



# TRAVELS WITH MARIE-MAGDELEINE

A book to mark Marie-Magdeleine Mauger Fouéré's 99th birthday on 1st June 2016



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mark Marie-Magdeleine Mauger Fouéré's  
99th birthday on 1st June 2016  
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Designed by Kate Horgan

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(Front cover) Marie-Magdeleine and Yann  
visiting Les Hauderes, Switzerland.  
(Back cover) Marie-Magdeleine braving the snow  
for her daily walk in Palmerston Park, Dublin.

# Travels with Marie-Magdeleine

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## Contents

Foreword - The story of an intrepid traveller	1
Our wonderful trip to the United States of America (1983)	5
First visit to Africa: Nairobi and Bulawayo (1971)	49
Venise (1972)	58
More African journeys (1975-1977)	65
Greece (1980)	73
Voyage to Calella de Palafrugell (1982)	86
Trip to Swaziland (1986)	90
My séjour in South Africa (1995-1996)	139
Slovenia (2002)	152
Other places, other faces	183



MES VALTON  
Rue d'Assas  
PARIS-VI

ENSEIGNEMENT SECONDAIRE

SECTION A'

ACADÉMIE de Rennes

(1) Institution Bossuet  
à Lannion

département des Côtes Du Nord

(1) Nom de l'Établissement.

(2) Ou oblitération par le maire ou le commissaire de police, pour les candidats préparés dans leur famille. (Voir page 3.)

INSTITUTION BOSSUET  
de de Lannion (du N.)  
cachet de l'établissement (2)

Signature de l'élève :

Marie - Magdeleine Manger

LIVRET SCOLAIRE

DE L'ÉLÈVE

(3) Nom et prénoms.

(3)

Manger Marie-Madeleine

né a Lannion, département du Finistère

le 1<sup>er</sup> Juin 1917

INDICATION DU OU DES ÉTABLISSEMENTS AUXQUELS L'ÉLÈVE A APPARTENU



## The story of an intrepid traveller

In 1983, while I was posted in Washington, my parents, Yann and Marie-Magdeleine Fouéré, travelled to America.

My mother Marie-Magdeleine decided to record her impressions of this memorable trip by writing about it. On her return to Dublin she wrote it out, first in long hand and then on a typewriter.

She also kept all the concert programmes, entry tickets and other memorabilia in a neat package, some of which are included here.

That was the first of many diaries she kept on the various trips she made, which are reproduced here along with some photos marking the events she describes or places she visited. When she didn't keep a diary (on visits such as those to Venezuela, Cuba and Mexico where I was posted, as well as to Switzerland), she wrote in great detail about the trips in her letters. They are the makings of a second book.

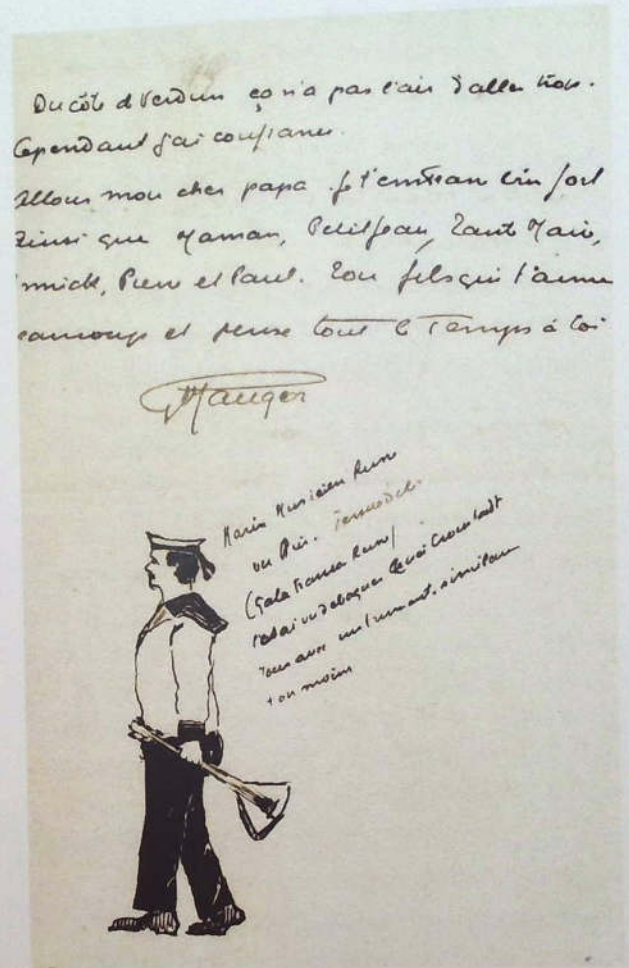
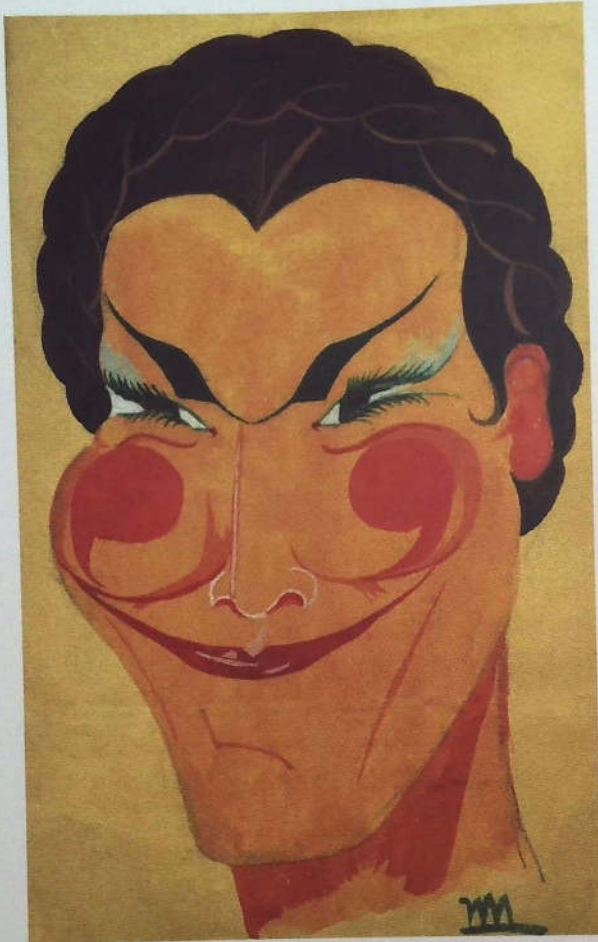
My mother was not only an intrepid traveller but also a prolific letter writer. Her letters were the link between all the family members, from my father who was often in Brittany or travelling to different parts of Europe defending the cause of Brittany and other ethnic minorities, to my three sisters and my brother scattered

in various countries across the globe.

No matter the location or the circumstances, whether propped up in bed after her breakfast or while she travelled, sitting in railway stations or airports waiting for the departure, she would use every available moment to put pen to paper and write letters to us. Her letters were always very informative, filled with news of other family members and the events happening around her.

Marie-Magdeleine wrote as she spoke, often hopping from one topic to another but always keeping a free flow of words. Her manuscripts and letters contain hardly any erasures or corrections and every space was used, so that often we would be turning the pages in all sorts of different directions in order to follow what she wrote. Her French accent and the French expressions she used when she spoke English come through in her travel diaries as well as in her letters - origine/origin, folklorique/folkloric, Venise/Venice, etc. I left the text as written, so as to maintain authenticity.

Letter writing and what one could call an early version of travel writing, combined with a bohemian carefree spirit, were very much a part of the Mauger family tradition. Marie-Magdeleine was the youngest of ten children.



(Left) A caricature of Marie-Magdeleine by her brother Jean. (Above) A letter from Georges Mauger to his parents, 1917.

Her eldest brother Georges died in the First World War at the age of 19, just a few weeks after she was born in 1917.

Being in the Navy, he travelled to Malta and other parts of the Mediterranean. His letters home contain many delicate pen and ink drawings to accompany his descriptions of events around him.

Another brother, Jean, who died of TB at the age of 27 and was closest in age to Marie-Magdeleine, was a proficient artist, and left behind many beautiful drawings, paintings and caricatures.

One sister, a St. Vincent de Paul missionary, died in China in 1935, and another brother, Paul, emigrated to Reunion Island and then to Southern Africa, where he died in 1975. Their uncles included a member of the French Academy, the poet and writer Charles Le Goffic, and another, a curate, who wrote many letters recounting his trips across Europe.

This book is destined mainly for the family and friends of Marie-Magdeleine. I hope you will enjoy it as much as I enjoyed putting it together.

My thanks and gratitude to Kate Horgan whose expertise and professional advice ensured success in the realisation of this project.

Above all, my thanks go to my mother who

devoted so much of her life to maintaining links between all the family through her letters and diaries. She remains an inspiration to us all.

Erwan Fouéré  
*Brussels, June 2016.*



# Our wonderful trip to the United States of America



1983

**O**n the 22nd of April, 1983, we left Palmerston Park at 9.30 a.m. to get the train to Limerick, then the rickety bus to Shannon with all our luggages, mink coat, and a bit of apprehension from my part to face the flight over the Ocean Atlantic.

We arrived at Shannon at 2.30 p.m., had a poor quality snack and a small bottle of wine at the cafeteria before going to check in at NorthWest Orient counter; then paid a visit at Shannon duty free shop to make small purchases for Erwan, already priced in dollars (all their prices there have their prices marked in \$ dollars.). We bought a bottle of after shave for Erwan eau savage Christian Dior which apparently cost double price in the States, a few boxes of Irish linen handkerchieves as souvenir presents which were destined to our various hosts in Washington, and of course the inevitable cigarettes for me.

We boarded our plane at 4 p.m. which was full of passengers. The weather in Ireland was chilly and still a bit wintry. We settled more or less comfortably in our seats (smoking area, the last row practically at the tail of the plane), and waited patiently for the non-smoking sign to

disappear once we were airborne to have the first relaxing puff. Papa plunged himself as usual in the daily paper, letting the smoke coming to his face without comment! Then after what seemed a considerable time the trolley passed by with the 'beverage' (as they call all sort of drinks in the States) we had selected. For Papa the usual healthy orange juice free of charge! For myself the bottle of wine for which I had to pay 2 dollars (hardly a glass and a half). The meal came soon afterwards; there should have been a choice of chicken or beef, but as we were in the last rows of the plane, the air hostess announced that only chicken was available. Well, it did not make much difference as I know from experience that it all taste the same.; the only quality of the meal was that it was piping hot. Coffee was drinkable but was really more the colour of a very diluted coffee than the taste.

The movie started, although I took an ear phone which costed me 2 dollars to hear the sound, it was useless as we were too far away from the screen and couldn't watch the picture without stretching the neck in a very uncomfortable position.

Anyway halfway to Boston the plane started to have some tremors. As I asked a bit anxiously the air hostess why it was so shaky,

*Previous page: Yosemite National Park, California*

she replied laconically : 'Ah well, the weather outside you know...!' I just had no way to check as she said 'the weather outside'. I settled for this explanation, and asked her for a beer.

Well, soon we landed in Boston where we waited one hour for our connection flight to Washington. I got a glass of white wine at the nearest bar to settle my nerves, while waiting. We had another stretch of flight of about an hour and 1/2, but it seemed longer, as by then, we were beginning to feel quite tired. We finally landed in Washington at 11 p.m. local time, (which was for us 2 a.m. Irish time, as there is difference of 5 hours between Ireland and the States.)

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For Papa the usual healthy orange juice free of charge! For myself the bottle of wine for which I had to pay 2 dollars (hardly a glass and a half).

---

We were at our destination, and Erwan was there to meet us and to welcome us. Just to see him again I felt better. We were so glad to see him looking so well and happy. We took a taxi to his flat 'Sagamore' is the name of the ancient building renovated. The flat is bright

and spacious with all comfort. We exchanged news of the family and all; and I soon flopped into the king size bed in the master room which Erwan had generously given to me with the bathroom en suite; Papa settled in his own room with a shower room connected to it, and Erwan was sleeping in the living room on the large convertible couch. I slept soundly until 9 o'clock the following day. We were very happy to be together, and slowly got adapted to the difference of time and to our new surrounding. The weather was much the same as in Ireland fairly cold and rainy the first four days.

Saturday 23rd April

The day after our arrival, we met Claudagh O'Brien and her mother who were on a visit in the States and Mary Minch; we went all together to have lunch in a nice restaurant called 'Bootsie, Winky and Miss Maud', situated not far from Erwan's place. It was very enjoyable.

(Insertion of extra text by Mamy: There are little episodes which occurred while staying in Sagamore or some particularities I noticed while I was in Washington specially, which I omitted. For instance, one morning I was relaxing in bed, reading after my breakfast, suddenly the fire alarm started to beep loudly and continuously. (Erwan had explained to us that if this little gadget fixed to the ceiling of the living room

was suddenly operating letting out a shrieking sound, not to worry...it was the fire alarm, very sensitive gadget which at the slightest smoke in the room, would immediately go into action.) Anyway, it startled me, and I jumped out of bed putting my dressing room and telling Papa that we better get out, that there might be a fire somewhere in the building...I opened the door of the flat and was ready to knock next door, when Papa said calmly : ' I think it is my toast burning...', and so it was! It took quite a while for the alarm to stop and I returned to bed amazed at the efficiency of the system of alarm in case of smoke which could well be a start of fire. In fact I never saw so many fire engines rushing by in the street, after we arrived, there are numerous sirens going on, ambulances, police cars, but more often fire engines or the lot together. Also most of the buildings which specially are converted in flats, have all fire exits stairs built in front of the building, instead of the back like in Europe.

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**I never saw so many fire engines rushing by in the street, after we arrived.**

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Another episode caused me quite a panic. One day the weather was quite hot, and Papa had gone to Philadelphia to meet

some people involved in the Celtic League. Erwan and I decided to have our lunch on the roof terrace above his flat, where you can enjoy the sun and a nice view of the city.

I went up to investigate the temperature on the terrace which was well-equipped with a table, chairs and deck chairs. It was certainly warm enough to have our lunch there, but as I tried to open the door into the flat, I found to my distress it was locked from the inside. Here I was, banging on the door with all my strength to try to attract attention, hoping that Erwan would miss me and would hear the banging... no use...Nobody came, and I resigned myself to sit on the chair, trying to imagine how on earth could I get out of this place. Yes, there was the roof of Erwan's flat with its sky light, but then there was a big gap to jump and I would not have been able to reach the roof!

After what seemed to me ages, trying to contemplate the view, and reassuring myself... by this time big clouds were forming on the sky, and it looked like it might rain anytime. I had another try at the banging, and suddenly Erwan appeared all alarmed, and anxious, as he was looking for me, not knowing where I was, but heard after a while a faint banging which he realized with stupor that it could be me trying to open the door of the terrace...and rushed like mad to the top of the stairs to open the door.





Marie-Magdeleine enjoys a picnic on the Sagamore roof balcony after her ordeal

Well that was the end of my panic, and quite relieved, we set on our picnic in the terrace, making sure that I would not be locked up again.

A lot of buildings or houses have those roof terraces, where you can relax, and have your meal or drinks, on a warm summer day. On Erwan's terrace, which is actually reserved for all the tenants of the 'Sagamore', there is also a shower where you can cool yourself. But the heat in the peak of the summer is intensified by a high density of humidity which is rather

oppressing. But each flat called over there 'condominiums' have all air conditioning, mesh screen windows against the invasion of flies or mosquitos, or other insects, and equipped with large frigidaire freezer combined to keep the food and drinks at very cool temperatures, and all have dishwasher, washing machine and tumble dryer; the ones in Erwan's flat are cleverly concealed in a fitting cupboard. Also when you rent those modern type of flat, you can rent every single piece of furniture, from king, or queen size bed, chairs, armchairs, couches, carpets, T.V., the lot for a very reasonable price.)



Sunday 24th April

We got up late, had a nice lunch at the flat, and we went to visit the White House; it was a rather grim day, and I found the White House smaller than I expected! There were a few visitors, we were shown the gardens and the state rooms,

quite nice but not as grandiose as expected! At 5 p.m. we went to a service in an African Methodist Episcopal Church where a choral Festival was held. The Congregation was entirely black people, their voices were quite beautiful, but I was still quite tired after the journey, and



Marie-Magdeleine and Yann visit the White House in Washington DC

Erwan took me home to 'S' street in a taxi, (taxis in the States are not very expensive) leaving Papa meditating in the church, as Erwan was to join him back later. I had another rest, went to sleep and felt better afterwards, but it was fairly cold and Erwan had made a lovely log fire in the fireplace of the living room, and went to get a delicious pizza, in a special pizzeria 'Vesuvio' near his flat. After a nice supper and warming up near the fire, we looked at the colour T.V. for a while, and soon retired to bed.

Monday 25th April

We join Erwan at Brookings Institute for lunch, it is only 15 minutes walk from the flat. It is a modern building with gardens on the front, very pleasant inside, with a large hall and a little water fountain cool, a large lounge, and the restaurant is a self service where one can get a choice of good dishes and drinks for a very reasonable price; as every eating place in the States, there are two sections 'smoking' and 'non-smoking'. At Brookings Institute you see a constant flow of people, interesting people who comes and goes bringing information and exchanges of views on Politique, culture, discussions, and meetings are held regularly. Erwan particular interest and

research is environment in the various states of America. After lunch we went for a walk.

Washington at first sight was somewhat of a surprise to me, as the people in a great majority are all black or coloured. It is quite striking and one feels you could be just as well in Africa; specially that a sudden change of temperature occurred after 4 days of cold and rain. It became suddenly very hot and up to 25 degree centigrade, sunny and bright.

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Washington at first sight was somewhat of a surprise to me, as the people in a great majority are all black or coloured.

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Thursday 26th April

Mary Minch and Patricia, an American friend, a lawyer, extremely sympathique came to have a light supper at the flat and we went together afterwards to the Kennedy Centre, to the New York Metropolitan Opera which show Macbeth that night. Kennedy Centre is a fine modern building situated near the famous notorious Watergate Hotel, where opera, theatre, and concerts, films are held every night; its terraces are situated along the Potomac River; there are inscriptions and

quotations of J.F. Kennedy from his speech in the nation engraved on the stone walls. The Opera House is very grand, has a ceiling covered with beautiful crystal chandeliers. The stage curtain comes from Japan; there is a predominance of red colour, walls, carpets, seat covers. Macbeth was very well acted and the orchestra excellent executing Verdi splendid music, the overture partition is particularly beautiful.

Wednesday 27th

We attended the National Symphony Orchestra, with Jean Pierre Rampal as conductor and Flutist, also Toshiko Khono, Flutist; also at the Kennedy Centre, but in the Concert Hall very modern with good acoustic. I forgot to mention that on Monday evening 25th, we were invited to a very nice lady Professor who offered us a light supper and drove us to Georges Mason University in Maryland, where Professor Foster has arranged for Papa to give a talk on minorities in Europe, after his own talk, and Erwan gave a talk on the Institutions Europeennes.

Thursday 28th

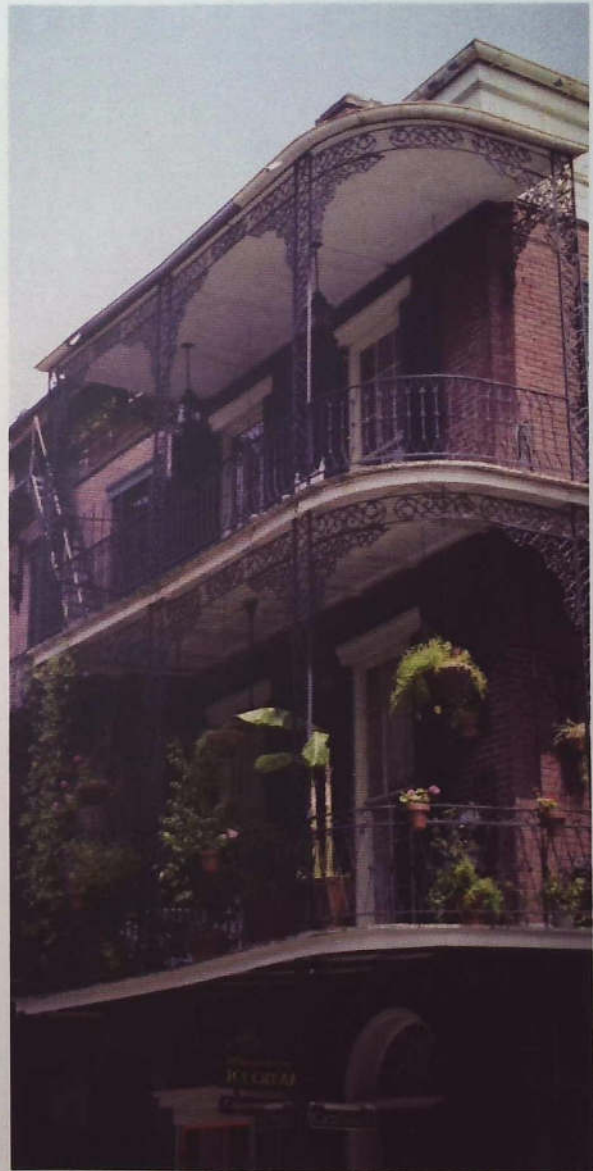
We were invited to dinner at the home of an American family, I mean American of foreign origin; father from Pakistan, mother from Finland, who became American citizens and brought up their family in America. One

daughter works in Brookings Institute as a secretary, called Zarina. They live in a very attractive area in the outskirts of Washington. It was nice to be welcomed in a family who made their roots in the States and were happily settled.

29th April

We left Washington for New Orleans via Minneapolis. It was a fairly long trip with the indirect routes we had to take on account of our pass North-West Orient line; going North before going South! We arrived in New Orleans in the evening. It was much hotter than in Washington. We went to the Hotel reserved by Erwan in the French old Quarter, Oliver House Hotel, built in 1936; this historic mansion was declared by famous architect H. Richardson to be the finest designed structure in New Orleans. From the windows of our large bedroom we could hear echoes of Jazz being played around in neighbouring cafés; the furniture were antiques, the room spacious with a bathroom en suite. The air was quite warm even late at night and you could feel you were in the Southern part of America.

Erwan arrived to join us at midnight, after leaving Washington late afternoon after his work; he very gently crept in our bedroom where a rolling bed had been added. The following day we went to visit 'The Vieux Carré' quarter; it is an old part of New Orleans





City, and the most interesting and typical, with its wood carved balconies and terraces along the handsome structure houses, their patios cool and full of greeneries, where you can relax with an iced drink or coffee.

We had lunch the Saturday 30th April in a selected well known restaurant situated in a residential part of the town; afterwards we took a cruise on a old type boat along the Missisipi, with crowd of school children sipping coke or munching potato crisps or popcorn. (One thing very common to see is people in the street, or any public place where it is allowed, always something to drink or to eat in their hands, it is

a habit; in the cinema, the most popular habit is to buy huge cartoons of popcorn, and munching them all through the movie; what is left is scattered on the floor, making it a mess. That is the reason why you see notice board in shops, or the tube, museums, etc., saying no smoking, no food, no drink! safe precaution it seem.)

Along the river are a few industries buildings on one side, and isolated summer residences on the other side of the bank. At night we went to dinner in a typical French restaurant called Brennans with a large patio where there are

Brennans restaurant, New Orleans



trees and plants, they serve us a nice meal in the open air still warm at 10.0 clock at night, we had fish delicious, and for dessert the speciality of Louisiana, a sort of tart, called 'pecan pie', made of pastry, raisins and almonds quite nice; their wine white is really nice, and served always well chilled. We afterwards strolled along the lively jazzy busy streets of 'The Vieux Carré', Bourbon Street, full of souvenir shops, various bands and orchestra playing loudly the old Jazz tunes so famous in New Orleans, it goes on all night long. We finally retired to our (relatively) cool hotel.

Next day, Erwan hired a car to visit the Plantation Houses around, the first historic

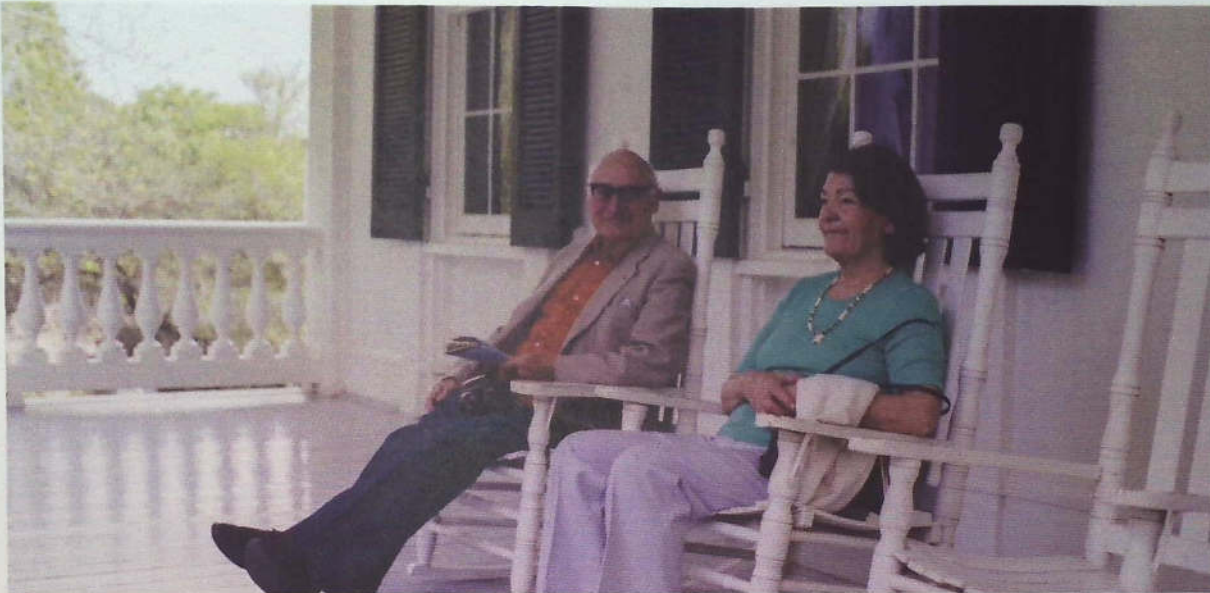


'Houmas House' which derives its name from the Houmas Indians; they originally held this strip of land located at a point in the river that affords a commanding view of several miles up and down the might Missisipi. It was the country home of Dr. Georges. B. Crozat of New Orleans, who devoted the last 25 years of his life in restoring the house and gardens to their former grandeur. His heirs have opened this historic mansion for all who appreciates fine architecture, outstanding furnitures and beautiful gardens.

Built in 1800, it has many Spanish characteristics, with his white columns and wooden balconies terrace. A few hostess in elegant period long dresses showed us the beautiful rooms, all of them elegantly furnished and well preserved. A few films were actually shot in the Plantation : 'Hush Hush Sweet Charlotte', 'Moon of the Wolf', 'Long Street'.

We then took the road to another old Mansion converted in guest house called Myrtil Grove. They had built some cottages in the grounds and we stayed in one of them for the night. Actually there has been some confusion regarding our bookings and we found ourselves with only one middle size double bedroom instead of two separate rooms; after a bit of insistent discussion with the person in charge, we were given 2 rooms, one with two beds, the other medium large double room;





so started a typical Fouéré family discussion: who will go in the twin beds room, and who will take the other double bed room. At the end Erwan and Papa moved one bed from the one room and in the process torn away the frame of the door (rather frail construction!) and put the single bed for Papa in the large bedroom, the large bed being occupied by me! When all the bedding problems were solved, we went to have dinner in a nearby restaurant and went back to our sleeping quarters.

Breakfast was included, but it was served in the Main house with all the other guests. I was spoilt as usual by Erwan who brought me a

Yann and Marie-Magdeleine relax at Myrtil Grove plantation house

tray of juice, coffee and pastry.

Monday 2nd May

Then we took the road and visited other Plantation Homes. One called 'Rose Gardens', the other 'Oak Alley' which used to be the property of a wealthy French sugar Planter in 1840, with an alley of 25 oak trees over 250 years old, quite spectacular setting. Inside the mansion we were shown beautiful rooms also very well preserved and with beautiful antique

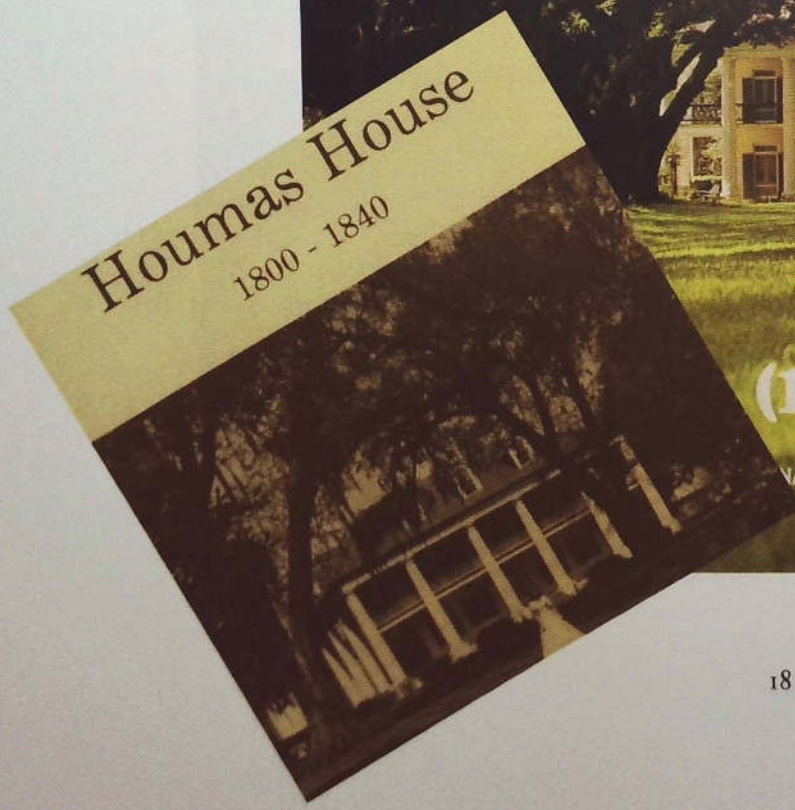


# OAK ALLEY PLANTATION

Houmas House  
1800 - 1840

(1837-39)

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK



furnitures; the Tours are still conducted by the personal servants who have been with the Stewart family owners of the Plantation since 1925 and fully restored to this present state, and later left it to a non profit foundation so that it could be visited by the public.

Tuesday 3rd May

We visited 'Nottoway' Plantation, after spending a night in Oak Alley in one of the guest cottages situated in the Park of the Plantation; cosy little cottage with three bedrooms, living room, bathroom and kitchen; we had a light supper there, and slept very well in the quiet surrounding of the Park. 'Nottoway' Plantation next day we visited is the largest Plantation in the South; this big mansion has been restored and opened to the public since 1859. It contains 64 rooms, the style of the building is a beautiful blend of Greek revival and Italianate supported by 22 enormous columns. The main feature is a beautiful white ballroom with crystal chandeliers and 2 hand carved white marble chimneys. There are overnight accommodations which can be booked at a fairly high cost; there is a restaurant in the ground floor of this Mansion where we had our lunch.

After the visit of 'Nottoway', we returned

to New Orleans to leave our rented car at the airport and took a flight from New Orleans to Washington. Papa and I by North West Orient on account of our Pass, up to Philadelphia, after changing at Minneapolis, that 'mini mini' airport which we encountered several times during our various trips, in order to reach Washington. Actually on this trip to Louisiana we had to disembark at Philadelphia and take a late train arriving at Washington at midnight, where Erwan had already arrived earlier by a direct flight leaving New Orleans later than us. I must say we felt rather exhausted that night but glad to have made that interesting voyage in New Orleans.



Yann and Marie-Magdeleine in Nottoway plantation.

Wednesday 4th May

We rested in 'Sagamore' residence (Erwan's flat) and were in good form that evening to attend the Zurich Ballet in Kennedy Centre, featuring the famous dancer Rudolf Nureyev, in the Manfred Symphony music by Tchaikovsky. It was the first time I saw Nureyev performing, so let us say that I was expecting miracle, forgetting that this genius artist was over 45 years old now and showed his age in his performing. A dancer of that class no matter how agile he could still be is bound to slow down after having given 200 performances a year. But it was an experience to have at least seen him on stage.

During the next few days we visited government buildings, the Congress Library and the splendid Museum dedicated to space, where we saw striking films on planets and flying presented on giant screens, very impressive.

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I expected some lively discussion;  
I made the following remarque:  
Nothing is happening here!

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Another day we got a special pass through a friend of Erwan to go to the Capitol and attended a session in the Senate Chamber for the 98th Congress. During that session, I sat very quietly in the gallery provided for visitors

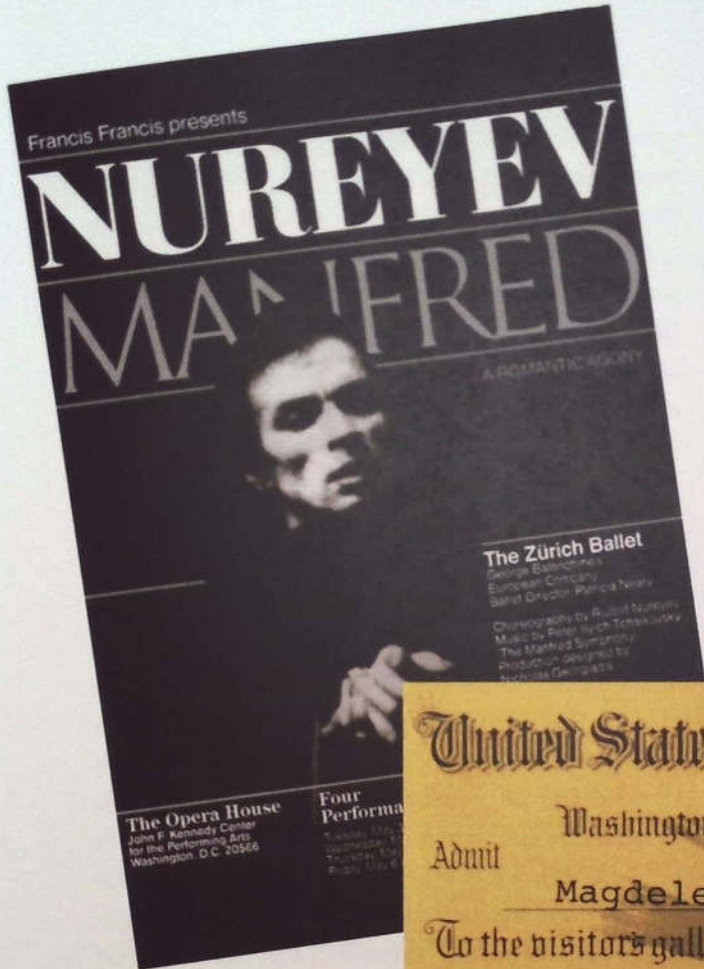
with special pass. We were accompanied by a friend of Erwan, secretary to a Senator who obtained a pass for us. After a while, I got a bit puzzled as I expected some lively discussion; I made the following remarque : Nothing is happening here! to what our friend replied amused: You should be most respectful to the Institutions of our Government. In fact things were happening in a quiet way, members of Congress and Senators were called to vote some legislation, and as their names were called, a light appeared above the President's seat; anyway as the process took quite a long time, we respectfully left the gallery, and departed from the Senate, with its long corridors, security guards, marble stairs and decorous paintings.

We took walks along the Mall situated between the Capitol, Washington Monument, and Lincoln Monument. On the grounds is also the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, a dark polished granite wall with inscriptions of the 58000 American soldiers killed during that war. Impressive sight as parents and relatives of those soldiers come to touch the inscription of the name of their dead, and secure a flower with cello-tape on the stone in memory of them.

Saturday 7th May

We went on a cruise on the Potomac River to Mount Vernon, situated in Virginia. It

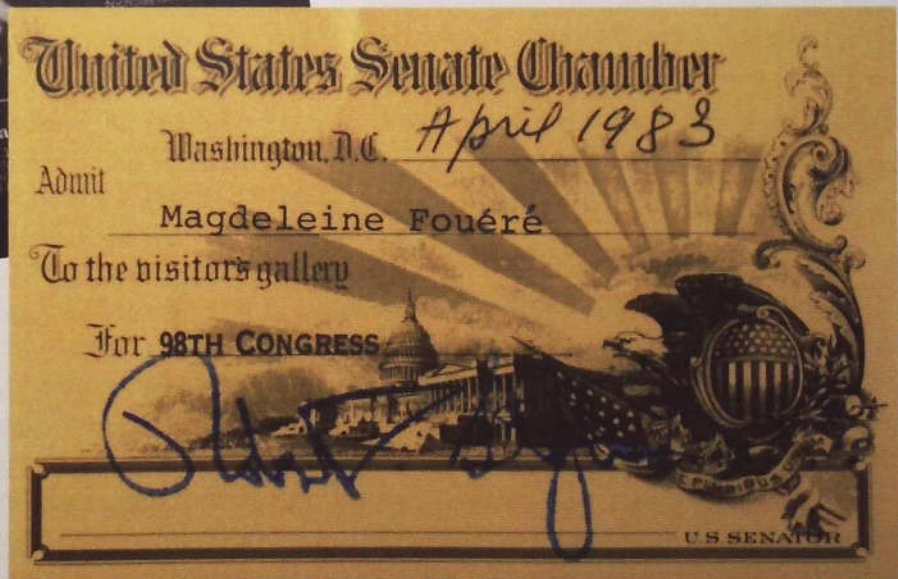
OUR WONDERFUL TRIP TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



was the Residence of George Washington, of mid-Georgian architecture; the trip on the boat was very pleasant, a warm sunny day. This lovely Mansion is surrounded by extensive grounds, we visited the out parts, and dependences of the Estate, but did not visit the interior of the Mansion, as the queue, 'line' as they say in the States, was very long, and we had to catch our boat to return to Washington. In the evening we had dinner in a very typical Mexican restaurant near the river.

Sunday 8th of May

We are invited at Patricia house, friend of Erwan,



where we had a 'Brunch', this breakfast-lunch combined which the Americans favour so much. There were common friends of Patricia, All American, except one French last married to an American. Strangely enough I was surprised to see this French lady sitting down on the floor to give her seat to her husband called Jackson, who sat on the chair after mildly proposing the seat to his wife! very devoted gesture from a French wife to her husband!

Usually our days in Washington were always well planned, morning was spent leisurely for me anyway, staying in bed having my breakfast, and reading until 10 or 11 o. clock. Papa used to keep his routine that is spending his morning at his desk in his room typing away or writing.

---

### I had to brace my courage and stand, my head down, between Papa and Erwan.

---

At midday we sometimes either met Erwan for lunch at Brookings or had a light meal with delicious Californian white wine at Erwan's place; then on week days we usually went Papa and I for a nice long walk; my favourite one was in the Residential area of the City where all the Embassies of all over the world are situated.

You could learn your geography by just

strolling along and taking note of the numerous countries big and small represented each by a different aspect of building.

For instance, France has quite a big classical red brique building, with large garden at the back, Ireland has a smaller one, the Eastern countries, Russia and countries near by have a rather grim aspect building with tight security around; further on the Embassies, there are beautiful big houses surrounded by lovely gardens full of scented flowers.

We used often to take the tube at a place called 'Dupont Circle' where you had to descend a very steep rolling stairs which seemed to have no end. One must not be inclined to vertigo. It is apparently the deepest underground in the world. So I had to brace my courage and stand, my head down, between Papa and Erwan, I mean Papa on the step in front of me, and Erwan on the step behind me!

Another part of Washington also quite attractive is Georgetown; there you found a lot of very narrow little houses built side by side resembling some of them or same type of houses in some part of London. These houses are apparently very expensive to buy or let and very 'recherché'. Some have big gardens at the rear, with large swimming pools; there is also a long commercial street with quaint little boutiques, and fashion shops, souvenir shop etc.

Thursday 12th May

We had a little dinner party at 'Sagamore' Erwan's place, a nice American couple living next door on the same floor, and another couple French, the wife very French and lively, the husband works at the Commission. We had delicious pizza Erwan's speciality which he collects piping hot ready to serve, at the Pizzeria near by.

The following morning we left Washington for San Francisco California. It just happened to be 'Vendredi 13', just as well we are not too superstitious! Anyway, we took a different flight from Erwan to Minneapolis, and we met Erwan there. I forgot to mention a particular thoughtful gesture from Erwan, as we were discussing in Washington the evening before our departure for California, I enquired where we would have time to eat with all the changes of plane the following day. Papa replied casually (Oh Well, we will not have time between the flights); as usual he could not care less whether he ate or not! But Erwan said mysteriously : (not to worry; I have a surprise for you.)

Indeed an hour before leaving the flat, Erwan came with a mysterious box with the name of 'SUZANNE' printed on it. Well! that was the surprise, a lovely abundant picnic with wine, cups, napkins, orderly arranged in the box, even a carton of fresh strawberries with fresh cream! Just like him to to think

of treats like this, and which prove to be very useful during our trip to California.

Let me explain to you about 'SUZANNE'; it is the name of 'The' shop in Connecticut Avenue, near Erwan residence, where you can get special delicatessen foods of all sorts; their smoked sliced chicken is delicious. 'SUZANNE' was a delight to open in the train we took from Washington to Philadelphia, the journey last two hours, and we decided to have our picnic before arriving in Philadelphia. Inside 'SUZANNE', we found 2 enormous portions of Quiche Lorraine, 1 carton of hors d'oeuvres, salad, load of slices of smoked chicken, some cookies, a bottle of white wine and a bottle of red wine, fruits, etc... We settled for one portion of Quiche Lorraine, which was quite sufficient that day. So we had 'SUZANNE' with us all through our trip to California.

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A lovely abundant picnic with wine, cups, napkins, orderly arranged in the box, even a carton of fresh strawberries with fresh cream!

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At 'Mini mini' airport then we took with Erwan our flight for San Francisco, about 4 hours journey from Minneapolis. Erwan had

a companion sitting next to him who boarded the plane the last one and wore a cowboy hat. He started chatting with Erwan and was apparently very nervous, as it was the first time in his life he was flying. Approaching San Francisco, Erwan turned back to me to ask if I had a cigarette for his companion, as he felt even more nervous, as the plane was beginning its descent. I gladly gave a cigarette for this poor man, as I knew well how he felt.

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**That oyster shell Papa brought in the car as a souvenir and left under our coats on the back seat was going to cause a very unpleasant smell later on.**

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As we landed in San Francisco, I was very interested with the various crowd in the airport building. There were a mixed bunch of Chinese, coloured and white people; some had guirlandes of flowers around their necks as they had been in Hawaii on holidays. They all looked very tanned and cheerful, and you could feel the heat as we stepped out of the airport building, yet it was 7.30 p.m.

We collected the rented car Erwan had booked and we drove to our hotel, Andrews Hotel,

downtown, where we had a nice welcome. It was a small intimate hotel, but elegant, cosy and friendly, with coffee available at any time on a tray in the lobby, or tea or herbs tea...The rooms were pleasant, with dainty lace curtains at the window, and fresh flowers on the table. We slept very well and found in the lobby breakfast ready to collect on trays : coffee, tea, gorgeous fresh croissants, fresh fruit in baskets, all very appetizing. I took my tray and went back to bed.

We left San Francisco in the morning, Saturday, to drive in the Napa Valley, the wine country. Beautiful sunshine, warm in the 25/28 degree centigrade; we drove through the country side and had a picnic in the hills overlooking the Pacific Ocean. 'SUZANNE' picnic box was very useful. It was a lovely spot very calm and we rested after the picnic enjoying the scenery and the sun.

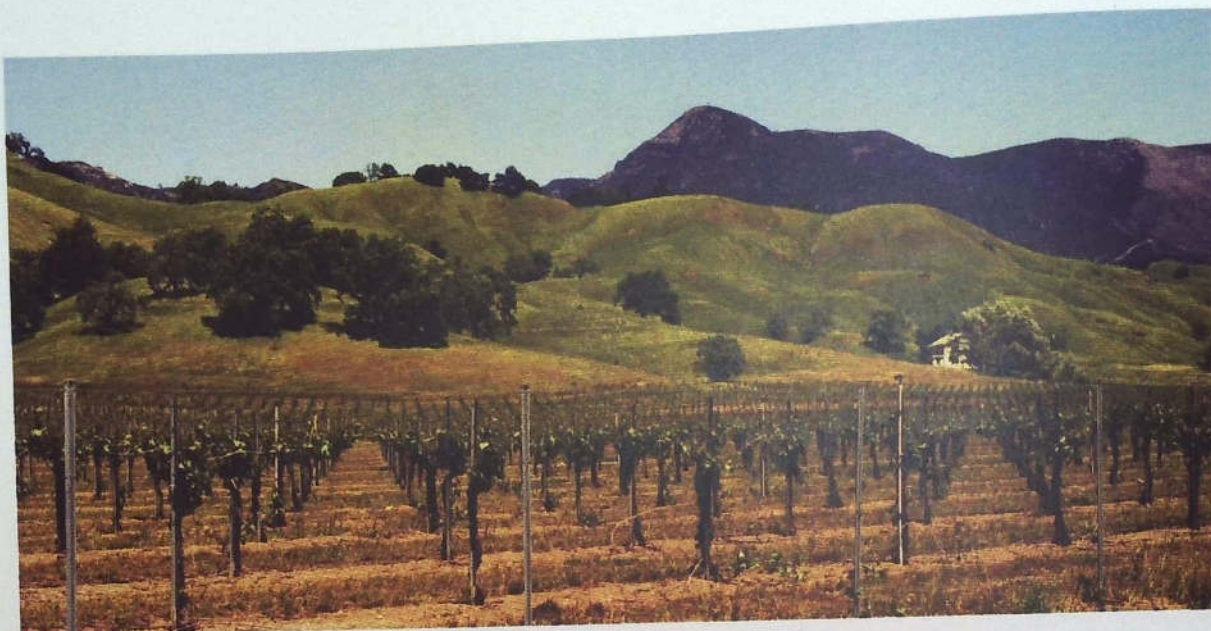
After a rest, we continued our drive and visited an oyster bed on Tomales Bay. Papa could not resist taking a huge oyster shell of queer shape. The oysters over there are enormous and they are often served in restaurant cooked with stuffing like meat! Anyway that oyster shell Papa brought in the car as a souvenir and left it under our coats on the back seat, was going to cause a very unpleasant smell later on; as gradually with the

Yann visits an oyster bed on Tomales Bay



OUR WONDERFUL TRIP TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA





smelting heat it started to stink like mad. We had whiffs of this rotten smell suddenly not knowing what it was and being puzzled of where it could come from! It was sickening; only after a while, Papa very calmly whisper : 'It could be the oyster shell!' To our horror, he picked it from under our raincoats, and indeed it was! We insisted for him to throw it away, he was very reluctant, but we insisted and finally he threw it outside the window of the car! But days and days afterwards it still stunk madly, and Papa's raincoat was ruined with rotten smell, mine fortunately was on top of his and did not get contaminated! We then visited various wineries, tasting the

white and red wine here and there until finally we came to a Champagne producer called Corbel. The offices had just closed and Erwan approached the man in charge explaining that to him that we had come from Ireland to visit the wineries, and heard of his Champagne. The manager was very friendly and obviously liked the Irish. He said he was very sorry we could not visit the Corbel winery; but to compensate he offered Erwan a bottle of Champagne which we kept for our birthdays celebrations. It was really very nice of this man and very generous. In the evening we stopped in the 'Best Western Motor Inn' at Rohnaert Park for the night.

Sunday 15th May

We took the road to meet Mary and Dave Laffey-Johnson at Souverain winery for a Brunch with Champagne. It was very nice of them to drive from their home about 40 miles to meet us and to offer us this delicious Brunch in a very nice restaurant part of the winery. Mary had not changed and she has now set her own travel agency. Dave is in the Police Force, very sympathique. Well, we said good bye to our nice friends and took the road early afternoon to visit a few more wineries all situated in the Napa Valley; visit of Beringer and Sequoia Grove wineries with various wine tasting. In one of them we purchased as present for Erwan, a nice brique jug, which is used to keep the wine cool.

We then returned that evening to San Francisco to Andrews Hotel where happened a shuffle of rooms, ours being a bit small, we kept it for the first night, and changed it the next day for a little suite very nice with a small sitting room, bathroom, and bedroom (some extra to pay but well worth it !).

Fresh flowers and pretty furnitures and curtains were very appreciated and the whole atmosphere of this small hotel was homely and dainty, right in the centre of the city. I was able to visit the shops the following morning, while Erwan went to a meeting on the environment. The shops are quite attractive and more

European than in Washington. I bought a sweater with a hood, and red heart with San Francisco printed on it, also a white one very long, both for a very reasonable price. The sports clothes are the best to but in the States.

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The guide on the bus was trying to explain to us that there was a large community of 'gays' in the city... anyway his explanations were a bit confusing and he didn't do a very good job of it!

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The following day Papa and I we took a Bus tour around the various parts of the city, and going through Golden Gate Bridge which looked really fabulous with clouds of fog usually surrounding it giving an aspect of irreal. The famous street cars of San Francisco have been temporarily suspended for repairs, they are replacing the old rails; it is a big major work, but they intend to put them back in circulation when they are in good condition. Those 'street car' are a part of the history of the city. The guide on the bus was trying to explain to us that there was a large community of 'gays' in the city, some quarters specially occupied by them; anyway his explanations were a bit

confusing and he didn't do a very good job of it!

In the evening we had our usual aperitif in our suite Erwan and I, then we went to Chinatown, the famous chinese part of the city of San Francisco, and we had dinner in Tao-Tao Restaurant, quite nice chinese food; we visited the numerous souvenir shops, bought a souvenir for the family. Cute little chinese pajamas for the two youngest grandchildren Annig and Oisin, funny T-shirts for the two boys Benjamin and Tristan with this suitable and appropriate inscription on them : (Grand Pa and Grand Ma went to San Francisco and all they bought me back is this dumb T-shirt!), a nice Chinese lampshade for Olwen, some pretty boxes for Annig and Kareen.

Our money was running short, so we couldn't get things for the parents of the grand children. Chinatown is very typical with its pagodas, dragons and the population exclusively chinese or japanese.

The following day we took a boat trip to Sausalito in the bay of San Francisco, the sea was a bit choppy, we passed by the famous 'Alcatraz' ex most tough jail of United States. It looks rather sinister, and hostile perched on high rocks, and surrounded by high walls and cliffs; apparently no one ever escaped from that jail except the actor who played in the movie 'Escape from Alcatraz'.

At Sausalito pretty little harbor we had lunch at Flynn's restaurant, and we sunbathed near the quay full of yachts and pleasure boats some converted in house boats, of all description and size. It was heavenly beautiful weather, Erwan nearly had a snooze lying on a bench after lunch.

Well, we took our boat back to San Francisco and in the evening, Joanne Laffey Baker and her husband Stan came to meet us at our hotel. I would never have recognized Joanne so much she changed from rather full figure to quite slim and tall size. We were very glad to meet her husband, and to see Joanne again; they drove us to John, her brother, for dinner.

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I nearly felt guilty and quite abnormal to light a cigarette, sensing people were watching me as if I was sniffing dope!

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On the way we stopped in a hotel which escaped one of the numerous earthquakes and is rather ancient looking near the sea front. We had a drink there, and drove to the Laffey family home situated in the outskirts of the city in a quarter called the Ocean. There we met John and his wife Maureen from Carraroe, their 3 lovely children, one specially Kathleen is the

most beautiful child I ever saw, with an angelique face and a soft blond hair, a real Dresden figurine with a transparent ivory complexion. She is 12 years old I think; John the father has changed a bit but still the same nice man he always was. Mrs. Laffey mother was there too, and we were very glad to meet them all; we were given a warm welcome by all, talking of old time in Cleggan and exchanging news of the old country and of our mutual families and friends.

Maureen produced a marvelous meal with load of food and a delicious cake. It was a very enjoyable evening which we appreciated a lot. Specially that Joanne and her husband took the trouble to drive all the way from their home about 40 miles from San Francisco to meet us; Joanne is still in the same business mortetician, and is more or less her own boss. Stan her husband is a business traveler.

Wednesday 18th May

We drove to Stanford University where Erwan had some friends Bob and Paula Reynolds, who are preparing a post graduation. Bob came to meet us at the Motel in Palo Alto, where we had booked room for the night, and he drove us miles along nice green countryside around Stanford, and to the coast; on the way back we visited the campus in the University, with extensive buildings and grounds; then Paula joined us in

the evening and they invited us to a nice dinner in a Mexican Restaurant.

As usual one has to be careful being a smoker to choose the smoking area reserved for smokers in most of the restaurants in the States, actually everywhere in the States I saw very few people smoking; I nearly felt guilty and quite abnormal to lit a cigarette, sensing people were watching me as if I was sniffing dope! The American people rightly so perhaps have a great fear of cancer and mostly of all diseases I think, but there is a very active campaign anti-smoking everywhere, and yet they have in the States

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### You can smoke to your heart content in the 'Rest Room'.

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a great production of tobacco which finds the sale probably in Europe and in the Third world. You can smoke to your heart content in the 'Rest Room' appellation for toilets, ladies, lou, W.C., etc. One has to know that because you don't necessarily feel like resting all day if you just want to relieve a need of nature!, and as you drink a lot of 'beverages' American expression for all kind of drinks, you find the need to rest often...in the 'Rest Room'.

The Motor Inn of Palo Alto where we spend the night was very comfortable, with two large

connecting bedrooms with bathroom, TV, colour, and special gadget at bedside you can switch on, to make the bed slightly rocking, supposed to put you to sleep and calm your nerves. However we didn't try as from previous experience, I remember this rocking business put me off to sleep rather than the opposite. Anyway we didn't need rocking after the nice Mexican dinner, and Californian wine; the friends of Erwan, Bob and Paula are very nice and friendly; Erwan met them in Washington before they both went to spend a year or so in Stanford University to do a post graduate course.

Thursday 19th May

Today is St. Yves, feastday of Erwan, we took the road for Sacramento, where Erwan had a talk to give on environment. Sacramento is a very nice town, the old town specially has a lot of character, with museums of old railways time of the west, the various tools they were using at the time. It is built in the style of the gold rush country. We purchased souvenirs in a Chinese shop, ate delicious iced yoghurts all kind of flavours, which taste a bit like ice cream but nicer. Papa and I had lunch in a cute restaurant in a shady courtyard under trees, and tables covered with bright

Yann and Marie-Magdeleine in Gold Rush country



cheerful red and white checked table cloth.

After our meal, we strolled along the streets, it was very hot, we met Erwan at the yoghurt shop, and we drove to Davis University situated in a nice campus with trees. There Papa had an appointment to meet a Professor of Celtiques Languages, called Leonora Timn, an American who was interested to meet Papa and to talk about the Breton language and culture; There are in the States a few groups of people of celtic origine interested in Brittany and other celtic countries, and some have formed a celtique league. While Papa was busy talking to Professor Timn, Erwan and I we went to pay a visit to the Campus shop, and I purchased a nice T-shirt with the inscription of U.C.D. University California Davis on it, some cards, etc. After a cold drink on the terrace gardens of the pub, where actually one of the waiter told us he came from Ireland Sligo ! and when we told him we were also from Ireland, offered us a nice iced coke ! quite delicious and refreshing, more ice than coke and coming out of the draught not the can !

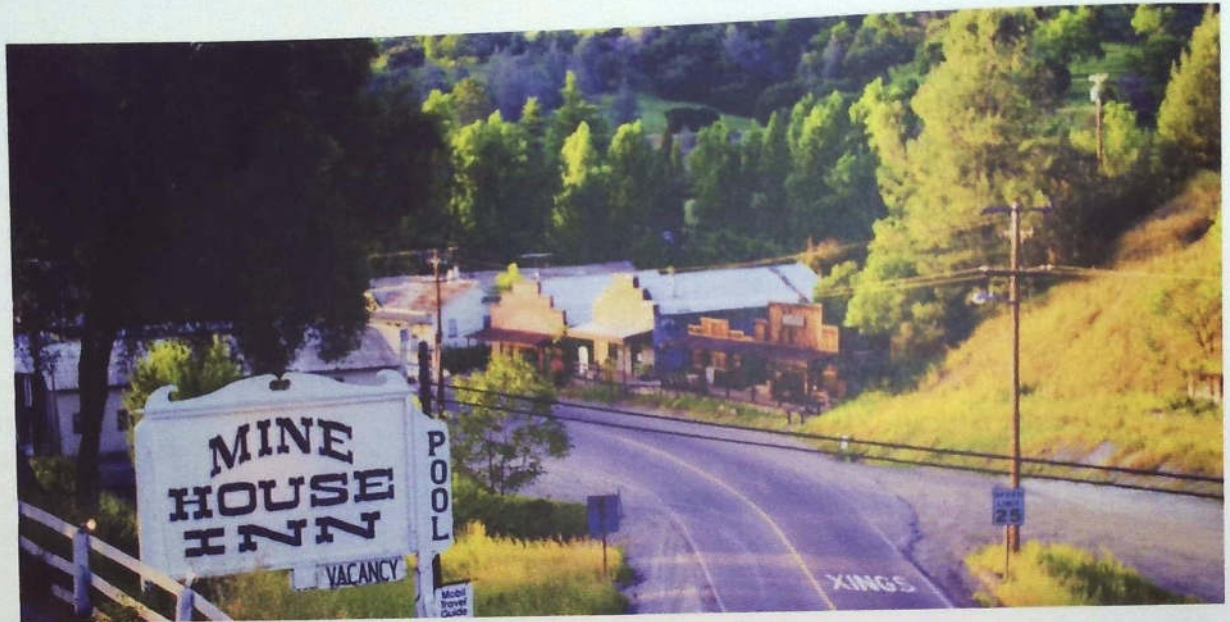
After our visit to Davis University, we drove on to the Gold rush country, stopped on the way to a sort of general store, side of the road, (the Oliver Coyne Cleggan style !) but typical western, with a group of cowboys style men chatting outside the store with their can of beer or coke in their hands. I didn't go in the



Marie-Magdeleine and Yann in the Mine House garden

store, I was feeling shy, not seeing any woman around. Erwan went to get some food, real wild west store he described ! It was a very hot day, but we had air conditioning in the car.

We drove further to the 'Mine House' in Amador City, where Erwan had booked two rooms. The 'Mine House' was authentic, converted in a guest house. We were shown to our respective rooms. Ours was the 'Director room' with the inscription written on the door, Erwan had the 'Bookkeeper room'. The



The Mine House Inn, Amador City, California

furnishings were in the old style, big mahogany beds and high ceilings and walls in red wood; the old china jug and wash basin on the dressing table, one flowery patterned chamber pots with lids under each bed! Like the old time, the room had a large wooden balcony terrace with rocking chairs, but next to our room had been added a modern toilet and shower room. Erwan had the same. It was nice peaceful and cool.

Let me tell you more about this 'Mine House'. It is located on Historical Highway 49 in Amador City. Gold was first found in the stream beds in

1849, and the first large gold quartz mining claim in California were staked there in 1850. Located in the heart of the 'Mother Lode', an area rich in historical and romantic lore, the Mine House is one of the most unusual small inns in America. The quaint Hostelry is housed in the old Keystone Consolidated Mining Company's office building, built one hundred years ago. Each room named for what it was originally used, has a story of its own and is authentically furnished in genuine antiques of the 'Mother Lode', used in the period when the building was a target for bandit and highway robbery men. The 'Director Room' with the high ceiling and



its own entrance in the front balcony, was where the affairs of the Company were talked over and the profit shared by the mine owners. This is where Papa and I slept imagining being the Directors of the Mine! counting our gold! The 'Bookeeper Room' where Erwan slept was where the activities of the Company were recorded. I don't think there was any bookkeeping activities that night he slept in the designed room!

After we had rested on the balcony terrace of our room, sipping our daily chilled white wine aperitif! we went to have dinner in a small village near by called Sutter Creek. We found a nice old style restaurant, where we were served

lovely fresh fish by a distinguée waitress wearing an elaborate long ancient laced dress all white (apparently she explained to us it had belonged to her daughter who wore it for her debutante ball). The meal was very nice and of good quality. We strolled along the sleepy little village of Sutter Creek, enjoying the coolness of the evening air, and we returned to our 'Mine House' where we slept very well in the peaceful surrounding. In the morning we rang the bell and it was the signal for the owner of the hotel to bring our breakfast tray which he deposed on a table at our door

Main Street, Columbia, California



outside, nice coffee and fresh pastry, juice, etc.

Friday 20th May

The following morning we drove all along the gold rush country, you can still see the old shaft of ancient gold mine, a vestige of the past. We visited a typical gold rush village called Columbia. with saloons and bars of the wild west well preserved; we had lunch in one of them, self service style. where we had the nicest 'frites' 'french fried' as they call it in the States, and a cornish pastry; there was a mechanic old piano in a corner which plays old western tunes, you insert 25 cents, and it played for a few minutes! Outside on the street some old western men were playing the fiddle, with their cowboys outfit and tanned faces. The whole atmosphere of the place looked real, and not overdone for tourists.

We continued our drive to Yosemite National Park where Erwan had booked rooms in one of the lodges. The Yosemite National Park embraces a vast wild lands set aside in 1890 to preserve a portion of the Sierra Nevada Mountains that stretches along California eastern flank. The Park ranges from 2000 feet above sea level to more than 13,000 feet, and offers three major features, Alpine wilderness, groves of giant sequoias and Yosemite Valley. The 200 miles of roads

give access to all these features either by car or by free shuttle bus in some areas.

The story of Yosemite began about 500 million years ago, when the Sierra Nevada region lay beneath an ancient sea. There are rivers, streams and impressive waterfalls. There are glaciers and snow was still on the summits of the gigantesque rocks.

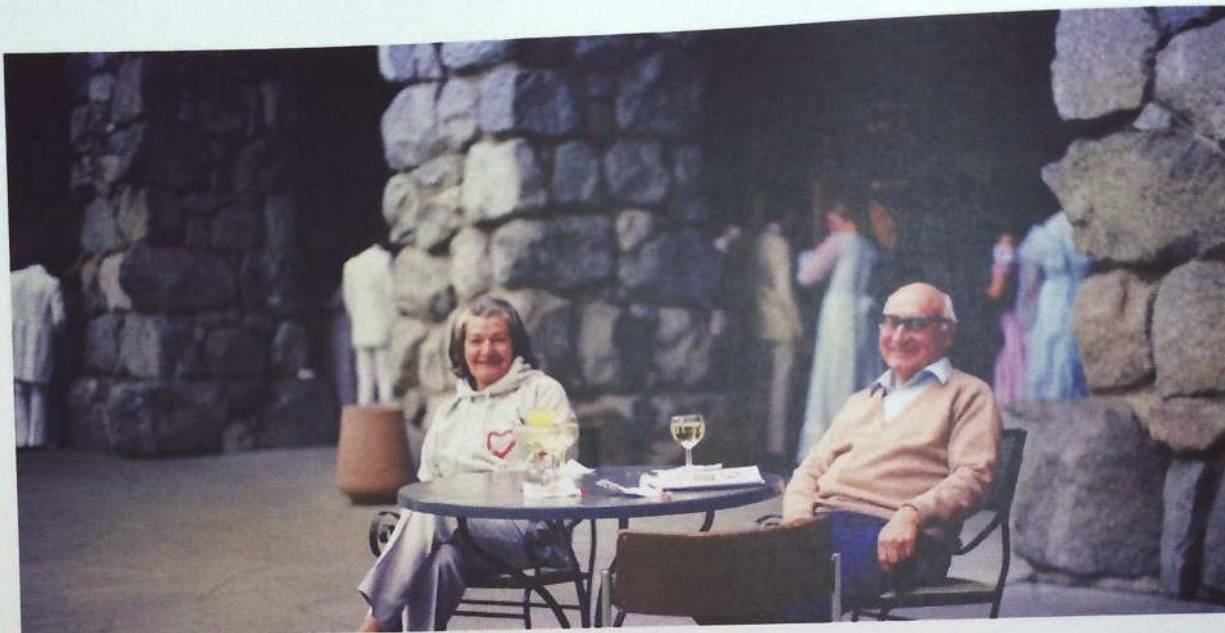
We arrived at the village at 5 p.m. and went to locate our lodge. We had two comfortable rooms with balcony, surrounded by pine trees, and bathroom. It was very hot, but dry heat, and Erwan located the ice providing machine where you insert 25 cent, and get a big plastic bucket of ice to cool our wine, which we had on the balcony. In all hotels, inns and lodgings there is always a supply of ice available usually free.

The village in the Valley is composed of great number of lodges, or log cabins less elaborate but quite adequate, with bath or shower room. The second night we had one of those cabins with two bedrooms. There are a choice of cafeteria self service, or two other restaurants, a souvenir shop, sort of general store where you can buy minerals even wine and snacks. We arrived at week-end, so there was quite a big crowd of visitors, and we had to queue for over an hour to get into one of those restaurant for

Ahwahnee Hotel, Yosemite National Park

OUR WONDERFUL TRIP TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA





Marie-Magdeleine and Yann at the Ahwahnee Hotel

our evening meal, but during the day you hardly notice people, as the nature is so vast, everyone is dispersed in the Park, and you don't see many people around. We took the shuttle bus free and hiked to 'Mirror Lake', a nice walk; we took 'SUZANNE' with us and had a picnic near the lake. Erwan has taken a supply of sandwiches and fruits to complete what was left of 'SUZANNE'; it was heavenly hot, and we found a shaded spot under trees; Erwan went for a dip in the lake (melted snow river) and enjoyed it.

After our picnic, Erwan sunbathed on a

rock; there was at distance a group of chinese performing Tai-Chi dance on a sandy bank of the lake ! We returned later to get our shuttle bus, which was at 20 minutes of nice walk.

In the evening we took our car and went driving to Ahwhanee Hotel situated against a high cliff with a spectacular waterfall crashing down from the summit. This hotel is where Queen Elizabeth stayed for two nights last March, on an unofficial visit. It was a very selected hotel, quite majestic; we were told that at the time of the visit of the Queen, the hotel had been totally evacuated of all its guests, and a tight security was established. We

went to have our drink in the lovely gardens, watching a display of several young couples, in what we thought was a wedding group, with long dresses, and white suits for the men. In fact after making enquiries, we were told it was a 'Prom', Post graduates students celebrating in style, each couple had to be photographed, a very romantic sight, some beautiful dresses looked very much 'Scarlett O'Hara' style from the film 'Gone with the Wind'. We enjoyed watching them. One of the young man seem to have selected two size larger for him for his suit, and was literally swimming in it, his long trousers dropping to

the ground; but they seemed happy and gave a colourful aspect to the place. The setting was perfect for that sort of display. We then returned to the lodge; the first evening we heard a thundering noise, thinking in fact it was thunder, we went to our balcony and saw a couple of avalanches quite spectacular and rather frightening I thought; it seemed so near us, huge portions of rock crashed down the valley with melted snow in a white foaming cloud. Usually this happen at nightfall after the heat of the day on the snowy slopes.

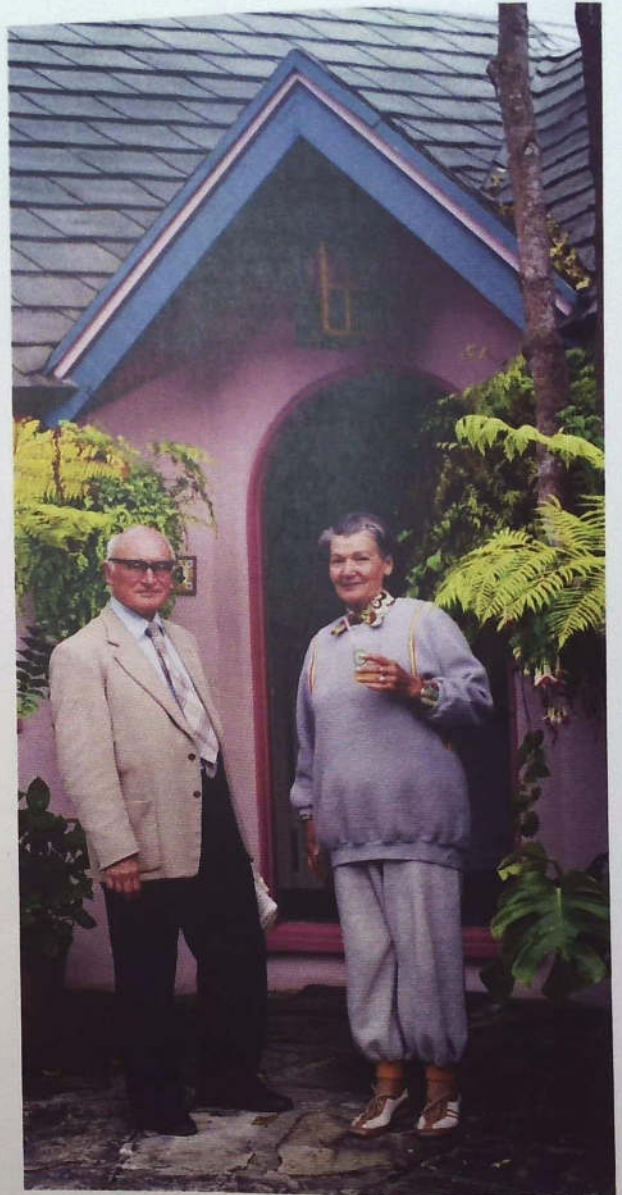
Prom guests at the Ahwahnee Hotel



Sunday 22nd May

We drove to the Coast. Carmel was our destination that day. It is a fairly long drive but with such an expert driver as Erwan, the 4 or 5 hours journey through good roads and pleasant scenery it was not too tiring, although we experienced during our various trips in California, a very hot weather, with temperature reaching 25-28 degrees or more, the heat was dry, the sky clear and blue, and the air conditioning in the car was a help preventing us from too much discomfort. We arrived in Carmel seaside resort at about 5 or 6 p.m. to the 'Inn of the Happy Landing' where Erwan had secured a booking for 2 nights. The pretty Inn consists of nine romantic little cottages grouped around a flower-bedecked courtyard, the centre piece, a lattice gazebo covered with flowering vine and hanging plants, is a favourite for tourists. The guest cottages are painted in pink with slate blue roofs and blue trimmed windows and doors which open into the central garden, with its fish pond, barbecue, and many varieties of flowers, tropical plants, shrubs and trees. Each cottage has comfortable modern rooms with Victorian antique furnitures. We occupied one of the family suites with private entrance, a fire place in one of

Marie-Magdeleine and Yann at the Inn of the Happy Landing

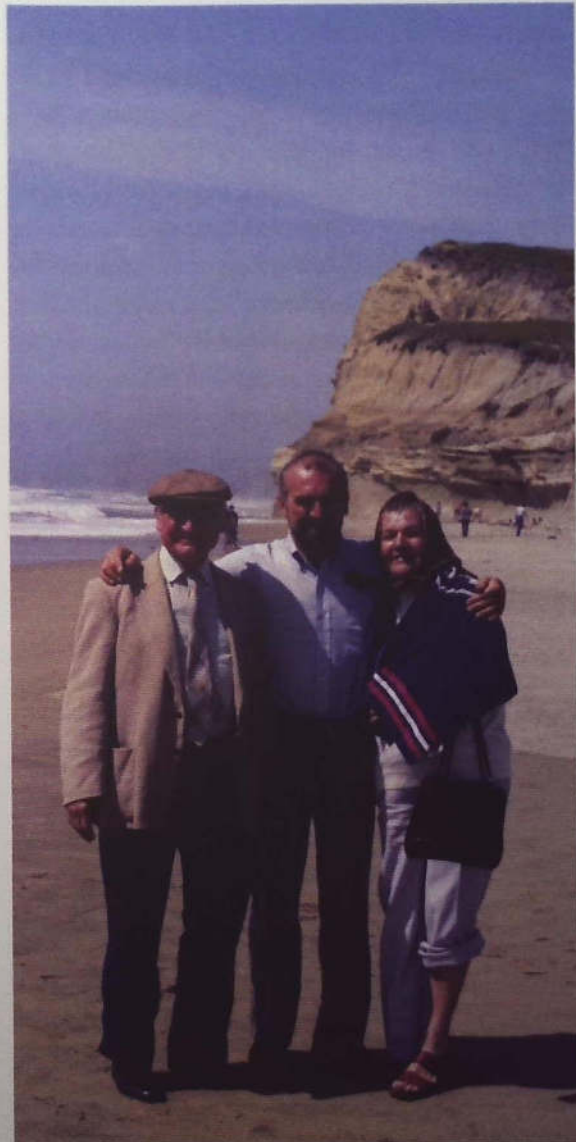


the bedroom occupied by Erwan, ours had 2 twin beds, pretty lace curtains and bedquilt, colour T.V. A tray was placed in each room in the dressing table with a decanter of sherry for the evening, and large bathroom shower.

After our evening drink we went for a meal in the town, and after strolled along the pretty streets full of boutiques, souvenir shop, art galleries, as Carmel is a popular retreat for artists, authors, professors and the wealthy from the San Francisco Bay since the turn of the century. We went to the beach with nice sandy shore, but its cold sometimes treacherous waters often preclude swimming there; but it did not prevent Erwan the following day to go for a swim, and found the Pacific Ocean not much colder than the Cleggan Sea! Usually at this time of year specially you can see divers with their rubber suits which protect them from the cold.

We retired in our pretty cottage and after a good night sleep, and a good breakfast brought to our rooms, nice hot coffee, home made fresh pastries, fresh juice, etc., we drove to Point Lobos State reserve which the National Park service designated a registered land-mark in 1968. It is located in Monterey County along the south shore of Carmel Bay. From the shore you can

Marie-Magdeleine and Yann with Erwan on the beach at Carmel



watch the sea Lions and sea otters barking, and bathing on the rocks, masses of them, big and small ones. Their characteristic is to lie flat on their back, the female holding her small one in the same position floating for hours. It is from that coast that in November the gray whales begin to migrate in Lower California. It is apparently quite a sight as they are in great number.

We continued our journey to Big Sur, where high on the hill above the cliffs, stands a very nice restaurant well known called 'Ventana'. From the terrace where we ate a very enjoyable lunch, we had a superb view on the sea, around us were green valleys, high grass from which you can suddenly watch a deer or buck bouncing elegantly. It is quite unspoiled wild scenery and so peaceful; and of course this beautiful sunny climate of California adds a great charm and warmth wherever you go. We returned to Carmel in the evening, driving along the 17 miles Drive through Del Monte Forest; here you drive through pine forests and groves of Monterey Cypress and along a coastline of singular beauty, and wildlife in the forest is protected.

In the evening we drove to Monterey and had dinner in 'Cannery Row'. As immortalized in John Steinbeck's famed novel 'Cannery Row'. This stretch of old cannery buildings will leave a melancholy impression of some of the most romantic years of California's

past. Though the canneries are no longer in operation, Monterey is still the home of a large fishing fleet that is harbored in scenic Monterey Bay. We had dinner in one of those old canneries transformed into a restaurant specialized in sea food, built just above the sea.

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This stretch of old cannery buildings will leave a melancholy impression of some of the most romantic years of California's past.

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That was our last evening in California coast of Carmel. I forgot to mention that the previous day we visited the Basilica of the Mission San Carlos Borromeo, an old Spanish mission founded in 1770 by Padre Junipero Serra, a Franciscan. It is still very well preserved, surrounded by lovely gardens. Many Indians are buried in the cemetery beside the church as well as Padre Serra. There is a museum attached to the church.

Tuesday 24th May

We left 'The Inn of Happy Landing' with regrets, to take our flight at San Francisco, sorry indeed to leave this beautiful country of California, well worth the journey.

Back in Washington, after a good rest from our



long journey, we went to the Opera in Kennedy Centre to see 'Porgy and Bess', very good singing and well acted.

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### When everything was set, a problem arised, we had forgotten the corkscrew.

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On the Sunday following, we had planned a picnic with Patricia. Erwan had rented a car for the weekend, which allowed us to visit the old town of Alexandria on Saturday evening, situated on the other side of the river the Potomac. It is a pretty old town, with famous sea food restaurants, a harbour, and lots of souvenir shops. We had dinner in a sea food restaurant quite ancient and well known, and after our meal, we walked along the streets, and piped in the souvenir shops full of interesting things, wicker baskets, chairs, all local handcraft, we saw a lot of 'Decoys' hand carved wood ducks, used to attract some of their alive fellows by hunters on lake and river. I will come to this particular subject later on.

The following day as I said above we were going with Patricia for a picnic in the country, but it was a miserable morning raining continuously, so we waited late in the morning, and as the weather seemed to clear up a bit, we made

up our mind to have our picnic after all. Patricia came to join us at the flat, brought a big bowl of fresh fruit salad, and off we went. Patricia knew a Park near Washington, quite suitable for picnic. It was a nice Park, with under the trees, some table and benches for picnics. We bravely sorted out all our sophisticated gear, Table cloth, napkins, various dishes and, of course, the inevitable bottle of wine. When everything was set, a problem arised, we had forgotten the corkscrew, so Erwan went to investigate near the very rare people about also having a picnic or barbecue, but he returned soon afterwards having had no success in his search, so he solved the problem by pushing energetically the cork in the bottle.

We started to eat heartily feeling now and then gentle drops of rain falling on our heads, but not too concerned as the trees were sheltering us. It gives us sufficient time to finish our delicious meal, and to enjoy the Californian wine with pleasure. We returned to our car just when the rain was beginning to fall more heavily, but we were able after a while to walk along the river.

Monday 30th May

Today which was Memorial Day in the States, we had Brunch with friends of Erwan, a nice family Bobby and Steve and their two daughters. In the evening we went to a spectacular open air concert held in front of

the Capitol, 35,000 people were present. I never in my life saw such an impressive sight.

On the lawn situated in front of the Capitol, all the crowd sat side by side with their picnic basket, some had champagne coming out of a Coke bottle as all alcoholic beverages are not allowed in public grounds...very clever! Everyone had brought rugs, plastic ground sheet, some had chairs. (Erwan always very thoughtful had carried the bathroom folding chair for me to seat on).

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Some had champagne coming out of a Coke bottle as all alcoholic beverages are not allowed in public grounds...very clever!

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We had also 'SUZANNE' by then restocked with sandwiches, our usual wine, never forgotten. Many had their family, young babies with them.

At 9 o'clock the concert under a marquis started by playing the National Anthem, everyone stood up then facing the Capitol in a dead silence in remembrance of the various wars which caused so many victims. After this homage on Memorial Day, the orchestra played two partitions of American composers and finally the magnificent Symphony No.9 from the

'New World' of Dvorak. To listen some 35,000 people this superb symphony so very well named under the stars which started to shine, was an experience I shall never forget.

Wednesday 1st June - We celebrated our birthdays, mine, and Erwan's which was a few days later. We went to a nice Italian restaurant called 'Vincento' on Connecticut Avenue, and had a very nice fish called Bass; the management of the restaurant knowing that it was my birthday, produce a nice birthday cake slice, with a candle lit on it, with the wishes of Happy Birthday from the waiter, very nice though (thanks to Erwan); then we went back to 'Sagamore' Erwan's flat, and there Erwan presented me with a beautiful bouquet of red Glayeuls, a large birthday cake made by 'SUZANNE', with Happy Birthday x 2 (for Mamy and Erwan) with candles, cards, and a nice 'Cross' ball pen to replace the one I lost, also a bottle of eau de cologne a la Verveine bought in Big Sur California souvenir shop, where I spotted it.

The cologne is delicately scented made from musk, Bergamot, orange blossom, lemon, as well as 23 other natural ingredients aged in oaken casks. It has a history this cologne was apparently made for Georges Washington who appreciated it so much that he shipped some to France to the Marquis de Lafayette.

We opened our bottle of Corbal Champagne offered to us by the manager of the Corbal winery in Napa Valley, and we exchanged toasts for our common birthday, at the time we did not yet find the present we wished to give to Erwan, it will come later in my story.

2nd June

We went to dinner picnic near the pool at Mary Minch and Joly nice house situated in the residential area.

Saturday 4th June

This was our departure day from Washington to Boston at 11 o'clock, very sad to leave 'Sagamore' where we spent such a nice time, and were very comfortable. Erwan came with us to Boston. It made all the difference, as we were to spend that last week-end together in Boston and Cape Cod, which cut a bit the journey back from us. I was starting to feel very lonesome and apprehensive to part with Erwan who had been such a thoughtful host and companion during our nearly seven weeks in America, coming to Boston with us, involved for him a fairly big expense, but he never spared his time, fatigue or money, while we were with him.

We arrived in Boston at 1 o'clock and Erwan had hired a car; this time it was a large plush 'Mercury' very comfortable which we

collected at the airport. Arriving in Boston the air was cooler, lighter and a feeling of Irish influence was also very distinct. We were in Massachusetts one of the most Irish populated regions of the States with the Maine.

We took the highway to go to Cape Cod at Irene Feeney Jordan's summer cottage. It is about 1 hour and 1/2 drive; we stopped on the way as Erwan was feeling sleepy and wanted some coffee to keep him alert on the wheel. We stopped in a little café, Irish pub style on the side of the road; after our break we arrived near the place indicated with lots of instructions by Irene, where the cottage was situated, not without losing a bit our way, but we noticed a sign written on a card: 'Jordan's' with an arrow. We followed the sign and soon found the cottage.

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Arriving in Boston the air was cooler, lighter and a feeling of Irish influence was also very distinct.

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It is situated in a very attractive reserve of cottages, all same wooden structure among pine trees quite secluded area with private road and 2 beaches at the end of the road on each side, reserved exclusively for the residents of the location called 'Popponess Beach', near

TRAVELS WITH MARIE-MAGDELEINE



Mashepe, all Indian origin territories.

Irene, her husband Jim and the 2 girls Kathleen and Jennifer were expecting us and gave us a warm welcome. Irene has not changed since she came to visit with her mother two years ago; we met her husband Jim for the first time, he is very nice and friendly, typical American young man.

The cottage is very cosy and dainty, quite roomy inside with four bedrooms. Jim's origins are Irish although he had never been to Ireland. We settled in our respective rooms and Irene prepared the evening meal chatting with us at the same time, and exchanging news of Cleggan and our families.

By the time dinner was ready, at 10 o'clock, Jim casually said : By the time we will have finished our meal it will be breakfast ! It was well worth waiting for. Irene had prepared a huge meal, with a delicious roast, mashed potatoes, fresh broccoli, corn on the cob, strawberries and cream.

After our meal we all went for a walk up to the beach; it was warm but a bit foggy; while we were walking a strong powerful smell came out of the side of the road, Irene and Jim explained to us that there was a 'skunk' in the vicinity; they are sort of badgers which when they fear something exhales a horrible smell from their fur;

Yann and Marie-Magdeleine with the Jordans in Cape Cod.

they are harmless except for this stinking smell.

Coming back to the cottage Irene insisted for doing all the wash up with Jim, fearing to awake us in the morning with the noise; soon we went to bed and slept very well indeed, as it is so calm down there and peaceful.

Sunday 5th June

For the birthday of Erwan, we had breakfast tasting the lovely waffles with maple syrup Irene made, then we all went to Mass in the local church which reminded me of similar ones in Lobatse, Botswana, same structure and setting. It was a lovely day, we went back to the cottage and had a snack, then Irene Jennifer and us went for a drive to Hyannis, where the Kennedy residence is situated.

There was a nice beach, and harbour, and the sea looking inviting. We rested a while on the beach enjoying the sun, Erwan read his paper, we thought of that big family 'the Kennedys' who had such a tragic destiny; the residence is still occupied periodically by the mother Mrs. Kennedy now quite old of age and other members of the family occasionally.

We went back to the cottage at 5 o'clock as the Jordans were returning that evening to Boston. Irene started to prepare a delicious meal for Erwan birthdays, a lasagna, salade and a very nice birthday cake Irene had thought

to buy, chocolate cake with blue icing and Happy Birthday written on it. She had also nice presents for Erwan, a T-shirt and some table mats for his flat. So thoughtful of her.

After the meal the Jordans departed for Boston, leaving kindly the use of their charming cottage to us. We spent the night there and made the most of our last evening together. We were very lonely at the thought of our separation the next day; we went for a walk in the evening, enjoying the calm of the surroundings; we looked at the T.V. and retired to bed early.

Monday 7th June

Next morning, we left reluctantly the Jordan's cottage bathed in the morning sun already quite warm, and we drove back to Boston.

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### We were very lonely at the thought of our separation the next day.

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On the way we visited Wood Hole, a nice busy harbour, where a lot of shellfish is caught. We ate in a café near the quay delicious brown bread sandwiches filled with fresh crab meat. Erwan and I had a pip in the souvenir shop and Erwan bought me a nice T-shirt with a seagull printed on it as a souvenir.

We then took the road back to Boston

airport where we returned the rented car and met Irene who drove us to her house situated in the outskirts of the city, a nice compact house with a garden; it was very hot, we had drinks in the garden and ate some of the lasagna Irene had made in Cape Cod.

Then it was time for us to go back to the airport, and Irene very kindly drove us; she must have been exhausted after all that busy week-end; she explained to us that she is the chauffeur of the family as Jim does not drive.; still working part time and keeping her family and her two houses in perfect order, she manages to stay the same cheerful self and talks with her soft gentle voice.

At the airport, she left us and we parted with her sadly, she is really one of the family, and it gave us great pleasure to spend that week-end with all the Jordan family. We thanked her for all her kindness and warm hospitality.

Then came the time for us to part with Erwan, who was returning to Washington 1/2 hour before our flight to Shannon. It was heartbreaking leaving him, and we were very lonely indeed. He took so much of his time sparing neither his fatigue, nor his money and his loving attention and devotion to us

Marie-Magdeleine and Yann on Poponess Beach, Cape Cod.

OUR WONDERFUL TRIP TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



to make our stay in America a real success and a thing to remember, as for me it was my first visit to the States, quite an event really.

Our flight was not the best, rather unstable specially at the time they brought us our dinner tray. I must say I did attempt to catch some peas and carrots, but they were flying all over the place, and the chicken was ready to jump on my lap, the coffee was splashing. At the end I gave up and contented myself with the wine. A movie was presented of no great interest; my stomach was not very happy, and it was rocking too much for my liking. I try to sleep without success, and as we did our approach to Shannon the flight became more steady.

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I must say I did attempt to catch some peas and carrots, but they were flying all over the place, the chicken was ready to jump on my lap and the coffee was splashing.

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At 6.a.m. we landed and stepped from the plane to the ground, being a bit surprised by the chill in the air. I wore my mink with relief.

We got a taxi to Limerick, took the train to Dublin and had one pound of American cherries for breakfast, cherries bought in a

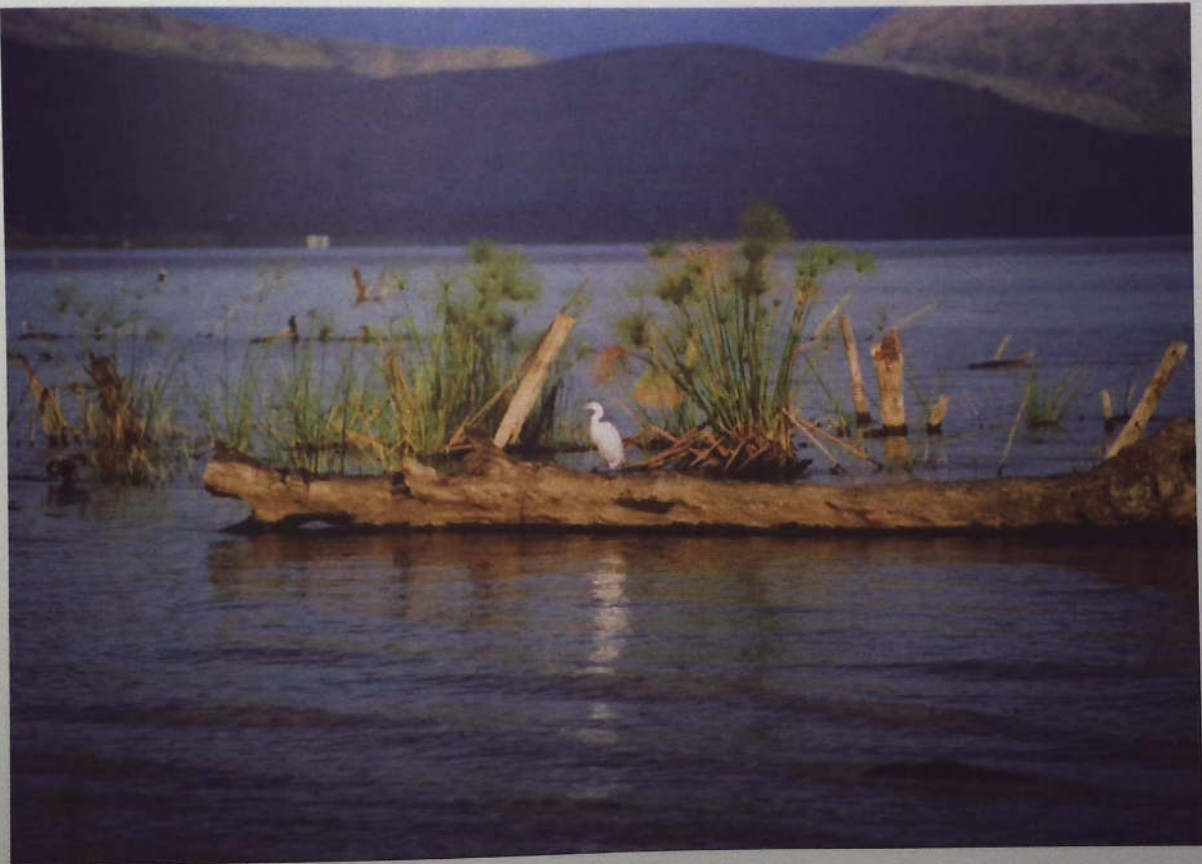
fruit store on the Highway near Washington. I was, I must say very thankful to Erwan to have insisted to put them in our traveling bag.

We arrived in Dublin at midday, and were welcomed at Palmerston Park, by a nice note from Olwen saying ('Welcome Home dear Mamy and Papa, got some food, will be seeing you tonight'), comforting thoughts; we drank some coffee and went to bed where we slept until 6.30 in the evening.

That, I am afraid and you might be relieved, is the end of my journal relating our trip to America, and my first visit to the States, a country new, young, and very refreshing, a great change from the old world, but I believe to be quite fascinating. A very big THANKS to Erwan to have made that stay so perfect in every way, and to Papa to have facilitated his realisation.



## First visit to Africa



1971

**A**nother trip I really also enjoyed was to Rhodesia, or Zimbabwe now. We were visiting the children, Rozenn and Jim, and their three girls. It was our first visit to Africa, and we flew from London to Cyprus first, where we landed in a thick fog. It was not very cheerful sight as we stepped out of the raggedy old plane on the tarmac where you barely could detect some soldiers here and there with their machine guns.

We got a taxi and were driven, for hours it seemed, through thick fog across the mountainous roads in the middle of the night. We arrived finally at what we hoped was really our hotel which looked more like an empty barracks. The porter expecting us explained to us that we should have been to his place ages ago if we had taken his taxi which he had sent to the airport to meet us and which had a Greek driver. The way you came, he added, was twice as long as the normal route for the fact that your taxi driver is a Turk and can't have access to the normal road! We were flabbergasted and did not realise the deep political tension of the country.

The hotel appeared to us empty and grim,

(Previous page) Lake Nakuru in Kenya.

but then it was middle of the night when we arrived in Kyrenia, and it was deserted. We were shown to our room which was spacious and had a bathroom. We slept soundly being so tired of the journey.

The following morning everything brightened up and our breakfast was sent to our room. The fog lifted a bit but it was replaced by the rain; of course it was March, quite early yet in the year for Cyprus. We tried to take a walk outside, but apart from the orange and lemon trees, you could have been anywhere. At lunchtime we were surprised to see quite a lot of guests in the large dining room of

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On one side of a street were shops owned by Greeks, on the other side bazaars and trades owned by Turks

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the hotel. It was in this hotel that Lawrence Durrell wrote 'Bitter Lemons'. For dessert we used to have baskets of huge oranges with their leaves attached — deliciously juicy, I never saw oranges of that size. We stayed only two days in Kyrenia. There was not much to see: the

weather continued to be gloomy, cold and rainy.

We returned to Nicosia which was then a very strange city occupied by partly Greek, partly Turk population, both in conflict. The UN Peace Corps were keeping the peace. On one side of a street were shops owned by Greeks, on the other side bazaars and trades owned by Turks. Some of those Peace Corps sent by the United Nations were Canadian. We went to a Greek Orthodox church near the Palace of the Archbishop Makarios. In the evening we had a meal in a hotel and the Landlady kindly let me rest in a room as our departure flight was not before 3 a.m.

We flew by night to Nairobi, where we arrived early morning and found a scorching heat hitting us at the airport. We were of course in Africa. We located a hotel which had been booked by BOAC Airlines. To our surprise we found this hotel very grubby and disorganised. Apparently the oldest hotel in Nairobi, it had gone down a lot and needed badly renovations. The Manageress was a white woman but all the staff were African. Our bedroom had not been prepared, the plumbing system was appalling, but nowhere else could we find accommodation as there was some kind of trade fair at the time.

We met Charles Gournach, a Breton friend of Papa, who was living in Nairobi and he drove us in the afternoon all through the National Park where you could see lot of wildlife: lions,

cheetahs, giraffes. Situated outside town, it extended for miles and took us three hours to drive around.

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We were able to watch at close quarter another cheetah crossing the road followed by four or five of her small ones.

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There were Patrol cars keeping an eye on motorists through the Park, and making sure you did not venture outside. But I had an urgent need to stop and no shelter around so I had to rush quickly just outside the car and relieve my bladder. Just at that moment a Patrol car passed by and reminded us of the danger of keeping the door open, even the windows, as there were baboons who are very inquisitive and could be aggressive. I retreated quickly inside the car, but the heat was suffocating. We kept good distance from the wild animals but were able to watch at close quarter another cheetah crossing the road followed by four or five of her small ones. Further on we came to a spot where big lions were resting. It was fascinating to watch them but I was quite relieved when we left the Park.

We left Nairobi the following day for an excursion in Nakuru, about 150 miles, organised

by an agency Charles knew. We shared a jeep with a couple of retired Americans both in their eighties. The man had a whole range of cameras hanging around his neck.

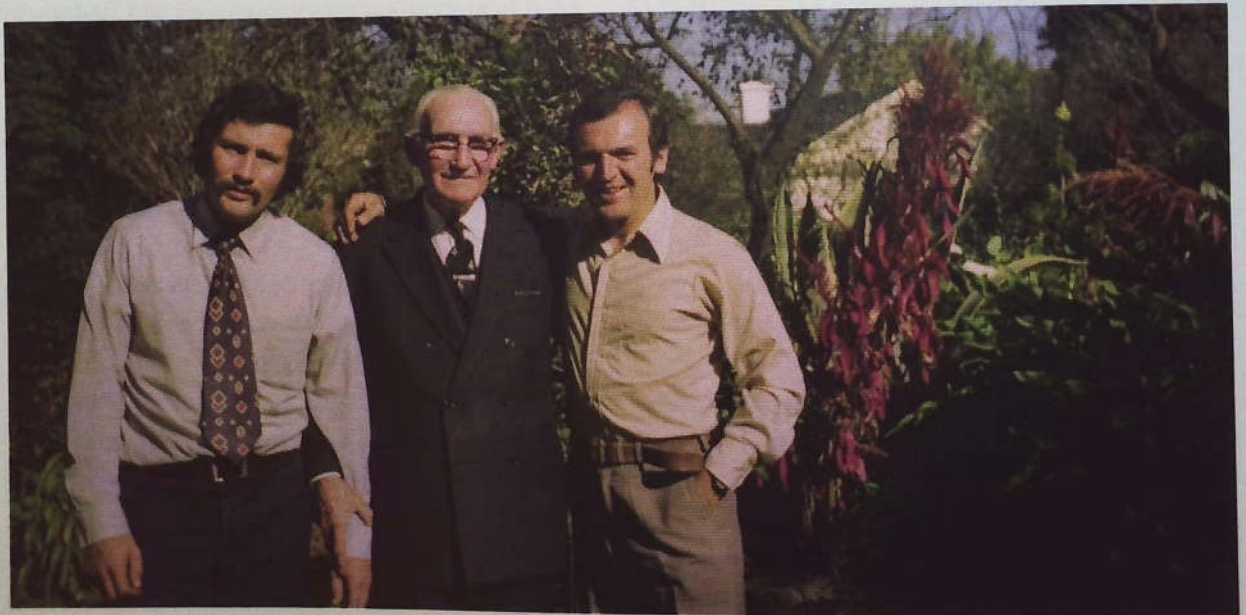
Our guide-driver was very efficient and quite refined. Along the drive I had to ask for a stop. Tactfully our driver explained to me that we had to stop at some tiny village and he would accompany me to the toilet (security precaution he said). The toilet was a very primitive affair and was letting a very strong pungent smell. Never mind—I did quick what I had to do, pinching my nose and trying to chase all the flies around.

After this unpleasant stop we continued

our trip and drove on very bumpy roads until we came to the Lake, where lots of flamingos, Pelicans, and various birds were seen. The shore of the lake was covered with crusty white salt. The American started to take loads of pictures, switching from one camera to another and trying to catch the flock of Flamingos flying which is a superb sight, their wings all pink beating in the air and their long necks stretching. There were masses of them.

We had lunch in a hotel near the lake and paying a visit to the ladies, we came to talk, our

Guillaume, Tonton Paul and Erwan in Johannesburg.





American companion and myself. She said in her strong American accent “You know, I thought I would have a heart attack on that journey, but I have to keep on a face for his sake”, meaning her husband, “he loves travelling and he never shows his age, but mind you, one has to take care of the men as they usually go first!” She explained to me that they took this world tour from the States. Their daughter being an air hostess, they had special reductions and as she was getting married would soon leave her job so they had to take the opportunity while it lasted of this reduced fare. All over the world trip at 80 something years! They only had done half of their trip and were

Le Coudray in Johannesburg, home of the Mauger family

leaving next day for Australia. I hope they made it and enjoyed it. They were a funny old pair.

We left Nairobi next day for Jo’burg, where Paul and Dircé met us at Jan Smuts airport. We were glad to see them and we stayed the night with them at their beautiful home ‘Le Coudray’. We saw all the Mauger Tribe, Darig, Anna Maria, Annick and her husband, Guillaume who was not yet married at the time. Jean Paul was in the States. We had the surprise to see Jim who came on business.

We had a big family dinner and the following morning we took a plane for Bulawayo, where Rozenn and the three little girls were meeting us. It was such a joy to see them and they all looked so sweet, the girls in their cute little white dresses and Rozenn in her mini exotic dress looking so well. We drove to 'Carraig Mor', their beautiful home.

I think it was the nicest house they ever had, situated in the residential area of Bulawayo, some three or four miles from the city. It had a great character, built recently by a well-known architect who managed to keep a huge rock inside the living room and built the house around it. It gave such a striking effect that this house was selected as the most original of its kind and photo articles about it were published in a magazine.

The house had a large living room with glass sliding door, a fire place built against this huge

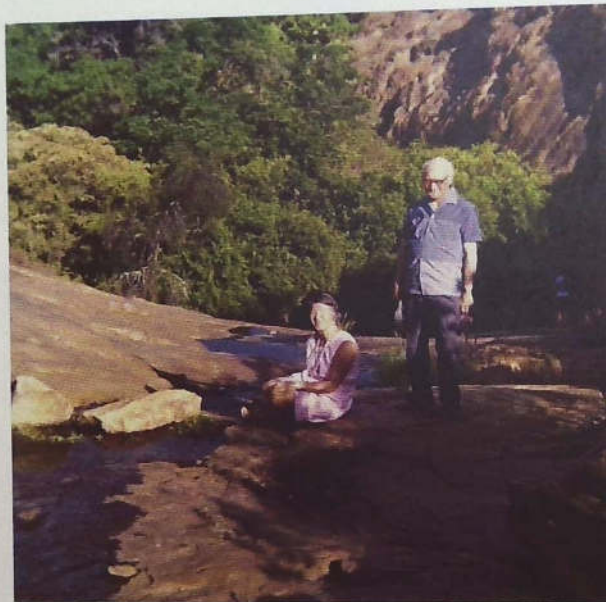
rock where plants and creepers were attached and it was leading to a dining room, and kitchen at the back. On the other side there were five bedrooms, two bathrooms and showers and the master room had a bathroom and dressing room en suite; the door was opening to the large swimming pool, surrounded by a patio and a

lovely flower garden kept very well by Moses the gardener.

I used to spend my day practically in that pool it was so hot, or sunbathing on the relaxing chair in the patio. Our bedroom had a window overlooking the garden where a beautiful magnolia was in full bloom and gave a wonderful scent.

Rozenn had two African helpers, Rozina, a very efficient woman who was an

excellent cook, and her sister Edith, who was slightly delicate and morose. Karen was then four years old and a real pet with her curly hair and chubby cheeks; Annig, six, very skinny but



Marie-Magdeleine and Yann in Matopos, Rhodesia.

full of life; and Yola, ten, pretty and quite already mature.

We really had a lovely time in Carraig Mor. Rozenn and Jim left for a few days for a little holiday in Swaziland and we took care of the three little ones with the efficient help of Rozina and friends. Rozenn had provided a load of supply of food and the menus were set for every meal during her absence. Paul and Dircé came to spend a week with us during their absence. It was really very nice to be together after so long we had not seen them.

In the morning I used to go for a quick swim after my breakfast and Paul joined me. On weekdays we used to collect the girls at their respective schools, Yola and Annig in one,

Kareen in another. One day we lost our way and we arrived late to Kareen's school. We found her sitting on the wall outside the school looking very cross! 'You are late!' she said and climbed

into the car. She was cute and determined for her age.

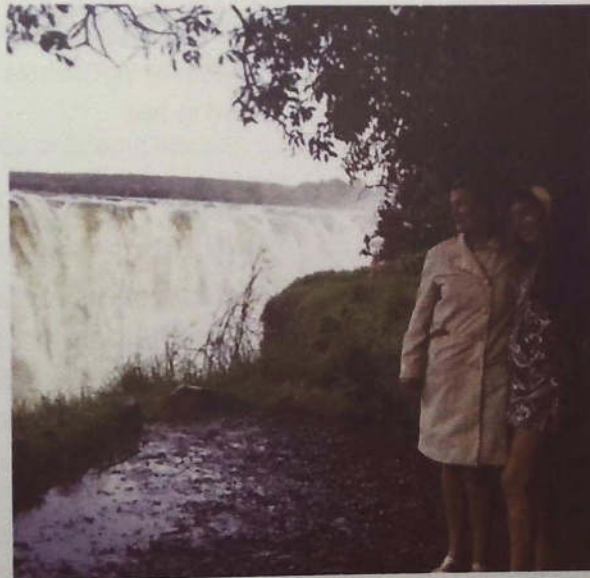
When Rozenn and Jim returned, parties of all kinds were held at various friends. Then Rozenn and Jim gave a dinner party in Carraig Mor in return. It was a very elaborate affair with lots of lovely food Rozenn had prepared and drinks.

About 60 people were present, there was music and dance on the patio near the swimming pool.

It was a sort of farewell party for us as we were to leave soon after that for the Victoria Falls, our last trip before our final departure from Rhodesia.

Victoria Falls are an extraordinary discovery. It cannot be described as it is beyond human dimension and unique

of its kind in the world. We drove in the early morning as it was very hot and stayed the night at the big hotel where Jim had reserved a room en suite for us, quite an impressive Palace



Marie-Magdeleine and Rozenn at Victoria Falls.

surrounded by tropical vegetation and the roaring sound of the Falls.

We walked along the narrow paths near the Falls and got absolutely drenched with the hot spray. It was a fascinating sight gazing at the thundering Falls which attract you in a strange hypnotique way as you go nearer to the edge of the precipice.

We came back to the hotel dripping and left pools of water behind us as we went up to our rooms, had to strip and change clothes. The air conditioning was on in the room and after the hot tropical rain it was rather drastic—we awoke the following morning with a shocking cold!

The night before Jim had arranged for us to have dinner in the very old colonial hotel near ours, with the fans on the ceiling. We ate a delicious meal and soon retired to bed exhausted by the intensive heat and our journey.

But this visit to Victoria Falls will stay in my memory as something one never forget.

Next day we returned to Bulawayo and it was the preparation for our departure, very sad indeed to leave Rozenn and the family. But we were to bring Yola back with us to France for a holiday. She was very excited and we were very happy to have her with us. We had to change planes three times getting out of Rhodesia to reach Nairobi.

We stayed one night in Nairobi, this time

in a nice small hotel Charles had found for us near the University. It was managed and owned entirely by Africans, extremely clean and quite comfortable. We spent the afternoon at Charles's place and met his wife.

Next day we flew to Rome where Jean met us at the Air Terminal. Yola was cold and so were we after the African temperature. Jean was at FAO at the time. He brought us to the guest house he found for us and we had a meal together, then we retired to bed.

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**Yola got tired and fed up and said  
'I will not walk anymore unless you  
find me some bubblegum!'**

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Next day was Palm Sunday and we went to St. Peter's Cathedral to attend the Papal Mass. The Cathedral was packed; Jean carried Yola on his shoulders so that she could see the Pope. After the Mass she said 'I saw the Pope already in Bulawayo.' She meant the Bishop who came to Bulawayo for the confirmation. We explained to her it was not the same Pope!

In the afternoon the weather was grey and cold; we walked all along the Tiber for hours. After a while Yola got tired and fed up and said 'I will not walk anymore unless you find me some bubblegum!' So Jean found a slot machine



with bubblegum and she was satisfied for a while, but the poor pet had been very good and walked a great part of the afternoon.

In the evening we went to have supper in Trastevere, the artist picturesque quarter of Rome. The first thing Yola said when we took the old tram from the airport to the terminal was 'Mama, this place is awful, this tram is crummy and all the houses look awfully old!' Of course after Africa, the old Roman city was indeed a great contrast.

We parted with Jean the following day and took our flight for Paris. There Pierre and Aimée met us at the airport and drove us to their lovely house outside Paris, 'Les Chataigniers'. They had moved fairly recently to that house they built on a beautiful spot near the forest. We spent the night there and the following day Pierre drove us to our train for Brittany.

I must end this travel memories of our first visit to Africa which indeed stayed very vivid in my mind, as it was my first contact with African soil and it has casted a spell on me.

# Venise



1972

I decide to try to revive my memory of the various travels I made in the past few years. The one I like to memorise is our trip to Venise, Erwan and myself a few years ago. It was at the occasion of a Seminar for the CIFE — Centre Internationale de Formation Européenne. Actually Papa was to come too, but was gone to Strasbourg to a Seminar on Regionalisme.

It occurred in October 1972. We made the trip by train from Brussels, long journey but pleasant. It was still quite warm in Italy. We

stayed at an Hotel near Rialto Bridge. I can't remember the name of the Hotel, but as far as I can reckon it was not a very attractive place and our bedroom with bathroom was clean but dark. The advantage was that it was very central so that Erwan was able to join the assembly of the CIFE every day, where they were holding meetings and conferences.

During the time he was engaged I used to stroll along the narrow streets of Venise; my very first visit to this antique city and I was very impressed by its romantic atmosphere,



the beautiful Place St.Marc with its open air cafés and terraces, where you can sit for hours just watching the crowd of tourists passing by and all the pigeons coming to eat in your hands crumbs of biscuits or bread. There are no cars allowed in some of the narrow streets with its old pavement and small bridges crossing the various lagoons of Venice.

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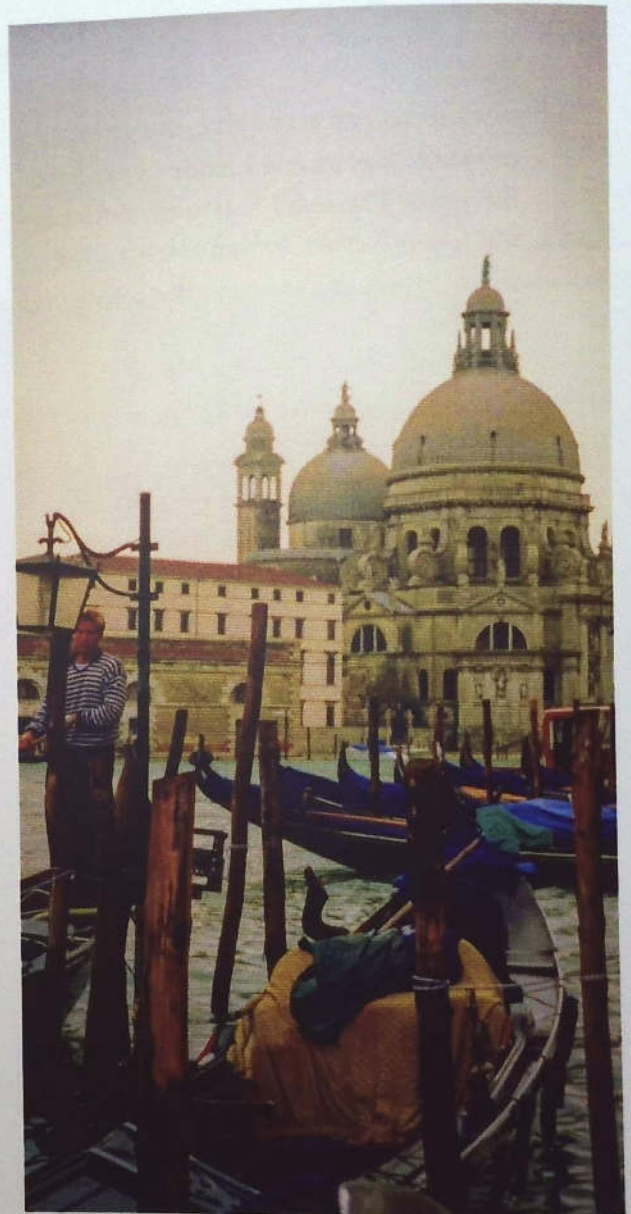
### My ancestors very far back were Gondoliers in Venise

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The Gondolas here replace the car, of course for me it was a discovery which I was fascinated to see. My ancestors very far back were Gondoliers in Venice; their name was 'Jude', or 'Judi'. I was so keen on finding out about that name that I approached one day one of these Gondoliers and asked them about it, if they knew families called Jude. One of them replied amused "It is a very common name in Venice."

They knew the name alright, but that is as far as I could go in finding traces of my ancestors. Erwan was very amused of my inquiry. Mind you, I like to think I had Gondoliers as ancestors, even if it is as far removed as the time of Louis the 14th.

On one of our first evening in Venice we attended a beautiful concert in a very old church



(can't remember the name), where that night the orchestra of young Venetian musicians held a free concert, to protest against their low salaries. I remember the music being very beautiful and very well executed. It was packed.

Another day we visited a Byzantine art exhibition of extraordinaire beauty. Erwan just managed to spare one hour or so that morning to join me and skip a part of the CIFE meeting. At lunch time we were to join the Assembly for lunch at Isola St. Georgio across the bay; as we met some of the people attending this meeting I made the blunder to say "Oh, we had a very nice morning visiting an art exhibition, it was really well worth it ..." The Lady to whom I made this remarque, replied in a rather sarcastic tone "Well, good for you, but we were working hard in the meantime!" I realised then that I had put Erwan in a delicate position.

One evening we went to the famous Lido, where high stakes games are played in the Casino. As we were entering the big games room, a porter asked us for our passport. It just as well I had mine which I always carried with me when travelling abroad. In the corner of this big room there was a table with very concentrated looking people playing cards. They all more or less looked Mafiosos, big fellows dark skin and flashy suits, really tough players, playing high stakes. It is a very interesting atmosphere in those games

rooms where they play the 'Roulette', 'Chemin de Fer', 'Baccarat', the lot. You can't help thinking that from those premises some unfortunate player may have ended his life by plunging in the lagoon having lost all his fortune with extensive debts on top in a desperate attempt to regain it. Erwan and I we ventured at one of the game (the one with the low stakes!), but we lost our few liras in the process. We came back by the Vaporetto which brought us to our hotel.

One day I went with Erwan to a very posh hotel where a banquet dinner was served to the Assembly of the CIFE. It is at this occasion that I was introduced by Erwan to the President of the EC, Jean Rey, a very sympathique man who knew Erwan well and liked him. He asked me, then mentioning Erwan "Quel numero est il dans la famille" I told him "No.3." He replied then "Combien de numeros avez vous?" I replied "Five." He was quite impressed. Also at this banquet I met the writer Denis de Rougemont who knew Papa well. Alexandre Marc, who was the President of CIFE, also knew Papa. He is of Russian origine, also very sympathique.

After the banquet we returned walking to the hotel. The night was warm yet; as Erwan was describing the scenery feeling very romantic, he approached a few steps leading to the lagoon, and gently slipped into it. Here he was shouting (the polluted water reaching up to his neck) "my



good suit...my new suit..." I burst laughing as it was so sudden and indeed so comical in a way to see him trying to reach the step to get out of this smelly polluted lagoon. He got out keeping shouting "my good suit; it is ruined. What am I going to do?", laughing and shouting at the same time. I stop laughing when I saw he had scraped his hand which was slightly bleeding. I then realised it could be the start of cholera or terrible infection. He was dripping. We had to go back to the hotel as quick as we could, but his shoes were full of water and he was a pitiful sight. We met passers by who seeing us laughing and shouting looked suspiciously at

us taking us I am sure for a drunken couple!

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### Erwan approached a few steps leading to the lagoon, and gently slipped into it

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We arrived at the hotel where the porter hardly let us in, seeing the condition of clothing dripping wet of Erwan. Finally Erwan explained what had happened and reluctantly he let us climb the stairs to go to our room. As Erwan inquired where he could have his suit dry (it was the only one he had brought with him), the



porter said he was sorry but there was not drying place in the hotel, and suggested to have the suit cleaned and pressed the following morning. In the meantime Erwan shivering and feeling sick with the smell of his wet clothes, went for a bath and start to wash all his underwear, socks and shoes included; then not having anything to disinfect his scratched hand, I applied some eau de cologne to his hand hoping for the best. It was fortunately very slight scratch and as it was still relatively warm weather Erwan didn't catch pneumonia as the result of his unexpected immersion in the lagoon, and his suit did not suffer too much from this incident except that being a bright new suit it never really recovered completely from this rough treatment even after cleaning and pressing.

Apparently that sort of thing happens quite frequently in Venice as you can't be too careful when you walk along the various lagoons, it is very easy to fall into it. There is no protection to prevent it. I think this incident will stay in the 'annals de l'histoire' of Fouéré family.

When the time came to depart from Venice, we left it with regrets; it was a very short visit but successful. Someday I hope to go back to Venice this time with Papa who has never been, and before this antique city will be submerged by the sea.

We then took the train to Milan where we had to change for our connection to Brussels.

Erwan had booked a compartment Wagon Lits for the night journey. But it happened that we had mistaken the hour of departure of the train, so that we had to look for the departure platform miles away and arriving at the right platform to our stupor we saw our train moving away. We then raced like mad, Erwan carrying all the luggage and shouting "Stop! Stop!" as we barely reached the Wagon Lits some of the passengers were at the window and looked at us as if we were demented; they retreated carefully inside their compartments. Erwan started to bang at the door of the compartment shouting "Ouvrez! Nos cabins sont réservés." The porter opened the door reluctantly and let us climb the steps just in time as the train was accelerating; but the porter declined to have our booking. Erwan got furious and turning to me said "Can't you see my mother is having a heart attack running like that?"

Finally the porter admitted he had our booking but gave our compartment to another passenger when we did not turn up in time, but with great protestations from Erwan we were finally shown to our cabin and we sat exhausted but relieved to have made it. It was a very comfortable accommodation with each our own bed and we settled to sleep for our long journey. Thanks to Erwan and Papa I made my first visit to Venice, the city of my ancestors.



## More African journeys



1975

I was to go back to Africa at a few other occasions, but one of them was a sad one as I made the journey to Jo'burg to attend to the funeral of Paul, who died the day before my arrival. I was able to see him and he looked, in his eternal sleep, calm and at peace.

We moved to Botswana with Rozenn and family and I stayed with them three weeks, sewing curtains for the new house and happy to be with the children after the sadness of losing my favourite brother.

We departed Jim and I from Jo'burg in his smashing Pontiac, and the journey up to Botswana was quite pleasant; about four hours driving but 40 miles of dirt road coming towards the border (it has since I believe been repaired and tarred).

Lobatse is 20 miles after passing the border, a small town which has just 2 streets with various shops. BMC (Botswana Meat Commission) building is situated outside the town and around it are all the habitations of the staff attached to BMC.

The house reserved for the Barrett was the highest on the hill with the nicest view. But as

(Previous page) Rozenn in Lesotho

the moving van was coming later, we stayed two nights at the Cumberland Hotel, three miles from Lobatse. Rozenn, the two children A & K (Yola was in Mara Pula School as a boarder in Gaborone), the dog and all the luggage had left Jo'burg after us in Rozenn Beetle car packed up to the brim. They arrived in Lobatse shortly after us. We had our dinner in the hotel and retired to bed.

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The big attraction for Annig was a dump at the backyard of the hotel where she spent hours gathering Coke bottle tops.

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The following day, Rozenn and Jim went to the house to help the moving of their furnitures and prepare the house. I stayed at the hotel with Annick and Kareen. The big attraction for Annig was a dump at the backyard of the hotel where she spent hours gathering Coke bottle tops which she was collecting for a competition! She got filthy in the process but enjoyed herself. Kareen trotted around the pool of the hotel quite satisfied.

Then we all moved to the house already

set for occupation, floors polished and new decoration finished in the rooms.

I was occupying Yola's room, Annig and Kareen had each their own room and a large bedroom was the Master's room. The living/dining room had an extension on a covered patio leading to the garden and pool. Quite a pleasant house if not as luxurious and spacious as 'Carraig Mor' in Rhodesia.

The back of the house was at the bottom of a hill very busy and wild. I helped Rozenn altering curtains to fit windows and door. But that did not prevent me from enjoying the sun, and swimming in the pool although it was August (winter period for Africa) The sun was always shining during the day leaving a rather chilly evening and night.

We drove to Gaborone, a one hour drive to visit Yola at Mara Pula.

Gaborone is a medium size town, capital of

Botswana with good stores. Just outside the town is situated the school of Yola — Mara Pula, beside Holiday Inn Hotel. It is a mixed school, boys and girls and multiracial. The teaching is good, and the girls are quite happy there. Yola used to come home at weekend.

It is in Botswana that I met the Khama

family, or at least Lady Khama, her daughter Jackie and their three sons. The President Seretse Khama I never met; he died shortly after I left Botswana after a long illness of cardiaque failure condition. The 2 youngest boys, Tony and Tshekedi (T.K. was his nickname) were in the same school as Yola, and the Khama family became very good friends of the Barrett family. While I was there

I got to know some people, neighbours and people who used to work with Jim.

My stay in Lobatse was cut a bit short as we



Marie-Magdeleine with Kareen, Yola and Annig in Lobatse, Botswana.

got news of the advanced arrival of a baby boy for Benig, and I returned to Ireland a week before intending. So that was my second visit to Africa.

November 1977

My third visit I made this time with Papa in November 2 years later.

Rozenn and Dircé came to the airport to meet us in Jo'burg. We stayed the night with Dircé and saw the Mauger family, Guillaume married by then, Annick, Darig and their families. Then we drove, Rozenn, Papa and I to Lobatse, which was for Papa his first visit to Botswana.

This time we travelled in Rozenn's Beetle little car, full up at the back with load of food supply bought at the hypermarket. The shops in Lobatse being restricted and dearer than in Jo'burg, Rozenn would buy in bulk, sugar, flour, grocery goods and various things she could not get in Botswana.

It took us longer to drive than with Jim's Pontiac. We stopped on the way in a small one street town to have a meal, and arrived late afternoon in Lobatse, where we found Jim and Kareen waiting for us. November for Europe is springtime for Africa, already warm but pleasantly so.

Rozenn had arranged our sleeping quarter. Papa had Annig's room (while she was a boarder

at Mara Pula by then), I had same as before Yola's room, also in school.

Rozenn had a very good efficient helper, Anna, who used to come in the morning, cleaning the house, washing the clothes, and ironing them beautifully and doing the wash up. Rozenn did all her cooking. We used to take our meal at midday on the patio which was very cool and had a lovely view on the countryside and hills in the background.

Morning I would have an early swim after my breakfast and sunbathed near the pool, watching carefully for a potential snake or lizards which were plentiful. Rozenn would bring me coffee at 11 o'clock. Papa would be as usual in his room typing on his desk or writing until lunch time. Kareen used to go to school until 3 or 4 in the afternoon.

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The film was shown sometimes upside down or there was a power cut and an interruption.

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We usually had the most delicious meat supplied by the BMC and strawberries from Rozenn's garden. After lunch I used to go for a siesta until 4 o'clock. It was very hot and you felt refreshed after dipping in the pool to wake you up. Then we would go for a drive in the

countryside, visiting small African villages, or taking a walk. Then by 6 p.m. we would come back home and have tea. Jim would be back from work.

We often drove to the local cinema held in the Cumberland Hotel. Funny sort of cinema, very 'couleur locale', with hard chairs (we used to bring our cushions with us!) The film was shown sometimes upside down or there was a power cut and an interruption. But sometimes we had quite good films, mostly American. It was quite fun.

Some days we went on excursion the whole day, for instance to visit the famous Mafeking, by the most atrocious road.

I shall never forget the return from Mafeking. It was very hot and thundery with occasional lightning. The Beetle was bumping up and down the track road, the dust was covering us and I was nearly sure we would overturn so deep were the ridges of the road after the rain.

Another day we went to a mission in a small village away in the bush. Father Julien was the priest in charge of the mission. He built his little church himself with the help of the locals; he was living in a small hut near the church, and gave us a warm welcome. He even left me the use of his room for me to have my siesta. There was a local art hand craft shop where we bought lovely African potteries, wooden bowl and spoon hand carved.

I remember Father Julien as the prototype of the real genuine devoted Missionary attached to his native flock and living among them, the same humble simple way so near to nature. He was Irish as far as I can remember and loved his mission and his people. So remote from the civilised world, one has to be really dedicated to adopt such an isolation and to love the native people, but it was obvious he was happy and contented and certainly a very holy man.

We left Botswana after three weeks as we wanted to visit another strikingly beautiful country — Lesotho. I think for me it was the most beautiful African country I saw.

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*The only human beings we met were those lonesome cavaliers on horseback which made an impressive sight silhouetting against the sunset.*

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We left Lobatse with Rozenn and stopped in Jo'burg for the night in Le Coudray. There we had discovered troubles with the Beetle which was nearly on its last leg. We discussed the difficulties at suppertime with Guillaume who told us we would never make the journey to Lesotho with the poor Beetle. He then

proposed to lend us his Mercedes for the journey. Rozenn had hesitation; it was a fairly new car and a much bigger car to drive.

After a night of thinking over, she decided to accept the responsibility and left her Beetle to Guillaume to be fixed, taking the Mercedes to continue our trip. She took great care of the car on mountainous roads very steep and treacherous.

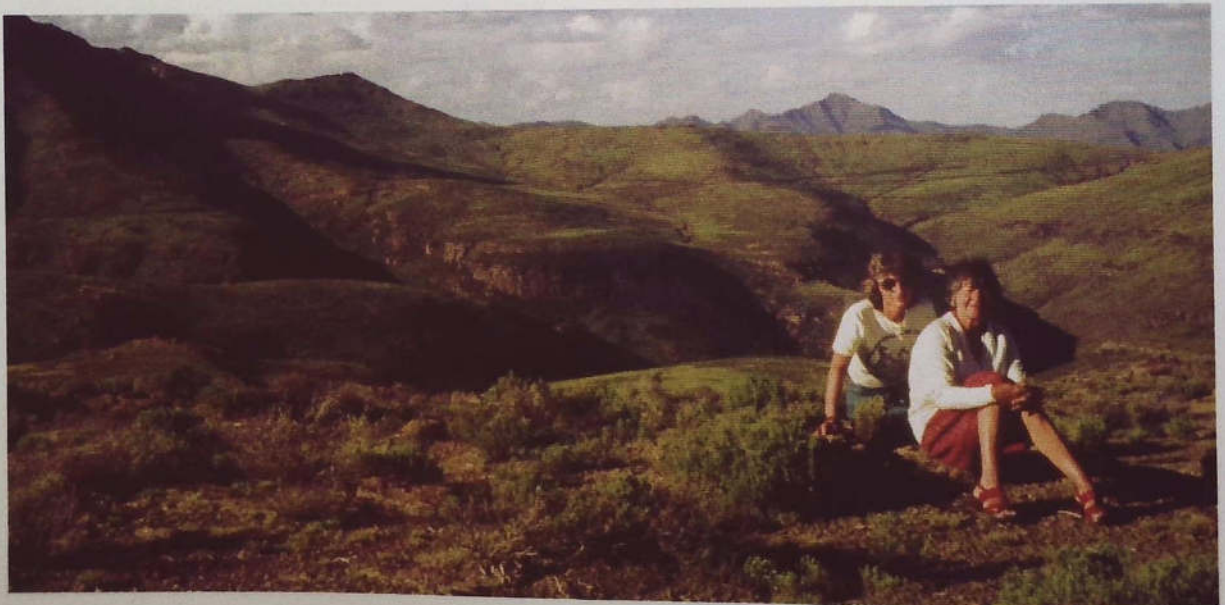
Lesotho is a magnificent country with high mountains and desertique land. It is a very poor country; the characteristic of the scenery is those peasants wrapped in blankets which forms a sort of cape with large hats riding their

horses. It can be very cold on the summit.

We found a lovely hotel, the cone roof covered in thatch, situated in the hollow of a valley. There was no tourist as it was miles away from anywhere and not the touristique season. We had a very comfortable room with a terrace, and the owner of the hotel was very nice.

We spent the night there and went for a walk on the top of a mountain, where we found beautiful wild orchids. We brought a huge bouquet which we deposed on Paul's grave on

Marie-Magdeleine with Rozenn in Lesotho. (Facing page) Yann at God Help Me Pass, Lesotho.





our return to Jo'burg.

It was extraordinary peaceful on top of those mountains where we had a superb view. The only human beings we met were those lonesome cavaliers on horseback which made an impressive sight silhouetting against the sunset. They remind you of Mexican riders. A few African mud huts are scattered here and there in the wilderness.

One of the perilous roads we took was called 'God Help Me Pass', narrow and steep — we would never have made it with the Beetle. It was certainly a trip well worth it, and I would love to go back again to this country.

It was the last trip of our stay in Africa, and we returned to Jo'burg to take our leave with Rozenn unfortunately and with all the family.

February 1979

The fourth voyage I made to Africa, I made it alone, two years ago in February with the intention of staying three months.

I was not very well and was under medication of anti depressing. Anyway I decided my trip, got my ticket special fare in London and departed from there in February, leaving with Benig my winter clothes.

I arrived in Jo'burg, Rozenn and Dircé were at

the airport. It was very hot then in South Africa. We stayed a few days with Dircé at 'Le Coudray', and I saw all the Mangers. Guillaume had bought a house which he was renovating; Fiona was a lovely little girl.

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One of the perilous roads we took was called 'God Help Me Pass', narrow and steep — we would never have made it with the Beetle.

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We had a family reunion as usual and we departed Rozenn and I for Lobatse.

The first few days I rested a lot and was sunbathing and swimming in the pool, alternatively, went to see the three girls in Mara Pula. By then Kareen was also boarding at the school.

Gradually I felt unwell and restless and couldn't tolerate very easily the extreme heat combined with all the drogues I was taking. I became lonesome for Papa, and although Rozenn and Jim were trying to make me feel at home and comfortable, I decided after hardly four weeks to go back to Ireland.

It was a big disappointment for me as for Rozenn who felt she had failed to make me happy, but the reality was that I was suffering

from the effects of the drogues and could not settle.

My ticket was for a determined date return but I had taken a medical insurance and was able to advance my date of return with a medical certificate from Dr. Mossam of Lobatse stating that for medical reason I had to return earlier than the fixed date.

Rozenn drove me to Jo'burg and we stayed at 'Le Coudray' with Dircé overnight. I felt sad to leave Rozenn, but I knew I had to go back home. So that last trip to Africa did not work the way I was expecting, but then as I said I had not been able to overcome this loneliness and depression and should not have attempted actually to leave home and to come alone to Africa in the peak of the summer.

I hope to return to Africa some day to see the children and to visit Swaziland, but this time I will go with Papa.



# Greece



1980

**A**nother travel I did like very much was my first trip to Greece. It was in September 1980. I had not been well that summer and Erwan proposed to me to accompany him to his holidays already planned. We flew to Athenes and we were met by a friend of Erwan; he has friends everywhere he goes. Cecile is her name; she is a very nice girl and very good looking, she has lived in Greece many years and is fluent speaker in Greque.

As she drove us to the hotel through the rather chaotic traffic of the city, we had a slight collision with a bus. She stopped her car, got out and started to abuse the bus driver in a very animated voice which did not seem to impress the driver. We couldn't understand a word she was saying, but with accompanied ample gestures it sounded quite aggressive. She suddenly turn to Erwan saying go find a policeman. Erwan disappeared trying to locate a traffic controller of some kind, but came back after a while with a policeman who listened calmly to Cecile explanations and

(Previous page) Greek Orthodox priests in the monastery on Patmos. (Right) Marie-Magdeleine arriving in Athens and (next page) with some locals on the island of Samos.





had a look at her car, so then did we; there was hardly any sign of dent or scratch. So the Policeman looked quite perplexed and said “Your car has practically nothing, nobody is hurt, so be on your way, everything is alright.” Cecile was not satisfied with that statement. As a matter of principle she said, as in Greece men have usually always the advantage of their sex and women on the whole are treated with condescendence, specially women drivers...

So we got in the car and Cecile drove on saying to Erwan, “You don’t realise your mother could have been killed”, as it happened the collision with the bus occurred on my side, but I hardly

felt the shock at all. We were in a way, Erwan and I, rather amused at Cecile’s volubility of speech as she started to shout abuses to the bus driver, specially that she did not, neither did we, took time even to look at the car and see if there was real damage. Anyway the incident was closed and we went for dinner in a very nice typical restaurant where we ate specialty of Greece — Dolmezza. They are vine leaves rolled and filled with mince meat and a lemon sauce, quite nice.

We left Athenes next morning very early to take a flight to Samos Island, only 20 minutes flight time. The weather was very clear and warm even so early. We arrived at Samos airport



(Above) Marie-Magdeleine at Samos harbour and (right) setting sail for Patmos.

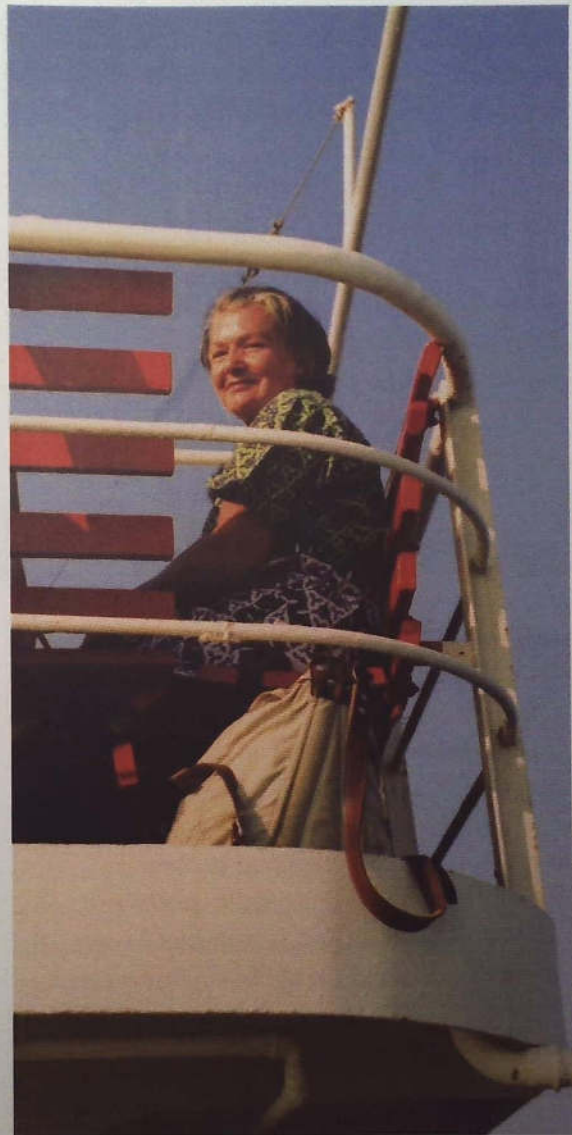
where we took a bus to Pythagorion, 15 minutes journey. There we found a lovely fishing village quite unspoiled; there were mostly old people just getting out to take the morning air. I sat in a café on the pier; I was the only customer at 7 o'clock in the morning. I ordered coffee and rolls and watch our luggage piled up in a corner. Two or three villagers were standing nearby and one of them, seeing me uneasy about the luggages said, not to worry they are quite safe. Erwan had gone in search of an accommodation,

we had nothing booked, but then the peak of the tourist season was over and we were told there was no need to make reservation.

So Erwan came back a little later and said we could have a room in a guest house on the pier. It was quite clean and we had a bathroom but it was free only for three days. We did not worry, too happy to be in that lovely island full of sun and song. We immediately went to locate the beach and we found a long strand of soft pebbles and a beautiful transparent warm sea. We went for a swim it was heaven, so warm and so calm. Facing the beach at the horizon was the coast of Turkey. We sunbathed; there was only a few couples and

we had the beach nearly for ourselves. It became quite hot at midday, and usually I would go back to the village and have some lunch on the quay in one of numerous tavernas. In Greece, you always eat outside on the terrace of a café or restaurant as it is so warm. I must say I didn't care very much for their food; it is very oily and hard to digest. You go in the restaurant and choose whatever you wish to eat, then you sit outside at a table and the waiter bring you whatever you have chosen. Most of the time the food is not very warm, but you have choice of various salad and vegetables. Their yoghurt is delicious and the wine very cheap and very pleasant to drink, it appeared light so you are inclined to drink quite a lot of it but then it does get to your head and you find yourself in a pleasant 'euphorie'.

Erwan often used to stay on the beach at midday and would bring an apple or grapes with a gourde of water to drink which he would carry with him everywhere he would go. After lunch I used to go for a good sleep in the hotel for 2 hours or so. We had to change hotels three times, but did not mind; the second one was very nice but the room was small and situated over a kitchen for which we had constant smell of oily cooking. The third one was the best as the room had a large balcony just over a small beach and a bathroom shower. It was apparently the oldest hotel of the village but needed

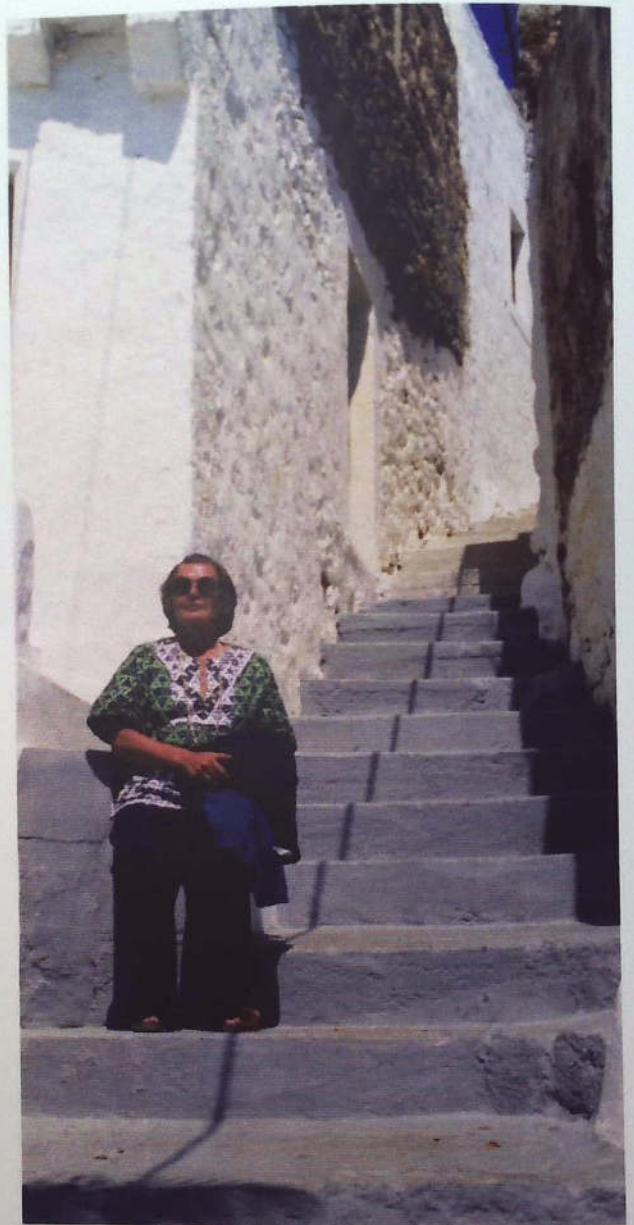


a lot of repairs. When we arrived the first day to take our room, we noticed the loo had been disconnected and the piping needed to be fixed but not to worry, said the manageress, we will see to it. It was fixed rapidly. The advantage of the place is that there were not many tourists.

We made an excursion in a lovely island well known by Erwan who had stayed there a few times called Patmos. It is a one hour journey by boat across the bay, quite characteristic island with a monastery situated high up on a steep hill which you can visit. Nearby there was a friend of Erwan who had some guests staying occasionally and that is where Erwan used to stay at each of his visits. She is a very nice Greek lady and a widow, very kind. She let me have my siesta in her room, and we had tea. She was obviously very fond of Erwan and glad to see us.

The small little streets very narrow and all white wash same as the houses, and kept always very clean. There is no beach as such on the island but you can take one of the fishing boats always anchored in the quay and go to one of the small little cove where there are sandy beaches. It is an island very unspoilt and visited mostly by young energetic

(Right) Marie-Magdeleine taking a brief rest on the steep streets of Patmos and (next page) visiting the monastery above Pythagorion.





people as there is a lot of climbing from the harbour to the little village. It is very peaceful and Erwan's favourite spot in Greece.

Some days Erwan used to hire a bicycle for the day and go for a trip around the Island of Samos, taking his pack lunch with him. Those days I would stay usually in the village and go swimming and sunbathing on the small beach in front of the hotel and when Erwan return, we will go for our dinner on the pier in the cool of the evening having our evening meal with wine and Greek folklore music playing all along the Tavernas, watching the fishermen bringing their catch and sorting out their nets, load of cats (I have never

seen so many as in Greece) roaming about, yachts coming to shore, the evening sun setting in a red glow at the horizon. Then we had Greek (not Turkish, word forbidden in Greece) coffee at the terrasse in a small cute little shop where the old lady owner would serve us the usual small cups of strong coffee accompanied by a glass of iced water and we would stroll along the Harbour enjoying the warm air with the sea breeze cool and refreshing up to 11 or 12 o'clock at night. Turkey's coast would be by then bathed in a glow of mist and would yet appear so near.

One day we booked our passage for a cruise across the bay to Turkey only 1 hour and a half



(Above) Marie-Magdeleine at Logothetis Castle and (right) in the 'funny little car'.

distance by sea. The evening before we heard an attempted coup d'état was started. We decided to cancel our trip. As it happened the cruise boat went all the same but the tourists were restricted to the entrance of the harbour and all they saw were machine guns and soldiers.

One day we went to a Greek Orthodox feast held in a Monastery up in the hills above Pythagorion. There was a procession of Orthodox priest with their banners and Icons; a big crowd mostly of villagers were attending the

ceremony. Some of the Orthodox high monks had very rich embroidered vestments of bright colours. After the ceremony we went further up in the country to a small village where the villagers with their families celebrated the day with Greek folklore music playing on a little platform outside a popular restaurant. We joined the crowd and watch the villagers dancing Greek dances at the sound of the music. It was very picturesque. We returned late by taxi to Pythagorion having had a very enjoyable afternoon and evening. The Greek villagers were all very friendly and although we could not understand their language, you could always



make yourself understood. The old folks specially were very 'couleur locale', the women always wearing black clothes. The cost of living is not very high, specially for fruits. Farmers used to come down to the village on the pier with their horses and cart full of grapes and sell it very cheap — they were delicious grapes.

One day we hired a car, a funny little car which had had better days, but was working well, an old version of sport car bright red... One had to jump in as there was no door nor roof; great fun but with the breeze I had to protect myself with all sorts of cover from my bath towel to coat and scarf as the dust

of the road and the wind would blow all over us. But it was great to drive inland in Samos through country scenery, vineyards, stopping at an inn to have a meal. September is in fact the best time to visit these islands, the big crowd of tourists have gone and the grapes are ripe. It is still very warm in the 26-28 degrees, more during the day, but there is always a cool pleasant breeze from the sea, which is very clear and not polluted like some parts of Spain.

We spent 2 weeks in Samos and returned via Athenes to take an evening flight to Brussels. As it happened our flight had to return to base after being in the air nearly one hour,



as one of the engines was leaking! We had already begun our meal when the pilot told us about the trouble and informed us we had to return to Athenes. From the window where Erwan was sitting he could see the leakage.

Anyway we landed back at Athenes without problem, but we were told there will be an indefinite delay for our departure. It was near to midnight.

We settled then on a bench in the airport building after a taste from the brandy bottle we had purchased. Although the airport lounge was quite noisy with incessant loudspeakers calls for other flights, I soon went to sleep. Erwan had to awake me at 3 a.m. to tell me we will soon depart, this time we hoped for good. Actually it seemed we had been very lucky from the reports the pilot gave to complainers of the delay: we had no choice but to return, the damage of the engine being greater and more serious than he expected, and if we had continued our journey, we would most probably have crashed near Yugoslavia...

For a first visit to Greece, I was really very impressed by this beautiful country and constant sunshine which makes you feel so good. The only thing is that during my first visit I managed to pick a gastric virus to which the tourists are particularly sensitive. It obliged me to pay a visit to the local doctor.

Erwan teased me about this, as the local

doctor happened to be a very good looking young man and very attractive. He gave me some pills without examining me telling me I shouldn't be coming to Greece in September as it was a time when this virus was often caught!

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The local doctor happened to be a very good looking young man and very attractive.

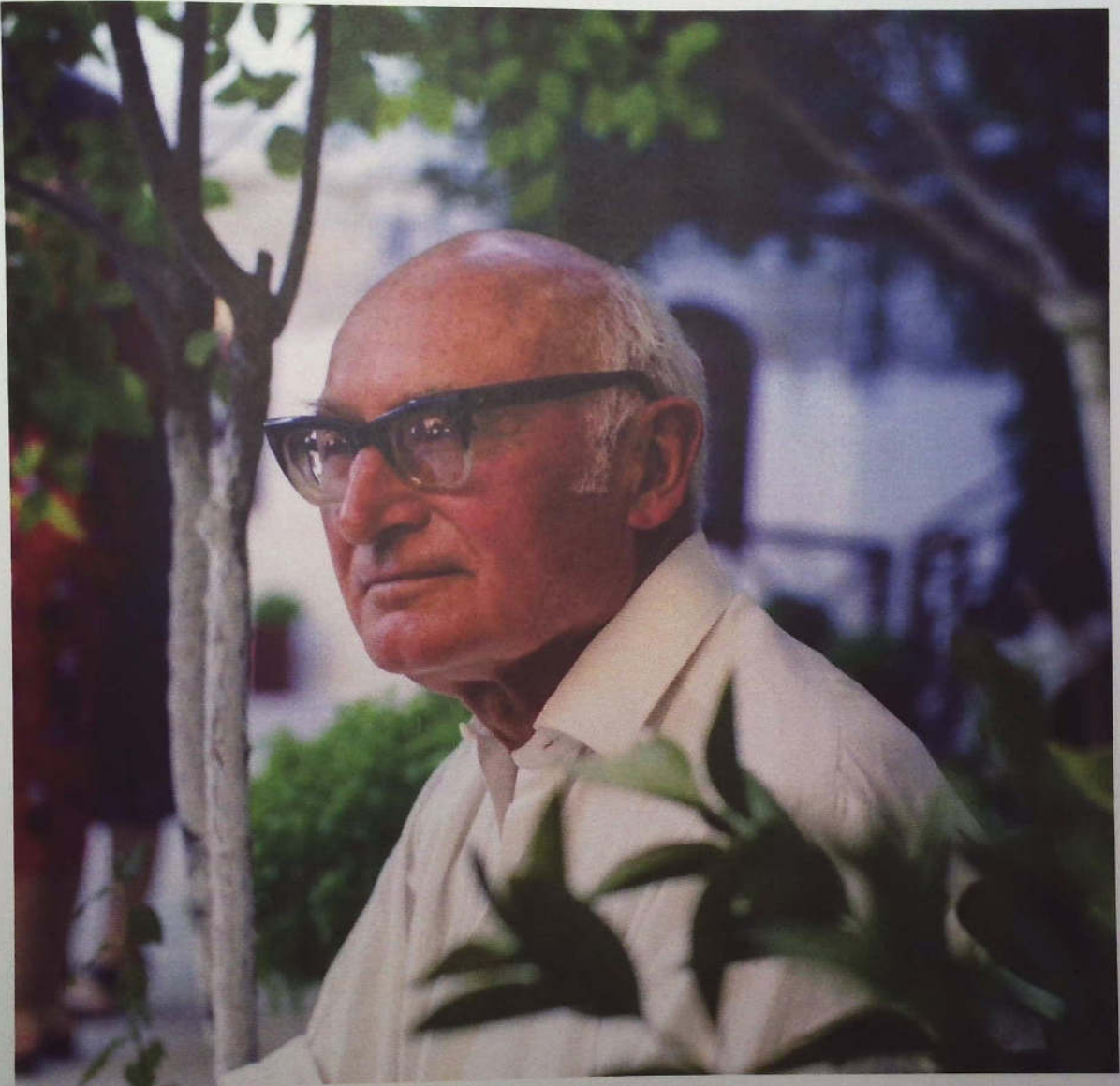
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When we did return to Greece the following year, this time with Papa and Erwan, the same type of gastric troubles occurred to me again. So I blame more the food or at least the way it is cooked than the so-called September virus.

When we went back again to Pythagorion, Benig, Michael and Benjamin were already there and it was nice being together. But this time we found a lot more tourists, mostly Danish and all the hotels and guest houses were full. We had difficulties to find a room Papa and myself 'chez l'habitant'.

Erwan was lodged somewhere else. It was not very satisfactory and after a few days we rented a small house. It was a bit awkward as there was no kitchen, only a frigidaire, a sink and a tiny electric kettle which was loaned to us by the landlady. There

Yann relaxing on Samos Island.





Marie-Magdeleine and Yann on their second visit to Pythagorion with Benjamin, Michael and Benig .

was a peculiar spiral stairs going up to the bedrooms which had no separation, but comfortable beds, and a bathroom downstairs with a living and dining room. But at least it was private to ourselves and we could do what we liked.

It was rather expensive though we used to go to the beach with the Musgrave family and take our evening meal together on the pier. We went again this time for a drive in the country around the island. The car was a funny sort of jeep rather antique looking, only four seats so we had to put

Benjamin in the boot, holding him with a string in case he would fall off. It was a bit of a squash but great fun.

The Musgraves left after a few days before us. We made before together the excursion to Patmos. Benjamin found two little pals, Danish, 2 small boys, one called Yes and the other one Thor. They had great fun together.

It was a pity the island had been more or less taken up by a colony of Danish people as too many tourists will spoil that lovely fishing village and will raise the prices of hotels and restaurants.

I forgot to say that on the big pebble beach, it was more or less reserved for topless and

sometimes bottomless swimmers, to the great delight of Papa who used to do his inspection visit every afternoon. I love to go back to Greece again, perhaps this time to Crete if we could find a small apartment near a quiet beach and unspoiled scenery, that way you could save money buying

your own food and it is far more relaxing and pleasant than to be in a hotel.

Yann exploring the Greek countryside by bicycle.



# Voyage to Calella de Palafrugell



1982

**W**e left Dublin at the end of August to take a flight to Girona, a charter journey of three hours or so.

We were met in Girona by José, friend of Wendy Lewis. On arrival we were welcomed by a nice warm air which Papa found too hot. José drove us in his taxi to Columbus in Calella; it took us an hour and a half. We were at our flat around 7 o'clock after leaving Dublin at 2 pm. So the journey was really quite short considering the distance.

This time we found the flat in perfect order. There were bright new curtains and bed covers to match, fresh flowers on the table of the living room. The beds were made and Wendy had taken some food and wine for us. It was a happy change of our previous arrivals, and it was obvious the flat had been well taken care of, after the departure of the previous tenants. Everything was clean.

There were very few people in the building, only a couple of flats were occupied. We started by organising our sleeping quarters, and we moved one of the twin beds of the front bedroom and put it in the living room for me so that each of us had our own bedroom.

We had a light meal and went to take

some fresh air walking up to Calella beach. It was lovely and cool after the heat of the day and it refreshed us from the journey.

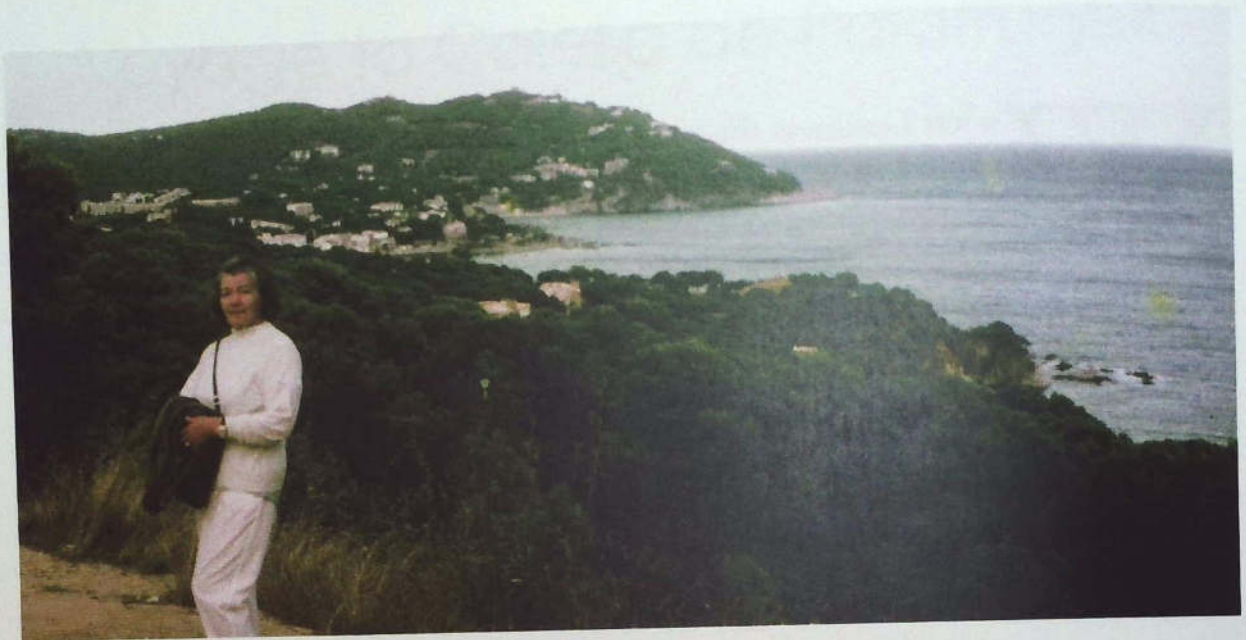
We slept well each in our own quarter, and the following day we went to the supermarket downstairs to get few things. I went to the beach as it was very warm and intended to swim, but when I got to the beach I was amazed to see such a crowd.

It was our first time to spend in Calella in August and the tourist season was still on. Lots of boats were anchored leaving a limited space for swimming between the shore and the part of the bay now reserved for boats. The beach being very small there was not much space to lie down and sunbathe.

I went in anyway for my swim, and the sea was quite warm. I sunbathed afterwards trying to forget about people next to me and children running past me, but it was not very pleasant, and I dreamed of the previous holidays when there was hardly anyone on the beach.

I returned to Columbus and prepared lunch, had a snooze in the afternoon, and went later with Papa for a walk, usually stopping at the ice-cream shop on the way back to taste each day a different flavour!

But then I picked up a virus of some



Marie-Magdeleine on a hill overlooking the town of Calella de Palafrugell

kind and developed a sinus infection which made me quite sick. So I had to give up my swim. The sea actually was quite polluted, far more than the previous years.

The days in Calella are always pleasant when the weather is good. As we came earlier in the year than we used to, it was still quite warm even hot some days and it is in the evenings that you feel the coolness in the air. Although I was not feeling too well with this sinus infection, I kept going all the same, but was quite frustrated

not to be able to go swimming or sunbathing. I stayed on our balcony where we always had our coffee after lunch, and went for walks every day.

After the first two weeks, we had to move to another flat as our own was let and we had another week to stay in Calella. Wendy Lewis found us a charming place situated near the golfet point and botanical garden.

We had the first floor flat of a house occupied and owned by a French Catalan family. It was a large flat with three bedrooms and a large living room leading to a terrace balcony where we used to have our lunch, two toilets and large bathroom and very well equipped kitchen. The house was



surrounded by a nice garden. The people, owners of the house were very nice and friendly. We had plenty of room and we could go shopping to a supermarket not very far from the house. The small cove golfet was at a certain distance, but as I didn't swim, it didn't matter very much.

It happened that while we were staying in that place, we heard of the tragic death of Princess Grace of Monaco. The family Roches downstairs had the TV and let us watch the funeral which was very moving indeed.

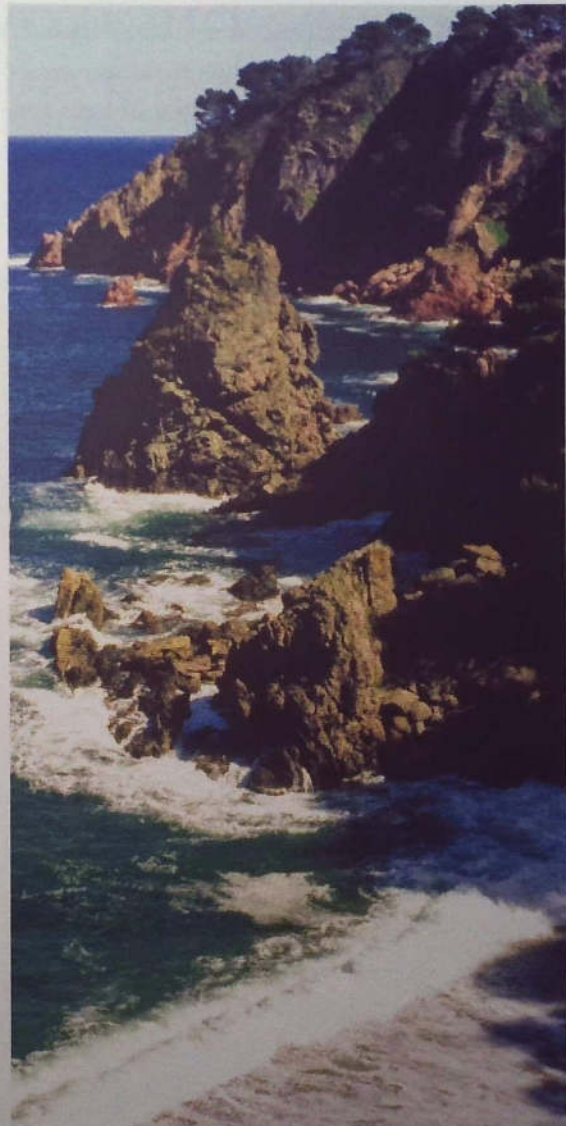
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It happened that while we were staying in that place, we heard of the tragic death of Princess Grace of Monaco.

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Then it was time for our return to Ireland, and José drove us to Girona with his taxi for us to take our flight to Dublin. We had already been to Girona to spend a day there and did some shopping — boots, bag, quite reasonable price. Girona is a nice town and easy to shop, only 3/4 of an hour by bus from Palafrugell.

We often went to Palafrugell by bus which passes by our road near Columbus. It is quite convenient, and on Sunday there is a big fruit vegetables and all sorts of food market, which



occupied the two principal streets of the town.

This stay in Calella was quite restful and we enjoyed it in spite of the wretched cold I got and which lasted me two weeks. But next time we will go later in September or October when most of the tourists will be gone, or in June if we could.

I must relate the first trip we made in Calella. It was quite a long time, nearly 20 years ago. Papa had booked a holiday package with an organisation called Erna Low, which advertised a lot at the time various holidays. Erwan came with us as it was in early October and still quite warm.

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**Calella, it was and still is an unspoilt fishing village with lot of caractere and very pretty scenery.**

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We flew to Barcelona and stayed there a day or two to visit the town before going to Calella, only a one and a half hour drive from Barcelona. Our hotel was called St. Roc, an old family hotel well situated at the end of Calella bay with a tiny cove where you could swim. We were practically the only tourists in the hotel which was quite spacious.

So we had a large twin bedroom with a sitting room and terrace overlooking the sea. Erwan had his own room with balcony on another floor. We really fell in love with the place.

Calella, it was and still is an unspoilt fishing village with lot of caractere and very pretty scenery. The beaches are small with gravel, but pleasant to swim. The food in the hotel was rather of small portions, a bit insufficient for food appetite such as Erwan's, but then our board was included in our package deal holidays and therefore was not as abundant as it should have been.

The real problem was the mosquitoes invasion at night. There were lots of trees around and very near our windows, and it was the time of year when they are plentiful. I was the most affected by them, and got a violent reaction to their bites. I could not sleep and used to spend a great part of the night in the small sitting room next to our bedroom smoking and watching the fleet of fishermen boats with their lanterns and motors coming back by dozen towards the harbour. It was a pretty sight.

One night I remember I was so distressed by the vicious attacks of the mosquitoes, I flew downstairs trying to locate Erwan's room... *[the diary stops there]*.

## Trip to Swaziland



1986

**Q**uel soulagement! What a relief and a joy to see Rozenn so lovely and always so young-looking with a gorgeous coral outfit to welcome me. I was so happy and I was scared a bit not to find her, but she came towards me and it was wonderful.

I had been so sad to leave mon petit Erwan at London who was so good to me and did so much for me. Without him I would never have had the courage to come here, but when he saw me so anxious and feeling not well, he organised an escort assistance who looked after me wonderfully all through the journey. I was crying when I left him and wanted to go back to him being scared of the plane. But the staff was so nice and reassured me, gave me champagne, one big bottle, and I felt better after that.

Rozenn was so sweet, she warmed my heart and I felt good with her. We went to Tante Dircé always so nice and welcomed us. I had a bath and went to sleep then. Erwan rang up from Zurich at midday, he was anxious for me and said it was snowing hard. He was to take his plane for Caracas one hour after. I was so happy to hear him and Rozenn too. We went to Annick Collet and Charles for supper, they were so nice to welcome us. I drank all Charles' beer I am

ashamed to say, and I was glad to see them and Titou so beautiful. We went back to Tante Dircé. Annick is of course always the same — cheerful and young lovely looking. Tante Dircé was not a bit changed, always so kind and also young-looking. We went to bed; we slept in the same room Rozenn and I. I was so happy to be near her, but I awoke her at 4 a.m., as I couldn't sleep.

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Tante Dircé arranged beautifully the flowers and I felt Paul's presence near me. It was so peaceful.

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She went to get my breakfast. I was ashamed really to give her so much trouble. I was so touched when Jim called from Manzini to welcome me, but I was asleep. He rang up again; he was so good and I was so happy to hear him. It was so kind of him.

Sunday we went to Tonton Paul's grave with Tante Dircé and Rozenn to bring flowers from all of us, and I talked in my mind with him asking him to protect us all. It was a lovely sunshine and so peaceful. Tante Dircé arranged beautifully the flowers and I felt Paul's presence

near me. It was so peaceful. We had lunch at Tante Dircé, lovely food, and I went to bed. Erwan was supposed to arrive [*in Caracas*] at 5 a.m. that morning. Jim arrived by plane from Manzini and I was so glad to see him looking as usual very smart and so young good-looking. We had a big dinner at Tante Dircé that night (Rozenn and Jim, Darig, Anna Maria, Annick and Titou), with Tante Dircé who gave such lovely food. In the afternoon, the first on Saturday who came to see me was Guillaume, but I was asleep. He came later and I saw him, he was always so nice, and Darig also came to see me.

We had a big dinner at Darig and Anna Maria on the Monday. I was so glad to see also Debbie, Fiona and Brendan who came to see me Sunday. Fiona is very beautiful and the little Brendan too. Debbie really so sweet and never changes. They are very good riders, Guillaume and Debbie and have beautiful horses. Guillaume is always the same; he shaved his beard and looks really nice and younger looking. I wish Erwan will shave his beard too, although it suits him. I am sure he would look younger if he shaved it.

I was so glad to talk to Anna Maria who looks very beautiful and not changed at all. She had a lovely outfit and is always elegant. It was a real nice evening in their beautiful house. Darig was cooking a delicious meal with Anna Maria and Natasha, lovely looking girl, so dainty and

was very sweet; also Laurent who has grown up a lot and is very nice. We stayed talking a lot, Anna Maria and I, as we have a lot in common as regards some psychologique problems and we understand each other. With Darig and Guillaume we talked about their father who was my favourite brother, and I miss him a lot.

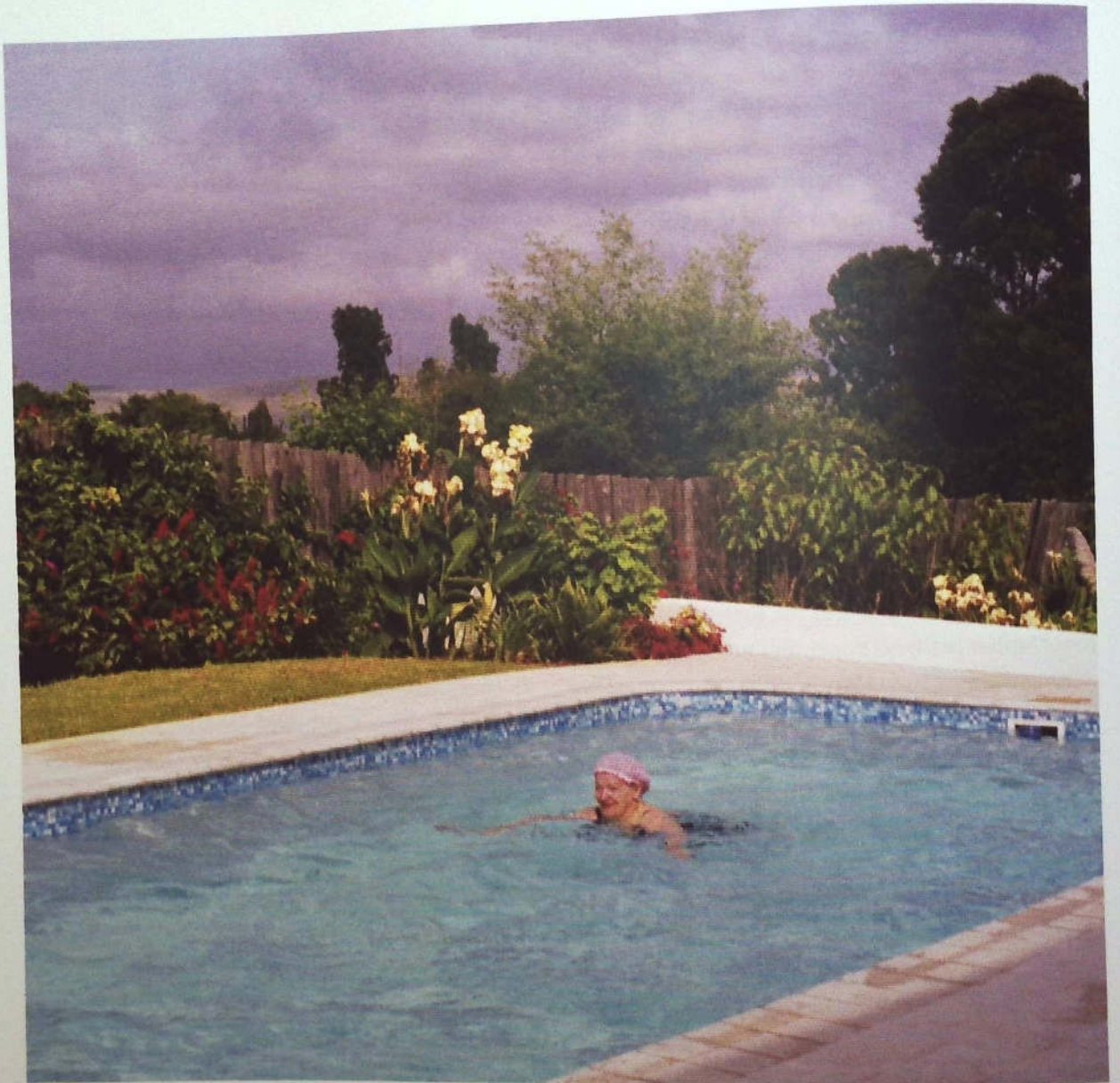
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We stayed talking a lot, Anna Maria and I, as we have a lot in common as regards some psychologique problems and we understand each other.

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Dircé went earlier home as she does so much for everyone and never seems tired, but she is so energetic. Rozenn and I went home to Tante Dircé at 11 p.m. and I slept better. Jim had to go back to Manzini as he came Sunday for a funeral. It was a pity as he wasn't able to come to Anna Maria for this lovely dinner evening.

In the afternoon I slept a lot and felt better after. I didn't go for a swim in Tante Dircé pool as I had a sore chest and cough. The garden of Tante Dircé is beautiful. This beautiful house of Le Coudray is full of souvenirs of Tonton Paul and all our family. Tante Dircé kept it so well and she is very courageous.



With Rozenn we went to do some shopping and post some letters. Before Jim left we went to an amazing shop full of wonderful materials for curtains and sheets. We chose some curtains, very pretty, for Lanzarote. Rozenn went to the gyno to have a check up and was told that her prolapse was 2nd degree accentuated. Later on she may have some repair. She had also to go Tuesday to a specialist for her ears as she had dizzy spells and nauseas since some time. The specialist gave her some tablets, said it was some virus infection common in Swaziland.

Papa had something like that two years ago and had I think some tablets; he always keeps them with him and never had another symptom since. So I hope it will be the same for Rozenn. She works too hard also and we are trying to get help so that it will relieve her, specially that she is involved in lot of activities apart from her housekeeping. She is great help in Family Life Association and does a lot for helping people. She is quite expert in that field with her Social degree and is greatly appreciated.

Tuesday morning as I say we went shopping. I awakened at 5 a.m., did my packing, had my breakfast and went with Rozenn, after saying goodbye to Tante Dircé who had been

Marie-Magdeleine swimming in Rozenn and Jim's pool in Manzini.

so good to us. We hope to see her soon.

I forgot to say I saw Annick the Monday with Gerome and Chloé, both so grown up and looking so well. Annick is like Rozenn: she is so young looking, and so efficient, always cheerful and energetic. She is working for an 'aggregation' of law I think or accountancy, and Charles has lot to do too with his business. But it is hard for him as for all business people with the weak economic situation in South Africa.

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He had put lovely flowers in my room, as usual such a thoughtful gesture which went to my heart.

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So on Tuesday we saw the ear specialist with Rozenn and did some shopping, then we took the road for Manzini in the luxurious Mercedes of Jim and Rozenn who drives so well. We reached the border but just after a heavy thundery rain. After the border it stopped raining and we arrived here at 7 p.m. and found Jim at home worried about us. He had put lovely flowers in my room, as usual such a thoughtful gesture which went to my heart.

Yola's room so pretty was all done up ready for me, and I thought so much of her sleeping peacefully that first night missing her. We had a nice supper together, Jim, Rozenn and I. Poor

Jim had a sore back. The house is so cosy and elegant and so welcoming with that beautiful pool clear and inviting and the garden so well kept by Jim, Rozenn and Solomon. I felt at home and relaxed. I went to bed early as I was tired and still feeling a bit dehydrated but I drank load of soda water and delicious wine Jim and Rozenn bought for me. Jacques [*The pet dog*] is so affectionate and I think recognised me, he is so lovable. Tiger [*The pet cat*] too smell me and I think adopted me as soon as I arrived.

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I felt revived and for the first time since I arrived was breathing freely with pleasure.

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By 9 p.m. I was asleep fast and Rozenn was still clearing up things. I awakened at 5 a.m. coughing, but went back to sleep nearly soon after and at 7 a.m. I got my tray and eat my breakfast in bed with the sun shining outside and the beautiful flowers blooming outside my window. Then I jumped out of bed and went for a swim, my first one, it was so wonderful at 9 a.m. to relax in that lovely pool. I felt revived and for the first time since I arrived was breathing freely with pleasure. Rozenn and I went shopping buying milk in a garage very peculiar and funny. Tristan would find this very amusing. The milk

is fresh and very tasty. We had lunch, nice fish and lovely vegetables 'susu' it is called from Jim and Rozenn garden. I went for a rest and slept until 5 p.m., went for a swim so wonderful, and had tea with Rozenn. Jim came from the office, and we all had a peaceful evening. I went to bed at 9 p.m. and slept not too good, but it takes a while to get used to the heat although I love it.

The garden is so lovely, sitting in the morning with the breeze; the scenery is so restful with the hills far back and the green fields around. The pool is so inviting you could be in it all day long, kept wonderfully clear and shiny by Jim. It is transparent so soft water and does me a lot of good; you feel so fresh when you dip into it surrounded by those beautiful flowers Jim, Rozenn and Solomon kept so harmoniously, deep purple some of them to soft cream lily, I mean Lys. The creeper ('lierre', ivy) Jim take so much care to decorate all along the wall bright white near the dining room. It involves a lot of work, but such a pleasure for the eyes to admire all those gracious plants and flowers.

I miss the girls as much as their Mum and Dad miss them. I think also of course of all ours in Ireland, Caracas, Brittany and London, and hope they are not too cold, also in New York. We are so lucky here to have the sun and the heat.

Marie-Magdeleine visits a local craft market





Today is market day. We went with Rozenn to see all the Swazi crafts, necklace, baskets of all colour, wooden dishes all so colourful and artistically made.

I remember two years ago when Rozenn, Erwan and I went to this typical open market and Erwan bought loads of things which he managed to fit in his already packed suitcase and which are now, some of them, in his luxurious residence in Chula Vista in Caracas. There is also at the market a big variety of exotiques fruits and vegetables; it is very interesting.

After we came home for lunch. We started preparing the knitting and found a nice soft white wool; we picked a pattern and I started a jumper for Kareen. Also we started filing all the recipes — Rozenn has a full drawer and I will try to classify them by order. I only until now did a first clearing, all sweet things one side, all salted things the other side. She has, Rozenn, a lovely recipe book very luxurious which Etna gave her. So I must try my best to make a proper job. I am not very good at that sort of thing, but I can always try.

After I will try to classify the photos, Rozenn has plenty. I know that at home I have been very unorderly about the photos I have in albums, and Papa always laugh at me as say, I put Rozenn wedding before the photos of her as a baby, and that goes for all my photos. I suppose it

comes from the fact that my mind is not always working in order! and I get a bit too fanciful at times. Gemini are often like that apparently.

We had a nice quiet restful evening after a lovely tea Rozenn prepared — soup is delicious with all the vegetables of her garden. Jim takes a great care of the pool and I never saw such a clear inviting pool. It is my delight. His back is sore at times and he climbs 25 times or more every day the two-storey stairs in his big working building. No wonder he looks so slim and fit and young.

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Rozenn is really an expert on hair styles and hers is always so smart.

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We went to supper at the Mondel; they were very nice. There were a few couples; the food was delicious and the wine excellent. We had a nice evening and went home about 12 midnight.

I can't remember what we did in the morning. Oh yes, I washed my hair and Rozenn made a lovely blow dry style with a sort of mousse spray before. She is really an expert on hair styles and hers is always so smart.

I think at midday we got, Rozenn and Jim and me, a lovely card from Erwan from Zurich written just before he went in his plane for Caracas. I was so glad to have it; it was written soon after he rang up the Saturday 1st

when we were in Jo'burg. I hope he is settled back in Caracas and hasn't too much work.

We all washed our hair. Oh yes, I have already said that. I am afraid this journal Rozenn insisted for me to do is haywire and very mixed up, but she said, 'Mamy, just write what comes in your mind'... it is proof that my mind has too much in it, and it doesn't come out by order or methodique. Also I must apologise for my bad writing; probably no one will be able to read it; no loss.

I am longing to get news from Papa, Jean and co., hoping Jean is better. I worry about his x-ray of his kidney; hope it will be OK, and soon he will go with all the family on holidays perhaps here or Caracas or Lanzarote, as long as he gets a good rest he needs so badly after his operation, and the fact that he works so hard and worry a lot about the business. Dany needs badly rest too indeed and the boys a change, sun and heat.

News also I wait with impatience from Erwan who must be very busy; hope he is O.K. since he arrived in Caracas. As for news from Benig and co., we got some on the phone lately and from Olwen and David. I think a lot and hope all is well with them. Our little Lolo, Annig and Kareen as well. The house is now full of their presence. Good Night.

As usual as soon as I have my breakfast I

go for a lovely swim, and it is so refreshing. Then I have my coffee and go with Rozenn to the family centre where she is so active. It is very well organised and everyone appreciate the precious help voluntary Rozenn gives with all her heart and her qualified highly degree of Social Science.

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We had tea and went to Mbabane to meet some vice-French consul, a certain Mr. Fleury who never turned up.

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There is so much to do for the people here and it is very rewarding but time consuming, and Rozenn has great interest in her work there. Vu Reverend Forester — very interesting personage, great personality and father of a friend of Annig. He lives on his own in a lovely house full of beautiful antiques, carpets on the wall, so effective.

We had tea and went to Mbabane to meet some vice-French consul, a certain Mr. Fleury who never turned up and we came back home after having a drink in the spa hotel. Rozenn had none; I had a nice bottle of wine.

There were few French people, not very attractive, except one who couldn't understand

what happened to this Mr. Fleury. Anyway this is another story which I will tell later. Good night.

Sunday 9th February

We went to Bob to spend the day. He is so nice. Jim played tennis for two hours and Rozenn and I went for a swim;

then we had barbecue

Bob and his friends cooked, lovely big sausages and delicious steaks, potatoes and a very tasty sauce Max did. I ate two big sausages and two potatoes with sauce. The dessert Rozenn made Italian style cream chocolate ice, scrumptious, and Max made crust pudding very good.

At 5 p.m. we left and I went for a sleep until 8 p.m. Jim slept just one hour. We had tea and listened to Russian

records, really beautiful. The lounge is so restful and it was wonderful to be near Rozenn relaxing

and reading the couch, and Jim looking at TV on his bed; his back gave him a lot of trouble. I sympathise with him. We went to bed, at least I went to bed at 9.30 and slept all night until 7 a.m.

Monday 10th February

Rozenn brought me to the dentist as I had a bad sore on my gum for

weeks. She was very nice and filed my plate. It is so much better now, thanks to Rozenn and Jim who knows this dentist, a German lady quite nice. I got a letter from Genevieve, long letter, the first one very interesting. I was so glad to read her news and to know that she was as well as can be expected, that she received a phone call or she gave herself a phone call from Yan, saying his eye was better thank goodness.

I am so glad as I was worried over that eye of his. I wrote to him and to all the children. I think of them all and hope



Kareen, Benjamin and Annig, some of the grandchildren always in Marie-Magdeleine's thoughts while she travels.

all are well, specially Jean after his operation. At least I am relieved to know Yan's eye is getting better. The wine here is so nice and mellow. I try not to drink too much of it. I like Lolo's room where I sleep and I think of her specially before I go to sleep as well as Kareen and Annig whom we miss and all mine — Papa, Jean, Dany, Tristan, Oisin, Erwan, who was so good to me preparing all my trip; Benig and Michael, Benjamin, Annig, Jamie, my little Olwen and David and our dearest baby Morgane soon her birthday the 19th. Genevieve also. I hope they are all well. I think of baby Fiona too, who went to heaven so many years, my godchild I loved dearly.

We went today to see Mary, friend of Rozenn and Jim and her baby she called Fiona too. Rozenn is the godmother, souvenir of her own little Fiona. Mary is so nice and I was glad to see her and her new baby, as it was so sad when she lost her little

baby Brian who was a lovely child. We saw Father Mike at Mary's. He is a very friendly man and gave lot of lemons to Rozenn, as I use two a day it is very useful. We went home, had our tea and sat a bit with Rozenn in the lounge, but I soon went to bed as I feel always very sleepy at night or even after lunch; it must be the heat although

I like the heat and it is nice and cool in the evening. I wish I could help Rozenn more, but Thursday she will have someone to help. Good Night.

Tuesday 11th  
February

I awake with a terrible nightmare at 5 a.m. I was all upset and had a smoke, then got up and went for a swim. I told Rozenn about the nightmare. We went to see a nice lady, a friend of Rozenn, English

called Vera, and we had, me a glass of delicious wine and Rozenn and Vera orange juice. She is very sweet and attractive. Then we had a nice lunch of fish at home. Rozenn cooks so well with



Marie-Magdeleine sews on Rozenn and Jim's porch

vegetables from her garden, delicious and fruits. Then I went to bed as I was not feeling too good after my nightmare, and Rozenn went to the spa hotel in Mbabane to meet this vice consul again. This time he was there but as usual the French are often so mean — no-one offered even a cup of tea to Rozenn who for the second time made 100 miles to meet this vice consul, with Jim and Rozenn not hesitating to spend money on petrol and fatigue to go twice for this function. Anyway when the waitress came to Rozenn to ask her what she wanted, she asked for a cup of tea and incredibly gave her the bill; no one of the French crowd (only five or six people), made a move to pay. She finally paid her cup of tea, flabbergasted as I would have been and everyone decent to see that the French people didn't have the courtesy to offer to pay. It is really disgraceful but typical of lot of French people. It is just as well I didn't go, I would have been very annoyed.

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### I slept until 2 a.m. and got awake by a most 'farfelu' dream.

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We had nice pancakes Rozenn made for tea, they really were so light and fluffy. The we sat in the lounge so peaceful, but as usual I felt nearly asleep in my book and went to bed about 9.30. I slept until 2 a.m. and got awake

by a most 'farfelu' dream. I smoked a cigarette to stop that 'farfelu' dream most queer and took a sleeping pill, then went back to sleep until 7 a.m. There was some thunder and lightning and rain, but it didn't bother me too much just a bad headache which didn't last. It is apparently the period with heat during the day and thundery rain at times at night.

Wednesday 12th February

I awake still dreaming a bit; had my breakfast and went for my swim. It is the most refreshing of all, first thing in the morning. Then we went to Jim's office and saw him working, very smart as usual, very busy; lot of the staff welcome me when Rozenn said I was her mother, and some joined their hands as in prayer, so touching. Apparently it is a mark of respect for the elderly people. Some shake hands with me holding their arms as the Swazi do; it is a lovely custom. They all seem very nice and friendly. I was very impressed by Jim's office, so harmoniously arranged with pastel shades, colours matching his shirt and his beautiful silver hair.

We had a terrible ordeal at Metro, a big wholesale place where Jim with his special card can get things cheaper; but poor Rozenn had an awful time as she went just for me to get two crates of soda water. I drink two bottles a day and thanks to Jim I got them cheaper,

but what a tantrum. Poor Rozenn had to wait with me one hour before being attended to and then she had to rush to come home to cook a scrumptious chicken. I felt really very guilty to give her so much trouble to get that soda water. I told her I prefer to pay more myself and get it in an ordinary shop as it is real cheap.

We went in the afternoon after my sleep and a drink of mint hot tea from her garden, to see the dressmaker but she wasn't home. We saw Georgia the neighbour and her nice garden. I posted or rather Rozenn posted my letter, cheque and birthday card to Olwen hoping she will get it in time. Tonight is the premier opening performance of her play; I think of her playing solo for two hours directed by David. I miss that; it is a pity, but I hope I will see it later. We forgot Ashes Wednesday said Rozenn; we were to go to Mass, but the intention counts, and that's the main thing. I often say Help me God if something goes wrong or if I worry over something.

Thursday 13th February

My night was not too good. I awake at 2 a.m., but I went to sleep at 10.30 p.m. which was OK; but when I try to sleep again at 2.30 a.m. I had another bad nightmare and I finally got up at 5 a.m. to get my breakfast and stayed in bed until nearly 8 a.m. resting. It has been raining very hard and at 9 a.m. I decided to go for a swim; the

water was warm, it was lovely, only chilly getting out of the pool as the rain has freshened the air.

I did some sewing with Rozenn in the morning, and made a hem at the splendid dress Erwan gave me which he bought in Mexico. I was quite pleased as I will be able to wear it Saturday when we go out to friends. In fact I already wore it in Jo'burg at Darig and Anna-Maria dinner. Everyone admired it as it is really beautiful, the colour, design and material typically Mexican. I am very spoilt really as Erwan always buys for me and for the family beautiful presents wherever he goes.

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**It is extraordinary here how the weather changes from tropical rain and thunder to sunshine and heat.**

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We had lunch; then I had a rest. Rozenn studied hard her German and Spanish and we went to Barbara, a Danish friend of Rozenn and Jim, for tea. She is very nice and her husband too, also their little children so sweet. There was another nice Danish friend there with her two children, very sympathique. It is extraordinary here how the weather changes from tropical rain and thunder to sunshine and heat.

I posted one letter to Papa and one to Genevieve, hoping tomorrow will bring me news





of some of the family. I thought so much of Olwen last night and was hoping her first performance of this new play went well for her and David.

Rozenn received at last her special big books of German and Spanish to prepare her essay. They came from England I think. She is very brave to study so hard two languages, German specially, which is very difficult, and she has to submit her essay before the end of the month to the University in Johannesburg. Jim is fixing the ivy on the wall doing all sorts of 'acrobatie' to reach high on the wall. He is so meticulous when he does something.

The sky is very heavy with black clouds, but no rain yet. I must say bye for now as I have to get on with my knitting.

Friday 14th February

Today is fine and sunny. I slept better up to 5 a.m. since 10 p.m. last night, and I took a little blue pill and dozed off until 8. I had my swim and did some sewing for Rozenn; but my sewing is not very good. Rozenn took lot of trouble with my hair after I washed it; she put this famous foam snow white Esther Lauder and blow dry after, with so much expertise. It took her precious time

Marie-Magdeleine stops for a chat with a local boy and his mother

as she has her Spanish to study and managed to do load of washing in the machine; but all the same, the help never came. She might come tomorrow as I am not much help in the house.

I stuck yesterday in the recipe book a very old letter of Olwen, the time she did her arts and was living with us. There was a recipe of oatmeal biscuits on it; the cat had chewed some of it; so I tried to put pieces together and it was such a funny, full of humour and poetry in that letter, even the way she wrote the recipe.

Then I stuck bits of a postcard of T. Genevieve and Tatie written ages ago where there was a recipe of 'Gateau Breton' as the cat must have been fond of recipes smelling probably the sweet flavour on the paper and it was better than nothing, not being able to eat the cake or biscuits.

This afternoon we went to Debbie, a lovely West Indian girl, her husband is manager of the Casino and Spa. Her mother was there too; she came to visit her children living near Barbados herself. There were some other young ladies, Joyce so sweet, she has a hotel and is Chinese; Kareen has done a 'stage' last year in her hotel. I talked to her about little Kee. She piled up load of cakes of all sorts on my plate mixed with cheese soufflé and savoury chop aux crevettes, chocolate cake, etc.

There was a Swiss-German young lady,

quite Suisse, lovely complexion, healthy and sport looking and very blond hair. Also an English lady Yvonne, fond of horses and dogs, even a little Scottish young girl mother of four children; in fact very Irish type. Debbie reminded me of Kareen Bowman, one of the ex girl friends of Jean who was also from the Caraibes or rather West Indian, St. Vincent, very attractive and nice personality.

I never saw such a display of food. I ate like a horse and Rozenn enjoyed it too. It was in a nice thatched roof house situated near Mbabane, behind the Spa with a splendid view. We came home and had a swim Rozenn and I. Then I ate again the delicious soup Rozenn makes with 'susu', and a bit of cheese. Rozenn very wisely took just a cup of tea.

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**I never saw such a display of food.  
I ate like a horse.**

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It is 8 p.m.; we are in the lounge with the sound of the cricket, and it is very peaceful. No news from home or no one from the family yet, perhaps tomorrow. I must stick some scraps of recipe again chewed by this cat. 'Night.

Saturday 15th February  
Birthday of Annig today. 20 years old. Very

happy birthday darling pet. I thought of you this morning. I remember the day you were born. The man next door came to tell me and Yola that I had a granddaughter. It was 11 p.m. I think. We were thrilled and your Dad saw you first on his way home; then I went with Lolo around 2 p.m. I think the next day to see you. I only was allowed to see you through a glass; you looked sweet and rosy with lovely bright blue eyes. We saw your Mum and she was so happy like your Dad, and we stayed with her a bit as she was tired and a bit weak. We went back home. Yola was disappointed as she was not allowed to see you. We lost, at least I lost my way driving back and Yola showed me the proper way. Imagine 20 years passed. I hope you will have a nice day today.

I got a letter from Erwan for all of us. It only took 10 days as it was posted in New York by a colleague of Erwan. It arrived same time as Yola's letter which we were glad to have. They all seem well and had been to Florida which Yola loves. I was delighted to read Erwan's letter as he is the first to write from the family except Tante Genevieve. He had a good journey, drank champagne a gogo thanks to a friend of Swissair who recommended him to the hostess, and I am glad as, as he says, he was like me very lonely after we parted in London.

Diana was to meet him in Caracas and she sent me a lovely card. Erwan tells us about

this air crash in Guatemala, and that they didn't find anything of his colleague Stakovich, who was burned to death in the crash.

We went tonight to a birthday party at some friends of Rozenn and Jim. It was most enjoyable and the food delicious; a nice couple. He is doctor, Jeff, and Penny his wife is physiotherapist and very artiste. I met very interesting people.

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I prayed God to protect us all. The singing was very nice, and it was very peaceful.

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Sunday 16th February

Today beautiful day. I forgot, yesterday we went to Mass, Rozenn and I. It reminded me of two years ago when we went also in that old church with Erwan. I prayed God to protect us all. The singing was very nice, and it was very peaceful, only a few people most Rozenn knew.

Now today we went to Bob for the day. It was hot but a nice breeze. We went Rozenn and I to Christa and Per house, Danish people, extremely nice, as Rozenn wanted Christa to help her with her German. Their house is beautiful all made of wood; it is very new. Per is a very tall gentleman very handsome, I think a poet as well as a businessman in wood carpentry. We had nice day

at Bob, always so welcoming. Jim played tennis a lot; Rozenn and I went for a swim and I ate a lot of nice big sausages cooked barbecue style. Rozenn made a lovely desert. I had two helpings. Jim very thoughtful, had brought for me a bottle of red wine delicious. It was so nice of him as they mostly drink white wine around here.

We came home at 5 p.m., had a rest and a swim and now we are in the lounge. I wrote to Erwan a long letter. We are trying to get Annig on the phone as we couldn't get her yesterday. It is apparently freezing cold in Europe, and I pity all ours who might suffer the cold; also in New York. We got a letter from Yola yesterday, it was nice to read her news.

Monday 17th February

Friends of Rozenn and Jim arrived today. They are from Brittany, Alliette and Jerome. They are very nice, and Alliette is expecting baby soon. She is from near St. Brieuc, Yffiniac, and Jerome from Evran I think or nearby. We had lunch then rested after lunch; then we went shopping and Alliette found a lovely dress which suited her very well. In the evening, Jeanne, a friend of Rozenn and Jim in the travel agency business came for drinks with her husband. We had a long evening with our drinks on the pergola; the sky was beautiful and it was nice and warm yet at 8 p.m. Jeanne is going to find some

informations about the trip of Olwen and David.

Oh yes, because we had Annig on the phone and she was well we wished her happy birthday, and she said Olwen was brilliant and the premiere show packed up house. I am so glad for her and for David who directed it. Apparently the report and critics are excellent, and I am dying to hear more about it as it is quite an achievement to perform such a hard play solo for two hours. I am glad the flowers arrived in time and I hope my note was also with it.

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### Sorry for this writing... I am sitting sideways...

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Annig says David and Olwen are definitely coming here end of March; they would have come end of this month, but David has a part engagement in a play, so it will be end March; perhaps before, one never knows. They think of coming direct London Nairobi, then Nairobi here single, and return from here to Nairobi by rail or other transport than plane, so as to see the interior of Africa. So Rozenn is making inquiries about those possibilities.

Papa also wrote a nice letter I was glad his eye is better, but he is a bit lonely at times I think. Tante Genevieve wrote also that Papa appeared on TV, 10 minutes talking about his campaign

for Brittany and that he looks very well.

Sorry for this writing... I am sitting sideways... I was glad to read all the news and will write to Papa soon. There was also a telex from Jean saying they were OK and off to Caracas tomorrow. They are staying in Palmerston Park yesterday and today, and I hope they are not too cold in our house.

I hope they will have a good trip and it will be nice for Erwan to have them all. I am sure Erwan will have found a house for them in Margarita Island, where Jean could recuperate well and Dany too, also Tristan and Oisin. It is a pity in a way they couldn't have come here, but it was difficult for the cost and next year I hope they will make it.

It has been raining a lot last night and this morning. Now the sun shine, and Rozenn is having a swim. I had two today.

A nice African girl came this morning to help and I am glad for Rozenn as there is a lot to be done when there are visitors and me. I try to help a bit but I am not much good. I do a bit of sewing and little bits such as set the table, it is not much. Rozenn does delicious cooking and she is so active. Jim has lot of work in the office and has always lot to do in the garden; he has still trouble with his back. Rozenn takes her tablet at night for her dizziness and it seem better, but she must take care. I will



think a lot of our baby Morgane tomorrow, her birthday and I hope David will be able to go to Omey to put flowers on her grave; it is such a peaceful 'lieu of repose' by the sea, and my mind is with Olwen who has to play every night in Dublin and cannot go to Cleggan tomorrow with David; but I wrote to them both hoping they will get my letter for tomorrow.

Wednesday 19th February

Today we had a beautiful day after awakening at 4 a.m. with another nightmare. I took a little pill and dozed off until nearly 8 a.m. The sun was shining and it was warm. I hope it was same day

Annig, Rozenn and Marie-Magdeleine on a visit to the Wild Coast.

in Cleggan for David to visit Omey and to wish happy repose birthday to our baby Morgane. She would have been one year today, but I felt her presence very much all through the day and she surely is peacefully in our mind protecting us specially her darling Mamy Olwen and her darling Daddy David; also she was surely watching over our travellers in the air Jean, Dany, Tristan and Oisín bringing them safely to Caracas.

The sky was so pure blue all day and it was pleasantly hot. I had four swims, the water was

so warm.

I wrote to Papa a long letter and to Olwen and David, also to Yola. We had lovely fish for lunch, I had a rest and a swim and Debbie the West Indian friend of Rozenn and her mother Geraldine came to have tea, a lovely delicious creamy sponge Rozenn made; and Debbie and Rozenn went to play tennis at the club nearby. Geraldine and I went to watch for a while, but then we were eaten up by the mosquitoes and we, Geraldine and I, went back to the house, had a cold drink and Jim soon came home from work.

Debbie and her mother are very nice. They come from St. Vincent where Jean was working 20 years ago, and knew Kareen Bowman, Jean ex girl friend. Debbie remembers me a bit of Kareen Bowman. They say that Geraldine husband must have known Jean when he was with the VSO in St. Vincent. They are called Barrow. I must ask Jean about that family.

Rozenn and Debbie had a good game of tennis, while I was eaten up by the mozzies and I kept scratching. We are watching the sunset tonight; it is nearly 7 p.m. and it is lovely sky with orange and blue clouds. We are expecting Jerome and Alliette tonight. Rozenn is doing her Spanish, she is really good at it and has a very good pronunciation and accent. I expect Jean and co. are now either in the air or arrived in Caracas. What a happy reunion with Erwan who will be so glad. I

better go in before I am 'devorée' by the mozzies. See you tomorrow.

Thursday 20th February

I forgot Jean and Dany, Tristan and Oisín must have arrived at 5 a.m. this morning. I thought of them in the air and I hope they had a good trip. Today is the day when our baby Morgane went to heaven, but is still in spirit with us and I am sure she helps her darling Mamy and Daddy in their every life as she helps us all. I feel often her presence and it comfort me same as when and often I think both at the same time of the little Fiona, my little goddaughter being together with her little cousin baby Morgane protecting us all.

Today was a beautiful hot day, blue sky, and we saw our friends Alliette and Jerome going off at Manzini airport; such a nice couple. Alliette is expecting twins Doctor discovered yesterday in Mbabane. She looks quite well. They proposed to ring Papa when they will be in Brittany, so nice of them. We went to the dentist and she filed my plate well; another 5 pounds; so perhaps now I will start to bear the sore as it will be a bit expensive to go each time it hurts me. I waited a week but was quite sore for eating and talking. We came back home and Rozenn forgot her keys, so we went for a swim in that divine pool and felt refreshed from the heat.

Jim arrived for lunch, and Rozenn in a jiffy



made a delicious meal. After I went for a good sleep up to 4 p.m. and then for another swim. Then the attack of mozzies, as I call the mosquitoes, came by full reinforcement and I was eaten up alive. I got one huge one sucking all my blood from my wrist! So after drinking our mint tea fresh from Rozenn's garden I went in the lounge and wrote a letter. It was a pity I couldn't stay on the pergola as the sunset was magnificent, but I had too many bloodthirsty enemies around!

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It is funny going to buy milk in a garage. I must write this to Tristan.

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We went also this morning to see Mary McCartan and little Fiona, such a sweet baby and her little sister ginger hair so pretty. Mary gave us a huge bag of lemons Padre Myke gave to her. I use two a day and they are delicious. I wrote to Benig and we had our tea, delicious soup Rozenn makes specially for me full of vitamins of her fresh vegetables from her garden.

Tomorrow Jim has to get up at 5 a.m. or before, so has Rozenn, as Jim is going to Jo'burg on business. We went to the garage to get the

Kareen, Tristan, Rozenn and Dany in Aghrusbeg, Ireland, during Marie-Magdeleine's time in Swaziland.

milk; it is funny going to buy milk in a garage. I must write this to Tristan; he will think that very puzzling. Jackie is peacefully sleeping near me. Rozenn went to watch Jwenko, a serial on TV in Jim's room. We will go to bed early as I feel very sleepy, hoping I will not awake again at 5 a.m. like this morning with a nightmare.

Alliette came at 6 a.m. in the kitchen, she could not sleep either and was hungry with her twins. She took a yoghurt and I offer her some coffee, but she went to bed for another while, before their departure for the airport.

See you, tomorrow is another day I hope as warm as today. Bye for now.

Friday 21st February

Today started early as Jim had to go to Jo'burg at 5 a.m. So Rozenn and Jim had to get up very early, Rozenn to drive Jim at the airport. I was awake at 2 a.m. with all my mozzies bites and nearly went mad!

I was also too warm and I must try to leave the window open as there is a screen; it is just that I feel a bit nervous sleeping with the window so low near the ground, although I know they can't, whoever they will be, come in with the alarm. I might sleep better. I stayed awake a good bit smoking cigarettes and took another pill, so I dozed off until 8 a.m. which was not too bad. It was a hot day and I went for a swim.

Then at 11 a.m., Rozenn and I went to a beautiful place called Foresters Arms where there is a very attractive hotel restaurant on top of a hill with a very peaceful scenery, lots of fields and forests around. There was an inviting swimming pool, but I forgot my bathing suit, so did Rozenn.

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We both had some sort of stew beef in Guinness, very tasty with tiny sweet carrots and rice. It was delicious.

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We had a drink on the terrasse enjoying the beautiful view and a lovely garden surrounding the hotel; all so well kept. We had lunch. It was my treat; Rozenn the poor thing was very hungry as she didn't have anything to eat since her breakfast at 5 a.m.

She had soup and we both had some sort of stew beef in Guinness, very tasty with tiny sweet carrots and rice. It was delicious. Then we had an assortment of scrumptious fruit crust and tarte a la creme. I had two glasses of wine, so cheap at 20p the glass. Rozenn had an Appletiser, whatever that is!

Then coffee; we were really full up and I had a little rest in a very comfortable armchair, while Rozenn did her Spanish in a very restful



lounge decorated with taste, rustic and cretonne a fleurs, very soothing. Then we went to see friends of Rozenn and Jim, a Chief Justice, the Chief of Justice in Swaziland, top grade, quite a young gentleman, his wife is from British Guinea and they had a little boy Alexander, 5 years old, very clever looking. We had tea and were on our way to the airport to meet Jim, dead on time. We saw him rushing out of the plane with his brief case, he was the first out.

Tonight we go to dine at other friends, the husband is Chief in the army for training Swazi soldiers; they are both English. I will tell you all about it tomorrow. My dress is too long; it is the sweet one Diana gave me. I must make a hem or I will trip over! See you later.

Saturday 22nd February

Today was a very hot day. We enjoyed the pool so much, and the sky was clear. After lunch, we had a rest, I mean, I went for a good sleep. Rozenn studied her Spanish and Jim had a rest.

At 5.30, we went to Mass. I forgot I had a letter from Rosario, with a lovely photo of her and her little boy Eduardo and the new baby who looks so lovely, a little girl. I can't remember the name. It was so nice of her to write to me about her family, and it is a pity her husband Justo was not in the picture. They are good friends of Erwan and us. Rosario is Secretary at the

Office in Caracas in charge of the telex and they were so good to us when we were in Caracas.

Well, as I said, we went to Mass and the christening of the little Kate Haron, new baby of Diana and Liam Haron. It was really a very touching ceremony. Mary and Brendan McCartan were the godfather and godmother. After the church ceremony, we had a very nice dinner reception at the Haron's house, where I met some Irish/Scottish and Welsh people all very sympathiques, with quite a few babies and children; all very sweet. And then we went home about 9 p.m.

I forgot that Rozenn read some part of the Mass at church up at the pulpit, very well indeed. She is the godmother of Fiona McCartan and she minded her while Mary was holding her goddaughter Kate Haron during the ceremony. I went to bed about 10.30; we had thunder and lot of rain during the night.

Sunday 23rd February

Today the weather started very hot and humid. We had a swim and at 10 a.m. we went to Bob for the day. Rozenn and Jim played tennis with Peter and Bob. I wrote letters and at 10 o'clock, the thunder and lightening started very bad. The players had finished their game, and Per put on some nice music, Requiem de Fauré to try to attenuate the clash of the storm. He is a

very nice man, very gentle; Christa his wife is German. Per is Danish. We had to eat on the veranda with the pouring rain around the flash of the lightening and the thunder crashing noise. I felt quite cold, and Rozenn brought me a blanket.

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**Per put on some nice music,  
Requiem de Fauré to try to  
attenuate the clash of the storm.**

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She made a delicious pineapple mousse and Jim brought me a little bottle of delicious red wine. We left at 4 p.m. Paul, Bob's eldest boy was there, very nice boy. We came home, I slept one hour and had a swim. Now I finish this page; Rozenn is studying her Spanish.

Monday 24th February

Today was warm but not a lot of sun. Elizabeth, the new girl, came this morning to help. She is very smiling and works very good. It is a help for Rozenn as she has to finish her essay today to have it posted by special courier tomorrow morning. We had a guest for lunch, some gentleman from the business. Rozenn made a nice lunch as usual in a jiffy. There was delicious Jewish meat, cold, so tender, vegetables assorted from the garden, and I had my usual yoghurt she makes and some of my favourite fruits,

the mango also I think from the garden.

I love mango and paw-paw; they are my two favourite fruits. I have a big plate of paw-paw every morning for breakfast, very good for your bowels, and in fact for everything. I remember Erwan used to get huge one in the shops and when I had a sore somewhere he said eat paw-paw, it is excellent for all the ailments and very healthy. So I did and used to feel better after.

I had a good rest after lunch. During lunch, I was saying to Mr. Herr, our guest of Jewish nationality, that Jean loved his life in Israel and his work in the kibbutz, also when he was on the boat at Gynosar, lake of Galilee fishing and how he came back home after a year in Israel, so healthy and all tan.

After rest, we went to town to get milk in the garage, and tomorrow we go to Metro to get big shopping.

It is a bit thundery this evening; I feel it, and the mozzies are all over the pergola, so Rozenn told me we better go inside, for I get so bad allergy to the bites. I posted a letter to Erwan with one for Jean, Dany and the boys, and also for Rosario and for Diana. I hope I get letters tomorrow from them and from Olwen and David. I hope they are all well. I worry when I have no news, and I hope they receive all my letters, Papa and the rest of the family. I have a bit 'mal au foie', must be too good food I ate

last night at our friends. I must start the photos 'classement'; I am a bit nervous in case I don't do it well. I do my best. See you tomorrow.

Tuesday 25th February

Today was, I thought quite chilly and windy in the morning early. I slept fairly good, although I didn't take any pill. I got a bit of a nightmare, but not too bad, and I slept and dozed off until 8 a.m.

I keep my window a bit open now, and I got used to it as there is a screen to prevent the insects to come and an alarm also for unwanted visitors. I finished last night to put the family reunion in June photos in order in a lovely album. They look really nice, and I must tackle again the 'classement' of the fabulous amount of recipes Rozenn has. I never saw so many of them.

I found the pool a bit chilly, perhaps because I have a bit 'mal au foie'. I don't know why as I don't drink here as much as in Ireland, and the wine I drink is excellent.

We went to Metro to get soda water for me and cigarettes; thanks to Jim's card I get them much cheaper. I try the Dunhill superior mild, but somehow they seem a bit stronger than Satin leaf; but they are so cheap compared to Ireland, only 30p. the packet.

8 p.m.; We had the visit of two very nice Jewish friends of Rozenn and Jim, also friends of Alliette and Jerome, the two Bretons who

came last week. Those Jewish friends have lovely names, one the wife is called Alona, such a soft sound about that name. I am not sure of the spelling. The husband is called Jouri, he is an eye surgeon, both living in Mbabane. They talk French very well and also English and Yiddish, which I think is a beautiful language.

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When I think of the cold they have in Europe, I consider myself lucky.

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They had a drink, but didn't stay long; they were going to a restaurant I think in Manzini. We talked about Israel, and I mentioned the Kibbutz called Gynozar where Jean was; they knew it well and said it was very beautiful on the lake of Galilee. I can't remember the name of the other Kibbutz where Jean was working with a bananas plantation, big load he used to carry on his back in a sort of a rush basket.

The air is getting quite cold tonight comparatively to the evenings last few weeks. But when I think of the cold they have in Europe, I consider myself lucky, as in Ireland, Brittany and London, it must be very cold indeed; and I hope the family over there, specially Olwen and David and Annig, whose house is indeed very cold, don't freeze; also

in Cleggan if Olwen and David are there.

Papa usually doesn't suffer of cold; but poor Tante Genevieve does and I hope she is OK; also Benig and co., they are not very 'frileux' either. But in New York, Yola and Kareen must be cold, although I expect the house is well heated. Let us hope all the world will get warm tomorrow.

Wednesday 26th February

Today was a nice warm day, a bit windy but pleasant. I had my usual swim after breakfast, got up at 8, and slept not too bad. Rozenn went to play tennis for an hour until 10.

I forgot yesterday she went to the jail... to visit some prisoners there and she said she visited the creche where lot of babies, with some born actually in jail. She brought moral support to them and I think she is very good as she is so busy, but always find time to help people in need of moral support or otherwise.

I am sure it means a lot to those people specially those women with young babies, being a mother herself.

Well, today, after her tennis she studied her German, very harsh business that German, as really the book is not so attractive as the Spanish one, and the language is harder to learn.

She studied for two hours at least on the terrasse near me knitting the jumper for Kareen and then prepare lunch, delicious fish

and fresh vegetables picked from her garden, and mango she took so much care to peel for me. I ate it with a bit of ice cream, very nice; and as usual, she ate hers over the sink in the kitchen like a squirrel! She makes me laugh.

Jim brought us at lunch time a long very interesting letter from Erwan, we were so glad to read. I read it a least three times as there was so many descriptions of his trip in Amazonie for instance, with creepy details about the fierce animals he met and the ticks which as he says were devouring his private regions! and had to take a mirror to pick some on his back and front!

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It was such a magic sight all around and along the quiet deserted road with above us and in front a huge orange shape moon, full in the dark blue night, and a few stars appearing faintly.

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He said he was expecting Jean, Dany and the two boys the 20th and had found a house in Margarita island for them near the sea, where he brought them the Sunday 23rd to see if all was well. They would be there till the 6 or 7 March, and 8 March.

Erwan would go by two little planes with them

and Diana to an island very small where the sand is very fine and where there is a research station for the habitat of 'tortues de mer', as the sea is particularly clear there.

I will continue tomorrow the 'recit' of the letter. Rozenn is gone to a meeting of Alliance Francaise and at 8 p.m. we go to Father Myke to supper. I will tell you all about it tomorrow, as I must go and change. See you.

Thursday 27th February

I was not very early this morning and had a good rest after the very enjoyable evening we had at Father Myke place.

We went around 8 p.m. and it was such a magic sight all around and along the quiet deserted road with above us and in front a huge orange shape moon, full in the dark blue night, and a few stars appearing faintly. We drove peacefully, Jim being such a smooth driver; it was very relaxing, the car so comfortable.

We arrived at Father Myke house at same time as Mary and Brendan McCarthan, and their baby Fiona who had a little cold but was so good; she is really a darling baby. Father Myke was greeting us welcome in his solitary white house, very pleasant and situated in the middle of nowhere, as it seems specially at night. There was another Padre, Father Maurice from a town 50 miles away, a missionary; of course in civil clothes you find it

difficult even impossible to know they are priests, as I ask him what is your occupation, he replied I am a Priest.

We had our supper on the verandah facing the green fields and trees lighted with electric lights and in the background the black bush which looks so mysterious in the dark, although the sky was clear, and as I said the full orange moon brighten up and gradually all the stars appeared. I was searching for the Southern Cross and found it; it is my favourite as unique in Africa and invisible in Europe.

We had plates of snails cooked with great care by Father Myke, his specialty. I ate one reluctantly, but Rozenn ate my plate and Mary's one plus her own. This morning she felt a bit queasy and had a glass of Andrews salts to settle her stomach.

I ate nice long sausages and a bit of steak Father had cooked on the braziers; then a delicious pudding he prepared, and coffee. It was so kind of him and her gave me a huge bag of lemons from his garden.

This morning we went to the open market as always so colourful and we went home; Rozenn had to train a young social worker and gave nearly two hours of her time to explain the social work to this nice girl of Swiss origine.

We had lunch, Rozenn had a little sunbathing well deserved; then she studied her German.

I went for my siesta, had a swim. Oh yes, at 9 p.m. or so, as I was stepping in the pool I saw a huge log or something, it is like a huge long 'limace', like a big sausage; anyway I called Rozenn and Solomon picked it up with the net. It is harmless I believe but ghastly looking.

This evening before tea I did a lot of clearance in the photos drawer and select a few for the album.

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**As I was stepping in the pool I saw a huge log or something, it is like a huge long 'limace', like a big sausage.**

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We had tea and I am finishing my report of the day. I was expecting perhaps a letter from Olwen and David or Papa or Tante Genevieve, but maybe tomorrow. I have started a long letter reply to Erwan; will be with you tomorrow, Please God! Good night for now.

Friday 28th February

It was early when I awake this morning, but it was just as well as the sun was shining and the blue sky was really bright.

Rozenn and I went to a sort of auction and she rang up Jim to let him know what was of

interest. Jim join us and after a while, Rozenn and I went back home to prepare lunch, at least Rozenn did. I just set the table.

Jim came and brought a letter from Tante Genevieve which I was glad to get. She is not too well at the moment, but then it is so cold over there as in all Europe. She got my letter, it took 10 days same as hers, not too bad. She rang up Papa and he was well, his eye better.

At 3.30., Mary McCarthan came with Fiona her baby to watch a video; it is a serial on TV, a story of Lord Mountbatten in India. I didn't stay to watch as it is a bit wary in part. The baby was better after her cold.

I wrote or rather finish a letter to Erwan, wrote one to Tante Genevieve and one to Kareen. Tomorrow we go to Mass, Rozenn and I, and then we go for supper to Mary and Brendan.

It was quite warm today. Rozenn continue the study of German and it is hard going, as also the method book is far less attractive than the Spanish one. I hope to have a letter from Olwen and David tomorrow. It seems a long time now. There was a lovely sunset these past few evenings and a full moon. That explains I expect, that I feel a bit lunatic, as Olwen used to explain to me. Tomorrow is another day and I will tell you all about it. I feel sleepy tonight. We, Rozenn and I, are both in the lounge, her 'plongée dans ses journaux', me in mine. Night.



Saturday 1st March

I am one day behind with my journal, and although I am writing this Sunday, I must tell you that yesterday, Saturday, was a very nice day. We had a lovely sunshine and I enjoy my swim very much. Jim was very busy and had to work all day to do the 'inventaire' at his warehouse. So he was very tired finishing late and had only a short break for a snack at lunch time.

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Jim came and brought a letter from Tante Genevieve which I was glad to get.

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Rozenn and I went to Mass which was said by a different priest, a very nice Father and after Mass we went to have a lovely evening at Mary and Brendan with their two sweet daughters. They made us such a warm welcome and it was a real family reunion. I like them all very much.

We went home about 10 p.m. Jim stayed at home as he was very tired. Mary and Brendan proposed me to come with them to spend Sunday; I really would have loved to go with them to their Sunday outing, and I told them I might go if it was not too much trouble for

Yann, Marie-Magdeleine and Tante Genevieve at Evran in earlier days.

them. I will tell you then what happens Sunday.

Sunday 2nd March

We finally went to the Mondel, as I was not feeling too well, and didn't want to upset Mary and Brendans' plans, although Mary very kindly insisted that I would come with them and rang us up. But I decided it was perhaps better I go with Rozenn and Jim to Mondel in case I would feel I had to come back here too tired.

It was a fine weather until 5 p.m., but I felt tired and Rozenn came to drive me back home. I had a rest, but the thunder started and lightening and I couldn't rest very long. It is still quite stormy, I mean lot of rain and I feel the humidity pouring all over me. Tomorrow will be better I expect.

Monday 3rd March

The day started very nice and warm. We went to get the milk at the garage as usual, such fancy! to get milk, creamy beautiful milk in a can with Barrett on the lid in a garage; it will amuse 'follement' Tristan.

I had two or three swims and had the pleasure of receiving a letter from Papa at lunch time which came very quickly. He was well but had a terrible journey from Evran to St.Brieuc, taking two hours by the Siberian weather, snow and ice and slippery road.

But he had to go for an important appointment with the docteur. He continued his treatment at the hospital and I hope he will have good results of all his analyses and various tests.

Rozenn had prepared a delicious meal for a dinner party Rozenn and Jim gave in the evening, with Vera and Terry, very nice couple.

Vera knows Benig as one of her sons was in Hendon Police College and she met Benig when visiting him. Then also present were Jeanne and Joe, who are very sympathique. Jeanne works in a travel agency and is so sweet; her husband is a senior citizen involved in a lot of administrative boards.

We had a delicious 'coq au vin' with mushrooms and vegetables and rice; and a cheese board; also lychees 'au cassis' with fresh cream. We had coffee on the pergola and at 11 p.m. the rain started to fall, but we saw a very strange formation of clouds in a curious shape very mysterious. At 12 p.m. nearly all our visitors went. It was a pleasant evening and Rozenn and Jim were excellent hosts.

Tuesday 4th March

I got up quite late today, was a bit worried and upset over various things. Then we went to town to do a bit of shopping and came back for lunch.

We heard then on the radio a sinister



news happened in Caracas, a big fire in the Chilean Embassy, and I think the Ambassador was victim in that terrible fire; they said there were lot of casualties and I got quite alarmed and 'boulversée' in case Erwan could have been involved in such a tragic fire.

Jim arrived and seeing me so upset proposed me to phone to Erwan or to telex. I told him it would be very kind of him if he could telex. He reassured me and gave me a letter from

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### I got quite alarmed and 'boulversée' in case Erwan could have been involved in such a tragic fire.

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Papa, another one which took nearly two weeks to come; and then he telexed as soon as he went to his office to Erwan and rang Rozenn at 4 p.m. to reassure me that he got the reply from Erwan and that all was fine for Erwan, that the 'incendie' was confined in one building in Chilean Embassy, far from the Delegation, that Jean and family were all well enjoying their holidays in Margarita Island, and that he will ring us some time this week.

It was very kind of Jim to telex so quickly and to reassure me when I got

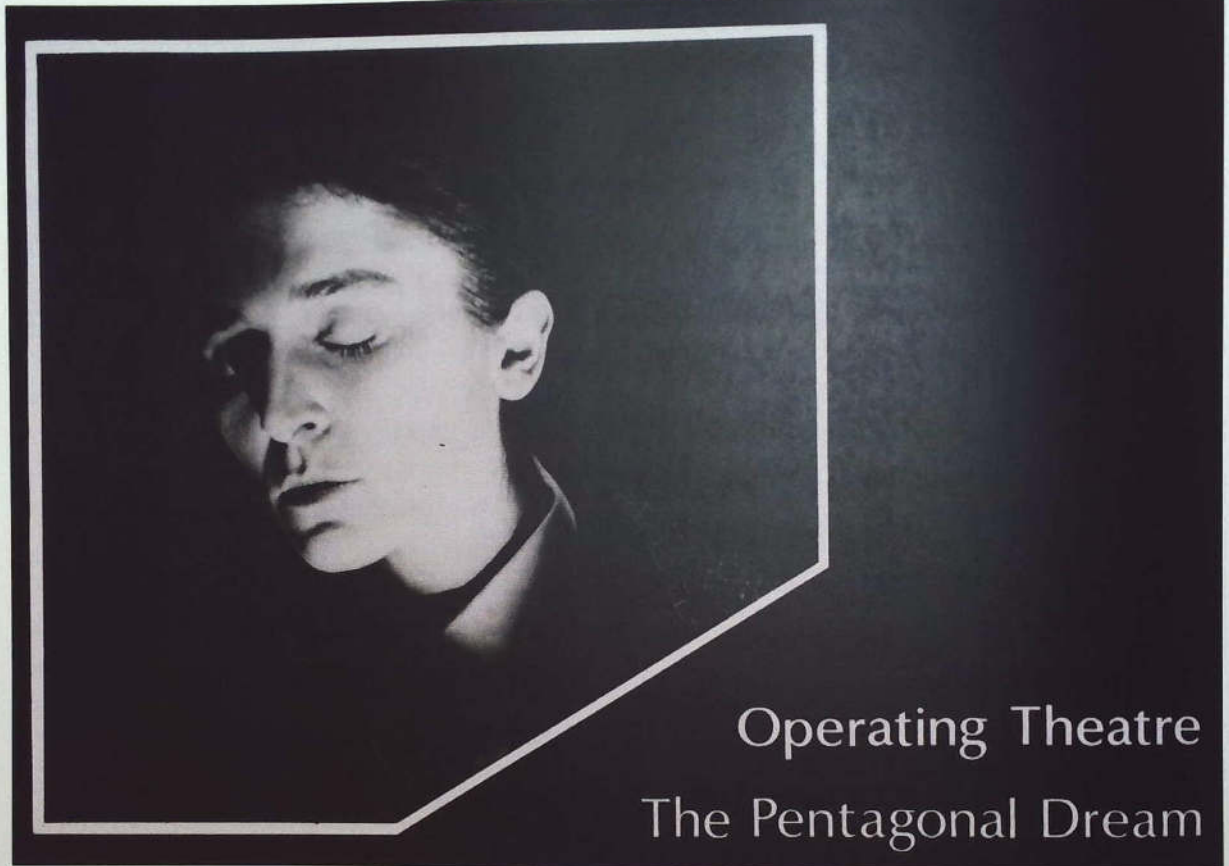
the reply from Erwan. So I felt better.

We went with Rozenn to visit a friend, Lee, who lives in a big ranch 20 miles from Manzini in a huge farm with her husband and their little boy. We had tea; it was really lovely and peaceful and most interesting about various palm sort of bush called something like Chicadas; the view was so vast on a large horizon with hills of Mozambique in the background. We came back home, had a glorious swim, tea, and now I am leaving you until tomorrow.

Wednesday 5th March

I am far behind in my journal, so I have to write backwards in retrospective; I am not sure this is the correct word.

Today I got up late too, and we went, Rozenn and I, to Mbabane as Jim was in Jo'burg. We had a stroll around the town, then we went to this very attractive gallery where we went two years ago, and had lunch in their little restaurant in a small garden. It was my treat, but Rozenn didn't eat much. I made an urgent appeal to Rozenn to ask the lady in charge if I could have some wine as they don't serve alcohol or wine. I felt a bit embarrassed as the poor Rozenn had to catch the lady's attention to explain to her my addiction and urge for a glass of wine, but she was very nice and gave me a glass of white wine, as she has no red. Rozenn didn't want any.



The original poster for Olwen and David's show, The Pentagonal Dream.

We went shopping and Rozenn had a go at a huge cone of chocolate ice cream, which I must say didn't appeal to me, being so full of chicken curry delicious.

We came back and Rozenn tried to install the video, as three friends artistes were coming to see 'Diamond Body'. They came at 7 p.m.; we had a drink on the veranda and Rozenn in a jiffy prepared a scrumptious Paella, also a very exotique salad and desert of pineapple with cottage cheese a la menthe.

We watched the video which was not very good as it was a copy of a copy, but still not too bad specially for people who didn't see the play before. The three friends were quite impressed anyway of Olwen's talent and were very anxious to meet her and David. They stayed until 12 midnight, and seemed to enjoy their evening; but it was tiring for Rozenn who do so much in one day. We went to bed at 1 a.m. and we both had a good sleep. Good night.

Thursday 6th March

Got up very late and sunned under the pergola all morning. Rozenn was busy in the house and studied as well her Spanish and German. Then we went to get Jim at the airport; he was very feverish and flu-ish, very tired after his trip to Jo'burg.

We were also very glad as when he came back from work at 5 p.m. he brought us a big envelope from Olwen and David containing one letter for Rozenn and Jim, and one long letter for me, which we were glad to read, full of good news about their work and great success at their play, also lots of articles and reports about the play *Pentagonal Dream*, and full of praise for Olwen performance; as they described often Olwen performance as 'magique'.

There were a few photos of her, very good and an album of *Operating Theatre*, so well made.

Their success is really spectacular and I am so glad for her and David, who works so hard; they sure deserve it.

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### They described often Olwen's performance as 'magique'.

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The great news was that Olwen said they will most probably come on 27th and will be with us for Easter, Please God.

I hope nothing important in their work would prevent their coming, as we would all be very disappointed.

Poor Rozenn spent a lot of her time trying to work out the best way for them to come. We still don't know about Papa's date of arrival, and in a way it would be better if they could all come together and that we could meet them in Jo'burg, but it might not be that way, and we cannot say much until we know for sure about the three of them, dates of arrival.

Anyway the essential is that they are both well and that their works go on very well indeed. Jim went to bed early and slept a bit. We had our tea and were watching the *Far Pavilions*. I read the book, but it is a serial so we are in suspense for another week. We read carefully all the reports of the works of Olwen and David and went to bed. It was a very warm day. See

you tomorrow.

Friday 7th March

Jim was better this morning and was as usual like Rozenn early risers. I was not very early but I wanted to wash my hair and to write to Olwen and David a long letter, as someone was coming to see Rozenn and could post the letter express.

Rozenn had a very busy morning and was training this nice Suisse girl for social work; but she came late, and it was a rush then for Rozenn to prepare lunch. When Jim arrived from work there was no mail today. I had a rest after lunch as usual, but Rozenn was disturbed from her study as someone called to see her at 4 p.m.

We went to town; it was very hot indeed and we managed to get a few things done and went to visit Mary McCarthan, but they were gone for the day. So we came back home. Rozenn had her energetique swim; I can't remember the number of strokes, but it is quite Olympic style and then she got vapours and opened all doors and windows in the lounge! Mind you it was a nice cool breeze, but I feel it rather treacherous when you are in vapours!

Jim came back home and we are having a lovely sunset evening. I feel I don't do much or practically nothing to help Rozenn as I would like to, but I have not much energy with this lovely hot weather. I must go on the scale

tomorrow, hoping I might have lost a few ounces.

I hope all the family in Caracas is well. We may have Erwan on the phone perhaps tonight with perhaps Jean and co. They are off this week end altogether with Diana in a little island full of 'tortues de mer', beautiful white sand and transparent sea. Tristan and Oisin will love it. Hope Papa is well and will soon arrive. No news from Benig; I hope they are OK, also little Annig Barrett, Yola, Kareen; long time since we had news of them. I say good evening until tomorrow.

Saturday 8th March

I was fairly early this morning, but the sun was shining and warm, so I got up and had a swim after my breakfast. I had quite a long swim as the water was nice and warm; but I had a bit 'mal au foie' worrying about lots of things as usual.

I chatted with Rozenn about my worries and the fear that she felt Olwen and David might not be able to come on account of their work, but I want to keep faith that they would.

Rozenn was busy all morning with making delicious fruit cake, watering her lovely plants and lots of things in the house including giving a bath to Jacques and clipping his curls. He is all done up and lively today, Jacques is. Then Jim came back from work and we had lunch, very nice grilled fish and variety of vegetables very tasty. Then I went for a sleep

until 4 p.m., had another swim, it was very hot and Rozenn went for one hour to tennis.

At 5.30 p.m. we went to Mass. I was not very concentrating and I hurt my knee by mistake trying to kneel down on the bench. I couldn't pray well; perhaps I didn't try hard enough... It is not easy.

We had a little drive in nice roads behind the house where there is a lovely view. Then we came back, had tea, and Rozenn is now on the pergola having some fresh air. I fear the mozzies, so I stay in the lounge with Jacques and Tiger and I say good evening, because I feel too warm to write any longer. Tomorrow is another day, and I don't feel more inspired.

#### Sunday 9th March

The day was really nice and restful. We had a luxurious morning/noon aperitif au champagne which Jim gave us as nice surprise, delicious champagne served in very elegant glasses of crystal and 'degusté', I should say, sipped gently under the pergola with a blissful sunny hot day, with the transparent pool at our feet.

Rozenn for the first time sunbathed for a while. I was so glad she was relaxing and resting for once. Jim cleaned the pool with lot of long pipes, sort of Hoover thing and took such a care with lot of patience to scrub the bottom of the pool. After our champagne we had lunch and

I went to bed; I slept for two hours. At 4 p.m. Rozenn and Jim went to the airport to meet Bob and we relaxed around and in the pool until supertime. Tonight there is some lightning; I do hope there will not be thunder at night. Good night; the crickets are singing.

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**Jim was doing a bit of gardening and had a hard job fixing sellotape on the ivy creeper on the wall on top of the ladder.**

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#### Monday 10th March

It was a holiday today, Commonwealth Day. We really had a lovely quiet day the three of us, very relaxing and restful. I started to be quite hot and Rozenn and I did some sunbathing. I didn't stay long in the full sun; for the first time I stay with my bathing suit on the long chair lying flat on my tummy, but I prefer not to stay too long at a time.

I was writing to Annig, little Annig B.; Rozenn was doing some Spanish, while Jim was doing a bit of gardening and had a hard job fixing sellotape on the ivy creeper on the wall on top of the ladder; such a meticulous job and tiring too for his back. I must say the ivy is growing since I am here and covered highly the nice wall white. It is very effective and decorative.

Then we all had a swim and lunch, delicious chicken with stuffing so tender with the vegetables I like so much, and I was allowed a nice exotique dessert same as Jim which Rozenn made in a jiffy as usual, a tranche of sponge cake she made and some ice cream.

First she just roast the sponge a bit on a pan in butter, then put on the ice cream on top and 'arrosé le tout' with liquor of cacao; absolutely delightful to eat (as I'm trying to lose some weight, Rozenn gave me a nice portion, not too big)

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I was allowed a nice exotique dessert same as Jim which Rozenn made in a jiffy as usual.

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Then we had a rest; I slept until 4.40 p.m. At about midday the thunder and lightening started with lot of rain; but at 5 p.m. I went for a swim, it was still raining a bit but the pool was very warm.

Now after trying to fix a dress for Rozenn, I gave up as I couldn't see, and I finished my long letter to Annig. Rozenn, like Papa and Erwan, was buried in a big amount of newspapers and she did also her Spanish... and I finish my page for today.

The sky has cleared up and hopefully there

will not be any more thunder as I don't like it at night. Perhaps we will have a call from Erwan as they have to be back last night in Caracas from the Island 'des tortues de mer'. See you tomorrow.

Tuesday 11th March

The day started being very cloudy and heavy. I did some writing to Olwen and David as last night we got a phone call from Olwen to confirm their definitive arrival for the 1st April in Manzini. We were so glad to hear her voice and to know that now for sure we will see them soon.

They couldn't get any flight on any airline around the 27th and Easter; so they finally got one booked on Zambian airline, London, Lusaka, Jo'burg, Manzini, where they would arrive on the Tuesday afternoon. We were very glad that at least now we are sure of their coming.

We didn't talk long as the call is costly from Dublin to here, but Olwen said that they were well and like us looking forward to their arrival to see us.

They are coming by Zambian Airways, hope this airline is OK; I expect so. Olwen said they got an open return ticket which is good as it means I could go back with them if Papa doesn't return direct to Dublin. It is very good news.

Now we wait for Papa to precise us the date of his arrival; Olwen said it could be around the 20th March. We had no news



from him yet or from Jean and co., Erwan or Benig. We also wait impatiently for news from Yola, Allen, Kareen and Annig.

After lunch the thunder and lightning started and it goes on and on. I feel funny and a bit heady.

We saw Mary and the lovely Fiona baby today. Mary was a bit depressed, but I expect it is normal when she thinks of her little boy Brian. We had a chat with her and came home for lunch.

Tonight the thunder and lightning seem to be gone; hopefully it will not come back tonight.

We were told today by some friends of Rozenn that she knew a good dressmaker Chinese who might do me an evening dress with the material Erwan gave me from India. I know exactly the shape I would want, very flowing with large sleeves and round opening neck.

Rozenn is studying her Spanish and she will become quite an expert. The rain is starting to fall heavily again. Let us hope tomorrow will be fine and dry.

The fact that it rains Rozenn doesn't have to 'arroser' her garden. 'Le ciel s'en charge copieusement.' I leave you to stick some photos in album. À demain.

Marie-Magdeleine writing letters on the pergola of Rozenn and Jim's house in Manzini.

Wednesday 12th March

It was quite humid and cloudy today. We, Rozenn and I went to the open market to get some wood carving mask in dark wood, very decorative for sending to Yola, who might find a market for this sort of decorative art object African in the States; also little rush basket which could be used for bread or other purposes, very pretty and some necklaces of 'tornado' pearl, pretty colours. I should think they will sell well in the States.

We got fruits and vegetables also. It is really quite an exotique atmosphere in that market where all the African women chatted away, some with their lovely babies or small children with them. They look so cute with their big innocent eyes and I love to look at them; some smile at you.

After that we had the ordeal of Metro; I felt the poor Rozenn goes to lot of fatigue and trouble to go to that Metro, just for me really to get my cigarettes cheaper, as she got very little for her household; also for the soda water I get cheaper there too.

When I think I only paid 30p per packet of cigarettes there instead of 1 Pound 70 in Dublin; that is thanks to Jim's card and the patience of Rozenn as we have to wait for hours at the cashier. I never saw people working with such a slowness. Perhaps it is the heat, although it is quite cool in that store.

Anyway we came home, had lunch, nice fish in wine sauce Rozenn made. Elizabeth the African girl didn't come today, perhaps on account of her little girl who broke her wrist. We have to wait for hours at the cashier. I never saw people working with such a slowness.

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We have to wait for hours at the cashier. I never saw people working with such a slowness.

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I help Rozenn with the beds and few things. Then after lunch I had a long sleep; I felt tired, Rozenn too but she had to struggle hard to learn her German, which is such a difficult language, specially learning like that on your own without coaching. I think she is very brave.

We met Mary McCarthan in town this morning. She looks tired, she is such a sweet person. I did a bit of sewing, not very much and wrote some Easter cards to send overseas to the girls and the grandchildren Musgrave and Carrer-Fouéré.

Now I want to sniff the glue to stick some photos of album Rozenn had. I felt rather high sniffing that glue, but must try to get a milder scent one. We may have news from Papa tomorrow about his arrival; it is about time. So long for now.





Thursday 13th March

I was glad to awake with the sun a 'travers les rideaux', so I decided to have a go at sunbathing.

I did half an hour on my tummy flat; it was OK; but then I had enough of feeling I was wasting my time and went in the full hot sun to sit in my bathing suit to do a bit of sewing for Rozenn. I was concentrating on my sewing, felt a bit hot and heady, but wanted to get a bit of tan. So I continued to sew until 1 o'clock and went for a cool off in the gorgeous pool. I set the table and we waited for Jim a bit; Rozenn was doing a lot of machine sewing in the meantime.

At 2 pm Jim rang, he wasn't coming for lunch.

Coronation of King Mswati III in Swaziland, attended by Yann.

So we Rozenn and I had lunch, and I went to bed but got quite a headache, so didn't sleep, but Mary was there with her lovely baby Fiona, so I wanted to see her baby. I went for a swim and felt better, but tonight my brain seems to be frying! as Rozenn said.

Poor Jim came back home at 6 p.m. and told us his ordeal of having to stand up all morning from 9 to 1 at the Queen's Palace with a number of Chefs d'entreprises Europeans, standing up in the full sun with no hat permitted, no smoking

and no drinking all that time while the Queen was attending a parade of her subjects dancing and swinging in their native gears and outfits. This ceremony was organised by the Queen of Swaziland to celebrate the formation of this regiment of Europeans who contribute to the development commercially and otherwise of the country.

I think Rozenn would explain all this better than me, and Jim would too. I get a bit mixed up specially with my boiling head tonight. But poor Jim came back exhausted and his face all red with the exposure under the blazing sun. It was no joke.

Well, we are going to watch 'Far Pavilion'; it is very good. I read the book long time ago and can't remember the story very well. But the colour didn't work, so it was a pity.

I went to bed early as I felt tired and hot. I still have no letter since a while and hope they the family are all well, and that we will get a letter tomorrow. I wonder if they receive my letters and how long it takes to reach Brittany, Caracas, Dublin, New York, London...

Friday 14th March

This morning I wash my hair; it is always an ordeal. The weather was partly sunny, partly cloudy. I did not expose myself to the sun anyway. I had a good swim, did quite a bit of sewing for

Rozenn and we had lunch.

Then rest; I slept a good hour, then we went, Rozenn and I, hunting on a big shopping spree for tons of cheese, loads of bread and various things for this musical evening at the French Alliance Saturday.

I am a bit scared to find myself in the middle of lot of French people, and all 'bleu, blanc, rouge'. However I be with Rozenn, and I admire the way she go to such trouble to organise this concert food wise.

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This morning I wash my hair; it is always an ordeal.

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We went back. I feel a bit tired today and found the air very oppressive and heavy. No letter again today; we are waiting for Papa to send confirmation of his arrival, but there was a long letter from Kareen with photos very nice of herself, Yola, Allen and family over there. They went to Florida and loved it after the cold of New York.

Karen seems well organised with her evening classes and all her occupations with the little Heather. She miss her folks of course and I think she misses a bit Ireland; the way she talks, I mean she writes about Irish Pubs and Irish people she met. We certainly

miss you pet and hope you are happy.

Saturday 15th March

It started fine and hot, and I did some sun bathing for not more than half an hour on my tummy. Then I did a bit of sewing and wrote to Tante Genevieve.

Jim came for lunch and brought a letter from Papa and one from Tante Genevieve. Papa's letter was frustrating in the way that he did not precise at all his date of arrival, just saying he didn't think he would go to Dublin before coming here. It was a nice letter but he didn't say a word about his health, so I hope he is OK.; very busy with the elections which finish tomorrow.

Tante Genevieve's letter was not so good news as she had been quite sick, but felt better. It was the bitter cold of Europe, specially unusual in Brittany which affected her so much. I wrote to her every

week and I hope she is recovered now.

In the evening we went, Rozenn and I, to that French concert which was enjoyable in parts, but really Rozenn gave so much of her time and fatigue to organise the reception after; it was a shame that this M.Roche, the so-called representative of the French Government did not

even give her a word of thanks for all she did — typical of some French people. So I think she should save her energy to herself and the study she has to do and all her numerous activities. She is so good she gives too much of herself to everything she does. We came back home around 12.30 p.m. and she was exhausted.



Annig with Marie-Magdeleine and Erwan on a visit to Ezulwini Valley

Sunday 16th March  
The day started very hot and cloudy. We

went to Bob; Rozenn and Jim played tennis and I wrote letters. We had lunch under the tree, but the thunder started and lightning,

and we finished our meal on the verandah.

Then we went to see Vicky and Mac from the Wild Coast. They are so nice people and I was very glad to see Vicky, always the same and so warm and affectionate. We stayed with them for two hours and went back by the most appalling storm, thunder and lightning all over the sky. Jim drove very well; there was torrential rain and visibility was bad. We arrived exhausted, had tea and I went to bed at 9 p.m., slept until 8 a.m. this morning. Rozenn was very tired too feeling the two past hectic days and apparently the storm continued but I didn't hear.

Monday 17th March St. Patrick's Day  
It has rained a lot and I went all the same for a swim under the rain; the water was warm in the pool.

At lunchtime Jim brought a letter from Tante Genevieve; she was very depressed and I was upset to read her letter. I hope she will soon be better. No news from Papa or Erwan. I wrote to Tante Genevieve and to Erwan; Rozenn posted the letters.

I couldn't sleep this afternoon, but tried to rest a bit until 4 p.m. It is a very dark day, still drizzling like all day, but I still got in the pool after my rest. It was quite warm the water. Perhaps Jim will have another mail this evening.

I think of Ireland today and of Olwen, David

and little Annig B., who I hope will have a nice St. Patrick day; also Erwan, Jean, Dany, the boys and Benig, would probably have a big party like we had last year at Erwan's place. Yola and Kareen with Allen will also see quite a lot of St. Patrick's Day celebrations in New York. We are going to Mary and Brendan tonight, and I am sure it will be a great party with all the Irish people around. I will tel you all about it tomorrow. I am still a bit 'mal au foie', but I think it is the worry I have for Tante Genevieve and not having news from Caracas crowd.

I want to help Rozenn a bit as she is doing the washing up. I could dry it up for her. I wish I could help her more, but I don't feel too energetic.

We drank mint tea which is good for the 'foie' and we had supper and went to bed not too late after a lovely party at Mary and Brendan with all the Irish people so friendly; they sang songs and we had lovely food, goulash made delicious by Mary and a lot of salad and deserts, some made by Rozenn. It was a very enjoyable evening and I felt at home with all those people mostly from the North of Ireland.

Tuesday 18th March

Yesterday I forgot to mention I had a very upsetting letter from Benig. I can't go into details, but Rozenn and Jim read it and I will

wait until Papa comes to answer to it. I couldn't really help but be upset about it. Rozenn and Jim were very good and we talked about it together. I can't say anymore here about it, perhaps one day. I feel quite sick all day with upsetting and in the evening I went with Rozenn to see part of a French film at some friends house, but my mind was full of the worries that letter gave me and I could not concentrate.

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I am sure it will be a great party  
with all the Irish people around.

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We stayed until 10 at those friends and the film was OK, but a bit severe. I went to bed, took sleeping pill and Maxolon as I had very 'mal au foie' from anxiety and I went to sleep at 11 p.m., but awake at 1 a.m., couldn't go back to sleep. I smoked a cigarette and I had to get up to make a cup of tea after taking another tablet and a sedative. I went to sleep again until 7 a.m., got up and after my breakfast went for a swim. I was still quite upset and Rozenn talked to me a bit and comforted me. Then I wrote to Tante Genevieve as her morale was not too good and she had been quite sick.

I went to bed after lunch, was so tired I slept until 5 p.m. Rozenn went to tennis and is not

back yet.

She rang Papa last night; he is coming on Good Friday and Rozenn arranged for him to get a seat on the Jo'burg/Manzini flight, as we can't get to Jo'burg at Easter weekend with all the traffic and queue at the border. Rozenn also rang Tante Dircé and she is expecting us Friday, as Rozenn had to go for a meeting at the University and shopping. We will be back Sunday.

I am glad Papa is coming Good Friday; he sounded well on the phone. I am trying to finish Kareen's jumper. I still feel quite upset but try to forget about it for the time being; will show the letter to Papa when he comes.

Wednesday 19th March

Nothing much happened today. I sunbathed a bit and write letters.

We had lunch; Rozenn was trying to study a bit before lunch, but she is so busy with lot of things. She got top marks in German for the last paper. She really deserves it as her method book is very 'hardue'.

I rested a bit after lunch and started my packing for Jo'burg. It was very sunny and warm. No news yet from anyone. Rozenn managed to get a booking on the flight Jo'burg/Manzini for Papa for Good Friday.

After tea we saw 'Tender is the Night' on video. It was very good. It is a bother to wait

one week for the next part. I made a mistake with my page journal... Sorry. My head is a bit tired and I have lot of worries. The mosquitoes are very bad and bite fiercely.

Thursday 20th March

Today, Jean, Dany, Tristan and Oisin are leaving Caracas for Carces via Paris. I hope they will have a good journey and that they enjoyed their stay with Erwan up to the last minute. He will be lonely now, although Benig is there since the 16th with Suzanne.

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**My head is a bit tired and I have lot of worries. The mosquitoes are very bad and bite fiercely.**

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I got a very upsetting letter from Benig before she left London, but I don't want to talk about it here. I hope things will sort out for the best for her, her family and ourselves.

We are off to Jo'burg tomorrow, Rozenn and I; she has to attend a meeting for her German and Spanish study, and we will be able to see the family. It is warm today, but will be colder in Jo'burg. We are coming back Sunday. No news yet of Erwan; I hope he is OK. I worry when I do not get news and hope he might ring one of these days, as he mentioned in his

telex. It is today that we saw the video 'Tender is the Night'...I am one day behind...Sorry.

Friday 21st March

I couldn't sleep very well as I knew we had to leave early. I went for a swim at 8.30., and I must go and dry the dishes to help Rozenn as she has yet lots to do before we depart for Jo'burg.

We went at 10 a.m., had a good drive up to a place where we had lunch and arrived in Jo'burg where we went to the Indian bazaar; but I was very tired and I couldn't concentrate on any choice. I was sorry I gave Rozenn an extra run to that place as she had so much to do.

We went to other shops for Rozenn's purchases and at 6 p.m., we arrive at Tante Dircé. We had supper with Annick and Chloé; such a lovely girl. Guillaume came to say hello and I went to bed early as I was jaded. I slept well with a pill, and at 7, I awake. Tante Dircé was very nice and was glad to see us. Darig came to say hello too in the evening.

Saturday 22nd March

Today Rozenn had to go to Pretoria for her assignment at the University and an exam. She came back at 1 p.m. Tante Dircé and I went to the cemetery to put flowers on TonTon Paul's grave, and we stayed there a good long time; it was so peaceful and I talked to TonTon Paul in my mind, asking him to help me and my

family with our problems and to protect us all.

Then we had lunch and I went to sleep until 6 p.m. I had a swim in the pool in the morning. At evening time Tante Dircé had to go to some function with Guillaume; we went for coffee at Darig and Anna Maria. I was glad to see the family. Poor Rozenn was very tired after her journey.

Sunday 23rd March

We left Jo'burg at 10, and had a tiring journey in a way. We stopped at a café for lunch, it was a bit crazy and pooffy, but not too bad. We arrived at Bob at 4, and pick up Jim. Then we went home and I went to bed early after tea. I was exhausted, so was Rozenn I am sure.

Monday 24th March

This morning was quite cold and raining. I still went for a swim, but the water in the pool was quite chilly. No mail again. Oh yes, a letter from Papa just confirming he was coming on Friday; hope he will have a good journey. He seems well and doesn't give much news.

We had lunch and I went for a rest. Then I swam again under the rain; we had Mary and Brendan and 2 other friends for supper with Father Myke who brought us a lot of oranges, lemons and a big grapefruit and a bottle of red wine. He is so nice. I went to bed at 12, when

Mary and Brendan left, as I was very tired, although I wish I could have helped Rozenn with clearing everything. I slept with the 2 pills until 8.

Tuesday 25th March

I got up late; it was chilly, rather cold, but I went for the swim quickly. The water was cold. I did some sewing while Rozenn was studying her Spanish. She got top marks at her exam, also in German. She is very brainy really, as German is so hard.

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Father Myke brought us a lot of oranges, lemons and a big grapefruit and a bottle of red wine. He is so nice.

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We stayed on the verandah frontwards; there was sun and shelter from the wind. I swam again but felt cold a bit.

Still no mail from Erwan or Jean. I try to sleep but couldn't as I had 'mal au foie'. I got up at 3.30 p.m., swam again and had mint tea with Rozenn. Now the sky is very beautiful, big dark clouds and some bright horizon with the sun going to bed.

We are going to see a French film tonight at some friends; the lady is expecting triplets...

imagine! I hope the film will be good.

I pray to God I will have news from Erwan, and Jean and famille tomorrow. I don't seem to be very quick at sewing, but my glasses are not too good and I can't see very well at times. I must go and get a sip of wine. It is getting dark earlier now.

Wednesday 26th March

This morning was a bit cool. I went for a swim but felt a bit cold and had a sore back. I stay in the sun for a while and got warm. Then I knit a bit of Kareen's jumper, nearly finished. We had lunch. There was a letter from Tante Genevieve, not very cheerful, she is still not well. I went after lunch with Rozenn to Mbabane. She had her hair done and then I went with her to do some shopping and visit some friends. We came back at about 6 or so. I felt very tired. I went to bed early, at 8.30 p.m. I think. No news from Erwan or Jean. I hope tomorrow I have some news.

Thursday 27th March

Today it started cloudy and now the sun is shining. I don't know if I should sunbathe or not. Rozenn is very busy preparing Papa's room as well as Olwen and David's. Papa is coming tomorrow. They say the weather will be nicer this week and warmer. I hope so. I do

so love the heat and have never enough of it.

I pray I have news from Erwan and Jean today. We had a nice letter the other day from Yola and Kareen, both well. I must write to them.

Friday 28th March

Papa is arriving today. We rang up Tante Dircé at lunchtime; she said he was there in the garden. We talked to him; he sounded tired, no wonder after this 'farfelu' airline, stopping four hours here and there. We went to meet him in Manzini airport at 5 p.m. He looked well but tired. We exchanged news, some good, some not so good.

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I bought a track suit trousers pinky/red with two pockets for 2 pounds 50.

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Rozenn went to 'chemin de croix' for Good Friday. I stayed in the sun asking help of God for all our troubles. We were glad of course to see Papa, but had to show him Benig's letter, very upsetting. Anyway I went to bed at 8 p.m. straight after tea as I was tired.

I awoke at 10.30 p.m., and went for a smoke in the lounge, where Rozenn was working on her German and Spanish. I took another pill and went back to sleep until 8 a.m.



Saturday 29th March

Today was nice warm day. I went for a swim, and then with Rozenn and Papa we went shopping in town. I bought a track suit trousers pinky/red with two pockets for 2 pounds 50. After showing the town to Papa we came back home, had a swim and then had lunch. Then we, Papa and I, went for a sleep. Rozenn was busy working all day. I awoke at 3.30 p.m. and went for a swim.

Oh yes, this morning Jim showed me the rest of the video 'Tender is the Night'. It was very sad. The actor, David is fantastique, so handsome and attractive. This evening we go to dine with the Chief Justice and his wife with drinks beforehand. I tell you about it tomorrow.

Sunday 30th March

Paques - Easter today; a beautiful day. We went to Mass, the Swazi Mass with beautiful singing. Some were being baptised at Mass. We stayed 2 hours and left after the communion.

Jim came back from tennis at Bob at 2 p.m. We then had champagne and a lovely lunch. Rozenn cooked with delicious 'mousse au chocolate', and Easter eggs Papa brought from Brittany. Rozenn put flowers on the table and little 'poussin' on the chocolate.

Then I went to bed and slept for three hours. Papa and Rozenn went for a walk, very brave. I had a swim at 6 p.m. and now I have 'mal au

foie', too much wine and champagne.

We tried to ring Yola and Kareen but they were out. We will try again later. I think of all the family scattered all over the world, and hope that all have a nice Easter. I am still sleepy. I will have some mint tea.

Monday 31st March

It was cold today. I went for a swim but couldn't get warm. Friends of Rozenn and Jim came for drinks. Then we had lunch.

I tried to go for a sleep but couldn't as I was upset when I heard Papa saying he was going to Sweden and Wales in May and June, so I will be on my own again for long time when I return to Ireland.

I can't write properly as I have hiccup. Rozenn and Papa must have gone for a walk; I don't know where is Jim. I made some mint tea and will write to Erwan. I hope it will be warm and sunny tomorrow when David and Olwen arrive.

I say no more now as I am quite upset with the thought of being nearly always on my own and more now once I go back to Ireland.

Tuesday 1st April

Today Olwen and David arrived. We were so happy to see them coming out of the plane, like 2 white lovely seagulls, all dressed in white. They

look very well but tired. It was so great to be together. We exchanged news and had champagne on the verandah with the sunset. It was great joy.

We had tea, lovely soup and then I went to bed early, as I was tired with so much excitement and happiness, which made me sleepy. They went to bed early too.

I had a long lovely letter from Erwan and 2 beautiful cards from Jean and family. It was a happy day, although I felt the shadow of the worry about Benig.

Papa slept in my room, but no way I could sleep, not used to share room and his snoring; the poor thing can't help it. So I went in the kitchen for nearly an hour, had tea and try to go back to sleep with 2 more sleeping tablets, but no success; so I got up and made my breakfast. Tomorrow we will arrange a bed for Papa in the lounge; I hope he will be OK.

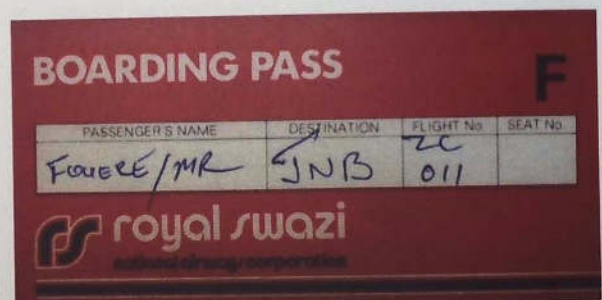
I could try to sleep in the lounge, but I am a bit scared and will be far from the loo.

Wednesday 2nd April

Today was glorious, sunny warm day. At about 10 a.m., we all had a swim, at least, Olwen, David, me and Rozenn. Olwen and David brought news of little Annig and a lovely letter from her. I wrote to her today. We miss her and the 2 little sisters. Olwen and David went for a walk in

the village; then we had lunch, lovely chicken Rozenn cooked so well, and pudding very nice.

I went to bed after lunch and I slept 2 solid hours, even snored I believe. We then had a swim while Papa and Rozenn went to town. I stayed in the sun. I wrote a letter to Benig as good as I could, as I want her to be sure of my love. The day is going and I finish this until tomorrow. So lovely to see Olwen and David looking like 2 lovers they are; Bless them, and thanks to Rozenn and Jim warm welcome in their beautiful home. We are all happy.



# My Séjour in South Africa



1995

I departed from Dublin to Johannesburg via London. David came to the airport to put me on the plane, as I had requested assistance and a wheel chair. The flight to London was short; then in London I got assistance and was directed to the business lounge. There I had a drink and a snack, and at 8 p.m. someone came to wheel me up to the plane for Jo'burg.

I had a comfortable seat and settled down for a ten hour flight. We were served, first a glass of sparkling wine, and a snack; then later on they served us a big dinner. I had a vegetarian dish of polenta quite nice, and a delicious desert and coffee. After a smoke, I settled down to sleep, part of the way. At 5 o'clock, they gave us hot towels, and some orange juice. Then they served breakfast which was quite nice, with fresh fruits, yoghurt, cereals, toast and tea; and at 7 o'clock we landed in Jo'burg.

There at the door of the plane was Erwan waiting for me and Wilson the driver; they had a wheel chair ready for me, and I was happy to see Erwan looking very well. We drove to the residence in Pretoria, where Joanna and Alberto welcomed me.

I did not feel too tired, and I exchanged news with Erwan; then he had to go to the office and I

started to unpack and to take a bath. The sun was shining and it was quite warm. I relaxed and had a rest.

The first few days I felt well, but then I started to have cramps in my tummy. As the workers were all over the place fixing the swimming pool, there was a lot of noise of drilling and hammering; it was hard to rest, so Erwan decided that we should go to Cape Town. So we took the plane.

Joanna was supposed to take the bus to join us in Cape Town, but she never turned up and while I was having a rest she disappeared. When I asked Alberto where she was, he told me that her boyfriend called for her and that they were gone; she took all her belongings, without giving any notice. It was a very disturbing time as we had to find someone else to replace her in the Cape.

We flew Erwan and I to Cape Town, and Alberto came for ten days, as Erwan had to go back to Pretoria. I continued to have cramps and had to go to hospital for check up. Dr. Sandel came; he is an homeopath and put me on the drip. I stayed overnight, and I felt better.

So I came back home the following day, and we, Erwan and I with Alberto went back to Pretoria, as Rozenn and Jim were arriving. Rozenn to help Kareen who was on the point of



having her baby, and Jim because he had to have cataract operation.

Tianna was born three weeks before her time, and Rozenn was in time to assist her during her labours. All went well, except that the baby got the jaundice, and had to be put in the incubator for a few days. Then Jim had his operation in Jo'burg, and Rozenn came back to Pretoria in time to see Jim out of hospital. The operation went well, and he stayed for a few days at the residence to recuperate. Unfortunately I got sick again and the cramps in my tummy got worse, so I had to go back into hospital for treatments and x-rays. Poor Rozenn had to spend her time

Kareen, Tianna, Rozenn and Marie-Magdeleine in Erwan's Pretoria residence on a later visit.

running from one hospital to another. In the hospital they put me on the drip, and eventually the cramps went away. So I was able to go back home.

But before that, on 29th October, Erwan and I were invited to a lunch reception for Prince Philip of Edinburgh, who was on an official visit to Pretoria. The lunch reception was given on the occasion of Young Leadership Awards. We were introduced to the Prince; he was very charming and exchanged a few words with Erwan, who

introduced me to him, as my mother who comes from Ireland. I shook hands with him and I was surprised that he looked rather short, but still not old looking.

During the lunch there were toasts to the Queen, and Mandela. Then there was a show, but it was all in Afrikaner, and performed by women. We left after the Prince made a speech.

3rd November

We went for a weekend to Nelspruit in the Eastern Province of Transvaal. We took the car and stopped the first night at a very nice country lodge which had a sitting room, nice bedroom and our own swimming pool. It was called Cybele Lodge. Erwan went to Nelspruit where he gave a talk to some students.

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**No set dinner, one pitiful cocktail buffet... We did not stay for the show afterwards.**

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The next day we drove through the forest to another country lodge called Kirby. We had our own chalet situated in the lovely grounds surrounded by trees, with a large bedroom, sitting room and bathroom. It was very pleasant and relaxing.

Then we drove back into the mountains. There

was quite a lot of fog; we came to the summit of the mountains and saw a very primitive hut with toilet written on the wall. I was glad to relieve myself, and then we drove on back to Pretoria. It was a very nice weekend, about four hours driving from Pretoria.

Soon after we went back to Cape Town, and found a housekeeper called Angelina, a coloured woman who cleaned very well, but did not know how to cook.

25th November

Papa arrived and we soon started preparing for the Christmas; but I had on and off severe cramps and had to see the homeopath, Dr. Smith, who referred me to a specialist entomologist, Dr. Wright. But unfortunately on Christmas morning I got worse, and Dr. Sandell came to give me an injection and brought me to hospital where they x-rayed my tummy. Dr. Wright also came to see me.

They kept me for 5 days, and gave me a wash out for the intestines. Then I went back home feeling better and I opened my presents piled up near the nice Christmas tree Erwan had decorated. Then poor Erwan had to cook the turkey, and in the evening there was a dinner reception at the residence for the President of the European Parliament. Mr. Hansch, accompanied by his wife. Kader Asmal and his wife

Louise were also there.

10th February

We were invited to a diplomatic evening at Stellenbosch, which was 'minable', no set dinner, one pitiful cocktail buffet... We did not stay for the show afterwards.

11th February

We went to the airport to see Mr. Hansch and his wife off. There we happened to meet the King of Sweden who was on an unofficial visit. As I shook hands with him I took him for the porter as he was dressed in casual travelling clothes!

13th February

We had a dinner reception at the residence for the Latin American and Spanish Ambassadors. It was a very enjoyable evening. The Ambassador of Venezuela was there with his wife, as well as the Ambassador of Mexico and the Ambassadors of Chile and Paraguay. They

were very sympathique and friendly. Also the Ambassador of Spain and his charming wife.

18th February

We attended the opening of the Art Against Apartheid exhibition at the Parliament. I was fortunate to be seated near Mandela and to shake

hands with him. There was some African music and Mandela got up and started to dance with the Speaker of the Parliament Frene Gunwale. It was so spontaneous. The French Ambassador was there as well.



Nelson Mandela, President of South Africa, with Erwan.

20th February

We attended a big official State banquet in honour of the Queen of Denmark, Queen Margarethe, who was on an official

visit. As I shook hands again with President Mandela, he told me 'You have a very exceptional son!' I was very proud. I shook hands also with Govan Mbeki and his son Thabo Mbeki,

as well as Archbishop Tutu. There were about 200 people divided in separate tables of six. The French Ambassador, not very sympathique and rather pompous, was seated at a table behind us. There were toasts to the Queen, and to Mandela, with the National Anthems of South Africa and Denmark. Mandela made a speech, as well as Queen Margarethe, while Archbishop Tutu said grace before the dinner. Everyone was watching the Queen as she started to puff away with her cigarettes, as she was chatting to Mandela on the main table. So all the smokers started to follow her example. It suited me very well! It was a very enjoyable evening, there

was a choir with very nice African music.

22nd February

Kareen, Goran and Tianna came to spend the weekend at the residence in Pretoria. They drove all the way from Botswana. The baby is adorable, very plump with a lovely face, blue eyes and a mop of auburn hair sticking up on top of her head, smiling and very good. It was a joy to see our fourth great grandchild, who was 2 months old when we saw her. Goran, a

Marie-Magdeleine with Annick Collet at Tante Dircé's house in Johannesburg







charming young man very good looking, blond with brown eyes. Allison was with them; she came to visit them in Gaborone for a week.

Saturday 24th February

We went to see Tante Dircé at her apartment near Guillaume's house. She was just recovering from a big operation and looked frail. Erwan, Kareen and Tianna, were also there as well as Annick Collet, who had come from France to see her mother. We all went to put some flowers on TonTon Paul's grave. Then we stayed for a brief lunch at Tante Dircé's. Darig came and brought some delicious food. The baby was very good.

Yann, Father Basil from Guguletu, and Marie-Magdeleine at the Mount Nelson Hotel, Cape Town.

Sunday 25th February

We left, Erwan and I, from Jo'burg for Zurich. Karen, Goran and the baby stayed on at the residence until Monday. Allison meanwhile went back to Cape Town on Sunday. It was a very enjoyable weekend, and I was sad to leave Africa. But I look forwards to going back again next year after Christmas and to spend a few months in Cape Town with Erwan.

Erwan and I parted in Zurich, as he was going to Sils Maria skiing for ten days. He put me

on my flight for Dublin, where I met Papa and David. Unfortunately Papa left a week after to return to Brittany, so I feel very much alone, although I see Benig often and Olwen who is now back from London. David is staying with me at the moment and I enjoy his company. I saw Jean and Dany briefly on their way to Carces. I saw Oisín on Sunday, St. Patrick's Day.

I keep remembering the lovely time I had in the Cape during the four months I was there with Erwan and Papa, and apart from the first two months when I was sick, I had a most relaxing time, enjoying the sunny weather quite hot at times and the swimming in the pool, and the good cares of Erwan, also the attentions of Alberto who is such a good cook.

I enjoyed seeing my friend Elsebe Graham, who has a daughter living in Dinan; also Jean Almond who invited me to the Cellars Hotel for lunch, and who is so nice, Charlotte our neighbour who is a charming person, and of course Father Basil from Guguletu, who invited me to lunch in a nice hotel in Sea Point. On Sunday mornings, we used to attend mass in Guguletu, where the choir and marimba musicians are wonderful.

Allison, Kareen's friend, a lovely girl who bravely faces life being paralysed from the waist down, lives on her own; she works in a library and leads a normal life, driving her own car.

I also enjoyed the lovely garden of the residence in Cape Town, with the splendid view off the mountains; waking up at 6 o'clock with the sun shining on top of the mountains is a pure delight. Erwan and I went to see quite a few movies in Cavendish Square Centre.

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### Near the penguins we discovered a small beach well sheltered where we swam in the cool Atlantique

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In the mornings I used to file all the articles, reviews and photos of Olwen and David since the beginning of their career in 1977. I quite enjoyed that every morning; in the afternoon I would go for a siesta then an invigorating swim in the pool, and afterwards a nice walk along the river, accompanied often by the kind Alberto.

When Erwan could spare some time, we would go to the sea, and visit the penguin sanctuary. Near the penguins we discovered a small beach well sheltered where we swam in the cool Atlantique, and sometimes had lunch in a nice restaurant along the coast.

Back home I miss all that; the grey, dull sky very seldom shows some sun. I follow my

The penguin sanctuary at Boulders Beach,  
Cape Town



routine, doing my shopping in the morning, having lunch, going for a walk and then resting for a while, then watching TV or writing letters. Phone calls and the visit of the children keeps me going, also calls from Papa and Erwan. Olwen is back now from London and I see her from time to time.

Now I look forward to the return of Papa; then in May Rozenn will come and we will go to Evran where Erwan will join us to celebrate his 50th birthday! also Rozenn's birthday and mine. David is staying here at the moment and it is a company for me. Jean and Dany are gone to Carces on holiday with Tristan and Oisin, and then they will go to Tunisia for 10 days.

Time passes peacefully, but I feel lonely at times and miss Erwan and Africa; but I have my wonderful memories, and it helps me. I also have the happy thought of another trip to Africa after Christmas.

1996

A Journey to the Wilderness

We left home in Cape Town on Friday afternoon last week 20th January, to drive one and a half hours to Vermont, a small seaside resort outside Hermanus, called Windsael.

We arrived at our guest house situated on the edge of the Atlantique, being welcomed by the lady of the house, Thea, a rather fat blonde, very

Afrikaner looking and her 2 scraggly dogs. The house was small and Thea showed us our rooms.

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Looking closely at the bed linen, we discovered it had been used previously and not clean. Also the floor mats were dubious!

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One was a fairly medium sized room clogged up with numerous 'bibelots' of all sorts, a big double bed with brass stands, 2 big arches, window doors on both sides, a small bathroom, shower and loo; but looking closely at the bed linen, we discovered it had been used previously and not clean. Also the floor mats were dubious! and some cobwebs were hanging from the corners of the door.

We mentioned the bed linen to our host and she immediately, looking very embarrassed, changed them for clean ones, apologising profusely, and putting the blame on the maid! To compensate the neglect of the bed linen, she offered us some tea, which by the way was charged to us on departure!

We went for a walk along the shore hoping to discover a sandy beach. We found none.

We came back to change and to freshen up before we went to a very nice restaurant called 'The Burgundy' in Hermanus. This special restaurant used to be a fisherman's cottage

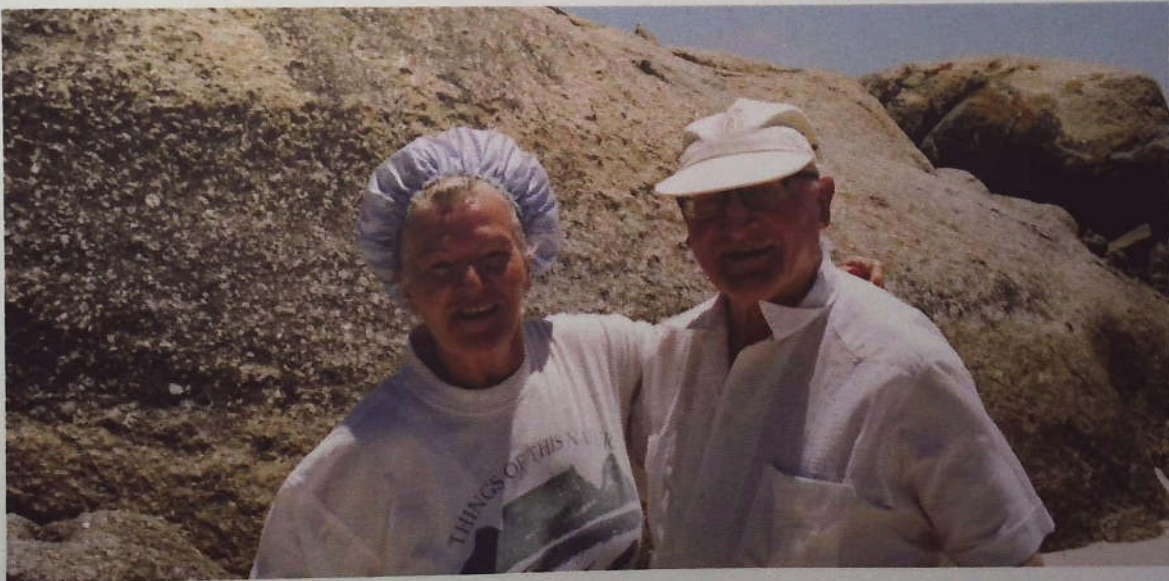
It is beautifully decorated, where the cuisine is excellent served with charming efficient waitress. We went, after a delicious supper, for a stroll along the bay. The moon was shining, the sky was brightened up with stars, and the waves were crashing on the shore in a cloud of foam. The misty air humid enveloped us.

We drove back to our guest house and slept peacefully with the sound of the rough sea. At 6 a.m., I awake refreshed and Erwan went bravely jogging. I had some hot robot tea, kept hot in a flask and waited patiently for my breakfast to come. There was some misunderstanding with Thea who thought that we all will go to the lounge

to have breakfast. So when Papa got up, he went to tell Thea that I was awake and was expecting my breakfast in bed. It eventually came at 8.30 a.m. and I was served in bed a delicious breakfast.

At 10 a.m. we left our host and told her we were leaving and had to go back home. The fact was that we found on the brochure another guest house further away in Hermanus. But first we went to a long sandy beach and bathed in the icy cold Atlantique ocean. Papa went to have some tea in a nearby restaurant looking for shade, avoiding

Marie-Magdeleine and Yann after her swim in the sea at Hermanus.





the glare of the sun on the white sand. As Erwan was trying to help me to get in the sea, a wave came and I lost balance; I was rolled down and scream in panic!

After our experience in the sea, we went to discover our second guest house, 'Mountain View', situated along the mountain with spectacular view over the bay. Four rooms ensuite set in landscaped gardens as well as wild flowers (Fynbos garden)

Our hosts were a retired couple very welcoming. We were shown to our rooms; Papa had his own twin beds room. Erwan and I shared a very spacious bedroom with a large double bed and a single bed, and also a corner reserved in the room as a sitting room with comfortable couch, 2 deep arches and also a shower en suite, TV, frigidaire, tea with sugar, milk powder, cups and saucers. One large bay window overlooking a pretty garden, and on the other side, a large window overlooking an inviting pool with a view on the mountains. There was an elegance in the details, all curtains, bedspreads in pastel pink shade, having a soothing relaxing effect. It was really a dream.

We settled down, unpacked our suitcase and went to have lunch in Hermanus in a very nice restaurant called 'The Green'. We came back to 'Mountain View', and the three of us had a nice

siesta. In the evening we went to the beach again at sunset and had another dip in the sea, then we went back to our guest house, had a shower, and change for supper which we had in a restaurant called 'The Great Gatsby' in Hermanus. It was not very good, and the service was very inefficient.

We had another peaceful night and on Sunday morning we regretfully left the 'Mountain View' to go back home. On leaving we went in a small Catholic church to pray for all the family. The church was nearby with a big cemetery.

We drove to Betty's Bay looking for Penguins! We got lost in the mountains covered with what looked like snow, but in reality was a layer of fine white sand swept by the wind up to the top, a very impressive sight. We drove for miles on a dirt stony bumpy road and came to a restaurant called 'Mien' situated in the middle of nowhere, a real Western film oasis. Inside this restaurant was a bar, candles of all colours (there is no electricity in this isolated part of the country) We were served a delicious meal and superb wine.

We did not find the penguins after all so we slowly drove back home along a 'corniche', overhanging precipice down the ocean and high steep mountains. We arrived home in Cape Town refreshed, contented, with wonderful memories of our travels to the Wilderness!

Marie-Magdeleine and Yann on their trip to the 'Wilderness'.

# Slovenia





2002

I arrived in this lovely country a week ago and I love it. Erwan travelled with me from Brussels. We had such a beautiful flight; it is only 1 hour and a half from Brussels. The sky was so clear, no clouds and the view from the plane was magique; it was a beautiful sight as we flew not very high, crossing Germany and Austria with all those high mountains covered with snow. We landed so peacefully in Slovenia. It was a good omen.

At first sight, I loved the country and the people, so friendly. Igor the chauffeur was there to meet us, a nice young man. We arrived at the residence. Karim the cook and Sasha, the young girl who is the housekeeper for the residence were there to meet us. Sasha is Slovenian and speaks English very well. She is quite striking, very tall and blond long hair, lovely face. Karim is half Algerian, tall also and a bit fat, but very nice face, kind and friendly.

The house is spacious and all newly decorated. It was before, I believe, an old ruin. It is now a very pleasant residence surrounded by trees with beautiful autumnal shades from gold to rust and brown. It is calm and from all the windows one can see the scenery around. There are houses close by but not obstructing. Rarely one can see people around their houses; a few cars pass by.

People living near seem very reserved; a few would say hello.

The rising sun is shining on the trees, the sky is clear this morning with a few small white clouds.

Monday 21st October

The weekend was quiet, but yesterday we went to Mass. It was bitterly cold and in the church, quite big, I could not get warm. So we did not stay long. The Slovenes are church-going and the church was packed. At the top behind the altar there is a place for babies and invalids, so they can get out easily without disturbing the people. The priest made a sermon in Slovenian, French and German.

I am not doing this memoire in the order of events. This weekend we went to the spa near Piran, about an hour by car. It is a lovely spa, with a huge swimming pool of sea water heated up to 35 degrees. There were only a few people. We had lunch in a restaurant close by outside. It was a bit chilly, except when the sun was shining. We drove back later and got a slashing downpour of rain.

The weekend before we drove to Piran harbour, the prettiest place on the coast. We stayed overnight in a very nice hotel situated on the pier.

We had an apartment sort of accommodation

with two rooms connecting and a big balcony just above the sea front. The view was very relaxing, the Adriatique sea so smooth and lots of navigation—boats of all sizes, fishing boats, sailing boats and at the horizon big liners passing by.

The port village is very lively with small narrow lanes and old pavements, a few tourist shops and a square with the statue of a local hero Tartini. It has an Italian influence as regards the outlook of the place. It is nice and warm along the coast.

The weekend after we went to the celebration of the 700th anniversary of an old village. There were a few Ambassadors there and some Ministers. The President was there in the morning as he had to attend a football match between Slovenia and France somewhere else later in the day. We assisted to the folklorique songs which reminded me of the Breton folklore.

There were a few lovely stands with local produce around the square. We bought some locally made honey made of chestnut flavour, good for lots of ailments, and a very pretty crown with 60 in the middle made of straw. I keep it to send to Jean for his birthday. The village, the oldest in Slovenia, was the size of Cleggan in Ireland. The Minister for the Environment was there as well as a few mayors.

Another weekend we visited and stayed the night in a very old historique castle renovated as

a hotel, built on a rock and dating back many centuries. There is a gripping story about that castle where a Princess called Barbara threw herself from one window committing suicide as she was in love with a Prince but forbidden to marry him. The story said she haunted the place at night!

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**I heard nothing from my bedroom, and was not disturbed by the ghost of the Princess Barbara!**

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The inside of the castle has a sort of convent atmosphere with long corridors around with galleries overlooking the garden. There was a big wedding the evening we stayed, with musique up to 10 o'clock in the morning. I heard nothing from my bedroom, and was not disturbed by the ghost of the Princess Barbara! I had the light on in the bathroom all night. The view was magnificent from my window at night with all the lights of Ljubljana at the horizon. It was magique.

The capital city here is so pretty. It has human dimensions with a river crossing and bridges, cafés and shops all around, very smart shops and squares. There is a feeling of intimacy around that one does not get in a bigger city.

Last night as we were having supper, we felt and heard a rumble very distinct like a train

passing. I got scared and thought it was an explosion near by. Erwan rang a colleague who got the information that it was in fact a tremor, 3.5 on the Richter scale, between Piran and here. The rumble slightly shook the ground; I was a bit scared as it lasted a few seconds, enough to be registered as a tremor. In fact lately in both Brussels and in North Germany there have been strong tremors felt. It might be on the news today. Just as well it was not in the middle of the night. People here are used to it.

Here the household consists of Karim, the cook who is very nice and makes tasty meals according to instructions of Erwan re regime, not too fat for me...

Sasha is the young girl who looks after the cleaning and washing of the house. She has lots of energy and supports her family, mother and two sisters (one had a baby recently). She is very intelligent and we are good friends. She talks a lot, smokes non-stop, and looks after me like a baby, seeing to all my needs. She does massage for me before my siesta and we go for walks around the place.

The big difference here with Ireland is that there is no wind at all, very rarely a small light breeze. It is dead calm, but at times in the morning quite cold, when the sun has not yet appeared. There is a faculty of forestry opposite the residence with a large green field around

it. Everything is at close reach, the city and Erwan's office. Today he is gone with all the staff (40) on a trip by bus visiting the various EU-funded projects around the country. It is a very instructive experience for them.

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**The big difference here with Ireland is that there is no wind at all, very rarely a small light breeze.**

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Yesterday we got the result of Ireland's referendum on the European Union. The result is a YES in favour. Jean has voted NO for the reason that the Treaty of Nice was not specific enough regarding neutrality of Ireland. It is good that on the whole people in Ireland were in favour; a NO result would have considerably affected the EU. It is true that the Treaty of Nice was not clear enough. Chirac of France made it ambiguous.

Erwan is entirely devoted to his attributions as Ambassador. He works very hard and does not spare his time. He is very successful in his important assignments. He gives of himself entirely, not sparing the long hours preparing his discussions, and gives enthusiasm to his entire personnel, working with them in harmony and appreciation.

I have already met a few Ambassadors, the Spanish one recently gave a reception in



Marie-Magdeleine with a young Slovenian friend

a restaurant avec les autres Ambassadeurs; je ne sais plus pour quelle occasion. L'Ambassadeur d'Espagne est très distingué (baise main etc). Je lui ai dit que ma fille aînée et mes petits enfants habitant Lanzarote, les Îles Canaries, rattachées à l'Espagne.

Mercredi

Erwan donne une réception ici, un dîner avec l'Ambassadeur d'Autriche et d'autres officiels. La langue officielle dans les milieux diplomatiques est l'anglais, ce qui m'arrange car je ne sais

pas d'autres langues à part français et anglais.

L'Ambassade Américaine est à deux pas d'ici entourée de murs énormes, comme une forteresse avec des guards tout autour et à l'intérieur. L'Ambassadeur est noir; je ne l'ai pas encore rencontré, ni en fait le Président, qui a l'air très simple et sympathique. Mais ici comme en Europe, les Américains ne sont pas populaires, Bush surtout.

J'ai Papa au téléphone tous les soirs et Rozenn qui séjourne avec lui pour le moment. Ils quittent Evran cette après-midi pour revenir à St.Brieuc. Rozenn repart à Lanzarote à la fin de la semaine.

Pour la Toussaint, Erwan a réservé un petit

appartement au meme hotel a Piran ou nous sommes deja allés. J'en suis ravé car la cote est très belle et ensoleillé. Erwan s'est meme baigné dans la mer. Moi je préfère les spas eau de mer a 35 degrés car cela fait beaucoup de bien pour mes douleurs arthritiques.

I try to keep as fit as I can to be able to enjoy my stay here. There is a lot Slovenia could teach countries like Ireland, and even France. The main features of Slovene people is their 'amabilité', that friendly approach to foreigners, and their efforts to keep cities and villages in clean and healthy surroundings. Their physical features are striking, they look so healthy and 'sportifs'. Erwan is in his element, joining marathons in the mountains and valleys. In fact the Slovenes are in general good looking folks.

Karim comme Sasha sont part-time. Karim vient vers 10.30 et prepare le lunch. Il part vers 2 heures. Il habite a 28 km d'ici et sa femme est employée dans un supermarché toute la journée. Ils ont deux enfants.

Sasha vient aussi en fin de matinée et reste jusqu'au soir quand je suis seule. Tout ici est très bon marché, pour nous surtout comparé au coute de la vie en Irlande qui a atteint des proportions ridicules. Il semble qu'il n'y a vraiment de très pauvres ni de très riches ici; c'est une bonne moyenne. Il y a parait-il des problèmes d'alcolisme, et du chômage. Mais

tout est en general bien équilibré socialement.

This diary is written as I go along. There are receptions, my memory at times going backwards...

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### In fact the Slovenes are in general good looking folks.

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I visited Sasha's sister in the maternity hospital where she gave birth to her first child, a big healthy boy. The father had left the mother, but when his son was born he came to see him. He is as far as I understand without job, and perhaps later he will go back to live with Sasha's sister.

In the meantime Sasha is caring for the whole family. Her mother who is 50 and shows signs of cancer in the thyroid glands was also abandoned by her companion before Sasha was born. Sasha has two sisters to look after, one of 11 years, the other one who just had the baby. She also supports her grandmother who has Alzheimers.

Sasha has a companion who works as taximan. I met him, he looks nice and strong, and lives with Sasha.

Hospital care seems quite adequate, certainly as far as I can judge, superior to Ireland's hospitals. But there is also some type of system that if you have the money you can be treated immediately. If you are poor you may have to

wait for treatment, same as in Ireland. But according to Sasha, an urgent case is usually treated straight away.

This seems to be the system all over the world. Money governs the world; there is too big a gap between very poor and very rich. As regards medical efficiency, the Slovenes have very good doctors and specialists so I was told. But I expect remote villages are perhaps at long distance from medical experts. I do not know yet how social welfare works.

According to Sasha, people receive an allowance 'au chomage' for a limited time but it is not easy to find work being in a small country. For schools as far as I know, they are free except for meals they get and I expect up to a certain grade.

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**Money governs the world; there is too big a gap between very poor and very rich.**

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Karim has two children, one small girl who goes to creche and a boy of 11 years who attends school. He picks them up after his work, as his wife is working full time in a supermarket long hours. He said that the one salary he gets from the European Commission would not be enough to rear his family, working part time.

I don't know how much his wife earns for a full days work but on the whole I think it is about average with other countries. It's also the lodging which is a problem. Rents of apartments are average depending on size and location; difficult to judge as they still have Slovene currency.

21st October

Erwan went at 7 a.m. to join all the staff who work for him at the Commission for a trip around the country so they can all have an idea of the various improvement projects being financed by the European Community.

Erwan has great experience, having dealt with all those EU projects in South Africa. He has experience and knowledge, useful for his actual posting. Language is of course a 'barriere'. He is gradually learning Slovene which is a very difficult language to learn, but necessary to reach the population in remote parts of Slovenia, otherwise it is a problem same as if the Gaelteacht in Ireland was only speaking Irish.

We ourselves live in Connemara, Ireland, where the Irish language is secondary; schools are in English, partly perhaps in Irish. The same would occur in Brittany where Breton is taught in some schools.

I wish Papa would be able to come and visit this beautiful country. Perhaps in the Spring. We could arrange for him to spend sometime

here. He knows a lot about ethnic communities and small countries like Slovenia.

Erwan will be back from his trip late this evening. I am sure his staff will benefit from this outing in remote villages; at least they will have an idea of what they are working for in the EU Commission. Nothing like contacts with country folks to know the problems they have to surmount.

Next Sunday, Erwan is running the 42 km marathon through the city and in the mountains; there will be lots of participants. Jean said on the phone there is a big storm at home. They still have not found the body of the young fisherman who drowned in the sea a week ago; no chance now to recuperate his body which probably washed by currents far away. Its very tragique for the parents and his companion who was fishing with him. He never heard his friend falling.

22 Octobre

Jour triste et pluvieux. Un vrai temps de Toussaint. Hier Erwan a fait une grande tournée dans le pays avec tout son personnel en bus a visiter les divers projets. Il est parti très tot a 7 heures et été de retour a 9 heures 30 le soir.

C'était une randonnée instructif pour son personnel pour se rendre compte des différents problèmes dans les campagnes

éloignées. Ils étaient 40 dans le bus.

Ils ont visité aussi les vignobles et pris un petit coupe par ci par la pour gouter le vin du pays! J'aurai aimé les joindre mais cela aurait été trop fatiguant pour moi. Je me contente de lire les oeuvres des poetes et écrivains Slovenes, dont beaucoup traduits en Anglais.

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### Jour triste et pluvieux. Un vrai temps de Toussaint.

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Erwan a des masses de livres et j'ai de quoi m'instruire. J'ecris aussi beaucoup a Papa, Rozenn et mes amis, et il semble que mes lettres les intéressent. Pour moi c'est un plaisir d'écrire en ce moment en tout cas. Il y a des périodes ou écrire me fatigue, ce que je regrette.

C'est le fait que Papa n'écrit plus ou a peine quelques lignes; cela lui fatigue, sa vue déficiente, et lui cause un effort. Il ne m'a jamais écrit de bien longues lettres; cependant autrefois au cours de ses nombreux voyages, il m'envoyait de belles lettres décrivant les pays qu'il visitait. Je ne sais pas ce que sont devenues ces lettres précieuses. Avec notre exile et les problèmes que nous avons eu a la fin de la guerre, beaucoup de choses ont disparues malheureusement.

En principe je garde les lettres que je reçois, bien sur celles de la famille ou amies proches,

celles que Jean écrivait lors de ses assignments avec la FAO, a St. Vincent, Yemen et ailleurs. Il m'arrive de les relire avec intérêt.

Le fléau du siècle est que les gens n'écrivent plus, mais utilisent cet Internet et computer ou les Fax. C'est le règne de la machine... rien de personnel ni d'intime. On juge parfois les caractères des gens par leur écriture. Cela a disparu et c'est bien triste.

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### Le fléau du siècle est que les gens n'écrivent plus, mais utilisent cet Internet et computer ou les Fax.

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Je me souviens que ma mere passait ses Dimanches a écrire a chacun de ses enfants, some exilés dans de lointains pays, comme ma soeur missionnaire en Chine qui était ma Marraine, Paul mon frère et mon Parrain qui a passé de nombreuses années a Madagascar et La Réunion, mon Père, Lieutenant de Vaisseau, partait pour de longs mois a bord de son bateau en mission, a Shanghai entre autres.

Toutes ces correspondances ont été heureusement gardés et mises dans les archives de notre famille Mauger Le Goffic, et préservés par Papa après la mort de ma soeur Genevieve. Tout est précieusement gardés a Evran. J'en ai relus certaines, mais l'écriture de

mon Pere était très fine et pas facile a lire.

I come back to the present. Its miserable weather, and I can't go for walk, which is a pity as I need exercise for my arthritis. I can always go up and down the stairs in the residence, which I am not used to. But it is compensated here when we get a chance to go swimming in the numerous spas they have in this country.

Some specially I love are the ones with sea water heated up to 35 degrees. For my downstairs problems its much better than those pools of mineral water which sting me. I have also the advantage of massages which Sasha does very professionally before I take my siesta. I have a physio who comes once a week, a small very pretty woman, very young, who has an extraordinary energy.

23rd October

I am afraid my journal is erratique. I take it as it comes. Today Erwan is having a reception, the Austrian Ambassador and his wife, a couple of Slovene friends and the Irish Ambassador. I don't know if he has a wife. I go to the hairdresser this morning to be respectable!

Karim the cook is preparing delicious dishes and a butler is engaged for serving as its supposed to be an official reception. It's mixed weather this morning, slight rain but it is supposed to clear up later. Hopefully we will get sunny spells.



I met Sasha's mother; she called the other evening, a nice woman who unfortunately has cancer. She is on a special medication for a while. If it does not help she may have to be operated.

The set-up familiale of Sasha is very complicated, as I mentioned. Sasha hopes her mother will go and live with her younger sister and the grandmother; she will keep the eldest sister and baby for the time being.

Tuberculosis seems to recur here; the sister who has the baby has it; BCG vaccine was given to the baby at birth, like I did with my three eldest children. But for Benig and Olwen the BCG was not available in Ireland so they did not

get it. It was important in my case, as tuberculosis affected my father, brother and sisters.

Personally I had no symptoms and was x rayed during my pregnancy. Now my last x ray shows a black chest—smoke layer! Cigarettes... There is also some emphysema, but no cavity and nothing serious.

It is raining, or rather drizzling. I will get ready at 10.30 as the chauffeur of Erwan's office is calling to bring me to town to the coiffeur. All the people I met so far are

Marie-Magdeleine with Ivan and Vida Rudolph, Jim and Rozenn in the garden at Crni Vrh.



extremely nice and pleasant. The fact that most of them speak English that they learn at school is a help to communicate.

On Sunday, Erwan is participating in the Ljubljana marathon! He did not have time to do much training, as most evenings he finishes work quite late. He gets up at 6 a.m. and goes to the office at 7.30 a.m. Offices usually start at 8 a.m., have a one-hour break at lunchtime and the staff leave around 5 p.m. but the Boss and some others leave much later. He does not spare his energy and is devoted to his assignment.

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**As we were having supper Erwan and I we both felt a loud rumble as if an explosion had occurred nearby.**

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Next week we are booked in the same nice hotel in Piran where we went once already. We will spend the weekend exploring the coast and perhaps we will go as far as Trieste, and will also visit the spa with the sea water heated up to 35 degrees! It does me a lot of good. The sea for me is a bit cold but Erwan bravely went swimming in it during the first weekend we spent in Piran. It's warmer on the coast than in Ljubljana. Being in a valley here, we also get some fog.

My cold sweats continue, but on the whole I am keeping fairly well. What I don't like is that experience I had few days ago. As we were having supper Erwan and I we both felt a loud rumble as if an explosion had occurred nearby; it lasted several seconds. I do hope it does not occur often as it terrifies me, and make me all nervous. There was unfortunately a real earthquake two years ago, near the coast, and a lot of damage to houses.

Tatie, my sister, used to feel it coming; she was extra sensitive to things like that. In Brittany a long time ago it did happen a fairly serious tremor; she was thrown out of her bed and things around her were shaking. A long time ago in Dublin we also had a small tremor. I felt it, but Papa did not. Things were shaking in my room.

Also my sister Yvonne, Tatie we called her, had extra sense and could detect water source using a special stick—on appelle cela en Francais etre 'sourciere'. She did try it in our garden in Cleggan once and detected a water source. The stick bent upwards and she had difficulty holding it.

This morning I am waiting for the chauffeur to come and drive me to the hairdresser. There are two chauffeurs, one is called Igor, very nice, the other one is Jure I think, I do not know the orthographe. He should be here by now.

I hope they fix my hair well. I will wait in the café of the hotel for Erwan to

call. This 1st class hotel is where Clinton stayed when he visited Ljubljana. I don't know if there was any Monica around!

It's there where Erwan stayed a few months before he could move. We went around town and saw some antique shops as I want to offer Erwan a nice picture as a gift for receiving me.

Last evening we had the reception. It went very well. There were six guests—the Ambassador of Ireland, the Austrian Ambassador and his wife, two Slovene friends of Erwan (retired banker and both did mountain climbing with him), and one member of Erwan's staff, a nice young woman.

The menu of the supper was salmon smoked Jean sent from home, ostrich and vegetables, and a nice dessert Karim made. The Irish Ambassador was on my left. He is very distinguished and very nice, comes from Ballinrobe in Co. Mayo and knows Cleggan well. His wife was in Dublin. He has great admiration for Olwen's talent.

On my right was the Austrian Ambassador, equally distinguished (baise main and all), his wife charming was at Erwan's right. The conversation was lively and most interesting. The two Ambassadors enquired about Papa and his writings.

The Austrian Ambassador asked me 'Are you French?' I took a while answer to that delicate

question. I said that I am Breton and French by heritage of my father who was Officer in the French Navy and defended the Fort of Camaret in 1917 where I was born, and my eldest brother engaged at 18 years as volunteer also in the Navy, who died shortly after my birth (being on duty on a ship off Brest).

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The Austrian Ambassador asked me "Are you French?" I took a while to answer that delicate question.

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The Breton part was included in the answer, and I mentioned Papa as he asked what sort of books he wrote. I explained all about minorities and ethnic communities. I quoted 'L'Europe aux Cent Drapeaux' and tried to explain his political convictions for Brittany's sort of autonomy/federalism to protect its identity and language. The Irish Ambassador was listening also to my answer; they all seemed interested.

During the supper the lightning and thunder started outside; actually it got worse during the night and I couldn't sleep, each big crash, boom and lightning made me jump in my bed and I felt the electric choc through my body. I hate 'orages', especially as bad as it seems to occur here.

The Austrian Ambassador when he arrived offered me a splendid bouquet of orchids as I have never seen in my life. They were all very sympathiques. It went on with liqueurs and whisky of various types and ages up to midnight.

The butler Slovene engaged for the occasion was very professional and good looking; Sasha dressed in her best with her long hair plaited and a scarf. She attended to everyone.

Au cours de la conversation with the Irish Ambassador, I told him of the tragedy recently occurred in Cleggan. He knew Malachy King and was acquainted with people in Connemara.

Tonight we are both, Erwan and I, invited to a reception this time at the Austrian Embassy for the National Day. I might go as there will be chairs to sit on. It is taking place in an old castle nearby, and should not be too late. Its probably a sort of buffet drinks party.

'Il pleut, il pleut, Bergere ramasse tes moutons' chantait ma Mere quand j'étais enfant. Je ne sais pas hélas la suite de la chanson.

By the way I had an experience yesterday afternoon, as I decided to go alone to the Supermercado ('Mercure' in Slovenia) nearby for cigarettes. Sasha and Karim were a bit anxious to let me go on my own in case I got lost. Erwan who was in the office at the time said it was alright and off I went. I found the 'Mercure' OK, got my cigarettes and tried to find my way back.

I have no sense at all of orientation; here around the place all the streets look alike. I knew ours was Rozna Dolina, but could not remember the number on the street where we are. I did approach various passers-by, one or two did not seem to know the way. I was turning around in circles. Once I saw a fairly old woman in her garden, I tried to explain our address, but she had no English. At the end I came out with 'Do you know where is the European Embassy?' She thought for a while and puzzled, said 'European...? I do not know.' Then I risked to mention the American Embassy; she vaguely understood.

At the end I gave up and went further to approach two young girls who looked nice. They immediately knew where I wanted to go, spoke English well and were microbiologists students. They insisted to accompany me to the house and were ever so nice and friendly.

During my tentative inquiry with the old lady in her garden, I was trying to describe the European flag which is at our gate, and went on 'It is blue with many yellow stars...' She got real puzzled and could not make out what I was saying. I thanked profusely those two young students and one told me 'It was natural for us to help you, hoping that one day when we go to

Marie-Magdeleine, Jean and Dany in Bohinj, Slovenia.



Ireland someone would help us in the same way as we did!' I said I hope so, not wanting to show my hesitation in assuring her of some amiability and desire to help in Dublin for instance.

Karim and Sasha were frantic both at the top of the entrance anxious to know where I was and fearing I got lost. But for me it was a good experience. That 'Mercure' is in fact very near, you only have to turn right and then left, but obviously I went astray.

Tomorrow Erwan said there is another expedition around some small country villages. I might just go if it is not too far. It is something to do with various projects. Pity the rain, sort of drizzle, has not stopped. Its a real 'temps de Toussaint'.

In Slovenia they have the same celebrations as we have specially in the country areas. On All Saints Day all the people go to the cemetery bringing flowers to their departed. I can see at home tomorrow and Sunday people in Cleggan and around waiting for the tide to retire in order to pass by in car or on foot to our cemetery in Omey Island where our two babies Morgane and JoJo are resting near Nominoé Le Dorven, and where one day I will join them.

Erwan also wishes to be buried in what they call at home 'the children's corner' of the cemetery. Erwan would like a bench to be placed near his grave for people to meditate.

Let that be in many many years, at least for Erwan who has such an interesting career.

As for me, as my friend Dr. Jacques Leclair keep reminding me 'Ma chere, quand l'heure est la, l'heure est la' (when the time comes, it comes). I could wait a bit longer if God gives me the strength morally and physically to enjoy what come to me in the present.

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Papa of course, the 'encyclopedie' as I call him, knows it all.

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At present, life is for me interesting. Thanks to Erwan I am able to discover so many things and people in this small but beautiful country. Thanks to his generosity, I have, as they say, 'la vie de chateau'. I read as much as I can books on Slovenia, get to know writers, poets, and am struck by the similarity with Celtic literature.

Papa of course, the 'encyclopedie' as I call him, knows it all. I do hope he will be able to visit this beautiful country in the Spring, which I believe is very enjoyable. The nature changes colour, the sun shines and one feels so well. It seems it can be very hot here in summer, up to 30-35 degrees, nearly as much as in Botswana.

I never suffer heat while in Africa, in Cape Town or in Pretoria, as I was fortunate to be able to enjoy a swim in the pool as soon as I was

awake just outside my bedroom in Erwan's residence.

Erwan misses Africa a lot; he did so much good work there, and it was for him a challenging post, at the time when Mandela was President. Mandela is Erwan's hero. I had the opportunity to shake hands with Mandela at one of the receptions we attended. He turned around and looked at me saying 'You have an exceptional son!' I thanked him for his appreciation. Pity he had to retire on account of his age; Mbeki his successor is not up to his task.

27th October

Yesterday was a great day for Erwan; he participated in the Ljubljana 42 km marathon. He made it in four hours. I saw him passing at the end of the road with his EU flag.

There were nearly two thousand participants young and old, some pushing prams with babies in them, some children running in shorter distance. Erwan was congratulated at his arrival at the end by the Mayor of Ljubljana who embraced him.

The marathon started at 11 a.m. and Erwan was back at the residence at 4 p.m. He had a bath and relaxed, glad to have participated for the first time in Slovenia's marathon. His secretary was one of the first to arrive, being very good runner. Some young men I saw passing looked like

gazelles with their long legs and flying nearby.

Today the sun is shining and it was sunny since I awoke at 7 a.m. I hope it will last; the sky is blue, no clouds. I look forward to the long weekend. We will go Friday morning to Piran along the coast, and we will stay in the same nice hotel on the pier where we were last time. We may go as far as Trieste to see where James Joyce stayed and wrote some of his books. Erwan was a bit stiff this morning going to his office at 7.30 a.m.

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Some young men I saw passing  
looked like gazelles with their long  
legs and flying nearby.

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Jean told me on the phone yesterday there was a fierce storm in Cleggan. I can imagine it must have been a very rough sea. Dany, he said, had a bad cold.

I also talked to Olwen in Dublin where the stormy weather was also blowing. She and David might go home for a few days to relax. I hope the roof in my house is holding well in the storm. Here in the valley, the wind is rare, hardly a small breeze, certainly not like at home where it is the opposite, storm after storm.

I hope to go for a walk around when Sasha comes. I can easily go out on my own, but as all

TRAVELS WITH MARIE-MAGDELEINE





the roads around look the same, I got lost the other day coming back from the small supermarket nearby and had to ask my way a few times, until finally two girl students speaking English brought me back to the residence—very nice of them.

All the same at times I miss home and the sea. Erwan is very busy and I see him at lunch and in the evening when he is back, often very late if he has meetings. I am inclined to repeat myself in writing this diary, and I haven't the patience to read what I wrote before.

Sasha does not come much before 11 or so. She has the laundry to do, the ironing and cleaning the rooms, also she is very 'attentionnée' and looks after my needs. I miss going on my own for a walk around. There is a nice park further away, but a bit too far for me to walk.

There is a bit of a breeze, but nothing like our stormy weather at home. If I sit too long in the open plan big living/dining room I get cold after a while.

I have a bit of cystitis at present; it comes and goes. I still have those cold sweats, and so far no one can find the cause. When I go back to Brussels, I will see Dr. Leclair, but he does not seem to detect the cause apart from my nervous tension; but since so long that I suffer from

them. I find it strange they affect me for so long, and of course it is wearing me out as I am perpetually wet and have to change clothes so often.

The cigarette smoking might perhaps aggravate this problem. Cigarettes here are very cheap; everyone smokes and they don't seem the worse for it. On the whole they do look healthy and strong here.

Olwen told me on the phone about the prices in Ireland. I fear Ireland economically is leading to a catastrophe, the cost of living is rising constantly. It cannot last. When I asked Olwen on the phone, like I do usually, how are your finances, she replied 'On the borderline!' So I sent her some money although she always says I will manage. But her artist work is up and down, according to what comes.

I do not know in detail the social and economic situation here in Slovenia; according to Erwan it is fairly well 'équilibré'; things are very cheap compared to Ireland. Their money is the Tollar. For us here with Euros, their Tollar seems much weaker. It is not perhaps a rich country, but on the whole people seem at ease and healthy, judging by what I see.

The European Union considers Slovenia ready to enter as a member. I don't know enough Slovene people to judge, but the Commission works hard at it. Certainly people seem to

Marie-Magdeleine walking by the lake in Bled

like Erwan, who as usual does not spare his efforts and works devoutly for their cause.

1st November La Toussaint

Today we are going to Piran and on the way to the seawater spa where the water is heated to 35 degrees. Heaven! It is grey and overcast weather; hopefully around the coast the sun will shine.

En Bretagne Papa is going today to St.Lunaire cemetery where his parents are buried. My thoughts go to mine—mon Pere, freres et soeurs are resting in Guingamp and in Loannec; also in Rennes where ma soeur Annig et Georges son fils et Genevieve sa fille are buried. George's ashes will be put there later.

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### Everything is closed in town and no post for three days!

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In Omey, Ireland, near our home, the two babies of Olwen and David are in the cemetery. One day I will repose near them. Papa has already his granite head stone in Guingamp where he wishes to repose when the time comes.

La Toussaint is in Slovenia like in Ireland and Brittany the day of veneration for those gone to Heaven, and flowers are all over the cemeteries, like a beautiful garden.

Everyone who works are today on holidays,

and gone to the countryside or the sea. Everything is closed in town and no post for three days! Karim and Sasha are on holidays since yesterday until Monday.

Sunday 3rd November

Nous voilà rentrés a Ljubljana après un très agréable long weekend a Piran et jusqu'a Trieste, qu'on a vu hélas sous la pluie et la grisaille.

Piran est un très joli petit port sur l'Adriatique, pittoresque et de caractère Mediterranean. Le long du pier se trouvent les hotels et restaurants. L'Hotel Piran est celui ou nous sommes descendues a deux reprises, confortable avec grandes fenêtres donnant sur la mer. De là on peut jouir à tous moments de l'animation le long du port, la navigation des petits bateaux de pêche, aux petits voiliers et grands paquebots au large. C'est une mer calme sans vagues, très différents de notre mer a Cleggan. Nous l'avons vu sous la grisaille et la pluie, avec cependant au premier passage un peu de soleil.

Un assez grand yacht se trouve amarré dans le port, qui aussi sert d'abri et de port d'attache a quantités de bateaux divers, un peu comme dans la baie de Perros Guirrec en Bretagne. Tous ces petits bateaux a voile blanche s'acheminent par beau temps vers le large, ou disparaissent dans la brume.

Il y a rarement de grosses vagues, mais pour

protéger le port il y a tout le long des muretins de gros rochers servant de protection contre une tempête éventuelle. Erwan s'est baigné ce matin juste au bas de l'hôtel.

We walked during the day through the narrow streets paved with cobbles towards the square named after Tartini, a musician born in 1692. The houses have several floors and windows with shutters where people hang their clothes, typical also in some Italian old towns.

My first visit to Slovenia unfortunately in a sense coincides with the gloomiest month of the year. I always hated November. December is preceding Christmas and full of expectations family wise, and, as a believer, of the expectation of the nativity of Jesus Christ. November is the month of the dead, gone above.

L'expression en Français 'c'est un temps de Toussaint' décrit en fait le côté sombre et triste du temps, jours très courts et peu de soleil, sauf bien sûr en Afrique ou dans les pays orientaux, où les saisons ne sont pas les mêmes.

Nous avons vu Trieste rapidement, sous la pluie, et avons visité le centre culturel où James Joyce est particulièrement honoré, et écouté et regardé un film vidéo sur sa vie et ses écrits. Trieste ayant été son port d'attache pendant de nombreuses années. Nous sommes passés dans une ruelle où se trouvait le fameux bordel que Joyce fréquentait; ce sont des maisons

abandonnées.

Il était difficile de se faire une impression en parcourant les rues de Trieste avec cette pluie incessante. Le port lui-même n'a rien de transcendant. Nous avons visité aussi une exposition d'antiquités qui avait lieu ces jours-ci dans un grand bâtiment.

Il y avait de très belles choses de toute sorte, tableaux, meubles, bijoux anciens, tapis, tout cela de grande valeur.

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### Voilà Sasha qui arrive, le 'moulin à parole' va reprendre...

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Erwan s'extasait particulièrement sur les petits coffrets. Il a une passion pour les petites boîtes! Il en possède toute une variété à Brussels et ici déjà. J'ai l'intention de lui offrir pour Noël et en remerciements pour son accueil un tableau de son choix qui serait nécessaire pour combler un panneau de mur dans son living room ici à sa résidence. Quand il se retirera, il lui faudra un château pour recueillir toutes ces possessions acquises au cours de ses postes en Afrique, Mexique et à présent, Slovaquie, en espérant que son dernier poste sera au Maroc comme il le désire avant de prendre sa retraite.

Voilà Sasha qui arrive, le 'moulin à parole' va reprendre... As soon as Sasha came, she very

kindly brought me for a walk. We are just back, it is 12 o'clock, but I got soaked of sweat, always the same reason, too much nervous tension. Walking and talking at same time always makes me very exhausted. I need calm and now off goes Sasha talking away on the phone, non stop...

I went up to change as I was soaked with sweat and feeling very cold at the same time. I think I should consider to go back to Brussels say middle of the month, according to what can be arranged. It's important that things will be arranged in Brussels before I arrive, such as to know if Gloria can be available say once or twice a week, also to have food in the flat, and to contact Dr. Leclair if necessary.

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### Walking and talking at same time always makes me very exhausted.

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I do not mind to be on my own for a while at Erwan's place. There is Helene nearby to visit, and Arlette on the 1st floor who is very obliging and can if necessary give me a lift to the bank or to the shops. I can contact Raphael and Nadia who are very kind, also Inge if she is around, even Robert le cas échéant.

I know Brussels can be cold, but here I feel the damp more, being in a valley there is not even a breeze to take away some humidity. My back is

again very sore. Sasha gives me massage before my siesta; she is very good at it, and it's very kind of her to do so.

I like to do some shopping when Erwan can spare the time, to buy a sort of tunique or blouse, a bit dressy. I did not go to the shops since I am here, and I can't afford too expensive clothes, but here will be much cheaper than Brussels. Sasha and Karim are fond of tam-tam sort of musique, and put always Slovene poste. Personally I prefer classical musique, but prefer to listen to it on my own.

One thing I be terrified of is earthquakes; we had already a couple of tremors. In Italy lately there has been a very serious earthquake which made victims of a number of children as it struck a school badly built, and some years ago there was a worse one destroying a whole village in a remote part of Slovenia.

8th November

Je reprends mon journal l'ayant laissé en plan ces jours derniers. Il commence a faire froid et la gelée blanche recouvre le sol. Il y a du soleil ce matin, mais c'est l'hiver a present.

Je suis aux prises ce matin avec des crampes; cela est du je le crains a ma gourmandise ayant mangé hier des champignons que je ne digère pas; mais ils etaient bien préparés par Karim que je n'ai pas pu resister. J'en subit a present les

consequences!

Hier il y a eu une mise au point au sujet de Sasha. Erwan en a parlé a Igor qui la connait bien et qui lui a expliqué que son constant bavardage me fatigue beaucoup. Elle ne cessait pas et parler d'un ton haut qui m'épuisait a la longue. Erwan lui a aussi parlé et elle semble avoir compris du moins elle a admis qu'elle avait tendance a trop parler.

C'est pour elle j'ai l'impression, une sorte de besoin psychologique. Au debut je lui posait des questions sur sa famille et essayais de comprendre ses problèmes, et lui donner quelques conseils a résoudre tous ses problèmes. Mais a la longue cela m'est devenu pénible et fatiguant. En fait elle me drainait toute mon énergie et me laissée épuisée. Il est certain qu'elle a beaucoup de fardeau avec sa famille a tous points de vue. Mais son flot constant a haute voix de paroles finissait par m'enlever mon énergie.

J'ai insisté hier pour aller faire une promenade seule, et lui ai dit que je préférais être seul; je ne sais pas si elle l'a compris mais j'ai pu marcher une bonne demi-heure dans un chemin calme près d'une prairie. Il est nécessaire que je marche tous les jours pour exercer mes muscles et me détendre.

Karim m'a dit 'Si vous n'etes pas revenue dans une demi-heure on ira vous chercher.' Il savait le chemin que je prenais. Cela m'a fait grand bien.

Depuis que Erwan a parlé a Sasha, elle ne m'harasse plus de paroles. Elle a admis qu'elle parlait trop et surtout elle a une voix haute fatigante. Igor l'a connait et a dit a Erwan qu'il hésitait toujours de venir ici car elle le soulait de paroles... J'ai dit a Erwan qu'il n'est vraiment pas nécessaire qu'elle reste après ma sieste a ne rien faire. Je n'ai nullement besoin de compagnie; au contraire j'apprécie d'être seule et de pouvoir écouter ma musique et lire. Il y a tant de livres ici que je voudrais au moins parcourir.

En ce moment, je suis plongée dans les oeuvres de Denis de Rougemont que j'ai eu l'occasion de rencontrer a Venise au cours d'un Congrès avec Erwan. C'était un ami de Mary Lavin, et je me partage entre son livre 'L'Amour et l'Occident', et 'L'Avenir c'est notre Affaire'; tous deux très intéressant, et qui est en accord avec Papa sur les ethnies.

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### J'apprécie d'être seule et de pouvoir écouter ma musique et lire.

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Pour moi je dois les lire attentivement et a petite dose. C'est un écrivain de grand talent et bien d'actualité.

J'ai eu le plaisir à entendre Jean hier qui m'a fait part de la visite surprise de Tristan venu d'Australie pour entre autre le mariage du son



meilleur ami Morvan Le Dorven, dont il est le best man. J'ai pu lui parler et lui souhaiter son birthday, 27 ans je crois; l'age auquel correspond celui de Papa quand on s'est marié. Il semblait en bonne forme, mais devra retourner en Australie d'ici peu. C'était une joie pour ses parents de le revoir.

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### Je n'ai pas pu le contacter car notre phone is out of order.

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Jean est soucieux car il se trouve a court d'aide. Nicolas n'est pas revenu juste au moment ou Jean a ses expeditions de Noël. Il n'a que 'cafe au lait' qui est bien gentil mais Jean va devoir essayer de trouver quelqu'un pour le remplacer et cela est un grand problème. En tout cas, il n'a pas l'intention de reprendre Nicolas si parfois il revient. Je me souci pour Jean et son dos.

Dany a repris ses cours et Oisin ses études a Limerick. Il y a, me dit Jean, des tempêtes a la maison. David se trouve a la maison; je n'ai pas pu le contacter car notre phone is out of order.

Je voulais savoir si Olwen a reçu le cheque de 100 Euros I sent her as I was worried when after asking her how were her finances, she said 'On the borderline!' but she never wants to

Bled Lake and island with its church.

accept money, and I felt it was better to send her some. I hope she is OK and that I will be able to contact her when she is back in Dublin. Pity she was unable to join David in Cleggan.

The cramps are bad and I have to go to the hairdresser, manicure, and join Erwan for that function somewhere, something to do with projects of EU and there is to be some musique. I should be back here at 1.30 for my lunch and will go to bed, hoping those cramps will not get too bad.

I phoned Helene; she is more or less OK but still has her arm in plaster. She said its also cold in Brussels.

16th November

Je n'ai pas entretenu mon journal depuis longtemps, car j'avais pas mal de courrier a faire, bien que je ne reçois guère de lettres, en tout cas aucun des enfants sauf Jean et Rozenn m'ont écrits; ni bien sur de Papa, qui ne voit pas assez pour écrire.

Aujourd'hui nous allons a Bled, avec une petite île entouré d'un lac. Il y a un spa et un grand hotel de luxe ou nous devons coucher ce soir. Bénig était allée passer un jour et une nuit lors de son passage en Slovenie. Il fait calme mais gris; la temperature est assez douce.

Hier on a fait du shopping dans la ville, a la recherche d'un tableau que je desire offrir a

Erwan comme present de Noël. On a fait quelques antiquaires et galeries, mais puisqu'a present on n'a pas encore trouvé ce qu'on voulait. Certains étaient fermés jusqu'a 4 heures. Il y a de jolies choses et Erwan est toujours tenté par les coffrets ou petite boites... Il en a déjà toute une collection.

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### Erwan m'a acheté des beaux gants de cuir fourrés (mon Xmas present!)

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La ville de Ljubljana est si joli avec ses squares et arbres, la rivière qui passe au milieu de la ville avec ses ponts si beaux et les cyprès de chaque coté qui se reflètent dans l'eau et la perspective au fond des hautes montagnes a l'horizon. De chaque coté il y a de nombreux cafés; les Slovenes aiment prendre leur drink ou snacks dehors sur les terrasses meme a cette époque hivernale.

On a fait quelques boutiques et trouvé deux chemisiers que je cherchais très jolis, et Erwan m'a acheté des beaux gants de cuir fourrés (mon Xmas present!). Tout cela a des prix bien plus bas qu'en Irlande ou Brussels.

On a assisté l'autre soir a une reception et exposition dans un musée/galerie dédiée au passé depuis les dernières guerres et l'indépendance de la Slovenie. C'était présidé par le Maire de

Ljubljana, une femme, et par le President Milan Kucan, qui est arrivé en mette temps que nous. Il a demandé a Erwan 'Where is your mother?' Erwan replied 'She is sitting down.' He seemed pleased, in fact I just happened to find a seat behind him.

There were a few local musicians who played folklore musique beautifully with various tunes. Their instruments were ancient folklorique ones (one in particular was very typical, a sort of 'planche a laver' which the musician scrapes with two spoons, one in each hand, with striking effect!) tambourines and cymbales. They sang folklore tunes to accompany their musique.

Then the President made a speech, in Slovenian of course, and someone else explained the contents of the photos. So we all went and had a look at them; they were very interesting. The attendance wasn't very large, quite a few veterans of the war. We had a job to find the Galerie and nearly got lost.

There is so much to see and Erwan is so busy, he hasn't much spare time. I went as usual to my particular coiffeur situated in the biggest hotel, where Erwan stayed for a few months before moving into his residence. There is also a nice coffee room in the hotel.

I have two more weeks here and intend to

Musicians on a *pletna* boat at Bled





make the most of it; the time seems to fly. During the week I keep busy. Early morning, I write, Erwan leaves for his office at 7.30 a.m. I am on my own until 11 a.m. and have peace. Karim the cook and Sasha the housekeeper come at 11 a.m.

Then I go for a good walk now on my own, dans un chemin tranquille près d'ici réservé aux piétons le long d'une petite rivière et entouré de bois. J'essaye de marcher 45 minutes à 1 heure; cela tire bien sur sur mon dos qui me fait souffrir, mais c'est nécessaire que je fasse de l'exercice, sinon je m'enquiloiserait. La physio, une gentille jeune fille, sort of miniature, very pretty, comes every Wednesday for massages. She is very good; she also attends the maternity and looks after the newborn babies and checks that their limbs are OK, and if there is an 'anomalie', she sees to it.

Although she is petite, she has an extraordinary strength, being quite able to lift my 75 kilos like a feather. J'ai perdu un peu de poids, mais il m'en reste encore trop.

Erwan vient de partir au marché qui se tient sur la place centrale tous les Samedis; puis de retour nous prendrons la route pour Bled ou nous passerons le weekend. Il y a une piscine dans l'hotel et je pourrais en profiter, bien qu'elle ne soit pas d'eau de mer, mais de minéraux. La temperature extérieure en ce moment est plutôt lourde, et empreinté d'humidité. Il n'y a pas un brin de vent.

On a malheureusement pas encore trouvé le tableau qu'on cherche et que je voudrais offrir a Erwan pour Noël. Il y a encore beaucoup de choses et d'aspects de ce beau pays que je n'ai pas vu. Peut-être si je peux je reviendrais ici en Printemps.

Jean, au cours de ses vacances en Avril, espère venir par ici, en voiture de Carces. Cela lui prendra 12 à 13 heures a travers l'Italie. Papa peut être pourra aussi venir a cette époque, si l'on peut l'aider pour le voyage.

20 Novembre

J'ai encore abandonné mon journal ayant des lettres a écrire. Je suis a nouveau aux prises avec ces crampes et ces cold sweats.

Notre visite a Bled s'est bien passé, malgré le brouillard. On a eu la suite présidentielle a l'hotel Palace ou est descendu le Prince Charles, Bush's wife et d'autres dignitaires. L'hotel est situé au bord du lac et face a cette immense roche très élevée. Le paysage de notre terrasse/balcon était saisissant. Il se trouve au milieu du lac une petite île ou l'on peut aller en canoë. Il y a une petite eglise avec un clocher; la tradition est que le voyageur doit aller sonner la cloche de l'église deux fois, signe qu'on reviendra a nouveau un jour.

Malheureusement vu le temps, nous n'avons pas été jusqu'a cette île.

Notre suite était fort confortable avec deux

grandes chambres, salon et salle de bain, balcon plus terrasse, au-dessus du lac, illuminé le soir ainsi que la roche ou se projetent des lumières de couleur.

Au petit matin, j'ai écarté les rideaux; il faisait à peine jour et je suis restée clouée sur place en admirant un spectacle étrange. C'était comme un immense tableau en couleur ou je pouvais discerner le corps du Christ étendu sur les genoux de Marie, sa mere... c'était comme une apparition! N'en croyant pas mes yeux j'ai à nouveau regardé et le meme tableau se dessinait devant moi. Était-ce une hallucination, ou réellement une sorte d'apparition?

Erwan dormait; je lui ai fait part à son réveil et il ne voyait rien. Peut être était-ce un effet d'optique causé par ces projecteurs? En tout cas, cela m'a fort impressionné.

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**C'était comme un immense tableau en couleur ou je pouvais discerner le corps du Christ étendu sur les genoux de Marie, sa mere... c'était comme une apparition!**

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Nous n'avons pas séjourné plus longtemps à Bled, vu le temps, et sommes rentrés à Ljubljana à midi. J'avais fait quelques excès de

café si délicieux mais qui m'est pas indiqué pour mon foie. Si bien que mon souper n'avait pas bien passé; je ne me sentais vraiment pas bien.

C'est à revoir ce paysage au Printemps; espérons qu'alors Papa sera de la partie. Depuis quelques jours je suis aux prises aux crampes et cold sweats qui augmentent. Je n'en sors pas et cependant il me faut reprendre le dessus ayant dix jours qui me restent avant notre départ pour Brussels.

Ces jours-ci Erwan a des réceptions à rendre. Demain plusieurs Ambassadeurs viennent dîner. Certains je ne les ai pas encore rencontrés, ni leurs femmes. La semaine prochaine Erwan doit à nouveau donner une autre avec cette fois entre autres l'Ambassadeur de France que je n'ai pas encore rencontré, le Baron de Baume! Il est parait-il sympathique. Sa femme est je crois à Paris.

Espérons que pour alors les crampes auront passé. C'est vraiment épuisant; les anti-spasmodiques n'agissent pas. C'est surtout coté colon droit ou justement se trouve le fameux polype. Je dois éviter aussi le poulet qui semble me causer de l'intoxication; alors on reviens au régime poisson. Aujourd'hui la physio doit venir; mon dos est le problème. Demain je vais au coiffeur me faire couper les cheveux et manucure. Il fait relativement beau ce matin et je vais me forcer à aller faire ma promenade du matin près d'une

heure. Il le faut vu mes douleurs ici et là. Je dois éviter de m'enquiloiser. Le soleil est plutôt pale mais il n'y a pas un brin de vent; ce qui change de Cleggan.

J'étais heureuse hier d'avoir une longue conversation avec Olwen qui m'a téléphoné. Elle semble en bonne forme et pense venir avec David nous rejoindre a Brussels pour Noël, et le jour de l'an. Je m'en rejoins.

Je ne sais pas encore si cette visite de Colette Monpert, accompagné de sa fille Catherine va s'arranger; cela serait possible le weekend du 8 Decembre ou le suivant. Cela serait pour moi une grande joie de la revoir après tant d'années. Mais je ne voudrais pas que ce voyage lui cause une fatigue.

D'après Catherine, sa mere baisse beaucoup, et fait de la depression et a de l'osteoporosis qui l'a fait se courber et marcher difficilement. Enfin on verra. Il se peut que de se revoir nous cause une grande joie surement, mais aussi un peu un choc car l'une et l'autre avons bien changé physiquement depuis plus de 30 ans que l'on s'est vu.

29 Novembre

C'est le départ day! Last night we went to the Opera. It was very good, 'The Nutcracker' with lovely Tchaikovsky music. The ballet was very good; we had a 'loge' and could see very well. There was all the diplomatic corps, or nearly all.

We met a few at the 'entracte', entre autres the wife of the Irish Ambassador who had just arrived from Dublin.

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*I feel sad to leave this beautiful country and such friendly people.*

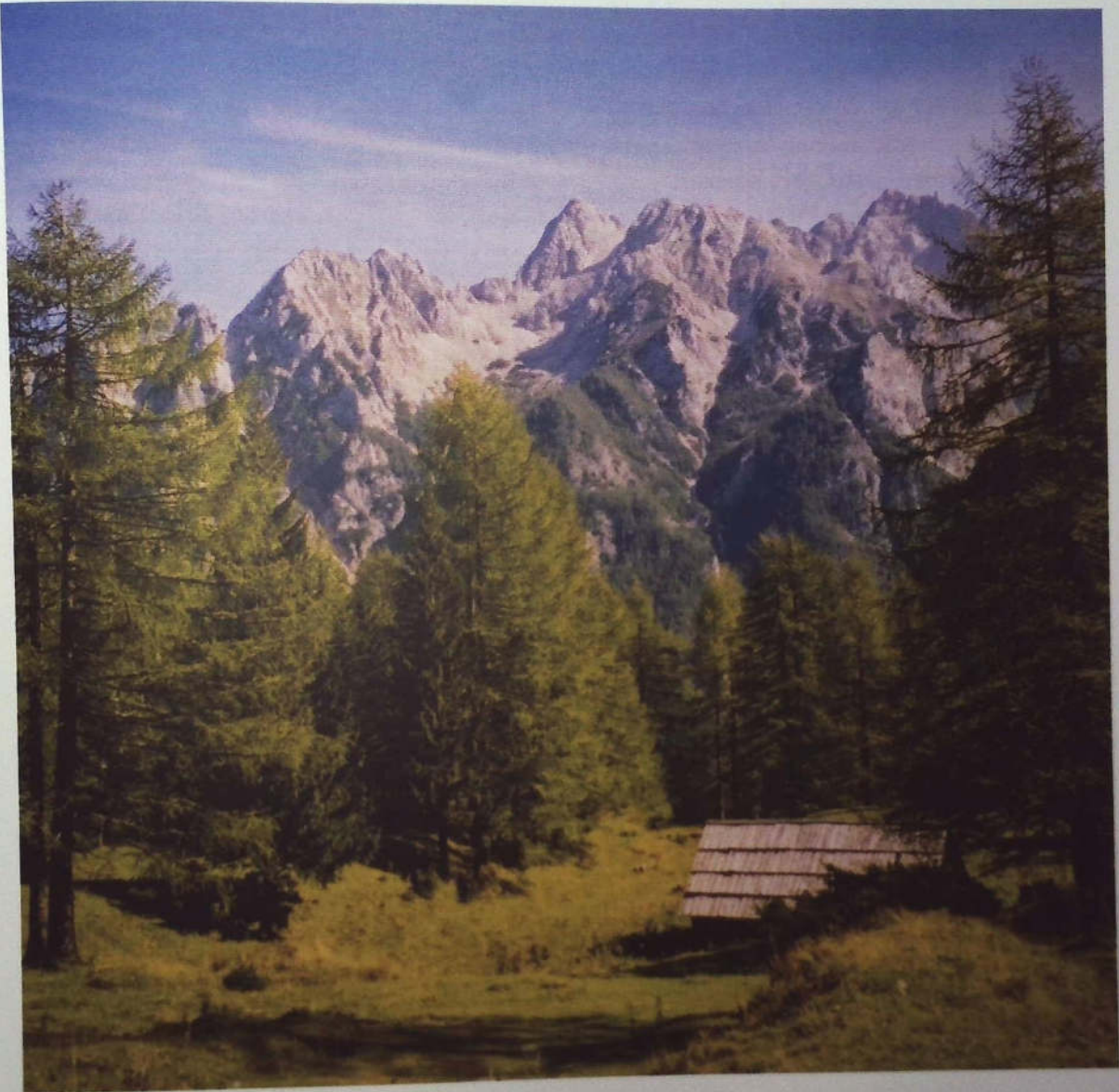
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Here it has been, as usual, so damp and foggy. I have all my packing to do. Erwan said he will help me. He is gone since 7.30 this morning to the office and will come back at 11.30 to fetch me to go and see the picture I want to offer him to thank him for having me the past two months and spoiling me.

We have to go where the artist lives in a small village outside the city. I hope it's not too far; it will be a bit of a rush as we leave at 5 p.m. this evening to go to the airport. I feel sad to leave this beautiful country and such friendly people. But please God I will be back with Papa in the springtime. I hope in Brussels it will not be as damp as here, that sort of dampness here which goes through your bones.

This diary is very untidy... I am so busy writing to all the family, there is little time for my diary. I do write to all the children and to Papa, but since two months I am here, I received very

The Julian Alps in Slovenia.



few letters, nearly none from the children. Papa can't write as he doesn't see well enough, but we phone each other every evening and I ring also the children, who did ring sometimes.

I worry for Erwan as he works so hard and devotes himself entirely to his work, checking everything and visiting the country where there are projects the EU has initiated. It was the same when he was posted to South Africa, leaving home at 7.30, he never stops until very late at night. He doesn't get enough sleep and has no time for his jogging.

He also takes time to show me around and we had nice weekends going here and there on the coast which I love (Piran, my favourite). The spas which did me so much good, and visiting various places around and staying in beautiful old castles renovated and luxurious hotels. He spoilt me as usual.

I will miss him once in Brussels, but it will be for three weeks as he will come the 21st December in Brussels to get Papa in Paris and will bring him for Xmas in Brussels. It will be nice to be together. Olwen will also join us either on Xmas Day or the day after. Then Papa will stay in Brussels with me all January.

In February, Rozenn will come to Brussels to spend a few days and to bring Papa back to Brittany. I am not sure yet if we can arrange for Colette to come to Brussels with Catherine. I

hope it will work out as we haven't seen each other for years. No doubt we will find each other much changed physically. I think she is worse than me, having osteoporosis. She hardly gets out of her apartment in Paris and has great difficulty to walk. We really are like two sisters, having spent all our youth together in 'pension'. She and her husband Roger were very good and helpful to us during the war with all the troubles we had.

I have to rush as I want to sort out my things for packing, before Sasha and Karim come. I can manage better on my own in peace.

It is those stairs which make it more tiring to go up and down bringing stuff in my room for packing. I don't want to leave all the work for Erwan who told me he will do it for me. It will be a bit of a rush.

I hate departures and I appreciate Erwan coming with me to Brussels. He will have to return here Monday morning for his work.

## Other places, other faces



TRAVELS WITH MARIE-MAGDELEINE





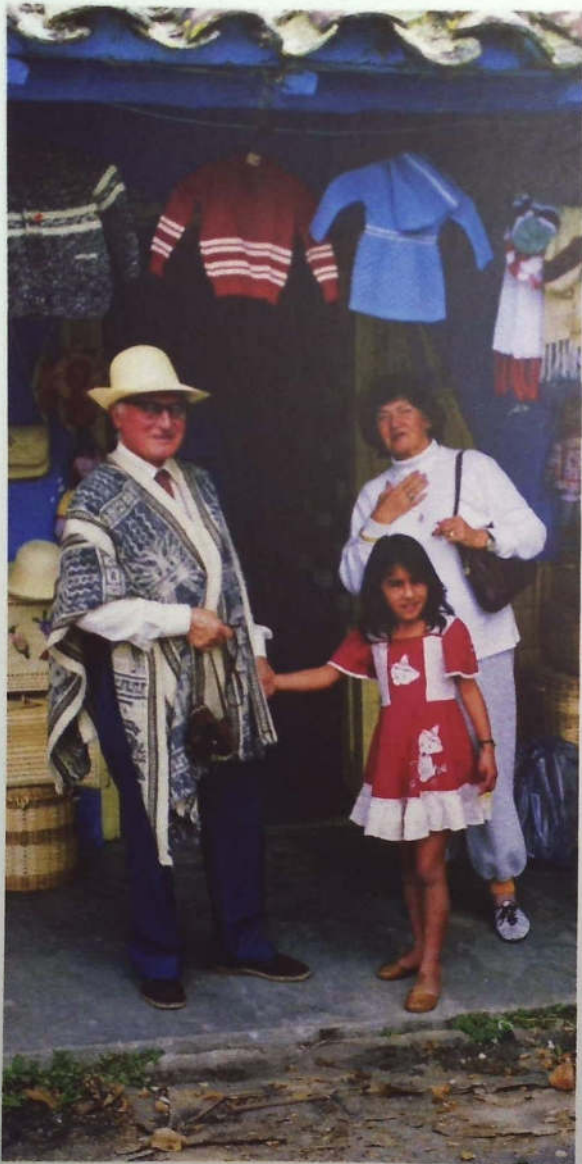




OTHER PLACES. OTHER FACES



TRAVELS WITH MARIE-MAGDELEINE







## Photo Captions

P. 183 Marie-Magdeleine walking from Omeý Island, Connemara after a swim.

P. 184 (top) and P. 185 Yann and Marie-Magdeleine in Les Hauderes, Switzerland.

P. 184 (bottom) Yann, Marie-Magdeleine and Erwan in Cancún, Mexico.

P. 186 (left) Yann and Marie-Magdeleine with the statue of Simón Bolívar, Caracas, Venezuela.

P. 186 (right) Marie-Magdeleine in Sils Maria, Switzerland.

P. 187 (top) Marie-Magdeleine and Yann enjoying the sea in Margarita Island, Venezuela.

P. 187 (bottom) Marie-Magdeleine with Kareen and Yola in Caracas, Venezuela.

P. 188 (left) Yann and Marie-Magdeleine with a local child Merida, Venezuela.

P. 188 (right) Erwan and Marie-Magdeleine at a costume party in Caracas, Venezuela.

P. 189 (top) Marie-Magdeleine after her daily swim in Aughrusbeg, Connemara.

P. 189 (bottom) The family gathers in Connemara to celebrate Marie-Magdeleine's 80th birthday.

P. 190 One of her last swims: Marie-Magdeleine at 85 years of age with Tianna at Aughrusbeg, Connemara.

Pat  
my letter to  
have a nice  
ain's - I do in  
glut  
the family - Aunt  
males's  
week





