

We started off in grand style by car but after passing through Cambridge I found great difficulty in seeing the road as my eyes were then beginning to give trouble. So I handed over to Madge who is an excellent driver.

Blancé, the guest farm we were going to, is very well known and very popular for families with young children. The younger children have their meals in a large room attended to by Mrs Ryan only, and no parents are allowed to watch as Mrs Ryan says the children eat and behave much better when she is in full charge. Some children are very finicky and won't eat this or that but by the time they have been there a few days it is rather amusing to see them eagerly waiting for the bell to call them to a meal.

A lot of the accommodation is in one, two or three roomed huts which, although not lavishly furnished are never-the less very comfortable. We had a two roomer, Mark and I sharing and Madge and Annaliese the other room. There is a bathroom and for hot water there is a forty gallon drum an under which a fire is made giving one plenty of hot water. The boy keeps stoking the fire, as there is any amount of wood so that one has continuous hot water. The food was excellent, real home cooked. Madge and I shared a table and at another table sat twelve teen agers in charge of which Mr. Ryan placed Mark in charge to keep order. There was a lot to do as there was tennis, squash, bowles, shooting and fishing on the dam also a four hole golf course. More of a mashie course! When I say my eyes were giving trouble I could see dimly. Of an evening there would be cards or an impromptu dance or just a sit and talk evening. There was no bar but one left your bottle in the lounge come sitting room and just helped yourselves. There was no communal drinking so that one realised that it was not necessary to offer drinks. Just carry on as though at home.

After a most enjoyable holiday during which several picnics were arranged and we did a lot of walking and an occasional visit to the local town of Tarkastad about five miles distance.

While there I spent one evening with an old friend Bush Pringle, a local farmer who served with me up North and we were P.O.Ws and he travelled out in the Andes with me when we were repatriated.

On my return to East London I went to see a friend of mine Ivor Christopher about glasses with which he fixed me up but advised me to go and see an eye specialist and so on Lornas return I booked an appointment with Dr. Warren. He was very thorough and explained to me exactly the trouble and advised an operation. Apparently the lens in the eye instead of being opaque had become discoloured and thus shut out the light. After preliminaries I was booked in at the Mater Dei nursing home. The doctor operated first on the right eye in a very delicate op. as a small cut is made in the eye and the lens, which looked like a very small orange pip is squeezed out and four stitches made to close the cut. ~~Later the lens is replaced~~ Later the lens is replaced by a thick glass and which being heavier than the usual eye glass is made of plastic. After two weeks we decided that rather than wait six months to do the left eye he decided to carry on. So after some weeks I was able to get glasses and found I could see very well, but without glasses everything was blurred. Well this op. cost £150 plus Nursing home. However that was far better than being blind.

At about this time the Queenstown Board closed up and their business taken over by Munro and Wilson who asked me to carry on with their travel which I enjoyed doing as, apart from the money it kept me occupied far better than sitting idle. When a man goes on pension he should find some occupation for if you just sit on your bottom you will not last long. So I have always kept myself busy, writing gardening, walking etc and so keep fit.

Now on to 1903/