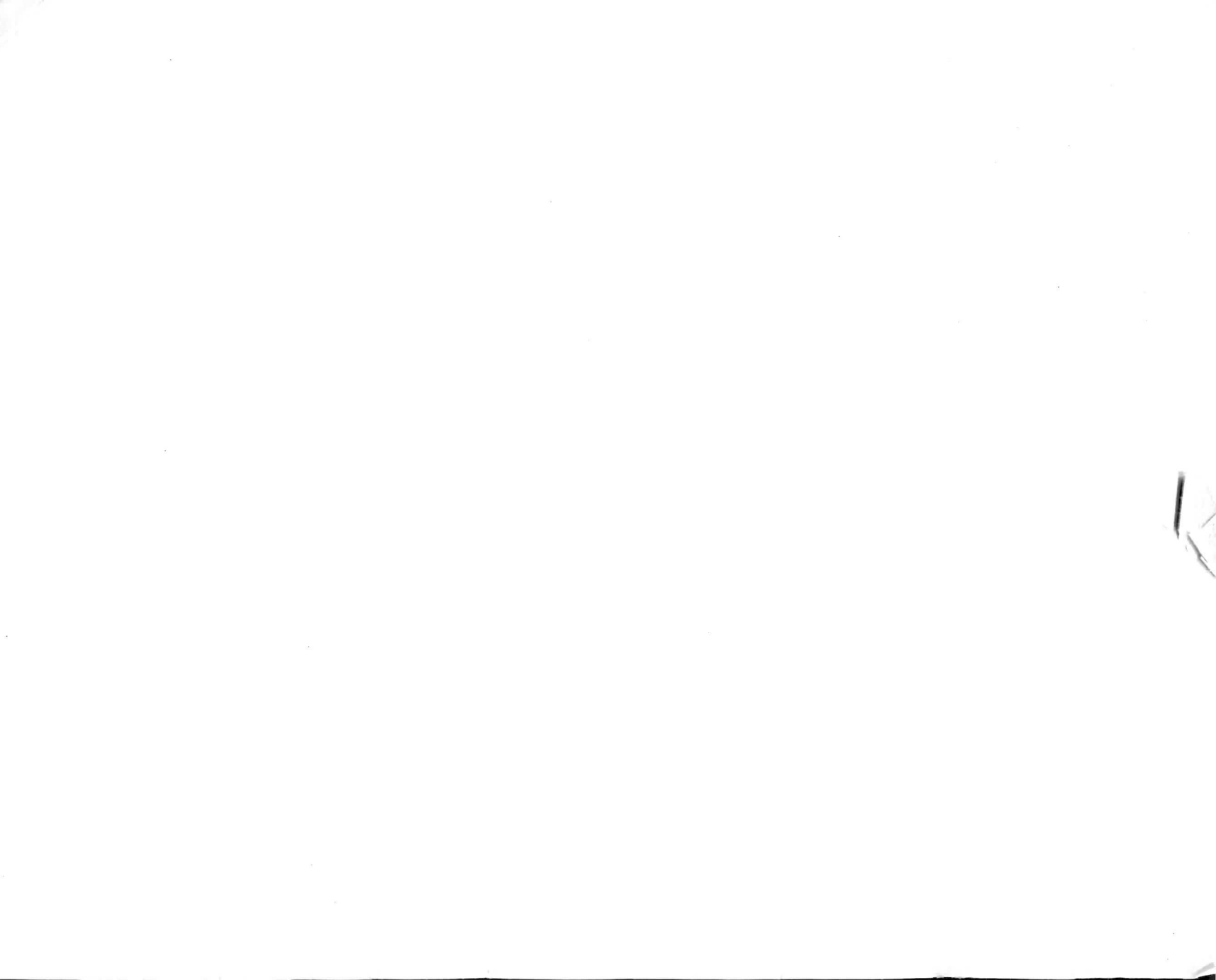


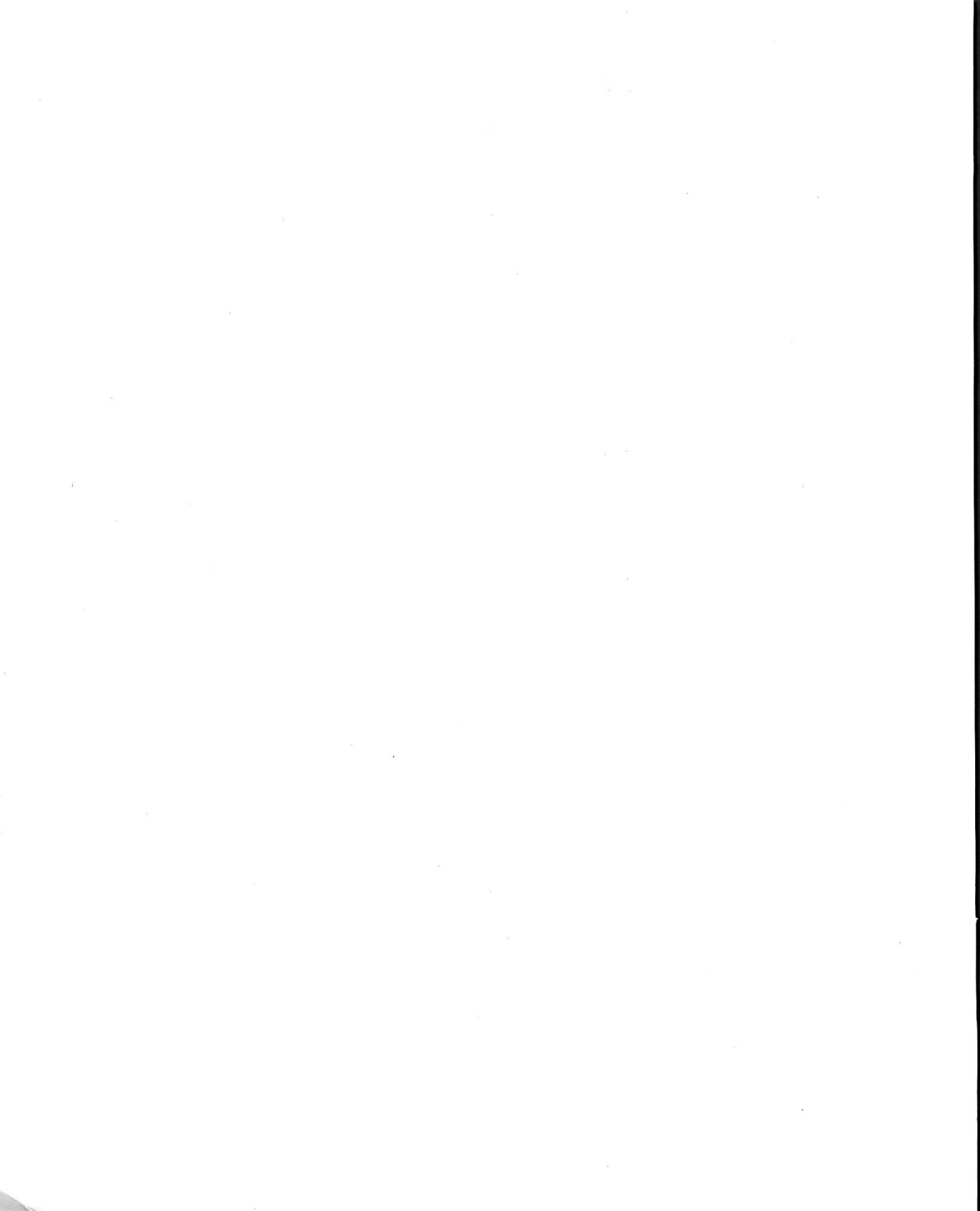
W. W. A. Phillips

A Naturalist's Life





William Watt Addison Phillips (09 April, 1892–16 March, 1981).



W. W. A. Phillips
A Naturalist's Life

Eileen Wynell-Mayow



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[Handwritten signature]

Author's note

When Rohan Pethiyagoda, Managing Trustee of the Wildlife Heritage Trust of Sri Lanka, suggested that I should write a book on the life of my father, W. W. A. Phillips, I feared it would be a somewhat daunting task. His name is synonymous with conservation in Sri Lanka and his scientific contribution immense and well documented. But what was he like? What sort of person was he?

I hope, in these pages, that I have been able to convey something of my father's character, his kindness and generosity, and his deep love for Sri Lanka, her people, and her unique flora and fauna.

I must thank my cousin, Rowan Phillips of Langholm, for the excellent reproduction of old photographs; Mrs Wendy Hill of Oxford for her help and advice; and above all, my husband Richard, for his endless patience and encouragement. My thanks are also due to Rohan for all his hard work in the publication of this book.

Eileen Wynell-Mayow
11 Tackley Place
Oxford OX2 6RR

THALASSEUS BENGALENSIS BENGALENSIS:
SPINNER CRESTED TERN. / M. VAN SOOVI.

1958.

Nov 1st ADDU ATOLL LAGOON. 2 birds approached
HITTADU ISLAND, 2 of these terns were
sitting on rocks on coral, following up
from the reef; other was low over water;
leaving in the afternoon, near the same
place saw another large tern flying;
this was either another of this species or a
THALASSEUS BENGALIS, the large Crested Tern; as
it flew into the sun, I could not see it well
enough to identify it with certainty.

Nov 3rd Visiting ROSKY ISLET - KANDAHARA to the N.W. of GAV
in the afternoon, saw one of these terns on the shore
sitting with Black-naped terns close to Noddio;
no signs of nesting.

July 6. 2 flying together over the Adulu lagoon about
4 PM observed from A/S R launch.

November 2. Party of C12 resting on coral bank on Southern Reef; at
low tide appeared more or less in breeding plumage with much
black on back.

November 16. Flock of 20/30 on a grassy bank on the Southern
reef at low tide - they appeared to be nesting
& foraging.

Extract from diary maintained on a visit to the Maldives in 1956.

1

Sailing for Ceylon

William [Bill] Watt Addison Phillips was born on 9 April 1892 at Attleborough Cottage, the fifth of six children of Charles Addison Phillips and his wife, Anne Kerr. His two middle names were the maiden names of ladies who had married into the Phillips family— it was a common practice of the Victorians to use surnames in this way.

The Phillips family were originally yeoman farmers at Hanbury in Staffordshire, but Bill's grandfather had become a partner in Hall & Phillips Hat Manufacturers, and Bill's father also worked in the family firm. It was a flourishing concern and although by no means wealthy, Charles Phillips, who was a countryman at heart, had built a large house that stood at the end of a private lane surrounded by fields. It was on the outskirts of Nuneaton, within half a mile of the Abbey Church, and close to the works of Hall and Phillips, which became a leading business in the area.

They were a happy and close family. Bill's mother, who I remember with great affection, had grown up in Edinburgh, where her father, Andrew Kerr, was an architect. She was a fine woman devoted to her husband and to her children, whom she encouraged to develop their own interests and talents. From a young age, Bill and his brothers were free to roam at will getting to know the local farmers and gamekeepers, learning from them all they knew about the countryside and absorbing a world of nature.

About the turn of the century, when Bill was very young, an uncle, David Kerr, returned to England on leave from Ceylon. He came to visit his sister and her family in Nuneaton. Bill was so enthralled with the tales his uncle told of life on a tea estate that from then onwards he was determined that one day he too, would be a tea planter in Ceylon.

His education was first at Southcliffe School, Filey, Yorkshire, where in

1906 he won the Natural History Prize—a book called *With nature and a camera* by Richard and Cherry Keaton. The same year his parents gave him a companion volume, *Wild Ways* for his birthday. Bill then went to St. Peter's School, York, where he was very happy. He played cricket and rugger, but his chief delight was on Sundays, when he would take a bus out to the Yorkshire Dales, walk across the moors, regardless of the weather, catching the bus back in time for evening Chapel.

Sadly, Bill's father, who had been ailing for some time, died in 1908 and the change in the family's finances necessitated Bill leaving school early. He spent a few months living at home and during this time he founded the first Nuneaton scout troop. Bill had always been a keen scout and he believed that the skills he had learned helped him when he was a prisoner of war some years later. That Summer, he went to Oxford for a May Ball at the Queen's College where his elder brother Allen was an undergraduate. It was a sixty-mile bicycle ride from Nuneaton to Oxford and my father told me with pride that he never once got off his bicycle. His dinner jacket was in a brown-paper parcel strapped to the carrier on the back. Having danced most of the night he snatched an hour's sleep, breakfasted and cycled the 60 miles home again.

Shortly after this he found employment as a bank clerk in Eastbourne where he had relations. But banking was not to Bill's liking. Letters were exchanged between his mother and her brother David Kerr on Glasgow Estate, and in November 1911, at the age of 19, Bill Phillips left England to start his planting career in Ceylon.

I have the following account in my father's own words—

On arrival in Colombo we stayed at the old GOH (Grand Oriental Hotel) and dined that night with friends in Cinnamon Gardens. The monsoon rains were pouring down and the frogs in the garden were croaking so loudly that I could scarcely hear anything that was said in the dining room; yet the others, being so used to that noise, did not deem to notice it at all. Next day we took the day rail (train) to Talawakelle to me a most thrilling journey winding up the Kadugannawa Pass through unfamiliar vegetation with exciting glimpses of the hills, eventually to arrive amid clouds of steam and much shouting at our

station. There we were met by my uncle's horse drawn carriage and pair. A long drive through tea estates up the Tillicoultry shortcut (with all the men walking up the hills to ease the strain on the horses) and through the Agras to arrive in due time at the old Bungalow of Glasgow Estate, my home for the next six months.

Bill learned the rudiments of tea planting and immediately took an interest in all the natural wonders around him. Later on he was to write—

I came out to Ceylon with a deep love of the English countryside, only to be overwhelmed by the entirely new flora and fauna which I found on arrival. To begin with, everything was so strange and different, that it was difficult to know where to make a start in an attempt to fit in the various, birds, animals and insects that crowded in upon me. A few could be identified and placed with some certainty but the vast majority, especially of the smaller birds and the insects, were so different that I felt bewildered by them. Few books were available and those that did exist were for the most part too highly technical and scientific for the beginner.

On leaving Glasgow, Bill went as assistant (SD) to Kotiyagala Estate, Bogowantalawa. During this time he and some fellow planters kept a pack of hounds and they would regularly hunt on foot on the Bopats for wild boar and elk (sambhur). I don't think they caught very much, but it was good exercise and they were all extremely fit, which I am sure was of great benefit in the war that was to come.

Bill kept diaries of the birds and bats he saw, and of the snakes he kept, paying the local people 5 cents per snake brought in alive. These were mostly earth snakes and vipers such as *Aspidura trachyprocta*, Barne's Cat Snake (*Boiga barnesii*), Sri Lanka Cat Snake (*Boiga ceylonensis*) and Merrem's Hump-nosed Viper (*Hypnale hypnale*), though rat snakes were also plentiful. All were carefully measured and studied and then 'liberated' though some escaped in the bungalow and at least one was killed and eaten by a tame mongoose. There was also a python, which was kept in the office, but it eventually died. He trapped bats and sometimes caught civet cats, which he would keep as pets. His labour force

took a great interest in these activities and would often bring him small animals that they had found. All the time Bill was making notes, studying and learning.

His closest companion was a fox terrier call Jock, who had been given to him as a puppy by Mrs Kerr. When Bill left the estate in 1914, he gave the dog into the care of his faithful servant.



W.W.A.P. with 1st Nuneaton Scout Troop.



W.W.A.P. with his mother.



Attleborough cottage, birthplace of W.W.A.P.



Mother (right centre), Uncle Dave (left) and his wife (left centre), and brother Alen (right).



W.W.A.P. aged 18.



Bopat Hounds: W.W.A.P. at far right.

2

War Service: 1914–1919

At the outbreak of war, Bill felt duty-bound to enlist and he left for Egypt in October 1914 with a contingent of the Ceylon Planters' Rifle Corps (CPRC). He was seconded to the Indian Army, 24th Punjab Regiment with the rank of Lieutenant, later promoted to Captain and saw service in what was then known as Mesopotamia, around Basra and the Tigris river— an area he would have loved to have visited under happier circumstances. He took part in the Battle of Shaiba and Nasseriyah. Once a bullet went through Bill's turban, only half an inch above his head.

But there were lighter moments. An amusing incident occurred during a period of a relative calm when Bill and a brother officer were appointed to relieve the monotony of a diet of tinned bully beef, by shooting some duck and possibly geese. Unfortunately, on the chosen day, wildfowl were conspicuous by their absence and nothing was found until they were some 3 miles downstream from their camp. Then they saw and shot a single duck, which fell 350 yards away, on the opposite side of the swiftly-flowing Tigris River. Reluctant to lose a good meal, the officers tossed a coin and it fell to Bill to cross the river while his companion kept watch. Stripping off his clothes (except for his *topee* [hat]) Bill plunged in and struck out for the far bank— but a strong wind had risen and in the swift current Bill soon found himself in difficulties. He was approaching exhaustion when to his intense relief his foot touched bottom and he realised he was on a sand bank which stretched to the opposite shore. Bill lay in the shallow waters until sufficiently recovered, and then waded to the bank and retrieved the duck. He knew he had not the strength to swim back across the river against the wind and the current, so he now had three long miles to walk back to camp naked and shoeless, clothed only in his *topee* and a duck. His companion kept pace with him on the other bank carrying the rifles and Bill's clothes, hoping to find someone to send a boat to his rescue.

Footsore and sunburnt, Bill approached a small Arab village, through which he must now pass. On the outskirts he took cover behind a wall. Hearing voices, he moved in that direction hoping for help only to find a party of women engaged in their household occupations. Retreating unseen, he tried again in another direction and came upon a group of Arab youths. Conscious of his nakedness, Bill managed with signs and broken Arabic to persuade one of them to part with his outer garment. Then the village Sheik rode up and Bill arrived back in the camp riding the Sheik's horse, wearing his shoes, clothed in a camelhair robe and escorted by the Sheik and all his mounted guard. Reunited with his companions and wearily returning their rifles, they wondered if a duck was really worth so much trouble.

Soon after this the head Arab Sheik invited Bill and his brother officer to visit his village about 7 miles away. Arab horses were sent for them and the escort led by the Sheik's son gave them an exhibition of trick riding and shooting. On arrival they were met by the Sheik and a large group of men who led them to a special guest tent, which was most beautiful. The floor was covered with lovely Persian and Arab carpets with cushions to sit on. They removed their boots and were provided with Arab shoes and coffee was served. Then they went for a stroll round the village and sat in the big council tent while the Sheik received the *salaams* of outlying sheiks and Arabs who had come to see him. A feast was served in their guest tent where they found cutlery had thoughtfully been provided for their use, though the Sheik and other guests ate with their fingers. Huge piles of food were spread out— a lamb baked whole, rice mixed with raisins, pieces of meat and Indian corn, followed by coffee and sweet meats. When they left the Sheik and his two sons rode part of the way with his honoured guests and after shaking hands and wishing them well, left them to be brought home by the escort— but these incidents were few and far between. The heat, sand, flies and constant bombardment were very trying and Bill longed for the war to be over, but three years of severe hardship lay ahead of him.

The 24th Punjab Regiment were amongst the ten thousand Indian and British troops who were trapped in Kut-al-Amara. The siege lasted from 5 December 1915 to 29 April 1916: a hundred and forty seven days during which time the men were under continual shellfire and enemy sniping and food was short. In fact, the garrison was on the verge of starvation when they were forced

to surrender. The survivors were taken prisoner by the Turks and transported by foot, pony cart, motor lorry and train to northern Turkey, a journey of 2,600 miles which took five months. During this time Bill wrote—

In 1916 as I lay sick in an Arab coffee shop beside the ancient Tigris my thoughts turned to my favourite hobby and the thought occurred to me that there was no book on the mammals of far-off Ceylon, my land of adoption.

He determined to make good use of his all too spare time to study zoology and as far as a greatly restricted liberty would permit, to collect specimens of the fauna that he found. Bill kept detailed records of the animals and birds that he saw in both Mesopotamia and Turkey.

The first camp was at Kastamuni where they stayed for about a year, living in Turkish houses on the outskirts of the town, closely guarded the whole time. Their rations were of the most basic, but they were allowed to buy provisions from shops set up in the compound. Cheques were accepted as the British Government had guaranteed payment at the end of the war. Once they were settled, letters came fairly regularly and it was always a great joy to hear news from home. Parcels took a long time to arrive. Bill's mother sent clothing, foodstuffs and books on natural history, zoology and botany, all of which were studied in great detail and Bill wrote to Cave & Co. in Colombo, who sent him two volumes of Tennent's *Ceylon*. Occasionally, he sent specimens to the British Museum and corresponded with their scientists. After some officers tried to escape, the prisoners were moved to Changri, 70 miles over the mountains. They had an escort of 200 armed soldiers to protect them from brigands, who were known to rob travellers. Conditions in Changri were poor. They arrived in September 1917, which was wet and cold, and that Winter was particularly severe, with snow and frost and everyone was thankful when they moved on to Yozgat in April 1918, where things were much improved. The prisoners were free to leave the camp and walk or picnic in the countryside, and they cultivated a vegetable garden in the compound.

During this time, Bill kept a young Eagle-owl as a pet. He had found the owl's nest in a cave half-way down a cliff in the ravine. With the aid of a rope he managed to descend to the cave and found a scratched out hollow in the farthest

corner containing two small birds about ten days old. A freshly-killed Magpie was lying beside the nest with the feathers of Partridge, Hoopoe and Roller, also the bones of Hare and Dog. Bill took the older and larger bird, which soon grew its full first plumage, the ear tufts being the last to grow. In three months the Eagle-owl was a magnificent bird measuring 27 inches from its beak to the tip of its tail with a wingspread of just under 5 feet. It could now fly strongly and escaped one night through the window just a week before peace was declared.

Rumours had circulated through the camp for many days and then in the second week of November, the prisoners learned to their great joy and relief that their long captivity was at an end and that they were to start for home as soon as the necessary transport had been collected. But there were many delays and they had a long, frustrating journey by train and boat taking altogether seven weeks before reaching England on 1 January, 1919. Bill arrived home the next day to a tremendous welcome from all his family. He had several months' leave due to him, and then, refreshed in mind and body, he decided to resign his commission and return to Ceylon.



W.W.A.P. in the uniform of the Punjab Regiment.



1925: wedding to Lilian Anderson.



Deltota Estate, 1927.

3

Return to Ceylon

Bill arrived in Colombo in September 1919, to be greeted by his servant, Velu, and Jock, his fox terrier who was overjoyed to see his master again after an absence of five years.

Bill now became superintendent of Anasigalla Estate, a division of St. George's Group, a large rubber estate at Matugama, near Kalutara, in the Southern province. He came to know his labour force individually. He understood their customs and was always ready to help with their problems and was much respected by them.

He rode a motorcycle and once a month would go to Kalutara, some 12 miles away, to collect labour pay, which even in those days amounted to several thousand rupees. The canvas bag containing the money was tied to the back of his motorcycle and on one occasion he found, on reaching the office, that there was a hole in the bag and most of the notes were missing. With a sinking heart, knowing that he was responsible and that he would never be able to replace so large a sum, Bill slowly retraced his tracks. His labourers and the villagers who had found the notes returned them all to him as he went along, and he found on counting that not a single rupee was missing.

His bungalow was soon full of animals and snakes— all the time Bill was learning and studying, listing his observations and keeping meticulous notes. At the weekends he would explore the jungle and country around, accompanied (until he got too old) by Jock, who had learned to ride in front of him on the motorbike. If Bill had a few days holiday he would stay overnight in rest houses, sometimes going as far as Hambantota, then a wild and desolate area, which he particularly enjoyed.

Christmas 1919 Bill spent at Weligatta near Hambanota. Leaving the bungalow at 6.30, he travelled by motorbike and estate lorry to Kalutara, where he caught the train to Matara, thence by bus to Hambantota where he dined

and engaged a bullock cart to take him to Weligatta, where he arrived at 2 a.m.

Sometimes he would go to Colombo, where he had many friends. He would attend rugger matches, dances and the social gatherings of the Capital, usually making time also to visit the Colombo Museum and meet the scientists.

Early in 1923, he published a paper 'On the habits of the Ceylon Gerbil' in *The Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society*, and 'A list of the mammals of Ceylon' in *Spolia Zeylanica*. But he was beginning to realise that if he was to achieve his ambition of writing his book *The Mammals of Ceylon*, he needed greater scientific knowledge.

As some leave was due in 1924, Bill arranged to study at the British Museum (Natural History), now The Natural History Museum, in London. Living during the week in a bedsit, he visited the Museum each day, working with the scientists, learning to take measurements, mount specimens, make scientific notes, all the time absorbing the knowledge he needed.

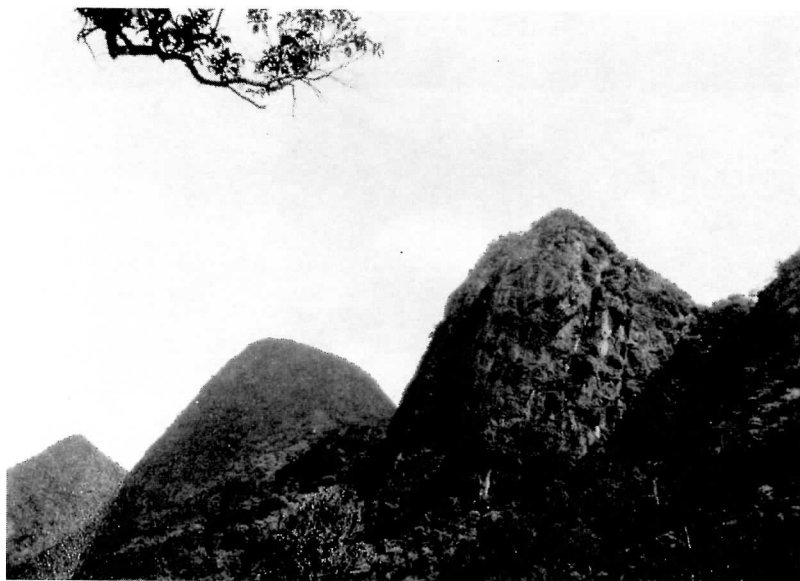
Weekends were spent with his mother, who was living at Leamington Spa close to her married daughter, Grace. His family were delighted to have Bill at home with them and he was invited to dances and dinner parties. At one of these he met an attractive and vivacious young lady, Lilian Anderson, who was known as Paddy owing to her Irish ancestry. She had been teaching in South Africa and was now coaching the daughters of some family friends. Bill and Paddy took to going for long walks on Sunday afternoons, finding they had a great deal in common and a shared interest in nature. It was not long before they were deeply in love and they married in January 1925.

On their return to Ceylon, Bill was concerned that his bride would find the heat and humidity of the low country trying, so he took acting billets up country, during which time Charles was born, followed by my arrival in March 1927. A permanent home now became essential and we took up residence on Mousakanda Group, Gammaduwa, an estate of some 1,000 acres of tea situated at the northern end of the Knuckles hills, 18 miles from Matale.



Mousakande Bungalow.





View from Mousakande Bungalow.



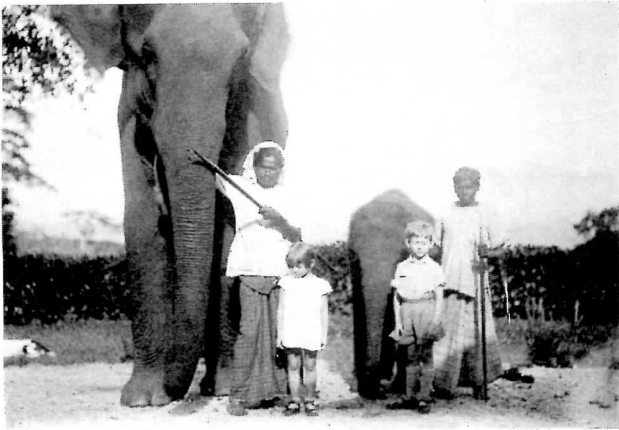
Charles and Eileen with a baby barking deer.



W.W.A.P., Charles and Eileen with Donks, the donkey.



Charles and Eileen with members
of the menagerie.

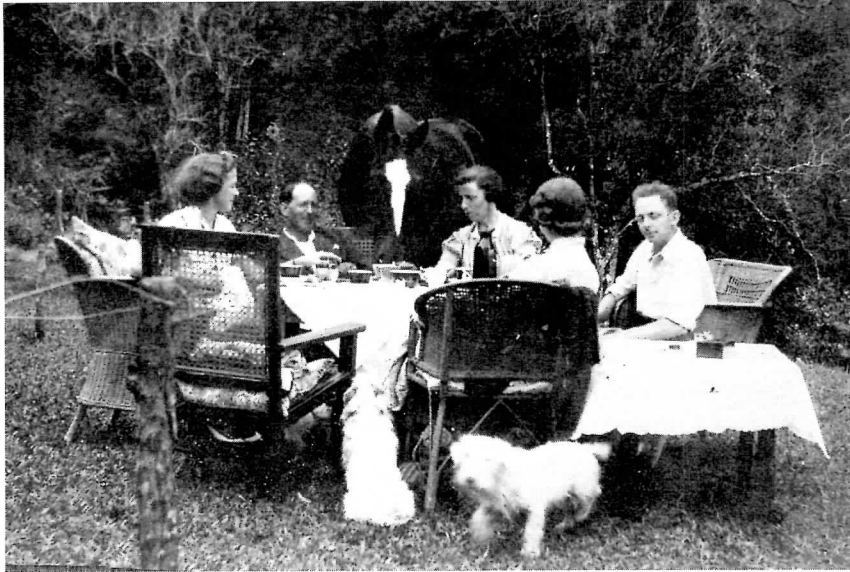




Jill, the jackal.



W.W.A.P. and Stewardess.



Tea party with Brutus, the horse.



Galloping ground.



'Bambara' beehive.

4

Family Life

My childhood was very happy and secure. Our home was in an ideal position, high on a hillside, with a wonderful view down the valley. It was a typical planters' bungalow with large, airy rooms opening off a central hall and dining room. The place that held most fascination for my brother, Charles and me was the back veranda, where lived a variety of birds and animals, some injured being nursed back to health and then released, some young being hand-reared by my mother. All of them Bill would study, recording their growth and habits, and photographing them for his book. To us they were pets— a loris, a palm civet, a flying squirrel, a barking deer that followed us everywhere, and Jill, the jackal cub. She had been found as a tiny baby and grew into a beautiful, though nervous, creature. One day she took fright and disappeared for two days— gradually she took to staying away at longer intervals until it became obvious she had adapted to her wild heritage. Sometimes we would see her watching us from the edge of the forest, and though we missed her, we were glad she was in the environment to which she belonged.

Our day began at 6 a.m. when Bill would be at his desk writing and working on *The Mammals of Ceylon* and other scientific papers. I would dress hurriedly and run out to the front, where old Sellan the donkey man would be waiting with Donks, my donkey. I would be off down the drive with old Sellan running behind me, but the donkey was old too, so we didn't go very fast. Riding back to the front porch I would dismount and lead Donks through the bungalow, calling in on my father and out to the back veranda where old Sellan would be waiting with a bran mash. I would then join Mother and Charles who were feeding and caring for the animals. Breakfast was at 8 a.m., and then Charles and I had lessons with our English governess, while Bill rode round the estate on his horse, Stewardess, and Mother would do the housekeeping, see to feeding the chickens and ducks, and supervise the gardeners and house servants.

Before a dispensary was opened on the estate, my mother would, every morning, treat minor ailments and dress cuts and injuries. There would always be a long queue of people waiting, and I can remember seeing a tea plucker with an open wound on her finger and an enormously swollen arm. She had been bitten by a *thith polonga* (Russell's Viper), which would normally be lethal, but the bite had been cut open so the venom bled out and then it was washed daily with potassium permanganate, a powerful disinfectant. The plucker responded well to this treatment and was soon back in the tea fields.

We would always run out to meet Bill as he rode up the drive at noon—he would have a bath and after lunch we would all have a short rest. Then, if we were lucky we would walk to the office with him. Once, running ahead, Charles and I saw what looked like a stick lying across the road. As we stooped to pick it up, a slight movement warned us it was a snake and we froze as we had been taught—standing perfectly still until Bill arrived and killed it with his walking stick. This was the largest krait ever found in Ceylon and was preserved at the Institute for Tropical Medicine where I saw it many years later.

Sometimes we would go to the factory where we loved to watch the machinery, always polished and gleaming. The floor was continually swept and there was always the aroma of newly-made tea.

In the afternoons too, there would be tea parties when a neighbouring planter would ride over on his horse, Brutus, who would join us drinking tea out of a large china bowl. Then we would go round the garden—Charles and I playing hide and seek while the grown-ups admired the flowerbeds with their colourful mixture of tropical and English plants. There would be a final visit to the animals on the back veranda before supper—baths and bed for us—and Bill would spend another hour writing at his desk.

In the early days, before we got a generator, there would be a table on which stood the hurricane lamps with the wicks trimmed, cleaned and refilled, waiting to be lit at dusk. I always loved their twinkling lights but once the lamp boy spilt some paraffin on his arm, which caught fire. In his pain and fear he ran down the drive but Bill caught him. Rolling him on the ground, which put out the flames, mother wrapped him in a blanket and cradled him in her arms while Bill drove to Matale Hospital. Thankfully, he was not seriously burnt and was soon back on the estate. Promoted to Nursery Podian, he kept our rooms

spotlessly clean and cared for us devotedly.

Weekends were often spent camping on the Galloping Ground, a beautiful area of grassland bordered by jungle. It was not very far from the bungalow and old Sellan would walk over with my donkey. Our food, tent and equipment would be sent on ahead and all would be in order when we arrived.

Sometimes we would go further afield for two or three days. A favourite spot was near Elahera on the banks of the Amban Ganga. We would be carefully lifted from our beds at 4 o'clock in the morning, and gently laid, still sleeping, on the back seat of the car: "Dawn Days", my father called them. I can remember waking in the jungle, the sound of the birds and the smell of breakfast cooking.

All too soon for Charles and me, this life came to an end. There was a widespread belief that English children would not thrive in the East after the age of seven or eight and there was our education to consider. So in 1934, our parents took us back to England and left us at boarding school.



Scops owl.

5

The 1930s

Over the past years Bill had been publishing articles in the *Ceylon Journal of Science*, the *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* and other scientific periodicals. He had been elected a Fellow of the Zoological Society and the Linnean Society of London, and was a member of the British Ornithological Union. He carried on a wide correspondence with naturalists and scientists all over the world, many of whom were close personal friends.

In 1935, *The Mammals of Ceylon* was published (costing Rs 10/= or in England, 15 shillings). This was the culmination of many years of painstaking work and it received excellent reviews and public acclaim.

The thirties was the time of world-wide depression and Ceylon was no exception. "The Slump" was a difficult time for planters as tea and rubber prices were low and in some cases tea was selling for less than it cost to produce. On Mousakanda, costs were kept to a minimum and Bill managed to keep the estate running efficiently but he himself took a salary cut and it was not easy to make ends meet, especially as there were now school fees to pay. Paddy made her own clothes, always managing to look smart, and ran the house economically with a large vegetable garden and chickens and ducks (for which she cared in addition to the family pets which then included a leopard cub, a mongoose and many smaller animals). There was no hope of 'home leave' as in those days most planters had to pay their own passages and also the wages of the man who would 'act' for them. But they managed to save enough for Paddy to come to England in the long Summer holidays. She would travel by ship, a voyage of three weeks, and once she brought a bear cub back with her as a gift to the Dublin Zoo. These separations were hard for families—just as much for parents as it was for children—but Paddy and Bill enjoyed a close companionship as did Charles and I in England.

Gradually finances improved and Bill was able to acquire an old estate lorry which he had equipped as a caravan and this was the basis of their camps.

They carried a canoe and were more or less self-sufficient, transferring to a bullock cart if the roads got too bad. Weekends and holidays at Christmas and Easter were spent in the jungle. Bill wrote several accounts of these trips for *Loris*, the journal of the Wildlife and Nature Protection Society, of which he was Honorary Secretary from 1929–1938 and President in 1942/43 and again in 1947/48. In 1936 the Colombo Museum, at the instigation of the British Museum carried out an Avifaunal Survey of Ceylon and Bill (by now something of an authority on Ceylon birds and an accomplished bird photographer) was involved with this undertaking.

At last in 1938 Bill was able to come to England on leave. Paddy had travelled ahead and it was with great excitement that we journeyed to Dover to meet Bill from the ferry. In his anxiety to get home, Bill had left the ship at Marseilles, travelling overnight by train. It was wonderful for the family to be together again, and this was a very happy time.

Once, as we drove through Sussex, Bill said, 'Where would you like to stay tonight?' Looking out of the car window Charles and I saw a cottage. 'There,' we said, 'in that cottage in the middle of that field.'

Stopping the car Bill walked down the footpath and knocking on the door enquired of the elderly couple who answered, 'My children want to spend the night here. Would you consider taking us as paying guests?' They looked slightly surprised, but being kindly people and seeing our eager faces, after some discussion, it was agreed. Here we spent some magical days. Charles and I would wake at dawn and throwing on our clothes we would creep downstairs and run out across the fields with the dew sparkling in the early morning sun as we searched for wild mushrooms. These we would bring back to be cooked for breakfast with fresh eggs and home-cured bacon. The days were spent exploring the country around either by car or on foot, and then back for a hearty supper and baths in a tin tub in front of the fire.

Shortly after this we were a few miles from Bognor Regis when we saw a bungalow to let. More than anything Charles and I wanted a home and Paddy and Bill decided this would be ideal. The contract was signed, furniture bought and the following day we were settled in. It was not far to the beach where we would swim and picnic, exploring Pagham Harbour and lagoon. This was the same area where Paddy and Bill decided to live when they left Ceylon some

twenty years later.

At that time the threat of war had receded and we all believed there would be 'Peace in our time', as we were told. Charles and I spent two more holidays in the bungalow with two sisters from Yorkshire who came to look after us, but it was never the same as that idyllic holiday. All too soon war was declared and there were long years of separation ahead of us.



Paddy with leopard cub.



Black civet kitten.



Bhalu, the sloth bear cub.



Poochy and the pangolin.



Nimrod, the fox terrier, with leopard cub and mongoose.



Paddy and Bill at Mousakande, 1935.



Out birdwatching, complete with conoe.



Camping in the 1930s.





Out photographing birds.



"The Cottage in the Field".



Above and below: bird-photography hides.

6

The Second World War

The beginning of the war was a curious time in Ceylon. Events in Europe had little effect on normal daily life, though gradually commodities became scarce and there were, of course, no tourist ships. Bill and Paddy were worried about my brother and me, who were now living in Canada with Paddy's eldest sister, but their life on the estate continued much as usual. Bill organised a War Purposes Committee and took a special interest in food production, encouraging his labourers to become self sufficient as far as possible.

With the entry of Japan into the war the situation changed rapidly and after the fall of Singapore in February 1942 there was a serious threat to Ceylon. It was believed that the Japanese were intending to attack India from Ceylon in the south as well as through Burma in the north, and Bill was called upon to set up a coast-watching system all round the island, keeping a constant lookout for invasion from the sea.

Women and children were evacuated. Paddy was reluctant to leave but Bill was now back in uniform and it was decided that she should try and join us in Canada. Early in 1942 Paddy sailed for South Africa where she spent some months in Cape Town trying every means possible to procure a passage to Canada: this she finally managed to do and much to our joy we were reunited in the Spring of 1943.

Bill's work was highly secret and necessitated extensive travel both on land and round the east coast by motor launch supplied by H. M. Customs. He sailed from Matara in the south to Jaffna, visiting many of the offshore islands—Delft and Kayts, Iranativu and Pallaitivu—schoolteachers and priests, headmen and villagers, all would be alert to anything or anyone strange or unusual. Men who knew the jungles were recruited and equipped with radios and field telephones: they would coordinate reports and keep in constant touch with headquarters and Bill was continually visiting and investigating. A map of his

war journeys shows there were few roads or tracks that he did not negotiate in an army jeep.

On one of his visits to Mullaitivu in October 1944, Bill saw 200-300 Black-tailed Godwits feeding in the shallow water of a lagoon, a significant find as this bird had been until then considered a rare vagrant.

In spite of his demanding and important work, Bill maintained his interest in the Wildlife and Nature Protection Society, being elected president in 1942. He pointed out the necessity of planning for the future and instituting a Save the Fauna Campaign so that, as soon as the war was over there would be preparations to remedy in some degree the ravages suffered through food production and military activities.

Gradually, as the tide of the war turned, the Allies began to look to the future and plan for conservation and rehabilitation on a world scale and Bill was sent to a conference in the Middle East as Ceylon's representative. Early in 1945 he was called to London for talks and debriefing at the War Office, and at the same time he applied for—and was granted—leave to Canada.

By this time Charles had enlisted in the Canadian Army and Paddy and I were living in a small flat at the top of a Victorian house in Toronto, where I attended business college and Paddy worked in the university's Law Library.

It was with great excitement that we went to the station to meet Bill, who arrived looking drawn and gaunt after so many years separation. As always, he took a deep interest in his surroundings, in the bird life and in the flora and fauna of Ontario. He and Paddy spent as much time as they could out of the City, near Huntsville, where they could relax in the peace and beauty of the Muskoka Lakes and once again enjoy each other's company.

The news was good and in May, to our great relief, the war in Europe was over. It now became essential for Bill to return to Ceylon and through the auspices of the Canadian and the British Governments we were given passage on the S.S. *Sam Luzon*, a Liberty ship of some 10,000 tons, heading for Karachi with a cargo of two steam locomotives. These little ships could be built in a week and were a vital lifeline in wartime, crossing the Atlantic with munitions and supplies. At a steady 10 knots the voyage took over a month, sailing from St John, New Brunswick, across the North Atlantic, through the Mediterranean, the Suez Canal and the Red Sea, then the Arabian Sea from Aden to Karachi.

As this was the breeding season for northern-hemisphere birds, comparatively few land birds were seen and even the sea birds were not as plentiful as at other seasons. Nevertheless, many interesting birds were seen, particularly several species of shearwaters and petrels and there was only one day in the North Atlantic when no birds at all were seen.

Landing at Karachi, we then had a further two weeks travelling by train through India, often stopping overnight in accommodation at the railway stations. We were all thankful when we arrived in Colombo after two months' travelling.



Chestnut-headed Bee-eater.

7

Planting in Uva

Mousakanda Group had been sold soon after Bill left on war service in 1942, and he was now offered a position as superintendent of Galapitakanda Estate, Namunukula. Some years later, this estate was absorbed into Tonnacombe and Bill became manager of the whole group. Tonacombe bungalow was in an ideal location on the edge of the escarpment, with the garden falling away in lawns and flowerbeds to a pond framed by eucalypts, beyond which was a view across the low country to the sea some 60 miles away. At night you could see the Great Basses lighthouse and sometimes the lights of ships at sea.

I was working at Ceylon Army Command as a Temporary Woman Assistant (TWA). At first, headquarters were based in the Colombo Museum, but were then moved to Peradeniya, into the vacant Southeast Asia HQ. Charles had transferred from the Canadian to the Indian Army and was an officer cadet stationed at Bangalore, south India. He came on leave in March 1946, spending a very happy time with Paddy and Bill on Galapitakanda and then coming on to see me in Kandy. He went with some fellow officers to swim in the river near Katugastota, where he hit his head on a submerged rock and tragically died a week later of tetanus in the Military Hospital in Kandy. His grave lies in the very beautiful War Cemetery near Peradeniya. This was a dreadful loss to the family. Paddy and Bill were devastated at the death of their only and much beloved son and our grief drew us together. I moved up to Army HQ at Diyatalawa so that I could be close and go home at the weekend.

I had met my future husband, Richard Wynell-Mayow when he was posted to Ceylon Army Command as signals officer after serving in Burma. His family were well-known tea planters, his grandfather having arrived in Ceylon in 1865. We were married at St Peter's Garrison Church in the Colombo Fort in April 1947.

The Associated Newspapers of Ceylon asked Bill to write a series of small books—each would include 20 species under the headings *Familiar Birds of the*

Garden, Birds of our Swamps and Tanks, Birds of our Highlands and *Birds of the Ruhuna National Park*. They were published at intervals between 1949 and 1961 and were priced at Rs 5/= (cloth cover) and Rs 3/= (board cover).

Illustrated with colour plates by Mrs Cicely Lushington and with Bill's black and white photographs, the books were designed to attract the amateur bird lovers and to encourage the interest and enthusiasm of young people.

These books proved to be very popular and Bill, who was never one to seek the limelight, found his name was in all the papers. The Governor General asked him to lunch. By mistake the invitation was sent to an admiralty civilian of the same name who worked in the naval dockyard at Trincomalee. He duly arrived with his wife at Queen's Cottage in Nuwara Eliya, mystified as to why he had been invited and even more so when he found himself sitting at Lord Soulbury's right and being expected to converse about birds, a subject of which he knew nothing.

Bill always enjoyed this story but he was very pleased when some years later, before he left the island, Sir Oliver Goonetilleke requested him to call at Queen's House. Sir Oliver sent his car for Paddy and Bill (who were staying in Colombo) and received them in his private sitting room—thanking Bill personally for all the work he had done for conservation in Ceylon and the enormous contribution he had made to the knowledge of Ceylon's wild life.

About this time too, Bill published a series of papers on the *Nests and Eggs of Ceylon Birds* and *An Annotated Checklist of the Birds of Ceylon*—Bill had bought one of the first Land Rovers to be imported into Ceylon and spent as much time as he could in the jungles studying the birds and animals.

In February 1950, a breeding pair of Broad-billed Rollers (Dollarbird), an extremely rare bird, were shot at Maha Oya by the Museum Taxidermist. The female was found to contain eggs ready to be laid. This act of destruction caused a great outcry among conservationists and bird lovers. Bill had observed these birds mating and defending their nesting site from invaders and he had every intention of photographing the birds at their nest. He was extremely upset at their collection 'in the interests of science'. In all three years of the Avifaunal Survey (1936–39) collecting took place only outside the breeding season and no nesting birds were ever shot. The Ceylon Broad-billed Roller was recognised as a subspecies, and a separate scientific name, *Eurystomus orientalis irisi* was given

to distinguish it from the southern Indian race. I am glad to say that the bird has been nesting since in rain forests at Sinharaja, Kithulgala and the Peak Wilderness.

Paddy and Bill were delighted with the arrival of their grandchildren—our son Michael and daughters Heather and Loraine, and they were exemplary grandparents. Richard was now superintendent of Craig Estate, situated about 5 miles from Bandarawala, at 4,500 feet. Frequently at weekends Bill would leave Paddy with us and continue down to the low country. Sometimes he would stay overnight at Tanamalwila Rest House close to the Kirindi Oya. Later on when my children were at school this became a favourite place of mine, too.

We would leave early in the morning, dropping down through Poonagala Estate to Koslanda, stopping to admire the Diyaluma Falls. Here we always saw Racquet-tailed Drongo and sometimes if we were lucky, the Ceylon Trogon. Continuing on to Tanamalwila we would leave the car at the rest house and walk down to the river. This was a place of mystical beauty—the trees on either side met in a green canopy overhead and filtered sunlight through ever-changing shadows—in the dry season we would wade upstream, enjoying the crystal-clear water and the sandy riverbed. This was the haunt of the Red-faced Malkoha, though I only saw it once, silently threading its way through the canopy above. We would often see Paradise Flycatchers with their beautiful long tail feathers, the bright-green Jerdon's Chloropsis (Blue-winged Leafbird), hornbills, bee-eaters and parakeets. Sometimes, deer would come down to drink and once in the distance we saw an elephant. Deeming it wiser to go no further we sat on a convenient rock enjoying the peace and beauty of the scenery, before making our way slowly back in the heat and stillness of midday to enjoy a curry prepared by the rest-house keeper.

Then we would continue on to Weerawila, stopping on the way beside a small lotus-covered tank to see Purple Coot and Pheasant-tailed Jacana; Pied Kingfisher could often be seen fishing from a tree on the edge of the tank hovering in the still air until spotting its prey it would dive rapidly, coming up with a fish in the beak. Then it would perch on a branch and proceed to beat the fish to a pulp before swallowing it.

Weerawila and Tissawewa were wonderful places for the birdwatcher. Painted Stork, Open-bill, Spoonbill, Black-headed Ibis, Spot-billed Pelican and many other species too numerous to mention. I spent some happy hours

watching a colony of weaver birds building their intricate nests.

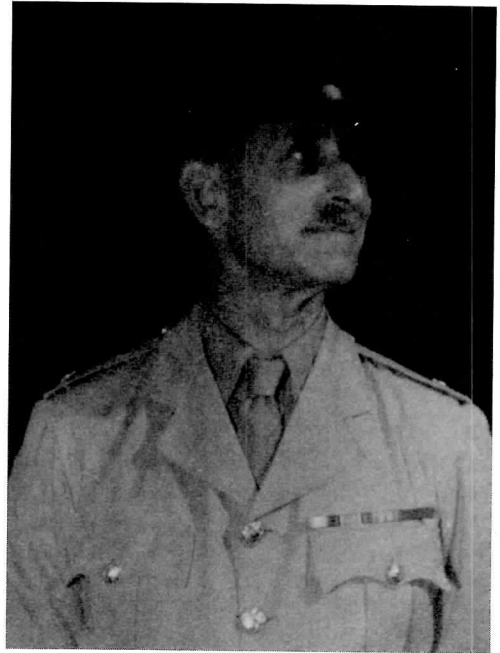
On the way home we would turn left off the main road following a jungle track to Buduruwagala to view the ancient Buddhist rock carvings. I can remember this track looking particularly beautiful with the shrimp plant (*Justicia* sp.) in full flower on either side.



Tonacombe.



L.P. at Tonacombe.



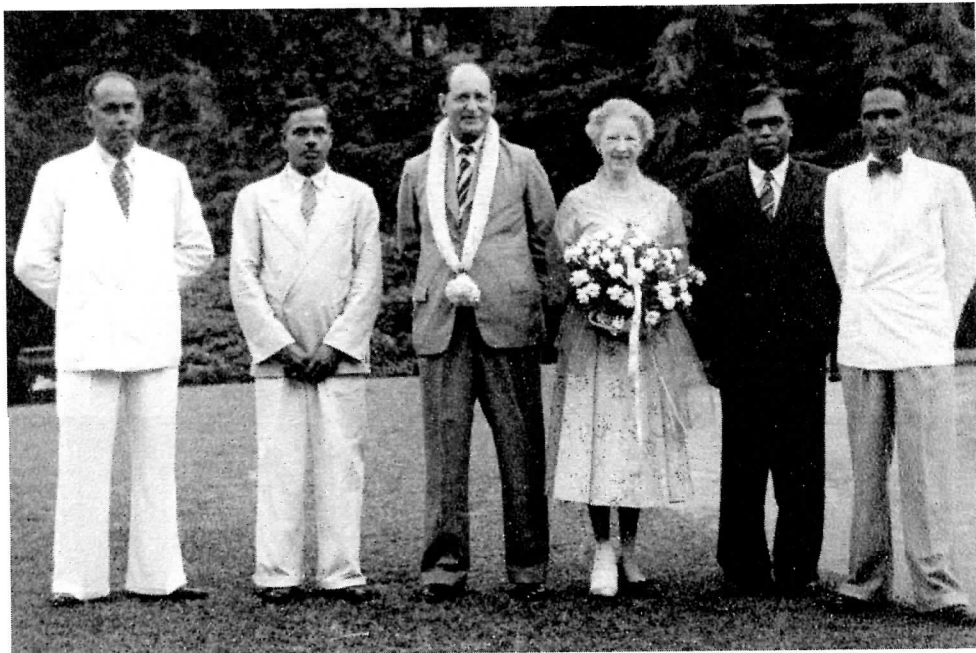
W.W.A.P. in uniform, 1944.



W.W.A.P. — out in the wilds.



Retirement from Tonacombe: with Tonacombe staff.



8

The Maldives

In 1956 Bill was 65, considerably more than the accepted retirement age for tea planters. Although extremely fit and energetic he was persuaded to retire, but he and Paddy were reluctant to leave for England when winter was approaching, so Bill agreed to carry out a survey of the flora and fauna of the Maldivian Islands for the British Museum. These islands comprise a chain of coral atolls some 400 miles southwest of Ceylon. Now known as a popular holiday resort, at that time, scientifically speaking, almost nothing was known of the area.

At the end of November, Bill and Paddy left Colombo by ship for Malé, accompanied by a taxidermist. Also on board was the Maldivian Prime Minister, his wife and family. Two nights later they were stranded on a dangerous reef some 28 miles north of the capital, and there they remained until rescued by the Royal Navy 36 hours later.

The survey included not only birds, but also mammals, amphibians, reptiles, fishes, insects (including butterflies) and shells. They had a Maldivian interpreter and guide, who spoke excellent English, and knew the names, localities and habits of most of the Maldivian birds and other members of the fauna of the atolls.

Bill found everything of great interest and was especially pleased to find Shearwaters nesting on an island north of Malé. When there was nothing else to do, Bill would go sea fishing, for Bonitos, Kingfish, Yellow-fin Tunny and Rock Perch. There were always dolphins to be seen and sailfish and marlin were plentiful just outside the passage through the reef, though Bill did not have the equipment to catch these big fish. Once he hooked one, which came to the surface, raised its huge dorsal fin and departed, breaking the line like a piece of thread.

It was during the time of their visit that the RAF station at Katunayake (Colombo) was closed and handed over to the Ceylon Government for development into the International Airport. The RAF needed another staging

post and they decided on Gan on Addu Atoll, the most southern of the islands lying just 30 miles south of the equator, where there had been an airstrip during the war. A representative of the British government arrived and a Treaty was duly signed between the two countries.

Bill and Paddy left Male in February 1957, and spent some time in Colombo, settling their affairs and saying farewell to many friends before they sailed for England. They bought a house at Aldwick, an area they knew well and near their relatives. Shortly afterwards my husband and I arrived with our family for six months leave, so the time passed quickly.

Just as they were settling down to retirement the Commonwealth Office asked Bill to go to Gan as British Liaison officer. It was felt a go-between was needed between the RAF and the Maldivian Government and knowing that Bill has already spent some time there, he would be the ideal man for the job.

Bill was most reluctant to return to the East but eventually agreed to do so, until a suitable replacement could be found. As it turned out they lived on Gau Island, Addu Atoll, in the extreme south for nearly a year from May 1958 to April 1959.

This was a difficult time politically but nevertheless Bill would continue to record bird species he found. The number of identified species increased from 24 to 63 after his 1956/57 visit and again to 113 species after his sojourn in 1958/9. On his return to England Bill was awarded the M.B.E. for his work in these Islands.

9

Retirement

After the difficulties of life in the Maldives, particularly the extreme heat of Addu Atoll, Paddy and Bill were thankful to return to their home in England. Bill was as busy as ever, taking a great interest in the environment and studying the Flora and Fauna of the area. He was a voluntary warden at Pagham Harbour Nature Reserve and played an active role in the Bognor Regis Natural History Society. He was much in demand as a public speaker to many of the local societies as diverse as the Women's Institute and the Camera Club.

In 1960, our son, Michael, went to Preparatory school close by in Chichester. His grandparents gave him a home, taking a great interest in all his activities and turning up on even the coldest days to watch him playing in school matches, and Bill started a Natural History Society at the school. In October 1969 Bill and Michael were exploring an underground passage in Sussex, where they were delighted to find a small colony of Mouse-eared Bats (*Myotis myotis*) a species seldom found in Britain.

Bill and Paddy established a collection point for sick and injured birds at which they would nurse the birds until they could be transported to a nearby bird hospital run by volunteers with a deep love of birds.

Nor did Bill lose touch with his interests in Ceylon, now Sri Lanka. He had a wide correspondence, received the Ceylon Bird Club Notes every month, re-issued the Annotated Checklist of the Birds of Ceylon (Sri-Lanka) in 1975 and 1978 and began the revision of his Mammals of Ceylon (1935) as the *Manual of the Mammals of Sri Lanka*.

We always looked forward to our two-yearly furloughs, when we would rent the house next door. In 1966 we all went for a month's holiday to the west of Ireland. Bill had become interested in the Flora of Europe and the Burren is an important botanical area.

One day as we walked across the fields we saw a weasel some way ahead of us. "Would you like to see it close up?" said Bill. "Crouch down behind the

wall," and he made a strange sound with his lips. Soon the weasel was looking over the wall at us!! This sound Bill said was a of a rabbit in distress, a trick taught him by a game keeper in his youth.

We spent many happy hours bird watching at Pagham Harbour— on one occasion we had a close view of Bearded Tits in the reed beds near the lagoon—a beautiful and uncommon bird.

Bill's interests included butterflies and moths and he travelled all over England recording and photographing rare species of plants, particularly the ground orchids which he found especially fascinating.

While we were still living on Craig Estate, and our children at school in England, Paddy and Bill could be relied upon to collect or take them to the airport. It was a great comfort to us to have their willing help and support. They took a great pride in all their achievements, delighted in their company and there was a close and happy bond between grandparents and grandchildren.



Awarded M.B.E.



W.W.A.P. at Pagham Harbour.



W.W.A.P. with an oiled razorbill.

10

The Final Years

In 1975 Bill and Paddy celebrated their Golden Wedding— a happy occasion. Richard and I were now living in England and would visit as often as we could. Our son and daughters kept in touch by telephone and letters and would often come to see them too.

As the years went on Paddy's health began to fail. Arthritis and Angina meant she could no longer accompany Bill on his outings. Nevertheless she still took a great interest in all his work and gave him all the support she could. She developed glaucoma in both her eyes which resulted in the loss of her sight. In 1980 Paddy became seriously ill and Bill nursed her devotedly until she died, just a month short of her 90th birthday.

Mr. Thilo Hoffman, President of the Wildlife and Nature Protection Society had suggested the publication of a revised edition of the *Mammals of Ceylon*. The new edition would be in three parts and entitled "Manual of the Mammals of Sri Lanka". This was a major undertaking. There had been a number of changes in classification and in nomenclature and to bring this information up to date involved a considerable amount of correspondence. Part 1 and 2 were completed by 1980, but Paddy's illness delayed work on part 3 and it was some time before Bill was able to complete this task. Early in 1981 he received a specimen copy of part 1 of the "Mammals" and was very pleased to see it in print.

I spent a great deal of time with my father after mother died. He was lonely without her presence. His dedication of "mammals" reads- " To my wife Paddy-without whose devoted encouragement and assistance the first edition would never have been completed and deep gratitude for fifty years of joyful married life"

Bill had found it harrowing to see her suffering in her last illness and once he said to me "I have one wish left-when my time comes I pray I will go quickly".

When I was staying with Bill we would often sit up late talking and I

loved listening to his stories. It is on these talks and my own memories that this book is based. We would visit friends too and were planning to visit the Shetland Islands in the summer, a favourite place of mine, where the flowers and bird life are quite unique.

One day George Henry came to tea with his son Bruce and his wife. For me, this was a great occasion, and I couldn't help thinking how much knowledge of Ceylon, her jungles and natural history these two elderly men had between them.

Bill remained remarkably fit. We went out to Pagham Harbour one bitterly cold day in January, and started to walk towards the beach, but there was an icy gale and Bill said, "I think we will turn back"- the first time I had ever heard him say this!!

When I was not with him I would telephone every evening at 6.30 and I would always try and find something of interest to tell him. He had a deep knowledge of a wide range of subjects and I always enjoyed these calls.

One evening at the beginning of March he said "I have completed Part 3 of the Mammals-my life's work is done". A week later he was taken to hospital. My husband and I went down to Sussex to be near him, joined at the weekend by our son and his fiancé. Our two daughters were abroad at this time and were in touch by telephone.

We spent a happy evening at Bill's bedside- His mind was still lively and we made plans for him to stay with us when he left hospital- sadly, it was not to be. Bill's heart failed and he died the next day. His last wish was granted and for this we all were thankful. The manuscript of Part 3 was neatly on his desk, ready for despatch to Sri Lanka.

Diary, April 1914

Jungle Trip to Pomparippu

Left Kotiyagala about 3 o'clock Saturday evening and rode 16 miles to Strathdon, where I stayed the night with my companion. Left the next morning by car to Kandy. Went to Kurunegala, arriving 10.35 o'clock. Had tea, then motored to Puttalam, 54 miles in 2^o hours. In the evening, after tea at the rest house, we called on the GA [Government Agent], then fished till dinner and caught seven small fish. After dinner at the rest house we went aboard the boat at 9 O'clock. Sailed all night and woke up to find ourselves on a sandbank. I and one of the boatmen went ashore and walked up the coast until stopped by a river mouth where we waited for the boats to come up and take us on. We had breakfast on board at about 12 O'clock, landed and walked to Pomparippu, about 4 miles. We saw the headman, sent a cart for our equipment, had tea and then went out. Saw several pigeon and Golden Plover. Stayed the night at the rest house.

TUESDAY, 7TH. Started at dawn and walked to Tallivila, arriving about 9 O'clock at the same time as the cart with our camping gear. Got camp ready and then went out to shoot a deer for food. Everything is too dried up—decided to go back.

WEDNESDAY, 8TH. Struck camp at dawn and went by road to Pomparippu. Saw spotted hind and pig. Breakfast and tea at the rest house. Then went to look for Golden Plover and afterwards straight to the boat. On reaching the boat we went three or four hundred yards down the coast to look for partridges and waders, then sailed across to see the fishing headman and arranged to fish in the morning.

THURSDAY, 9TH APRIL (my 22nd birthday). Started out fishing in an outrigger sailing boat about 8.30. No luck. Boatman caught two fish only. Back to breakfast, then set sail for Karativu, 4 miles away. Saw partridges, doves and waders.

Next morning sailed for Puttalam at 11.30, arriving about 4 O'clock. Packed up and motored straight to Nikaweratiya. Stayed night at the rest house.

SATURDAY 11TH. Left early to motor to tank about 5 miles away. Saw teal, snipe, *bata goya* (*Green Pigeon*), pigeon, water-pheasant (*Jacana*) and several large crocodiles. After breakfast went out in a boat on the tank and saw teal, snipe, doves and more crocodile. Back at the rest house we had a bath in the tank and stayed the night.

Diary, December 1919

Christmas Around Hambantota

SATURDAY, 20 DECEMBER. Left Anasigalla (Matugama) at 6.30 a.m. by motorbike to St. George where I caught the estate motor lorry into Kalutara, catching the 9 a.m. train to Matara. Booked a seat in the mail bus to Hambantota and went up to the rest house for lunch. The rest house is in the old Dutch Fort, together with most of the European Bungalows and public officers. The bus left at 2.20 p.m. and the first stop was at Tangalle (about 26 miles). Here we spent about an hour and I had time to see the old Dutch Fort or Blockhouse, which stands on a small headland overlooking the sea. It is now used as the local jail and I met the Head Jailer and had a few minutes' conversation with him. There seems to be a small fort at nearly every town along this coast. I suppose the Dutch must have been much afraid of the Sinhalese! Most of them are now used as either offices or public buildings but they remain to remind one that it is only a little over a hundred years since the British took over the island from the Dutch. Some miles out of Tangalle the evening began to draw in. This part of the journey was accomplished rather more quickly so it was not until we reached Ranna that we stopped to light the lamps.

On reaching Hambantota I went up to the rest house for dinner, where I met Scott, the P.W.D. [Public Works Department] Engineer and obtained his permission to use the P.W.D. bungalow at Weligatta. Before setting down to dinner I ordered a bullock cart to be got ready to take me to Weligatta as soon as I had finished. We eventually left at 10.15 p.m. I put down a little straw and made myself as comfortable as possible while the bullock slowly wandered out to my destination (I had originally intended to go into Yala but cholera at Tissamaharama prevented me from doing so). On arrival I found my men there with my kit but it was after 2 a.m. before I got into bed, having first arranged for local trackers to come at 5 a.m. to go out into the jungle.

SUNDAY, 21 DECEMBER. The morning was dull and inclined to rain. Working right-handed around Embilikala Lewaya we found peacocks were plentiful, many sitting on dead trees uttering their very unmusical cries. Jungle Fowl were also very numerous— the beautiful cocks with generally a hen or two beside them often being seen scratching or feeding on the path ahead. On observing us they would put down their heads and charge away into the jungle, rarely flying. Hare too, were often seen, and small herds of deer— mostly hinds.

Waiting for me when I returned to the bungalow was a Sinhalese villager who reported that a leopard had killed a bullock close to the bungalow and he was anxious I should sit up for it. I inspected the kill and made arrangements for the construction of a *machan* in a tree close by.

All over the plains were Golden Plover and one or two jackal taking little notice of anyone. Along the margin of the lagoon was a wonderful collection of waders of many different species— flamingos, storks, Black-winged Stilts, lapwings, Greenshank, Redshank, sandpipers etc, with a few Curlew and Grey Plover. As we went quietly along we could hear an elephant crashing and feeding in the jungle close by and beside the path I found a Bustard Quail's nest with three eggs, and also an Ash Dove's nest.

After a hurried dinner I immediately went out to sit up for the leopard but it was no good; I was too tired, having had too little sleep the night before, and I could not keep awake!

MONDAY, 22 DECEMBER. It was raining the next morning, so I did not go out until 6.15 a.m., when it had cleared a little. I walked for a mile or more up the Weligatta coast road and turned left into the jungle following an old elephant path. Peafowl and Jungle Fowl were even more numerous. In a glade I saw a herd of Spotted Deer and a large boar stood looking at me. Here too, in a tree overhanging a pool I came across a colony of brightly-coloured weaverbirds with their curious woven grass nests. I found another doves' nest and a small, domed nest containing two eggs belonging to the White-throated Wren Babbler (*Dumetia albigularis albigularis* [now known as the White-throated Babbler, *Dumetia hyperythra*]). Many of the small grey jungle hornbills were to be seen and also many other interesting birds, the names of which I did not know.

After lunch I went out again to see if the leopard had returned to his kill

after I had left the previous night. This I found to be the case— there was nothing left of the bullock except its head.

TUESDAY, 23 DECEMBER. This morning I went down the coast road towards Hambantota and after a mile or so I noticed a number of crows fly up from behind some bushes. I found a bullock, not 10 yards from the road, freshly killed by a leopard which had probably been disturbed as very little was eaten.

A few yards further an elephant suddenly appeared in the path ahead of us— without a sound it had stepped out of the jungle— not 25 yards away it now stood with its ears gently flapping. While we stood still and watched, another appeared beside it, closely followed by yet a third. Then the jungle seemed to open and the whole herd appeared and stood idly shifting from foot to foot. For a while they all lingered on the path or in a small open glade adjoining, giving us a magnificent view; while some tore down branches from the neighbouring trees, others stood flapping their ears and swinging their trunks and tails to keep the flies away. In the middle was the great herd bull— one of the largest elephants I have seen— and around him were the cows, several of them with quite small calves trotting beside them, awfully quaint-looking little creatures. Eventually the herd faded into the trees and as we passed along the path where they had just been we could hear them trumpeting, rumbling, squealing and breaking branches close at hand on our right.

I sat up over the second leopard kill that night but saw only the jackals tugging at the carcass, to the sound of elephants crashing in the jungle.

WEDNESDAY, 24 DECEMBER. I decided to push on to Wirawila, another 8 miles up the road. As it was wet I remained at the bungalow to see my kit loaded into the cart and then made my way to Wirawila by various jungle tracks. A long, weary walk not completed till the afternoon and I was glad to see the rest house with my cart standing in front of it. After a little food I started out at 4.15 with fresh trackers to see what the surrounding jungles held.

Crossing the Willigatta road we rounded the edge of a large tank and saw Pheasant-tailed Jacana, Cotton Teal, Whistling Teal and many other water birds; and I spotted a pig munching at some fallen wild fruit.

THURSDAY, 25 DECEMBER— Christmas Day. Last night had been pretty poor. The rest house has a tank on each side of it and stands only a few hundred yards from the water. Consequently, as soon as the sun drops, clouds of mosquitoes invade the place. I was told too, that malaria was had in this district. I therefore determined to return to Hambantota if the jungles did not seem promising.

As I left the rest house at 5.30 a.m. a small sounder of pig crossed the road ahead of us some 500 yards away, but I saw only one deer all morning and the only other thing of interest was a fine giant squirrel. There was a vast concourse of birds on the tank bed—herons, egrets, storks and crowds of waders together with a large flock of teal and a solitary white ibis. As I watched, a very fine White-bellied Sea Eagle came and settled on a tree close by.

After lunch I packed up and leaving my kit to follow in the bullock cart with my man, I rode off to Hambantota on a push bike, which I managed to borrow from the local police headman (for a consideration).

At Hambantota rest house I found another planter and his family, who had come to spend Christmas by the sea, and enjoyed dinner with them.

FRIDAY, 26 DECEMBER. We took my friend's car and met the cart with my kit about 4 miles out on the Weligatta road. I then walked over the fields, finding Golden Plover, small sandpipers and doves.

In the afternoon I slept a little and then went down to the beach. The sea was just a nice temperature so we were able to enjoy a delightful bathe for over an hour.

SATURDAY, 27 DECEMBER. I caught the motor bus for Matara and then proceeded back to the estate by easy stages arriving there on Sunday morning, having had a most enjoyable trip.

Portfolio

A selection of photographs (mainly) of nesting birds
by W. W. A. Phillips from the period 1930–1938



Tailorbird on her nest.



Indian Little Grebe on her nest.



Spotted-billed Pelicans and Painted Storks.



Eastern Grey Heron brooding on her eggs.



Eastern Grey Heron standing on its nest.



Painted Storks standing on their nests.



Open-billed Storks on their nests.



Ceylon Shikra Hawk brooding young.



Crested Goshawk and young.



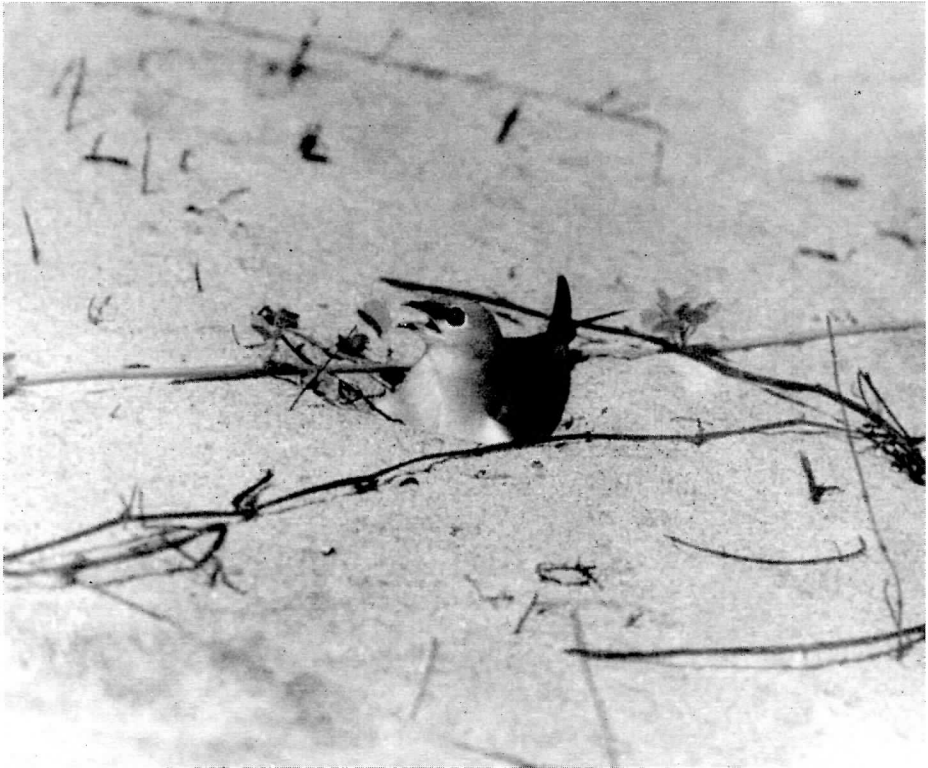
Ceylon Bustard-quail brooding eggs.



Indian Purple Coot brooding her eggs.



Indian Little Ringed-plover about to brood eggs.



Large Indian Swallow-plover brooding eggs.



Forest Eagle-owl.



Ceylon Fish-owl.

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