

A few jottings noted down after talks with Barbara 2006 - 07

Auntie Eva

Eva was the elder of the two Hartshorne sisters. She was trained for a career in singing, but was found to have a shadow on her lung which would not have stood up to the rigours of travelling and singing as a profession. She lived at 65 Park Street with the Gadd family for many years and used to teach people in the drawing room. She had a fine soprano voice with a very special quality of tone (“a bit like double stopping”) Used to take Muriel and Barbara to the Baptist Eisteddfods, where they recited (Bar) or danced (Muriel). Jessie used to get nervous watching them perform, so Eva was a much calmer chaperone.

Barbara remembers Eva singing on the stage at the Victoria Rooms in Bristol. Barbara somehow managed to wander onto the back of the stage (Jessie was getting Muriel dressed for a dancing display) and she stood by a chair and listened to Eva singing. At the end of the performance Barbara walked to the front of the stage to peer against the brightness of the footlights and her father (George Francis Gadd) walked up to the stage and lifted her down.

Re-singing for the Temperance Society. Eva was not against drink and enjoyed the occasional tippie – so probably sang out of charity (or was paid!) and not through any strong belief in temperance.

Snippets!

The Hartshorne family lived at Totterdown and attended the Counterslip Baptist Church. Jessie probably met GFG at Old King Street Baptist Church, where Moffat Logan was a very popular minister. Alice and Frederick were buried at Arnos Vale Cemetery.

GFG went to Redcross Street School and then to the Merchant Venturers. On leaving school he worked with the Western Dental Company and then branched out on his own. He had the house and shop at 65A Park Street on a ten year lease from 1916 -1926, but was then ‘bought out’ by Western Dental who opened a shop higher up Park Street. GFG then went back to work for them.

After Park Street the family lived at Zetland Road in Auntie Minnie’s house. At this time Barbara’s friend, Joy West, lived with them – but became not such a good friend on closer acquaintance! Muriel was friendly with Griff West (?brother) and took Science in the Sixth Form, because they both had some idea of working abroad on some scientific mission. Muriel was very naughty at school – thought school was for having a good time with her friends and not serious working. She got School Cert, but not Metric – so had to do that at a later date when she wanted to take her degree.

Flags in Park Street

When Royalty visited they would hoist flags across Park Street. The Gadds shared flags with the shop opposite and both were responsible for getting them hoisted. King George and Queen Mary came and the Prince of Wales (Edward) came twice when the Gadds lived in Park Street. People were invited to their drawing room to watch, including Mrs Logan (Moffat Logan's widow) who was a Scottish woman with a lovely laugh – a very pleasant person.

Aunt Louie (nee Louisa Everes Caffery)

Aunt Louie used to visit sometimes when Barbara was very small. She reminded B of the 'small fat grandmamma with a very slippery knee'. Aunt Louie had an ear trumpet and B. had to sit on her knee and talk through this ear trumpet. She doesn't remember ever meeting Aunt Louie's husband.

Cissie Gunn

GFG didn't like Cissie Gunn. B thinks that this was because Cissie was in service in a house across the Suspension Bridge – and GFG had to fetch her and take her home when she visited them.

Cars

GFG's first car was a Studebaker with celluloid side windows. It had 7 seats, because behind the front seats were two seats in the floor you could pull up. There was also a rail on which to hang a rug. Driving lessons were done in a cul-de-sac off Woodland Road. (I think Woodland Road runs from Park Row up towards Bristol Grammar School). Barbara does not recognise the car in the 1930s photograph with GFG driving – though he did teach John to drive. And she does not recognise the houses.

Singing

GFG and Jessie belonged to a group of singers who performed oratorios at the Colston Hall. Jessie had a contralto voice and sang alto.

Stories told by GFG

1. Some group that GFG belonged to were discussing what to get as a leaving present for a retiring member.

“Why not give him an honorarium?”

“What's the good of giving he an honorarium – if he had one he couldn't play it!”

2. Another story concerned a funeral hearse which was about to return empty after a funeral. A drunken man was somehow bundled inside without the driver's knowledge – and when the drunkard started to shout and sing on the journey back, the poor driver was terrified out of his wits!

George Gadd Senior

Barbara remembers that he used to come about with them in the car – about the 1920s – something like that. She recalls that they were once going somewhere and a young boy threw something at the car – a cap or something – and it fell on the step of the car and Grandpa later flicked it off with his walking stick.

Tape transcription July 2007

“Grandpa was all right, but he wasn't in any way a children's man. He was rather silent with children. He hadn't got a way with children – he wasn't alarming or anything, but he was fairly remotish to our childish minds, I think. I suppose he was in and out of our lives quite a bit. We obviously took him about in the car. Sometimes for some sort of outing I suppose. Yes, I remember Grandpa as a person. He was pleasant enough, but I think that probably after Grandma died he rather went into himself, because father (GFG) was like that too, wasn't he? He was all right. He wasn't objectionable. He was quiet really, rather withdrawn I suppose one might say.”

Looking at photographs

Auntie Eva – “She was very nice looking. I always had the feeling that probably in that family she took after the father and my mother took after the mother – in looks. There was a difference there. And Aunt always had a presence I called it. You know – she dressed well. They had nice hands – both Eva and Jessie – good hands, both of them.

Muriel loved being photographed – she fairly sparkled. John didn't like being photographed – he always looked rather cowed.”

Switzerland 1935 – “Auntie Minnie and Uncle Willie went to Switzerland once a year and I think father felt that he didn't want to be left behind on that. He wanted to keep up with the Jones's – yes, literally! (laugh) – so he took me there when I got my degree. I can't say that holiday in Switzerland was wildly successful. I think father was nervous all the time because it was unfamiliar you see. I think he found it a bit stressful really. He never said so, but I got that impression. He wasn't very happy with new situations. And it's always difficult when you don't speak the language, isn't it?”

Ferry to Jersey from Weymouth 1923 – “We were going to Jersey for a holiday on a cross-channel boat and Auntie Minnie asked us to take Stuart – because being an only child he lacked companionship. He and I were very close in age – only about 8 months between us. He was a nice boy, Stuart. I wish we'd lived nearer together really because we could have played together very happily. These awful school hats we had! Mind they

had the advantage, they were warm. They were lovely in winter – they kept out the wind. But nobody in their right minds could say these school hats were becoming. Of course, John went to the Grammar School. He went to Colston's Kindergarten and I think he couldn't go to the Grammar School until he was nine if I remember rightly and he just went on quite smoothly – no problems there.

Auntie Minnie messed about rather with Stuart. She kept changing her mind and switching. I don't know how many schools he didn't go to, poor child. He was a nice boy though – a very nice natured boy. How he endured Auntie Minnie I don't quite know, but Uncle Willie was nice – a very pleasant sort of character. No. I wouldn't like to say where Stuart went to school in the end. I don't know if he did end up at the Grammar School.” (Is he wearing the same cap as John in the photograph? Penny.)

This and That!

“I thought Harold's wife **Winnie** was lovely, because she had this soft voice – she was like velvet. She made you think of velvet. Everything about her was soft and velvety. Yes, lovely. Voice and looks and everything.”

“Now you, Penny, would have got on extremely well with my mother. You'd have liked my mother. There would have been affinities there, I think. She would have been disappointed to miss out on you – but she died a long time before you were born, didn't she?”

“I always said **my sister Muriel** was accident prone, because the house at Halsbury Road was such a small house, they could only get the cot in by putting it across the angle of the fireplace and she had to fall out of it down into a rather cramped position in the fireplace and she cried a lot naturally and mother got the doctor and he examined her. He couldn't see anything wrong – I suppose he may have kept an eye on her. A bit later on a bump appeared on her shoulder blade and the doctor said ‘Ah, she must have cracked a bone when she had that fall.’”

“The Gadds were never a very kissing sort of family and **my brother John** couldn't stand having his head touched. He hated having his hair washed or anything like that. He couldn't bear anyone to touch his head. He used to go up in smoke.”

“**Auntie Eva** was quite tall – well she was taller than mother. She had a great sense of humour – she was always laughing – you know, she bubbled. And mother was the more homely looking one. Well, Aunt lived a different life, because she was performing and she had to dress for that and it gave her more presence – but mother wouldn't have had that sort of presence however long she'd lived I don't think. It wasn't her style.”

Have you ever been to France, Auntie?

Good heavens, yes. I lived for about 3 months in France in my youth. I suppose it was some time in my life when I was at a loose end for some reason or another and it was to improve my French, you see. I think one of my staff must have fixed it up and I had I

think a fortnight in Paris and did a bit of sightseeing and then I went to Madame's house in the country for the rest of the time. The theory was that I was minding the two children - they were quite young children – but Madame was quite happy to mind the children and was happier if I did more of the housework, which I was quite pleased to do, because minding young children isn't the easiest thing in the world, so we swapped more or less. I don't think I stayed the whole three months because it clashed rather with applying for jobs in September here. I think an interview cropped up a bit early, so I didn't really do 3 months. I probably did about 2½ months. It was quite useful, though in the long run I never had much occasion to speak French. I think it was boy and a girl. The girl wasn't much more than a tot. They were only sort of toddlers and I don't know that I did much with them. As I say, I think Madame was quite happy to deal with the children if I'd deal with the housework. Yes, I think it was fixed up through one of the staff at school probably. I think I should probably have gone for 6 months, but that would have clashed too much with applying for jobs. Oh yes, I've lived a very lively life Penny! I think Father was rather alarmed and I have a feeling he insisted on coming to Dover to meet me on the way home and brought me home or something which rather surprised me.

So who lived opposite you in Park Street?

Well there was that music shop because Aunt used to get her music there. They were roughly opposite. I can't think what it was called. Quite a good sized shop. *(There was a music shop called Duck Son and Pinkers in Park Street in the 1950s – about opposite No 65. I don't know if this was the same one. Penny)* And she was a good customer because I suppose she got music for the pupils to some extent and probably got a discount or something. Yes, there was a nice man opposite, I liked. We used to have some dealings with him. He worked at that shop, I think.

So did you used to play on Brandon Hill?

Oh, yes. We were very lucky to have that because immediately after the war there were women police there. The men hadn't come back from the war, I suppose. And they patrolled it pretty thoroughly. I remember my sister got told off once, for allowing me to climb on the gates at the bottom of the tower, which she didn't bother much about. I liked doing it and I hadn't so far injured myself, so she thought it was alright. Yes - that was how it was. You could climb up the tower if you paid. It wasn't very expensive – only a matter of pence, I think. We sometimes saved up our pocket money and went up the tower. I remember years later visiting – I think it was Durham or somewhere in that area - I forget why or what I was doing round there and there was a tower there which I proceeded to climb. I don't know whether I went the whole way up - I think I probably did – and I was very alarmed, because as far as I knew there was nobody else there, but when I was coming down I heard voices and people **had** come up and had gone into one of the rooms off the tower block - to look at the view or something I expect and I hadn't heard them arriving there and it was really a bit alarming.

So John didn't have far to go to the Grammar School, did he?

No, we were rather envious because he could go home to dinner. But we won in the end because after we moved to Zetland Road, I had the advantage and John of course had less – but of course he left school before I did. He went to the Sun Insurance to work, so I'm not sure how long he went to school from the Zetland Road area.

Did John leave school when he was sixteen?

I think he may have been seventeen. He was at the Grammar School and the Head then was a Mr Barton who was considered very good and I think he liked boys to have one year in the sixth form. He thought it was good for them and I rather think John did that before he departed to his insurance. The Sun Office was on the Centre – I think they were at the bottom of Wine Street was it – or Corn Street? Well we all had the feeling that John had the makings of a college lecturer – he would have been a good lecturer - but he was quite happy at the Sun. I think he was quite satisfied with it. I think he'd reached the stage where he thought he ought to be earning, as one does. Unless you're definitely going to train for something, you don't want to potter on endlessly. I think he lived with us until he married probably – people did in those days. You didn't get all this hiving off and taking rooms and things, as happened later. It's much cheaper to live at home, if the family was happy with it.

It must have been fun living in Park Street.

Oh we liked Park Street because it was so quick to get down into town if we wanted to and equally I suppose we had Brandon Hill as a playground. I think it was very safe for children. As I say, there were these women police who patrolled it and I don't think the streets and so on were as bad then for children as they've become since. I think they were harmless enough. We didn't go down the bottom much because that was pretty well into Hotwells and there were rougher types down there and I think they sometimes came onto the lower part of the Green. We didn't mingle with them I don't think.

It must have quite a spacious house.

What Park Street? Yes, yes, it was. The rooms of course were a good size. We lived from the first floor up, because the ground floor of course was business – offices and things. No I think we quite enjoyed it there. And we liked that first floor balcony that joined up the cottage at the back onto the main house as it were. I think mother called it a stoep, which is an African term isn't it – S-T-O-E-P – a stoep. I think that's right.

So what was the cottage exactly?

Well it was just built on to give office space. It was all part of the property.

Didn't you say that my mother climbed along a parapet or something?

No, not a parapet – it was worse than that! You see the back of the house was on two levels. Park Street was one slope and Brandon Hill was the other slope. And there were cellars under the property I think and father had girders put in. You see if you came in from the back lane and down a bit, then it dropped several feet and there were steps down to the side door of the house as it were. And Father had girders – two went across the lower part and I think the third one extended a bit up the upper part. I don't know how far – I've forgotten – but somewhere above the steps down to the lower level, I suppose, I forget now exactly. Heavy deliveries were made at the back and they were hooked onto hooks on these girders, and run down until they were just at the back of the house and over where the cellar level was, which had a removable wooden top I think and that was pulled out of the way and these heavy things were lowered from the girders. Well my sister once – in those days Old King Street Baptist Church had tennis courts just off Kellaway Avenue – they ran a tennis club for a few years as far as I remember – and we often went up there – well teatime-ish. Mother and other ladies helped with putting on cups of tea if there were enough people there to justify it. And my sister got home a bit late from school one afternoon and we'd all left for tennis. It was hot weather and the dining room was on the first floor, but in a way two floors up because of this drop at the back of the house – and that window was left open because it wasn't accessible in normal circumstances – and of course my sister got home late from school and wanted to get in and get her tennis racket. She got a ladder I think from somewhere and mounted up to this open balcony which joined the house to this cottage at the back and crawled along the girder and through the open window. She must have had a good head for heights I think because it was quite hairy. She could easily have been killed if she'd fallen from there - it was like two floors down in a sense. However, she was determined to get her tennis racket! So that was what she did. Whether she got into trouble I've no idea.