

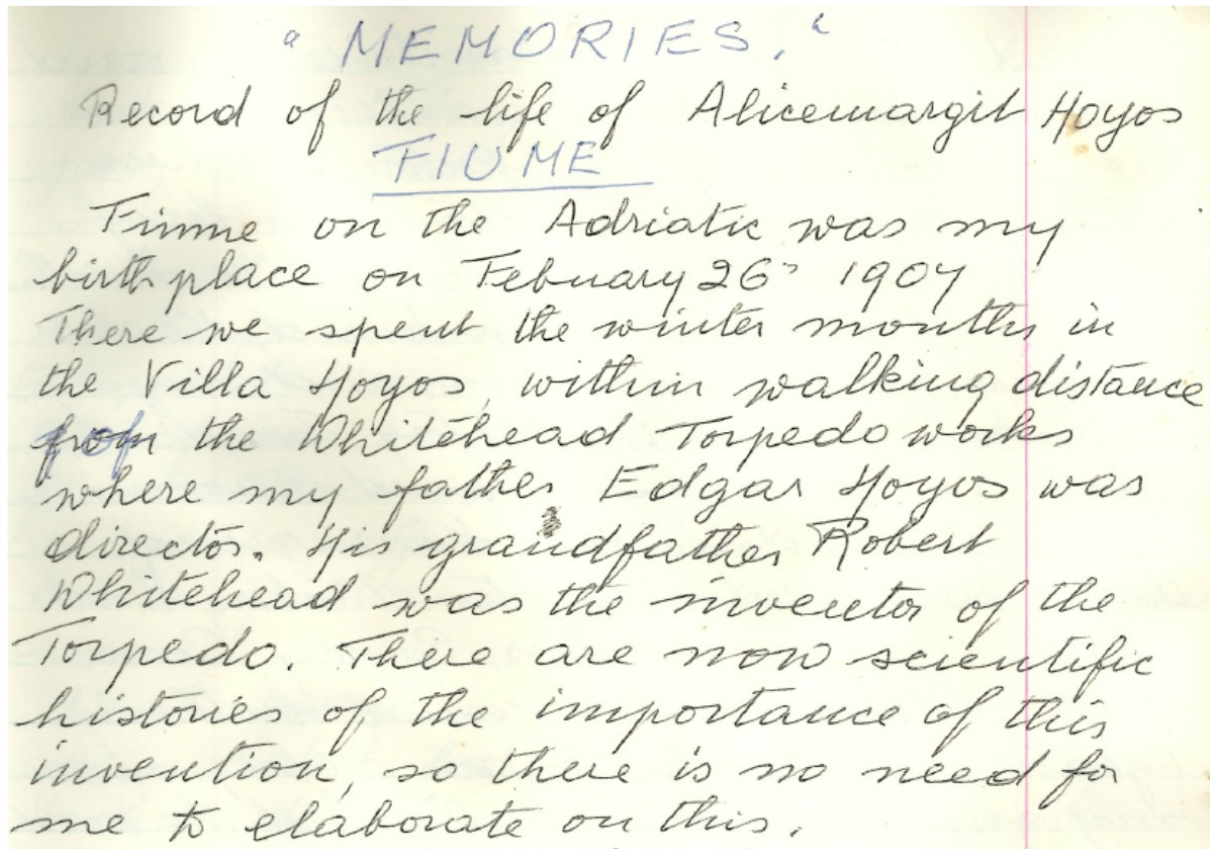
Memoirs of Alicemargit Morris (née Hoyos, 1907-1979),

written in the mid-1970s.

Compiled and edited by Nancy Jennings, granddaughter of Alicemargit, 25 October 2024.

The original is owned by Mair O'Kane (née Morris, daughter of Alicemargit).

With thanks to Rob Hoyos, Veronica Barry and others for providing the photos.



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My Childhood in Austria

When you cross the frontier to Austria, at Passau, the first thing you find is that the waiters run through the train announcing '*café-mit-schlag*', that is coffee with whipped cream on top. Delicious! Passau is on the Danube and is famous for the confluence of three rivers: the Inn, the Ilz, and the Danube. From there you can travel by boat down the Danube to Vienna, or on behind the Iron Curtain to the Black Sea. On the way you meet first Linz - the capital of Upper Austria with the famous shrine of Our Lady towering on the hill above the capitol - the Pöstlingsberg. You sail on past pretty villages buried in fruit blossom through Mauthausen. This brings back memories of Hitler's most cruel concentration camp. Here Lower Austria is entered. Approximately halfway between this and Vienna, we meet the town of Melk, eight miles from my old home.



The River Danube at Linz, and Mauthausen Concentration Camp 1938-1945, now a memorial
(photos by Nancy Jennings, 2023)

In my home Sooss [Sooß], we lived for many years as a happy family. We were seven [children] with beloved parents who did their best to make our youth a joy. On May 1st every year a large fir tree would disappear mysteriously out of my father's forest and would stand near the Inn at the bottom of the village bereft of its bark, thoroughly oiled, for the young men of the neighbourhood to try their luck at climbing it and securing the prize which hung on a little Christmas tree decorated and beribboned at the tip of the Maypole. This was often a ham and a banknote and I used to puzzle how the ham kept free from maggots throughout the month of May which can be very hot in Austria. Near the Inn there was a skittle alley, meeting place of all the villagers in the evenings where beer, laughter and often music on a zither could be enjoyed.



Pine forest near Schloss Sooss. Photo provided by Veronica Barry, granddaughter of Alicemargit.

Many a happy morning I used to rise at five o'clock to pick wild strawberries in the pine woods, sometimes disturbing a deer or a hare grazing peacefully in the fresh morning air. I used to find the strawberries by their wonderful scent, and can still feel the thrill of joy when I suddenly came upon a beautiful bed of luscious berries where I could sit down and pick to my heart's content. The berries are very small and it takes a lot of work to pick a dishful. You can imagine how I felt when my brothers ate up all my labours in about five minutes. Cherries too abounded in our district, and during the cherry season, children used to sit in the wayside cherry trees like jays and their faces were painted with cherry red more effectively than the best lipstick. All the roadsides are lined with fruit trees, mostly cider fruit and we had an enormous cider press made of a two-foot square oak beam. The cider pears and apples were sliced and packed into a wooden box when a square of wood was pressed down with the full weight of the beam, and the rich fresh juice would flow into large cans all around the press. We used to love this fresh fruit juice straight from the press and the country abounds with special recipes for famous 'Most' - Austrian Cider. Some reaches the quality and flavour of champagne.

On June 24th - midsummer night - everyone rejoiced in the famous feast of St. John the Baptist which is celebrated in every village with a giant bonfire. Joyously we all trooped out to the huge bonfire prepared for weeks by the foresters and young men of the village. Squibs and fireworks jumped about gaily round us as we walked. Everyone sang and joked and laughed, courting couples held hands for they were expected to leap over the flame as soon as the fire had burned down to a height which allowed for this feat.

The foresters had to keep a watchful eye on these nights for fear that the joy could turn into disaster, for during the hot dry summer, Austria, the land of the pine forests, is in constant danger of terrifying forest fires. Indeed not only forest fires, for I remember the terrible sight of a whole thatched village of poor Slovenes - summer visitors who regularly helped with the sugar beet planting - going up in flames. It was pathetic to see the mad rush of these people dragging their few possessions, one cow or goat or pig, out of the flaming houses.



The tower of Schloss Sooss; Alicemargit's brother Georry deer-stalking; and the family at Schloss Sooss.

Photos provided by Rob Hoyos, grandson of Georry.

My father [Count Edgar Viktor John Robert Anton Georg Hoyos, 7 February 1875 – 18 June 1952] had organised a voluntary fire brigade which was famous for nearly always being first on the scene at such times. Farm workers kept their helmets and pick on a hook behind the front door and as soon as the trumpet was sounded from the Schloss tower, they would drop their work; horses would be harnessed to the pumps, and, fully manned, the fire engine would race to the scene of the disaster. Sometimes we had gay rehearsals which used to thrill us children when my mother's life-size modelling dummy would be rescued by the gallant firemen amid joyous laughter from my mother's studio at the top of the tower. We always hoped that she would be dropped, but I never remember that she was. [Alicemargit's mother was Countess Ilona (Helene Georgine Eugenie Maria Theresia) Hoyos, née Kinsky von Wchinitz und Tettau, 12 August 1879 Ischl, Austria – 23 March 1968 Bryn Myrddin, Wales. Edgar and Ilona were married on 7 September 1901 in Vienna.]



Alicemargit's parents: Edgar (left), "Graf Edgar and Gräfin Helena Hoyos", *Wiener Salonblatt* 1901, and Ilona holding baby Ines in 1917.

One of my special joys as a child was to accompany my father out deerstalking. He used to carry a small whistle which he tuned the first time in the year when he heard the female call of a doe. Then we used to walk out with a rifle silently and peacefully, often after a thunderstorm when deer would be on the move, having missed their feed whilst sheltering from the storm. We would climb one of the prepared hides built like a tree-house in a tall fir. Here my father would imitate the doe's call and after a while perhaps a young buck would eagerly rush in sight, hoping to find a mate. But a young buck was not the target my father sought. He hoped for an old and wily veteran with antlers well covered with knobs and 'roses'. This is a huntsman's name for the specially formed antler base which grows more elaborate as the animal ages.

These were all summer activities, but winter too had its happy incidents. December 6th, feared and looked forward to by all the children. On this day Saint Nicholas – the true Santa Claus, a benevolent Bishop who loved children – still delights every hearth with his visits. He alone would not have filled us with fear, but he is invariably accompanied by the terrible Krampus, a fearsome figure dressed in black, with a swishing tail, horns and a long red tongue. In his hands he wields a dangerous birch rod and over his shoulder he bears a black sack. Our brothers used to amaze us, for they used to provoke this fearsome being and be chased by him and we always feared that some day they would be plunged into the sack and taken to the Nether Regions. We girls used to cling to our mother's skirt

and wait for the thrilling moment when Nicolo's steps would be heard and the Krampus's clanging chains following him. Nicolo was kind to good little girls. He had a silk bag with raisins and nuts which he freely distributed, but after he had gone the real thrill came, for we had placed a row of shoes in the hall for him to fill with lovely presents; but if the school report was bad we might have found only a rotten potato in our shoes. This did happen to my third brother once and left a deep impression on our minds.



Images of Nicolo and Krampus

Then came Christmas ... the happiest feast in the year! The drawing-room would be locked for several days before Christmas Eve, and at about six o'clock all the household would assemble in a dark room outside the Christmas room and we would all sing famous Christmas carols of which you all know 'Silent Night'. This family feast was always kept on Christmas Eve because everyone goes to Midnight Mass, and in the mountains they have to walk down to the village for church and spend Christmas Day with relatives. My father used to pick up the youngest member of the household and knock at the door when the angels would ring a little bell to say they were ready before flying away. Then the door opened and everyone exclaimed 'Ah!'... as they saw the lovely tree from floor to ceiling covered with stars, glass balls, silver chains, and candles. We all wished each other a happy Christmas and sang 'O Tannenbaum' before the crib, for this was the centre of the celebrations. We had a life-size figure of the infant Jesus lying in the manger at the foot of the tree. Round the room were tables covered with white sheets, giving the effect of snow around the tree. On these, a card bore the name of each one to indicate their presents. My mother always made us distribute presents to all our maids and staff before we were allowed to look at our own. With longing eyes we used to peep at our table, anxiously waiting for our turn.

One special Christmas has remained in my mind. It was after the 1914 war, when great poverty struck Austria and children had to run about barefoot in winter with hardly any clothes to keep them warm. My mother had secured sixty lovely thick navy blue knapp coats from the Dutch welfare who were most generous to Austria after the war. I shall never forget the look of gratitude on the face of the mothers when they were able to dress their children in something warm after so long a time of privation. These were distributed at a special Christmas tree which we always gave to the villagers a few days after Christmas.



Melk Monastery seen from the Danube, and Schloss Soos. Photos provided by Rob Hoyos, from the album of his grandmother Frances Hoyos née Briggs, wife of Alicemargit's brother Georry Hoyos.

Having sidestepped from the Danube, we will resume our boat trip towards Vienna. Melk on the Donau boasts a famous Benedictine monastery with a world-famous library. On the balcony of this fine baroque building, Napoleon surveyed his newly-conquered country when he subdued Austria. Now it is a lovely spot to view the St. John's celebrations we mentioned earlier. These are specially kept in Melk by sending thousands of egg shells filled with oil and a taper burning down the Danube. For every village lights a bonfire on this occasion, and it's an unforgettable sight to look towards the mountains on June 24th, and see stars of light by the thousand kindling in all directions.

We had a memorable luncheon party at the famous monastery of Melk when I was engaged to a Welshman called Ryle E.C. Morris. The prior of the monastery was honoured to entertain us because he had taken the trouble to learn Welsh, being the guardian of the body of a Welsh saint who is buried there: St Coloman. My husband was put to shame as he could only speak a few words of Welsh, but he was much more fluent at speaking English with a Welsh accent.

There is a beautiful stretch of the Danube between Melk and Krems called the Wachau. The boat glides between vineyards and fruit orchards especially lovely pink apricot trees and ruins of ancient robber castles. In Medieval days these robbers used to intercept the merchants bringing silks and spices up the Danube from the Black Sea. Aggstein was a favourite ruin for picnic excursions, and I was thrilled every time when the guide showed us the robber baron's rose garden, a small balcony from which he used to throw his victims down the sheer wall of cliff which received its name from the blood which was freely spattered over the rocks. Another famous castle in the Wachau is Dürnstein where Richard Coer de Lion was imprisoned and discovered by Blondell who played his lute outside the castle wall and was recognised by the king. After the Wachau, the Danube flows through the Wienerwald made famous by Strauss's music and we finally arrive in Vienna in the town of song. In the centre towers the ancient gothic Stephansdom which to the Austrian means the heart of his country. As the Welshman has '*hiraeth*' [longing] for his '*bwthin*' [cottage or homestead] so the Austrian exile longs for the Old Steffel which he has immortalised

throughout the ages in his songs. Vienna is famous for its music; its opera [house] is supposed to be the most modern today since it was rebuilt after its destruction during the war. It is also famous for craftsmanship, architecture, leatherwork, metalwork, porcelain and sweetmeats made by its famous cooks.



Ilona and Alicemargit on the road towards Schollach, Melk, near Schloss Sooss, summer 1908. Photo provided by Rob Hoyos.

MEMORIES

Record of the life of Alicemargit Hoyos

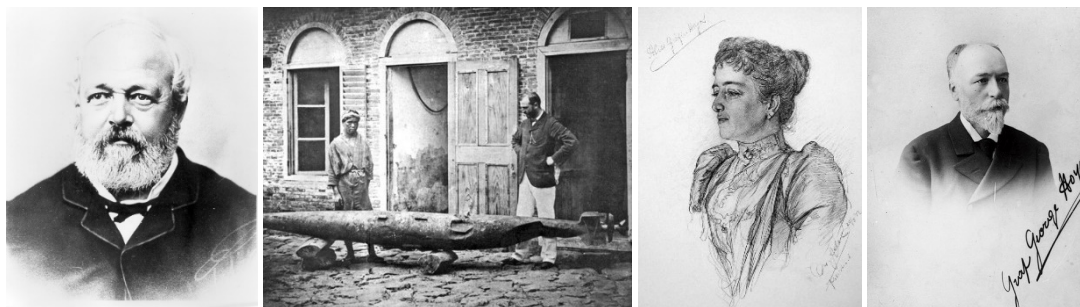


Photo: Whitehead Torpedo Factory, 1910, Fiume, Austro-Hungarian Empire, today Rijeka, Croatia

FIUME

Fiume on the Adriatic was my birthplace on February 26th 1907. [Fiume was then in the Austro-Hungarian Empire; now it is Rijeka, in Croatia.] There we spent the winter months in the Villa Hoyos, within walking distance of the Whitehead Torpedo works where my father Edgar Hoyos was director. His grandfather Robert Whitehead [3 January 1823 – 14 November 1905] was the inventor of the Torpedo. There are now scientific histories of the importance of this invention, so there is no need for me to elaborate on this [see 'Sources of information'].

My memories of our life there are kaleidoscopic. The first picture I call to mind, my nurse (a Hungarian) and several nursemaids used to take us for walks from the house called [Villa] Bergudi [where Alicemargit was born], where we lived before my grandmother Alice Hoyos-Whitehead relinquished the Villa Hoyos [Alice, born 1851, was the daughter of Robert Whitehead; she married, on 30 March 1869, Georg Anton Maria Hoyos who lived 21 January 1842 – 15 August 1904]. We walked along a low wall from which the maids could watch the main road, part of the quay and the '*Guarnero*', that is the bay of Fiume guarded by the two islands Cerso [Cres] and Ischia? [Krak] There must have been some labour troubles at the factory, because I have a vivid recollection of a long line of Italians and Croats, each with a bottle of red wine in his hand, the clear bulbous kind, marching and singing drunkenly from the factory towards Abbazia [now Opatija]. The maids seemed nervous and with childish fear I imagined they were wicked monsters, drinking blood.



Robert Whitehead, English engineer and inventor of the torpedo; inspecting a test torpedo with his son in Fiume, ca. 1875; his daughter Alice Whitehead (by C. W. Allers, 1892, Wikipedia); and Alice's husband Georg Hoyos

My three older brothers, Georry [George, born in 1902 at Beckett Hall, Shrivenham, Oxfordshire, England, died 1976], Cocco [Zdenko Alexander Anton, born at Beckett Hall 16 August 1903, killed in the Nazis' Aktion T4 at Schloss Hartheim, Austria, 31 March 1941], and Balthy [Franz Josef Balthasar Hoyos, born 10 December 1904] were the usual brotherly tyrants and I still have a chip on my shoulder, when I think of the most unjust verdict Georry pronounced on my baby efforts to help. The factory had made a boat for the three boys and this was kept on wheels in a shrubbery behind the front tulip bed. The three boys were trying to propel this along and I aged 3 or 4 came along to help. Georry said: "You are no help! Go away!" I demurred and suggested that every little helps. "No!" said Georry "unless you can push it all alone you are no good!" I was put to the test and though I was a fat roly-poly was not able to move it at all. I was sent packing probably in tears and felt the unfairness ever since.

Perhaps I sought comfort in the tulip bed. Mama used to hide fascinating little fairies on the little thrones inside the flowers. These were French wax figures, nude, except for different coloured loin-cloths. I was quite convinced they were real fairies for many years.

When I was 6 I caught scarlet fever and was isolated, but developed mastoid[itis] after. In those days of privilege my parents sent for a surgeon from Vienna, who performed the operation in my bedroom. Mama knelt outside the door, saying her rosary and listened to hammer & saw cutting the bone behind my ear. Cajetana, my sister, was 2 years younger [Marie Cajetana Leopoldine Franziska Robertine Hoyos, 15 February 1909 – 1 February 1948]. When the quarantine was over, she was allowed to see me, but my head was still bandaged & I turned it cautiously. "Why are you so silly with your head!" she exclaimed and catching hold of it, with both hands, wrenched it round & was hastily removed by her nanny.



Edgar and Ilona Hoyos with Georry (age 6), Cocco (age 5), Balthy (age 4) and Alicemargit (ca. 10 months old), *Wiener Salonblatt* January 1908.

One day we were all to go in the works 'Barcasse' [launch] to see the launching of a Hungarian ship the 'Scent-yst-van'. The ship had been built in the works and was destined for the Austrian navy. We moved out into the *Guarnero* in our little motor boat and soon the 'White Swan' sailed out past us to drop anchor in the centre of the bay. But then came disaster. All we could see, was the dark figure of a man spreadeagled against the white hull along with the anchor chain and a dull splash as they hit the water. All the little spectator boats roared their engines to rescue the drowning man. I was terrified that we would be the first and have to haul him into our boat but he passed by us, lying on the deck of the works engineers' boat and I sighed with relief. 'Scent-yst-van' was an unfortunate ship. There had been several accidents in the shipyard and she fell victim to one of the first naval battles in the 1914 war.



Villa Whitehead (left, now offices) and Villa Hoyos (right, now 18 apartments) in 2024. The tunnel leads from the garden of Villa Hoyos to the road between the factory and Villa Whitehead. Photos Nancy Jennings.



Aerial view of Rijeka (Fiume), showing the Torpedo Factory and launching platform, Villa Jones (J, occupied by the engineer Tal Jones), Villa Whitehead (W) and Villa Hoyos (H). The distance between Villa Whitehead and Villa Hoyos is around 100 m. Bergudi is ~1 km to the west, the centre of Rijeka is ~2 km to the east, and north is at the top in this image; Google maps 2024.

The railway ran through the grounds twice on a high embankment. We had to go through a tunnel to the Villa Whitehead situated very near the large factory gates. There was a big field between the gates & the Villa, which stood higher up on a steep bank. Here Aunt Agatha, née Breuner, the widow of Robert's brother John Whitehead, lived with her fairly large family. In the field she kept some donkeys and we were sometimes allowed to ride sedately in paniers on their backs. The boys of course showed off and straddled them with one foot in each panier. This was my ambition naturally too, so one day I was put in my panier and while nanny went to fetch Cajetana to lift her into the opposite one, I scrambled out of mine and threw my leg over the donkey's back. It shied and galloped off down the hill, back to its field. I had no reins & no knowledge about stopping a bolting donkey, but I stuck on. The nurses, who were frightened, only scolded me severely, but my mother, who was a Kinsky, a family of great riders, restored my self-esteem by praising me for having stuck on. Through the other railway tunnel behind the Villa we went to the tennis court and along the embankment on the upper side O'Mama [grandmother, i.e. Alice Hoyos née Whitehead, 31 March 1851 – 18 January 1936] had 7 little gardens made for her seven children [the children, born between 1870 and 1880, were: Leopoldine (Polly), Marguerite, Edgar (Alicemargit's father), Alexander, Lilian, Gabriele, and Camilla]. These came into our possession, when we moved there. Each little garden was fenced with green wooden palings and a small wooden gate. In Fiume we were only 6 because Ines, my youngest sister, was born in Vienna after we had left there owing to the war with Italy [Maria Ines Hoyos was born on 10 April 1917 and died on 26 September 1985].



Villa Hoyos, 1913. Photos provided by Rob Hoyos.

After scarlet fever I was given two beautiful dolls, one from O'Mama Hoyos, which I called Alice after her, and one from Grandmama, called Gina after her [Georgine Ernestine Maria Eugenie Festetics von Tolna, 1 December 1856 – 30 November 1934, who, on 11 June 1877, married Zdenko Kinsky 1844 – 1932; they had 9 children including Ilona]. They were almost my size and I spent much time wheeling them about in a doll's pram. Villa Hoyos was built on a slope. The front door and front hall led up to the main floor, which was at a level with the stone-paved patio and lawn at the back. There was therefore a very steep slope, a gravel path along the side of the house, the cause of some disasters. My pram slipped from my hands & raced down the hill. Gina broke her china head and I remember my grief. Another time Georry and Balthy invented an exciting bicycle game, a figure of eight run, round the tulip bed, crossing the descent, along the lower level & up to the top of the slope. Naturally the moment arrived when Georry came full speed down the slope and Balthy crossed from the tulip bed. The inevitable crash knocked out Georry's two front teeth. Anton the family butler picked up the teeth & pushed them back into place immediately, apparently a much-practised peasant custom. They actually held in place firmly till he was about 20 years of age, but got rather black in colour towards the end.



In front of Villa Whitehead: Cocco, Georry, Berthe Genet the Swiss governess, and Balthy, 1911.

Photo provided by Rob Hoyos.



Left: Cocco, Georry and Balthy in 1910. Right: Georry. Photos provided by Rob Hoyos.

There were 2 large bird cages each end of the lawn, one merely wired, the other glassed in. Maté, the Croat gardener cared for the inmates: in the region of 50 canaries. In the autumn these were caught one by one in wire traps i.e. small cages with little shutters, which could be dropped with a string operated from outside. Each captive was carefully transferred to the glass house winter quarters & we children were fascinated spectators. The summer house had many nests and the canaries bred freely. Every now and then a tiny, bare fledgling fell out of the nest and to our horror was soon covered by ants. If Maté was not near, it had no chance. He had the key to the cages so no one else could rescue the casualty. Near the summer cage there was a garden bench, on which my nursery governess read me *Alice in Wonderland*. For ever after the white rabbit always came out of the shrubbery near that bench in my imagination. The path from here led down a straight way lined with bush spirea and was therefore called "*Der weisse Weg*" [the white road]. It led to a bungalow where later one of the boys' tutors lived. His name was Herr Weybora. He was incredibly ugly and had a hunch back, but succeeded in wooing & winning the nice looking Swiss governess Berthe Genet whom we all loved dearly, as well as her sister Hermance who was the nursery governess. She also married one of the tutors, Herr Ferrari, who was soon called up to join the army for the 1914 war. Mama prided herself, that her house was a successful marriage bureau for tutors, governesses and staff.

On Sundays we had Holy Mass in the Conservatory and it was always packed, with all the Whiteheads, their staff and our family and staff. The boys served at the altar and Aunt Agathe played the harmonium. We all sang lustily the Schubert Mass "*Hier liegt vor Deines Majestät*".



Left: Balthy (age ~10), Cocco (13), Cajetana (5) and Alicemargit (7) photographed in Abbazia [now Opatija] in 1914;
right: the girls in Abbazia, April 1915. Photos provided by Rob Hoyos.

There was one more great occasion which I must relate: My mother always kept open house for all the naval officers from many countries who called in Fiume. The British ship *Mauretania* called to 'Show the Flag', in fact just before the declaration of war. We were invited by the captain and entertained to lunch. For years I kept among my treasures, the black and gold sailors' hat band with H.M.S. MAURETANIA which we found tied round our dinner napkins. Mama used to give soirées and dances and was very much admired by all her guests. She was beautiful and vivacious and my father was always delighted with her success. Often her sisters, Aunt Margit [Margareta Kinsky, 12 August 1881 – 6 April 1928] and Aunt Nora [Norbetine Kinsky, 18 December 1888 – 26 March 1923] stayed with us. On one of these occasions, we were picked out of our beds at night by the aunts & taken out onto the lawn. Ever since I am immediately aware of earthquake rumblings. It is the most eerie and terrifying noise. As it happened the Villa stood, but there were several casualties in villages nearby.



Left: Georg Ritter von Trapp (4 April 1880 – 30 May 1947) and 'Aunt Agathe', Agathe Gobertina von Trapp (née Whitehead; 14 June 1891 – 3 September 1922). They were married in 1911 and had 7 children; von Trapp had 3 more children with his second wife Maria Augusta Kutschera. The family inspired the film *The Sound of Music*. Right: Ilona at Villa Hoyos, summer 1905. Photo provided by Rob Hoyos.

After the war was declared [1914] and just before we left Fiume the parents gave a festive reception to honour Georg von Trapp. He was married to Agathe Whitehead & was a submarine Captain in the Austrian Navy. He had been mentioned and decorated for sinking an Italian warship. My mother's cousin Uncle Walter Berchem (his mother was a Féstetics [member of the Feštetić family, part of the Habsburg monarchy]) wrote a poem in praise of this action and I was made to learn this by heart. In the evening Cajetana & I were dressed as cherubs and given a laurel crown. Before the crowd of distinguished guests I had to recite the panegyric & crown the hero. Catjetana had to be coaxed to perform, as she dissolved in tears at the thought of appearing before strangers in just a vest with one shoulder strap off her shoulder. She was a very pretty child with tight fair curls and Mama had a screen in her bedroom made of photos of her in various positions.

Abbazia [Opatija] the charming seaside resort was on the other side of the *Guarnero*. Here Mama's parents Papus and Memi often spent the summer with other members of the Kinsky family. Here we also met other friends and we children enjoyed the nice tea-parties and rambles in the chestnut woods where we picked up baskets of sweet chestnuts. One friend we used to visit was Leo Littrow [Leontine Camilla von Littrow 1856 - 1925]. She was a distinguished painter and some of her colourful Mediterranean oils are in Bryn Myrddin. We were told she was a child of [King] Edward VII, which meant nothing to us, but her *Salz-Stangern* (Austrian caraway straws) were delicious [Edward VII was ~15 when Leo was born. Alicemargit's father Edgar Hoyos states in his memoirs that Leo's grandmother was the mistress of King George IV, who died in 1830].



Oil painting by Leo Littrow, of Lovran (~6 km from Opatija), Istria, Croatia



Carnival in Fiume, February 1912, with the family in a decorated car. Photos provided by Rob Hoyos.

A great day in Fiume was the Carnival. At the only one I remember Mama dressed the whole car in a blanket of cotton wool, must have been very dangerous. Aunt Margit, Mama and we children were all in white furs. Cajetana and I were on this occasion given bonnets and muffs made of seagull feathers which we wore for many years. Driving through the town in a long procession of fantastic vehicles watched by a motley crowd of gay onlookers pelted by paper streamers was an unforgettable experience.

SOOSS



Schloss Soos in the 1930s (above) and in ~1905 and 2017 (below). After the Anschluss (annexation of Austria) in 1938, the Schloss was subject to compulsory purchase by the Nazis. It is now owned by the Austrian state and is a college for agricultural and Jewish studies.

The summer was always spent in Sooss. A whole railway carriage was reserved to transport our parents, 6 children, nannies, governesses, tutors, staff and luggage from Fiume over the Semmering to the Südbahnhof [South Station] in Vienna. There one of the early cars met us & Papa drove Mama to Sooss. We must have followed by train and I remember being met at the station in Loosdorf by the coachman Haslinger with nice carriage horses, mostly

borrowed from the army, by a special arrangement which suited both the army and the borrower & must have been in the nature of puppy walking. This ceased when the war broke out and all horses were commandeered. Then my father managed to buy a pair of dual-purpose horses to do farm work as well as driving.

At first O'Mama [Alice Whitehead née Hoyos] reigned supreme in Sooss and we children lived in the 'STÖCKL', the old part of the Schloss. Sooss had been bought by O'Papa George Hoyos [Georg Anton Hoyos, 1842-1904, who married Alice Whitehead in 1869; he bought Schloss Sooss in 1894]. He enjoyed tinkering with the extensive building and replaced the original onion tower, by a German style copper roofed ridged steeple, which he never liked, nor did any of the family, especially when the copper roof was commandeered for the war effort and replaced by a tin roof painted green. This paint faded and ran and looked a mess. It was also quite out of keeping with the number of other small onion towers built into all the corners of the building. From the *Stöckl* we had access to the old 18th Century ruin. This was a wonderful playground, tumbledown battlements, sandstone caves, up and down stairs and all the undergrowth full of wild scented cyclamen, violets and wood anemones, daphne and a host of wild flowers. My sister and I made delectable meals for our dolls, under the supervision of the maids & nurses, who regularly brought their sewing out and sat in the old courtyard. Here rough wooden tables and benches made a pleasant, fresh-air sewing room. It was peaceful, unless the boys escaped from their tutors and decided to play robbers and knights, when we were all attacked with wooden swords and chased from our peaceful retreat.

O'Mama had a very charming custom. The house was mostly peopled with guests. Whenever anyone left, the carriage drove up to take them to Loosdorf station. Then the gardener and all the staff in uniform lined up beside the carriage. The gardener had a tray full of fresh buttonholes and handed one to every departing guest. The staff wished them a happy journey and we children yelled goodbye & raced across the lawn to the wall from which we could see the road and the carriage driving down. We waved and shouted lustily till the carriage was lost to view. This wall was also the viewpoint from which every arriving carriage and later the new and exciting motor cars were scrutinised by us and if they came to the Schloss we had already decided what degree of welcome they deserved. Children can be ruthless judges!

The boys had some very enterprising tutors. Herr Ferrari was very clever at electrical installations. Over the road below the house there was an extensive tennis garden. The wired court in the centre and a pleasant gravel path along a shrubbery all round the plot about 500 yards in length. Behind the shrubs down one length the boys built a fine cement track with 3 stations and a miniature railway. This was electrified and could be controlled from a switchboard at the main station. Luckily it had just reached final completion, when the expert tutor was called up to join the army. There were however, always 3 or 4 tutors and Herr Weybora, the most efficient and extremely unpleasant knowledge feeder, was not eligible for military service. The constant topic of my brothers' complaints was the refined, sarcastic agony of their lessons, but they all passed their final entrance exam. into the *Schottengymnasium* with very high marks, thus proving that his methods had been successful. They entered this ancient educational establishment in Vienna at the end of their schooling to take the *Matura* [final exam]. On a country estate boys had so many happy leisure activities, that grilling lessons were soon forgotten.

My father was a keen *Weidmann* [sportsman]. This is not just a man who can pot at anything with a gun but he learns all forest lore, from large winter shoots which yielded bags of 500 hares, some deer and pheasants to the

intricate, selective stalking of roebuck, also tramps over the estate with dog and gun, all with a view to building up a fine stock of game for the future. Stalking roebuck was the ambition of each boy and when he successfully shot his first buck, having been carefully trained by the forester, who knew all the habits of each buck and the observation posts built near the likely feeding grounds, he was the hero of the day. It was always necessary to cull the deer to keep the best and strongest bucks for the benefit of the future herd. It is still an Austrian feature to mount each pair of antlers with the name of the *Weidmann*, the date & place where it was shot. Many hundreds of these trophies adorned the walls of one long passage in Sooss, dating back to approx. 1850.

Fishing in the little brook and the pond was another pastime. As well as some nice trout, there were crayfish. These were caught in expanding nets rather like lobster pots. Rotten meat, often left all day on the sundial, was tied to the centre and the basket lowered at likely spots. Many were the jokes about my youngest brother Adam [born in 1912], who suffered from sweaty feet, & he was induced to hang his toes in the water in the hope, that he might land a crayfish. The pond was a place of many pleasures. Balthy built a boat and I was his special handmaiden, [and] had to make flags and cushions for this. We bathed in its slimy water with glee when it was hot, and built water wheels at its entry & exit. But the height of excitement was reached in winter, when the pond froze. Not only was it carefully brushed to make a good skating rink, but when the ice was between 9" and 1 ft thick it was cut into large slabs approx. 6 ft square & pulled ashore with grappling hooks and loaded onto hay wagons. The horses had frost nails in their shoes to haul the heavy load into the farmyard. Here in one corner a long tunnel went to a deep cave in the sandstone under the *Stöckl*. Wooden troughs were erected and the slabs of ice slid down & tumbled into the cave. Two men with pickaxes spent the time between loads breaking up the ice, till it filled the cave in a solid mass. This was our ice cellar, used as well by our cottagers. Milk, butter, whole deer & other meat were all kept on the ice; which shrank from the cave wall very slowly. By about August it was just a small cone and had to be bridged from the doorway to manoeuvre the food. The whole operation was an annual thrill for us children.

Winters were always exciting. From Sooss, a 2-mile hill road rose towards the village of Hürm. This made an excellent toboggan run for all the village children. Every Austrian country child knew how to make some sort of sledge out of 3 pieces of plank. The Hürmer strasse was exceptionally exciting, because it had ridges across every few yards to rest horses when pulling a load uphill. These ruts made splendid jumps as the sledges gathered speed downhill, sending the riders 2 or 3 yards in the air to land again lower down. The road ended in a T shape; the house of Frau Ganzberger, a characterful old peasant woman was sunk below the end of the road. Many a bad sledger landed straight down, if they failed to turn the corner and sometimes went through the window. She would come out and pursue the delinquent with a big cooking spoon.

In the big yard behind the Schloss we played often. There were sandpits and climbing frames, also a steep hill down to the stables with wooden rails and a wooden railway in which we could sit & go down to the bottom. Once a week Frau Weidenauer used to bake scrumptious loaves of rye bread. She wheeled them up from the bake house in a barrow lined with a spotless white cloth. It must have been quite a worry for her, when she was raided by us, a horde of wild youngsters, as we broke the burst edges off her loaves. This must have been before 1918, as after that Austria underwent a period of bad starvation. Then bread was rationed and we had only half a round loaf the size of a dessert plate per week each.

On August 12th was Mama's birthday. We always had special festivities for this, ending up with spectacular fireworks on the lawn outside the dining room. Herr Tuschik, the bailiff, was responsible for these and I can still remember some early ones, ending up with a flaming portrait of Kaiser Franz Joseph, the old Austrian emperor [Emperor of Austria and King of Hungary from 1848 until his death in 1916].

The husband of one of the village girls lived in Vienna and used to time his summer holiday to play the Waldhorn on these occasions. The beautiful strains of:

"Und mir sang die Nachtigall

Ihr Liedchen in die Nacht

Die Liebe, die Liebe

Ist eine Himmelsmacht!"

used to sound sentimentally out of the forest while we watched rockets & Catherine wheels making a fine display.

Another summer joy was the feast of St. John, June 24th, when every village has a huge bonfire. The whole village proceeded along a path we called the sunset walk. The young folk had prepared an impressive tower of wood ready for my father to kindle. When the fire burned, young couples danced round to the gay tunes of concertina and mouth-organ and finally jumped over the fire in pairs. Sometimes we all walked up to the top of a hill to look towards the mountains, when we could see myriads of village fires lighting up with the stars & moon and the air was heavily scented with wild strawberries and hot pine needles and peopled with glow-worms in air and grass. In Melk on *Sonnwendfeier* [the midsummer solstice] they send thousands of egg shells, each with a wick in a drop of paraffin down the Danube below the great Benedictine Monastery which towers above the river.

There were also many church feasts. Visits to the Holy Graves on Good Friday when you could see elaborate carved life-size figures of 'Our Lord' lying in His coffin, realistic Roman soldiers, and Mary with the apostles watching from afar. These 'Graves' were beautifully decorated with Spring flowers & hundreds of candles. Palm Sunday in Loosdorf Church was also very colourful, when all the children had bunches of catkins, box leaves and primroses tied to hazel sticks. These were blessed as palms and treasured throughout the year.

There are great numbers of pilgrimage Chapels everywhere, mostly dedicated to Our Lady. On her feast days long columns of pilgrims could be seen walking from all directions, the men on one side, the women and children on the other. They were headed by a cross bearer, altar boys swinging incense and the *Pfarrer* [priest] intoning the rosary and lively hymns. As the roads were everywhere lined with small shrines or crucifixes, these made convenient resting places for a wayside picnic.

Corpus Christi was for me quite a penance, though we all looked forward to the occasion. It was for one thing usually terribly hot and the whole ceremony took close on 2 hours. A route was prepared in Loosdorf from the church door through the town. There were four Altars on the way & the route was beautifully decorated with young birch trees & garlands of oak and pine. Mass began in church then the priest carrying the Blessed Sacrament under a canopy proceeded to the first Altar to say the Offertory. Here began my agony, because at every stage half a dozen loud detonations were exploded to lend majesty to the proceedings. The noise was deafening and filled me with misery in anticipation. I had overheard the maids discussing the accidents, which often occurred to the young men, who annually undertook the task. Fingers and hands blown off by careless operators. This was a common practice all

over the country on all village occasions, church feasts, weddings, fairs, etc. and the bangs often started at 5 a.m. The Corpus Christi procession proceeded from Altar to Altar saying a part of Holy Mass at each and ended up back in church for solemn benediction. Large crowds attended, drawn from villages for miles around and all the church organisations carried banners & wore special clothes, which made it a very colourful spectacle, headed by priests and many red and white altar boys and a large choir & brass band. First communicants in white veils walked backwards before the canopy scattering flower petals.



Alicemargit's first communion, 1917. Photo provided by her granddaughter Veronica Barry.

Once a strolling player called and was shown into the servants' hall. He was a ventriloquist and we were quite puzzled when he spoke to a friend underground. He also did some juggling on the big oak table watched by all the inmates of the Schloss and the most intriguing trick was standing on his head, being fed on scrambled egg by his wife. I think Cajetana & I discussed this phenomenon till late into the night, as we could not understand how food could go uphill.

An early accident, which must have frightened my parents, happened to me at the age of about 4. My Hungarian Nanny had given me a pair of scissors to cut out paper pictures. Hermance, our beloved nursery governess, came into the room, and I jumped off the chair, scissors in hand to run and greet her. I fell and cut my face up the right of my nose and through my tearduct, only narrowly missing my eye. Mama, who was really deeply concerned and comforted me until the doctor came to sew up the wound, said whenever she related the accident: "What will I do with Alicemargit! She will have a hanging eye and I won't be able to marry her off!" However, Dr Poduschka from St. Polten made a splendid job of the repair, so no cause for Mama's fears. We all loved Dr Poduschka, who had a long, thick, curly beard, which felt hot and tickly when he listened to our chests.

There were so often forest fires, farm fires and houses with thatched roofs caused danger, that Papa organised a voluntary fire brigade and bought a pump, uniforms with helmets and pick-axes. Every able-bodied man belonged. Herr Tuschik had a simple, lanky son called Karl, who was just able to blow a trumpet. At the first sign of fire, he was sent up the Schloss tower to blow the alarm. Quickly the horses were put to the pump & off went the fire brigade, usually proud to be the first on the scene. The worst fire I saw was in a village near the famous Schloss Schallaburg, the property of Baron Tiuti. This village was entirely built of thatched houses and inhabited by itinerant Slovenes, who came annually to help with the sugar beet. These groups of workers usually owned just a cow and a couple of goats and pigs. While the horse-drawn pump had to go round the road, we ran over the fields and got there to find every house aflame, animals, bedding and children being dragged to safety with great difficulty. Brigades came from Loosdorf and Melk. The fires were subdued, but the damage was terrible. I was too young to know what happened to the people, we were only spectators but imagine they were given asylum in the big Schloss Schallaburg. This Schloss, which has a terracotta courtyard with a fine pillared arcade & carved portraits of the owners over centuries, is depicted in every Austrian school lesson book as one of the buildings of historical interest.

We took part in all the country labours: haymaking, potato harvest and plum picking. I was a very dedicated picker and loved going out very early, while it was beautifully cool in the woods to pick wild strawberries or '*Schwammerl*', the varied edible toadstools, which we used to dry on sheets of paper in the kitchen and store for winter use. Strawberries were fascinating. They could be found by their scent and I knew the right terrain, where carpets of these delicious fruits could be found. They are small though and it took a long time to pick a jug full. When I got home after several hours of hard work my harvest was eaten in a few minutes. Wild raspberries are found on new forest clearings and these we sometimes picked in milk churns, when the whole household made a day of it. As food became scarcer, harvesting nature's bounty became more zealous. One year the plums were a glut and we picked a whole haycart full to the brim on one of our farms, the Neuestift. These were all bottled and made into the sugarless plum cheese, called '*Powidl*' really a Bohemian name, but always used with puddings. When the beech nuts were plump, we collected these and spent evenings shelling them, while Papa played the piano and we all sang.

Behind the Schloss there was a row of walnut trees. The green outer shell stains one's hands a horrid dark brown. We were invited to tea with the Braidass. Count Eugen Braida had a villa & estate the other side of Loosdorf & we met the family every Sunday after church for the '*Kirchentratsch*', the church gossip. This time we were asked to tea & Countess Braida was a splendid cook & her teas were always special. When Mama saw my brown hands, she was very cross and said at first, I was not to come. When I begged to be allowed, Mama was adamant that I must

wear white gloves & keep them on. This still meant I would not be able to have tea & I was very depressed. Countess Braida, however, noticed my sorrow and insisted on hearing my tale. As she had a daughter Gretl, only a few years my senior, she had a good laugh and told Mama that Gretl's hands were also walnut stained, so I was reprieved & proudly sat by the daughter & we both enjoyed a delicious tea. Mama was always very conscious of appearance and hated to see us '*Unvorteilhaft*', ungainly. She used to tell us that Grandmama Kinsky [Georgine], her mother, who was very religious & had in general the reputation of being rather straitlaced, nevertheless always told her daughters, it was their duty to look as nice as possible out of kindness to one's neighbour.

Balthy and I were special playmates. He had a baby doll, which he christened "Gindas Findus", King of the Visigoths, who appears in the Hoyos pedigree. For this I had to make endless clothes, from sporting outfits to ceremonial garments. Gindas had a nice basket bed & was put to sleep next to his owner every night.

A cruel sport we much enjoyed, was the slaughter of hornets. There was a greengage tree in the garden with most delicious juicy sweet fruit. The floor was littered with this rich harvest, but it was no pleasure to collect them, because hornets 1 ½ inches long favoured them as well. We used to tie paraffin-soaked bits of rag to the end of a bamboo, then light it & quickly annihilate a hornet with this burning brand. The poor beasts buzzed & soon died. In this way we could clear the space fairly quickly & then pick up the fruit. I am still very much ashamed of this cruel sport, but at the time we enjoyed it thoroughly.

When snow lay on a Sunday we used to go to church by sledge, a great sport for us. The sledge held 4 adults plus one on the box by the coachman. This meant there was no room for the older children. Papa, Mama, 2 governesses and a tutor occupied the seats & perhaps Cajetana and Adam between them. This left the 3 boys and myself on toboggans tied behind the sledge. It was a delightful form of transport. The horses with bells, the sleigh gliding smoothly and we behind had to hold on tight, but even so, we often fell off on corners. Nobody minded! We shook off the snow & ran after our seats, to get back on before the next tumble. Austrian snow is usually so dry and powdery, that we never suffered from standing in the unheated church on stone floors for an hour's service.

The highlight of winter was preparation for Christmas. A foretaste came on Dec. 6th, the feast of Nicolo. Everybody had to put a pair of shoes outside the drawing-room door and assemble inside. We younger ones were very frightened & my hair stood on end when Nicolo's heavy footsteps and Krampus' rattling chains were heard approaching. St Nicholas, dressed as a bishop, was accompanied by Krampus, the devil, a fearsome creature with horns, a long red tongue and a birch whip. He also had a large sack and was supposed to put naughty children in this. Nicolo was benevolent & patted each of us, distributing oranges, nuts & raisins. But he too could be strict. Children with a bad school report were given a rotten potato instead of presents or goodies. The boys were cheeky & outrageous & my fear for them terrible. They were of course too old to believe in the authenticity of the devil & pulled his tail, were chased around the room and chastised with the birch, while Cajetana & I clung fearfully to Mama, quite sure they would be carried off in the sack. After Nicolo left us, we rushed out to see the beautiful arrangement of presents he had left in our shoes. Fir branches covered with cotton wool decorated the white sheet spread out under the row of shoes, and presents wrapped in bright red paper tied with large paper bows protruded from every shoe.



The whole family at Soos, probably in the winter of 1919-20, since Ines, the youngest of the 7 children, was born in April 1917.

Georry, the oldest, was ~18. Photo provided by Rob Hoyos.

Preparations for Christmas took up a very long time. While sweets were plentiful Mama spent many evenings fringing coloured tissue to make small decorations like miniature crackers. Later she became very ingenious making sweets from sugar beet, nuts, honey and some home-grown flavouring. Quince cheese was one of our favourites & could be made with honey. Cut in all sorts of shapes, they added to the tree decorations & were colourful when dipped in crystallised or icing sugar.

Our Christmas festivities took place on Christmas Eve. This custom arose in the mountains, when families have their feast and then go down the hill to midnight Mass and stay for Christmas day with parents & grandparents.

We were not allowed into the Christmas room before the '*Bescherung*' [distribution of presents] until we were 14. After that we were allowed to help decorate the large tree which had been chosen & marked in the woods, on a solemn family expedition some time before the day. After a festive tea, all the household assembled outside the drawing-room door in the dark and there we sang carols, 'Silent Night' and '*O du fröhliche*' till Papa came to pick up the youngest child & knock at the door. The angels had been very busy and had worked all night, shedding some of

their silver hair in passages & on the stairs. Their last duty before flying away was to ring a tiny bell in answer to our knocking. The door opened & Ah! there stood the tree in all its glory lit from floor to ceiling by wax candles & covered with hundreds of glass balls, toys, chains, stars, sweets and a lace curtain of silver angel's hair. Along the wall on both sides were long tables covered with white sheets, like snow. Divided into sections, each piece had the name of the owner prominently displayed. Every member of the staff equally had their own section with their presents set out on it.

Mama always insisted that we had to distribute the household presents before looking at our own table, but she could not prevent longing eyes from peeping that way during our duty sessions. '*O Tannenbaum*' was sung in front of the tree and everyone wished a '*Frohe Weihnachten*' [Happy Christmas] all round. Under the tree was the infant Jesus, a life-size wax figure in a wooden straw-lined crib.

In the big laundry room, part of the stable building, a large hall, were big scrubbed wooden ironing tables all round the wall, a great steel-topped stove at one end, and rows of old-fashioned smoothing irons on shelves. These had metal plugs [that were] dropped into the red-hot fire and [then] pulled out with hooks and dropped into the iron's cavity, a little door dropped behind them & then they were ready for work [ironing]. The long wash tubs next door could accommodate 6-10 washerwomen scrubbing away on their washing boards. After Christmas, this large room was used for the village Christmas [party] given by my parents to about 60 children annually. They had their own Christmas tree & everyone was given a present with their name on it, something suitable for very poor families, for the village was very poor. Two or three were peasants and tolerably wealthy, but the rest were small-holders or cottagers with large families and mostly dependant on jobs in my father's farm or forest. There was one memorable occasion. After the war Holland sent relief parcels to Austria and my mother managed to get 60 warm nap coats with gold buttons. When these were distributed at the Christmas ceremony several mothers burst into tears of joy. Their children had to endure the bitter winter in flimsy clothes & suffered acutely.

Though money was short in our family as well after the sudden inflation in 1918, all those who worked on the estate got milk, firewood, game, eggs, etc. free and I think it was a constant substantial drain on the impoverished estate, but Herr Fuschik had been an honest, old-fashioned bailiff for many years and could never have changed the customs of a lifetime. He was, however, nearing retirement age and a new and dangerous type arrived into our lives one day. Balthy had started to take an interest in digging & had found a few interesting coins by the old castle of Sichtenberg, which was on the estate about 2 kms distant. He met a very undernourished & rather desperate looking man, who gave his name as Beaudin and said he had worked in the middle east for some explorers & had learned the art of scientific excavation. He had a wife and 2 children. They all looked starved. Balthy was sorry for him & when questioned he maintained he had been a forester on an estate, but was now a refugee without references & owing to the war his background was difficult to trace. But Papa thought he was God-sent & could lessen Herr Fuschik's burden by taking over the forests & farm. For a few years this seemed to work as Beaudin was nominally under Herr Fuschik's orders. He was very good at everything he undertook and soon transformed the neglected forests and farm, but my father was not at all pleased with various innovations, which Beaudin insisted were usual. For instance he openly took a commission of 10% off any cattle or timber sale he contracted and stopped much of the free perks which workers considered their right. Papa's finances improved, but the atmosphere on the

estate slowly deteriorated. In the end Papa got to dislike the estate office and so did Herr Fuschik. The latter gave notice and moved away with his wife and son, upon which Beaudin moved into the bailiff's house with his poor wife and 2 anaemic girls. He was not liked by anyone & the story got around that he beat his wife. I know he was horribly cruel to the dogs and used to state that one must give them a good thrashing before every shoot. I remember Papa remonstrating but Beaudin was so firmly entrenched that no one could go against his orders. In the end he became a Nazi & was a horrid element in the village & estate.

Balthy was then a *Heimwehr* officer, the voluntary force created to combat Naziism. He was luckily in Vienna when Hitler occupied Austria [13 March 1938]. Had he been arrested at home we all thought Beaudin & his followers might have beaten him to death. This although it was Balthy who had befriended [him as] a starving refugee. After Hitler's fall Beaudin committed suicide and was found in the woods, hanging from a tree? What dreadful misery, violence and destruction the Nazi doctrine of hate brought about.

But there is still much to tell about the peaceful time, when Herr Fuschik was in charge and we were happy children. Happy visits from numerous cousins. We specially liked all the Plessens ['Polly', Leopoldine Camilla Helene Franziska Malvine Hoyos, 15 April 1870 – 20 February 1935, who married in 1888 Ludwig Mogens Gabriel von Plessen-Cronstern, 1848 - 1929], whose home was [Schloss] Nehnten in Holstein [Germany]. [Their children] Mausl [Manuela], Betsy, Leopold and Mogens were greatly admired by us and later I had a crush on Betsy, who once stayed a long summer with us. I never met Mausl's '*Hohenthal*' the eldest [Ludwig]. Now, in 1976 only Mogens is still alive and lives in Africa [Mogens died in 1988].

The Bismarks also came [on 21 June 1892, Alicemargit's aunt Marguerite Hoyos 1871 - 1945 married German politician Herbert von Bismark, 1849 – 1904] but not so often and I mostly remember Aunt Lili [aunt Lilian Hoyos, 1877 – 1923] and Uncle Tootoo Reventlow [Adolf Cécil von Reventlow-Criminil, 1861 – 1927] with their exciting son Hubert [Hubertus Cecil Ernst Georg Alexander Randolph Reventlow-Criminil], who used to race about on a motor bike, and Cecilia [Augusta Cecilia Diana Theodora Gräfin von Reventlow-Criminil, born 1908] who married Leopold [Graf von] Sternberg & later spent a *Fasching* [Carnival] with me in O'Mama's Vienna residence.

One great occasion was the wedding of Mama's sister Margit Kinsky to Rudi Coreth [Rudolf von Coreth zu Coredo, 1868 – 1939; they married at Schloss Sooss on 15 July 1919]. This took place in the ballroom and I still retain a vivid picture of the lovely altar decorated to the ceiling with phlox, of which there always was a handsome round bed at the entrance gate. A very fine Catalpa tree stood in the centre and made an attractive picture with the vivid pink phlox at its base.

VERMÄHLUNGEN UND VERLOBUNGEN.

Der Abt des Benediktinerstiftes Melk Amandus John vollzog am 15. d. M. auf Schloß Soos bei Loosdorf die Trauung des vorm. Km., GRates und Kammervorst. weiland des Erzherzogs Ludwig Viktor, Rittm. a. D. Rudolf Coreth aus dem Hause der Grafen v. Coreth z. Coredo, mit Margit geb. Komtesse Kinsky z. Wehinitz u. Tettau. Rudolf Coreth ist der ältere Sohn weiland des Grafen Moritz Coreth z. Coredo, Frei- und Edlen Herrn z. Starkenberg, Herrn auf Welsberg in Steiermark, Km. und Rittm. a. D., und dessen Gattin Emma geb. Gräfin z. Stolberg-Stolberg, die in zweiter Ehe den Km. und FMLt. a. D. Leopold Grafen Gondrecourt geheiratet hatte und nun neuerdings verwitwet ist. Sein Bruder Botho Coreth, Rittm. d. R., hat Maria geb. Gräfin v. u. z. Aichelburg zur Frau. Die Neuvermählte, Margit Coreth-Kinsky, die während des Krieges als Oberschwester in Wien und im Melker Allgem. Krankenhause eifrig sich der Verwundetenpflege gewidmet und auch 1½ Jahre in wohnynischen Feldspitälern gewirkt hatte (sie besitzt das Gold-Verdienstkreuz mit der Krone am Bande der Tapferkeitsmed.), kam als zweite Tochter des Fkherrn auf Chlumetz, Kratenau, Winaf und Wikle in Böhmen Zdenko Kinsky und dessen Gemahlin Georgine geb. Gräfin Festetics v. Tolna, Herrin auf Rába-Molnári, Kom. Vas, Ungarn, zur Welt. Ihre Geschwister sind: Oblt. und LegSkr. Franz Kinsky; Ilona Hoyos, Gemahlin des GesAtt. a. D. und Herrn auf Soos Edgar Hoyos; Sita Kinsky; Alice (Dr. jur. Alexander) Thurn-Valsassina; Nora Kinsky, die während des Krieges in Rußland bei der österr.-ungar. Mission vom Roten Kreuze für Inspektion der Gefangenenlager tätig gewesen; Gräfin Hanna Esterházy, Witwe nach dem Rittm. Grafen Alois Esterházy, der am 23. Okt. 1916 den Heldentod fand; und Fähnrich Zdenko-Radoslav Kinsky. Der zweitjüngste Bruder der Margit Coreth-Kinsky, Lt. Graf Norbert Kinsky, fiel am 13. Okt. 1914.



Margit and Rudi's wedding featured in the *Wiener Salonblatt* on 26 July and 6 September 1919 (cover).

The ballroom was very large and had fine portraits. Gold Rococco chairs were ranged like pews facing the altar & the French window opened onto the great balcony which ran the length of the frontage of Soos. The fire brigade made a guard of honour in uniform and Papa played the Schubert Mass on the harmonium. Aunt Margit looked very charming. She was always called Mama's 'Jumelle' [twin] because they both had the same birthday August 12th, though there were 2 years between them. This wedding took place just after the Emperor Karl had been deposed & sent to exile and I remember Papa was rather worried, because we children insisted on singing the 'Gott erhalte' the Austrian imperial national anthem. Some of the firemen present were socialists and he feared a confrontation, but I think they were too honoured to be asked to take part in a wedding at the Schloss to think of causing a rumpus. [This was the end of Austria-Hungary. On 31 October 1918, Hungary terminated its union with Austria. Karl I of Austria renounced his participation in government affairs and the Republic of German-Austria was proclaimed in November 1918; in April 1919 the National Assembly dethroned the Habsburgs and banished Karl from German-Austria].



The last two Emperors of Austria, Kings of Hungary: Franz Josef I of Austria in 1892 (left), who died in late 1916 and was succeeded by his great-nephew Karl I until late 1918 (right; Wikipedia). The three older Hoyos boys (Georry, Cocco and Balthy) met Franz Josef at court in around 1911; the burning of his portrait must have taken place after late 1918.

For me the wedding had an upsetting side. I had been given 6 beautiful pouter pigeons which were my special joy and pride. They had however the annoying habit of finding any open window in the house most inviting & invariably left messy visiting cards on dressing tables & beds. When this happened to all the carefully prepared visitors' rooms Mama ordered their immediate slaughter.



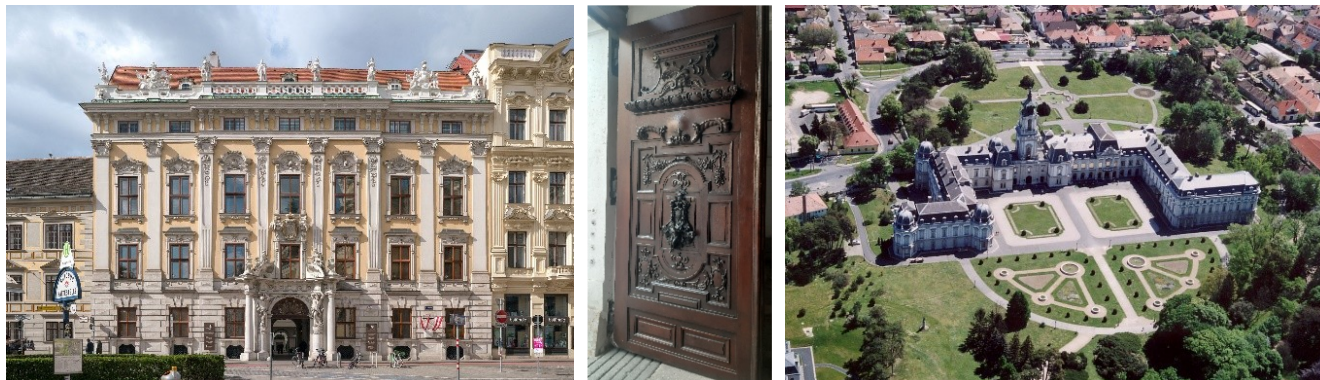
The wedding of Margit Kinsky to Rudi Coreth, 1919, at Schloss Soos, Melk, Austria. The hosts were Eddy Hoyos (the tall man roughly in the centre) and Ilona (smiling, seated to right of the priest). Georry is behind Ilona in the back row. To the right of Ilona is her mother, Grandmama Georgine Kinsky, and standing behind her is Aunt Nora Wilczek Kinsky. Seated at the front are Alicemargit, Adam and Cajatana. Cocco and Balthy are dressed like Georry in black jackets with white collars and are also in the back row; Cocco is 5th from the right, above O'Mama Alice Hoyos (in a large black hat with white feathers), Balthy is to the left of Cocco. Countess Clara Briada is seated on the far right, her husband Count Eugen Braida is standing behind her at the very back. Their daughter Gretl Braida is standing third from the left. Behind the priest is Aunt Hansci (Johanna Trauttmansdorff neé Kinsky). Dr Schatzl is standing to the right of the groom.

Our youngest sister Ines [born 1917] made the family a Hoyos complement of seven. The 3 big boys Georry, Cocco and Balthy were taught at home by tutors as mentioned before. Balthy was considered Mama's favourite and many stories about his childhood were family legend. He had long fair curls till he was about 7. At that time the 3 boys were once taken to court and carefully drilled on how to bow to the old emperor. Balthy acquired the label, told all over Austria for years that he made a '*Purzelbaum*' (a somersault) instead of the bow before Kaiser Franz Joseph.

He was decidedly spoilt & always got his own way with Mama. She tried to be strict & sometimes put him in a corner, facing the wall, to punish him. He used to shake his curls in an engaging manner and wink at Mama, who ended by laughing, when he joyfully ran out of his corner & hugged Mama.

Mama used to tell us about her own childhood, when she suffered from the greed of her grandmother's employees. She was the mistress of the Palais Kinsky [a Baroque palace at 1, Freyung in central Vienna which was bought by the Kinsky family in 1784] where much of her time was spent. She gave her *majordomo* housekeeping money & he was responsible for the dining-room, nursery & kitchen food. He could not skimp the dining-room, so

made his savings on nursery & kitchen & thus lined his own pockets. According to Mama the children were very badly fed, all except Uncle Feri the son & heir [Franz-Xaver Kinsky, 23 May 1878 – 10 December 1935]. She used to relate a pathetic story [about] when she & Aunt Margit & Aunt Hansy [Johanna Sophie Marie Josepha Anna Kinsky, 2 April 1891 – 15 May 1984] found Uncle Feri in his own room eating grapes and with mouth-watering longing they begged: “*Feri est-ce que nous pouvons suceler vos peaux?*” (“Feri, can we suck your [grape] skins?”).



Palais Kinsky, in central Vienna, Austria (left Wikipedia, middle Nancy Jennings 2024, door with Kinsky family crest), and the Festetics Palace, Keszthely, Zala, Hungary (right, Wikipedia)

Sometimes they went *en visite* to their Uncle Tassilo F  stetics, Grandmama's brother, who lived on a grand Hungarian estate K  stely [Prince Tasz  l   Festetics von Tolna, 5 May 1850 – 4 May 1933]. Mama's account of the gardens, with peaches & nectarines, pears, apples, strawberries, all superlative in size & excellence was again full of disappointment for they were never allowed to taste these delicious fruits. In those days fruit was considered poisonous for children.

Uncle Tassilo was a legend. He was the complete *grand seigneur*, always used his own train to travel from Budapest to Vienna where he had the Palais F  stetics [Berggasse, Vienna] for his visits to the capital & lived everywhere with a retinue of faithful servants. Papa used to tell us of a visit to K  stely where they sat in the garden with Uncle Tassilo. The sun got rather hot & they suggested moving into the shade. Papa jumped up to move the chairs but at Uncle Tassilo's command “*Lass das Eddy!*” [“Stop that Eddy!”] he desisted. Uncle Tassilo pulled out a large silk hanky and waved it. Two giant hussars stalked across the lawn & moved the chairs about 3 feet into the shade.

No wonder Mama used to say: “I don't believe in revolution until I can see Uncle Tassilo travelling 3rd class with a rucksack on his back”. This fate was reserved for the next generation as he died before such a fate overtook Austro-Hungary.



Tasziló Festetics ('Uncle Tassilo', the legend; Wikipedia).

One of my greatest joys was going out '*Auf die Pürsch*' i.e. stalking with Papa & also with the boys as they reached the age of being allowed to shoot their first roebuck. In May the *Weidmann* used to go out with a small whistle, which he tuned to the call of a doe. Then we climbed one of the wooden platforms, built all over the woods & overlooking a suitable clearing where roe deer might come out to graze. This often was in the evening & most likely after a thunderstorm. The beauty & pleasure of watching the lovely colours, the patches of sunlight, the dark mystery of deep forest & the delicious scent of hot pine needles while waiting for movement from various forest animals, first hares, an occasional fox, pheasants, pigeons & the fast-moving woodcock on its twice-yearly passage through Austria. After calling the buck with the mating call I have seen young roebuck crashing through the undergrowth at a gallop in search of the doe. But this was not the *Weidmann's* target. He would wait for a special strong old specimen, with a fine knobbly set of horns. The old expert, however, was not so easy to deceive & again I have watched an old wily buck approaching through splendid cover without a sound & eyeing us warily. He would mostly get away at a bound before Papa could raise his rifle. After the early '*Pürsch*' came lovely days out partridge shooting in the fields and then pheasant shoots with us children helping the beaters. This I much enjoyed, as the head beater, a seasoned woodman & good at training the dogs, always led me through his special covers. When he used to find an old pear tree, cherry tree, raspberry corner, nuts or strawberries in the middle of thick cover, I did not despise these treasures, even when they came out of his dirty pocket, though I am sure my tastes are now far too refined to contemplate such doubtful delicacies. Curiously this man was called Meutpeur and was a bit of a legend, supposedly a remnant of Napoleon's French army. Different to the natives in his way of life, a herbalist, beekeeper and expert of forest lore, he lived alone in a small hut & was a bachelor. His pine honey, a dark mahogany colour with wonderful scent, was delicious.

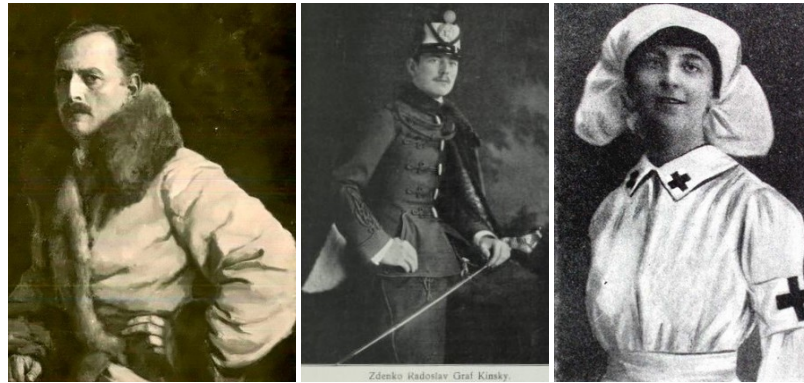
The big winter shoots were a special event called '*Kreisjagden*' because the guns & beaters covered an area of several kilometres in a vast circle. Herr Fuschik sent out a gun and a beater alternatively in two directions. When they met, closing the circle he blew a horn and the field turned inwards. The guns shot hares, deer, foxes anything that ran until the horn was blown again, when the guns had to face outwards & only the beaters walked to the centre. For these great shoots anyone in the neighbourhood who carried a gun was invited: the doctor, the station-master, the wealthier peasants, shop keepers and artisans. The peasants vied with each other in inviting the

shooting party to a farm lunch where their home-made cider flowed freely. The bag was threaded onto poles & carried off by groups of beaters finally to be sent to Vienna by train from Loosdorf. 500 hares and a number of deer, pheasants & partridge were quite usual amounts. Hares had to be treated as pests because they did a lot of damage to crops & forest plantations. We led a very happy & carefree life from 1916 onwards. The worst famine came later and except for occasional sad reports of family members lost fighting, we roamed the forest & played happy games of robbers and soldiers with the children of the forester, Höllthaler. When Hansl Höllthaler had a bad toothache, we all sat with him while he lay in the grass and entertained him with silly jokes. I often wonder if this was a good cure for toothache? There was however a tragedy to come when Höllthaler was kicked in the stomach by one of our farm horses and died. This upset poor Papa very much, as he was always deeply concerned with the welfare of his employees, and Frau Höllthaler and her children remained in his care for many years after.



Margit, Ilona (the 'twins'), Norbert Kinsky (siblings) and their father Edgar (seated), and a group assembled for partridge shooting (from left at the back: Rudi v.d. Straten, Uncle Alick, Ilona, Edgar, Margit, Berthe; in front: Georry, Balthy, Cocco), 1911, Sooss. Photos: Rob Hoyos.

We children still lived in the *Stöckl* in those days. This is the old part of the Schloss & was reached by steep wooden steps. I have a vivid picture of Mama sitting, crying on the sofa in our play room, when Uncle Norbert was reported dead on the Russian frontier [Norbert Kinsky, 31 January 1893 – 13 October 1914 at Zalokot', present-day Ukraine]. Her three brothers [Norbert, Franz-Xaver and Zdenko Kinsky] had been called up & Uncle Zdenko was taken prisoner in Russia [the youngest of Ilona's eight siblings was Zdenko Radoslav Dlask Henyko Smil Rudolf Ferdinand Kinsky, 14 July 1896- 1 January 1975]. He describes his Russian adventures in his own memoirs, also the brave work of his sister Nora [Norbetine] who went out to find him as a Red Cross nurse [see 'Sources of information' below].



Four of Ilona's eight siblings: Franz-Xaver ('Feri', the 'son and heir'; top left; *Wiener Salonblatt* 1906), Norbert (top right; <https://kugi.blog.hu/>), Zdenko (x2, bottom left) and Nora Kinsky (bottom right). Nora was an Austrian Red Cross nurse and founded a hospital in Russia, where she worked before and during the Russian Revolution of 1917. At the age of 27 in 1916, she travelled to Siberia to visit and inspect prisoner-of-war and labour camps, where she met thousands of Austro-Hungarian and German prisoners of war. She escaped, returned to Austro-Hungary in summer 1918, and married Ferdinand Maria Wilczek, a prisoner she had helped to free from a prison camp. Nora died during the birth of their second child in 1923.

Mama & her sister Margit went to Melk, a biggish town by the Danube to nurse in the hospital there. Aunt Margit was in love with the Superintendent of the hospital Dr Schatzl, but we children did not understand the details. Whether he was married, or whether he was not aristocratic enough to please Grandpapa I do not know. But we felt that the whole affair caused much heartache. Grandpapa was a great character & it was said, he never wished to see any of his nine daughters married [incorrect, he had nine children, six daughters and three sons], but thought Heaven should be a place where he should reign supreme & have his nine [6] daughters eternally around him. When Mama finally gained his reluctant consent to marry and went on her honeymoon with Papa he followed & suddenly appeared at a restaurant in Salzburg? where they were enjoying a meal. Poor Papa, it must have been very embarrassing, but Grandpapa announced that he had to see if his 'Loschi' looked happy [Grandpapa was Oktavian Zdenko Stanislaus Sigmund Johann Kinsky, 4 November 1844 – 5 January 1932].



Balthy (age ~12), Cocco (13) and Georrey (14) in 1916. Photo provided by Rob Hoyos.

When I was about 14 Mama thought we should have a lady governess instead of the good teachers we had been having. These were, like the boys' tutors, well-educated, academic people, but not society members. I was taught for a while by one of the boys' tutors Herr Bauer. He was greatly absorbed with Egyptian history & taught me a lot about Akhnaton and the pyramids. When eventually all the tutors were called up, the boys went to the *Schottengymnasium* in Vienna to complete their schooling. Papa had been a 'Vorzugschüler' i.e. a successful scholar as a boy, whereas his brother Alick found study difficult [Ludwig Alexander Georg Hoyos, 13 May 1876 - 20 October 1937; he became an Austro-Hungarian diplomat and bought Schloss Schwertberg in 1911]. In one of the bedrooms there was a clever satirical drawing by O'Papa Hoyos of Uncle Alick on an ass, seated very shakily, with behind him his tutor beating the donkey over a river of examiners with hands outstretched to pull the victim from his mount. However, Papa never did anything outstanding, except being an amiable landowner and a charming host, whereas Uncle Alick became Minister of the Interior and was then blamed for the famous ultimatum to the Serbs after the assassination of the Crown Prince Franz Ferdinand [June 1914], which was the beginning of World War One. Perhaps this was not a laudable achievement but he undoubtedly was an able statesman.



‘Uncle Alick’, Ludwig Alexander Georg Graf von Hoyos, Freiherr zu Stichsenstein, chef de cabinet of the Imperial Foreign Minister, played a major role during the July Crisis at the outbreak of World War I in 1914.

The new governess Mimi Otto was the daughter of an Austrian diplomat and soon became a family friend and even more a companion to Mama than an educator. We were all very fond of her, but she did not teach us for long. One day Mama and Mimi went for a walk when they passed a brisk game of football played by the newly-formed Sooss club started by Balthy. Mama was very shortsighted, but she seemed to notice something unusual about one goalkeeper. To her horror Mimi recognised me in the goal. I was greatly enjoying myself, but this was the end of our free life. Mama would not risk this horrible danger – all the village louts kicking balls at me, so she immediately packed off Cajetana & me to the *Sacré Coeur* in Pressbaum [a Roman Catholic private school, Alicemargit went there at age 15, in 1922]. Mimi stayed on for several years and is now (1976) a British citizen living retired in Folkestone after many years as matron at a D.G.A. Hostel near there.

The winter pleasures when we got older were fun. One year Cajetana & I went round the village as Nicolo & Krampus with bags of fruit & nuts. However, this game was soon cruelly ended, when we called on a crusty old widow, who did not bother to find out why we had called, but received us by throwing a bucket of cold water at us, bitterly cold too on Dec 6th in an Austrian winter with snow on the ground.

Annually we acted a family play. My second brother Zdenko, Cocco for short, was by far the most gifted actor and playwright. He turned Baroness Orczy's '*Elusive Pimpernel*' into a splendid play and acted Lord Blakeney admirably. Tragically Cocco was affected by the starvation we suffered from in 1918 and developed a fatal illness. He suffered much & was finally killed as incurable by Hitler's law. Mama & Papa were not informed. They just received his ashes with an official statement of his demise. [Zdenko graduated from the *Schottengymnasium* in 1921 with plans to study political science, but from around 1928, his mental health deteriorated and he was diagnosed with what was then termed catatonic schizophrenia. He was transferred from a clinic in Zurich to the sanatorium and nursing home Mauer-Öhling, Mauer bei Amstetten, Austria in 1936. In March 1941, he was killed by the Nazis in 'Aktion T4' at Schloss Hartheim. His parents were told that he died of typhus.]



Schloss Hartheim, Alkoven, Austria, now a memorial, where Zdenko Hoyos was one of ca. 30,000 people killed by the Nazis between 1940 and 1944 because they were disabled or unable to work (photo by Nancy Jennings, 2023).

The starvation period was very difficult and Mama used every means in her power to collect wild food. We went out in parties to pick strawberries, raspberries, nuts, plums and all kinds of herbs which could be cooked like spinach or eaten as salad. There are many edible fungi which are a good food but there were several tragic deaths when whole families were wiped out through eating poisonous species. Raspberries are very plentiful & were picked in milk churns. Plums we harvested in hay carts and beechnuts were collected in sacks full. On winter evenings we sat peeling beechnuts, cracking walnuts & hazelnuts & cutting up *Bolitus* [*Boletus* mushrooms] for drying on trays in the kitchen. This was done to the accompaniment of Papa's gay piano playing. He was an expert waltz player and accompanied our singing of folk songs in parts. At one time the 3 boys each learnt an instrument, Georry the violin, Balthy the Cello & Cocco the piano. This meant very nice concerts on special occasions. Altogether we were never short of entertainment. An old gramophone and cupboard full of classical records taught us much & we also had an old-fashioned harmonium with many hundreds of music rolls which we played for hours. This was near the large billiard room, where we used to play a wild game of fives. This meant slapping the billiard ball into the pocket with the flat of one's hand and running round the table to get your turn. Fire brigade practice was another entertainment, when Mama's life-size model was rescued from the tower, giving a chance to set up the long ladders and work the engines in record time.

But as life got more serious during starvation & inflation we were allocated 4 children from Vienna to add to our own 7 hungry mouths. Bread was rationed to half a round loaf the size of a desert plate per person per week. After about 2 days we had no more bread and used to roast thin slices of potatoes on top of the stove without fat. Sugar was unobtainable, but we grew some sugar beet & boiled it down into a thin molasses. Our poor town refugees arrived looking like bean stalks and very pale. It was lovely to see them putting on weight and colour in spite of our short rations, which were still luxury to them. The peasant farmers in the village seemed to have much more food than we had, but were very reluctant to part with it. I remember one day Cajetana and I ventured to ask for a loaf of home-baked bread from one old woman who owned the biggest farm in Sooss. She opened her kitchen drawers, where we saw the mouth-watering riches of 6 large loaves, but she slammed the drawer back & said she had not enough to give us any. Poor hungry townies used to come from Vienna hanging on the few trains that ran. They were called *Hamsters*, as with rucksacks on their backs they trudged from the stations into the countryside ready to pay any amount of devalued money for food. This paper money lost value daily and the farmers stored

chests full. It was often eaten by rats & mice. When the final debacle came, 10,000 Austrian Kronen [the currency of German-Austria from 1919] became one new Austrian Schilling overnight [in 1925]. This caused great hardship, liquidation of many firms, loss of jobs & starvation. The Hoover Commission did much to help and as Austria was mainly rural & very hardworking they overcame the food problem fairly soon and were blessed with several good harvests. Land & house property were the only safe investment.

At that time I made a fine collection of the '*Notgeld*' paper money issued by every small town in the country for local trade. This was very often very artistic, with pictures of castles, mountains, churches etc. I made quite a big collection & am still angry with myself, that at the age of 18 I sold it to my aunt for £2 as I wanted shoes or a dress at that moment. Now I would rather have this interesting collection than £50. Though we had lessons at home, we still had to pass annual exams at the *Bürgerschule* in Loosdorf. The head-master would arrange with our governess & we went into the school to sit the exam. I think this was compulsory but in any case it was good that we had to reach a certain standard & follow a set curriculum.

Confirmation was a great event. We were confirmed at the convent in Pressbaum. One was always taken to the Prater, the Vienna amusement Park after the ceremony. This is an old custom and around Whitsun there were always many white-dressed children enjoying the scenic railway with shouts & screams, going up in the *Riesenrad*, the giant wheel (from the top position one can see the whole of Vienna), and having joyous picnics in the lovely Prater woods. Most people drove out in a *Fiaker*, the famous Vienna horsedrawn cab, which still operates for tourists. A band used to play on the Praterstern and everywhere tables & chairs invited customers for ices & beer, *Apfelsaft* & *Himbeersaft* [apple juice and raspberry juice], the fleet-footed *Kellner* [waiters] at their beck & call. We children thought the Prater a sort of paradise and always felt our visits there were much too few & far between.



Betsy Plessen and Ilona. Photo provided by Rob Hoyos.

About this time poor Mama was bitten by our dog. We had a Swiss bull-terrier called Stella and she had 2 pups called Luna & Sol. Our first cousin Betsy Plessen was staying & Mama & Betsy went for a walk with Stella, who

was usually very friendly. Suddenly she went for a man, who was working in a field & tore his trousers. Mama called her & bent down to smack her, upon which she turned & bit Mama twice in her hand. They put her on the lead & led her home & put her in her kennel with the pups. However, when Höllthaler [the forester] was told about her odd behaviour he looked through the window & found what he had suspected, that Stella had rabies. She was foaming at the mouth, had bitten both her pups & was tottering about in circles. He shot all 3 through the window. Betsy was a trained nurse & immediately put Mama's hand into strong disinfectant & sent for the doctor. He had to come from Hürm 5 km away, but as soon as he arrived he heated a wire and pushed it through the 2 punctures to cauterize the wounds. Then Mama went to Vienna to have Pasteur treatment. She was very ill for about 2 years. We lived with rabies, every summer there was a muzzling order, but somehow one did not expect one's own dog to get it.

As mentioned earlier Cajetana & I were sent to the *Sacré Coeur* at Pressbaum after Mama saw me acting as goalkeeper to the Sooss footballers. I was very happy there & got into the exam. class taught by Mother Brodorotti. We all loved her & her English & French classes were the most interesting. I was 15 when I went & Cajetana 13. She was a trial to me. I tried hard to become a *Ruban Bleu* [blue ribbon] – the equivalent of a prefect and dedicated to the Virgin Mary. But Cajetana was always in trouble and I was apt to be blamed. However, I must admit that when I became an aspirant (the first step) I went through a period of fooling & larking with my friends and so causing a commotion so at the next elections, I was sadly not elected. Then came a very exciting surprise. We were rehearsing a play for performance on Mother General's visit. A fortnight before the date the chief actress was taken ill & I was asked, if I would take her place. It meant hard work, but the play went without a hitch. I was told to change hurriedly, which I could not understand, but was told that Mother General wished to speak to me. When I went up to the august visitor in front of the whole school and all the community I was pushed forward to kneel on a cushion at her knee. She drew out a Blue Ribbon from her pocket & under thunderous applause it was placed on my shoulder & tied across. This was a very nice way of becoming a leader.

There was a Baroness Kuhm living in the village of Pressbaum & when Mama & Papa came to visit us, they sometimes took us out to tea with her. This led to a painful disappointment for me. The great day of my confirmation had arrived and I had written home to beg the parents to be present. They were to lay their hands on our shoulder while the Bishop did the laying on of hands and anointing. We waited anxiously, but no parents arrived. It was customary to shed copious tears about such disappointments. At last the parents arrived, but too late to do their share. They had been to Baroness Kuhm, a voluble lady & could not get away in time.

Papa was greatly entertained at some of his visits to us. In the parlour where we met our family visitors 2 very stout girls called Wurstel (sausage) with an even stouter Mama were always engrossed in opening enormous food parcels and stuffing themselves busily. Papa used to laugh and make funny jokes about their family name being so very expressive of their behaviour. It was still a time of great food shortage & the school diet was very short. Coffee made of acorns. One piece of rye bread without butter for breakfast. One large dish of vegetables, red cabbage with a handful of sweet chestnuts. These grew in the convent grounds & we all helped to gather them. Seldom did we see meat, but we had heavy dumplings made of rye husks. The great feast days were very wonderful. For the feast of the Immaculate Conception on Dec 8th we helped put up altars to Our Lady in the passages & classrooms and wore long white veils for the procession to Mass and from altar to altar. This great feast day was

followed by a *Congé*, a free day, when we had exciting games of *loup* in 2 camps, one to hide & the other to seek. As the school is an enormous three-storey building the seekers had a difficult job. Once we penetrated into the strict enclosure & saw a room with scourges for the nun's discipline, but we were firmly ejected & beat a hasty retreat. Though we usually drove to Loosdorf on Sundays for church in a horsedrawn carriage, later some of us on bicycles, there were times when a priest came from the great Benedictine monastery of Melk to hear our confessions. Then we had Mass in the Schloss Chapel and the boys would act as altar servers.

For a while Adam had a little priest as tutor & he acted as chaplain & said Mass regularly. Adam was very naughty with this poor priest. He had never been taught by the good tutors, which his older brothers had. He was only 2 years old when the war broke out & at one time I used to teach him to read & write. When he had his own tutor who was so small he had to stand on a step to say Mass, Adam a gangling tall teenager used to run away & the poor priest enunciating prayers at the top of the long *Stöckl* stairs, while Adam slid down the railings, cocked a snook & vanished for the day. Eventually he too had to be sent to the *Theresianum*, a boarding school in Vienna originally founded for officers by the Empress Maria Theresia. Then he went to the Jesuits, but he was never an outstanding scholar & used to be a great comedian. Cajetana & Adam could keep us all in fits of laughter for hours.

Thinking of my dear father I often wonder how much he must have suffered. The whole war, the death of his beloved Emperor, Mama's several serious illnesses and poor Cocco's death, the horrid Beaudin incident and all the Nazi influence, but worst of all a sad shadow came at that time. Papa was the most gentle & charming nature & greatly in love with Mama. It filled our home life with happiness, but he was never an intellectual. Mama was an artistic restless nature, very active in mind & body and had great faith. She was of course a devout Roman Catholic. Papa became R.C. when my eldest brother Georry recovered from Meningitis and he was at that time deeply impressed by Mama's faith during Georry's serious illness. So it must have been a great anxiety for him when Mama began to take a great interest in our neighbour Carl Rohan [Karl Anton Rohan, 1898 – 1975]. He lived alone in his Schloss Albrechtsberg near Loosdorf and very soon his visits to Mama became noticeably frequent. He considered himself a philosopher and used to spend many hours reading to Mama & discussing his theories. We children all hated him & felt he was an evil influence. I know my father suffered acutely at this time, but was too young to understand. Much later, after my father's death, my mother assured me that her infatuation for Carl had never in any way lessened her deep love for Papa and she knew that he never doubted this. She was certainly a very lonely widow and longed to be reunited with her darling Eddie.

About Papa there was a strain of 'second sight', probably from his Scotch blood. Once when Mama was very ill, he found himself writing on his sheet in bed, while between sleep & waking. The writing was in German script and addressed him as "*Mein Goldkind*" ["my golden child"]. The only person who used to call him by that name, on account of his very fair golden hair, was his oldest sister Polly. She went on writing and reassured him "Ilona will be quite alright, she will get over her operation and be restored to you in good health." On another occasion, what seemed to be his father wrote and Papa tried to ask some questions but the answer came "I must turn my face to the light, do not call me back!" When Cocco became mentally unbalanced with Precocious Dementia [schizophrenia], he was again deeply worried & this time his sister wrote: "Do not worry about Cocco, he has been with us [i.e. in the

afterlife] for a long time!" Papa & Mama did not wish to pursue this talent and he used to wake himself firmly, when he felt he might be in touch. I was never told the details, but gather it ceased as he got older.



Edgar and Ilona celebrating their silver wedding anniversary with their family, at Sooss, 7 September 1926. *Wiener Salonblatt* 17 October 1926. At this time, their children were between the ages of 24 (Georry) and 14 (Ines); Zdenko was probably in a clinic. This image shows, from left to right, Georry, Adam, Ilona, Ines, Edgar, Alicemargit, and Cajatana.

What happened next?

From 1922 – 1925, age 15 to 18, Alicemargit attended the *Sacré Coeur* convent school at Pressbaum. In 1927, when she was 20, she visited her aunt in Long Island, Virginia, USA, where she learned to drive. On her return she attended Hohenheim Agricultural College at Stuttgart, Germany. Over Christmas 1930, age 23, she visited her Uncle Rudi and Aunt Cicely Coreth (his second wife) at St Donat, Austria. There she met Ryle Morris who had been invited by his family friend, Cicely. Ryle and Alicemargit were married in April 1931 when he was 30 and she was 24.

Ryle died on 29 May 1971, aged 79; Alicemargit on 6 April 1979, aged 72.

A portrait of my darling husband

RYLE EDWARD CHARLES MORRIS

from his accounts of his own life and of our happiness together

by Alicemargit Morris née Hoyos



Alicemargit Hoyos and Ryle Morris, engagement photo, 1931

This is meant for the children and grandchildren and is to be a record for their example and guidance.

Ryle had two formidable older sisters and I gathered that they found his boyhood occupations boring [the family consisted of David 'Da' Edward Smyth Morris, 3 May 1886 – 1891, Mary Edith Morris, 3 August 1887 – 4 December 1975, Vida Emily Morris, 1 March 1890 – 17 October 1986 and Ryle Edward Charles Morris, 26 November 1891 – 28 May 1971]. Ryle loved fishing and spent much time with the coracle men on the river. Here he learned to paddle his coracle and always enjoyed demonstrating this skill. His mother Edith Abadam [17 September 1846 – 16 June 1926] was a very exacting mistress. Boxes of lists, recipes, staff timesheets which I found on my arrival at Bryn Myrddin [Morris residence near Abergwili, South Wales; Alicemargit arrived in 1931] left a clear picture of her meticulous efficiency. His father [Edward Harrold Morris, 1850 – 17 February 1929, married Edith Abadam on 28 April 1884] was greatly loved by all, a charming host, enthusiastic sportsman and a careful administrator as solicitor to many family members. Alice Abadam [Edith's sister, the suffragist, 2 January 1856 – 31 March 1940] used to tell how all the Abadams, who seem to have suffered some family pride, asked Edith "How could you ever marry Edward Morris, he is not artistic and literary and you were brought up in such a wide liberal household?" Edith is reported to have answered with a thoughtful smile: "He has his compensations". To balance this judgement I have conveyed I must add that Mr Maddox the Abergwili school headmaster, whom I knew well and often met at sports, concerts etc. in

the village, told me to my slight consternation: “There was never anyone as wonderful as Mrs [Edith] Morris of Bryn Myrddin. You could never be as good as her!”



Ryle's mother, Edith Morris née Abadam, and his father Edward Harold Morris. The middle photos were both taken in 1885, the year in which they were married.

About Edward Morris, called affectionately Uncle Ned by all the family, I always heard most kind and admiring remarks. He was a good Latin scholar and very fond of Trollope's books; a keen sportsman.

Ryle went to prep. school at Frederick's at The Wells House in Malvern where he became head boy. He took me there once & showed me his name on the head boy's list. At that time he was thinking of becoming a Roman Catholic and was suddenly nostalgic about his schooldays and his confirmation. He wanted to show me the school chapel which stood a short walk away in the school grounds. When we got there, to his great disappointment it was locked and I had a sense of relief, as I wondered if a revival of early spiritual enthusiasm would bring doubts.

Mrs [Edith] Morris was always eminently practical. This caused some resentment to her eldest daughter Mary, who mentioned that Malvern had been chosen, because her dentist was there & therefore subsequently the girls were sent to a school there as well, which Mary and her Aunt Alice thought decidedly inferior. Mary especially was very critical of the Misses Farmer and Leather, principals of this Ladies' establishment and I felt that she never submitted to their discipline. Earlier there were governesses carefully chosen for their Protestant background, i.e. Swiss Waldensians.

I have omitted the sorrow, which came to Bryn Myrddin early in Ryle's parents' married life. The eldest boy David, who called himself 'Da', was very delicate [David Edward Smyth Morris, 3 May 1886 – 1891]. Aunt Alice nursed him carefully through anxious early years, when he had to have specially prepared food and slept within earshot of her. She adored this child and he reciprocated. She often told me about this special relationship and his gentle cry of “Ai” when he called in the night. She nursed him so assiduously that eventually her own health was affected. He had grown stronger and it was thought she could safely go for a holiday to rest her heart. She related, how in Italy she woke one night to see her sister Edith leaning over Da's cot trying on some white socks and saying to Miss McGeorge, her companion housekeeper: “What a pity they are too small!” She was aware that this was ‘second

sight' and woke greatly alarmed out of this trance, to hear a day later, that Da had caught scarlet fever and died (and this scene had actually taken place). In those days Abergwili had open drains, running down the High Street and *Streptococci* disease was always prevalent. Mrs Morris was warned not to go to assemblies, but thought it her duty to attend a Christmas tree gathering and it is thought she brought the germ to the child.

Although Ryle became head boy at his Spartan prep. school he told that he was much teased for his Welsh accent & was laughed at for saying "Cōōbler's Waax" [Cobbler's wax, a product used in tying fishing flies], so he was evidently still preoccupied with fishing & apparently returned home for cherished holidays at his favourite sport. His father, also a keen fisherman, took him to the Outer Hebrides, always a very happy memory. He tied his own flies, collected feathers & was loyal to this interest all through life. The girls were keen riders, but I never saw photos of Ryle on horseback, though there are many of the girls. Rabbit shooting with ferrets on Merlin's Hill was a happy family gathering, when Jim Harris of Bryn Towy and some of his brothers, also Wilmot Vaughan and Billy Morris of Castell Pigyn came for the day & Ryle joined them with enthusiasm. There was an alarming incident on the hill, when one of the guns accidentally shot at a loving young couple strolling on the hillside and hit the young girl in the eye. I cannot remember exactly who did this, perhaps the Police chief Picton Phillips, but he was knocked down in the streets of Carmarthen a few days later by the young man, who naturally resented the maiming of his lady love. He did not seem to remember that he was obviously trespassing on private land, however much the incident was always regretted by the Morris family.

There were several signs reminiscent of those peaceful prewar days, when I got to Bryn Myrddin. One room was called James's room, after the butler. An apple tree in the garden was called the David Evan apple after the old gardener, and much of the maintenance work on carpentry, windows, furniture etc. was looked after by an old factotum called Bowen, with whom my mother-in-law regularly inspected the roof and planned all the house repairs. She was very active and was reputed to have run & jumped over a log on the drive only a short while before her death. In those days there was a fairly large staff. There is a photo of eleven maids and men.

The next step in Ryle's school career was Bath College. He never told us much about this, but it packed up before he had finished his studies & it was of course a family joke, that Bath College must have gone bust, because Ryle went there. He then went to a Grammar for 2 years and was happy there and got to Christ Church Oxford (The House) from there. As there is a box full of diaries about his college years I will skip this time, except to mention, that it was the custom in those days to invite friends to breakfast in one's college rooms. Porridge, bacon & eggs, coffee, toast and marmalade etc. etc. arrived carried on the heads of the Scouts on large trays.



Ryle Morris in 1916; Ryle's brother Da, who died in 1891 aged 4.

This was the unhappy beginning of the 1914 war and Ryle suffered much remorse because he did not rush to enlist as soon as possible. Perhaps he had a presentiment of his battlefield fate, but he often mentioned, that he was ashamed of holding back. However, he did go to Sandhurst after taking his degree of B.A. rounded off by an M.A. which he always hastened to say, was only a matter of payment, not academic prowess. Then came one day in the trenches in France [he was Second Lieutenant with the Royal Welch Fusiliers, and went to France in May 1916], where he went over the top with his sergeant & was immediately hit in the head by a whizzbang i.e. a piece of shrapnel. It meant a long spell at a hospital in Rouen, where he made very little progress until the piece of metal was successfully removed by a Trephining operation.

His mother showed great courage, coming to France immediately. Mary was made to come with her, but she rather resented this. Ryle often mentioned his memory of the lovely bells of Rouen cathedral which he heard from his hospital bed. His homecoming was a sorrow to his mother. He suffered from frequent wound epileptic fits & had to be spoon-fed and re-educated like a child.

There was a great friend of Aunt Alice Abadam, Dr Alice Vowe Johnson [January 1869 – December 1938; Alice Abadam's life partner]. She was then working at St. David's mental hospital Carmarthen. She frequented the home of Annie Sprake Jones ['Miss Jones'] who later lived at Bryn Myrddin for more than 15 years. Annie's father was principal of Carmarthen School of Art, and theirs was a friendly, very hospitable household. Aunt Alice lived in Penllwyn Park [Carmarthen] in those days; conveniently near the Catholic church, to which the two friends belonged [they both lived at 26 Picton Terrace, close to St Mary's Church and the park, from 1886 – 1904; there is now a blue plaque for Alice Abadam. Both Alices are buried at that church]. Aunt Alice was a courageous and committed convert & contributed much to the Church; travelling to Rome with Lady Herbert of Llanover to petition the Holy Father to create the separate Welsh Archdiocese and the Diocese of Menevia, so that the specific needs of Wales [could] be

especially cared for. It was then that she moved from the more expensive part of Carmarthen to save money for the purpose of having the first mitre for the Bishop of Menevia, Bishop Mostyn, made. She designed this herself with great care and put in expensive jewels. When Bishop Mostyn became Archbishop he took it to Cardiff [Francis Mostyn became Bishop of Menevia in 1898 and was Archbishop of Cardiff in 1921 until his death in 1939]. Several unsuccessful attempts have been made to restore it to Menevia.

Dr Johnson, called Johnnie by the family, was not pleased with Ryle's progress. She suggested he should accompany her on a world tour, because she felt his initiative and self-reliance was being sapped at home, where he was still treated as a child. This was a big decision for his parents. Johnnie was very small & Ryle a tall gangling young man, subject to those frequent attacks. There were two other members of the party, I think a Mrs. Shaw and her daughter Otti Shaw. There are many photos of his world tour in Bryn Myrddin and Ryle spoke of it with happy appreciation. Johnnie had one frightening experience when she lost him in San Francisco, but he finally got home, much improved & able to plan his future. As his head specialist, Dr Head, advised an outdoor life for him he decided to go to Usk Agricultural College, for a horticultural diploma. This time always figured as one of the happy parts of his life. He got very fond of his gardener teacher Mr Burrows and took me to see him after his retirement. He made several nice friends & came home with the intention of running a market garden at Bryn Myrddin. I remember he told me with pride that he cut 40 lbs. of spring cabbage on the 1st of May, his first year. This must have been around 1927-1928.

In June 1926 [Ryle's] mother died. He had been spending occasional weeks with Aunt Alice who had acquired a fine house & garden at 28 Hamilton Terrace, St John's Wood, London [she lived there with 'Johnnie' from 1926 – 1933]. She was actively engaged with Feminist work, antivivisection and music. Her friends, the Duchess of Hamilton and the Scotch "Chief" Mrs Cameron Head gave her the opportunity to introduce Ryle to a society circle & after his mother's death he spent much time with her ostensibly seeking a suitable wife. Aunt Alice related that she used to ask him after every party or dance he attended: "Was there no one you liked?" He became rather depressed, as he apparently was unable to find his ideal. Aunt Alice used to comfort him by imitating the sound of the wood pigeons "She'll come soon, she'll come soo-oon!" Then he met the Gurowskys. Count Gurowsky was a Polish aristocrat, who kept his title as a British citizen by royal patent. He lived in a fine mansion 'Woolhampton' near Reading, next to Douai Catholic Public School. His tall handsome wife was Swedish and they had a daughter, Helen. Ryle proposed to her but was rejected. This was just before his father's death in 1929. A small drama had developed at Bryn Myrddin where the housekeeper Miss McGeorge had spread her wings and was in the habit of sitting at the head of the table. Aunt Alice and Mary, who was much under her aunt's influence at the time, much resented Miss McGeorge's behaviour and Mr Morris's, Ryle's father's, weak acquiescence to it. The day after his father died, Ryle was duly primed to take the head of the table upon which Miss McGeorge gave notice which suited family plans all round. I remember a regular allowance being paid to her by Ryle until her death.

Now the stage was set for the beginning of our happy life together. Again Johnnie intervened. She had a friend who used to live in Yorkshire, a Miss Wroughton [Cicely Mary Musgrove Wroughton, 1885-1963], daughter of the Master of the Pytchley [fox-hunt]. She married [on 17 October 1928] my widowed Uncle by marriage Count Rudolf Coreth [his first wife, Ilona's sister Margit Kinsky, had died in 1928]. She arranged an invitation for Ryle over

Christmas 1930. I was then at Hohenheim Agricultural College near Stuttgart in my first term. My parents had gone to America to spend Christmas with my eldest brother Georry & his wife Alice, just married from my Aunt Camilla Short's house. I was invited to St Donat [Austria], the country house of Uncle Rudi and Aunt Cicely Coreth. It seems Ryle made up his mind very promptly, because he asked me to marry him on Dec. 30th 1930. Uncle Rudi did not speak English, so the general conversation was always in French.

After our engagement we went for a long walk in slushy snow & were very late for lunch. Uncle Rudi had suspected the outcome & champagne was on the table, when we came in with our apologies. Then Ryle bowed and said: "*J'ai cueillis la plus belle rose D'Aurtriche!*" ["I have plucked the most beautiful rose of Austria!"] His vision must have been coloured by the first haze of love, because I remember at a later date, he was tactlessly asked, if he thought me the most beautiful woman he knew. He was always scrupulously truthful like the famous mirror & after some hesitation he said "No! not exactly!" I never discovered who was Snow White! An elderly cousin Eugenie Hoyos was staying in the house as a visitor. Her excited curiosity about every detail of our courtship, was most amusing. She came to my bedroom every evening to tell me, what the engagement ring looked like & to ask endless questions & to praise Ryle's handsome figure and many virtues.

An amusing incident arose at Bleiburg, the Château of the family Thurn Valsassina. My mother's sister, another Alice, only pronounced the French way, married Count Alexander Thurn [Ilona's sister, Aloysia Eugenie Johanna Maria Gabriela Kinsky, 27 July 1886 – 31 August 1975, married Alexander Georg Ghislain von Thurn-Valsassina-Como-Vercelli, 3 February 1879 – 5 March 1962]. We were asked there for tea. Aunt Alice was a very lively & athletic member of the Kinsky family. She rode well, she flirted well and at her golden wedding she jumped over the dinner table fully set with glass, china & silver. During our visit to [Schloss] Bleiburg she had a good look at Ryle and as we left she whispered her approval to me and said: "*Je vais prier!*" ["I will pray"] Much later Ryle told me, he had caught her remark and thought she had said: "*Je dois organiser!*" ["I must organise!"] This had shocked him considerably. We were told an amusing incident about Aunt Alice. The British army was stationed at Klagenfurt, within walking distance. Aunt Alice much enjoyed visiting the Officer's Mess & was always welcomed warmly, as her humour & vivacity gave much pleasure, though she was by then fairly old. Walking down the hill from Bleiburg, she noticed the old manservant waving excitedly from a window. She was irritated by his obvious efforts to call her back, and indicated by an impatient gesture, that she was not returning & was fed up with his efforts to hamper her progress. He continued to gesticulate & point, so after lengthy efforts on his part she looked round to see, what was wrong with her back only to find her dress was completely tucked up & she was walking with her white underpants in full view.



Alexander Thurn with his wife Alice née Kinsky (*Wiener Salonblatt* July 1906), and Schloss Bleiburg, Carinthia, Austria (2006, Johann Jaritz, Wikimedia).

She was a courageous mixture, as she entered a convent at the age of 65 or so as a widow [she was actually widowed in 1962 at the age of 76] & when asked by her brother Zdenko [Kinsky] (Ra), why she did this, she answered in Malaprop style: *"Ich muss mich doch kastrieren!"* ["I have to castrate myself!"] Castrating mistaken for castigating. She was however a trial to her superior and a constant pleasure and distraction to her fellow novices, catching flies in chapel & jumping over benches etc. so in the end, when she caught severe bronchitis the Bishop was asked to send her home. She went to Vienna & there continued to dress like a nun and attend daily Mass for the rest of her life [she died in 1975 at the age of 89].



Von der Feier des 80. Geburtstages der Gräfin Alice Hoyos.

Am Boden sitzend: Gräfin Beatrix Hoyos.
 Erste Reihe von links nach rechts: Frau Hannah von Bredow geb. Gräfin von Bismarck-Schönhausen, Gräfin Ilona Hoyos geb. Gräfin Kinsky, Mrs. John Whitehead geb. Gräfin Agathe Breunner, Graf Edgar Hoyos, Gräfin Alice Hoyos, Frä. Marguerite von Bredow, Gräfin Edmée Hoyos geb. Marquise de Loys-Chandieu, Graf Alexander Hoyos, Mrs. Guy Boas geb. Whitehead.
 Zweite Reihe: Mrs. Francis Whitehead, Graf Leopold Sternberg jun., Baroness Manuela von Plessen, Baronin Gino Malfatti geb. Whitehead, Gräfin Goedela Keyserling geb. Gräfin von Bismarck-Schönhausen, Gräfin Melanie Hoyos, Gräfin Ines Hoyos, Baroness Franz Seckendorff, Mr. Guy Boas, Gräfin Alice-Margit Hoyos.
 Dritte Reihe: Baron Hansi von Plessen, Major Leopold von Bredow, Mr. Bobby Whitehead, Baron Gino Malfatti, Fürstin Bismarck, Fürst Bismarck, Graf John George Hoyos, Gräfin Alice Hoyos, Graf Gottfried von Bismarck-Schönhausen, Gräfin Cecilie von Sternberg geb. Gräfin von Reventlow-Criminil, Graf Albrecht v. Bismarck, Graf Balthasar Hoyos, Mr. Ryle Morris, Graf Adam Hoyos.

Hofatelier Gebr. Knozer, Wien, IV.



Die Tafel im Jockey-Club in Wien anlässlich der Feier des 80. Geburtstages der Gräfin Alice Hoyos am 31. März 1931.
 Links der Tafel: Gräfin Alice Hoyos, Baron Hansi von Plessen, Gräfin Edmée Hoyos geb. Marquise de Loys-Chandieu, Fürst Bismarck, Fürstin Nora Fugger-Babenhausen, Prinzessin Lili Odessalchi, Mr. Bobby Whitehead, Mrs. Guy Boas geb. Whitehead, Gräfin Cecilie Sternberg geb. Gräfin v. Reventlow-Criminil.
 Rechts der Tafel: Gräfin Beatrix Hoyos, Fürst Windisch-Graetz, Prinzessin Marizza Liechtenstein, Graf Alexander Hoyos, Gräfin Alice Hoyos, Graf Edgar Hoyos, Mrs. John Whitehead geb. Gräfin Agathe Breunner, Gräfin Ilona Hoyos geb. Gräfin Kinsky.
 Rechts stehend: Mr. Guy Boas geb. Whitehead, Mr. Ryle Morris, Gräfin Alice-Margit Hoyos, Mrs. Francis Whitehead, Baron Gino Malfatti, Frau Hannah von Bredow geb. Gräfin von Bismarck-Schönhausen.

Hofatelier Gebr. Knozer, Wien, IV.

Alice Hoyos's 80th birthday party at the Jockey Club, Vienna, on 31 March 1931 was featured in the *Wiener Salonblatt* in June 1931. Top: Alicemargit is in the middle row at the far right, Ryle is standing behind her between Alicemargit's brothers Balthy and Adam Hoyos (far right, back row). Bottom: Ryle and Alicemargit are standing second and third from the right, Ryle next to Guy Hermon Sidney Boas (1897 – 1966, husband of Augusta Alice Cecilia Whitehead 1898 – 1973, daughter of James Beethom Whitehead who was a brother of Alice Whitehead and son of Robert Whitehead).



Gräfin Alice-Margit Hoyos
in einem eleganten Abendkleid der Firma Leopold Weiner,
Wien, I. Bognergasse, Graben-Ecke
Artler Hermann Schusterli, Wien, I., Opernring 11.



Alicemargit in the *Wiener Salonblatt* (fashion section), 1 March 1931, the Karlskirche in Vienna, where Ryle and Alicemargit were married on 7 April 1931 (postcard from 1930), and Ryle with his long waxed moustache, disliked by Alicemargit, 1931.

Ryle and I returned to Vienna, where O'Mama [Alice Hoyos née Whitehead], who loved intrigue, had prevailed on me to convey by secret code, what I thought about the young man I went to meet. If marriage was possible I was to wire my plans in English, if I could not consider it, my news was to be sent in German. [Alicemargit's sister Ines later told her great-nephew David Vaughan that Alicemargit had sent her telegram in a mixture of German and English so O'Mama was none the wiser!] At the Plösslgasse [Plößlgasse] 13, O'Mama's residence, there now were 3 engaged couples to try her patience. My brother Balthy [was] engaged to Franzi Seckendorf [Francisca von Seckendorf, they married on 7 October 1931], my sister Cajetana to John Bowman [Sir John Paget, 4th Baronet Bowman, 12 February 1904 – 16 August 1999, they married on 7 February 1931] and now Ryle & myself [married on 7 April 1931]. We were very vexing and trying 'lunatics' as she indulgently called us, never informing her at which meals to expect us. I tried to institute a notepad for each couple to put down their daily plans, but the 'lunatics' were much too preoccupied to bother about this. Another cousin also staying was Billa [Gabriele] Plessen, Aunt Polly's [Leopoldine] daughter. With her as chaperone Ryle & I spent a few very jolly days on the Semmering, a skiing resort near Vienna. Later, when I fully realised his vulnerability I often felt hot at the thought, that I encouraged him to take dangerous ski lessons with a hole in his head. He did wear a metal plate and actually looked very handsome with the black band on his forehead, which secured the disk. Another curtailment which I conceitedly demanded of him was the trimming of a long waxed moustache. His aunt Alice Abadam had encouraged the growing of it. She thought it artistic & original, but my conventional mind feared family jokes & criticism.



John Bowman and Cajetana, 1931; engagement photo of Alicemargit and Ryle, 1931; Franzi Hoyos-Seckendorf, Balthy's wife.

Photos provided by Veronica Barry.

On the Semmering we stayed at different hotels in deference to convention, which was still strict in well conducted families in those days. We had daily skiing lessons soon graduating from the nursery slopes to long tours through the forests, where we spent most of the time embracing trees, the constant cry: "*In die Hocke!*" [crouching position] repeated by the instructor but we were both bad pupils. Billa, who was a charming & tactful gooseberry suggested a day on the Raxalpe, higher ground & different experiences. We climbed up in a funicular railway, had a lovely sunny morning & lunched at a mountain hut. There we both experienced the lovely warmth of mountain sun which enabled us to sit with wet snow-covered suits in perfect comfort. On the way back to the afternoon train a sudden snowstorm cut us off from the ski party. This was rather a frightening experience. It was snowing ever more & the atmosphere became so thick we could not see beyond a few feet. Just as we felt completely lost & wondered if we had missed the last train, the instructor hailed us & sounded quite relieved to have found us so all was well.

In the meantime contact had been made with Papa & Mama [Edgar and Ilona Hoyos], who sounded very pleased & suggested April 7th, their own wedding day for ours. O'Mama was in a hurry to get Cajetana married by the Anglican Embassy Chaplain. This worried me very much and I tried to persuade John to sign the reverse and get married in a Catholic church, or at least to wait the return of our parents. I also went to see Cardinal König to see if any dispensations could be granted, but he was very definite that nothing could be done, if Cajetana got married in the Anglican faith. If she wished to return to her own faith after marriage she might get help for this later. John was quite definite that he would rather give up Cajetana than have a son who had to be brought up a Catholic. He had been to Eton and found that boys were much teased if they were R.C.s. John's father was an Anglican rector. Ryle was always very sympathetic to our faith. One of his sisters was a nun [Vida]. Aunt Alice became a Catholic & his other sister [Mary] also joined. When he finally chose to be an R.C., his mother's ardent efforts to protect her

children from this faith would be finally frustrated. I hope she is now in the wide world of full understanding. On his world tour and climbing expeditions in the Tyrol with Johnnie he always went to Catholic churches with her and did the same with me while abroad. At home this was different at first, as he had an allegiance to Abergwili Anglican church, where his parents worshipped and he was a sidesman [Ryle's parents, his brother David (Da) and his sister Mary are buried there].



Painting at Bryn Myrddin of Ilona Hoyos, by John Quincy Adams, 1914

Our stay in Plösslgasse was a very happy one and soon taken up with preparations for our wedding. Cajetana & John were duly married [on 7 February 1931] in O'Mama's drawing room in front of Mama's portrait by de Quincy Adams, which now hangs in Bryn Myrddin. They did not wait for the parents to return from America and the Anglican clergyman performed the ceremony. Balthy arranged for Ryle and me to go to England to meet the parents and let them inspect my future home. O'Mama had written to her friend Lady Enid Drummond of Edwinstow [Carmarthenshire] to ask about Ryle and Bryn Myrddin. I remember her reading her comments to me, "He is the son of a respected Carmarthen solicitor. Bryn Myrddin is a grey villa-like building outside Carmarthen!" This did not convey much to me but O'Mama said in a melancholy tone: "I know those grey, depressing English villas!" Never did I subsequently find Bryn Myrddin depressing, always radiant with a happy atmosphere of sunlight & love. Perhaps O'Mama had never seen a Welsh "Villa". Papa & Mama were duly taken to Wales by Ryle and left me with Aunt Rosie & Uncle Bertie at Piddletrenthide [Dorset]. I was not to see my home, till after it had been redecorated by Aunt Alice, and after our honeymoon. Aunt Alice unfortunately was rather upset about our wedding date. She feared April 7th would be too early and cold for her and there was an unhappy exchange of letters, when we had to stick to our plans, as O'Mama always left Vienna before May and marriage from her house was the only possibility for me.

My father's old batsman Anton Meiringer [? spelled 'Mairinger' by Eddy Hoyos], who acted as our butler in Sooss, had been invited to wait at table for the wedding feast. He was quite a character and could have been an artist. Every day he laid out an exquisite pattern of petals grasses & berries on the white table cloth, in fact he took much more trouble over this than about keeping his pantry, china & silver clean. He was married to a Xantippe of a wife, who insisted on his bringing her a daily portion from the '*Herrschaftstisch*', the lordly table. Mama's sister, Aunt Margit, is sure she saw him put spinach in his pocket once for this purpose and when meat & bread were rationed & there was always one portion short, he used to be sent to the kitchen for more, while we raided the pantry & found the hidden treasure. When the conversation was supposed to be secret from the staff, we lapsed into English or French, but Anton after years of waiting understood all the jokes & his face used to crease into a broad grin of appreciation.



Left: Walter Berchem, Ilona's first cousin; and right, at the back, left to right: Ryle, Alicemargit, Billa Plessen (the chaperone during the skiing trip in 1931), ?, Robert Osick, at the front, Franzi and Balthy. Dates unknown, photos provided by Veronica Barry.

Our honeymoon began in Baden bei Wien, where we spent the first night and then on to the lovely island of Brioni near Trieste [Italy; the Brijuni Islands are now part of Croatia]. Many photos taken with a wedding present camera from Uncle Walter Berchem [Ilona's first cousin] chronicle all our journey in the big photo album. I have a happy memory of breakfast on the balcony of our hotel room in Mediterranean warmth & sunshine. For about 5 days we walked and explored the Roman remains resting for happy picnics and enjoying our first intimacy. One day we went to Abbazia, the other side of the promontory of Istria to visit Papus and Grandmama Kinsky [Georgine and

Zdenko Kinsky]. We were taken to the bedside of poor Aunt Zita dying of tuberculosis [Therese Kinsky, 16 January 1884 – 1 July 1932]. She held my hand tight and promised always to pray for us. Gina Wilczek later Liechtenstein was there as a schoolgirl [Georgine Norberte Johanna Franziska Antoinette Maria Raphaela von Wilczek, 24 October 1921 – 18 October 1989, daughter of Nora Kinsky who died in 1923. Gina Wilczek married Prince Francois-Joseph de Liechtenstein on 7 March 1943], also Aunt Hansci [Johanna Kinsky] & her son Norbert [Norbert von und zu Trauttmansdorff, 13 September 1922 – 26 August 1990]. The latter fell for Ryle & ran away to fetch a lovely small bronze rabbit to give him and you surely remember this always on Ryle's mantelpiece. Grandmama, who always wore long grey skirts with a deep pocket, used to reach for a surprise all through our childhood saying “USSA! USSA!” [? Meaning unknown.] On this occasion out came a present for Ryle, the mounted miniature of myself as a baby, still in my flat now. Papus gave us an introduction to the captain of the *Saturnia*, which was to take us from Trieste to Naples, a very pleasant voyage, but I do not remember entering Naples harbour in daylight, so we did not “See Naples and die!” However it looked very lovely from many angles, from Capri, Baia Pompei, always towered over by majestic Vesuvius. There are however 2 diaries of our honeymoon, one by Ryle & one by me so I will skip this here.



The party celebrating the return to London of Alicemargit and Ryle. From left to right, back row: Mr and Mrs Spencer Pryse, Herbert Vaughan, Alicemargit and Ryle, Nina Pimm, Barbara Foster. Front row: Marjorie Bowle née Cuff Adams, Dr Alice Vowe Johnson, Alice Abadam, Mary Edith Morris, Ethel Hughes née Abadam, Hilda Abadam.

Our return to London was celebrated by Aunt Alice [Abadam], who had invited several family members to tea at her house. There I met Herbert Vaughan, Ryle's first cousin, a literary man, author of several books & the eldest of the Vaughans of Langoedmore. By then the family home had been sold and he lived in Tenby. [I met] Hilda Abadam & her sister Ethel Hughes [daughters of Alice Abadam's brother Conrade Maxwell McPherson Middleton Abadam, 1845-1873], and her [Ethel's] daughter Nina. There is a photo of this occasion in the album showing also Spencer Pryse & his wife. He was then painting a portrait of Aunt Alice, but she never liked it and it was burnt. Aunt Alice had a handicapped maid, whom she had trained quite adequately, but she used to amuse Ryle with her childish ways & he imitated her to perfection. When he called to see his aunt & Griffith answered the door, he would ask: "How is my aunt?" Her reply would be quite offhand "She's alright!" but then with great emphasis "But there's bad my corns is!". Descriptions of a former employer: "Oh! he was bad, he had to come downstairs on his be'ind". Aunt Alice made short shrift with her, if she gave her trouble: "Now Griffith, if you are bad tempered I'll give you a pill!"

The great day came, when we were to go to Wales. John Bowman had bought an Austin saloon for us and this was duly delivered at Hamilton Terrace [Alice Abadam's house in London]. As I had only driven in the States I was a little nervous of driving out of London, so we got an AA man to pilot us out. We were asked to go to Llanelli and come into Carmarthen by train, because arrangements for a festive reception were made for us in Abergwili. The car was met by British Legion members at Gwili Villa, a rope attached & we were pulled to Bryn Myrddin accompanied by a cheering crowd of villagers. I remember hearing one of the spectators, who had peeped at me through the car window exclaim: "Oh! she looks just like one of us!" and I wondered, if they had expected to see me dark or yellow. When we arrived at the front door Dyffrynog the poet from Abergwili Garden of Eden recited a Welsh Penyllion which of course I did not understand but when I was expected to make a suitable reply I said that '*Cariad*' [darling] was the only [Welsh] word I knew. This remark seemed to please my audience.



The dining room at Bryn Myrddin, date unknown. Photo provided by Margaret Vaughan.

After this opening ceremony, we all climbed Merlin's Hill where a towering bonfire had been erected and a barrel of beer was tapped. An old Irishman Sullivan drank our toast enthusiastically "God bless you both and keep you well and happy all your life!" Audley Lloyd who at that time was at Castell Pigyn had kindly organised all this grand reception for us. He was one of the kindest people and devoted his life to tramps. Miss Lizzie Davies, the housekeeper, had prepared a nice supper for us and I was taken round to see the beautiful decorating Aunt Alice had supervised in our absence. This was truly a labour of love on her part, as she contracted acute sciatica while doing this and had to read all Conan Doyle and Agatha Christie to help forget the pain. Lizzie also showed me the well-stocked linen cupboard, which my mother had been shown too, and commented on to me after her visit. So started our happy life together. Soon Dr Parry diagnosed the start of our firstborn and in due course Elaine [Elaine Mary Elizabeth Honoria Sophia Morris] was born on March 27th [1932; she died on 12 April 2021], Easter Sunday. Dr Johnnie again came to the rescue and recommended her adopted child Nurse Ward, a splendid monthly nurse who came for the next 2 births as well [Margaret Mary Edith Winefride Morris, born 7 November 1934 and Mary Agnes Abadam Morris, born 21 April 1938. Mair Teresa Mabel Morris was born on 23 July 1946]. My parents were staying and Mama stood godmother to Elaine, who was christened in my bedroom. Honor Kysant was another godmother.



Alicemargit and Ryle in 1932, expecting Elaine; Alicemargit with Elaine and Ilona; Alicemargit in 1934 with Elaine and Margaret; and Mary Ag and Margaret, 1930s.

MILLIONS of people have seen the film "The Sound of Music". Many more than once. We were all captivated by its magnetic story of the von Trapp family. The children were adorable, and the scenery and songs never-to-be forgotten.

But for one person I met this week, the outstanding production is of special interest. Recalling her life as a young countess in Austria, Mrs. Ryle Morris of Brynmyrddin, Abergwili, also told me of her relationship to the von Trapp family.

Reminiscing in the large sitting room at Brynmyrddin, surrounded by family portraits, she told me: "My mother was a cousin of the first wife, who was the mother of the children portrayed in the film."

"Maria the second wife, whose part was taken by Julie Andrews, is still alive and with the help of her children runs a singing school in Vermont," she added.

"How do you solve a problem like Maria," was one of the lovely songs sung by the nuns in the film, but when it was being made, Maria thought she really did have a problem.

Mrs. Morris explained: "I understand she became worried that it would be too glamorised, and often rushed to Hollywood to try and prevent this happening. But Maria was unable to do anything about it because she had sold the film right of the book which tells the true story of the family."

"The only thing I remember associated with the von Trapps was when I was seven years old," recalled Mrs. Morris.

"George von Trapp sunk a German 'U' boat in the Adriatic and my mother gave a reception for him. I had to dress up as a cherub and present him with a crown of laurels."

I naturally wondered if Mrs. Morris saw "The Sound of Music."

"I saw it two or three times, and although the story was true, it was a little glamorised," she said.

Talking about her own childhood and life as a countess, Mrs. Morris told me: "I was one of seven children and we had a very happy home. My mother was the Countess Kinsky, and my grandmother married a Count Hoyas, who was a naval officer in the Austrian navy."

"Our family goes back to the Roman Empire, and we are descendants of John Whitehead who invented the torpedo."

"We lived in Fiume, where my father, after serving in the diplomatic corps, was a direc-

tor at the Whitehead torpedo works. But when the Italians declared war on Austria, we had to move to my grandmother's country seat in Lower Austria."

"We were educated by a governess and tutors. When I was 15, my mother sent me to a convent school at Pressbaum, near Vienna, for three years."

Carols

With Christmas only a few weeks away, it was appropriate that Mrs. Morris should tell me about the celebrations she enjoyed as a child.

"We would have a foretaste on December 6th, when St. Nicholas was supposed to arrive. Someone would dress up as Father Christmas, and we left our shoes outside, for a small present to be left in them."

"If we had been bad in some way, such as a poor school report, a rotten potato would be left in the shoe."

"A few days before Christmas Day there would be a great deal of preparation in the household, and on Christmas Eve the servants would join us. We would all wait outside the door of the drawing room, and when it was opened, a large tree, with lighted candles, would meet our eyes. We would then sing carols, and presents would be distributed."

"The traditional feast would also be held on the eve, because on Christmas Day everyone went to Mass and visiting in the village."

In 1927, at the age of 20, Mrs. Morris visited her aunt at Long Island, Virginia, U.S.A.

"It was the time of the prohibition in America, and I felt very near to crime. I can remember one night hearing gun shots outside my window. Someone was being chased for rum-running," she said.

Returning to Europe, Mrs. Morris attended an agricultural college near Stuttgart, and witnessed the start of Hitler's uprising.

While at college she received an invitation to spend the

By

Helen Vaughan

Christmas of 1930 with an aunt.

It was then she met Ryle, her future husband. He was also a guest of my aunt's, and in 1931 we were married," she remarked.

After spending a honeymoon in Italy, Mr. Morris brought his bride back to his home at Brynmyrddin, which had been built by his father.

Bonfire

The village turned out in force to welcome the newlyweds, and a bon-fire was lit on Merlin's Hill.

With a staff of six, Mrs. Morris capably ran the 15-bed-roomed mansion, joined in the community life, found time to bring up four daughters, and learn Welsh. She could already speak English.

One of her first local positions was advisor to the County Ranger movement. She then became vice-chairman of the Women's Institute organisation in Carmarthenshire, a member of the executive committee and market organiser.

She also serves on the national committee of the Council for the Protection of Rural Wales, and is secretary of the Minervia Ecumenical Community and Diocesan Secretary of the Union of Catholic Mothers.

When she does find time to relax, Mrs. Morris enjoys gardening and painting.

I wondered if Mrs. Morris had visited Austria since her marriage. She told me: "My husband and I have been back. In 1951 I returned for my parents' golden wedding celebrations. They were held at a



MR. AND MRS. RYLE MORRIS

castle belonging to a cousin. Our old family home was taken over by the Germans, and it is now a girls' agricultural college." Mrs. Morris said finally: "I knew the glory of the past, but it was dying out when I became old enough to enjoy it. I have modern ideas about things myself."

Sources of information

Archive of Alice Abadam's personal items, drawings, letters, documents, etc. at the LSE Library: Archives and Special Collections Team, Library, London School of Economics and Political Science, 10 Portugal Street, London WC2A 2HD, UK. Tel: +44 (0)20 7955 7229, library.enquiries@lse.ac.uk. <https://archives.lse.ac.uk/Record.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog&id=ABADAM>

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