

were evacuated by the state to the safety of Devon. They lived in Challaborough in a cottage by the sea. There were, Pam, Pat, Michael, David, Wendy, Richard and Christopher, Christopher set himself alight when wearing his flannel and highly flammable pyjamas and just about burnt himself to death. Doc was called in but by the time he got to the child, couldn't save him to any reasonable quality of life, so he died. Mrs was actually in the Journeys End inn down the road when Christopher got hold of the matches but during the inquest Doc perjured himself to protect her.

Later when they got back to London there was Nicholas, and Angela. Lots of little Catholics. Mrs Nash was a most extraordinary lady. One of the most unprepossessing looking people I have ever seen, thin as a rake, shocking smokers cough and complexion, eyes badly squint, mousy unkempt hair. But when she opened her mouth and spoke, everyone in a room would turn around and look. She had cultivated, and she told my mother she had cultivated it, the most wonderful and compelling speaking voice I have ever heard. I spent many weekends at the Nash's, running around the beaches and rocks at Challaborough. Wendy had a little bit missing in the top attic and would suddenly and unexpectedly pinch one fiercely - not my favourite person. It is quite extraordinary how people treat 'the state' in England. On arriving back in London after the war Mrs Nash tells how she went to the council office from where they relocated families and merely said "right, here we are, find us accommodation". She lined all her kids up from the biggest to the smallest with the dog at the end, and there she stayed until they found her family somewhere to stay! They had sold a beautiful oak table to Harrods at a very low price in order to get rid of it quickly when they were evacuated. On return to London they were horrified to see the price at which the store was selling it. Mrs. Nash went in and spoke to managers, having things to say about making good out of others misfortunes, but Harrods said that that was how business was run and what businesses did. The price that they were asking was way above her reach. One can imagine her chagrin.

The other particular friends we had, but this was a bit later, were Monica, Vincent and Johnny de las Casas. Johnny was about five or so years younger than me, so barely tolerated. I used to make him smoke home-made pipes, and rebuked the poor kid fiercely when he coughed and choked. These pipes were made from acorns and straw but I have no idea what we smoked. This we did in the goose shed.

When we first moved to Devon, super wood houses were bought for all the prospective poultry, there was the ark, two duck houses, and a goose shed. We never got round to using all of these for the purpose for which they were intended, so they made very good storage places. Also hidey holes for me. I remember one becoming my den, and there I read all the 'Mary Plain' books - Mary Plain was a bear.

If I only tolerated Johnny, I absolutely adored his mother, as did my mother. Her name was Monica and everyone knew her as Monny. She was dark haired, complexioned, and eyed; rather gypsy-like we used to think. She had a husky voice and that rather attractive irresponsibility, topped by a great sense of humour. She was also Catholic, and took me once across the fields to Modbury to the Catholic Church with her. I was most impressed. On the way home we collected mushrooms in her hat.

My mother had incubators, and hatched chicks and ducklings and on one occasion sold some ducklings to Monny. One was looking a bit sick when she took delivery and my mum having pushed him a bit with her finger, said "this one will be fine in the morning". During a phone call when morning came, when asked how the ducks were, Monny stated that the dead duckling that she had been sold was still dead. This family lived on a farm where Vin, the husband, was trying his hand at farming - I think unsuccessfully. The house was a beautiful glass fronted place overlooking a river, and was called 'Cockleridge'. They had a boat and Monny would take Johnny