

The Diaries of Silvia Tatham 1895-1957

Volume I



Monday Jan 21

This week has not been a very happy one. Friday was baby¹'s birthday, we three, Meaburn², Mary³ and I were in bed till four o'clock, and on ~~Friday~~ Saturday in bed till Eleven.

¹ Agnes Clara Tatham (1893-1972), Silvia's 2nd sister, always known as "Widdy" in the family. After studying at the Slade she became a well-known artist, with a studio in South Kensington. Several of her paintings were exhibited at the Royal Academy.

² Meaburn Tatham (1886-1976), Silvia's only brother. He was at school at Southborough, Tunbridge Wells, and at Eton. He went up to Balliol College Oxford, as did his father Meaburn and his son Roden. He spent some time as a journalist, and then as an attaché in the government of the Leeward Islands, where he met his wife Eileen Roden. During the Great War he help set up and then served with distinction in the Friends Ambulance Unit. After the war he joined the Cadburys chocolate company, and remained until retiring in 1950 as a director.

³ Mary Katharine Tatham (1889-1968), the eldest of Silvia's 3 sisters. In 1922 she married Knud Knudsen, a Lutheran Pastor from Denmark. They had 4 children and 15 grandchildren. Thus in 2008 the majority of Silvia's living relations are Danish.

We went to ~~three~~ no, two parties, one to Mrs Martins⁴ and to Mr J. Morlands⁵. We acted a sharard with Uncle Herbert⁶ and Daddy⁷. The word was Antolope.

<i>Aunt</i>	<i>Elope</i>	<i>Antolope!</i>
<i>1. me</i>	<i>2. me</i>	<i>3. me</i>



⁴ Mary Martin, wife of Dr Paulin Martin, the local GP. They lived in Ock Street, Abingdon, and had 2 children, Dorothy and Edward Paulin Martin. Edward was about the same age as Silvia, and came on holiday to N Wales with the Tathams the following year.

⁵ John J Morland, a local solicitor then aged abt 55, widowed for some years. In the Apr 1891 census he was listed as living of Bridge Street, Abingdon, with 6 sons, 2 daughters and 6 servants.

Or the reference could be to his son Francis John Morland, b abt 1868, also a solicitor, and his wife Margaret; in 1901 they were living in Abingdon, at The Laurels in Spring Terrace.

⁶ Herbert Francis William Tatham (1861-1909) Silvia's father's brother. An outstanding scholar, with a prodigious memory, as well as a gifted athlete, he became a housemaster at Eton. He died tragically in an accident at Chamonix in 1909. Silvia was deeply affected by his death.

⁷ Meaburn Talbot Tatham (1858-1937), Silvia's father. He was educated at Eton and Balliol, and like his younger brother Herbert was an excellent scholar and athlete. After a short time as a master at Westminster, he settled with his family at Northcourt House, Abingdon, and became a private tutor for young men preparing for admission to Oxford.

Wednesday Jan 30

It is my birthday today. I am ten years old. We had breakfast downstairs this morning. I had *The Talisman*¹ from Daddy and a doll from Mother², a writing case from Meaburn and a calendar from Mary.

Sat Feb 16

We skated on the river to day! Up-to-Newnam³. It is good ice at Newnam, but it is bad ice every where else.

every where every where

Tuesday Feb 26

We went to Oxford to day. Meaburn and Mother went to a concert. Joachim⁴ played the violin and a lot of other people played and sang. I went to the Occulist with Daddy, he did something very horrid to my eyes, it hurt dreadfully.

April 1st Monday

Tiger has got a kitty! just like her, we are going to keep it till its grown up, & then its going to go away.

¹ The Talisman, a Tale of the Crusaders, published 1825; one of Sir Walter Scott's Waverley Novels.

² Clara Susan Tatham (1861-1945), née Miers, Silvia's mother, was the 6th of the 8 children of Francis Miers, a Brazil merchant, and his wife Susan Mary Fry. Born in Edgbaston 19 Mar 1861, she never lived in Brazil, unlike her elder siblings. It is something of a puzzle how she met her husband Meaburn Tatham, as the two families had little in common. One thing they did share was a love of the Welsh coast and the north Welsh mountains. It is pleasant to speculate that Meaburn and Clara may have met during one of their family holidays in Wales in the early 1880s.

³ Newnham Courtenay, village abt 3 miles from Northcourt, further up the R Thames towards Oxford.

⁴ Joseph Joachim (1831-1907), violinist & conductor, close friend of Brahms who dedicated his violin concerto to him.

April 15 Monday (Bank Holiday)

Meaburn tumbled in the cess-pool to day!!!! He went to tea with Edward Martin this after-noon.

Our holidays have begun.

The 4th of June

Wednesday June 5th

I am staying at Eton with Phyllis Lowry⁵. Yesterday was the Fourth of June. Mrs Lowry had ninety people to dinner! We had dinner in the boys dinning room, and after dinner we went into the playing fields to watch cricket matches, and a band played. We had tea at Uncle Herbert's house, Aunty Jessie⁶ and Pubsey⁷ were there. After tea we went to see a procession of boats, the boys who ~~dressed~~ rowed were dressed up. Then we went home and had supper, after supper we went to a lady's house, to look at some beautiful "fireworks".

fireworks

Then we went home and went to bed, it was ten o'clock!

⁵ Phyllis Mary Lowry, a couple of years younger than Silvia and a lifelong friend. Her father was Charles Lowry, then an assistant master at Eton and later a housemaster at Sedbergh. In about 1960 after her husband had died, Phyllis came to live at Northcourt House, by then a school, as companion to Silvia's younger sister Evelyn.

There was another connection with the Lowry family, as Phyllis' grandfather, Rev. Charles H Lowry, lived near the Tathams' house at Northcourt after his retirement. In Mar 1901 he is listed as living in Abingdon at Springfield, with his wife Sarah and their 3 unmarried daughters.

⁶ Jessie Elizabeth Tatham (1854-1942), elder sister of Silvia's father. At this time she was living with her parents in Bayswater. After her parents died she took on their house, Cary Castle, at St Marychurch near Torquay. Later in life she set up a Anglican sisterhood there.

⁷ Charles Meaburn Tatham (1828-1924), Silvia's grandfather, always known in the family as "Pubsey". He was a barrister and company director. His "Recollections" survive and are of considerable interest.

Monday June 17th

Tiger's little kitten died a long time ago, but Fattys had ~~got~~ one a long time ago and Tiger had another one this morning! So we have now four cats and 2 kittens!! Quite a zoological garden of cats.

Thursday July 24th

I have had a dear little goat given me. I have had it about a month now. When it first came it was so frightened, when I went to the stables to see it, it ran round and round, but at last Mother managed to stroke its head and then I did. We took it out the next day but it broke its chain and before we could catch it, it fell into the moat. It was very nearly drowned, and very nearly died of fright when we got it out, but its all right now, it follows me about the garden, and it is so fond of me, I have it quite loose now, it's so tame.

Mummy and Daddy went to Scotland last Friday, they come back on the 17th of August.

Fatty has got another kitten, her first one has gone away.

Wednesday July 31st

Meaburn went away today, he has gone to stay at Emberton¹ for a fortnight.



Wednesday August 14th

It is Meaburn's birthday to-day, he has come back from Emberton yesterday.

Saturday August 18th

Mummy & Daddy came home yesterday, we were all so glad. Mary & Meaburn and I went to meet them. We went for a picnic on

¹ Emberton, a village in Buckinghamshire, original home of the family of Silvia's grandmother, Elizabeth Collingridge. She and Pubsey kept up a house there, though they lived in London at this time.

the river to-day. A pupil called Mr. Fife came to-day, we like him very much.

Monday August 20th

A pupil called Mr. Sutton came to-day, he has got a big black ~~French~~ Russian poodle called Worry, who is a dear.

Wednesday September 4th

Phyllis & Mrs. Lowry are staying with us, they came the Saturday before last, and are going to stay till next Saturday. Phyllis and I have got two clockwork steamers, we sailed them in the river one day, but mine sunk, so daddy got me another. We are going to a school-treat to-day at Shipon². A pupil called Mr. Harrison has come, he is very nice. We have now three pupils, Mr. Fife, Mr. Sutton, Mr. Harison*.

I have got some reigns for my goat, I have taught her to jump over the tenis-net.

* Frederick Harrison's son (ST)

Thursday September 5th

The school-treat was very nice, there was games, races, and scrambles -.

I can swim now, but Mother wont let me go out of my depth.

Sunday September 8th

The Lowry's went away yesterday by river we went as far as Sutton pools³ with them,



we had dinner there, and then came back,

Friday September 20th

I have been staying at Emberton. I went there on Monday September 9th and came back last Wednesday.

² Shippon, village abt 1 mile west of Northcourt.

³ Sutton Courtenay, village abt 1 mile south of Abingdon.

I enjoyed my-self very much, but for one thing, while I was away Capella died. When Mother came back from seeing me off at Oxford, Harry told her that when he came home from driving us to Radly¹, he had found her lying down ~~iff~~ very ill. He took her to the veterinary surgeon Mr. King, she got better, and came home, but got worse again; Mother took her to Mrs. Good a woman who lives at Marcham², where she died (we think from eating yew).

Daddy & Mummy have given me a pair of nuns^{*3}, they are such dears. They come from Egypt; they build in the winter.

* Birds, White Nuns (ST)

September 27th

Last Thursday Mr. Sutton was taken very ill indeed, something was the matter ~~was~~ with his brain.

Meaburn and I were sent to the Martins, & on Saturday Mary & baby to the Raikes⁴. Mr. Sutton's mother & father & uncle came, two nurses, & three doctors. At last he got well & went away.

December 20th

A short time after this we got a letter from Mrs. Good saying that she had got two little Nanny kids, & she wanted me to buy them. Mother & Daddy did not want me to have them at first, but at last they did. I have had them nearly three months now, they do follow me sometimes. One is the mother & the other a daughter.

When we first had them the mother was 18 months, & the daughter 4.

Daisy Tarver⁵ has been staying with us & so has Pubsy, & before that Aunty Kiki⁶.

¹ Radley, village abt 1 mile east of Northcourt, location of the public school Radley College.

² Marcham, village abt 2 miles SW of Northcourt.

³ The White Nun bird has not been positively identified. There are 4 possibilities, of similar names, but none has its habitat anywhere near Egypt.

⁴ Rev Thomas Raikes, a master at Radley College, and his wife Elizabeth.

⁵ Probably Margaret Tarver, dau of Francis Tarver, formerly housemaster and French teacher at Eton.

When they were here we had 6 pupils. Lord Dalhusey⁷, Mr. Nelson, Mr. Bailey, Mr. Gibbs, Mr. May, Mr. Tailor.

There is only two left now. We are going away the next day after tomorrow, Monday, to Eden Cottage⁸. We stopped lessons yesterday Friday.



March 20th [1896]

Oh dear! I haven't written for such a long time! It is really very naughty of me. We had a very nice time at Beckenham; we went to a pantomime at the Lyceum. The story was Robinson Crusoe. I like the Lyceum better than Drury Lane & the Christal Palace Pantomime.

⁶ Annie Esther Miers (1853-1942), known as "Kikky" or "Kiki", elder sister of Silvia's mother Clara. Born in Rio de Janeiro like most of the family, at this time she lived with her parents in Beckenham. There is a family tradition that Maurice Macmillan, the publisher and father of the prime minister Harold Macmillan, proposed marriage to her but she turned him down. She never married, and lived on her own in Oxford. She kept a cockatoo. After Kiki died it went to Northcourt, outliving her by many years.

⁷ Arthur George Maule Ramsay, 14th Earl of Dalhousie was born 04 Sep 1878 at Atkinson's Hotel, Torquay. He succeeded to the title 25 Nov 1887 at the age of 11. He was at school at Eton and, after his coaching at Northcourt, went on to University College, Oxford. He became an officer in the Scots Guards and served in the Boer War and WW1. The other pupils named have not yet been identified.

⁸ Eden Cottage, Beckenham, by no means a cottage but a 12 bedroom mansion in Kent, was the home of Silvia's maternal grandparents, Francis Miers and his wife Susan, née Fry.

We went to Masculayn¹ & Cooks, & to the Cristal Palace. And we went to Westminster Abbey, & to St Pauls. I like Westminster Abbey the best, I was christened there; Daddy likes St Pauls best.

Mummy & Daddy went to Paris for a few days while we were at Beckenham. While they were away Uncle Herbert took Me & Meaburn to the Zoological gardens, we enjoyed ourselves very much.

We went to the British Museum & to the Kensington Museum too; didn't we have a nice time? We have never been about in London so much before. But all this time Uncle Harry² had scarlet fever, but he is quite well now. He is a professor at ~~Eton~~ Oxford now, and dosnt live at London anymore.

Aug. 23rd

We have just come back from the summer holidays; we went to Capel Curig in Wales. We had a dear little house called Bron Eryr,



¹ Maskelyne and Cooke, the most celebrated stage magicians of the day, performed at the Egyptian Hall, Piccadilly.

² Prof. Sir Henry Alexander Miers (1858-1942), elder brother of Silvia's mother, was born in Rio de Janeiro 25 May 1858. After leaving Trinity College, Oxford, in 1882 he worked for 13 years at the British Museum as a mineralogist and crystallographer. On 13 Dec 1895 he was appointed Waynflete Professor of Mineralogy at Oxford University and became a Fellow of Magdalen College. A few days later he fell ill with scarlet fever and was unable to move to Oxford until the following February. Later he was appointed Principal of London University, before becoming Vice-Chancellor of Manchester University. [Mary W Porter, *The Diary of Henry Alexander Miers 1858-1942*, Oxford, 1973].

just opposite Moel Siabod & a very kind landlady called Miss Hughes³.

Granny⁴ & Grandpapa⁵ & Aunty Julie⁶, & Aunty Jessie, & Kiki stayed at the Royal Hotel⁷ a mile further than our house, & the Lowrys took a house on the bridge called Pont-y-Gryffing⁸, just 5. minutes walk from our house.

One day we went by coach to Bedd Gelert & another day we drove to Llanberis. One day we went to Penmeanmaur⁹, & another day Meaburn & I went up Moel Siabod with Daddy.

Edward Martin¹⁰ stayed with us for ten days. The night after we went to

³ Bron Eryri, well known guest house in Capel Curig – still welcoming visitors to Snowdonia in 2008.

⁴ Susan Mary Miers, née Fry, (1825-1922), mother of Silvia's mother Clara, was born in Rio de Janeiro, where her father Edward Wynne Fry was a merchant, as later were her brothers and her future husband Frank Miers. The family home was Thornhill House, Handsworth, then still in the countryside outside Birmingham.

⁵ Francis Charles Miers (1821-1908), father of Silvia's mother. His father was the botanist John Miers, FRS, and his grandfathers were John Miers Snr, the silhouette artist, and Francis Place, the "Radical Tailor of Charing Cross", political activist and one of the movers of the 1832 Reform Bill. Frank Miers was a prosperous civil engineer and a founding partner of the Brazil import/export business Fry, Miers & Co. After his retirement he & his family lived at Eden Cottage, Beckenham.

⁶ Julia Mary Miers (1865-1943), younger sister of Silvia's mother Clara, was born at Clapham 02 Apr 1865 after her parents had returned from Brazil. She was a talented artist. Something of a recluse, she lived on her own in north Oxford. Towards the end of her life she moved into Northcourt, where she died 20 Aug 1943.

⁷ The Royal Hotel no longer welcomes visitors to Capel Curig. In 1956 the buildings became Plas-y-Brenin, the "National Mountain Centre for Wales".

⁸ Pont Cyfyng, the starting point for walks up Moel Siabod.

⁹ Penmaenmawr, on the N Wales coast near Conway – quite some distance away from Capel Curig.

¹⁰ Edward Paulin Martin, son of Dr Martin, the Abingdon GP.

Penmeanmawr Edward & I were both sick, & I stayed in bed with a billious attack the next day & was sick again, but Edward was quite well.

One day when Phyllis & Mary were building a fortress with stones; one fell down on the top of Mary's finger & broke it! Luckily there was a doctor staying at Cobdens Hotel¹, just up the road.

While we were in Wales, my dear Mother got, Capra, died. I loved her very much, it was so pretty to see her playing with her daughter, Nanette Capracorn. If either of them went away for an instant, the other was quite unhappy, & they both cried till they could see each other again.

They were both very fond of me & I cried very much when I left them, & they followed me every-where. Poor Nanette, I was told she felt the loss of her mother very much & I wished I was there to comfort her. She seems more fond of me than ever & follows me everywhere. But I do so long for the two little goats I have lost. I hope to see them both again one day.

Tiger, & Beatrice & Benedick are quite well. (Beatrice & Benedick are my two birds) it is Benedick's birthday to-day.

Sep 9th

Before we went to Wales our vicar, Mr. Griffith² died of Tyfoid Fever. Meaburn & I have been staying at Emberton for a week, I take Nanette for walks now sometimes, I do love her!

November 9th

Meaburn has gone to school at Mr. Freemans, Park house, Southborough³, Tunbridge Wells. I miss him very much, but directly he went to school Ursula came to

¹ Cobdens Hotel, Capel Curig, well-known to generations of mountaineers and still there in 2008.

² Rev. Robert Charles F Griffith, Vicar of St Helen's Church, died at Abingdon abt Aug 1896 aged 51.

³ Meaburn's letters to his mother from his time away at school at Southborough still survive and give an interesting commentary on this period of Silvia's diary.

stay here for a fortnight, & then Daisy Tarver came for a fortnight.

While Daisy was here, she & I wrote him the Czar⁴ a letter & asked him to come to a play (Sleeping Beauty)

He had been staying with the queen, & he stopped for an hour at Oxford station for lunch. But Lizzy⁵ (who was charged with the letter) burnt it & so he never got it. We went to Radley & saw him go by in the train quite plainly but he never stopped, as we had asked him to in our letter. When we got home Lizzy confessed.

The play went off beautifully. I was a comic king, the old spinner in the tower & the old stone-cutter. Daisy was the wicked fairy & the prince. Mary was the good fairy & the princess, & baby ~~the~~ an attendant & the queen.

While Daisy was here she did lessons at Miss Oxlad's⁶ class with me (I do all lessons except French, German, Latin, & Arithmetic there now).

Sweet Nanette is quite grown up now, but a dear!

Mary's finger has not joined properly (it was photographed by the X ray to find out) & she is going up to London with Mother tomorrow to have an operation on it.

When Daisy went Pubsey came to stay here & now Aunty Jessie is.

November 19th 1896

Mother has just taken Mary up to London to have an operation on her finger. She was

⁴ Czar Nicholas II of Russia ruled from 1894 until his abdication in 1917. His wife Alexandra was Queen Victoria's granddaughter. They and their children were killed by the Bolsheviks on 17 Jul 1917.

⁵ Lizzy: presumably a servant at Northcourt. She may be Elizabeth Tardoe, listed in 1901 as the cook.

⁶ Presumably Alice E Oxlad. In Apr 1881 she was listed as a schoolmistress aged 34, living in Bromley, Kent, together with a governess & assistant teacher. Her mother Mary Oxlad, clergyman's widow, was nearby with her younger daughter Emma, also a governess. They were living in Bromley College, founded in 1666 to provide housing for poor widows of clergymen and still open in 2008.

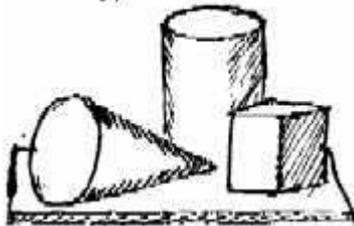
very sick after having chloriform but she is better now. Aunty Kiki is staying here now.

November 21st

I learn drawing at the convent, freehand like this,



It model like this.



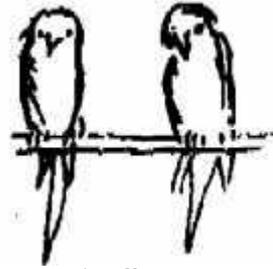
It is great fun. There are 10 other girls. I think I draw 3rd best. We are beginning to look forward to the Xmas holidays now. Mary is going to the pantomime this year. There is a lot of measles about in Abingdon.



Here are some studdies of my goat, they are not very like her.

Feb 2nd 1897

What a long time since I have written my diary! We have begun lessons again. Mary enjoyed the pantomime very much, & so did we all. It was Aladdin at Drury Lane. Kiki gave me a beautiful cabinet for a birthday & Christmas present. It cost 2 guineas & I keep my museum in it. My poor little hen-bird Beatrice died before we went away, & Benedick was so unhappy without her that we had to send him down to Keates, to live with the other birds. I was not able to have him back as a mate could not be found for him. So Mother & Daddy gave me instead a pair of Budgerrygars, or grass-parrots. Here are their portrates.



They are green & yellow. Mr He has got a little blue mark over his nose, or beak rather, & Mrs She a pink one.

Nanette & Tiger are both quite well. The latter has not been very well before we went away. She was so unwell that we sent her to the veterinary surgeon, who when examining her throat found a bone there like this.



While Uncle Herbert was staying here we acted a charade. The word was "Port-manteau (= toe)". We have already like had a little skating here on the moat. I cant quite skate yet but I can slide. Meaburn can skate very nicely. He went back to school last Wednesday 27th. Baby does lessons now as she is 4.

Mother took me to see "Charley's Aunt¹" on Saturday, my birthday, at Oxford. It was awfully jolly.



Feb 9th

It is Dad's birthday today, he is 39. I painted him a photo-graph frame, it is white with Red & Yellow flowers, Daffodils, Tulips, & Red & Yellow Roses! Mr & Mrs How² came yesterday. Mr How criticised my

¹ Charley's Aunt, the farce by Brandon Thomas, first produced 5 years before in Feb 1892. It was hugely popular in its day and has been revived many times since. The show was a particular favourite of the Tatham family. Meaburn used to take his children and grandchildren to see it.

² Frederick D How, water colour artist, and his wife Edith. He was the son of William Walsham How (1823-1897) Bishop of

drawings & paintings. I have painted a Madonna in oils, it is my first attempt, & I am naturally rather proud of it.

I learn Latin & Arithmetic with Dad now, French German & New Testament with Mother, & everything else with Miss Oxlad. On Monday I do Literature, Physiology, Geograph & Old Testament. On Tuesday (To-day is Tuesday) Eng. History, Dictation, General History & Reading. On Wednesday I stop at home & do French & German. On Thursday Literature, Geography, Blank Map & Roman History, & on Friday I do English Hist, Reading, Old Test. & Roman Hist. On Saturdays I stop at home & do French & German.

I practice $\frac{3}{4}$ of an hour every morning before breakfast, & do preparation for an hour & a half in the evening. I do lessons with Dad from 9.10 – 9.55 every morning except Saturday. I have music lessons at the convent¹ from on Thursdays & Monday from 2 – 2.30. And drawing Lessons from 5 – 6.15 also at Convent on Fridays.

Sunday March 14th

Kitty² has been staying here from Friday till Tuesday. Then, on March 6th Saturday I went to stay at Eton until Wednesday, when I came home I brought Phyllis with me, who is staying here now. I think she is going to stay till Tuesday. I have kept this diary for more than two years now but I must confess I don't write quite often enough. Nanette is not quite well, but I think she is very happy. My birds & Tiger are very well, & so are all the other animals.

Sunday March 21st

Last Sunday I said Nanette was not quite well, and now she is dead. On Thursday

morning when I was doing my birds Mother came in to tell me she was dead. However we soon found out she was not really quite dead, and so I went out to see her. When she heard me coming she bleated, and when I sat down beside her she tried to put her head on my lap, but as she couldn't I did it for her. Every time I moved my head her eyes followed me. The veterinary surgeon came at last and he ordered her to be taken indoor and dosed every hour. In the evening she was much better, and we thought she was going to get better, but in the morning she was dead. She was buried next to her mother, and I have planted flowers on her grave. Yesterday I went to Upton³ with Mother, we picked violets in a neighbouring orchard and I pulled up some by the roots to plant on Nanette's grave.

Sunday March 28th

Yesterday I went to Oxford with Kiki and Daddy to buy a pair of kids because I missed Nanette so much. They are coming tomorrow. They are both black and white. Kiki came last Tuesday. Every Tuesday I go with Hilda Westcombe⁴, Joan Clarke, and Douglas Bailey for a Botanical and Geological walk with Miss Humfrey. Last Tuesday I felt very tired and queer after I came home, and so I had to go to bed. Soon after Mary had influenza and so Kiki didn't have a very happy visit.

Sunday April 4th

The goats are darlings. I have taken them out several times, but I have not had them loose yet. Meaburn comes home next Wednesday the 7th.

Sunday April 25th

Wakefield, best known as a writer of hymns including "For all thy Saints". Silvia and her parents had stayed with the How family in Apr 1891.

¹ Our Lady's Convent in Abingdon was founded in 1860. Soon afterwards the sisters set up a school, still operating in 2008.

² Esther Catherine Fry (1887-1961), eldest of the 3 Fry sisters, known as Kitty, Susy and Josy. They were Silvia's cousins on both her father's and mother's side.

³ Upton (Berks): small village abt 8 miles south of Abingdon, home of Silvia's mother's uncle Joseph Fry, his wife Julia, and their 3 unmarried daughters Sophie, Ettie and Susie (not to be confused with their 3 nieces mentioned above).

⁴ Hilda Westcombe was the daughter of Isaac Westcombe, manager of the Abingdon branch of the London & County Bank, one of the forerunners of the National Westminster Bank.

The goats are quite tame now and very fond of me. My lessons finished on Saturday the 10th. Zoe and Cabri* (my kids) follow me everywhere, in the field and road. But they are not allowed loose in the garden because they might eat yew, which we think the other kids died of. Auntie Julie has been staying here, and Pubsey is now.

* Afterwards called Judy (ST)

June 9th Wednesday

Meaburn has gone back to school. He went on the 29th of April, I went with him as far as London, and then he went on to Southborough, and I went to Eden Cottage, where I stayed for 6 days. I went to the guildhall, & rode the donkey. Also Kitty & I (Kitty & Susy¹ were staying there) found a hut in a wood (next to the garden) with a trapdoor in the floor. When I came home I begun lessons again; Dora & Constance don't learn at Miss Oxlad's class any more now. On Saturday 22nd of May I went with Mother and Daddy to Southborough to see Meaburn. We stayed at a dear little Hotel called the hand and sceptre².



Meaburn was well and happy, he took us some very pretty walks, across the common & through the wood & up & down some hills. We came home on Sunday 23rd, I brought home a lot of gorse & roedodendrum (which Meaburn stole for me). I am very fond of my kids, but I can never love them like Nanette. I long for her still, but I haven't told Mother. She would think me discontented. I suppose I am, but I

¹ Susan Mary Fry (1892-1975), second of the 3 daughters of Ned Fry and his wife Katie (née Miers).

² The Hand & Sceptre inn dates back to 1728 and was named after the original landlord George New Hand. It is still there in 2008.

can't help. When my other goats died, I did not feel as I do about Nanette, I was very unhappy of course, but I did not feel I did not want to live anymore as I did when she died. Perhaps it was because I was here when she died, and had time to hope & pray she might live. I prayed a great lot, & I can't understand why God didn't hear me. I suppose it was because He thought I would serve him better if I had some great trouble. My little kids are so tame now, they will eat out of my hand.

Mary has got a beautiful collie-dog called Queene. Both Tiger & Fatty have got kittens. Tiger's is black & is lying asleep in a chair by my side now. Fatty's is a tabby, called Her Royal Greyness. The other is called His Royal Blackness.

June 14th Monday

Such a lovely day. It was very hot both yesterday & the day before, when it was 81 in the shade. Uncle Ralph³ has been staying here, he gave me a beautiful basket of chocolate! Next Monday I am going up to London for the Jubilee⁴. We are going to see the procession from Pall Mall, where some relations have given us three seats.



Sunday 27th June

I came back from London on Friday night, & I haven't had time to write before to day. The procession was very nice, it took more than an hour going by. We were in our seats

³ Ralph Edward Tatham (1843-1907), Silvia's great-uncle and Pubsey's youngest brother. He was a stockbroker. He died unmarried on 16 Sep 1907 at his home at 20 York St, near Baker St, London, for long a meeting place of the earlier generations of the Tatham family.

⁴ Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria, celebrated 22 Jun 1897.

soon after 8.0 (we were staying at Cleveland Gardens¹) & as we had to have breakfast before we started, & had to walk 4 miles, it can be imagined we had to get up very early! We only got into a crowd once on our way, & that was while some cavalry was passing, & the road, which we had to cross, was blocked. The foreign troops all had to go on a long way in front as the proc. was so long; & so I've had a good view of them going by. After that came the tallest officer in the army, Captain Ames, & then the sailors, soldiers, & royal Carriages. Then came the Queen, crying, & with a very pail face. She is exactly like the pictures of her, when she is made kind-looking. I was very sorry when it was all over; I liked the foreign troops very much. The men were all so handsome, & it nearly made one cry. Mother & Daddy went home the same day, but I stayed till Friday, & saw the illuminations. They were so nice, I liked them very much, but not so much as the procession.

On Wednesday I saw the Queen again as she drove to Paddington Station. She had some life-guards & Indian soldiers with her. On Thursday I went to the army & navy stores, & on Friday morning to the Zoological Gardens.

Monday July 12th

Mother & Daddy went off to Ireland & Wales this morning, where they are going to stay a fortnight. Mary, Nurse & Baby are going to Emberton next Monday, & as I should be all alone Miss Oxfad is coming to stay with me. Last Tuesday I went in for the Preliminary Academy examination at the convent. I don't know whether I have passed yet.

Wednesday July 14th

Have passed examination with distinction. Marks 92/99. Going to have a prize next Tuesday.

Sunday September 5th

¹ 14 Cleveland Gardens, Bayswater, London home of Silvia's grandfather Charles Tatham (Pubsey).

I have just come back from Emberton where I have been staying for a week with Meaburn. On 25th August we came back from Llanbedr North Wales where we stayed for 3 weeks. Llanbedr is between Harlech & Barmouth, is merely two miles from the sea & very pretty.

We went over Harlech castle one day.



Another day we went up a mountain called Cnycht².

Before we went there Miss Oxfad had told us there was a haunted house³ there. It was supposed to be haunted because a man called Royle killed himself there, & later on a young couple both mysteriously died. Meaburn and I searched for it until we found it.

It was a lovely house surrounded by a nice garden. Everything had been allowed to go to rack & ruin however. Most of the windows were all barred up, except one which turned out to be the kitchen window. We managed to climb in, & then proceeded to go all over the house. Most (if not all) of the windows were lattices, & one of the rooms was panaled, while in the hall there was a splendid oak fire-place.

² Cnycht. A small but impressive mountain (2,260 ft) near Croesor.

³ Quite possibly Plas y Dduallt, near Ffestiniog. A historic manor house, empty for many years until its restoration in the 1960s, and long notorious as a "haunted house". Subject of TV "Most Haunted" documentary (series 10 episode 6) on 25 Mar 2008.



One day Daddy, Meaburn & I all went by train to Arthog¹,



where we got out and walked over the hills to Dolgelly². It was a lovely day and a beautiful walk, and we enjoyed it very much. However, at the end we had to hurry very much (in fear of losing our train); and this was made all the harder by Meaburn having a blister on his foot, & also falling down and hurting his knee and then crying. When we got to the station we had a long time to wait however as the train was very late.

One day we all drove to a beautiful lake called Cwm Bychan.



We had tea there and drove back afterwards.

Another day we all went by train to Port Madoc³ and from there drove to Bedd Gelert⁴. I think this drive is the prittiest I've

¹ Arthog, a remote station on the Ruabon to Barmouth railway line. Closed in Jan 1965.

² Dolgellau.

³ Porthmadog.

⁴ Beddgelert.

ever been. There was a lovely view of Snowdon, and when we came to Port Aber Glaslyn it was beautiful. Snowdon was then hidden. When we got to Bedd Gelert we met Granny, Grand-papa, Aunty Julie & Kiki. We had lunch with them, & after that Nurse, Mary & Baby all went home to Llanbedr. But Mother, Daddy, Meaburn & I stayed till after tea, when we went to Capel Curig where we were going to stay for a few days at the Royal Hotel.

Before we left Beddgelert Grandpapa made a causeway from the land to a stone a short distance out on the Glaslyn⁵. This causeway or bridge was strong enough for Grandpapa even to walk across, as it was made first with stones, then grass and mud & then paved again with flat stones.

The drive to Capel Curig was very nice indeed, & we were so glad to see dear old Peny-gwrid⁶ & the Royal Hotel again! The next day I was very excited, for Daddy had said I could perhaps go up Snowdon with him, & this had been seconded by Grandpapa saying he would take Meaburn and Aunty Julie up in the train from Llanberis. We were all ready when the coach from Bettws-y-coed came, but it was full! The coachman remembered us quite well, & told Daddy he was very sorry he could not take us. Well! We should have to go by carriage, but here another diss-apointment awaited us, all the carriages were out! But a carriage soon came home and so we were able to go after all.

We all set off in the carriage & Daddy & I were dropped at Gorphwysfa, & we started going up Snowdon. Although it was a fine day it soon began to rain and I got wet through. We got up to the top before the others and had time to see the train slowly labouring up.

I had to go down in the train, partly because Meaburn was cold and wanted to walk down & partly because I was wet & could be dried at Llanberis Hotel. I got a beautiful view of Anglesea and the places around

⁵ Silvia's brother Meaburn was to undertake the same project there on holiday with his own grandchildren, more than 50 years later.

⁶ Pen-y-Gwryd.

when we got out of the mist, but I would have liked to walk down.

The next day we went home we drove by the coach to Bettws-y-coed, from there we went by train to Ffestiniog, & from there to we went by the toy railway to Miniford¹. There we changed & went by the big railway to Llanbedr.

Aunty Julie stayed the night with us, & the next day went to stay at Borth² where Aunty Katie³ and her family were staying. The next day uncle Herbert came to stay with us until we went away. He, Daddy Meaburn & I went over the hills to Cwm Bychan. On our way we went over a mountain called Diffus⁴



and altogether went nearly 14 miles. We were met at the lake by a carriage & mother & the two little ones. We had tea and drove back.

A few days after we went home to Northcourt.

Sunday September 19th

The Lowry's have taken Mrs Reynold's house for 3 weeks, so we see them every day, & sometimes all day. The Baby, Christabel⁵, is such a dear little thing. Phyllis and I are dressing dolls for the Competition in 'Little folks'. My doll cost 2.6, and is going to have chemise, flannel petticoat, white petticoat, drawers, socks, shoes, hat, and a dress. The

¹ Minffordd.

² Probably Borth, seaside resort 7 miles N of Aberystwyth, in mid-Wales.

Or possibly Borth-y-gest, a pretty seaside village near Porthmadog.

³ Catherine Emily Fry, née Miers (1856-1933), another sister of Silvia's mother. She married her first cousin Ned Fry in Jun 1886. They had 3 daughters Kitty, Susy and Josy (see above).

⁴ Dyffwys (2460 ft). A stiff climb and long day's walk, then as now.

⁵ Christabel Mary Lowry ("Chrissy"), born at Eton in 1896, younger sister of Silvia's friend Phyllis.

dress will be green trimmed with white baby-ribbon. I have got Butterick's patterns⁶ for it, and so does Phyllis, whose Doll is going to be dressed in pink. Meaburn goes home on Wed & the L's on Tuesday.

Sunday October 24th [1897]

Yesterday I went to Ox, to see my first Shakespeare play! It was The Merchant of Venice; Mr. Benson⁷ was Shylock, & Mrs Benson⁸ was Portia. It was so nice! Portia hadn't a very nice voice, and Bassanio was rather weak, but otherwise it was very good. Shylock was very good indeed and so was the Pr. of Morocco, Antonio, Gratiano, Nerissa, Jessica, and the rest. Portia, I thought was better as the judge Balthazar than as Portia.



⁶ Buttericks' Patterns, the business started in 1863 in Sterling, Massachusetts, by the tailor Ebenezer Butterick and still trading in 2008 as a division of the McCall Pattern Co.

⁷ Sir Francis Robert Benson (1858-1939), or Frank Benson, was an actor and theatre manager. He was at New College, Oxford, where he distinguished himself as an athlete and as an actor. He went on to the professional stage and founded his own company in 1883, specialising in Shakespeare. From 1888 onwards he managed the Stratford-on-Avon Festival.

⁸ Gertrude Constance Cockburn (Featherstonhaugh), married Frank Benson in 1886 and continued to play leading parts in his company.

After the play we went on the stage to see Mr Benson who was an old college friend of Dad's. He had taken off his clothes, but Mrs Benson was still Portia. After this we had tea at Magdalene, but as Mother & Daddy had to go home by the earlier train, I stayed till the next with Miss Oxlad & went to the service at the chapel.

Queen has got six dear little puppies, about a month old. Four are like her, white and brown, one brown, & the other black, white, & tan.

I go to a gymnasium at the High school Oxford now. It is great fun, but "More of this hereafter".

July 23rd 1899¹

It is such a long time since I have written this poor diary of mine! I must try to make a summary of the intervening events. I got a prize for my doll at Little Folks. I have seen three other Shakespeare plays "As you like it" out of doors, "Midsummer Night's Dream" by the O.U.D.S. at Oxford, and best of all, Julius Caesar in London, Her Majesty's Theatre².



Last year we went to Cromer for three weeks, and then Mary, Agnes, and Annie Clarke, our new nurse, went to Emberton and Mother, Daddy, Meaburn and I went to the Lakes. I have written about being there in my 'travelling diary'. Soon after we got home, (Meaburn had gone back to school) nurse went mad! She thought she was engaged to Mr. Hulton, our pupil, whom she called Mr. Hurst. Of course she had to go away. We have got such a nice nurse now.

¹ or 1898?

² Herbert Beerbohm Tree played Marc Antony in this production of *Julius Caesar* at Her Majesty's Theatre. It ran from January 22 until June 18 1898, with a total of 161 performances.

Silvia had a great love of the theatre, and carefully kept a list of every performance she ever attended.

