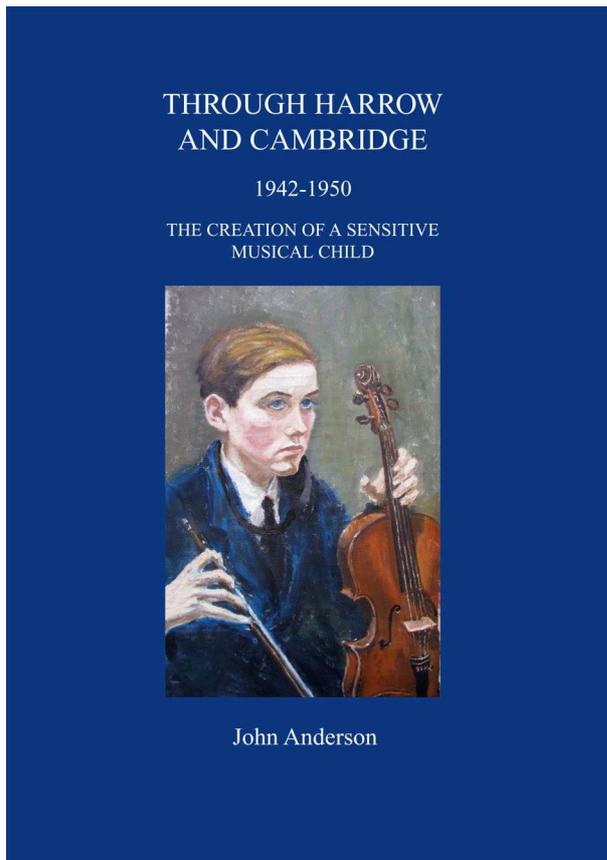


Preface



Dr. Harald Fuglsang has been my life's companion since May 1966 – 40+ years. He and I, John, created the Kirsten Kjær Museet together in Denmark. Harald has completed 3 books, and it was he who suggested that I also might write a book . I took the hint, and wrote a booklet early in 2011 - 'JACKIE THE UNFORGETTABLE'. It was about the renowned cellist Jacqueline du Pré, whom I had met in 1964 when she was 19 years old. We quickly became friends, and she came at least 22 times to our house in London, ostensibly to practise, but really to join in chamber music sessions. But what then? Well, Harald struck again, saying - isn't it time you wrote another book? OK - I can try. As a start, I have lots of letters, mainly to my parents, and these are all in the computer and printed out. But who am I to be starting a second book at the age of 81? I was born in Brighton, Sussex, England on 5 November 1929 (Guy Fawkes Day, please to remember the 5th of November) As you will read, I am ½ English, ½ Scottish – 100 % British.

My father, Robert David Anderson, was born in Shetland of a fishing family in 1887. He died in London in 1956. He had stayed in Shetland until he was about 21, attending the local primary school at the southern end of the island of Yell – in bare feet! He was the first Yell boy to obtain a bursary to the prestigious Anderson Institute (no family relationship) in Lerwick, the capital town of Shetland. He probably studied in Lerwick for some 6 years, becoming an assistant at Porteous' pharmacy. It was during that employment that the thought of further travel came to him, and he went to Mumford's pharmacy in Hove, southern England. He was still in the world of chemistry, no doubt taking exams to qualify him for his next big move – to India! He became no less than a scientific officer with the Doomdooma tea company in Assam, and worked in India for the next 17 years.

On one of his returns to India, by passenger liner in 1923, he met the woman who was to become his wife and the mother (foto) of his 2 boys, Robert and John. The boat was heading for Columbo, whence he continued to India, and she to Australia. She was trying to recover from the death of her 1st husband (Cyril Saunders), killed in France 3 weeks after their 1915 marriage. But her 2nd marriage took her to Assam, where Robert was born on 20 August 1927. She suffered terribly from malaria, and the whole family returned to England and settled in Brighton at 20 Preston Park Avenue, where I was born.

My mother was the middle of 3 strong sisters born in Manchester, England – Elsie, Gladys, and May. Together they produced 7 children, and the 2 youngest were my brother, Robert David (Robbie), and me myself. Robert went off with all the brains, achieving a 'double 1st' at Cambridge – in Classics (Latin and Greek) and 2 years later in Egyptology. What did I get? – a poor 2nd in medicine, also at Cambridge University. The oldest of the 7 cousins, Bob, is 15 years older than me, to the day, being born on 6 November 1914. Incredibly, he is still alive at 96, living in South Africa. All our other cousins, 2 girls and 2 boys, have died. But between them, they produced a younger flock, so all is not lost, as it were. In closing the cousin section, it may be of interest that the 3 youngest were gay – May's youngest, Ken, and we 2, Robert and John. Oh dear (my favourite phrase).

My father had a younger sister, Thomasina Williamina, our aunty Tommy. Her life was largely uneventful, but, like her brother, she had excellent early education at the local school. Her handwriting was very good, and it would not enter her head to make a spelling mistake. She married when she was about 40, while she was still looking after her parents in her house at Mid-Yell, on the east side of the island, with a large voe in front. My paternal grandparents were both about 90 when they died. Thomasina's husband owned some 4000 acres of ground and a large house, the Manor House of Burravoe, at the south-east point of Yell. When he died 10 years later, she inherited the lot, and on her death in August 1980, it came to her nephews, Robert and myself.

According to my mother, I was a silent child who never gave any trouble. When I was a baby, she could never make me smile. The reports from my kindergarten, which was just at the bottom of the road, show that my behaviour was very good – 'conduct, excellent', 'general progress, highly satisfactory'. Nothing wrong with that! Then came prep school – Prestonville School, 4 Belmont, Brighton. I was reasonably happy there, but frightened of the headmaster, Major C.M. Phillips. On the whole my reports were quite good. I copy some of the headmaster's remarks: Summer 1938; though he has made general, all-round progress, one has the idea that he might do better: Easter 1939; a good term's work: Summer 1939; good, all-round, progress; some of his examination results were disappointing, but I feel he has not been really fit during the last fortnight: Christmas 1939; quite satisfactory though he must learn to do himself justice in tests: Easter 1940; has not been so consistently steady as usual but, considering his age, has made very satisfactory progress: Easter 1941; a thoroughly good term's work; if he will keep this up, he should do well in the future: Christmas 1941; he has not kept up the standard he set himself last term; I am hoping that this is but a temporary lapse and that he will give of his best in future: Easter 1942; has worked well: Summer 1942; he has done a sound term's work and we look forward with confidence to his doing really well at Harrow where we wish him every happiness. The Harrow reports come later.

As I have written, my father was a Shetlander, and family holidays in Shetland are part of my earliest memories. They took place by car and boat, and the journey could be fairly terrible. Shetland is a very long way from Brighton. Aberdeen, whence we embarked, is some 550 miles from Brighton, too far to reach in one day by car, particularly with wife and two small children. So we had a night en route, often at Darlington in County Durham. The boat (the St.

Magnus, St. Sunniva, or St. Clare) usually departed late afternoon, and she arrived at Lerwick some 14 hours later, early morning. The seas were often rough, and all of us, except my father, were invariably sick, especially my mother. In the early years, say the mid-30s, we stayed with my grandparents in St. Magnus Street, Lerwick. St. Magnus became in fact the principal saint of Orkney and Shetland. Later the family stayed with my aunt on the island of Yell, and once (1938) at the Manor House of Burravoe. Then there was a terrible year when we sailed on the St. Ole from Thurso in Scotland to Kirkwall in Orkney. This crossing was far from long, but, goodness me, it was rough and how we suffered! But in Kirkwall we could admire the cathedral of St. Magnus, begun, incredibly, in 1137. I write 'incredibly' because the Orkney islands have very little importance in the general run of things, and why should anyone dream of building a massive cathedral? Well, Earl Rognvald Kolsson evidently did. Peter Maxwell Davies (now Sir Peter), composer, moved to Orkney in 1971, and still lives there to the best of my knowledge. Among his very many honours, he was created Master of the Queen's Music for a ten-year period from 2004.

My mother never hit it off with Thomasina. Wretched Thomasina – she developed glaucoma in her old age, and that required surgery to her better eye. One eye was already almost blind. Thomasina stayed about 3 months in London, and it fell to me to do most of her entertaining, as well as arranging her admission to Moorfields eye hospital for the surgery. I often took Thomasina on the underground, and it was very difficult getting her to place her foot on the moving escalator. She had never before met anything like it. But she managed somehow, and perhaps almost came to enjoy it. We went together to the Albert Hall to listen to the Red Army chorus. That was a great success, but unfortunately the surgery was not, and she ended up worse than at the beginning. She ended her days in an old folk's home in Lerwick, virtually blind.

Classical music entered my life early. There were good symphony concerts in the Dome at Brighton – a hang-over from William 1V's Pavilion. My mother took us there regularly, and she played the piano modestly. We built up a library of long-playing 78 records. My brother started to learn the piano, I the violin. I was 9 when I started, too old by today's Susuki standards, but I was keen and learnt quite fast. I was soon playing violin and piano sonatas with my brother. Then came prep school – aged 9 or so to 12. Nothing much to report from there, but there is a photo that shows all the boys assembled in July 1938 when I was 9. Much later, May 1951, I started my playing career in the Chelsea Opera Group (COG), which in the early days, until May 1957, was conducted only by Colin Davis (now Sir Colin, very deservedly). I was a good amateur violinist and violist. The last time I played in COG was in April 1969 (The Grand Duchess of Gérolstein by Offenbach). These details are shown in the booklet "In Concert – 50 years of Chelsea Opera Group". The booklet also contains the following on p. 17 under the heading "The Trojans" by Berlioz – "I remember John Anderson, one of the violinists, after a rehearsal of Part 1, exclaiming, his face shining with a kind of holy radiance, 'It's beyond anything!'. Well, goodness me!