159 Suffolk st.
Burton. 6157.
6. 3. 07

Dear Bob and Chris,

This has taken much longer than I planned it to but at last I have finished it. I can't guarantee that it is accurate but it's how I remember it all. Probably Tom would know more because he was older but he won't write his memories down. Laugh at the right moment he is very interesting but the problem is getting him going.

You will have to put up with my erratic writing because along with reverse street parking I don't compute! Added to which I have inherited the family tremor and sometimes my hand refuses to work.

Chris, I was so sorry when I heard of your loss of Heaneley. I only met her once at Pat's and I thought she was pretty special.

Pat seems very happy in her new abode and is leading a very social life.

With best wishes

Love.

Meg.

The Meise family and my mother's family. the Leishmans and later my father when he took over Linton in 1922, were neighbours and close friends from their first settlement.

My grandfather, Matthew Leishman took on the farm in 1905, having been left a legacy from his father, a church of Scotland minister of Linton parish in Scotland the name of the farm.
A Mr English and another man had taken up the farm six months before, and planted an orchard and starting to build a house.
My grandfather had no experience of farming and having borrowed money at a high rate of interest from Sir Joshua Symonds and S.A. Saunier, after the initial flutter, had trouble making ends meet. In spite of this all his eight children seemed to have loved the place and regarded their childhood as very happy.
I do not know when Mr and Mrs. Meise took up their land but I was told it was just after they married and that they arrived with 300 sheep, tools and a swag.
Later, when the Meise children started going to the Highbury school Ernie drove them up in a spring cart. The young Leishmans had to walk and my aunts told me that when the cart came along Ernie would whip up the horse and tell them they could have a ride if they could jump on. They were always late.

She was a great tease but always so kind I cannot imagine he ever left them behind. Aunt Helen fell under the wheel one morning when she was trying to climb in and the wheel went over her breaking her collar bone. She did not tell her mother for three weeks because she did not want Ernie to get into trouble.

Aunt Helen shared a birth date with the twins Grace and Nellie and like Nellie joined a sisterhood, Anglican. After training as a nurse she moved as a medical missionary in the Solomon Islands and the New Hebrides for thirty years. after a lot of adventures avoiding the Japanese in WWII, a typhoon wiped out the mission and the four sisters abandoned. Eventually joined the Roman Catholic church and she became a Carmelite. Needless to say for my Protestant family this was the equivalent, in reverse, of Henry VIII dissolving the monasteries and some members unhappily were never reconciled. Fortunately she felt she had made the right choice.

None of them seemed to have learnt much at the school. Aunt Marjorie said the only thing she learnt was how to spell 'cat'. Old Mr. Wilson teaching her how to break string when she helped him sort the mail in the post office, after school came out and after the train came in, on the other hand, proved useful all her life.

My mother told me that when Bill was born Mrs Reese could not feed him and my grandmother lent or gave her a milking cow which his mother said saved his life.

A story you probably know and which Evelyn White tells me is quite true was about Dinah, the aboriginal living Lance when he was a Baby when he was recovered from the rabbit warren where Dinah had hidden him Dinah said he wanted to introduce red hair into the tribe.

I remember Dinah very clearly as we often saw him walking along the road and when he called into the farm for tea, sugar, flour and tobacco. He always carried a handful of spears and a boomerang. He had a sugar bag with a leather twine strap for his supplies and often a possum or roo tail for his dinner.

He was a regular visitor and always knew everything about the family, asking for news of absent members.

My mother said that once he told my grandmother she was on his land and should not be there.

She was most indignant and after he left said - "I fancy him saying that to me! What a cheek!!"

I have met some of his descendants in Penfield and I think the Riley's are connected, too.

Mr. Meese was a very good blacksmith and my father, who was a horse man and definitely non mechanical always took broken machinery parts to him to fix.

The forge was in a shed, like most at that time, had walls of tarpaulin side by side and a hay thatch. At time went by the walls took a lean to port and the hay went grey- with a musty smell.

Mr. Meese was a tall, scraggy man with a big moustache and he nearly always had the butt of a cigarette tucked in the corner of his mouth under it. Later on, when he had a car, I think a long green Essex with a clip on cellulid windows he took my mother and me to Harrogate for some function. I sat beside him in the front seat and was fascinated because he had a butt in both corners of his mouth. In retrospect I never remember ever seeing him light a cigarette or for that matter hearing him speak.

I loved both him and Mrs. Meese and never missed the chance to visit them. They were so welcoming and warm and time never seemed to bother them at any of the family. They all spoilt me, Rosie and Alice would take me to the orchard to

with mulberries or almonds and make large batches of almond toffee, having it out of the hot onto big serving dishes which would be collected as items now. They would take me down to the sheds to look at new calves, fed lambs and the newest batches of puppies and kittens.

I loved the house, which I think was stone and mud latt. The native kitchen was quite small so everyone had meals at a long table with benches each side in the big vestibule at the back of the house. The walls were netting, thickly covered with dolichas creeper which made it cool and airy in summer.

The sitting room was on a lower level & think and was rather dark. There was a dark leather sofa with a carved wooden back and two large photographs of Mrs. Meise's parents (I believe) in gold, oval frames hanging above the fireplace. They were highly tinted with rather grim looks. A multi-coloured paper string curtain that rustled in the breeze to keep flies out, hung in the doorway. I thought it was the height of elegance and longed to have one.

The other highlight for me was the lavatory down the yard. The wide, plank seat had two holes, a big one for grown ups and beside it, a small one

for children. This and the string curtain had curiosity in the game I dreamed about trading when I grew up.

Many years after, when Mr. Miese had had a stroke and lost the use of his arm he set to making mud batts and built onto the house. He was a wonderful, indomitable man.

Mrs. Miese was still very pretty - small with blue eyes and pink cheeks. She seemed always to be worrying which with such a large family was understandable but she always had time to make people feel loved and wanted.

For a long time Rosie and Alice drove up to Linton on Wednesday afternoons ~~[illegible]~~ for piano lessons with my mother. There certainly was some music but it was interspersed by gales of laughter. Alice had a laconic wit and ~~[illegible]~~ a wonderful deep guffaw. I doubt if they learnt much. Rosie was very pretty and gentle both of them did painting on fabric with heated wax which was a craze at the time. For years I cherished a voile pillow sham Rosie made for me. It was very dainty with lace round the edge and pink roses painted with this stuff in the corners.

When Rosie married Matt the whole

district came to their reception in the dispensary hall. At midnight we all trooped down to the siding to see the happy couple onto the train to Albany for their honeymoon. I was about nine and cried my eyes out as the train chugged off because I knew I had lost her.

It was bitterly cold the night Kathy and Ernie took me to see Uncle's circus. It was before they were married. As the circus started I forgot the sharp sting of frosty air on my bare legs. I was in another world.

The girl acrobats in pink tutus and ballet shoes were the highlight for me. They spun round an apparatus which walked up to the top of the tent, suspended only by headbands and stood up on the backs of four beautiful white ponies cantering around the ring in unison. Meanwhile the girls giggled, did handstands and formed pyramids. The lighting was dim and as the events were performed fine dust rose in a haze but it was sheer, unadulterated magic for me.

Ernie always seemed much older than the rest of the family. He had a dry wit, loved tricks and before he spoke in a slow drawl, clicked his mouth as if he was rehearsing his words before he spoke them.

On the morning of the Children's Sports
Day he always drove up to the Harrogin
Ice Works to collect a churn of ice
cream for us. He brought it back, packed
round with salt and milk sack
bags over it to keep it cool.
We children watched down the road
for him and escorted the horse and
sulky onto the sports ground as if he
were Royalty.
We had an ice cream
was such a treat. We were given
little cups of it. They were called Penny
Licks and the creamy yellow, slightly
salty mixture melted almost before we
could eat it.

Ernie found Dad Egerton-Warburton
when he died in his bed on his block
which was near Ernie's place. He went
over when he heard the dogs barking
and found Dad. I think he died following
an attack of 'flu.

Dad was a very gentle, fair haired
young man. When he came in to get
mail and stores and we were there
too he always brought me a bag of
lollies. I felt very sad when I heard
he had died because I really liked
him, not because of the lollies alone.
He is buried near other family members
in the little St. Michaels' Church-yard
of Mr. Barker.

When I was in Melbourne last year I spent a day reminiscing with Lachan and we agreed one of the best nights of our lives was Bill Meese's 21st. Birthday party.

It was meant to be a surprise to Bill but as everyone in the district was given a party when they turned 21 he probably had his suspicions.

Possibly to encourage him to change out of his morning clothes Mrs Meese had invited us to tea at the boys house on pedals. It was dark by the time he and Laurie came in. I remember Mrs Meese going out into the yard when they were having a wash in a tin dish and a bit of muttering going on but whether he did change or not I do not remember. All the boys wore grey flannel singlets for work.

Their house was quite substantial with four rooms I seem to remember. There was a big fire in the front room where we had tea, roast mutton, preserved pears and custard.

It had been a very wet year — oh! happy days! — and not only was the road in from the gate very muddy but the little creek between the gate and the house, although it was not wide, had steep sides and was running a banker. We had crossed in the safety without incident but nearly buggies and cars could not cross.

Laurie was prepared and by the time the first guests arrived he had a horse harnessed into the spring cart, ready to ferry them over.

There were shrieks of dismay when the ladies tried to climb in without getting wet and muddy and even wilder shrieks as the cart tilted down into the water and the horse slid and scrambled up the other side. The one thing that showed up clearly was a snowy white bandage round Laurie's head covering the gash where he had been kicked by a horse. It was all great fun for us children.

The ladies sorted themselves out and each ening up their baskets of cakes and settled in the kitchen to gossip and get supper ready. For all these functions someone was detailed off to collect the treasure tins, cups and saucers from the hall.

The older men settled themselves in by the fire for card playing, my father who was a bridge and cribbage fanatic was always well to the fore. These men were respected like tribal elders and always given the best things for supper.

The boys organised us young ones into games out on the flat. Two big fires were going to give us light and to boil the billies. We played drop the hanky, turos and threes, prisoners base and chasey.

It was a frosty night and when the moon came up everything turned silver. Shaken knows when they got home but I am sure no one minded the late hour.

accidents with horses happened regularly, people being tossed off or bruised but generally the damage was minor. My father was breaking in a very pretty, light chestnut mare, a bit feisty and because he did not have enough room to quieten her down he lent her to Lonnie and Bill, to work in the spring cart.

Her mother had a very placid temperament but unfortunately Georgette, as she was called, had not inherited it. She came home after a few days obviously thinking a spring cart was hereafter her she bitched it to bits.

Lonnie and Bill came to visit us regularly for tea and cards. They usually unharnessed the horse and tied it to a fence post outside the front gate. These evenings tended to be late, after midnight and often the horse got fed up, undid the rope with its teeth and went home. Once when they left it harnessed into the cart it took off, carriage and all, getting stuck in bushes down the road. On one glorious occasion it took the post and a length of netting until it was caught up nearly half a mile away. I loved it when they had to stay overnight and we breakfast the horse next morning.

Lonnie dropped in a lot, usually with a fresh lot of rabbits or a couple of ducks. I remember the look of embarrassed disbelief on his face when

My father told him there were leprechauns and fairies on the river flats at Pedlars. He told me the same thing and I never knew if he really believed there were or not but I was grown up before I stopped keeping a sharp look out.

There was a rumour that treasure was buried on Pedlars, ill gotten gains from a jewelry theft. I dreamt of finding a rusty tin box full of diamonds, rubies, pearls and other precious gems. That coupled with the possibility of little people cavorting on the river flats gave me the feeling it was haunted and mysterious.

During the summer on Sunday afternoons people foregathered at Mollwollen Pool for a picnic and a swim. It was not quite the "grey, greasy Limpopo" but did have certain drawbacks. Bark from the trees gave it a golden brown colour, there were snags and mud round the edges and leeches were an ever present hazard. In the heat no one minded.

Most of the women or children could swim across the pool to the sandy edge on the other side so we had to troop down to a shallow ford on the south end of the pool. We changed in the bushes and splashed around in the shallow water.

One Sunday, the young men with Frank and Laurie to the forefront snuck around and gathering up all the clothes took them back to the other side and hung them in the trees.

There were horrified shrieks from the swimmers and I remember someone moaning. "I wore my old, holey singlet and the boys have hung it up."

Eventually the older non swimming ladies made them take them down and return them. They left them in a heap and when everyone scrambled out of the water and began grabbing garments and tut-tutting it was like hens round a pile of mash.

One year a mine was strung across the pool so the non swimmers could cross. It was a huge success until unfortunately the mine broke one afternoon. My mother was in the middle of the pool and said she would have drowned if Laurie had not taken her to shore.

Bill was the mainstay of the Highbury cricket team but he and Laurie were always late. This created a problem for the team, especially if they had an away game because they could not do without them.

We had one of the few telephones in the district. We were Highbury 1 and for a long time there were only 3 others.

almost every Saturday afternoon during the season the phone would ring and the question came, "Have the boys gone hunting yet?"

In winter if the river was too deep to get the car through and there was a dance on at the hall the boys, Rosie and Alice had to come in the spring cart. The girls would moan about the difficulty of keeping the mud off their long dresses getting in and out of the cart.

During the spring Sunday hikes were all the rage. Those who could walked to two or three miles to a chosen site and someone with a truck took everyone back to the store. The smaller children hung round the boys fighting to hold their hands as we walked along. We must have been a dreadful nuisance but none of them ever seemed to mind. Bonnie nearly always had a bag of sweets for us, giving him the edge in the popularity stakes. The hikes petered out as the weather became hotter and harvest started.

When Bonnie came to teach at the Presswille school she joined the young people in Keighley and made quite an impact. She was well regarded as a teacher and for years I kept a hand printed programme from one of her school concerts which ~~she~~ she had decorated

with gum and babies she had painted on each one.

When her sister Audrey visited they always drove up for a musical afternoon with my mother. Mother was an accomplished pianist and had a very good voice so music played a big part in her enjoyment of life. There was a lot of singing and a lot of laughing in those days.

Weekend camps were popular for awhile. One Sunday a lot of people joined the young ones when they had a weekend camp at, I think Minigin Pool.

Bonnie had rigged up a lunch by threading two saplings through a couple of wheat bags. She had hauled it up about eight feet in a sheoak and balanced it on two branches. She climbed up for a rest and a read after the picnic lunch but come down shouting when Frank began to chop the tree down.

Bonnie was very pleased with herself as she had caught a duck by swimming underwater and grabbing its' legs. She coated it in wet clay and cooked it in the coals. She offered it to the older ladies but they were less than enthusiastic and my mother said it was disgusting!

When war broke out everything changed. Some of the young men joined up. Mark Saunder and Laurie among the first to go, Mark to his death, Laurie was captured. My brother Tom was already in the 10th Lighthorse and was sent to patrol the coast between Geraldton and Bunbury - on horseback. He was allowed home to help with seeding, shearing and harvest but when the Light Horse was disbanded and things became grim in the march he went east, trained at the Canungra jungle complex and then the islands.

It was a bad time for families left behind. My parents had each lost a brother in W.W.I. and it was an anxious time. Very little information about the serious situation Australia faced came out.

The Home Guard was formed and women in each opened canteens for service personnel i.e. the "colour patch" which served cheap meals for those on leave. Knitting groups and fund raisers for troop comforts took over from social events. In Bunbury any function was a fund raiser to help the war effort.

Food parcels were sent to relatives overseas. I remember my mother sending four eggs, packed in a treacle tin to which she added dripping to stop

them breaking. Unhappily the slow trip through the tropics proved too much for both eggs and dripping and the Scottish cousin who received them was less than appreciative.

Sugar, butter, tea, tobacco and petrol were rationed and people bargained for coupons from each other. Tea for my mother and tobacco for my father were very important. People made a sort of ersatz coffee by roasting and grinding wheat but it was pretty awful.

My father fixed up a gas producer on our car and the drum of burning coals on the back, spitting out sparks as we drove along was a constant fire hazard.

I had just finished school and was at home waiting for an interview for nursing training (which I aspired and gained the W.R.A.A.F. to train as a radar operator to my mother's horror) your mother had to go to hospital and asked if I would go over and look your father and children.

Although I had some domestic skills I knew nothing about small children and felt rather overwhelmed. It was better when your mother came home and although she had to stay in bed she could tell me what to do. I was so inept I must have driven your parents mad.

Much later, after the war was over when Hank had married Kylie and they were living next door

they were living on the farm next door along the Bair Rd. they had a New Years Day duck shoot for the whole Murie clan. Sam and I were invited to join them. Richie, his first wife and four children were there, too.

Kylie put on a great feast for lunch and then while we cleared up the men went off for the shoot. She was a marvellous cook and I remember that no sooner were the decks cleared from the meal when she began taking sponge cake after sponge cake out of the freezer compartment of the refrigerator and whipping up cream to slather over them.

The men came back with bags of ducks, over a hundred. We were all standing around in the kitchen, listening to their exploits when Danye who was about four came in brandishing a carving knife and advanced on one of his young girl cousins.

Kylie screamed and went to leap forward ~~and~~ to get the knife but Frank held her back and said in his slow drawl "Let's just see what he is going to do with it."

Fortunately someone else took it away before Danye could do anything with it.

I remember another story about Danye too, when he was about four and a bushfire broke out near the farm.

Frank had a lot of drums of water standing on a ramp ready for such an outbreak and when the keepers arrived they began loading them on the back of a truck to take out to the

village. Danny was watching them and when they picked up one he said, "That one's got petrol in it." but they took no notice of him. He said it again but he was told to get out of the way.

Danny was right and it was sheer good luck that no one was injured in the conflagration.

The war made big changes and nothing ever seemed the same afterwards. I went off to do other things but I often reflect on my good fortune in having spent my formative years among wonderful people with strong principles a sense of fun and who loved me.