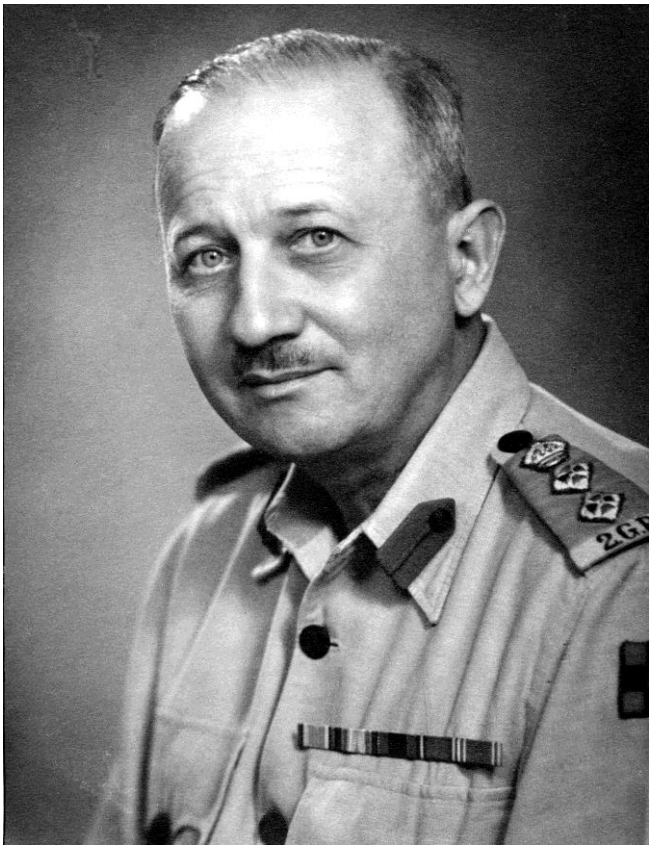

FOREWORD

Many years ago, when I was a boy, my father spent a great deal of time preparing a genealogical tree for our family. He visited many strange people who were thought to be relatives, delved in the registers of old churches and finally prepared the diagram we now have.

A bare family tree, though interesting, is a rather meagre record of a family which requires more details of the characters and habits of its early members. Information of this sort should be available for the benefit of future generations, a century or more hence, who will surely be interested to know of the manner in which their ancestors lived.

Here are my own recollections as far back as I can remember, together with incidents in my own life and the early days of my children. This record has been initiated in the hope that each of my children will pick up the thread from where I end and continue the narrative for the benefit of their own descendants.

Alfred Lakeland Fell

Commenced in January, 1953 at
The Cottage, Ferry Lane, Wargrave
Berkshire

and

Concluded in June, 1955 at White Corner,
Ryders Avenue, Westgate-on-Sea, Kent

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Genealogical Table

Figure 1 - First Term at Framlingham

6. FRAMLINGHAM COLLEGE. 1910-15

We were two very miserable boys when we set out for Framlingham on a very cold day in January. We had never before been boarders at school; we felt lonely and feared the future.

In our railway carriage a genial, rotund man with a shiny bald head, questioned and reassured us. He gave us sweets, made us laugh and finally disappeared. When we reached Framlingham in the evening we were surprised to find him there and he proved to be Mr Towle, the senior mathematics master; the finest type of old fashioned tutor and a character who might have stepped out of Dickens. He took a great interest in us throughout our years at Framlingham and five years later, when I was in the Cricket XI, he presented me with a cricket bat and took me to his room for a glass of sherry to celebrate having scored 50 runs in a school match. This was no small honour from any master but was doubly appreciated as it came from one who was himself a County cricketer and a Senior Wrangler.

Our beginnings at Framlingham were more than modest. We were both put in Form II and as there was only one Form lower than this we felt fairly secure. At the end of one term we both moved up to Form III and at the end of the year we moved up two forms. Thereafter I left my elder brother behind and moved up two forms every year until reaching the Upper V where I spent a year in almost complete confusion, finally reaching my peak in Form VI B.

During the last two years at school my work was seriously compromised by a determination to get my school colours for Football, Cricket and Hockey. This hat trick succeeded and, during my last year, my joy was complete when I was invited on two occasions to play in the County cricket team.

Apart from passing the ordinary Cambridge examination I achieved no distinction. On two occasions I won leather bound prizes but cannot recollect what they were for. One was “David Copperfield” which I never read and the other was “Half Hours with a Naturalist” which I read and re-read repeatedly. Both were blown up in the blitz of 1941 during the air raids on London when all our property, which was in store, was destroyed.

Other minor achievements at school included the Bronze Medal and Certificate of the Royal Humane Society for Life Saving which was followed by promotion to sub-Prefect. Further promotion to Lance Corporal in the OTC was neither wanted nor appreciated but that was before the war began.

In those days, life at a Public School could be hard and the food was bad. Unless parents elected to pay an extra fee breakfast consisted of no more than tea with bread and butter. Lunch provided a meat dish and pudding both of which were often uneatable. Tea again produced just tea with bread and butter and that was the final meal at 6 PM. There was no supper.

We were always hungry and pocket money never exceeded threepence per week which was insufficient to add jam or other luxuries to the eternal bread and butter. Strangely enough this diet actually kept us fat but we always longed for something salty to eat.

While our diet was limited our spiritual welfare was more than abundant. We were marched into Chapel every night before going to bed and this was repeated three times on Sundays including an early service before breakfast at which we were unwashed, hungry and half asleep as boys always will be when they are driven unwillingly to church.

We slept in large dormitories. The largest held forty boys and was a vast, cold room with bare wooden floors where there was occasional but not much bullying. Exactly five minutes was allowed for undressing and getting into bed after which the gas lamps were extinguished and talking was forbidden. If any boy prayed at all he was obliged to do so quickly but more often it would be done under the blankets.

The corridors outside the dormitories contained long lines of basins at which we washed in cold water in all weather and it was an unwritten law that one stripped to the skin and to the waist for washing, however cold. At this stage of my life I never possessed a dressing gown and I soon learned that it was warmer to make haste than to indulge in self pity.

Looking back on these conditions they sound unduly harsh but, once one had settled down, our lives were completely happy and I thoroughly enjoyed my years at Framlingham.

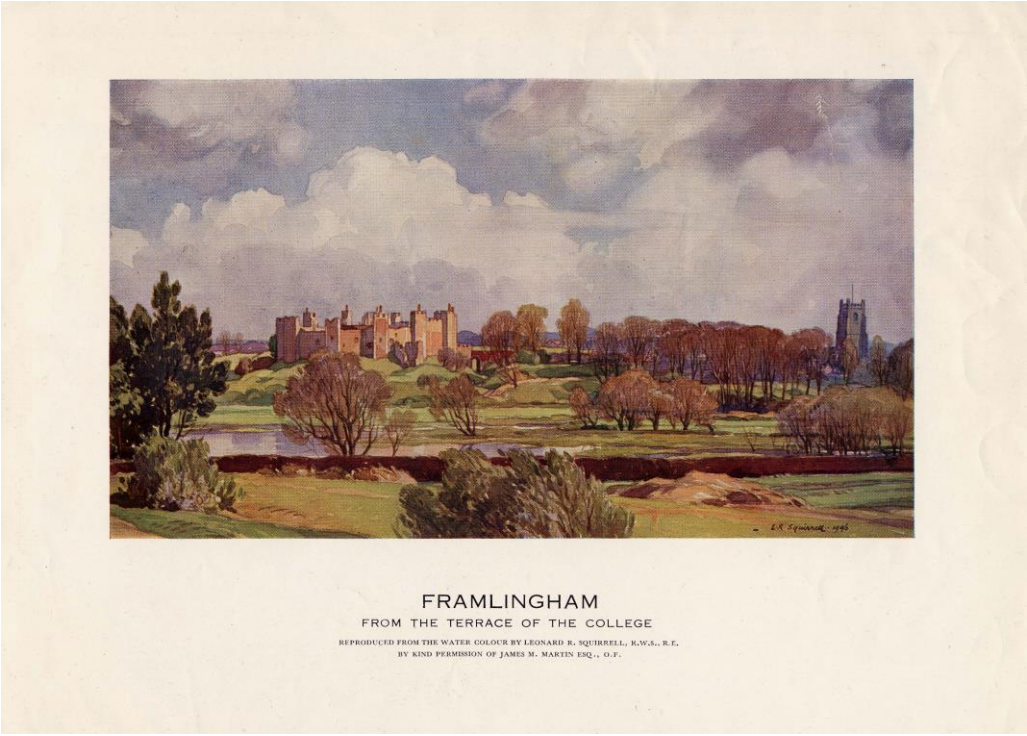

Figure 2 - Framlingham

7. HOLIDAYS WITH AUNT JULIA. 1910-15

While we were at Framlingham my brother and I spent our holidays with Aunt Julia, the spinster aunt who had squandered the residue of the Indigo planter's estate. Aunt Julia was already over 70 but, in spite of being a semi invalid, she was an ideal guardian for small boys. She entered into all our games and escapades, accompanied us on all our outings and often risked collapse from the strain. She did her very best to give us the best possible life and on one occasion she actually stumped round the pawn shops to sell old clothes in order to take us to the Crystal Palace exhibition. It is not surprising that we were very fond of her.

Unfortunately Aunt Julia was the victim of her own virtues. She was incapable of keeping money in her purse; she just had to spend it all quickly. The result was that life was a series of ups and downs, successive periods of affluence and depression which we boys enjoyed but which caused considerable anxiety to my father who paid the bills. As soon as a cheque arrived Aunt Julia sallied forth and immediately the house was filled with sweets and everything we boys liked to eat but this was soon followed by an aftermath of penury.

As soon as we went to her Aunt Julia, with customary affluence, took a house at Sydenham where I recall meeting Couldrey, the well known artist whose paintings of animals were very valuable. Some of his pictures were on Aunt Julia's wall and I have often wondered what became of them.

The Sydenham house proved too expensive and we moved to a more modest dwelling in Ipswich. On arrival, I remember driving from the station to the house in a large Victoria carriage and pair followed by several butchers' and grocers' touts on bicycles. In those days tradesmen had to search for customers and our procession through Ipswich was spectacular.

Aunt Julia had casually mismanaged the furniture removal and a completely empty house greeted us. We spent the night sitting on the floor while an upturned drawer from the kitchen dresser provided a stool for our old aunt who sat perched unsteadily until she collapsed from strain in the small hours of the morning.

This delightful old character had many curious habits and one was a passion for her revolting little mongrel named Mikado who was toothless from age and grossly fat from overeating. He slept under the blankets on her bed and was never allowed out of the house alone.

Gramophones were still unknown but Aunt Julia possessed a phonograph which played records in the shape of wax cylinders. This was a monumental instrument and was much admired in its day for it had an enormous metal horn with pink and white roses painted on it. The cylinders were considerably more expensive than modern records and we were unable to afford more than six tunes so the entertainment suffered somewhat from constant repetition. For one tune, which was a full-throated song by Caruso, it was necessary to stuff a towel down the horn in order to moderate the high notes. These precautions were forced on us by complaints from the neighbours.

As age overcame Julia she became increasingly religious and forged a close link with the Vicar of the local church who was a high churchman and given to spectacular ritual. One Sunday morning, when Julia was in bed, my brother and I were much interested in a long procession which came winding up our road headed by the Vicar and his choir singing lustily; a large brass cross was held aloft, an acolyte was swinging incense and a crowd of curious street urchins was following. We were deeply impressed by this display until the whole procession converged on

our own front door and we discovered that Julia had demanded Communion in her own home and half the town had come to witness it.

My brother had now left school and had become an engineering apprentice with a large manufacturing firm in Ipswich. I, myself, continued at Framlingham and much envied the fact that Hadwen was given a cycle and later acquired a motor cycle, both luxuries which I never possessed until I was grown up and able to buy them for myself.

My memory is vague as to when we left Julia but I recollect visiting her once about 1922 by which time she was full of years and very frail but still her old self. She died soon after, leaving her few possessions to Hadwen who benefited very little for most of her property was sold to pay her debts.

Figure 3 -My Parents, Aunt Julia, Myself, Hadwen and Mingeen

Figure 4 - Brighton Beach - My Parents, Hadwen, Myself and Mingeen