

Whonnock Notes

No. 21 - Spring 2015

George Stanley Godwin

1889 - 1974

Biographical notes

by Fred Braches

Then there is another book I'll send (or I suppose also work being on the main problem is welcome for a self-made man, who, starting at zero, got a decent Chemistry degree, specialized on decarbonization & new processes, got as the cause. As I told him, his theory left things out of consideration that vitiated it as far as he advanced so under a claim for it. E.g. Fish get cancer &, as you say, remains reveal it as a disease of antiaging. Even so, with some beach muck (shiny like polished coal) he induces cancer in mice. But I suspect (tho' I don't propose to try it, being that absurd - from your viewpoint - an anti-irradiationist -) that if you irradiated a site on a mouse of gum tree with any nasty muck it might develop a lesion or cancerous lump.

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Cover: Page of a letter by George Godwin to Dr. Ethlyn Trapp, 1939.

George Stanley Godwin

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Lucy Godwin

George Stanley Godwin and his wife Dorothy Alicia Purdon, ca. 1912.

Dedicated to Lulu, a writer,
who reminded me that a writer's metier
and that of a historian differ.

FOREWORD

I'D ALWAYS CONSIDERED writers immortal, and to quote A.A. Milne, "I supposed that everyone of us hopes secretly for immortality; to leave, I mean, a name behind him which will live forever in this world, whatever he may be doing, himself, in the next." But if works go out of print and are heaved into time's dustbin, so too goes the writer's legacy. Therefore I am most grateful to my cousin Robert for republishing two of my grandfather George Stanley Godwin's vast array of fiction and nonfiction to enable my beloved Gramps a better shot at immortality!

Let me share something of my Gramps. July at Oaklands meant Gramps' birthday and a Strawberry Feast, with tables set up in the sunshine and heaps of ripe strawberries and lashings of whipped cream. After I'd finished gorging, Gramps and I checked on the male geese in the apple orchard to make sure they were not cannibalizing the latest crop of goslings. Gramps kept geese to crop the grass to save himself from mowing.

Then on we went to inspect his prized grapevine in the greenhouse he built himself. After stopping to admire the ripening tomatoes, the radishes and other items in his veggie garden, we walked up to his woodshed where an easel was set up with his latest painting in progress and, in the corner, an oak chest he was in the process of carving.

Then, to my lesson in woodworking as Gramps taught me to make a cradle for my dollies. After, off to the woods across the lane to ensure no poachers had set up snares, hopeful we'd spot a shy badger or two and safe in our gumboots in case we stepped on a poisonous adder.

Although I was somewhat intimidated by this stern taskmaster, everything with Gramps seemed more interesting, an adventure, and I delighted in his company. Before dinner, I might be invited to enter his hallowed domain, his study, where few were allowed to tread. We shared a worship of the written word, and I marvelled at the full bookshelves that climbed the study walls and at the books covering every surface. He'd shuffle papers around on his desk, and pull out something he was working on as I stood mute in adoration and awe. I'll not forget his command. Never crack a book's spine. That was a sin.

One night after bedtime with the sun still bright, I wiggled out of the bathroom window and turned cartwheels on the lawn with joyful abandon. The front door opened, and there stood my mother and Gramps. "Let me deal with this, Monica," said Gramps sternly. I was marched into his study as to the gallows. He scolded me, then his face softened as he pronounced sentence: "Lulu, you are an Ancient Briton!" I had no idea what that meant. Then Gramps grinned, and I grinned back. We recognized each other. We knew, we were kindred spirits.

I adored my grandfather but, as any person with a multi-faceted intellect, Gramps was not an easy man. He had a biting wit, a piercing intelligence, did not suffer fools gladly and set the bar high. My mother also adored him. As did other women. George Godwin was handsome and charismatic. While some may be tempted to hurl rocks at him, when viewed in context, my grandfather always acted in accordance with the values of the well educated gentleman that he was, and with honesty, integrity and courage.

So to a little spice, without which a biography is not complete. My tiny Granny, who stood under 5 feet, refused to have any further conjugal relations after she delivered their last child, a 12 lb. baby, Uncle Tony in 1926. Gramps sought company elsewhere. Gramps' second daughter Georgina was born to my mother's best friend, Meg Saurat, in 1940. Meg's father Denis Saurat was a French intellectual, a writer, and professor at Kings College in London. Gramps was living in London at the time. My mother and Meg, a dark haired beauty, were friends at Cambridge, and so it was. Gramps' admitted paternity is recorded on Georgina's birth certificate. He paid child support to Meg who became a professor at the University in Aix-en-Provence and later married a Frenchman. We all knew of Georgina. I have a photo of my mother and her half sister, both of whom died of cancer relatively young

Another child, a son, Nicholas born the year after Georgina, was adopted. Nicholas Creed is the spitting image of Gramps and, before retirement, he was a writer and journalist like his biological father.

Gramps met his earlier love, Ethlyn Trapp, during his stay at the Balfour Sanitarium in the Kootenays while being treated for TB. Statistically, at that time only one third of TB patients survived. Treatment consisted of fresh air, good nutrition and enforced bed rest. The sanitarium was in a remote area and contact with the outside world forbidden to prevent the spread of infection. By loving Ethlyn, Gramps demonstrates to me that, although he was married, he grabbed life with both hands and refused to surrender to his environment locked up and surrounded by the dying and the dead.

Dr. Ethlyn Trapp went on to lead a most distinguished career becoming president of the British Columbia Medical Association and of the National Cancer Institute, and she received the Order of Canada in 1968. Their correspondence survives. She was known in our family as Gramps' girlfriend who never married as he broke her heart.

I had tea with this gracious lady years later at Klee Wyck on the banks of the Capilano River, her home since destroyed by neglect after her bequest to the City of West Vancouver. On the walls of Ethlyn's salon hung disturbing dark paintings of trees done by her friend, Emily Carr.

A legacy is a silken thread hanging at time's mercy. Fred Braches has woven silk into steel through his meticulous research and tireless, at times relentless, dedication to his self imposed task, to ensure that George Stanley Godwin's life and times are fully and accurately recorded. On behalf of my Gramps, thank you Fred. It has been my privilege to provide you with all the information and the photos you've needed over the last year. You have my everlasting gratitude.

I'll end as I began, with a quote. Philip Guedalla stated, "biography is a very definite region bounded on the north by history, on the south by fiction, on the east by obituary, and on the west by tedium." I trust the reader will find in the following, as I do, that a balance has been achieved between the compass points.

Lucy Godwin,
February 2015

PREFACE

GEORGE STANLEY GODWIN (1889–1974), a British writer, was the author of two novels with a connection to Whonnock, BC: *The Eternal Forest* (1929) and *Why Stay We Here?* (1930).

After Godwin's death his great-nephew Robert S. Thomson edited and reissued both books, rekindling the interest in the author and his work. George Godwin is mentioned in Alan Twigg's book *The Essentials, 150 Great BC Books and Authors* (2010).

Most of the published biographical information about George Godwin was either written by Robert Thomson or is based on his research. That includes the information about the life of the author in my *Whonnock Notes* No. 6, "Ferguson's Landing, George Godwin's Whonnock," published in 2000.

Since Dr. Thomson's biographical work was mainly done in the 1990s, updates and revisions are necessary to correct erroneous views that have no basis in fact.

In the following notes I have quoted parts of George Godwin's letters and biographical records by George Godwin from the following sources:

- (1) Letters to Dr. Ethlyn Trapp in Vancouver, written in the years 1939 – 1941 and in 1970. Vancouver City Archives, Reference code AM211.
- (2) Letters to J. S. (Ted) Roberts, written between May 1964 and April 1965. This correspondence started with a shared interest in the life and work of Captain George Vancouver but also provides insight in other matters that interested George Godwin. The original letters are now the property of Lucy Godwin who kindly gave me permission to publish part of their content in this issue of *Whonnock Notes*.
- (3) Godwin's "Private Journal," and specifically the description of his early childhood, written on the last pages of this journal, probably in his last years. Quotations have been transcribed from a photocopy of the original manuscript, also with Lucy Godwin's consent.

Godwin mentions his children in almost every letter. He writes and sometimes goes into great detail about their lives, his worries, their accomplishments, and joys. The children were an integral part of his life, but it is not up to me to share those parts of George Godwin's letters.

The invaluable and generous support of Lucy Godwin, daughter of Godwin's daughter Monica, is hereby thankfully acknowledged.

A warm thank you also to Paul Godwin, son of Godwin's oldest son Eric for his help. Paul was the first Godwin I could show where in Whonnock George and Dorothy Godwin lived and where his father Eric took his first steps.

Finally a reminder that, although the material is presented in chronological order, this booklet does not pretend to be a biography of George Godwin.

Fred Braches

BIOGRAPHICAL INTRODUCTION



George Godwin in the 1930s.

Pages 10 – 15 **CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH**

George S. Godwin was born in London, England, the youngest boy of a large family and was only three years old when his father died. He was educated at boarding schools. Failing his studies at college, he spent a couple of years in Germany.

After returning to England, Godwin reportedly worked briefly for a German bank in England. In the spring of 1909 he was admitted to membership of the Middle Temple and started studying law. His mother died in 1910.

Pages 16 – 22 **WHONNOCK YEARS**

In September 1911 Godwin, then age 22, left for British Columbia, Canada where one of his brothers managed a real-estate agency. George Godwin was employed as “real estate broker” with the agency, but that ended with the arrival of his future wife, Dorothy Alicia Purdon, from Ireland. They married in the spring of 1912 and moved to acreage in Whonnock BC. Godwin’s dreams of living off the land did not materialize.

George Godwin first novel, *The Eternal Forest* (1929) was inspired by his years in Whonnock.

WAR YEARS

Pages 23 – 26

At the outbreak of the First World War, Godwin wanted to join the Canadian armed forces, but was rejected for active service because of poor eyesight.

He returned with his wife and son to England in 1915, where he joined the Canadian Expeditionary Force after all and embarked for France in September 1916 with the 29th Vancouver Battalion. In the summer of 1917, after suffering a “severe cold” in France the previous winter, Godwin was hospitalized in England. He did not return to France but was assigned to a different Canadian unit in Britain.

In December 1918, diagnosed with pulmonary tuberculosis, he was shipped to Canada and placed in the Balfour Military Sanatorium in the West Kootenay, BC, for recovery. Godwin returned to England and his family in the summer of 1920.

Godwin’s second novel, *Why Stay We Here?* (1932), closely follows Godwin’s own war years. This book starts and ends at the same community described in *The Eternal Forest*, but the characters from that novel that go to war in *Why Stay We Here?*, don’t share overseas experiences with the protagonist.

FREELANCER, WRITER, AND PUBLISHER

Pages 27 – 35

Although Godwin was called to the bar in the fall of 1917 (in absentia), he did not pursue a career in law.

During his stay in British Columbia he had freelanced for Vancouver, BC, newspapers and upon his return to England writing became his profession. He made a good income mostly as freelance for newspapers, magazines and publicity people. That allowed the family some luxury and his five children the education they desired.

Aside from freelancing, his main source of income, Godwin wrote a good number of fiction and non-fiction books and a play.

His efforts in publishing, started in the mid 1930s under the style The Acorn Press, ended because of the paper shortage of the war years. Godwin tried to enlist with the army, was rejected, but found employment writing for the War Office.

AFTER THE SECOND WORLD WAR

Pages 36 – 39

Godwin resumed his work as a writer and freelancer. Starting with the 1949, July–September issue, he became the editor of the literary quarterly *The Adelphi* for a year.

OAKLANDS

Pages 40 – 45

Godwin and his wife spent their final years in Sussex in a house that combined two old cottages with a modern extension. They bought that property in 1956 and named it “Oaklands.” It included seven acres of woodland as well as an established orchard. His last book was published in 1957. He continued writing and had plans for another book, but that did not materialize.

James Godwin (1845 – 1893) x Elizabeth Mary (Lizzie) Free (1853 – 1910)

1. Elizabeth Margaret Godwin (1876 – ca. 1971)
Spouse: Alfred Tillman
2. Herbert James (Bert) Godwin (1877 – 1964)
Spouse: Kathleen Craven
3. William Donald Free (Donald) Godwin (1879 – 1920)
Spouse: Jean Murchie
4. Edwin Harold Godwin (1881 – 1913)
Spouse: Brenda Topham
5. Constance Ethel Godwin (1885 – 1956)
Spouse: Vernon Bernard Taylor
6. Richard Free (Dick) Godwin (1887 – 1964)
Spouse: Jean Wiley
Spouse: Christine Ledburg Pritchett
7. George Stanley Godwin (1889 – 1974)
Spouse: Dorothy Purdon
8. Alice Maud Mary Godwin (Maud) (1882 – 1969)
Spouse: Geoffrey Stephen Allfree

1890 July 1889	1890 May 14. No. 690.	George Stanley	James & Elizabeth Maria	Godwin	Westbury Lippes Clapton	Butcher	Richard Whittington Rector
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Baptism registration of George Stanley Godwin at St. Peter-Upon-Cornhill on 14th May 1890.
Note that the birthdate recorded here as 1st July 1889 should correctly be 4th July 1889.

CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH

GEOERGE S. GODWIN was born in London, England, the youngest of five boys of a large family.

He was baptized in the Anglican Church of St. Peter-Up-on-Cornhill in the City of London not far from his father's place of business at Leadenhall Market. James Godwin's profession is recorded as a horse flesh salesman, a butcher and meat salesman, He was obviously a successful businessman.

The family owned a suburban house in Upper Clapton (Hackney) where George was born and a country house on acreage near the the seaside village of Port Reculvers, Kent,¹ where the family spent the summer months. George was only three years old when his father died in 1893.²

George was educated at boarding schools, starting with a preparatory school at Glenrock, Sussex "...where the scholars sat at one large table with the Principal and his wife."³

At age eleven he entered St Lawrence College in Ramsgate, Kent.⁴ "The hours at school were so many hours of blank inertia...I was too unhappy to pay much attention... I seldom lost my place at the bottom of the class, except in English, history and scripture where I contested the other end." In 1904, failing his studies, he was overjoyed to leave the college.

At sixteen he travelled with his mother and his younger sister Maud to Germany⁵ for a couple of years "to come to some conclusion about my future career." "Those were happy days," he remembered, "I had no work to speak of and was free to amuse myself." He was taught some basic German and was introduced to the music of Wagner, which he would relish all his life. His love for Germany and German culture survived the First World War, but on 20 December 1940 Godwin writes to Dr. Trapp: "I am through with Germans forever."

After returning to England, Godwin worked for a German (?) bank in London. On 26 May 1909 Godwin was admitted to membership of the Middle Temple and started studying law. He is described in the admission records as a bank clerk, of Fareham, Coolhurst Road, Crouch End, North London, aged 19 years – the home address of his mother.⁶

He would move to live in the Middle Temple.⁷

His mother died not even a year later, on 30 March 1910 and that would have put some financial stress on George Godwin perhaps forcing him to end his legal studies.⁸

¹ Today this seaside village seems to be known as Reculvers rather than Port Reculvers.

² GODWIN James of Westbury Upper Clapton Middlesex and of Leadenhall market London meat salesman died 12 May 1893 at Westbury. Probate, London 30 June to Elizabeth Maria Godwin widow. Effects £14790 4s. Paul Godwin suggest that James's estate would have been the equivalent of a million and a half and up. He'd done extremely well in his short life.

³ All quotations are from George Godwin's biographical notes on his childhood and youth in his "Private Journal."

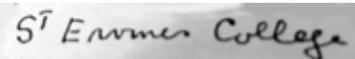
⁴ The directory of "all known Old Lawrentians includes the names R.F. Godwin and G.S. Godwin with 1904 as the year they left college.

⁵ Godwin's notes refer to Wiesbaden, near Frankfurt. Dresden is the place where the protagonist of the semi-autobiography *Why Stay We Here?* lived and attended "Realschule," a type of secondary school.

⁶ Information courtesy Lesley Whitelaw, Archivist, The Middle Temple, January 2015.

⁷ In the England Census of 1911 Godwin's address is given as "3 Plowden Buildings, Temple, E.C."

⁸ GODWIN, Elizabeth Marie of Fareham, Coolhurst Road, Highgate Middlesex, widow, died 30 March 1910. Probate London, 27 May, to James Herbert Godwin, meat salesman and Cornish Arthur Cogan, secretary, Effects £3426 7s 5 d. (Cogan was a member of the Incorporated Society of London Traders, and later President of the Federation of Meat Traders.)



Although George and his brother Dick are registered as leaving St. Lawrence College in 1904, in his "Private Journal" George Godwin writes that he entered St. Eumes (?) College and not St. Lawrence College. St. Lawrence College did not respond to my e-mails asking for help to solve this puzzle.

From George Godwin's "Private Journal"

"Private Journal, George S. Godwin, Calgary, Alberta Dec. 1911" is written on the first page of a notebook that contains Godwin's thoughts, stories, and poems.

At the end of the book are notes about his childhood and youth, ending with his stay in Wiesbaden, Germany.

These biographical notes were probably written around 1970, a few years before his death.

Here is a transcript of a part describing his early childhood at home in London.

WHEN I WAS THREE YEARS OLD my father died. I have but two distinctive recollections of him. I remember on one occasion bursting open the door of the dining room where my Mother and Father were seated talking, to receive a sound whipping for breaking in on them so violently and omitting to shut the door behind me.

My Mother took my part and myself also upon her knee and words passed between my parents. I thought my Father a hard man then, but now, in the light of experience I can think more kindly of him. Then I had but one sentiment: fear. What could a little child know of jaded nerves and irritability of an overwrought man suffering from cancer?

Then stands out distinctively in my memory a certain evening we were in the day nursery. My elder brothers and sisters dancing in a circle with our nurse Ellen.¹ I was too little to join the game. Presently a trained nurse came into the room and the game ceased abruptly. I was taken to say "Good Night" to my Father. The nurse carried me into his bedroom, where he lay upon a big, canopied bed. My father kissed me and I was then taken back to my brothers and sisters.

That, the last recollection that I have of my father, remains vivid in my mind. I can still see the bedroom, my father's bearded face, the little lamp that threw its light about the rumpled pillows. The little birds of the bed canopy design that flew here and there from twig to twig. The big mahogany wardrobe with its long mirror and the other heavy furniture and a picture of Portia in scarlet robe and a scroll in hand that hang on the wall over against the dressing room.

That is the last I remember of my father. He was dying then, and must have died soon after. A picture of myself in my fourth year

shows me in black.

My father died in London while we children were away at Port Reculvers in Kent where we had a county house. My earliest years were spent between our country home in Kent during the summer and our suburban London home during the winter. Our London home was one of those substantial old houses that stand back from the road; such as may be seen still in most of the old suburbs of London, many degenerated into cheap lodging homes; others with their gardens built over. Quite deserted by the old time city merchants who once dwelt within their substantial walls.

Behind our house a garden ran that ended with stables, and glass houses, the stables having access to a back street. Of the garden I shall have more to say later, for in it I spent many days – days full of interest and adventure – a world of my own, peopled by the coach man who did duty as gardener, and also occasionally as boot boy when that domestic office was in the condition – frequent – of being without an occupant.

Gyp, the bullterrier, always on the leash, being considered too ferocious to be allowed his freedom – a reputation [earned] through killing, in honest chase, an inconsequential kitten. Of Gyp, the ferocious, I had no fear, knowing his reputation ill deserved. Many were the Sunday afternoons spent beside his kennel, when I would regale him with so much of the morning's sermon as I could remember, more by far than I could comprehend. He would listen patiently and moreover endure hand fondling all of which goes to prove his confinement to have been cruel and unnecessary. Gyp was always gentle to me.

But that is not all: there were my rabbits, my white mice, and also the chickens. Those last I mention simply because they peopled

1. Ellen Holmes, Domestic Servant & Nursemaid. Age 21. Born in Poplar, London. UK Census 1891.

a large run and did useful service as Red Indians. Otherwise I considered them tedious things.

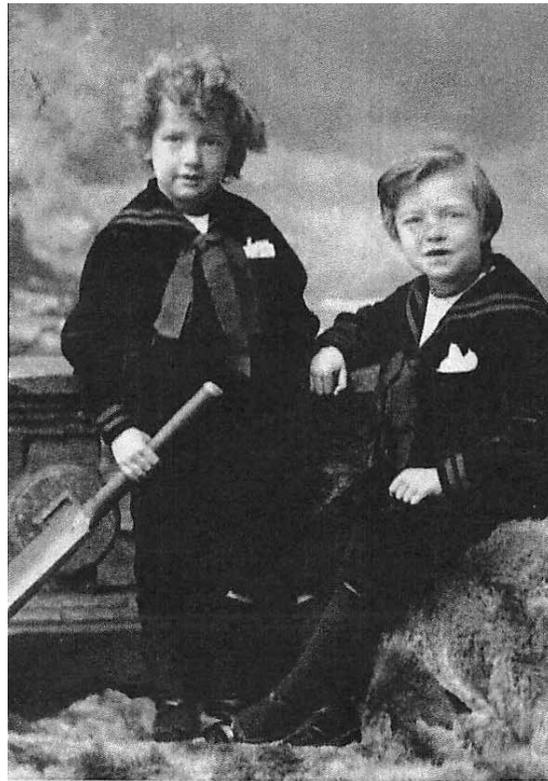
Such was my garden and such the inhabitants if I omit my brother, who played with me, but he is not so easily dealt with as Watts, the coach man, or Gyp, or the rabbits and I therefore (intend to) give a somewhat more complete picture of him as he was than I have the others.

My brother Dick was 18 months older than I, fair and sturdy and lacking at that time a complete set of front teeth, which he lost in falling off the esplanade Port Reculvers striking his mouth on a breakwater. The absence of teeth give his mouth a watery expression.

His eyes were light blue. Affectionate eyes that always seemed to be laughing. To Dick I was always "Slippy," his faithful servitor, his abject admirer. Dick was my first hero, if not, alas, my last, not the least among that company.

In all our games he was the leader, the moving spirit of adventure. Scornful of any suggestion but his own, I soon became his man Friday, both faithful and admiring. As might be expected the paths into which he led me were not always those between still waters. It was Dick who instigated me in the breaking of the 5th Commandment. It was only of pears from over the wall, but the memory of the depression, and sense of wickedness that gripped me after the commission of the act, hardly compensated for the wooden flavour of the pears (which he heartedly denied). I took the subsequent spasms in my stomach as a direct visitation from on high.

The glass houses that ran into the form of a "T" at the end of the garden were, for the most part, forbidden to us because of the grapes that extended over the roof of the first house. Naturally enough, since the houses needed a certain amount of ventilation, we spent a considerable time in them. Here I learned led by Dick to treat the 5th Commandment with fine scorn.



George Godwin (left) and his brother Dick at Reculver.

The luscious grapes were too much for our itching fingers and watery mouths and willingly Dick would take his punishment for stealing them. In those days, acting on the principle that he was the instigator of the wrongdoings my eldest sister would chastise him, his fate acting as a deterrent upon my less wicked mind. Bah! Those grapes were worth it. What other grapes in this world approach in excellence the black grapes of England. The gardener counted every bunch and kept a record in his note book; the bunches never tallied with his book.

In the second house we kept exotic ferns and such like things that needed a warmer temperature and in the last house, the fernery as it was called, plants needing tropical heat. There grew a certain palm that stretched up against the glass roof. It was covered with fibrous stuff and this fibrous stuff attracted our attention one day, suggesting itself to Dick's fertile imagination as an excellent substitute for tobacco. We removed it with considerable labour. We took two pipes from the library; we smoked it; we were sick. Such an episode

in the life of every boy—sometimes it is brown paper, sometimes the fragrant stuff itself. Always it is sickness and when it was valuable, always a whipping. So it was with us.

I have said that Dick was the moving spirit of our adventures, but of one adventure it was Slippy, the faithful whose voice prevailed. My Mother had been away for some days and to celebrate her return I had a grand plan for a great surprise. A certain old tree, I forget entirely of what variety, except it was one of those comfortable, climbable old trees that boys delight in. This tree grew near the conservatory steps. The conservatory was approached from the library. The tree was the first thing to challenge the eye on going into the garden. It chanced that I had discovered underneath the bark was very coloured and attractive in appearance. The plan that I disclosed to Dick was nothing more or less than stripping the tree of its bark for Mother's delectation. It was done, that is we stripped enough bark to kill the tree and the much anticipated surprise turned out very differently from our expectations. My recollections are of an angry gardner and a conciliatory Mother.

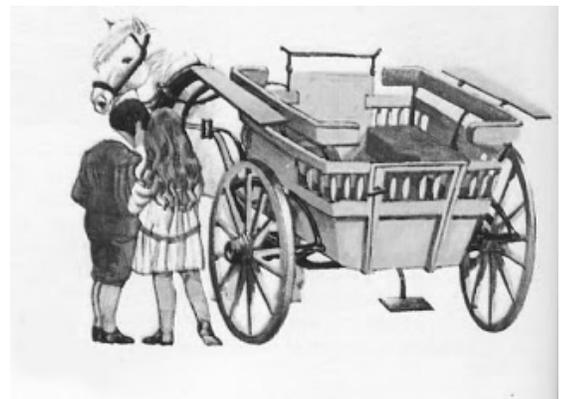
The old tree—many a time have I defied authority in the shape of a stout visiting Aunt from the branches. Many a time looking from the barred window of the day nursery have I thought again of the rhyme running:

*Hush a bye baby on the tree top
When the wind blows the cradle will rock, etc.*

To me it was that tree and that tree only from whose top [the baby] ran imminent danger of breaking its neck. That I should be told that rhyme always seemed to me was intelligence underrated and had I had the boldness to do so I might have put into words some embarrassing questions that

were in my mind. For instance I might have said: "Come nurse, do you tell me this preposterous story as truth? Did you ever put a baby in a tree top? And if you did, what did its mother say?" But these questions remained unasked. Who knows what is in a baby's mind? Did we know that, could we just guess a bit more shrewdly, fewer warped youth and maids would start out in life handicapped by foolish handling.

At the time of which I write there was only one animal in the stable, a pony named Tommy. Before I made my appearance on the scene to pay my insignificant part in life there had been a chestnut pair. On Tommy I learned to ride accompanied by Watts in livery and cockade and would be walked round the common. Once we met a fire brigade and that day Watts had to return alone. I followed the engine. What boy would not have done so? Tommy was used for a governess cart and I could turn even an uninteresting drive through suburban roads into an absorbing game. I would crouch down beneath the rug and at stated intervals guess with myself just to what part we had come. This always made the drive interesting to me.



A governess or tub car designed for children.

By my Father's death my Mother was left with the responsibility of looking after a family of eight. On my eldest brother Bert fell the task of replacing the head of the family and whilst just in his teens [16 or 17 years of age] he became a man of affairs. He took what fate gave him with a quiet patience and for many years he was accepted as the breadwinner as a matter of course. The fact that my Father's premature death entirely altered the career that was his by choice became entirely forgotten and when after years he found himself in troubled waters, his faithful stewardship stood him in little stead to ward off the torrent of criticism.

My Mother had many anxieties we knew nothing of then.

There was the self-same bed in which my father died where I spend my first awakened hours each day. From the night nursery to my Mother's was across the landing. A scurry of bare feet and I would be in bed beside my Mother with always the demand: "Mummy, tell me a tale."

And what tales they were, generally touching a nerve. Love triumphed ever. Tears would rise to my eyes and a lump come in my throat but they came always right in the end, those tales. Faith and charity. And my Mother, Welsh with Huguenot blood in her veins, would be affected by the pathos as much as myself. Often we would cry together but I was never happier than during morning with my Mother before the maid brought my Mother [tea?]

There was a game too: a yawn from my Mother; my index finger would be popped into her mouth. "Snap," a narrow escape and peals of merriment.

From my Mother I learnt in simple language the stories of the Bible and the Lord's prayer, which I did not understand and a little prayer that appealed more to my childish mind:

*Now I lay me down to sleep
I give my soul to Christ to keep
If I should die before I wake
I pray the Lord my soul to take
Amen*

Jack the Giant Killer, Red Riding Hood, and Hansel and Gretel were certainly more vital things to me than the man I was taught to pray to but I revered what I did not comprehend because my Mother revered such things.

Hardly should a little child feel with an understanding heart for the Man of Sorrows. The story lies dormant through the immature years but in after life, when sorrow is a reality and suffering a part of life the tragic tale of old shines out from the mind with a new and poignant meaning.

*The seed, the little seed
We planted in the dark
Has risen and cleft the soil
And thrusting forth a thousand arms
It rushes to the sun*

Marriage Certificate
of George Stanley
Godwin and Dorothy
Alicia Purdon, 15
May 1912 at St.
Catherine's Anglican
Church in what was
then still Coquitlam.

George Stanley Godwin
Age: 22
Residence: Coquitlam
Birth: London, Eng.
Bachelor
Real Estate Broker
Parents: James & Elizabeth
Godwin

Dorothy Alicia Purdon
Age: 27
Residence: Coquitlam
Birth: Belfast, Ireland
Spinster
Parents: Henry & Alicia
Purdon

Witnesses:
W.D.F. Godwin
W.A. Thursby
Residence Coquitlam

Date of marriage:
May 15, 1912
Religion of bride and groom:
Church of England

Married by:
Rev. H. Fane Edge, in
Coquitlam BC
St. Catherine's Church

George Godwin worked as an
agent for the Coquitlam Real
Estate Company where his
brother William, one of two
witnesses, was manager.
The other witness, Walter
A. Thursby was also employed
by the company.

12-09-123771 44771 $\frac{269}{1912}$ 1912 G

BIRTHS, DEATHS, AND MARRIAGES REGISTRATION ACT.
SCHEDULE C.—Marriages.

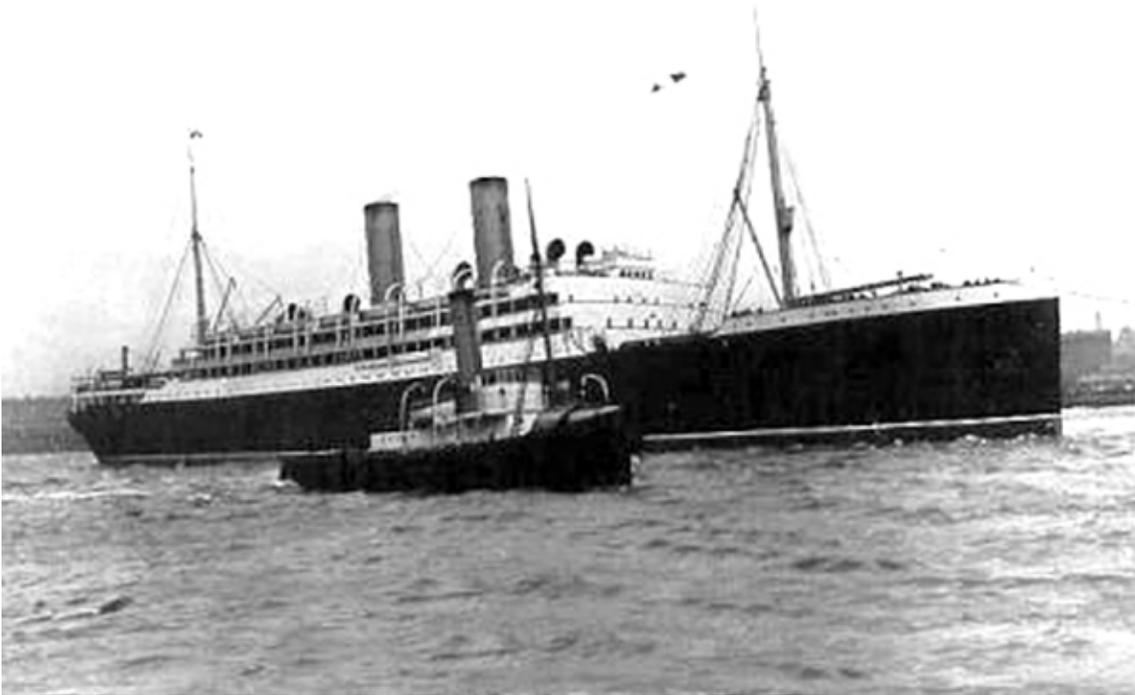
Registration District of New Westminster, B.C.

MARRIAGES
Registration Act
JUN 4 1912
New Westminster, B.C.

His name	<u>George Stanley Godwin</u>
Age	<u>22</u>
Residence when married	<u>Coquitlam</u>
Place of birth	<u>London, Eng.</u>
Condition (Bachelor or Widower)	<u>Bachelor</u>
Rank or profession	<u>Real Estate Broker</u>
Names of parents	<u>James & Elizabeth Godwin</u>
Her name	<u>Dorothy Alicia Purdon</u>
Age	<u>27</u>
Residence when married	<u>Coquitlam</u>
Place of birth	<u>Belfast, Ireland</u>
Spinster or widow	<u>Spinster</u>
Names of parents	<u>Henry & Alicia Purdon</u>
Names of witnesses	<u>W. D. F. Godwin & W. A. Thursby</u>
Residence of witnesses	<u>Coquitlam, B.C.</u>
Date of marriage	<u>May 15, 1912</u>
Religious denomination of bridegroom	<u>Church of England</u>
Religious denomination of bride	<u>Idem</u>
By whom married	<u>Rev. H. Fane Edge</u>
By whom solemnized	<u>Idem</u>
Place of marriage, church, residence, &c.	<u>Coquitlam, B.C. St. Catherine's Church</u>
I hereby certify the foregoing to be the correct Record of the marriage of <u>George Stanley Godwin</u> and <u>Dorothy Alicia Purdon</u> made in pursuance of the above mentioned Act.	
Dated this <u>15th</u> day of <u>May</u> A.D. 191 <u>2</u> ,	
Signature of Clergyman, Minister or Registrar	<u>H. Fane Edge</u>

Reports of marriage celebrations to be delivered or forwarded by registered post prepaid, to the District Registrar on the last day of March, June, September, and December, in each year.

WHONNOCK YEARS (1912 – 1915)



RMS Empress of Britain was a transatlantic ocean liner built on the Clyde in Scotland in 1905-1906 for Canadian Pacific Steamship Ocean Service Ltd.

IN SEPTEMBER 1911 George Stanley Godwin – age 22 – arrived in Quebec from Liverpool on the steamer *Empress of Britain*. The passenger list shows Ottawa, Ontario as his destination, student as his occupation in England and barrister as his intended occupation in Canada.

He took his time crossing the country but we don't know where he stayed. A note on the first page of his "Personal Journal" shows that he stopped in Calgary in December 1911. He went on to Coquitlam where his brother William Donald Free (Donald) Godwin lived. Donald had left England in 1905. In 1910, in Vancouver, he had married Jean Murchie from Aberdeen. He was now manager of the Coquitlam Real Estate Co.

The 1912 *Henderson City Directory* shows George Godwin as salesman for that company. On May 2, 1912 his future wife Dorothy Alicia Purdon (27) arrived in Quebec from Liverpool aboard the *Lake Manitoba* with destination Vancouver.

The passenger list shows the note "To get married to Mr. Godwin, Real Estate." Her mother accompanied her. It is not known where George and Dorothy had met.

Three weeks after her arrival in Canada, on May 15, 1912, "real estate broker" George Stanley Godwin and "spinster" Dorothy Alicia Purdon were married at St. Catherine's Anglican Church in today's Port Coquitlam.



Port Coquitlam was only incorporated as a municipality separate from Coquitlam in 1913.

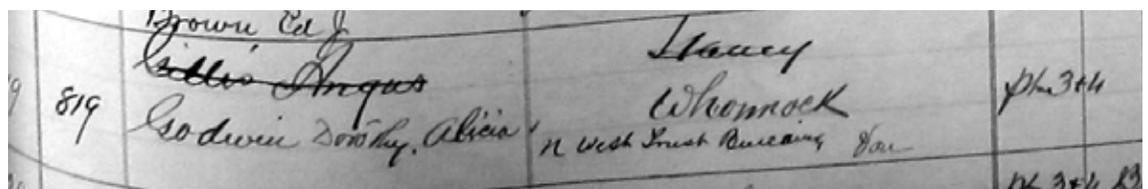
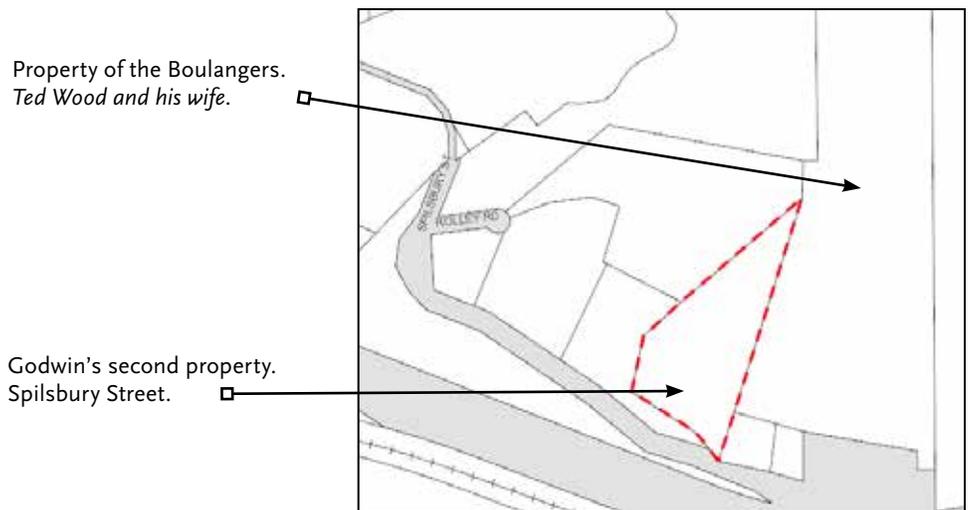
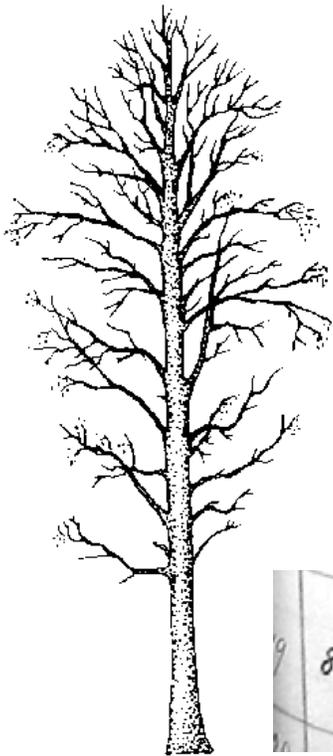
"Pittsville on the Pitt River ... boldly proclaimed itself a city in the making."

TEF p. 140

At the time George and Dorothy married St. Catherine's Anglican Church was located on Dewdney Trunk Road (now Kingsway) west of the Coquitlam River Bridge.

In 1931, the building was moved to a new location on McAllister Road where this picture was taken.

... where silly so-and-sos like us tried to scratch a living.
 (Letter to Ted Roberts, 10 May 1964)



Last entry for the Godwin property in assessment books Maple Ridge: 1919



Godwin on his property in Whonnock. Not much of a forest to clear. Young alders mostly. The log on which he sits had been taken down some time before with a saw.

ALTHOUGH THEIR FIVE-ACRE PROPERTY in Whonnock was only surveyed in January 1913, the young couple seems to have moved to Whonnock already in 1912. The first Whonnock entry in his “journal” is dated November 27, 1912. George Godwin’s idyllic life as a bushranger did not last long. Much as he loved life in the backcountry, Dorothy hated the place and wanted to get out of it.

Their first son Eric was born in New Westminster in March 1913 and it is doubtful that the Godwins would have stayed another winter on that first property. The municipal tax records of 1914 show the name of a new taxpayer: another newly-wed British couple.

The Godwins acquired and moved to a three-acre lot on Spilsbury Street. Here they did not have the spectacular view of the valley and the mountains that they had enjoyed on their first property but there was easier access to the store and the post office, to the rail station and the outside world. Their house stood close to the road at the foot of a steep slope and not much farming could be done here.

George Godwin earned some money by freelance writing for Vancouver newspapers.

On August 4, 1914, war was declared and in November George Godwin was appointed lieutenant of a company of thirty-two men from Whonnock and thirty from the rest of Maple Ridge.

The 104th Regiment Westminster Fusiliers of Canada was placed on active service on 6 August 1914 for local protection duties. The first battalion it raised embarked for Britain in November 1915 and disembarked in France in August 1916. George Godwin was not to be part of that battalion.

“I was rejected for active service,” George Godwin wrote to Ted Roberts in 1964, “but [joined] later in England, after I had pawned the ‘ranch’ and returned under my own steam, plus pregnant wife and two-year-old son.”

The Godwins returned to England in late summer or the fall of 1915.

Their second child, daughter Monica, was born in Ireland in January 1916.

George Godwin would not have fared better if he had chosen to continue a career in real estate rather than work as a bush ranger.

Property was an excellent investment in 1912, but in 1913 the Vancouver real estate bubble burst wiping out the real estate market.

The Godwins did get a loan on their property for the fare home, but they would not have found a buyer at that time.

The Newcomers in Ferguson's Landing

The "Newcomer," the protagonist of *The Eternal Forest*, did not move to a more urban setting. He continued clearing and cultivating on his first and only property.

The Newcomer only gave up because his health forced him to do so.

There is no mention of war in *The Eternal Forest* and therefore the novel is not tied to a specific period before or after the First World War.

Whonnock...one of the loveliest spots in British Columbia. A delightful residential district ... conceded by all who know it to be a beauty spot of the Fraser Valley. (Coquitlam Star, 1912)

THE PROTAGONIST in the *The Eternal Forest* is the Newcomer, a young Englishman who, with his nameless wife climbs off the transcontinental train at a small settlement known as Ferguson's Landing.

He, "...a tall man in his early twenties...a man with a remote manner..." and she, "a woman of about the same age, fair, pretty and slender" (p. 9).

Although they are warned that there is no money in farming at Ferguson's Landing, they are ready to purchase some acreage where they can be "together, undisturbed, encircled by the bush, alone."

What they find is an enchanted place looking down over the valley and the river to the snow-covered mountains. (p 28)

There they built a simple small, shingle-clad house, without outside graces but inside "... the best furnished home in the settlement, with its armchairs, chesterfield, bronzes and pictures in oils, its bedroom with the big brass bedstead." (p. 160)

The Newcomer starts clearing his land "with good will but without method" and, short of money after clearing only half an acre, he starts hiring himself out whenever possible.

An enchanted place it may, be but the land is not very suitable for farming, and after the birth of their first child the Newcomer considers selling "since there was no decent living to be made upon the place." (p. 27)¹

At that time they decide to stay since he has come to love the forest and she is reluctant to

leave the comforts of a home with her baby. (p 194).

A second child is born at the end of the third year.²

Five acres of the land are now cleared and "under cultivation," but the Newcomer has come to the conclusion that competition with Japanese and Chinese farmers is impossible: "... a man is a bloody fool to settle in this valley." (p. 199)

He and his wife decide to sell out (p. 199) and return to England. However, the only interested buyer is a Japanese man and the Newcomer refuses to sell to anyone but a white man. (p. 202)³

They struggle on but their time at Ferguson's Landing comes to an unexpected end when the Newcomer is diagnosed with pulmonary tuberculosis.⁴ (p. 278)

Manual labour is now out of the question and the Newcomer lists the farm for sale.

1. At that time the Godwins decided to sell and moved to property on Spilsbury Street.
2. The Godwin's second child, daughter Monica, was born in Ireland.
3. Only after the First War did Japanese farmers settle and buy property in the Whonnock-Ruskin area and they started farming there in great numbers.
4. In *Why Stay We Here?* the Newcomer, now named Stephen Craig is revived and in good health and still living on his land at Ferguson's Landing at the declaration of war in August 1914. Like Godwin himself Stephen Craig returned to England and after serving in France, is diagnosed with tuberculosis and shipped to Canada for a year at a sanatorium.

At home on Spilsbury Street in Whonnock



Paul Godwin

George Godwin, with Dorothy and Eric. The lady and her child sitting behind Godwin have not yet been identified.



Paul Godwin

Eric running through the garden of the Godwin house on Spilsbury Street in the summer of 1915.

Fraser Valley Record

Published in the Interests of the Fraser Valley, and Read by Many People, Some of Whom Grow the Big Red Strawberry.

MISSION CITY, B. C., THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 12th, 1914.

Maple Ridge Company for 104th Regiment

Why Stay We Here?

pp. 32, 33.

Maple Grove, the municipal district of Ferguson's Landing, was to have its own infantry company. ... The fellows of the Landing had talked it over, [Bob England] explained.

"They want you to take the commission." A commission? No thanks," ... But when an hour later, Bob England put on his oilskin it was agreed. Stephen was to officer the new-made soldiers of the settlement.

The examining officer was nearly done. "Sound as a bell," he declared. But a few moments later he shook his head. "Sorry," he sympathised. "but I simply can't pass you with that bum shooting eye."

Remarkable Fine Body of Men Paraded Before Colonel Taylor on Tuesday Evening Last.

60 strapping sons of Maple Ridge including 32 from Whonnock end of the municipality, comprise a strong company of highly patriotic men of enviable physique which has been attached as a unit of the 104th, New Westminster Regiment, commanded by Colonel J.D. Taylor, M.P.

The lieutenants appointed to the new company are Reeve N.S. Lougheed, of Maple Ridge and George Godwin of Whonnock.

The sixty men paraded before Col. Taylor in the agricultural hall at Haney, on Tuesday evening, and prior to being measured for their uniforms the men lined up were highly commended for their splendid appearance and military alertness.

The volunteers who hitherto formed a local corps of Home Guards, organized by Reeve Lougheed, have been drilled regularly for several weeks past and have attained a considerable degree of efficiency as a unit.

Now the company has official recognition and will be captained by an officer yet to be appointed. Several of the men are on their way to Nanaimo for home defence duty on the Island.

Addressing the company on Tuesday evening at Haney, Col. Taylor M.P. says as militiamen they would only serve for home defence but if need to be outside Canada if the safety of Canada ever became an emergency. After

referring to the high military standard of the 104th Regiment among the soldiers of B.C., the Colonel intimated that he soon expected to enlist a local company from Mission.

As men largely engaged in agricultural pursuits, strong and healthy, and of proven loyal spirit, the Maple Ridge company would, he was sure, come right up to the great confidence he had in them.

The Colonel advised that the company take early steps to provide a drill hall for its own use and urged the men to be painstakingly in their drills so that they would be unexcelled when the official inspection of the regiment took place.

Close upon eighty men will in all probability be enlisted. Sixty men paraded on Tuesday evening.

These were, from Whonnock: T.R. Cockrill, R. Fletcher, M.W. Kirby, M.C. Moffat, R.A. Aikman, R.A. Hamilton, O. Lee, T. Hollingshead, G. Godwin, W. Davin, F. Cooper, H. Reid, F. Lee, Chas. Black, R. Percy, A. Collins, J. Garner, A. Watson, ? Smith, A. F. Earle, C. Featherstone, H. Farmer, G. MacLaughlin, Ole Lee, W.H. Alexander, A. McLeod, R. Johnson, G. Gilchrist, G. Walden, J. Capes.

From Maple Ridge: F. McWhinnie, A. Stephens, E.B. Carr, J.A. Carr, L.S. Carr, A.E. Mackness, D.B. Martyn, H.D. Mackness, W.J. Marriot, N.S. Lougheed, W. Best, W. Gillis, J.F. Anderson, P.H. Burnett, W.H. Tapp, J.H. Hamilton, R. Nooden, L.G. Rayner, T.H. Laity, H. Toey, H. Carter, C. McDermott, D. McMyn, and G. McMynn of Pitt Meadows.

WAR YEARS (1916–1920)

IN SEPTEMBER 1916 George Godwin joined the Canadian Expeditionary Force in England. He embarked for France on August 10th with the 29th Vancouver Battalion, later known as “Tobin’s Tigers,” and remained assigned to this battalion for almost a year.

His experiences at the front are described in his book *Why Stay We Here?*. As he wrote to Ted Roberts in 1964: “... really an account of the 29th at the stage of the War when everybody was properly brassed off with it.” “Believe me, in France no one talked about ‘Tobin’s Tigers’ though there were constant observations about the true character of the war! Did I say Profane?”

About his service in France he also wrote to Ted Roberts: “I was not very long on the line being sent off with Major Graham to form some part of an instructional lot to give a final training brush up to men coming over from Canada to be drafted where needed and to their utter disgust ... I felt very sorry for these men, but their discontent did not make their final brush up before going up the line an easy task for those of us who were handling them. But I got on well with my company—I was only a subaltern, but I had the responsibility of an officer of field rank.”

During the winter of 1916–1917 he suffered a “severe cold” and when on leave in July 1917 he was admitted to hospital. He did not return to France. After recovery he was transferred to the newly created Canadian Tanks Corps in England.

In December 1918 Godwin was hospitalized again and this time he was diagnosed as having pulmonary tuberculosis.

In later years George Godwin liked to tell that his case of tuberculosis was caused by poison gas at the Western Front but there is



George Stanley Godwin was Called to the Bar in absentia (thus qualifying as a barrister) on 19th November 1917. Information courtesy Lesley Whitelaw, Archivist, The Middle Temple, January 2015.

no evidence of that in the medical reports of his years with the CEF.

Godwin was sent to Canada by HMAT *Essequibo*, and a medical examination at Vancouver General Hospital in May 1919 established that his condition was a “partially arrested tuberculosis,” but that he still required “sanatorium treatment in a dry climate.”

Subsequently he was placed in the Balfour Military Sanatorium in the West Kootenay, BC. There Godwin stayed for almost a year from June 1919 until he was “struck of strength” of the Canadian Expeditionary Forces on 19 May 1920. It was at the sanatorium that he met Ethlyn Trapp, then an occupational therapist.

George Godwin stopped in Vancouver for a short time, probably taking care of the sale of the Whonnock property. He would have visited the settlement for the last time.

Godwin returned to England on board s.s. *Scotian* of the Canadian Pacific Line, arriving in London on 24 August 1920.



Paul Godwin

Eric age 2 years and 11 months, 1916 at the Purdon family home in Belfast.

Addresses of Dorothy Godwin 1916 – 1920

1916	60 Albert Road, Hythe, Kent
1917	57 Brockman Road, Folkestone
1917–1918	60 Albert Road, Hythe, Kent
1919	Morey Croft, Pulborough, Sussex
1919–1920	31 Philbeach Gardens, Earls Court, London

Some of the addresses can be retraced in *Why Stay We Here?* The page numbers refer to the 2003 version.

60 Albert Road, Hythe, Kent

“But this time Alice had hidden herself well. It was an hour before Stephen found her. A long, low row of cottages facing the harbour of the place. it was, and he came, after much searching by match-light, to the door.” p 179

Morey Croft, Pulborough, Sussex

“Alice had found a cottage, a little workman’s cottage that had passed the hands of an artist. The Croft had been homely, then beauty had been bestowed upon it, and now, neglected, it was making a beauty of its own.” p 181

Two victims of the First World War

REVISITING FERGUSON’S LANDING after the war, Stephen Craig enquires about some of the people he knew from the days he lived there. “Bob England” and “Old Stein,” are both victims of war. In real life there were more casualties from Whonnock in the First World War than just these two.



The grave of Charles Stahl at the Maple Ridge cemetery. Whonnock did not yet have its own municipal cemetery at that time.

“What about Bob England? Is he back on his old place?” “Him? Why, he was killed at Passchendaele. Didn’t you know that? ... No, Stephen did not know. Poor Bob. So keen from the first on this war; then afterwards, weary of it. And now killed by it.” *Why Stay We Here?* p. 208

British-born Robert Fletcher stood model for Godwin’s Bob England. Fletcher was among other things a real estate agent. Fletcher farmed on top of Byrnes Road just below the first Godwin property. Fletcher was so eager to join the overseas forces that he reduced his age to be allowed to enlist. He died of his wounds at Lens, 29th of August 1917.

“Is old Stein still around?” “No, old Stein done himself in. They found him on the wires of his own fence; he’d fixed his shotgun with string and blown his head off. They said he was a spy. These bastards there thought everybody was spies, but it got on the old boy’s nerves. And then they got the policeman to come up from Carlyle [Ruskin]. It was then he done it.” *Why Stay We Here?* p. 208

“Old Stein” was modelled by Godwin on Charles Stahl, German by birth, who committed suicide at age 51 in 1918. Stahl lived alone, close to Godwin’s first property. He only returned to Whonnock in October 1912 after a trip to his birthland, Australia. There is nothing in either of the novels to suggest that George Godwin, the Germanophile, befriended Charles Stahl, although one would expect that.

Balfour Military Sanatorium in the West Kootenay, BC.



Dr. Ethlyn Trapp, daughter of New Westminster pioneer T.J. Trapp. She was a Canadian pioneer in radiation oncology, and was the president of CMA, B.C. Division. She was made an honorary fellow of the Faculty of Radiologists of Great Britain. An Honorary Degree of Doctor of Science was conferred to her on the occasion of the graduation ceremonies of the 1st graduating class of the UBC Medical School. Dr. Trapp received the Medal of Service of the Order of Canada from the Governor-General in 1968. She died in 1972 and will always be remembered for her work with cancer.

New Westminster Heritage Homepage

In Balfour Sanatorium Godwin befriended therapist Ethlyn Trapp who later became a Canadian pioneer in cancer radiation. The photo shows George Godwin and Ethlyn Trapp (left) with two unidentified nurses. Almost two decades after his return to England, Godwin and Dr. Ethlyn Trapp met again and started exchanging letters.

Middle Temple Roll of Honour

GILLET, F.B., Lt.,	1st Life Guards.		
GILMOUR, A.K., Capt.,	7th K.O.S.B.	Killed in action	1916.
GLYN, C.R., Lt.,		Killed	1917.
GLYN, J.P., 2nd Lt.,	North Irish Horse.		
GLYN, R.S., Lt.,	East Kent Regt.	Killed in action	1914.
GODWIN, G.P., Lt.,	British Columbia Regt.		
GREGORY, J.S., 2nd Lt.,	A.S.C.	Killed	1918.
HALL, W.H.,		Killed in action	
HALSTED, H.C., Capt.,	R.A.M.C.		
HAMILTON, D.,	Inns of Court O.T.C.		
HANCOCK, C.G., Lt.,	9th Btn. Middlesex Regt.		

Extract from the Middle Temple Roll of Honour showing that Lieutenant G. P. [sic] Godwin served with the British Columbia Regiment.

George Godwin's name is also shown on a Whonnock Roll of Honour.



The 29th Battalion, (Vancouver), CEF

John E. (Ted) Roberts of Victoria was one of the foremost experts on the life and work of Captain George Vancouver. He shared that interest with George Godwin who in 1930 had published a biography of the famous explorer. They became good friends although they never met.

10 May 1964

THANK YOU for the cutting of the 29th which, naturally, interested me very much. Though I should make it clear that I did not join this Battalion in Canada, where I was rejected for active service; but later, in England, after I had pawned the “ranch” and returned under my own steam, plus pregnant wife and 2 year old son.

I managed to get past the medical people at Seaford and was given a commission even before going to France, on the strength of a Public School OTC qualification !!!

To see Clyne’s name again revived memories. He was an extraordinary chap and the only serving man or officer I ever met whose mind was perpetually on ways of killing the enemy, a business I was never able to stomach in cold (or other) blood.

PS: Believe me, in France no one talked about “Tobin’s Tigers” though there were constant observations about the true character of the war! Did I say Profane?

25 July 1964

Next about the contact you made with Col. Clyne. It would give me enormous pleasure to get into correspondence with him, and I very much hope he will initiate this. When I was with the battalion he had already won his M.C. and was for me, a newcomer, something of a hero. I remember him perfectly. But I was not very long in the line, being sent off with Major Graham to form some part of an instructional lot to give a final brush up to men coming over from Canada to be drafted where needed – and to their utter disgust – this process being made inevitable by reason of too numerous

battalions being sent overseas as units. I felt very sorry for these men but their discontent did not make their final brush up before going an easy task for those of us who were hanging them. But I got on well with my company—I was only a subaltern, but I had the responsibility of an officer of field rank.

I think I can probably give Clyne some interesting stuff as I kept records very carefully and have trench maps and all sorts of minutiae of that kind of interest to an old soldier like him.

Now to thank you very much for the promised history of the 29th, which, naturally, has great interest for me, even though I was so brief a time in the line with it.

5 August 1964

This morning the postman brought the promised History of the 29th Battalion. I spent a long evening with it and each page recalled some event, place, or individual to me. Moreover, the book, as object, could not have been better planned or produced, and does infinite credit to those who worked out the format and contents.

I shall hope to hear from Col. Clyne, whom I remember well, as I think I told you.

I found the details of the action at Vimy in which a man dear to me was killed, and the details of his death I was never able to secure before the account given in his book.

This friend, a Lieut., was Ben Gray, and to him I dedicated my novel *Why Stay We Here?*, which is really an account of the 29th at that stage of the War when everybody was properly brassed off with it.

Clyne, Henry Randolph
Notman, *Vancouver's 29th:
a chronicle of the 29th in
Flanders Field*,
Vancouver, privately printed,
1964, 166 p.

It is not certain if Col. Clyne
ever corresponded with
George Godwin.

FREELANCER, WRITER, AND PUBLISHER

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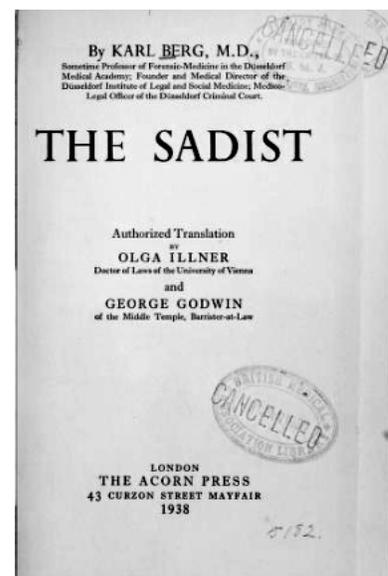
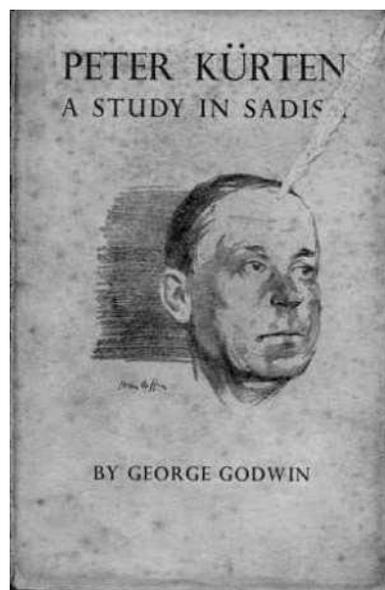
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Geoff, selfprinted, 1967. in memory of his son Geoffrey Stephen Godwin who died at sea.



Aside from George Godwin's *Peter Kürten, a study in sadism*, The Acorn Press also published in 1938 *The Sadist*, an account of the crimes of Peter Kürten by Karl Berg. Authorized translation by Olga Illmer and George Godwin. 177 p

This book was re-issued in 1945 by The Medical Press in New York and Heinemann in London.

THE
ADELPHI

April-June Number 1950

EDITED BY
GEORGE GODWIN

EDITORIAL

POEMS **MURIEL GRAINGER, HERBERT PALMER**

PARTICIPATION **ALICE McCONNELL**

MAN ON EARTH
(3) **THE REGENERATION OF A WASTELAND**

THE LAKE OF MEMORY
(3) **THE SHIP'S BOY OF LA TRINIDAD GEORGE GODWIN**

THE PROBLEM OF EROSION **SIDNEY E. KNIGHT**

BOOK REVIEWS Professor H. V. Routh, Paul Selver,
Henry de Villose, George Godwin, R. N. Currey

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Starting with the July – September 1949 issue (Vol. 25 No. 4) George Godwin took over as editor of *The Adelphi*, the English literature journal founded by John Middlestone Murry in 1923.

The 1950 issues contain four episodes of Godwin's novel *The Lake of Memory*.

He filled most of the pages with his own writing under his own name, as "the editor," or anonymous.

His position was obviously one of a caretaker while Murry offered the journal for sale.

By the end of 1950 Murry found a buyer putting an end to Godwin's involvement with *The Adelphi*.

THE TEMPLE

①

1911
3 Plowden Buildings:
George Godwin.
Census of England
and Wales 1911

②

1940
2 Harcourt Buildings:
George Godwin.
Letter to Dr. Trapp

③

1949
Essex Court:
George Godwin,
Dorothy Godwin,
Antony Godwin.
Electoral Register

④

1950
Pump Court:
George Godwin,
Dorothy Godwin,
Antony Godwin.
Electoral Register

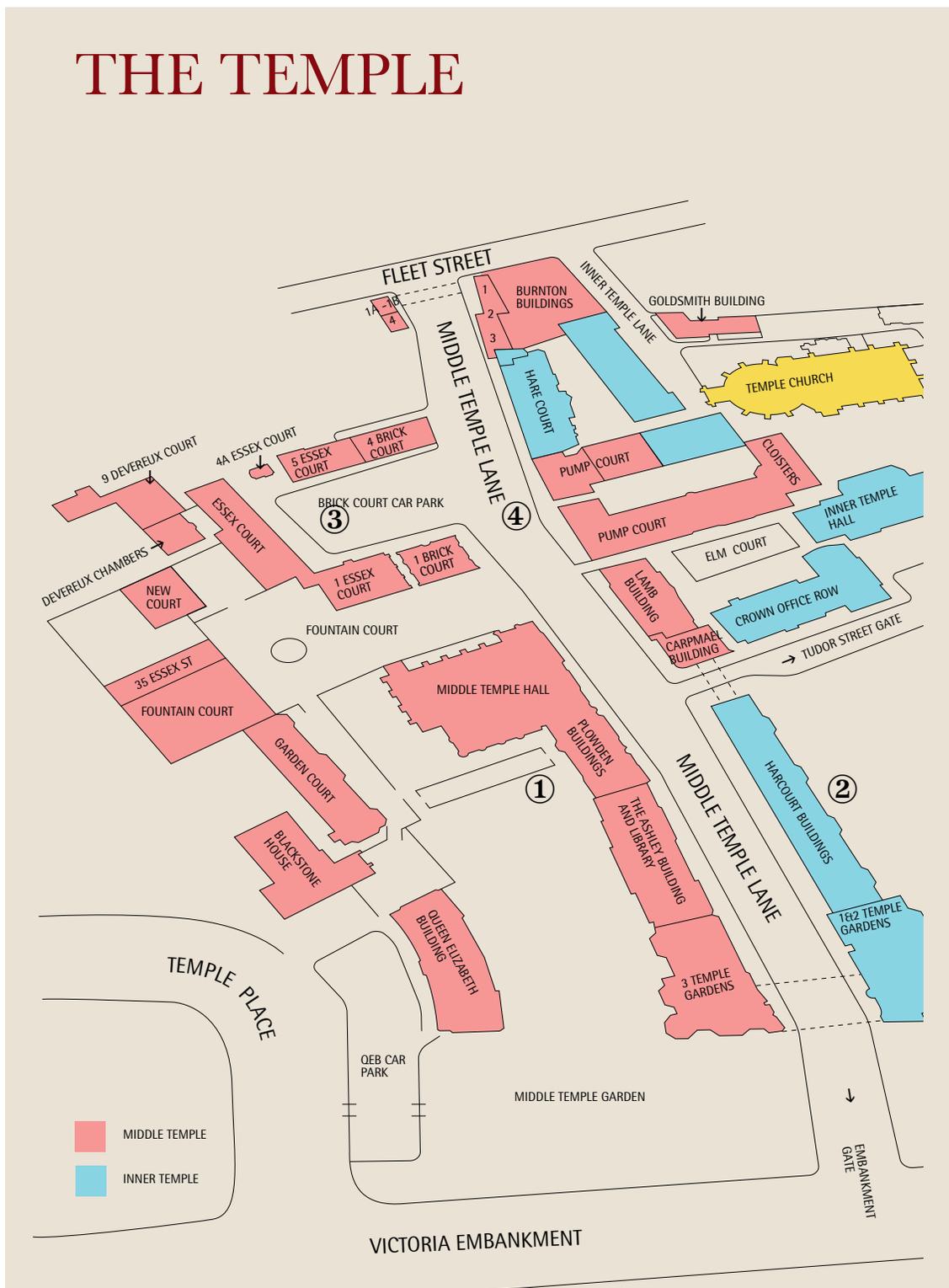


Illustration from Middle Temple Members' Guide 2014/2015



94 Palace Gardens Terrace where the Godwins lived from 1934 to 1939.

AFTER GEORGE GODWIN'S RETURN TO England in August 1920, the family's first postwar home was in Kensington. They spent their summers at the sea shore. In 1929 they bought "a large Victorian house set in an established orchard on apples, pears and plums..." at Shorehams-by-sea. The family lived there until the depression forced them to sell the "Orchard House" in 1933. (Geoff, 1967)

In London they found "a large house whose back windows commanded a fine view over the so-called Millionaire's Row, Kensington Palace Gardens." (Geoff, 1967)

"I had to leave my London home [in 1939]. The Lycée Francaise, where Bill (16) and Tony (13) go, was evacuated to Cambridge. They and their mother now are in a little villa that is our new home. I go home week ends." (letter to Dr. Trapp)

During the week Godwin slept on the floor of his publishing office at 43 Curzon Street. He moved to the Harcourt buildings, Middle Temple, in 1940 and after almost being

killed by a bomb on January 1st, 1941, he moved to live in the Savage Club. (letters to Dr. Trapp)

The name of George and Dorothy Godwin and their son Antony appear on the City of London Electoral Register of 1949 and 1950 as living at the Middle Temple.

In 1956 the Godwins purchased "Oaklands" at Staplecross, near Robertsbridge in Sussex.

Harcourt Buildings where George Godwin lived for a short time in 1940.



From letters to Dr. Ethlyn Trapp 1939 – 1941

17 October 1939

LAST YEAR by dint of hard work I got my fees up to nearly £2,000. Since the war was declared I've counted perhaps £10.

I had to leave my London home. The Lycée Francaise, where Bill (16) and Tony (13) go, was evacuated to Cambridge. They and their mother now are in a little villa that is our new home. I go home week ends.

I am on the Officers Emergency Reserve slated to be in the Army soon. It will be strange but I don't mind. The action of the State has disposed me of my living: I might as well become an insignificant part of the war machine.

I read how Canada is preparing. Frankly, I think her leaders are bloody fools, incorrigible, infantile, sentimental once more to throw away the cream of her young men. It would never have been enough to have attended to her own dear soil. Do you agree? I have always believed that Canada should form just so many more states of the U.S.A. – all working towards what is our only hope of permanent peace – the ultimate Federation of the world. Nationalities and imperial dreams must go, or the blood of the young men will always be the price extracted by greed and ambition from generation to generation.

Do you know I am now 50 years old? Not only that but I'm on my way to having white hair. But my back is straight and I am a fit man.

I've done little of my own writing for ages. In my head I am working out the broad plan of a very ambitious piece of fiction. But it is the sort of job that demand full time efforts; so it lies, unborn, in the cocoon of my imagination. I believe it will be good. I

should have 2 years in the country to do it. – I could live 2 years in the bush. It wouldn't worry me. I never minded solitude – this paying myself a sincere compliment, you'll agree.

I just completed a small commission book, a copy of which I will send you as the subject is of importance.¹ I also wrote and did the publishing of an official history of a college at London University (Queen Mary College).² I made a very nice book of it—I mean the production. I had just 1500 copies bound when the war came and so they await the peace I may never see.

[Now] I shall make up my bed, which is a lilo [inflatable rubber bed] on the floor. I shall put my wireless beside it and await the last news bulletin – towards 12 o'clock. I sleep abominably and so shall probably listen to the English traitor who addresses us nightly from a German wireless station.

There is nothing 1914-ish about this war. Nothing but a sort of stoic resignation. I think man is beginning to be afraid of his own wickedness. There is such a shocking discrepancy between the instruments of slaughter he has invented out of the wickedness of his heart and by our defenseless, soft and vulnerable flesh and blood body.

How can any man be anything but a Socialist? We would share and we would disarm. The dynamics of Socialism is better of course: Capitalism answers the classic question "Am I my brother's keeper?" with a negative.

22 June 1940

So much has happened since the war began that I feel still rather dazed by it all. As you know, without making a fortune, for

Little villa? can't have been too little. I remember Gran's stories of refugees billeted on them who started burning the furniture for warmth. (Paul Godwin)

1. *The Land our Larder: the story of the Surfleet experiment and its significance in war.* The Acorn Press, 1939

2. *Queen Mary College, An Adventure in Education.* Queen Mary College and Acorn Press, 1939.

many years I was a fairly successful freelance, earning enough for a high standard of living and the fulfillment of educational aspirations for the children and an annual trip abroad.

With the capture of Norway [9 May 1940] we have been having a paper famine and to-day, with many another writing man I am in the position of a carpenter who knows his job but can get no wood to work on. I have had odd bits and pieces here and there—from the Ministry of Information and so forth, but my normal source of revenue, the newspapers and magazines and publicity people has dried up entirely. It has been grim all right.

I gave up my London home, moved into a tiny villa at Cambridge, cut everything down ruthlessly and plugged away seeking work wherever there seemed to be the slightest chance of it. I had to give up my Curzon St. office, to close down my little publishing effort (though, as a defiant end to it, I am publishing in a few weeks a book on our woodlands³ and will send you a copy. (Did I send you a little book on the Land?))⁴

I am writing this in my new abode, a jolly little set I was fortunate enough to snap up in The Temple at a very low rent.⁵ I actually have two and shall now sleep in the smaller. Since the war I have slept on the floor of the Curzon Street office and doing my own cooking etc. a proceeding that looses much as the novelty wears off. I go home week-ends and dig furiously trying to grow food in our tiny garden.

I might add that I was rejected for the Army and have been turned down when I tried for the Canadians—though very nicely treated at H.Q.

I believe the civilian population ought to be put on army rations and army pay and told what to do, a man drawing the number of rations appropriate for his family. Then we could meet the Germans with a tranquil spirit. As it is, men like myself – a considerable number – are so harassed by the economic problem of the war situation that they can't help in the war effort as they very much want to. That is a bad business. For, if we are to come through, we shall need every Jack-man of us. Only now are we realizing the magnitude of the German criminal conspiracy against humanity.

There is much criticism of Democracy for not being ready. Personally I don't see it like that. I think we are as we are because we have not been living with murder in our hearts for our neighbours for twenty years, but have had real impulses of love and deep desire to remodel Europe and establish permanent peace.

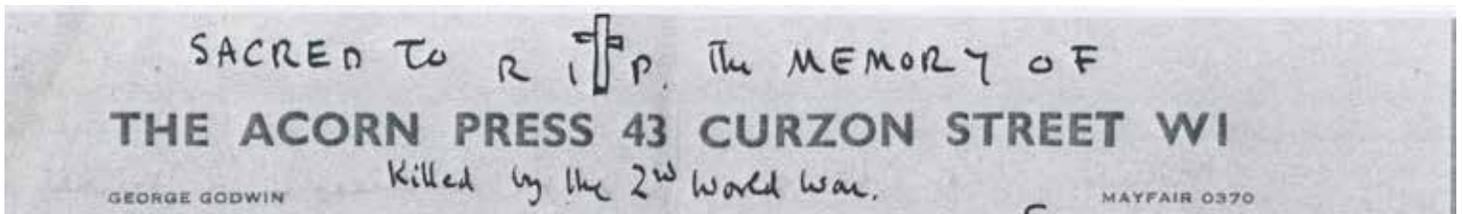
Against such criminals as the Nazi regime we are outwitted. France is too tragic for utterance. I got home from France just before the war began. There is a real civilization. Is it to go under? Can it go under? I don't believe it. Yet, I cannot figure out how it is to be saved.

People here have not got wound up a bit. On the contrary, we are perfectly calm and collected and shall remain so even if the

3. *Our Woods in War: a survey of their vital rôle in defense.* The Acorn Press 1940

4. *The Land our Larder.*

5. 2 Harcourt Buildings, Temple, E.C. 4



Head of the letter to Dr. Trapp of 17 October 1939.

Godwin writes on 22 June 1940: "I had to give up my Curzon St. office, to close down my little publishing effort." In 1946 the artist Hellmuth Weissenborn and his wife Lesley Macdonald, a publisher, took over the imprint of The Acorn Press in London.

raids get really hot. I've been in them before and I don't like them but they can be stood up to.

As for the land battles in England, well, all I can say is this. God help the Hun if it comes to hand-to-hand fighting, for, believe me, we shall fight as Englishmen never fought before on our own soil, which is sacred soil for us. Hitler's star may today be at a dizzy zenith, but woe to him in his last hour and woe to his regime.

What are things like in the West? Are they very bad? Here already there are predictions of famine by winter and it may well be with all this destruction instead of production of foodstuffs and essentials.

In one way these are amazing and stirring times to live through, but at fifty a man wants peace: peace to work, peace to think and meditate and grow ripe. The thought of handling a rifle is one that turns my stomach. Yet, if the Germans land and there is fighting I know I'll get into it if I burst first.

Good God! Think of it, landing on our soil! How would you feel to see a German tank battalion crashing down Hastings? Though I am only a guesser, I think France will fight on in some way. The people are not behind Petain, I'm sure, for he is a losy [sic] old Fascist and friend of Franco, the Spanish butcher. The whole fault lay in failure to digest the lesson of Poland and Spain. [General Maurice] Gamelin, of whom so much was expected, proved a foolish old doctrinaire with only a defensive strategy worked out. What good was that against those monster mechanical thrusts of the German's mechanical army? None. I should have thought it was obvious that one can't win wars by sitting in a tunnel of steel underground.

All looks dark. There is every concrete reason for despair. The future offers not one glimpse of light anywhere; only

suffering and pain and possible extinction of civilization.

And yet, this is very strange, something illogical and even absurd washes out the logic of the hard facts and shouts its contradiction. It's like Ulysses, when his men wanted him to turn – you remember? – and he would not and extolled them in such words as these: Ye would not after all that we have suffered together turn now from me? For men were not made to live like brutes, but to follow courage and wisdom like a star.

Like the men of Ulysses ship we may go down in the maelstrom, but if we do, believe me, we will go with a cheer. O invincible! O courage, the lovely virtue, Courage, that one seeks and desires and knows to be as Barrie said the lovely virtue. ⁶ This shall not be lacking in all the sons of these Isles in the days to come. I am getting all hot up, but you need not mind. Only now, at long last, we all know what we are up against and the knowledge stirs one's blood strange things and moves one to the depth of one's soul.

19 August 1940

I cannot tell you how thankful I am to have a job again after nearly a year of only odd jobs. Life is ironic. For nearly a year I tried everywhere, but had not been a week here [2, Harcourt Buildings, Temple] before I was offered two other jobs! Now I am being approached to do some evening work for a firm. I like my work here enormously and feel fairly competent to do it. It is connected with propaganda but beyond that I am not at liberty to go into details.

In a few days I have a new book coming out. It was written when I had so few commissions to keep me from going dotty. It is a companion to *The Land Our Larder*, and is concerned with the trees. I'll let you have a copy. *Our Woods in War* is the title. It was held up a long time as I could not get a paper permit—paper is really something we lack.

6. "Courage" by J.M. Barrie, Rectorial Address delivered at St. Andrews University, May 3 1922

20 December 1940

Life goes on much the same since I last wrote you. I am very well and doing a government job about which it is wiser not to talk – so will leave it at that. The pay is not great, but it enables me to keep my end up for which I am truly thankful.

I do a little work outside the office, but have just completed a pamphlet for a publisher and will post you a copy when it appears. I have also a new book out and I am posting you a copy of it – short and about our woods in the war.

I forget whether I told you the Temple has been smashed about a bit. Numerous bombs and two land mines. I am now in a set two doors from where [I was]. The first land mine didn't do me much good, but, despite my windows and shutters flying across the room and the ceiling descending I was unhurt.

When all was mostly cleared (a job I did at night in a boiler suit) they came again and bust everything up once more, but I've set it to rights again and carry on. It is queer life, doing for myself and living – or rather sleeping – in a sort of glorified cupboard. The smaller the the room, the safer the experts say.

The terrors of air warfare on London, like the accounts of Mark Twain's death are grossly exaggerated. You must not worry about folks over here. We can take it.

12 February 1941

On the first day of the New Year, about midnight, as I stood in my pyjamas warming myself before the gas fire preparatory to going to bed, a land mine descended on the next house and wrecked my place and catapulted me into a glass-paneled door. My nose was all but completely guillotined and I have been away from the office for six weeks. It is healed now, I am glad to say, having had 14 stitches in it and

two operations, but I am not Clarke Gable now. I console myself with the thought that it might, an inch higher, have been my eyes. I got peaches of black eyes, split mouth, jaws so sore that I couldn't eat for days, but all that's well now. When you write address me to the Savage Club. I am there temporarily and casting about for a cheap place to live. I'm very fed up about the other place, as I was very fond of it, as you know, and was able to do my own housekeeping there.

I often think of B.C. and, believe me. I could do with a month of absolute solitude in the bush. I need it more than anything.

18 May 1941

I am now living at this [Savage] Club putting off day by day. It is hard to plan anything when tomorrow is a day-shifting mystery.

Considering what I went through last winter I am as fit as a fiddle and I am beginning to feel I must be very tough. My scar has healed but it is a very horrid one, moreover, I am told I really need a third operation to do something about the septum which was broken. But I can breathe all right.

I am still in the same job, making propaganda stuff. It is becoming very boring. I am struggling to do a new [book?] with London 1940 – as theme and broken periods of work scratched from the working day do give the mind time to “crank up,” if you know what I mean. Thought and the imagination are very conditioned processes – vide Shelley “A defence of poetry.” I sometimes use the image of the engine. It must be warm to run surest and it takes a little time.

I can't remember if I sent you a pamphlet I wrote last year on faith healing.⁷ It's done [and as soon as they stop] the stupid regulations about sending books out I'll let you have a copy again. Quite brief and unimportant.

7. *Priest or Physician? A study of faith-healing*. London: Watts, Thinkers Forum No. 10, 1941. 44 P

AFTER THE SECOND WORLD WAR

From letters to John E. (Ted) Roberts 1964 – 1965

10 May 1964

I SHALL TAKE the keenest interest in your brave go at reconstructing *Discovery* and all luck to you. By the way, why in Hell haven't the burgers of Vancouver a statue of him in the city?

One day – who knows – we may meet. Good old Langley Prairie where, as everywhere else thereabouts on both sides of the river, silly so-and-sos like us tried to scratch a living.

5 June 1964

Whenever I see pictures of B.C. I get a yearning to see the terrain again. But at my age, never will in all likelihood.

I hope your project advances rapidly; there is far too little pride and interest in the past of the West, but what you are doing goes a long way to remedying that.

25 July 1964

About getting a new edition of the Vancouver book out for the forthcoming

celebrations, I have to thank you for a very good idea. [*Vancouver, A Life: 1757-1798*. London: Philip Alan and New York Appleton, 1930.]

I shall put the idea up to several publishers who have Canadian branches, and I'll let you know the reactions I get. I am not very hopeful.

When I did the Vancouver book, Philip Alan, who did the English end, told me he was offering the rights to the States. I asked him not to do that until he had offered it in Canada—this out of a sense of loyalty. But no Canadian publisher was interested, and the book went to Appleton's of New York (and got a splash review in the *New York Times* Book Section, complete with Vancouver portrait!).

I shall write first to McMillan in London (they have a Toronto end) and ask if they think their Canadian affiliation would be interested.

3 August 1964

I am returning the letter from Mr. Matthews, about the painter who painted Vancouver's *Discovery*. I can well understand that correspondent's feeling about the neglect of the old mariner.

The vast reservoir of technical knowledge such men take with them to the grave is a loss that can never be retrieved, and, among much else, hits people like you, engaged on digging out historical minutiae.

Could someone write at least a long piece for the *Province* or some other publication?

Roberts's project was the construction of a replica of the stern of Captain Vancouver's ship Discovery for the Royal BC Museum, then the BC Provincial Museum, in Victoria, BC.



5 August 1964

If at some time you find yourself by chance in the Vancouver Public Library, do ask if they happen to have either or both of two novels I did, linked as a sequence: *The Eternal Forest* and *Why Stay We Here?*

It would interest me to know – but it is just idle curiosity.

As you are such a knowledgeable bloke, I wonder if you have any knowledge of a feat that I have been unable to run to earth here, and which I should like to understand for a story I am tinkering with.

When the Romans took over the Eastern Mediterranean, they have transported to the renamed capital (Constantinople) an obelisk from the African side. How was that great weight ferried across the Med? If you should happen to have the technical “know-how” on this, I would appreciate the information.

25 August 1964

Prompted by your suggestion that this might be a good time to get a new edition of *Vancouver* out, I offered it to Macmillans, who have a Toronto Branch, but they were not interested. I really don't think there is any chance of a new edition, alas. By the way, B.C. House, London (the Agent General) to whom I wrote for the address of the Centennial goings-on had to ask Canada House for the information!!

It was very interesting to hear that Mrs. Heddon is still around; she must be getting on. She is a first-class researcher, a widow, I think, of a naval officer. She may recall where she dug up that sheer of *Discovery*. Of course if the unlikely happened and I found a publisher prepared to do a second edition, I would be only too happy to add the new material you have. I do hope you nail down your serial material. It should be very interesting indeed.

17th September 1964

The longish delay in acknowledging your letter of 1st September has been due to a house full of the family: two sons – for a bit three sons – one wife, one vocal baby. Verb. Sap. [a word is enough for the wise].

It was awfully kind of you to work out figures about the mechanics of heavy sea transport in early days—but I do appreciate it and also any further material you may unearth. I wanted it actually for a bit in a long story I am working on.

It was kind of you to enquire at the library for my two novels with B.C. backgrounds. I scarcely expected that they would be found there. (The both are in Eton College library!) Your reference to Major Matthews recalls him to mind for two reasons: I knew him from France during World War I, a bit of a farceur, but quite a friendly bloke who told amusing stories of how he once drove a Toronto tram and hit something or somebody. I forget the details.

Some years ago I wrote to the library asking if they had a copy of *Vancouver*, and got a reply from him – my first intimation that he landed up there after the War. He said bluntly, he had never heard of it and seemed to have no further interest. From my memories of him, he would be the last type I would associate with librarianship or archivist work, which call for scholarship.

Now, don't bother your head about saying anything about me when you write your piece. I am so aged now that worldly vanity has now almost expired, sunk alongside hope (I hope). But being human I feel that universal urge to fight against oblivion, and for that and another reason – feelings of respect for a man who will tackle the task you have set yourself, I'm trying to get through book dealers the two novels I did that have a B.C. interest. If I manage to unearth copies I'll post them along to you.

I am off shortly to Portugal on a cargo ship for a bit of a change. I'll send you a postcard en route (if I remember). I shall make my way home via Barcelona in the same way.

By the way, are the young folk in your part becoming as peculiar as some here? I ask apropos your remarks and references to the book by Drake's nephew. I can't quite make it out myself. I see in Hastings lads with hair like girls, and I am told some are now using eye shadow and rouge.

There are two gods for these curious young people: clothes and motorbikes. And of course an unwashed girl, with long uncombed hair, to trail into the coffee bars.

(I must beware of the vice of the old, which is to be too critical of youth!)

But, strange hair-does and clothes apart, how is one to interpret the street fighting on holiday occasions in the seaside resorts? We had a proper battle in Hastings lately, many arrests and much property smashed up, apparently just for the fun of destroying.

No, you didn't tell me how you earn your crusts but I hope you find sufficient to put a good wallop of butter on it!

Steel? That is something very much out of my line. As for myself, I am one of that large company—a Barrister who never appeared in court but once and then minus brief. Hence the retreat, like so many others, to writing. I have two sons, lawyers, one with the Treasury Solicitor's Department in Whitehall, the other partner in a large law firm in Singapore, just now on leave here.

You ask about this part of England. It is fine farm country, well-wooded, starred by many old-world villages and cottages some of the type shown on this snap of the cottage from which I write.

9 March 1965

How very kind and thoughtful of you to send me that material about the obelisks. It is quite fascinating and gives me everything I need for that job. As I know that you are a man who will take the infinite trouble to dig

out details to secure absolute accuracy (vide you work on Discovery) you will understand why I wanted to find out this piece of technical information.

I am working on a series of short stories and in one have a conversation between and older and a young man overlooking the waters from Constantinople – not then so named. The young man, a newcomer, asks "How did they get the obelisk I saw in the city across the Mediterranean, and how did they erect it?" To get the answer to that bogged me down and I suddenly realized that it was a bit of an engineering riddle. Now your references give me what I need.

Isn't it amazing how much work can go into this writing game? I recall that the author of *Madam Bovary* went all the way to North Africa to get material for his *Salambo*.

Having done the difficult spade work involved, I am sure your Discovery will be a first-class job and also as you create the ship you will get your reward as she takes shape and her excellence surprises even her creator.

There is truly no fun like making things. I am sorry for those people – I suppose, the majority – who have never discovered this pleasure. This problem of digging out facts which has been keeping you busy for a long time, is one much in my mind just now as I am researching after material touching on the life of strange character who spoofed the world that he was a Formosan, invented a language, architecture, laws, etc. and hoodwinked the scholars at Oxford, only to end up respectably and the friend of Dr. Johnson. [George Psalmanaazaar: *The Fake Formosan*] Wonderful material, if I can do it justice, for I am getting old and tire somewhat easily, and book making is great toil.

We have had a hard winter, but now spring seems to be close: this a.m. a brilliant sun out of a blue sky and things shooting up out of the ground, undamaged by the heavy fall of snow, which is now almost melted away.

I had this a.m. a letter from an old friend in Duncan saying your winter had been very hard. He was formerly editor of the Ottawa Citizen, deeply read, and a really good chap. And like us here, facing the problem of old age, and how to carry on without servants, and, if on the move, where to go? I would hate to sell this place, but I suppose I'll have to. But to live in a hotel would drive me up the wall and I should take to serious drinking: I don't want to do that!

Many years ago I made some sort of a model of Columbus's ship. A large photograph of it hangs before me now. When he is next here I'll get one of my sons who is a good photographer to photograph it and send you a print. It is only an amateur job, but it looks rather nice. I gave it to an old friend who has a beautiful country house and it stands under a large oil painting in his hall, which makes me proud of my effort!

Before I close I must again thank you very, very much for the indications you also gave me in enclosing the tear sheets on obelisks. (I know in the end I shall want to write a book about it all!). Meanwhile I have found that Sir E. Budge did a short book on the subject, and I am applying to the central library for a copy. [E. A. Wallis Budge: *Cleopatra's Needles and Other Egyptian Obelisks.*]

1 April 1965

I have dealt with the enquiries you made and the information follows. I have written to the Town Clerk, Bath, asking whether he can tell me where Puget is buried and whether the Council had any pictures taken of the churchyard ceremony as per the cuttings you sent me. I will let you know the results as and when I hear from that quarter. I should think a ceremony like that would have been recorded photographically.

The Vicar of Wolley, near Bath (where Puget is buried), is the Rev. J.G. Rowe MA, incumbent of St. Mary Bathwick, Bath. (He is a Canadian, with McGill degree.)

For the Mudge widow, try the Vicar of St. Andrews, Plymouth; the Rev. J.K. Cavell MA, St. Andrews, Plymouth. O.K.?

Your industry in these historic items amazes me. When I was writing the Vancouver book I wrote the vicar of his native town asking for information and got a very snooty reply, which may not have been typical of the C. of E. clergy, but did rather surprise me. You may fare better. I do hope so.

You really are an astonishing man! What you tell me of your woodcarving makes it clear that you are a very advanced worker in that medium, for a hand is, surely a very, very difficult subject.

I did try a small figure in a charming small piece of lilac wood, but you would laugh at the results, I fear. But I may claim with a little pride that this cottage room in which I now write has two tables and an oak chest from my imperfect craftsmanship. (The oak table has a top of two pieces of 2 inches thick and dowelled together, and a single leg far too thick I now think, also the two heavy oak feet. But the whole effect is impressive—at least guests all exclaim when they see the very well polished table. But now I find that I am far too inexact in my manual movements to do more than odd jobs for purely utilitarian purposes about the garden. My eldest son, a medical bloke, and also a keen photographer, took a photograph of the photograph of my attempt at model making, and when I get the promised print I will send it along to you. The job was done in a small room in Lincoln's Inn without a bench and so is pretty primitive.

10 April 1965

The photograph of my attempt at model-building is a photograph made by my medical son from a large one done professionally. It was done in London without facilities, such as a workbench, but I won't make further excuses for its amateur character. It gave me great pleasure to do the job.



The obelisk of Theodosius in Istanbul, Turkey

OAKLANDS

From letters to Dr. Ethlyn Trapp

Oaklands
Staplecross
Nr. Robertsbridge
Sussex

16 January 1970

I AM NOW AN AGED MAN, 81 no less, the youngest of eight, the eldest, a sister, still living at a hundred.

23 March 1970

I live very quietly, finding great pleasure in my garden, but I am somewhat limited physically as I suffered some sort of brain damage from that blitz bombing and, a few years ago, had to relearn lucid speech again and even how to read.

10 May 1970

Some years ago I bought some neglected land that had been savaged by a contractor. I restored three acres and planted three-year old Norway fir transplants (I think there were 2,000). I remember when I toed in the last one, with a great sense of having achieved something worthwhile, I spoke a little invocation, really quite out of character, I still recall the words: Little tree grow up tall and strong that one day you will serve to the floor of the nursery of some little children. (It was something like that; and irreligious old agnostic that I am, I had my moment of vision.)

Some years later I had to sell the plantation, which I hated doing, and the last time I saw it in semi-ruin an electric pylon was visible. Sic transit.

But for another reason I became interested in the soil. I was asked to describe in a small book [*The Land our Larder: the story of the Surfleet experiment and its significance in war.* 1939] a job of reclamation in Lincolnshire where the owner had adopted what is known here as the Indore Composting system, as introduced by Sir Albert Howard, who got the idea from watching the Chinese



I bought a little greenhouse and set the vine under glass. 1971.

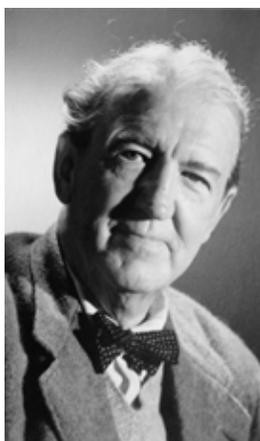
vegetable growers when he was in charge of an experimental station at Indore, India.

One way and another I have maintained my interest in the soil and tried here to grow all the vegetables needed for the house.

This house—really two old cottages with a more modern end piece added by some owner, I was fortunate enough to buy at a most reasonable price along with seven acres of lovely woodland across the narrow lane. In this I was really fortunate, for there is here an established orchard that bears heavily and I unearthed a small vine while slashing, some 12 years ago.

I bought a little greenhouse and set the vine under glass. It responded to this marvellously and now yields abundant crops of Hamburg grapes.

It is now more than two years since I began to write a book, and it has still some way to go. I felt I had to prove to myself that old age didn't really mean complete feeble-mindedness. I will, when – and if – I get it published send you a copy.





E-mail from Paul Godwin, son of Eric Godwin, 25 January, 2015: Oaklands: "They moved there in 1956. We spent three weeks there that year, kids in a tent on front lawn. Found these old size 127 contact prints in my old album. It says August 1956 so they moved there not long before that.

"Previous occupant became a recluse and back garden was a jungle of growth and old wire etc. We all helped clean it up during which we uncovered a pump and water cistern and a grape vine which GSG eventually built a greenhouse around and ever after it produced great quantities of grapes. After a few years GSG tamed it all into a lovely orchard."



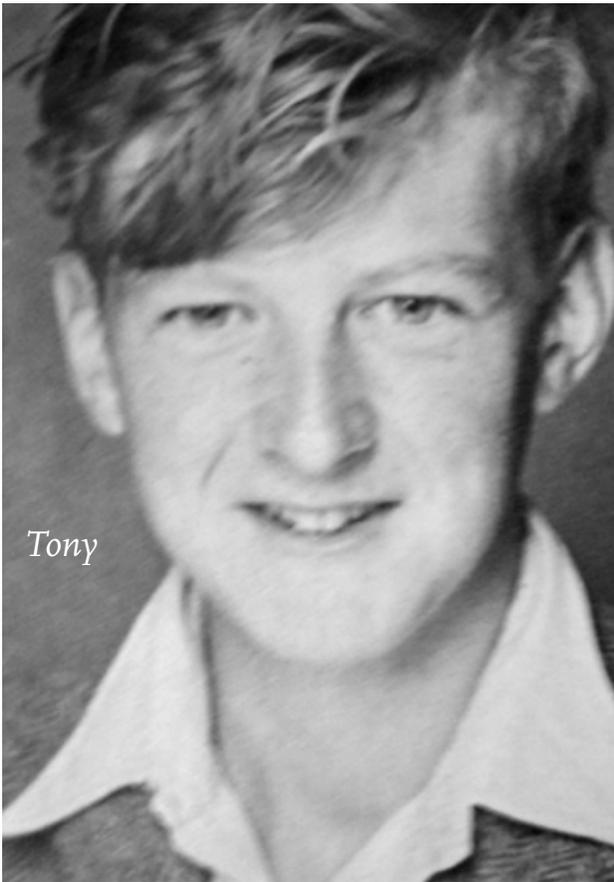
Lucy Godwin and "Gramps," Spring 1971



George Godwin with sons Eric (left) and Geoff, 1960s



George and Dorothy Godwin, 1960s



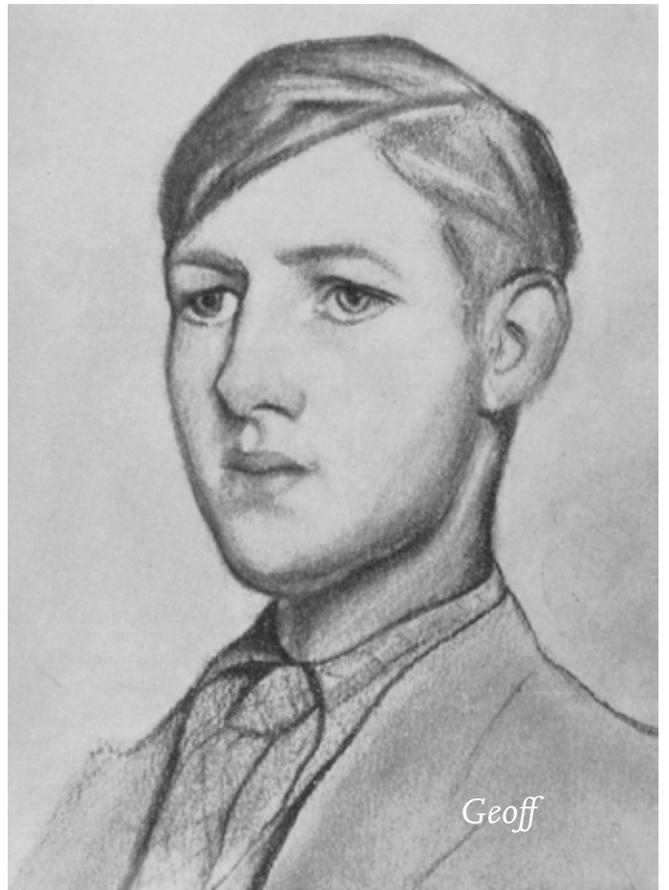
Tony



Eric



Bill



Geoff



George Stanley Godwin (1889 – 1974)
Dorothy Alicia Purdon (1885 – 1980)

1. Eric George Godwin (1913 – 2006)
Spouse: Nancy Hannah Rook
2. Mary Monica Godwin (1916 – 1976)
Spouse: Dennis Parker Riley
3. Geoffrey Stephen Godwin (1921 – 1967)
Spouse: Penelope Underhill
4. William Henry Godwin (1924 – 2013)
Spouse: Leila Milosevic
5. Antony Purdon Godwin (Oct 1926 –)
Spouse: Queenie Pearce Smith



Oaklands for sale 2012 | Sold in October 2013





PERILS OF READING HISTORY FROM A NOVEL

Maple Ridge News, 15 January 2014

ONE BOOK WHONNOCK is a community program that invites people in east Maple Ridge to read and discuss the same book.

Jean Davidson is the heart and soul of this program, which she started three years ago with the support of the Whonnock Community Association. Her efforts made neighbours talk to neighbours – not a small achievement in these rural parts of Maple Ridge.

The book now being read is the 1994 edited version of *The Eternal Forest*, by George Godwin. This book, first published in 1929 in London and New York, is set before the First World War. It focuses on a small community called Ferguson's Landing on the Fraser River before the War. The author seems to reveal the true identity of the place by letting the chorus of frogs sing: "Wan-ik, Wan-ik."

Whonnock is where, in 1912, the author and his wife, Dorothy Purdon – just married and both fresh from England – settled on acreage off today's 268th Street. George was not cut out for life as a "bushranger," and Dorothy just hated the place. A year or so later, after the birth of their first child, the couple moved to a more urban home on Spilsbury Street, close to the railway station and other amenities, before returning for good to England in 1915.

The Newcomer, Godwin's double in the novel, is as naively enthusiastic as the author himself must have been. He wants to be together with his wife " ... undisturbed, encircled by the bush, alone." He does not give up, but keeps on trying to scratch a living from the soil until his health forces him to put the property up for sale.

The Newcomers – as the Godwins – see themselves a notch above the others in the settlement. She chooses not to befriend the women of the community and prefers to get her practical knowledge from books. He judges his neighbours harshly, but he shares local gossip and discusses news and ideas with them and learns from them how to develop his land and work in the woods.

Robert S. Thomson, the editor and publisher of the 1994 version of the book, stressed the historical significance of it, but reading historical facts into these stories is perilous.

This book, after all, is a novel, where fiction is inspired by reality.

It is tempting, for instance, to take the story in the prologue of the founding of the place in 1849 by a Scots master-mariner called Captain Ferguson at face value. But the true first white settler in Whonnock was Robert Robertson, who started living here in 1860, and he does not figure in Godwin's book in any way.

Recognizing residents of Whonnock among those of Ferguson's Landing's is an interesting but rather disappointing exercise. Similarities between Godwin's creations and real people are only superficial and his portrayals, often unflattering and derogatory, even vindictive, are obviously coloured by imagination.

The book does show the blatant racism and sexism so common at this time. Godwin tells us about swindlers and ruthless speculators ruining the lives of the common men.

He admires and pays tribute to the true farmer, fisherman and woodsman, whose existence is threatened by the seemingly unstoppable flow of Japanese and Chinese immigrants.

Above all else, Godwin glorifies the invincible eternal forest. He would go on dreaming of trees, the forest and Canada for the rest of his life.

Fred Braches



Pacific Chorus Frog: "Wan-ik, Wan-ik"



Gordon Young

On a wonderful and sunny Saturday afternoon in June 2014 some twenty participants of One Book Whonnock, all faithful readers of George Godwin's The Eternal Forest, united to review the history of Whonnock in the years immediately before the First World War when the Godwins lived in Whonnock.

The participants, including Lucy Godwin, granddaughter of George and Dorothy Godwin, also visited the places where the author and his wife have lived.

WHONNOCK NOTES

Free copies are available for reading or download in pdf format at our Web site <www.whonnock.ca>.

1. Transcripts from the Fraser Valley Record (1908-1912)
2. Cemeteries in Whonnock
3. The Trondheim Congregation
4. Through the Eyes of Brian and other Friends
5. Whonnock 1897 —John Williamson's Diary
6. Ferguson's Landing: George Godwin's Whonnock
7. Robert Robertson and Tselatsetenate
8. A Name Index of the Whonnock Notes Series No. 1-7
9. A Name Index of the Whonnock Community Association
10. The Family of Catherine & Edward Julius Muench
11. It Was a Wonderful Life, Brian and Isabel Byrnes
12. Whonnock's Post Office
13. John Williamson's Diary Revisited
14. The Case of Private Cromarty, a Soldier from Whonnock
15. A Dream Come True
16. The Ladies Club: Minutes 1911-1919
17. Enumeration Maple Ridge 1917
18. Charles Whetham: A Remarkable Resident of Ruskin
19. Short Writings on Local History
20. Mrs. Norman's Photo Album
21. George Stanley Godwin 1889- 1974 Biographical notes

Sue Schulze continues to have a stock of all *Whonnock Notes* handy at the Whonnock post office, providing easy access to anyone who would like to buy a copy. We owe her thanks for doing this—and much more—for the promotion of the history and heritage of Whonnock.

If you are not planning a visit to the Whonnock post office to get your *Whonnock Notes* please order from Fred Braches, PO Box 130, Whonnock BC V2W 1V9. Phone (604) 462-8942. E-mail: braches@whonnock.bc.ca

Also available: *Records of the Whonnock Community Association's Historical Project, 1985.*