
ANNE HOSKINS

FOLLOW YOUR HEART

MY LIFE STORY

ANNE HOSKINS - MY LIFE

CREATED BY REBECCA SKINNER
CELEBRATING LIFE'S CHAPTERS
P: 0401 808 335

DOOP

VAN



Inne,
Adriana,
Driena
Wisse

geboren den 22 Oct. 1924, te Bandoer

gedoopt te **Hennion**

den 21 Juli 1929

door

J. W. Spino Fockers.

med. Ferv. predilect

OUR FAMILY IS A
CIRCLE OF LOVE AND
STRENGTH. WITH
EVERY BIRTH AND
EVERY UNION THE
CIRCLE GROWS.
EVERY OBSTACLE
FACED TOGETHER
MAKES THE CIRCLE
STRONGER



.....

Anne, 19 days old, with her proud mother.

Previous page, Anne's Christening Certificate.

PREFACE

I had what can only be described as an idyllic childhood. My parents were from Holland and my younger sister Aria and I were born while they were stationed in the Dutch East Indies, now known as Indonesia.

My sister and I had a carefree existence. Our family had household staff and we spent weekends with extended family riding ponies in the cool of the mountains. Twice we returned for a year to Holland travelling by ship through the Suez Canal to Italy or Marseilles, then Spain, England and on to Amsterdam. But just before my 18th birthday it all came to a dramatic end as a result of the Japanese occupation of Indonesia in World War II.

Under German occupation the Netherlands had little ability to defend its colonial outpost and less than three months after the first attacks on Borneo the Japanese Navy and Army overran Dutch and allied forces. The occupation began in March 1942 and didn't finish until after the end of the war in 1945 with the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The experience of those caught in the occupation varied. Many in areas considered important to the war effort experienced torture, sex slavery, arbitrary arrest and execution. Many thousands were taken as forced labourers for Japanese military projects including the Burma-Siam Railway and suffered or died as a result of ill treatment and starvation. About 170,000 civilians were interned in prisoner-of-war camps.

The Japanese treated the civilians taken in the Dutch and British colonies much more severely than the mostly American civilians taken in the Philippines. It remains unclear why this difference occurred, most likely the vagaries of the camp commanders. A United Nations report stated that four million people died in Indonesia as a result of famine and forced labour during the occupation including 30,000 European civil internee deaths.

My family and I became prisoners of war. My mother, sister and I went to a camp which was considered perhaps the worst of them all. Its commander was notoriously cruel. We were among the survivors.

This is my story recorded in February 2013 when I was 88-years-old.



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Baby Anne with her parents.

CHAPTER 1 - PRISONERS OF WAR

From our point of view it all started after Pearl Harbour when Japan invaded Indonesia. Soon news came through that all Dutch-born were to be taken away to camps, however not those with any Indonesian blood. Despite us being born there, both my sister and I had blonde hair so there was no way internment could be avoided. However, as my father was a construction engineer, he was asked by the Japanese to work on repairing some of the bridges that had been bombed by the Dutch. We were allowed to stay at home and were so happy we didn't have to go to a camp. During this time the curfews started. At first fairly gentle then decidedly more efficient. By this time we were not allowed to leave our house at night.

But after six months the inevitable happened. We were called up and told we had to go. Camps had been set up all over Indonesia to intern European civilians, mainly Dutch as 'guests of the Emperor.' Males and females were sent to separate camps. We didn't know where my father was taken. My mother, sister and I were informed we could only bring one suitcase each. I clearly remember a large truck arriving outside our house, already full of people and, like cattle, we were squeezed inside. There were so many people that we had to stand all the way to Tjideng, a women and children's internment camp. We had little idea what we were about to endure.

Tjideng was created out of a closed-off section of Tanah Abang, one of the poorer suburbs of Batavia now known as Jakarta and the hottest part of the island of Java. It contained small, densely packed houses. At the front gate of the camp the Japanese opened our suitcases and went through all our possessions. We weren't left with much. They took any money, pencils, paper and books. I loved cooking but my beautiful collection of cook books was burnt in front of my eyes.

For the first six months we were separated from the others already in the camp. I don't know why, perhaps they were concerned we would pass on news about what had been happening on the outside. But people could whisper through the bamboo screens and anyway they had already heard a lot of news. Then we were integrated with the others. This wasn't a question of making room for us in one of the houses, we were just told which house to move into and we had to squeeze in with all the others.

PAIN IS INEVITABLE
SUFFERING IS OPTIONAL

- M.KATHLEEN CASEY

PRISONERS OF WAR



The houses continued to fill up more and more. In the house we were allotted to, we had a small area with three beds. Mum had a mattress and my sister and I (pictured with Anne above) put our beds on top of each other to make bunks for a little more room. There was just a curtain between us and another mother and daughter. They had a window which they could climb in and out of, but we had no access to the outside. So I got a hammer and made a hole in the wall and this became our entrance and exit.

The result of packing more than 20 people into a tiny house meant only for a small family, was that the toilets quickly got horribly blocked. So we were given tins to use as chamber pots instead. These, of course, had to be regularly emptied out. As time went on there was a little more order. We were divided into groups with a woman in charge. At first people were sent on jobs on a bicycle but when the tyres went down and with no way of pumping them back up, the leader would use a loud hailer to call a group together for a job.

THERE IS IN EVERY TRUE
WOMAN'S HEART A
SPARK OF HEAVENLY
FIRE, WHICH LIES
DORMANT IN THE BROAD
DAYLIGHT OF
PROSPERITY; BUT WHICH
KINDLES UP AND BEAMS
AND BLAZES IN THE
DARK HOUR OF
ADVERSITY

- WASHINGTON IRVING,
THE SKETCH BOOK, 1820

CHAPTER 2 - SADISTIC CAMP COMMANDANT

Boys were allowed to stay with their mothers until they turned 12 and then they were transferred to a men's camp. And some people had family pets which they had brought with them. But when people got really hungry of course their pussycat didn't last long.

The really sad part was that one day the Commandant decided to get all the young boys and the few remaining dogs and command the boys to kill them. They had to do it with poles. Can you imagine a 12-year-old boy having to kill his own dog?

Afterwards a lot of the women said it would have been better if we had killed them ourselves first and eaten them. It was very sad. The Japanese had no time for animals.

Commandant Kenichi Sonei was notorious for his cruelty. Reports made later record that even his own men admitted they were frightened of him and they described him as a 'psychopath' and a 'monster'.

He used to go berserk during the full moon. He would get us all out of bed, sometimes we would have to stand up all night outside. We were never sure what he was going to do.

I really do admire the women who were in charge of groups as they were often the ones singled out for punishment. He would tip food over in the kitchen, bury bread in rage and would make people go without food for days.

Reports by other detainees say that sometimes on a full moon he would let out his wild monkeys which he normally kept in cages. Those monkeys would run after the children, in particular, and bite them. He actually encouraged them to bite and thought it was funny. We were constantly scared as we never knew what was going to happen.

We were all given a number and had to have it displayed at all times. In sweltering sun we had to endure roll call at 6 o'clock every morning and in the dark in the evenings.

SADISTIC CAMP COMMANDANT

Nearly 11,000 women and children had to be counted, standing in neat rows in their groups, with the woman in charge arriving with a list of those who had died or who were in hospital. If we were only one person out, the roll call had to be done all over again. It was so terribly hard trying to keep the young children quiet.

Schooling and religious services were banned so when the war ended many children from the camp couldn't read or write. Some mothers tried to teach them illegally, but if they were caught they were given a beating or their hair was shaved off.

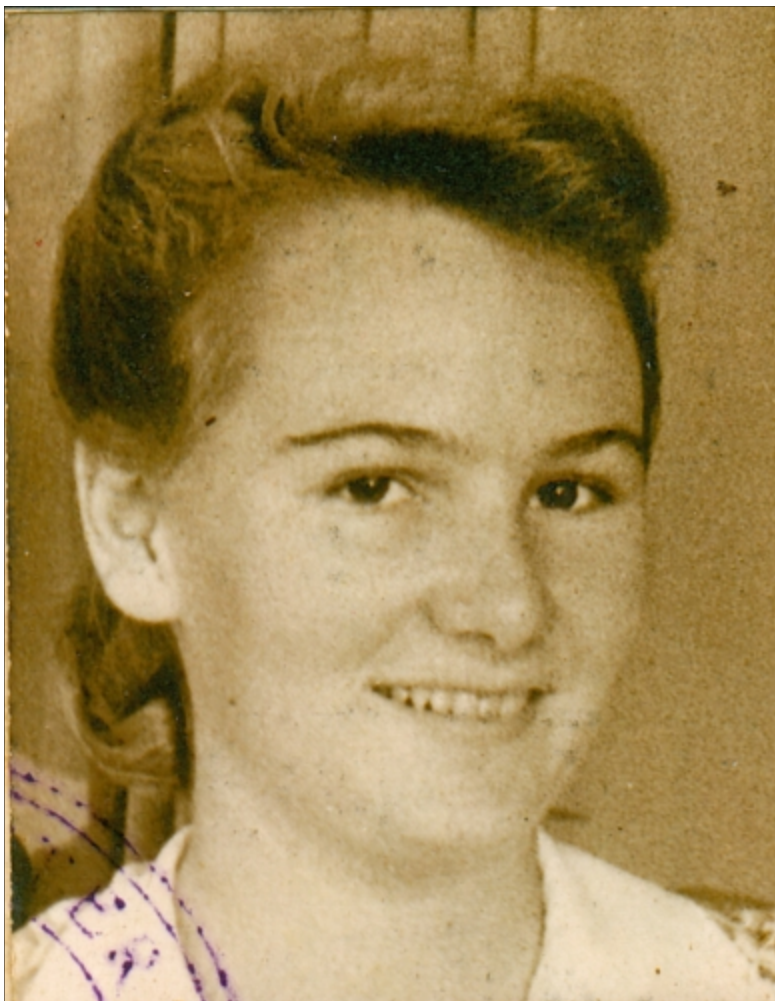
I remember one leader was ordered by the Commandant to have her head shaved but reappeared the next morning with a lovely full head of hair. You should have seen his face...The other women had donated some of their hair to make her a wig. There was nothing he could do about it!

There were always jobs to do and we were always kept busy. I built a fence with others girls my age all the way around the camp, digging holes, putting the poles in and then putting bamboo screens over them.

As a result I've always been good with a hammer and nails! There were roads to sweep, cleaning and repair work to do, and when the sewers overflowed at the hospital, we had to empty them out with buckets into the gutter. When it rained it got washed away but when it didn't, it was dreadful.

Simple things like washing our hands was hard as we were only allotted one bar of soap a month, so we were always having to borrow small bits from each other to try and keep ourselves clean.

As a result of these insanitary conditions, dysentery was rife and many, many people died as a result.



Anne aged 17 when war broke out.

Following page, Anne's WW11 internment papers.

CHAPTER 3 - A SPOONFUL OF SUGAR

Once a month we had to help the Japanese soldiers offload supplies of rice, sugar and salt which arrived in huge bales. They didn't offer to help and my job was to lift the heavy bags on my shoulder off the truck and put them in the warehouse under the guard's beady eyes, making sure I didn't steal anything. I think that's the reason why I have such a bad back from carrying those heavy bales.


Sometimes, if the guard turned his back, I would have just enough time to make a tiny hole in the bottom of the sugar sack and quickly stuff what I could into my knickers!

We only had the clothes that we came in with so we were forever adding patches to the few pieces of clothing we had. I didn't smoke when I arrived in the camp but I soon learned how. Each week we received payment for our work, either a cigarette or a spoonful of sugar or something else nice. On strict instructions from my mother and sister, who both smoked, I had to ask for a cigarette. We shared it. My sister would measure it out with a ruler and mark it into thirds with a pencil. She insisted on having the end bit. My mother would have the first, I would have the second and my sister the third, putting a pin in the end of it so she could smoke it to the very end. It was a real lift. It was our treat. But I would have much rather have had a spoonful of sugar.

Food was made in a communal kitchen, from which came a once-a-day ration of a spoonful of rice cooked in green water. If we were lucky there were some vegetables, a little bit of bread and on occasion, a spoonful of sugar. There was never any meat. From a nutritional point of view the females between 15 and 50 could just about manage but small children and elderly were really badly affected, so the death rate amongst that group was enormous.

My mother was in charge of our house with two helpers and she would get the food ration from the kitchen which she would then have to divide up. I learnt to eat all sorts of goodies, including some special edible leaves from trees growing in camp, to supplement our meagre rations.

A SPOONFUL OF SUGAR

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After the rain we would go snail hunting and would cook up all we could find. Because cooking and fires were banned we would cook them under our beds in old fashioned butter tins. We just hoped the Japs walking past couldn't smell the smoke. I remember how they tasted, they were just super.

Inevitably though we got thinner and thinner and as a result of beriberi had edema with ankles that swelled to the size of those of elephants, so it became difficult and painful to walk. Our stomachs too became swollen.

A SPOONFUL OF SUGAR

A few months after being detained my periods stopped and I told mum. She said, "Well you've been in camp too long for anything naughty to have happened!" Hers had also stopped, then my sister's did too. My mother told the doctor who just laughed and said it happens to all women because of lack of nutrition and it was a case of 'nature taking over'. Those who continued with their periods became extremely weak with no resistance to disease.

If you got toothache you had to have the tooth pulled out, so I'm missing quite a few teeth. But generally you had to wait a long time to see the doctor.

Over time the Japanese reduced the size of the camp many times. That did not deter them from bringing more people in from other camps. Tjideng started with about 2,000 people. Over the years its area was reduced to about a quarter whilst its population grew to about 10,500.

We just hoped it would end soon. We were all getting a bit down. I had very bad dysentery and mum was not the best as she was in her 40s. She had more or less given up. It was very sad to see so many women and children die.

Burials were done outside the camp at a cemetery and the Japs used to bury huge 'hands' of bananas with the coffin, as was their religious custom. We would have given our right arms for those bananas. And the irony was that the person may not have died of starvation if they had been allowed the bananas while alive.

The women who didn't want to see their children starve to death opted to go with the Japs as their females, so they would be fed and looked after and given a small measure of freedom. But they were not allowed to be taken against their will and the women had to sign documents saying they went voluntarily. I'll give it to the Japs, they didn't interfere with us. If the Japs made any advances to women in the camp they would be shot, so we never had to worry about that. In any case there was a double fence that the Japs marched along. However, if you happened to be cleaning or sweeping the road and a Jap walked past, you had to stop and bow. If you didn't do it you would get hit in the face. They expected this from their own women, so what else could we expect?

IF YOU'RE GOING
THROUGH HELL, KEEP
GOING

- WINSTON CHURCHILL



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Anne and her sister Aria, who was known as 'Ade', meaning 'small one' in Indonesian, which then got shortened to Dee.

CHAPTER 4 - MY FATHER AND WAR'S END

We never knew where my father was or whether he was even still alive. The Red Cross told us after the war that by law we should have been allowed regular communication with him but the Japanese didn't believe in it. The Red Cross also sent parcels with food and essentials but we never saw them. When they were finally redirected life got better and better. I remember the first things to be delivered were huge supplies of sanitary towels.

We didn't know exactly when the war finished. The first we knew was when the main gate suddenly opened and uniformed Scottish men came into the camp and made an announcement. Then Commandant Sonei was brought to the gate for identification and I think if they hadn't taken him away to go to trial he would have been murdered by the women.

On September 2nd 1946 he was sentenced to death by the War Crimes Tribunal. He appealed but his appeal went before acting Governor General Hubertus J. van Mook who rejected it out of sight, not surprisingly, as his wife, Mrs van Mook, had also been one of Sonei's prisoners...Three months later he was executed by a Dutch firing squad.

News that the war was over didn't mean an awful lot to us as we had nowhere to go. Our home, which we had rented, had been occupied by the Japanese and we were advised not to leave the camp. The Indonesians were still very much against the Dutch, mainly the younger ones who had been churned up by the Japs.

But one day our maid came to visit us at the camp and was so upset to see what had happened to us. She wanted to come and work for us again.

Finally we got news of my father. We learnt he had been on his way to Sumatra, being taken to a camp at Pedang on the east side, but the ship he was transported on was bombed by a Japanese aircraft trying to dispose of prisoners of war. It was awful. Dad floated in the water and luckily was able to grab onto a piece of wood which he shared with another man. But many of the men around him drowned. Eventually he was rescued and transferred to Singapore to a huge hospital at Johor Bahru.

MY FATHER AND WAR'S END



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Anne always adored her father.

WHEN IT'S DARK ENOUGH
YOU CAN SEE THE STARS

- RALPH WALDO
EMERSON

MY FATHER AND WAR'S END

I was very close to my mother but I absolutely adored my father, though he was terribly strict.

I remember the first time he allowed me to go to my first ball at school. I was only 12 or 13 and I was so excited as I had my very first long dress!

Dad took my sister and I and said he would be back at 10pm though the ball didn't finish until midnight. He said, "I'll be there at 10 and you had better be ready to come home!"

Mum always used to stay up waiting for us. And when we went out for the evening and other people were bringing us home she would make sure Dad was asleep so he didn't know if we were late, which we often were.

She always smoothed things over. But if he was picking us up, he would always arrive several hours too early.

Dad used to work for a large building company as an architect sent from Holland to the Dutch East Indies and on his first leave back to Holland he met my mother who was brought up on a farm near Arnhem, in the middle of Holland.

Marriage in those days made it much easier for the wife to join the husband at his overseas posting. She didn't want to be apart from him, so they got married and once everything was ready for her to join him, she went out to Indonesia in 1922.

I was born in 1924 and my sister in 1927, but my mother had a miscarriage between our two births.

Right, above, Anne's parents on their wedding day.
Right below, Anne's mother relaxing at home in 1925.



CHAPTER 5 - A LOVELY LIFE

Growing up in the Dutch East Indies was wonderful. At home we had Malaysian staff but we were brought up never to take advantage of them. My mother would say, "They are here to help me, not you, so you must pick up your things!"

One of them cooked for us and my father would come home from work each day for lunch, have an afternoon sleep when the heat was at its greatest, returning to work for a few hours. We also had a lady to do the washing.

One of the ladies used to sleep on a mattress in the bedroom my sister and I shared, to look after us. My father also had a driver who would also serve us our meals. It all sounds very posh but my parents were always reiterating, "They are here for our benefit, don't you dare throw your clothes around. If you do, you can pick them up. You must always treat these people with a civil tongue." But other people from Holland would make a real meal out of having servants.

Some of my happiest memories are the holidays we had with our extended family - aunts, uncles and cousins in the cool of the mountains. I particularly loved riding on small mountain ponies and was always sad when we had to go home. It really was sheer heaven on earth.

My sister and I went to a local school which was a mix of nationalities, mostly Dutch but a few Indonesian and Malay, though these were children who had had more tuition than the locals. From the age of 8 until 12 school would go from 7am to 1pm, as it was too hot in the afternoons. I made very good friends there and loved going to school. I didn't excel at any one subject though I did like algebra.

My parents spoke Dutch at home so my sister and I were fluent in that language and then from secondary school, German and English were compulsory.

What I really loved was swimming. My sister was a magnificent diver, while I became a very fast swimmer. In fact I could swim before I could even walk! We both became members of a local swimming club and I also joined the Girl Guides.



Above, the house in Batavia (now Jakarta) where Anne grew up.

I remember when Lord Baden Powell, the founder of the Scout Movement, came to Java and a special show was put on in his honour. I was nearly 15 and had to sit on a big, hard stone for a long time. When I got home I had backache and said to my mother that I must have hurt myself sitting on it. But in actual fact it was the onset of my periods.

My mother despatched my father to go to the chemist to get 'those bandages'. He went straight away. He didn't mind! That made my sister very jealous as she felt she wasn't grown up enough. But her periods started when she was 12 so she soon caught up. She had a big bosom even when she was young, but I was as flat as a pancake!

CHAPTER 6 - AROUND THE WORLD

When I was five my father was given a year off work and we all went back to Holland, travelling by ship from Jakarta, via Singapore, Medung, through the Suez Canal to Italy, all the way round Spain, stopping off in England then on to Amsterdam in Holland. It was wonderful. It took us about a month and mum said it was 'her holiday'.

In Holland we spent six months with one set of grandparents and six months with the other. I was christened there as both sets of grandparents could be present. We called both our grandfathers Opa and our grandmothers, Oma.

I loved visiting my mother's parents. My Opa always used to ask me about school. He was a very tall man and I remember we were out walking together one day after it had been raining. We stopped at a gutter and I burst into tears. I'd seen a dead cat. Opa said to me, "Please don't be sad, the cat has found a better spot to be." That has still stuck in my mind.

I also remember how cold the weather was and we loved wearing winter clothes but I can recall how itchy they were!

I went to two different schools as our grandparents didn't live close to each other. It was strange going to a Dutch school but because we had been brought up in Indonesia, an environment where you met up with so many different people, it was easier for us. I liked being there and settled in well, but still didn't like school that much.

Sometimes I had to come back to school for a day in the holidays as punishment for being naughty. I would have to do sums for two or three hours while the master was marking exam papers.

My sister didn't like school at all. She was spoiled as she was the youngest and she could get away with murder whereas I always had to toe the line, being the big sister!

HE WHO HAS A WHY TO
LIVE CAN BEAR ALMOST
ANY HOW

- FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

AROUND THE WORLD



Anne's parents Aria (Dicky) and Gerard (Tommy) Wisse.

The second year long visit was when I was 13 and this was really special as I was allowed to eat with the grown-ups on board the ship, but my sister still had to eat with the children.

She didn't like this at all and she made an awful fuss about it. As dad had a year off I couldn't understand why I couldn't too. Why did my sister and I still have to go to school? But we did.

However, when I went back to Indonesia I had to start the same year all over again. This actually turned out to be a very good thing as I came top of the class!



Top left, Anne's paternal grandmother, Anna Wisse. Top right, Anne's maternal grandfather, Willem Master.

Above left, Anne and her sister. Above right, Anne's mother dressing a Christmas tree.

CHAPTER 7 - MY SWEETHEART

However wonderful my childhood was, there is no doubt that the best and longest chapter in my life has been with my husband, who I met just after the war ended.

It was August 1945 while we were still living in the prisoner-of-war camp and we had decided to have a dance. We certainly had something to celebrate! We all wanted to dress up, but of course we had no decent clothes, just shorts with plenty of patches on them.

Some people in camp had somehow managed to hold on to their musical instruments, I have no idea how. So we ended up with a little band playing.

I was standing with my sister and a friend when I got the distinct feeling that somebody was looking at me. I couldn't resist it, so I turned around. I was right! Someone really had been staring at me and it turned out to be a man called Alan.

My English was not too good in those days but we started to chat to Alan and the people he was with, some of the crew that he was flying with. But Alan kept coming up to me and singling me out to talk to. I remember thinking at the time, "What does he want?" But I do remember being rather taken by his gorgeous blue eyes.

Alan and the crew's job at the time was to fly out supplies from Singapore to Jakarta, spending the night in Indonesia before returning the next day. They said that they had heard there was a women's camp and that there was a dance being held there, so they decided to come along.

Lo and behold about a week later who should come knocking on the wall of our room but Alan with a bar of chocolate. I still have the wrapper! He told me that he'd 'just happened' to be over here, but his crew said afterwards that he was volunteering for flights to Jakarta as he wanted to get to know me better.

Pictured right, Anne and Alan.



MY SWEETHEART



The wrapper of the first chocolate bar Alan gave Anne.

A little while later I was celebrating my 21st birthday with a little party and Alan came to it. He told me he had found out where my father was. He was in hospital in Johor Bahru, more dead than alive, poor soul.

Alan, by then, had decided he wanted to marry me. We were planning to get married in a church in Singapore, where my mother and sister were to be evacuated to.

The Dutch, who were being repatriated back to Holland, all had to go to there first. And by going there, of course, it meant we could be reunited with my father.

LIFE DELIGHTS IN LIFE

- WILLIAM BLAKE

MY SWEETHEART

I decided I didn't want to go with them as they would be going into a camp again, and I really wanted to be with Alan.

But his officer in charge got wind of our relationship and our plan to marry and was determined to send him away on a posting. They had the right to do that to any man under the age of 25 and Alan was only 22. They were only trying to protect him by splitting us up, I think because I had been born in Indonesia. They didn't realise I was properly brought up - I certainly wasn't a local in a sari!

So Alan decided to evacuate me himself as soon as possible. He got me some khaki trousers and a top and pretended I was one of the medical sisters and got me onto his aircraft and I flew with him and his crew to Singapore.

One day not long afterwards, Alan phoned me up and said, "Are you dressed? I'm going to pick you up and we're going to get married this afternoon!" He had just learnt he was to be posted the following day to Rangoon, the former capital of Burma, now known as Yangon - a long way away from Singapore.

At least Alan had the time to have a shower and put on his best uniform but I was still in the same dress. We got married by special licence only a few minutes before the registry office closed at 5pm on December 6th 1945 with two members of his crew to act as witnesses.

After the ceremony Alan took me to be reunited with my father for the first time in more than three years. It was so wonderful to see him again.

Dad told me that he had liked Alan from the beginning, because "he was a man." Dad said, "I never thought much of all those snotty nosed boys you used to go out with. But this man has been through the war. Plus, he did me the courtesy of coming to the hospital to ask for your hand in marriage."



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Anne's sister, her mother Aria (Dicky), Anne and little Adriana in Holland.



Above, Anne's first boyfriend, Hank.

MY SWEETHEART

Alan and I had only known each other for around three months, but you don't have to know someone well before you get married. You get to know them afterwards. I had had various boyfriends but Alan had that special 'something.'

I still remain in touch with my very first boyfriend, Hank in Holland, who used to be a pilot with KLM. In those days a boyfriend would look after you, there was certainly no hanky panky. A kiss was it!

The day after Alan and I married we flew out to Rangoon. Of course I wasn't supposed to go with him, no wives were allowed to be with their husbands. Alan said, "The less they know the better. As far as you're concerned you're a sister, Sister Hoskins, and you're flying with the crew."

I couldn't stay with Alan at their camp, as it was only for the crew and anyway, we didn't want anyone to know I was there. So Alan, who was always very resourceful, discovered two Australian women running a half way house that was used mainly for officers who were stopping off in Rangoon overnight. He went to the gate and spoke to the women about me. Luckily they said, "Yes, we could do with an extra pair of hands and we've got a nice little room at the back that she can have. When you have time off you can come round and see her."

So when we were first married I had to say goodnight to Alan at the gate!

Inevitably though I found out I was pregnant and Alan said, "Sadly, this is the end of the road. I can't keep you here any longer." The trouble was, we had no idea how I was going to get back to Holland. That is until one very fortunate day when I went into the city centre. As luck would have it I bumped into an old friend of my family's. Even more fortuitous, he was a captain with the new Royal Dutch Airline and was in Rangoon flying ex-prisoners-of-war back to Holland. He offered to fly me there the following day!

Once back on Dutch soil, the government issued me with underwear, dresses, a coat and a hat - the official allocation for a woman who had arrived back, with no possessions, after the war.



CHAPTER 8 - MY LIFE IN ENGLAND

Three months after arriving in Holland Alan was given leave from Rangoon and we went to England together where I finally met his parents. By now I had my first passport, marked British by marriage.

His parents were really sweet. We met them on June 8th which was a celebration day in Europe. I remember how they hired a taxi, which was really something in those days, and drove me past Buckingham Palace on the way to their house.

They had an upstairs flat above their house in Ferme Park Road near Finchley which I moved into. Our first baby was born in November 1946 while Alan was still away as he wasn't demobbed until just before Christmas that year.

My father's health by then had improved and he had arrived to support me at the birth. There was really thick smog the day I went into labour and both my dad and Alan's father walked in front of the ambulance I was in to help them find the way to the hospital. Later we sent a telegram to Alan telling him that Adriana had been born.

Alan's parents very always very helpful. His mother would always be correcting my English and I've always been very grateful for that. His mother learnt to speak really good English as she had worked as a maid for an upper crust family as a cleaner. However, his dad was a typical Londoner and his accent was so broad that sometimes I couldn't understand him.

We did have some funny times. I used to love going shopping with my mother-in-law. But one day I went out on my own. It was only to the greengrocers to get some potatoes. I was heavily pregnant at the time.

Pictured left, Anne's aunt and Anne (right) in her Dutch Government-issued clothes.



MY LIFE IN ENGLAND

The greengrocer asked me, "How far gone are you love?" I completely misunderstood him and replied, "Well, I'm all the way from Holland!" I only realised later what a silly mistake I'd made.

Then one day, without realising it, I said a really rude word and Alan was appalled. I was really surprised as his dad was always using it - you know, "f...ing this and f...ing that." I told Alan that I had learnt it from his father. Well, Alan was most put out and said, "Don't you ever let me hear you say that again, it's just not ladylike. I'm going to have to have a word with Dad about that!"

By now Alan was in the civil service, in the RAF department stationed in Northumberland in London. I worked, doing a bit of this and a bit of that, at one time helping sort out the ration books into alphabetical order to be archived.

Allison was born in January 1949 and young Alan in July 1952. When Alan was free to look after the children, I worked on Saturdays from 9am to 6pm at a large department store, very much like Myers, on the biggest counter selling stockings. The little bit of extra money was always very useful.

I clearly remember the first day young Alan went to school. It was in August and I took him in and introduced him. But the following morning he didn't get up and get dressed. I said, "Come along, you've got to get ready to go to school." With his hands on his hips he retorted, "I've been for one day, that's enough." I replied, "Not blooming likely mate, get your clothes on, you'll be at school for a long time yet!"

Allison was always closer to young Alan as Adriana was of course the oldest - she's always been very switched on, very clever. We decided we couldn't afford a fourth child and we felt two girls and a boy was enough for us.

Left, Alan's parents Blanche and George Hoskins.



CHAPTER 9 - POSTINGS TO CYPRUS

Over a period of ten years, we enjoyed two periods of living in Cyprus thanks to Alan's work with the civil service administration department.

The island was originally settled by Mycenaean Greeks in two waves in the second millennium BC. As a strategic location in the Middle East it was later occupied by different major powers, including the empires of the Assyrians, Egyptians, Persians, Romans, Byzantines, Arabs for a short period, the French Lusignan dynasty then the Venetians and Ottomans. Cyprus was under British administration from 1878 until it was granted independence in 1960.

Our first stay there was for three years from 1959 to 1962 when the children were all still quite young. Then we returned to England for three years, Alan and I returning to Cyprus two more times, once for three years, then for another two before he was offered a promotion back in England.

The first time we arrived proved a typical example of how Alan always seemed to be able to get out of tricky situations. It was December 6th, our wedding anniversary, and our boat from Southampton had to moor offshore in deep water. Alan said to me, "You'll be getting off first with the children, I'll follow with the luggage." I replied, "Haven't you forgotten something? What day it is?" He immediately retorted, "How could you possibly think that of me? What more do you want woman? I've just given you Cyprus!"

We lived first at Limassol until quarters became available where all the other staff were housed. Our neighbours were so kind. Every Sunday people would come round with a big dish, asking, "Where's your meat Missus, we'll cook it for you." Then they came back with it beautifully baked, ready for us to eat.

The children (Adri and Ally are pictured left) went to an English school near where we lived. At that time we could travel all over the island, skiing in the morning and sailing in the afternoon, which was wonderful as the second time the island had been divided up into Turkish and Greek areas and you had to get permission to cross the border.

POSTINGS TO CYPRUS



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Racing at Tunnel Beach, Cyprus where there was a sailing club.

WHEN LIFE TAKES THE
WIND OUT OF YOUR
SAILS IT IS TO TEST YOU
AT THE OARS.

- ROBERT BRAULT



Sailing - always so much fun in Cyprus.

POSTINGS TO CYPRUS

Mind you, I couldn't ski for nuts. Once I went to the ski fields with Allison as we'd decided we'd be adventurous. I remember I was on the learners' slopes and I slithered all way down. It was the same with skating. I was always frightened of the skates disappearing underneath me.

What we all really loved was sailing. I had learnt to sail when I was young and Alan and I joined the local sailing club. We progressed from sailing small yachts around Cyprus to eventually hiring a large boat to go for longer trips to the Lebanon and Turkey and would take crew with us.

Alan later drew wonderful pictures of our boats which are hanging on my walls. We used to race with the club and I won several silver cups. But it wasn't until we returned to England that we bought our first boat, once we'd moved from London to West Mersea near Colchester. We taught quite a few people to sail, including our children, and all three became very keen sailors. Weekends were such fun, taken up with chores like cleaning the boat as well as sailing or racing. There was a lovely little restaurant where we'd go to get food and a bar where we'd get our snacks.

There was one very scary time though when we'd just left the Lebanon and got caught in an almighty storm. I'll never forget it.

The weather had been lovely when we set out but once the storm hit, there was no turning back. We had all the children with us; young Alan was 9 or 10, Allison was around 12 and Adriana, 15 or 16. Adriana's boyfriend John, our son-in-law to be, was with us too. John and I tied ourselves on and clambered along the deck and lowered the sails and then came back and sat inside to give Alan a hand.

It was very frightening looking behind at the dirty great masses of water coming towards us.

POSTINGS TO CYPRUS

Whenever Alan and I had to do something on deck we would tell the children, "Stay below, do not to come out."

But every so often the door would open a little and a frightened voice would ask, "Are we nearly there yet?"

Of course it was far too rough for me to cook so we ate what we'd bought in the Lebanon. Basically it was fruit - oh, and cigars!

When the storm improved we sailed home with just the headsail and Alan tied a heavy rope to the stern and let it tail behind. I thought at the time, "We should never have brought the children." But we never imagined how dramatically the weather could change. That trip could have been lethal.

When we finally got back to Cyprus some of the sailing club members came out to meet us to give us a hand as we were utterly exhausted and they helped us to sail back.

Then, when we got the boat out of the water for a check-up, we found only one small part of the keel still attached. The rest had broken off. If that little bit hadn't been left, we would definitely have capsized.

All in all this was a very happy part of my life - it was such a lovely island - plus we got a new car out of it!

We made lots of friends and there were many parties to attend, though Alan used to hate all the official 'do's'. He'd complain, "I have to wear a tie to work every day and now I've blessed well got to put one on, again!"

Right, above, happy days sailing.

Right below, Alan all dressed up for yet another 'do'.





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Joyful days for Anne and Alan in Cyprus.

CHAPTER 10 - LIFE IN AUSTRALIA

We moved to Australia in 1978 after 30 years in England. Allison had been living there for a few years after originally going out with a girlfriend and staying with friends of the family until they found a place to rent. Her boyfriend John was also out there.

Alan and I went for a holiday and we really liked the look of it. Alan particularly loved it as he could wear sloppy trousers or shorts the whole time! I was in seventh heaven in the climate.

Not long after we got back to England, while Alan was in Germany, I received a phone call from one of Allison and John's friends in Australia saying, "If you can be home this afternoon, Ally and John are getting married, but they want to keep it a secret."

I'll never forget Ally's voice when I phoned the restaurant and got to speak to her. When she heard my voice she immediately burst into tears and said, "Mum, how did you know?" I admitted one of their friends had spilled the beans and I just wanted to be part of it.

After that we decided, as we both liked Australia, we would move there too. And I've never had any regrets. I often say to people, "You'd have to pay me to live in England again. I'll go there for holidays, but never again to live."

We settled in Sydney and I worked for nearly 15 years for the Little Sisters of the Poor in Drummoyne as a telephonist.

During that time we used to go for holidays to the Central Coast, particularly the area around The Entrance, around an hour and a half north of Sydney.

When we decided to retire there, to Tumby Umbi in 1992, the Sisters were most upset and wanted me to stay on. I still keep in touch with a few of them.

COUNT THE GARDEN BY
THE FLOWERS, NEVER BY
THE LEAVES THAT FALL.
COUNT YOUR LIFE WITH
SMILES AND NOT THE
TEARS THAT ROLL

- AUTHOR UNKNOWN

LIFE IN AUSTRALIA

When we moved into our house on the Central Coast, Alan indicated the spare room and said, "That's my room", then pointed to the rest of the house and said, "That's yours. We'll meet up in the kitchen!"

He used to spend a lot of time in his study, writing his books and doing his drawings

Oddly enough it turned out he really enjoyed shopping. After a while I couldn't get the bugger out of the shops! Sometimes he would come back complaining, "They've charged me far too much." And I'd tell him, "Just get over it!" But Alan was one person who never held grudges.

He also had a very cheerful disposition. I am not a morning person, but Alan would be laughing first thing and I could have murdered him. That's the beauty of being different.

He was also very thoughtful. He taught me how to use a screwdriver saying, "I won't be around all the time, you need to know how to fix things."

I was never the little woman, I had my own say in a lot of things. If we didn't agree we'd try and compromise and do whatever it was in a different way. I think that's why the kids loved him so much, because he was so fair.

Of course you have your moments when you could kill each other, but we've always believed that it's better to blow it out of the air and get it over with. It's no good trying to change things when you can't.

Our motto has always been, "Clear the air, say the truth." And although we needed each other, we knew how to leave well alone.



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Above and right, special cards treasured by Anne and given to her by her family.

Dearest Mummy

Congratulations

ON HAVING PUT UP WITH "IT"
FOR 8 YEARS



eggy

Shuffle

The Ballerinas



CHAPTER 11 - LAUGHTER AND TEARS

At around six in the evening Alan used to say, "The sun has set around the yard arm girl. Let's have a drink." It was the biggest treat of the day and we so used to enjoy it. We'd have a whisky and nibbles and watch the news, then I'd go and cook dinner.

We always had good laugh with each other but also a good cry.

It was terrible when we found out that young Alan had a brain tumour. His father was so desperately sad.

I nursed my husband until his death in 1996. He was in so much pain but he still made jokes. Funnily enough, in a way it was a good period of our lives.

Nurses used to come round once a week and they'd stay with him while I went out and did the shopping. He loved having those nice young girls to look after him.

It did take a bit of time to get used to not having him around. About a month after he died, young Alan offered me a trip to England to cheer me up. He treated me to first class. He wasn't that well himself but thankfully he was able to take a little holiday with me. A friend of his who worked in first class said, "Give me all his medication and I'll look after him."

He died on January 2nd 1997 just four months after his father, and I'm so glad we had that holiday together. His death was much more difficult to come to terms with than losing my husband. It is so much worse for a parent to lose a child.

Celebrations: Above left, Adri and Alan proudly showing his recently published book, A Contract Officer in the Oman.

Below left, a joyous young Alan when he heard Australia was to host the Olympic Games.

LAUGHTER AND TEARS

It has been difficult coming to terms with getting older and hard to adjust to immobility. If I know someone is coming at 9 in the morning I have to be up at 7 to get ready. Everything takes time.

I've never been a person who rushes, I am a bit of a slow coach. But there's no good to be had by harping on about what you used to be able to do.

At least I can still swim. Once the sores on my legs are healed I hope to start swimming again with a group of friends at the nearby Mingara Recreation Club.

I still enjoy a drink when the sun has set. I do it on my own now of course but I certainly don't drink until I'm google eyed. I have half a nip of whisky with nibbles, then the other half later on.

I get a lot of solace out of going through Alan's files in his study and reading what's inside them. I also always find lots of things I can do. Each day comes by and something different happens. Life still rolls on.

Looking back I realise I've learnt a lot of important lessons, many from my prisoner-of-war days: how to live with people; how to handle people; how to help them.

Also how not to think that you're the 'bee's knees', and how not to be a busybody.

You certainly learn a heck of a lot when every day you have to meet up with the same people, endure a severe lack of food, and everyone around you is complaining.

I could be bitter. Sadly that happened to my sister, she blamed the Japs. What's the point of taking it out on them? It only brings bitterness to yourself.

Getting all het up doesn't get you anywhere. No one has perfect days all the time. Sometimes, when I'm feeling a bit off, I go into the garden and sing and whistle with the birds.



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Anne with grandson Alexander on his wedding day.

Of course I miss my husband. Sometimes I sit here and say, "Alan! Where are you? I need you!" But our lives together worked out so perfectly right from the very start.

And if I had just one message for future generations, it would definitely be, 'Follow your heart - but make sure you do it sensibly.'

WHEN LIFE GIVES YOU A
HUNDRED REASONS TO
CRY, SHOW LIFE THAT
YOU HAVE A THOUSAND
REASONS TO SMILE