

CASTLE STREET, DOVER

After reading Budge Adams' recollections in the January 1990 Newsletter Jean Skinner has contributed some of her own memories.

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RECOLLECTIONS of MY CHILDHOOD

"I remember the time I knew what happiness was, let the memory live again." So sang old Deuteronomy in Lloyd Webber's musical "Cats."

Those were golden days when my brilliant mother, ex-Guildhall music student and father, Captain in the first World War, ran between them Pettit's Commercial College in Castle Street, then the business centre of Dover. It was a tremendously successful enterprise, most of the aspiring would-be secretaries in the area attending their school.

We had to rely heavily on "domestics" to allow my parents more freedom to run the business. I remember my first "nanny" – Julia, a French girl and extremely pretty with, naturally, many admirers. A delicate child, I was fed on port wine and bananas and cream in between copious doses of medicine. My brother was of tougher calibre and was a true Scottish rebel from a very early age, having to be chased round the table with a large wooden spoon!. Another "domestic" was Biddy Bodman – who had a beautiful pet rabbit, whom she adored and, to my mother's horror announced one day she had killed and eaten bunny for Sunday lunch!

Memories come flooding in of our delightful Sunday excursions to the Warren in my father's high powered Silver Bullett racing car – Stirling Moss was not in it! We had to walk up the hills; while at the top, my father poured water into the steaming tank!

Opposite us lived a retired Customs officer and his Chinese wife "femme de mystère" – her hat draped with a heavy veil.

"Non, rien de rien, je ne regrette rien" – for we were surrounded by love – the salvation of the soul

JEAN SKINNER



Caroline Place c1925, from E. end of St. Mary's Church. The buildings on right are approximately on the line of the side wall of the late B & Q Store

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