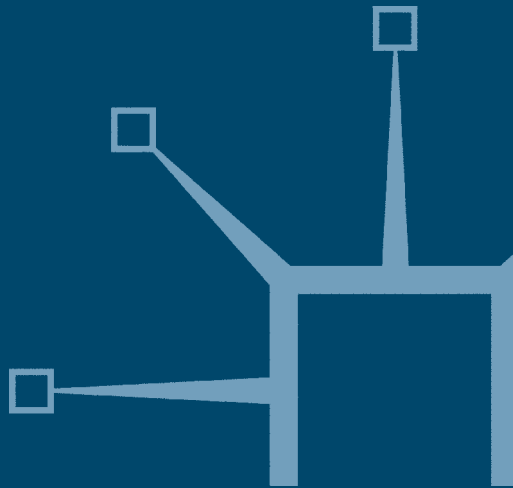


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# An Iris Murdoch Chronology

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Valerie Purton



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*For Harry Neale*

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# General Editor's Preface

Most biographies are ill-adapted to serve as works of reference – not surprisingly so, since the biographer is likely to regard his function as the devising of a continuous and readable narrative, with excursions into interpretation and speculation, rather than a bald recital of facts. There are times, however, when anyone reading for business or pleasure needs to check a point quickly or to obtain a rapid overview of part of an author's life or career; and at such moments turning over the pages of a biography can be a time-consuming and frustrating occupation. The present series of volumes aims at providing a means whereby the chronological facts of an author's life and career, rather than needing to be prised out of the narrative in which they are (if they appear at all) securely embedded, can be seen at a glance. Moreover, whereas biographies are often, and quite understandably, vague over matters of fact (since it makes for tediousness to be forever enumerating details of dates and places), a chronology can be precise whenever it is possible to be precise.

Thanks to the survival, sometimes in very large quantities, of letters, diaries, notebooks and other documents, as well as to thoroughly researched biographies and bibliographies, this material now exists in abundance for many major authors. In the case of, for example, Dickens, we can often ascertain what he was doing in each month and week, and almost on each day. Of his prodigiously active working life; and the student of, say, *David Copperfield* is likely to find it fascinating as well as useful to know just when Dickens was at work on each part of that novel, what other literary enterprises he was engaged in at the same time, whom he was meeting, what places he was visiting, and what were the relevant circumstances of his personal and professional life. Such a chronology is not, of course, a substitute for a biography; but its arrangement, in combination with its index, makes it a much more convenient tool for this kind of purpose; and it may be acceptable as a form of "alternative" biography, with its own distinctive advantages as well as its obvious limitations.

Since information relating to an author's early years is usually scanty and chronologically imprecise, the opening section of some volumes in this series groups together the years of childhood and adolescence. Thereafter each year, and usually each month, is dealt with separately. Information not readily assignable to a specific month or day is given as a general note under the relevant year or month. The first entry for each

month carries an indication of the day of the week, so that when necessary this can be readily calculated for other dates. Each volume also contains a bibliography of the principal sources of information. In the chronology itself, the sources of many of the more specific items, including quotations, are identified in order that the reader who wishes to do so may consult the original contexts.

NORMAN PAGE

# Introduction

Iris Murdoch died in February 1999, with her place as a major twentieth-century novelist secure. The author of twenty-six novels which have established a loyal world-wide academic and popular readership, she was also a Dame of the British Empire, winner of the Booker Prize for *The Sea, the Sea* (1978) and a professional philosopher with several important works to her name. She published plays and many poems. Since her death there has been renewed interest not only in her work, but in her life. Her husband, Professor John Bayley's, two memoirs, *Iris* (1998) and *Iris and the Friends* (1999) have been augmented by the film, *Iris* (2001) and by the superlative *Iris Murdoch: A Life* by Peter J. Conradi (2001) to which any subsequent biographer/chronologer owes an immeasurable debt. The Iris Murdoch Society, founded in 1987 and based at Kingston University and at St Anne's College, Oxford, is thriving, holding biennial conferences both to celebrate and also to apply world-wide scholarship to the work.

Iris Murdoch is a peculiarly suitable subject for a Chronology and, conversely, the Chronology is an ideal medium in which to make sense of the provenance of the novels of such a writer. Not for her the hermit-like life of a novelist such as Gustav Flaubert, whose life was his writing. Murdoch's novels are crafted from the rich raw material of an active, politically engaged, friendship-filled existence. To trace the outlines of her friendships with, for example, Elizabeth Bowen, Brigid Brophy, Philippa Foot, Eduard Fraenkel, Donald MacKinnon and Mary Midgley; to track month by month and often day by day her wartime work with the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA), her British Council trips to Japan, her intense relationships with key figures like Frank Thompson, Franz Baermann Steiner and Michael Oakeshott: this makes for a Chronology which, in straightforwardly recording the details of one exceptional life, incidentally gives a small insight into the movement of political and intellectual life in Britain in the second half of the twentieth century.

This Chronology records the stages of composition of all the novels as well as suggesting both Murdoch's contemporary intellectual and literary pursuits and the complex relationships which made up the texture of her daily life as she was writing. In particular, what appears as wild fantasy often turns out to be closely modelled on the Byzantine

complexities of Murdoch's emotional life. 'Real life is so much odder than fiction' she has observed. One can trace here, for example, the fluctuating contact Murdoch had with 'enchanter' figures like Elias Canetti, who appears in so many of the novels. The clear linearity of chronology may also sometimes reveal better than the complexities of conventional biography the stages by which the imaginative world of a novel was created. One small example: on 1 May 1954 Murdoch's friend, Lucy Klatschko, entered Stanbrook Abbey as a postulant. On 18 July 1954 and on two further occasions, Murdoch visited her there. By the autumn of 1957 she had finished *The Bell*, which describes in detail just such a religious community.

The only *literary* technique available to the Chronologer is that of juxtaposition. Three brief examples suggest the presence of many more. Thus the 'background' entry for 1933 – 'Adolf Hitler comes to power in Germany' is set against the fourteen-year-old Murdoch's writing in her school magazine about the Architecture Club's trip to Bradford-on-Avon and suggests poignantly the way in which large events which are to affect everyone take place while individual childhoods are being innocently lived. At a later stage in her life, the Chronology pieces together the intricate details of the history of the Oxford University Labour Club, from the minutes of its committee meetings. I have tried to add relevant background events, such as the introduction of conscription in 1939, to explain the attitudes and actions of the Oxford students. The extent of Murdoch's own conception of herself as a dissident is evident in her selling of the *Daily Worker* in Blackpool in 1940. That newspaper, as the Chronology records, was to be banned by the wartime government a few months later. Finally, as early as 1941 Frank Thompson had recommended to Murdoch the works of Mikhail Bakhtin. In April 1942 she looked in the Bodleian Library but could only find one of his works, in the original Russian. The current president of the Iris Murdoch Society, Barbara Stevens Heusel, has shown the fruitfulness of a Bakhtinian reading of the novels, though in their July 1987 interview Murdoch distanced herself from all such theoretical readings of her work, perhaps forgetting that early indication that Thompson, had he lived, would almost certainly have encouraged in her a more open attitude to theory.

A Chronology obviously focuses on the contingent, juxtaposing large events (outbreaks of war) against small (holiday trips, house moves). It thereby, serendipitously, engages with one of Murdoch's major themes: precisely the paramountcy of the contingent over the tendency of the human psyche to impose larger patterns, to demand shape,

significance, meaning where (Murdoch implies) one should be brave enough to accept the possibility of there being only accident. Murdoch pursued several such major themes throughout her career, among them the nature of 'the Good', definitions of freedom, the inadequacy of language and in particular, as mentioned, the dangers of myth-making. Here, the Chronology can show the outside pressures which forced her to define and redefine these themes over five decades of novel-writing and philosophising.

Murdoch's novels change noticeably decade by decade. The novels of the 1950s – *Under the Net*, *The Flight from the Enchanter*, *The Sandcastle* and *The Bell* – were preceded by *Sartre: Romantic Rationalist* (1953), as if Murdoch had to prepare the intellectual ground for her own writing. These four novels are all, differently, anti-existentialist. They continue the argument Murdoch is having with Sartre about the degrees of freedom available to any human being. They variously show how enmeshed characters are with each other and with the contingent world of things. The Chronology shows how, at an intellectual and often at a personal level too, figures like Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Simone Weil, Samuel Beckett and Raymond Queneau are behind these works. Murdoch's contacts with Wittgenstein (it was one of her great regrets that she met him only twice at Oxford) come primarily through her often painful and rivalrous friendship with his star pupil, Elizabeth Anscombe, also charted here.

The novels of the 1960s – *A Severed Head*, *An Unofficial Rose*, *The Unicorn*, *The Italian Girl*, *The Red and the Green*, *The Time of the Angels*, *The Nice and the Good* and *Bruno's Dream* – are full of the energy and optimism of that remarkable decade. There is a fascination in the novels and in society with the schism between the pre-war and post-war generations and with versions of utopia. *The Red and the Green* (1965) appears prophetically at the beginning of 'The Troubles' in Northern Ireland. *The Nice and the Good* (1968) is, if you like, an ironic critique of that year's popular slogan, 'All You Need Is Love.'

The 1970s, producing what are generally thought of as Murdoch's most mature works – *A Fairly Honourable Defeat*, *An Accidental Man*, *The Black Prince*, *The Sacred and Profane Love Machine*, *A Word Child*, *Henry and Cato* and *The Sea, The Sea*, show a continuing debate with realism and, through the first-person male narrators particularly, a fascination with psychology and the threat of solipsism which suggests the introspection of the decade.

In the 1980s, with the increasingly long and discursive novels, *Nuns and Soldiers*, *The Philosopher's Pupil*, *The Good Apprentice* and *The Book*

and *the Brotherhood*, Murdoch seems to me to be exploring the Bakhtinian notion of polyphony – of the destabilising of the fixed position of a single narrator. In *The Philosopher's Pupil* there is both a literal and figurative undermining of the solid world of the English novel: 'Ennistone' turns out after all to have been, in a way, the creation of a character on the fringes of the action, 'N'. During the same period, Murdoch becomes embroiled in debates between what had come to be called 'liberal humanism' and 'critical theory', arguing fiercely on the side of the former while her novels show a sophisticated awareness of the issues raised by the latter.

The elegiac novels of the 1990s, *The Message to the Planet*, *The Green Knight* and *Jackson's Dilemma*, show an increasing mysticism and animism, evident in the New Ageism in the world outside their covers. The 'farewell to magic' which ends *Jackson's Dilemma* can here be poignantly charted through the Chronology in Murdoch's own last 'journey into darkness.'

It has until recently been usual to talk of 'The World of Iris Murdoch' – as if this were some imaginative zone immune to time and change. This is at the most basic level to underestimate Murdoch's engagement with the changing world around her. To take a key example: she was, though she herself in later interviews tended to underplay this, a member of the Communist Party from 1938 until possibly as late as the end of 1945, when, after her affair with the fiercely anti-Communist Thomas Balogh, she wrote to E.P. Thompson of a shift in her opinions. (She may well have thrown her membership card away earlier, however, when she joined the Treasury in 1942.) A Chronology can show more clearly than a conventional biography how long she held on to her Communism. Though she would later say it was 'for a very short time', letters reveal that she stubbornly supported Russia long after most of her Oxford generation, notably Denis Healey, had moved away. It also shows at what cost she maintained her support – the agonised poems and letters, the indignant defence of the indefensible. I would like to suggest, though, that her refusal to believe ill of the Soviet Union (she would call it 'maligned') emerged less from ideological commitment than from that same trait of deep loyalty which prevented her from believing ill of her friends. One of the most touching discoveries in reading letters both to and about Murdoch is her constant over-estimation of the characters and abilities of those whom she has chosen to love. She is forever urging them to complete their novels, asking them about the smallest details of their lives, working tirelessly to find them publishers, often providing financial support in times of need. Her

warm and generous tribute to the Anglo-Irish novelist, Honor Tracy, for example, sits uneasily with Tracy's own waspish comments about *her* in letters to their shared friend Lucy Klatschko. Murdoch helped Tracy financially as she struggled with her writing: one is reminded of George Bernard Shaw's aperçu, 'If pity is akin to love, gratitude is akin to the other thing.'

In Murdoch's life, then, politics and the personal are more than usually fused: although she was elected Chairman of the Oxford University Labour Club at a difficult time in its history, when the break-away Oxford University Democratic Socialist Club, led by Anthony Crosland and Roy Jenkins, was threatening its popularity, she was not in the obvious sense a political animal. Her letters to David Hicks reveal the relief, almost, with which she left office and no longer felt the need to comment on politics. Once she had moved towards democratic socialism, however, her lack of confidence in the Parliamentary Labour Party becomes a constant theme, from youth to age – though the reasons for her disappointment change dramatically. I have tried to include in the Chronology enough detail of party politics to make this shift evident and explicable. After the War, Murdoch's comments suggest that she felt the Party was not being Socialist enough; in the 1970s, in contrast, she was disgusted by its Left-wing excesses. Again, however, there is a hidden consistency. From the UNRRA days it is obvious that she instinctively sided with outsiders rather than with any form of establishment. She felt herself from childhood to be a 'refugee' – Irish in England – and her novels are full of refugees and displaced persons of many kinds. Paradoxically, what drove her from the Labour Party more than anything else seems to have been its education policy, which she felt was prejudiced against intelligent children from bookless homes. These were the 'displaced persons' with whom she identified in the later years of her life and for whom (as seems evident in her long letter to Suguna Ramanathan in November 1992) she eventually abandoned her socialism altogether.

In order to give some perspective to Murdoch's shifting views I have recorded political events to which she herself responded strongly, hoping in the process to make sense of her political volte-face from youthful Communist to elderly Thatcherite. These include the actions of the USSR in establishing Soviet domination over Eastern Europe, the fate of dissidents of all sorts, the history of Poland (a country which she always held dear) and, more controversially, the IRA bombing campaign during the Troubles. I have not attempted to give a balanced picture here of the respective actions of the Republicans and the Loyalists: Murdoch,

with a strongly Protestant background on both sides of her family, responded most painfully to the IRA attacks and I have tried to record significant moments in their campaign to suggest to readers the cumulative impact it must have had upon her over the decades.

Very few readers will turn to a Chronology as a complete work: most will be searching for particular information. I have therefore risked a certain amount of repetition of key names and facts so that a reader turning to a single year or month will clearly see who is who without having to search elsewhere – though brief biographies are provided at the end of the book of the main figures in the narrative. I have also included some very minor but telling details from the Journals (to which we have access via Conradi's *Iris Murdoch: A Life*) to give as much sense as possible, within the confines of the Chronology format, of 'felt life.' The sad discovery of the death of a cherished bat at Cedar Lodge in 1961 is a case in point, suggesting the gentle humanity of the inhabitants of that magical place.

Throughout, the stress has been on Murdoch the writer – who is the only justification, after all, for our interest in Murdoch as a person. I have therefore dealt deliberately sketchily with the final stages of her life. I recognise that she has become an emblem for sufferers from Alzheimer's Disease. This did not seem the appropriate place, however, in which to chart in detail the stages of that disease.

The resources I have used are listed at the end of this volume and are of several sorts. Firstly, I have recorded and wherever possible summarised as many interviews as possible, since these were obviously actual events in Murdoch's daily life (though I have also recorded how fervently she tried to avoid them) and in addition they give a sense of how over the years she reworked her own life story. I have tried to avoid repetition (of favourite childhood reading, for example) but *some* repeated themes are very relevant in showing what were her over-riding concerns at any given time. The running (if one-sided) battle with Jacques Derrida in the final decade is a good example. Like King Charles's Head, he begins to appear in almost every public utterance of Murdoch's, from speeches to undergraduates to casual asides in interviews. The Chronology records their first encounter at Berkeley, California in the spring of 1984, when Murdoch was astonished at his pop-star status. It seems as if he became for her the final embodiment of the Enchanter figure whose (intellectually) seductive powers she so feared.

I have also deliberately included all dedications to individual works, since these have a strongly biographical relevance. Iris Murdoch was generous both as a writer and as a friend. Her choice of dedicatees for



her novels is revealing. Often they are ex-lovers: occasionally there is an obvious match between dedicatee and subject of novel, as when *The Flight from the Enchanter* is defiantly dedicated to perhaps the most potent enchanter of her life, Elias Canetti. Writers can often display a revealing boldness in their dedications, in suggesting the links between life and art. Often, of course, the dedicatees are supportive friends like the Spenders or the Cecils. Occasionally there is a hint at another side to the friendship, however, as when the Stones are made dedicatees of *A Fairly Honourable Defeat*, an exposé of a certain sort of apparently happy middle-class marriage. Sometimes, as with David Pears, who had talked to Murdoch about philosophy and became the dedicatee of *The Unicorn*, there is the continuation of a philosophical argument by fictional means (though Pears insisted that he couldn't make head nor tail of the book itself). Sometimes the dedications are acts of kindness to friends who are ill or dying: Brigid Brophy had just been diagnosed with multiple sclerosis when she became the dedicatee of *The Good Apprentice*. Murdoch's kindness to and nurture of her friends is a major feature of her life – and it spills over, as the Chronology shows, into her writing life too.

Letters, of course, are the single most valuable source for any Chronology. Iris Murdoch wrote copiously all her life to a wide variety of correspondents. All I have been able to provide in this first attempt at her Chronology is a snapshot of her letter-writing life, using the letter runs available in various libraries around the world. Thus relatively minor characters in her life like the American teacher and writer, Roly Cochrane and the distinguished Indian academic Suguna Ramanathan are given what may seem like undue prominence. The snapshot approach does, however, as so often with snapshots, give a glimpse into character which may well be lost in the more exhaustive formal study: Iris Murdoch's characteristic kindness and concern are very evident in the way she encourages and nurtures her correspondents, enquiring about their lives, persuading them to complete their own books and displaying a warm and genuine affection. Once letters from the major players have found their way into the Kingston or Oxford Archive, a much fuller picture will be possible. It may, however, in its very fullness be less accessible than this preliminary and inevitably sketchier initial attempt. Letters to the most significant figures like Elias Canetti will have to be augmented by those to Marjorie Boulton, A.S. Byatt, Rachel Fenner, Andrew Harvey, Betty Hester, Hal Lidderdale, David Luke, David Morgan, Leo Pliatzky, Honor Tracy, Rosemary Verey, Harry Weinberger and many others. Letters to Stuart Hampshire and to

Marjorie Locke as well as many other potentially valuable runs, have sadly been destroyed.

I have used only resources already in the public domain, but have brought them together in, I hope, a newly accessible way. Thanks are due to the organisations and individuals who helped me to do this. The Modern Manuscripts Room at the Bodleian Library, Oxford houses the letters from Murdoch to David Hicks, possibly her most lengthy correspondence, stretching from 1938 to 1992. It also holds letter runs to Isaiah Berlin, Rachel Trickett, Robert Bernard Martin, Toby Milsom and Stella Aldwinckle. I would like to thank everyone on the staff for their help in searching out and making these sources available to me. (Letters to Frank Thompson and to Janet Stone held there are, sadly, still unavailable to the public.) Murdoch's publishers, Chatto and Windus, have housed their enormous archive at the Reading University Library, where it can be consulted, with permission from Jean Rose at Chatto, at the Museum of English Rural Life whose premises it shares in Reading. I would like to thank Verity Andrews and her staff there for their help in giving me access to this important resource. The Kingston University Archives are invaluable and contain, as well as Peter Conradi's papers, letter runs to the American teacher and writer, Roly Cochrane and the Indian academic Suguna Ramanathan and correspondence from Murdoch to Professor Cheryl Bove. Jane Ruddell the Archivist and her team have been extremely helpful to me on my visits there. Murdoch's own library is now also at Kingston: I was able to examine there her own annotations to and dating of her favourite books. In addition, many letters from Murdoch are housed in libraries in the United Kingdom and across the world. The London School of Economics holds the letters from Murdoch to Michael Oakeshott; UCL Library Services, Special Collections, hold Professor Richard Wollheim's papers; The Location Register, which can be consulted at Cambridge University Library, lists letters at King's College, London, the Brotherton Library at the University of Leeds, the University of Hull and the University of Sussex, among others.

Other sources included back numbers of the *Iris Murdoch Newsletter*, kindly provided for me by the Iris Murdoch Society in the persons of Penny Tribe and Dr Anne Rowe; the latter was enormously helpful too in answering my queries. At the University Library in Cambridge I was able to examine Murdoch's address at Reynolds Stone's Memorial Service, Janet Stone's *Thinking Faces* (1988), Murdoch and Reynolds Stone's *Year of Birds* (1978), the catalogue to the Harry Weinberger Exhibition in Coventry (1983) and the *Poems of Iris Murdoch* (1997)

edited by Yozo Muroya and Paul Hullah. I also examined the Literature Locations Register which gives a useful guide as to the whereabouts of other, smaller collections of Murdoch material and the conditions for its use. Correspondence with Dr Hilda Spear of the University of Dundee, Professor Richard Todd of the University of Leiden and Professor Toru Sasaki of the University of Kyoto about their meetings with Murdoch were valuable in providing me with detailed accounts of specific events in her life.

Published sources include John Fletcher and Cheryl Bove's wonderful and monumental *Iris Murdoch: A Primary and Secondary Annotated Bibliography* (1994 – continually updated), which explains where to find Murdoch letters and manuscripts across the world. I have made extensive use of its findings, in particular in referring to the huge archive of manuscript material at the University of Iowa, which is especially useful in tracking Murdoch's writing routine, something she established very early. She would do her detailed planning and thinking for weeks or even months in advance and then write the whole novel out in longhand in several notebooks. The number of these notebooks vividly illustrates the often-criticised discursiveness of the later novels: where *The Sandcastle* occupied only eight notebooks, *The Philosopher's Pupil* filled sixteen. The Iowa archive reveals how scrupulously she noted the date upon which she began writing and the date she finished. She would then give herself several days rest before beginning to condense the notebooks into a single manuscript, also carefully dated. This would be sent promptly to the publisher and within a few months she would begin the next book. The Chronology format reveals this pattern very clearly.

I derived helpful information too from the two John Bayley Memoirs and from A.N. Wilson's *Iris Murdoch As I Knew Her* (2003). Most of all, however, as indicated earlier, I am immeasurably indebted to Professor Peter J. Conradi. His research for his definitive *Iris Murdoch: A Life* has been a resource without which I could not have completed this project. I have consulted and made copious use of his papers deposited at Kingston University, often finding useful material there which did not find its way into the magnificent biography, in particular Professor John Bayley's summary of his own Diaries, with their accounts of the Bayleys' numerous lecture tours for the British Council. The Conradi biography itself was, of course, the most valuable source of all, bringing to life as it does so many people in Murdoch's life as well as being a tome of scrupulously accurate and astonishingly wide-ranging research. I owe it a huge debt, particularly in allowing me access to quotations from *Iris*

Murdoch's Journals which otherwise would have been unavailable. Professor Conradi has been most kind and helpful too in providing me with details of Murdoch's last years; his belief that even a restricted Chronology would be valuable to Murdoch scholars, at this relatively early stage after her death, has sustained me throughout. I am only too well aware that any shortcomings in what follows are mine alone. I would like of course to thank Professor Norman Page, General Editor and wise adviser as always. Lastly, I would like to thank Professor John Bayley and the Murdoch Estate for allowing me to use Iris Murdoch's signature on the cover of this book.

It will obviously be many years before the Journals become available to the general public and even longer, perhaps, before we can expect to be able to consult *The Collected Letters of Iris Murdoch*: this work is therefore very much an interim measure, offered in the hope that students and scholars may gain *some* sense here of the interaction between life and work in a writer whose intellectual and personal story sheds such a powerful light on the history of the second half of the twentieth century.

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# An Iris Murdoch Chronology

## Family Background

On both sides of her family Iris Murdoch (IM) is descended from Protestant Irish stock. Her father's family, the Murdochs (the name in Gaelic means 'navigator') had migrated from Galloway in Scotland to Northern Ireland in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. They farmed for seven generations in County Down, not far from Belfast. In the 1880s, IM's grandfather, Wills John Murdoch, spent some years in New Zealand. He returned home with a young bride, Louisa Shaw, and a baby, IM's father Wills John Hughes Murdoch. Louisa was cheerful and adaptable and coped bravely with early widowhood: in 1903 she was left with three young children. IM remembered her grandmother well; she died in Belfast in 1947 at the age of seventy-five.

In contrast to the extreme Protestantism of his family, Hughes Murdoch was a free-thinker. He went to London at the age of sixteen, in 1906, to prepare for his civil service examination; having passed it, he worked in the civil service, first in Dublin and then from 1914 in London. Although as an Irishman he did not need to join up, he enlisted in the cavalry at the beginning of World War I, seeing active service and gaining a commission in 1918. After the war he returned to work in the civil service in London.

IM's mother's family, the Richardsons, came from middle-class Church of Ireland stock, established with other English settlers in Ireland in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century in an attempt by James I to control the indigenous population. The Richardsons were granted land in County Tyrone. Over the centuries the extended family produced two other women writers but IM's immediate ancestors suffered a downturn in their fortunes in the 19<sup>th</sup> century so that by the time she met Hughes

Murdoch, Irene Cooper Alice (Rene) Richardson, whose father had died in 1906, was living with her grandfather and her only sister, Gertrude, in the poorer northern inner city area of Dublin.

In 1918 Hughes Murdoch's regiment was stationed in the Curragh, near Dublin. Travelling on a tram while on leave in the city one Sunday, he met the beautiful Rene, a talented singer, who was on her way to choir practice. They married on 7 December 1918 in a Dublin registry office. Their only child, Iris, was born seven months later.

## **Early Years (1919–1938)**

### **1919**

#### **July**

15 (Tues) Jean Iris Murdoch is born at 59, Blessington Street, North Dublin, the first and only child of Wills John Hughes Murdoch and Irene Cooper Alice ('Rene') Murdoch (nee Richardson). Hughes had been a second lieutenant in the British Army when he married, but he has now returned to the Civil Service and is already working in London as a second division clerk, giving his address on IM's birth certificate as '51, Summerlands Avenue, Acton, London W3.' The birth takes place in the house of IM's maternal great-grandfather, Robert Cooper Richardson, and is a difficult one.

#### **November**

24 Hughes Murdoch transfers in London from the National Health Insurance Committee at Buckingham Gate, to the Ministry of Health. Rene and IM join him in England, at a flat at 12 Caithness Road, Brook Green, Hammersmith.

### **1921**

#### **August**

IM and parents are back in Ireland on holiday in Dalkey. The Black and Tans raid 'rebel' houses in Blessington Street.

#### **December**

The Irish Free State established. All Irish civil servants are offered the choice of moving permanently to Belfast or London.

## 1922

**March**

- 15 Eamon de Valera sets up the Republican Society to fight against the partition of Ireland.

**July**

- 2 (–5) There is heavy fighting in Dublin.

**Summer**

IM's earliest memory is of her father encouraging her to swim across to him on the other side of the salt-water baths near Kingstown, outside Dublin. The Murdoch family holidays at Dun Laoghaire every summer, well into IM's teens, staying with Mrs Walton on Mellifont Avenue, next to the baths. IM has three Murdoch cousins in Northern Ireland, children of Hughes's sister, Sarah. Muriel, Robert Cleaver and Sybil are all close to her in age and are important in giving her a strong sense of 'family'. She has four boy cousins on her mother's side of the family, sons of her mother's elder sister, Gertrude, who live in the Dublin area. William, David, Thomas and John Richardson are also close to her in age.

## 1925

**January**

- 15 IM enters an expensive day-school, the Froebel Demonstration School at Colet Gardens in London whose headmistress is a Scotswoman, Miss Ethel M. Bain. It has just over a hundred pupils, is co-educational until the age of eleven, has no strong religious bias and maintains links with the League of Nations Union.

## 1926

IM and family move to 4, Eastbourne Road, Chiswick, a short Tube journey from her school.

IM has an idyllic childhood, full of singing (often Irish Protestant songs and Sunday School hymns) and surrounded by animals. She weeps inconsolably at the death of a stray dog hit by a car. She calls her parents 'Rene' and 'Doodle' and the three make a perfect happy family. Her earliest favourite books are *Alice in Wonderland*, *Through the Looking Glass*, *Treasure Island*, *Kidnapped* and *Kim*. She writes a play with a



chorus of rabbits for a school concert. IM enjoys the atmosphere of politeness and high standards at the Froebel School. There are formal grammar and spelling lessons, but discipline is relaxed and there are special ceremonies involving dressing up as knights and ladies.

## 1928

IM begins writing stories to provide herself with imaginary siblings. She invents a brother and talks about him to her schoolfriends.

## 1929

### December

IM's grandmother, Louisa Murdoch, gives her a bible, recommending to her Psalms 119 and 105.

## 1930

### January

24 IM, kept at home by illness, receives a postcard from her headmistress, Miss Bain, saying how sad she is about IM's cough and hoping she will soon be better and back to school.

IM takes part in Froebel School's mimed version of *Eros and Psyche*.

She begins Latin and later, Greek. She plays cricket enthusiastically.

### Summer

During annual holidays in Dun Laoghaire, IM attends Revivalist meetings run by the 'Crusaders', at the Anglican Mariners' Church with Mrs Walton and her foster-daughter, Eva Robinson, IM's close friend, whom she thinks of as her cousin. After the stay in the south, the family regularly join Hughes's sister Sarah, her husband Willy Chapman and children, Muriel, Robert Cleaver and Sybil, for a longer stay in the seaside town of Portrush in the North.

## 1931

### September

IM is made Head Girl of Froebel School.

## 1932

**(early)**

IM and her father travel to Bristol to meet the Headmistress of Badminton School, Miss Beatrice May Baker. IM sits for one of the first two open scholarships to Badminton.

**June**

29 *The Times*, the *Manchester Guardian* and the local press carry the announcement that IM has won an open scholarship. (The other is won by Ann Leech, a doctor's daughter, who becomes a close friend.)

**July**

15 For her thirteenth birthday, IM is given a copy of the New Testament by her 'cousin' Eva Robinson, recommending Revelation 3.20. (She is to be given many bibles and New Testaments by her Irish relations over the years.)

**September**

22 At the beginning of the Autumn term, IM takes the 1.15pm train from Paddington and arrives, tearfully, at Badminton School. She is put into Badock House, named after Badminton's founder.

(late) IM writes to her father asking him to take her away from school. (She trusts his judgement, however, and stays on, gradually acclimatising and cheered up as she becomes more fully involved in school activities.)

**December**

The school magazine carries IM's 13-stanza poem, 'The Fate of the Daisy Lee', a melodrama about a lighthouse keeper. She goes on to excel at Classics and English, and to be otherwise a good all-rounder, enjoying hockey and art. She has a good singing voice. Her English essays are often read out in class.

## 1933

**January**

30 Adolf Hitler comes to power in Germany.

### **Autumn Term**

IM writes in the Badminton School Magazine about the new Architecture Club's expedition to Bradford-on-Avon.

## **1934**

### **Spring Term**

IM writes for the School Magazine two brief essays, 'To Lowbrows' and 'To Highbrows': the former follow Arsenal and go to the music hall; the latter read Dickens and Shakespeare and follow the situation in Germany. IM recommends knowing something about everything.

### **Summer Term**

IM writes an article on the value of 'Unimportant Persons' among whom she includes herself.

#### **August**

- 11 IM writes to her school friend, Ann Leech, from her holiday address, 15, Mellifont Avenue, Dublin, that she has discovered that her maternal family, the Richardsons, have a family motto, and a particularly good one. This is 'Virtuti pareat robur.' ('Strength appears through virtue.')
- 29 IM writes dramatically to Ann Leech about a terrible storm the week before: she had rushed down to the pier in time to see the local lifeboat rescue a drifting yacht.

### **November**

IM is confirmed into the Anglican Church at St Peter's Henleaze, Bristol.

## **1935**

### **July**

IM takes her School Certificate. She writes in the school magazine about 'How I Would Govern the Country', defending constitutional monarchy and condemning both imperialism and totalitarianism.

### **August**

IM goes for ten days to the League of Nations Summer School in Geneva, in a party of seven. This is her first trip abroad. The group is shown round old Geneva, climbs the Mer-de-Glace and Mont Saleve and bathes often in the lake.

## Autumn Term

Badminton School Magazine carries a translation by IM of Horace *Odes* Book I, v, 'Quis multa gracilis te puer in rosa'. She also reviews a visiting speaker's talk on Leonardo Da Vinci.

## 1936

### March

7 Hitler invades the Rhineland.

Badminton School becomes a refuge for girls from Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia, who bring early accounts of the concentration camps. IM, influenced by Badminton's left-wing tendencies, increasingly sees the Soviet Union as a place of hope. She is already in her own mind a Communist.

IM and her best friend, Margaret Orpen, try attending a Quaker Meeting. (There is a strong Quaker element in the Richardson half of her family.)

In the Badminton School Magazine, IM writes up the activities of the League of Nations Union, Junior Branch, and of the Literary Club.

### Summer

Meeting her on the mailboat to Dublin, Richard Hammond (son of Annie Hammond, witness at IM's parents' wedding) asks IM what she wishes to do in life. She replies that she wants to write.

At school, IM is vice-captain of her house, involved in the Debating Society, the 2<sup>nd</sup> XI hockey team and the League of Nations. In the Badminton School Magazine she publishes a three-stanza, thirty-line poem called 'The Diver' and also writes up the activities of the Literary and Architecture Clubs. She is one of the stars acting as the butler in a parody of Euripides's *Alcestis* and also plays Hank Eisenbaum in 'Hollywood Rehearses Shakespeare.'

### December

10 King Edward VIII abdicates. At Badminton the girls are deeply upset.

## 1937

### January

This year Martin Buber, the German philosopher, publishes *I and Thou*.

In the Badminton School Magazine IM writes up the activities of the League of Nations Union again and also publishes an article on

'Community Singing' in which she praises Soviet Russia as a courageous country, though much maligned. The magazine also includes a linocut by IM entitled 'The Prisoner'. She attends a series of lectures organised by the League of Nations Union in London and wins joint first prize in their magazine, *Headway*, for an essay attacking German attitudes towards the Jews and defending democracy versus dictatorship in Spain. For her prize she is given *The Oxford Book of Modern Verse*, edited by W.B. Yeats (1937).

## Spring Term

IM is made Head Girl of Badminton.

## March

17 (-20) Badminton School hosts a Peace Conference for local schools. IM writes up a report for the Badminton School Magazine, saying that the League of Nations is determined not to give up in its search for peace. She also publishes 'Millionaires and Megaliths' about a bizarre visit to an eccentric marmalade millionaire, Mr Keiller, who collects cow milk jugs, and an untitled four-stanza poem about her love of London.

## July

IM gains a distinction in English but not in Latin in her Higher School Certificate. She therefore does not gain a State Scholarship. As her Greek improves, she publishes a brief translation from Sophocles's *Oedipus at Colonos* in the school magazine.

20 W.H. Auden visits the school. IM, as Head Girl, is introduced to him and sits next to him. She finds him young, beautiful and golden-haired. She persuades him to write a foreword to a charity poetry anthology she is editing, the proceeds to go to the Chinese Medical Aid Fund. She buys a copy of his book of poems, *Look, Stranger!* (1936).

She is one of four soloists in Pergolesi's 'Stabat Mater'.

## Autumn Term

Miss Baker and Miss Rake, the history mistress, prepare IM for the Oxford Entrance Examination. With Miss Jeffrey, the classics mistress, IM reads Xenophon's *Anabasis* (with its famous line, 'The sea! The sea!') and the *Odyssey* Books VI and VII.

## 1938

**January**

IM attends the second series of lectures organised by the League of Nations in London.

(mid-Jan) For the second year running IM wins first prize in the League of Nations essay competition, this time for an essay on 'If I were Foreign Secretary.' She recommends official recognition of the Spanish government and argues that the Fascist countries can and should be controlled by sanctions alone, which would make the menace of war disappear. In the same magazine she publishes reports of the activities of the Literary Club and the Debating Club, and two poems, one called 'Come, Pale Feet' the other untitled, and a linocut called 'The Piper.'

**Spring**

IM wins an Open Exhibition of £40 a year for three years to read English at Somerville College, Oxford. (It is a brilliant General Paper, not her English Paper, which has won her the Exhibition.)

IM writes an account in the Badminton School Magazine of 'Poet Venturers', the collection of poems by Bristol school children she is editing for charity. She also records the visit of the School Choir to Downside Abbey.

**April**

2 IM meets for the first time her long-term Irish pen-pal, James Henderson Scott, a friend of her cousin Cleaver, just after noon at the Peter Pan statue in Kensington Gardens. He falls passionately in love with her.

**September**

28 IM and her best friend, Margaret Orpen, having left school and about to start their university careers, meet in London and stand in the gods at Covent Garden.

29 Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain, seeking to propitiate Adolf Hitler and avoid war, meets Hitler and Mussolini in Germany and signs the Munich Agreement, allowing for the cession of Sudetenland to Germany but guaranteeing the new frontiers of Czechoslovakia. He says, on his return to London, that he has brought back 'Peace in Our Time' –

but IM records in her Journal the fearful anxiety which prevails in the country for the rest of the year.

### **October (early)**

IM goes up to Somerville College, Oxford. Though she had planned to read English, she quickly changes to Classics, or 'Mods and Greats', a four-year course, possibly on the strength of a brilliant General Paper in which she showed her knowledge of Greek, augmented by a lack of sympathy with the Somerville English tutor, Mary Lascelles.

The new arrivals at Somerville are lectured to by the Dean, French scholar Vera Farnell, about the importance of behaving well, since women are still regarded as being on probation in Oxford.

IM is given a room above the archway in East Quad, overlooking the Woodstock Road. She makes friends with fellow-first year, Mary Scrutton (later Midgley).

She experiences her first alcoholic drink in the Royal Oak opposite Somerville. She is rejected by the Bach Choir without being heard, to her annoyance, because she admits that she cannot sight-read. She joins the Oxford University Labour Club which at the time is becoming increasingly Marxist.

This month the Conservative MP for Oxford dies, causing a by-election. Patrick Gordon-Walker is initially chosen to represent the Labour Party, but the OU Labour Club students force him to stand down by supporting their own 'Popular Front' (ie Communist) candidate, Sandy Lindsay. IM canvases for Lindsay along the Woodstock Road with another new undergraduate, Raymond Carr. He is struck, like many others, by her great confidence and thinks she must be in her second year. They stuff envelopes for Lindsay in his campaign room opposite St Peter's College. Carr thinks IM is in love with fellow-Somervillian, Anne Cloake (though the latter has no lesbian leanings). Despite all the students' efforts, the Conservative, Quintin Hogg, who is implicated in Chamberlain's appeasement policy, wins by a small majority, to the despair of the Lindsay supporters.

Noel Martin of Corpus Christi College sees IM through his College window and follows her to a lecture by Professor Eduard Fraenkel on Aeschylus's *Agamemnon*, during which he simply gazes at IM. After the lecture, they talk.

29 IM's charity poetry anthology, *Poet Venturers: A Collection of Poems Written by Bristol School Boys and Girls* appears, printed by Gollancz and costing one shilling, to raise money for the fund for Chinese Medical Aid. It includes

four of IM's poems, 'The Phoenix-Hearted,' 'Star-Fisher', 'The Coming of April' and 'Lower than the Angels' and also a foreword which IM has elicited from W.H. Auden.

## November

IM is now a member of the Communist Party. (She is later to say that this was the very first thing she did on arriving in Oxford.)

Frank Thompson, brilliant undergraduate poet and determined opponent of Fascism, notices IM in the crowded hall of Queen's College, where they are listening to the novelist Rex Warner and the poet Stephen Spender talk about Spain. Though she doesn't seem to him pretty, he is attracted by the impression of harmony she gives. (It is not until the middle of the following term that he manages to speak to her.)

David Hicks, three years older than IM and completing a Diploma of Education after his PPE degree, is attracted to her, seeing her as a princess from a fairy tale but is displeased by what he thinks of as her cold virginity. At some time during the autumn term he is the first man to kiss her, in his flat at 124, Walton Street.

20 IM is entertained by the Principal, Helen Darbishire, who is notoriously shy. IM is much disappointed by the level of conversation.

26 Russia signs a friendship declaration with Poland.

## December

26 IM spends Boxing Day with David Hicks and his family in Palmer's Green, North London.

## 1939

During her student days IM writes a fan letter to Samuel Beckett, whose novel, *Murphy* she adores. Only Denis Healey, fellow Labour Club member, has a copy and he lends it out to his friends. IM tells Beckett this and that there is a copy in the Buckingham Palace Road library: should she steal it? He replies saying that she should.

## January

(early) IM is rudely rejected by David Hicks. She believes this is because of her insistence on the importance of virginity.

14 IM reviews a production of *Lady Precious Stream* in the student magazine, *Oxford Forward*.



- 21 In *Oxford Forward*, Denis Healey reviews an exhibition of Canadian painting while IM reviews a production of Eugene O'Neill's *Anna Christie*.

### March

IM writes in the Badminton School Magazine that she is throwing herself into a hurricane of activity – academic work but also campaigns and committees, sherry parties and political and aesthetic arguments.

- 4 IM meets Michael (M.R.D.) Foot (who is to be a life-long friend, and briefly, a lover) He and Frank Thompson were at Winchester together and both are now at New College.

- 6 Frank Thompson and his friends Leo Pliatzky and Leonie Marsh act in their own play, *It Can Happen Here* (imagining Britain as a Fascist state), in St Michael's Hall, to a largely Labour Club audience. Afterwards, IM is in the producer, Doug Lowe's rooms in Ruskin College when the cast arrive. Hearing that Frank finds the Liberal Club 'too frivolous', IM suggests he join the Communist Party. Despite Lowe's flirting with IM, Frank invites her to tea two days later, challenging her to convert him.

- 7 IM comes to tea in Frank's rooms in New College and manages to convert him to Communism. He plays Mozart's 'Voi che sapete' on the gramophone. (She puts this in her second unpublished novel.) Frank falls deeply in love, writing later that he has met his dream-girl.

- 15 Germany flouts the Munich Agreement by invading Czechoslovakia.

As Hitler's aggressive intentions become clearer, there are rumours of conscription in Britain. Denis Healey, about to become Chairman of the Oxford University Labour Club, with IM on the Committee, organises a meeting against conscription. (Like IM and many others, he still at this time considers himself a Communist and by implication a pacifist.)

- 28 Madrid surrenders to the Fascists, ending the Spanish Civil War. This has stirred great passion in Oxford and created a martyr out of the poet John Cornford, who died in Spain fighting for the Republicans. General Franco's Fascists have prevailed, with the help of Germany and Italy and much to the sorrow of many idealist British students who supported the Republican Left.

(end) Great Britain and France extend a guarantee to protect the borders of Poland against invasion.

## April

- 5 During the Easter holidays, IM and James Henderson Scott sail to Belfast on the 'Duke of Lancaster' and spend time with IM's family and friends. During the stay they climb the tower of Queen's University and tie a friend's pyjamas to the flagpole. IM witnesses her first operation at the Royal Victoria Hospital where James is a medical student. They quarrel over Christianity and Communism (James is a Roman Catholic convert) but remain friends.
- 27 Conscription is introduced in Britain for young men aged 20–22, who must do six months' military training. In the Trinity (Summer) Term, Frank, Leonie Marsh, Leo Pliatzky and M.R.D. Foot begin to go about together, Frank pining for IM and Michael for Leonie, who is in love with Frank. Leo and IM have a brief affair. One evening, IM is seen going into Doug Lowe's rooms; in despair Frank returns to his parents' house on Boar's Hill and digs up a bed of irises.

## May

- 13 A 22-line poem by IM appears in the *Cherwell* magazine.
- 19 IM has a 28-line poem in two stanzas, 'Oxford Lament', printed in *Oxford Forward*.

## June

- 3 The *Cherwell* publishes a satirical polemic by IM, 'The Irish: Are they Human?'
- 17 A response to IM's Irish article by Derrick Brooman from Queen's College in the *Cherwell* argues (to IM's annoyance) that IM herself, on the evidence of her surname, must actually be only Scots-Irish. (Later IM is to say that she lost her virginity to someone from Queen's: this may have been Brooman.)
- On a punt journey with Mary Scrutton and sisters Charlotte and Susie Williams-Ellis, IM talks of her desperate desire to get married. Her companions point out that she has had six proposals in that term alone. IM insists that they don't count. (Twenty years later she remembers in her Journal that at this time Leo, Frank and Noel Martin were all in love with her, calling it a golden time.)

Denis Healey is elected Chairman of the Oxford University Labour Club for the following Michaelmas (Autumn) Term.

## July

- 4 (-12) IM attends a Communist Party Summer School in Surrey. While there she compiles a handwritten book which she entitles *Miscellaneous Songs, Bolshevik and Otherwise*. This includes 'Red Fly the Banners O', 'The Monolithic Party' and 'Brian Pearce's Song'.
- 31 Frank Thompson completes a sonnet to IM: 'To Irushka at the Coming of War.'

## August

- (last two weeks) IM travels with the Magpie Players, organised by Tom Fletcher from Ruskin College, performing sketches, ballads and songs in the Oxford countryside. The proceeds are to go to the Oxford University Refugee Appeal.
- 16 They begin in Bucklebury in West Berkshire, where IM for the first time stays in a proper farm and proceed, with ten stops, to Winchcombe in Gloucestershire.
- 23 The Ribbentrop/Molotov Non-Aggression Pact is signed by Germany and Russia.

On the Magpie Players tour, a journalist from *Picture Post* arrives and takes 200 photographs of the troupe, including several of IM (one of which is published as 'The Fairy Princess'). On the same day, IM notes in her Journal the signing of the Stalin/Hitler Agreement (the Ribbentrop-Molotov Non-Aggression Pact). This is the moment when many students desert the Communist Party, but IM writes that many intelligent people are simply misunderstanding the Soviet Union's intentions. She tries to persuade Tom Fletcher not to perform Auden's 'Soldiers Coming', tactless, she feels, with war fever everywhere.

At aristocratic Buscot Park, seat of Lord Faringdon, the show falls flat: despite the Left Book Club collection in the library, the audience refuses to respond to anything.

Two days later at Northleach in Gloucestershire the town seems panicked by the approach of war. Roughnecks barrack the cast. There is no food prepared at the Elizabethan manor where they are staying.

- 27 IM and fellow-actress Joyce Taylor, having lost their suitcases, stay with an old couple of whom IM comments in her Journal that they are good working class people but not intelligent.

- 28 The troupe gives a free matinee performance to a Basque refugee children's camp near Shipton-under-Wychwood. There is a worried letter from home which makes IM think that war may really be imminent. M.R.D. Foot is called up and makes IM his literary executor.
- 29 Tusmore Park, home of Lady Bicester, is the high-spot of the tour, with huge quantities of food and the Irish Lady Bicester expressing admiration for IM's acting, especially her presentation of the ballad 'Tam Lin' (which IM can recite for years afterwards). Nineteen-year-old Denys Becher plays Tam Lin. (He is in love with IM, but she never realises, imagining his skill at kissing her is part of his clever acting).
- 30 IM notes in her Journal that the Territorials were called up today.

IM's journal of the two-week tour runs eventually to a hundred pages. She has a brief fling with Hugh Vaughan James, who has hitchhiked from the west of Ireland and who appeals to her because of his Irish accent, stronger than her own.

## September

- 1 Hitler's German army invades Poland, flouting Great Britain and France's guarantee of its boundaries. A declaration of war is now inevitable. Evacuation starts of women and children from London and other major centres. The Magpies spend the day in Gloucestershire at an agricultural co-operative set up by a German refugee group who, because of the international situation, don't attend the performance.
- 2 The British National Service Bill comes into force, calling up men aged eighteen to forty. Frank Thompson, having turned nineteen in August, volunteers for the army, though as an undergraduate he is exempt from the draft until he reaches twenty.
- 3 Britain and France declare war on Germany. IM decides, to the horror of the troupe, to return at once to London. She and Hugh Vaughan James travel together as far as Oxford where IM catches the train to Paddington and from there the last train, after 1am, to Hammersmith. She arrives there too late for Tube or trolley-bus but somehow makes her way home to her parents.

- 17           The U.S.S.R. invades Poland from the east. Poland is now crushed between Germany and Russia.

## October

Philippa Bosanquet comes up to Somerville to read Politics, Philosophy and Economics (a three-year course).

Because of the requisitioning of part of Somerville by the Radcliffe Infirmary, IM spends her second year in digs at 43, Park Town, North Oxford, with Anne Cloake, Lindsay Lynch and Jean Coutts.

- 1           IM writes a poem (unpublished) called 'Dangerous Thoughts inspired by Curious Conduct on the part of the USSR' in which she struggles with her doubts about the Russian non-aggression pact with Germany.

Frank Thompson comes up to Oxford from military training to take his examination (Pass Mods). He stays a week, spending a pleasant time with IM, whom he calls a 'Bolshevik'. He has written a poem, 'Madonna Bolshevicka', in which he argues, answering IM's apparent criticism, that he just *had* to join up: he needs to fight. The Communist Revolution can come later.

IM sums up her first year for her old school's magazine: she represents the First Year on the JCR Committee, is a member of the College Debating and Dramatic Societies, the Classical Association, the Arts Club, the British Universities League of Nations Society and the Somerville Labour Club. She has joined the staff of the *Cherwell* and hopes to become sub-editor, she attended a one-week Communist Party summer school in Surrey. She is publishing poems, including 'Oxford Lament' (influenced by A.E. Housman and Gerard Manley Hopkins).

## November

- 11           IM publishes in the *Cherwell* an untitled poem, 'You take life tiptoe', which accepts the horror of war but insists too on there being certainties beyond it.
- 30           Outbreak of the 'Winter War': the Soviet Union attacks Finland. Frank Thompson bursts into Leo Pliatzky's room in Corpus, horrified at Russian aggression. Leo finds ways of interpreting the action favourably and the two – and IM – go on supporting the USSR, rationalising Russian policy as simply the result of the failure of Britain and France to build a common front against Hitler.

## December

During the coldest winter since 1895, eight miles of the Thames is frozen solid and IM, with almost all of Somerville, goes skating on the frozen river.

Russian forces are beaten back in the winter campaign in Finland.

## 1940

This year the Russians break through the Finnish resistance and Finland sues for peace.

## March

IM meets fellow-Froebelian Garth Underwood after eight years, in Foyle's bookshop in London. One of the first things she tells him is that she is in the Communist Party.

8           At a meeting of the Oxford University Labour Club allocating jobs for next term, IM is put in charge of 'Culture.'

Eduard Fraenkel, eccentric Professor in Classical literature who adores IM, gives her a copy of Wilamowitz's *Pindar*.

## April

IM and Mary Scrutton, after the requisite five terms, take 'Mods', IM's special subject being Greek vase painting. Afterwards IM is found by an admirer, Noel Eldridge and his family, weeping in her room, sure she has failed. In fact she gains a second and writes unselfishly to congratulate another Somervillian, Clare Campbell, on strengthening the cause of women at Oxford by getting a first.

IM is now Treasurer of the Oxford University Irish Club and gives a paper on James Connolly, an Irish Marxist and a leader of the 1916 Rising.

19           IM's first Executive Committee meeting of the Oxford University Labour Club takes place, with Denis Healey as Chairman. She proposes a meeting about Ireland to take place on 15 May. Other members of the Executive include Anthony Crosland, Roy Jenkins, Frank Pakenham, Kingsley Amis and (future Labour leader) Michael Foot. The main issues this term are: the conduct of the war, the opening of a second front and support for the USSR.

21           IM is present at another meeting of the Labour Club. There are divisions over the Club's relations with the Communists.

The national Labour Party this month has disaffiliated the University Labour Federation (ULF), the national Labour Students' body, for its Communist leanings. This puts the Oxford University Labour Club in a difficult position, as it is affiliated to both organisations. The Oxford moderates, who are led by Anthony Crosland, support the national Party's decision to disaffiliate the ULF. The leftists, among them IM, wholeheartedly support the ULF. The Crosland group brand them Communists.

## May

IM and her friend Mary Scrutton prepare to move from Mods to Greats: after five terms of Classical Greek and Latin literature, they move on to ancient history and ancient philosophy (with some more modern philosophy leading up to Kant). This will involve another seven terms, making a four-year long course.

- 1 Members of the Oxford Communist Party, including IM, trying to hold a May Day meeting, are pelted with fruit as they march over Magdalen Bridge and up the 'High'.
- 5 At the Labour Club committee, IM suggests that the meeting on Ireland be held on the next Sunday. The Executive put forward a motion that to maintain the unity of the socialist movement, the OULC should declare its loyalty to the ULF, even at the cost of disaffiliation from the national Party. The Executive Committee, including IM, supports the resolution which is duly passed. As a result, Anthony Crosland and Roy Jenkins, with others including David Ginsberg and Jack Blitz, immediately leave to set up the Oxford University Democratic Socialist Club, which becomes the official Labour group. IM's friend Mary Scrutton soon joins its committee. The Minute Book records that the OULC is now run by Comrades Murdoch, Pliatzky (Edmund) Dell and (Patrick) Denby.
- 10 Neville Chamberlain resigns as Prime Minister; Winston Churchill sets about forming a National Government.
- 12 (Whit Sunday) IM attends the Ireland meeting.
- 19 The Labour Club votes to co-operate with the Pacifists, who aren't being allowed to hold their meetings in St Edmund Hall.
- 26 Another Labour Club meeting.

29 Dunkirk. The British army is forced back to the Normandy beaches by the advancing Germans. Thousands of soldiers are rescued by small boats crossing the Channel.

IM and Mary, having moved on to 'Greats', are being tutored in Ancient History by Isobel Henderson who had been instrumental in persuading IM to change from English to Mods and Greats when she first arrived at Somerville. They continue to attend Eduard Fraenkel's *Agamemnon* seminars and IM also has private tuition from him. He is notorious for 'pawing' female undergraduates and patently adores IM, who reveres him and, unlike other female students, finds his combination of sexuality and intelligence attractive rather than upsetting. The seminars are frightening but also reveal to IM a vision of excellence.

## June

IM plays the Leader of the Chorus in the Christ Church College production of T.S. Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral*.

6 At a meeting of the Labour Club, IM is nominated for the post of Treasurer. For the next few months she is in constant communication with the Treasurer of the break-away group, Roy Jenkins, about dividing the Club's assets. He refers to her throughout the correspondence as 'Miss Murdoch'; she addresses him as 'Comrade Jenkins.'

22 France surrenders to Germany. It is around this time that Denis Healey and many other Oxford students (but not IM) break with the British Communist Party which does not support the war effort. Arthur Koestler's *Darkness at Noon* is published, further unsettling belief in Communism.

One of IM's many admirers, Noel Martin leaves Oxford with mounting debts and works as a farm labourer until he is called up in August. Before he leaves Oxford, he phones IM from the telephone box near the Martyrs' Memorial and proposes to her – a proposal she politely rejects.

## July

This month one of IM's admirers, Patrick O'Regan, gives her a copy of C.S. Lewis's *The Allegory of Love* (1938) They have been planning a camping holiday together: he has loaned her some money, which she has repaid.

Her parents have now been evacuated, with Hughes's job at the Ministry of Health, to 196 Cavendish Road, Bispham, Blackpool. IM visits them there and sells the *Daily Worker* in the Blackpool streets.



At the height of her Communist Party involvement, however, she writes to Patrick O'Regan, that she is more absorbed in spiritual matters than in practical politics. She declares that she prefers reading Engels and thinking about the theoretical side of Marxism to engaging in actual political activity.

28 IM is at the Shakespeare Festival in Stratford-on-Avon.

### **August**

11 (–18) The Battle of Britain. The Royal Air Force repels invasion in fierce aerial battles with the Luftwaffe over the southern counties of England.

Frank Thompson transfers from the Royal Artillery to 'Phantom', a small intelligence unit.

### **September**

7 Fierce German air attacks on London. The Blitz begins.

### **October**

17 IM is working in the Bodleian Library for Greats. (The poet Philip Larkin works there too that day.)

### **November**

17 IM reports to the OU Labour Club on the Town's ARP conference.

### **December**

Having been Treasurer for the Michaelmas Term, IM becomes OULC Secretary for the following Hilary (Spring) Term. The Chairman is George Lehmann of Queen's.

## **1941**

### **January**

21 The Communist newspaper, the *Daily Worker*, which IM has been selling in the streets of Blackpool, is suppressed for the duration of the war.

### **February**

IM's friend Leonie Marsh (who had been in love with Frank Thompson) leaves Oxford to get married. (When she very quickly has a baby, IM finds herself envious.)

At Somerville, IM has bought a copy of David Hume's *A Treatise of Human Nature* and is annotating it copiously, making 13 pages of notes altogether.

### March

Frank Thompson is posted to the Middle East with 'Phantom'. Some time before he is posted abroad, he meets IM in London. They visit Westminster Cathedral, where Frank lights a candle to the Madonna. He leaves behind with IM a folder of his poems, including 'To Irushka at the Coming of War'.

21 During the Easter vacation, IM writes to David Hicks from her parents' new address in Blackpool, 9, Waller Avenue, about wartime Oxford: she sees it as filled with evacuees and the atmosphere of war, everyone young and over-emotional. She quotes Chesterton about the courage of 'the people of England' and speaks hopefully of the country's postwar future. She admits to hating Blackpool though she is enjoying studying for 'Greats'.

(end) IM is voted OULC Chairman for the following Trinity (Summer) Term, with Rosemary Simpson, also from Somerville, as her Secretary.

### April

IM writes to Clare Campbell that she is reading French poetry and Malory and that she is absorbed in the ethereal poetry of the Pre-Raphaelites, especially Holman Hunt, imagining herself as one of his diaphanous heroines.

27 IM's first meeting as Chairman of the Oxford University Labour Club. At the request of this meeting, IM writes a reply to C.E.M. Joad's article in the *New Statesman*, in which he attacked the 'gross materialism' of Oxford students.

IM is nominated as President of the Somerville Junior Common Room Committee. Philippa Bosanquet, a year younger, disliking IM's Communism, nominates an alternative candidate who beats IM in the vote. (Philippa is later to become IM's best friend.)

### May

3 The *New Statesman* publishes IM's letter, written in her capacity as Chairman of the Oxford University Labour Club, complaining about an earlier article by Professor Joad.

- 4 IM as Chairman signs Minutes for the previous meeting of the OULC on 27 April. She comments in her Chairman's address on the need for stressing the reality of the working class movement. She wants more lively follow-up of events with discussion and stresses the need to muster support from other groups, for example the Liberals and the Christians, for practical proposals about food and education policy. At this meeting, a policy pamphlet is abandoned as not very useful and instead it is suggested that IM's Policy Meeting speech be circulated.
- 11 (Sun) There is an Executive Committee meeting of the Labour Club in Jack Terraine's rooms in Hertford College at 10pm. IM signs the Minutes of the previous meeting.
- 25 Labour Club Executive Committee meeting. IM signs the Minutes.

IM's grandmother, Elizabeth Jane ('Bessie') Richardson dies in Dublin. She has been living with IM's cousin and friend, Eva Robinson, who is seven years older than IM.

## June

- 1 Labour Club Executive Committee meeting. IM signs the minutes.
- 8 Labour Club Executive Committee meeting. IM signs the minutes.
- 15 Labour Club Executive Committee meeting. IM signs the minutes.
- 19 Labour Club Executive Committee meeting. IM has now given way to Rosemary Simpson, who signs the minutes.
- 22 Germany invades the USSR. The British Communist Party gives up its pacifism, to IM's initial disgust. She considers quitting the Party. She has had a difficult term as OULC Chairman, coping with the success of the break-away moderate Oxford University Democratic Socialist Club and with the animosity of the Oxford population, who dislike the OULC because of its Communism.

Three months after Frank's departure for the war, and probably also in the light of Germany's invasion of Russia, IM, still a loyal Communist Party member and following its line, ceases to support pacifism and accepts the need for war.

## August

IM attends a Badminton School Old Girls Reunion at Lynmouth in Devon (to which the school has been evacuated), and writes up the occasion for the School Magazine.

IM writes to Frank Thompson about the mess and pitifulness of Ireland.

## September

16 IM is reading Marcel Proust, whom she sees as inculcating in her the notion of forgiveness. She is picking up this theme too in her reading of Shakespeare, Tolstoy, Henry James and James Joyce. Joyce particularly appeals to her at the moment.

## October

12 The Labour Club Executive Committee meets in New College. IM is present. It is decided that failure to attend two meetings without good reason means that members are dropped from the Committee.

26 Labour Club Executive Committee meeting. IM is absent.

## November

5 The new Labour Club Executive is formed. IM, working towards Finals, is no longer part of the Committee but still keeps in touch.

18 Negotiations take place to reunite the two branches of the OU Labour Club. In an open letter to Sheila Rogers, the new Oxford University Labour Club Chairman, David Ginsburg, Chairman of the Oxford University Democratic Socialist Club argues that since the outbreak of war they have regarded the OU Labour Club as a largely Communist organisation.

23 Sheila Rogers replies to 'Comrade' Ginsberg that amalgamation of the two clubs should take place immediately. (This does not in fact happen until much later – February 1943.)

Frank Thompson, back in Cairo after two months in hospital with septicaemia in Damascus, writes to his parents that he has just heard from IM: she is gloomy but very affectionate, perhaps, he adds, because they haven't met for so long.

## December

- 24 IM writes to Frank scathingly about 'New Statesman liberals', declaring that she herself still supports the Communist Party absolutely. She mentions Mallarme and Gorky's *Mother*, which they both love, and the astonishing Virginia Woolf. She promises to read 'Bachtin' (Bakhtin). She feels herself however to be confused, unsure of her intellectual bearings.
- 30 IM writes to Frank about her new philosophy tutor for Greats, Donald MacKinnon whom she sees as a good man as well as a good philosopher. (She soon becomes infatuated with MacKinnon who, like Eduard Fraenkel, is to remain a great influence throughout her life, though the relationship in both cases remains chaste.)

## 1942

This year IM's father, Hughes Murdoch, who has worked in the Ministry of Health since her birth, is transferred to Somerset House to work on the Census. (He is to stay here until his retirement in 1950.)

## January

- 29 IM writes to Frank about her deep devotion to her philosophy tutor, Donald MacKinnon. She says she is now rebelling against her earlier identification with the Pre-Raphaelite heroines.

## February

- 22 At an Executive Committee meeting of the Oxford University Labour Club, Jack Terraine drops out of a debate with the Oxford University Democratic Socialist Club. It is unanimously agreed to ask IM as the senior Ex-Chairman, to speak in the debate instead.

## March

Just before her Finals, IM gives a very well-received talk on 'Poets of the 1930s'.

IM writes to Frank of her interest in Christianity: she is determined to read the Bible and to study the history of the Roman Catholic Church which she finds fascinating.

**April**

- 7 IM writes to David Hicks that after Oxford, she might be a nurse or a worker in a munitions factory.
- 24 IM is moved by Frank Thompson's enthusiasm for the writings of Mikhail Bakhtin, and goes to look for his books in the Bodleian Library. However, the only one of his works in print is *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (1929) and this is in Russian.

At Donald MacKinnon's suggestion, she visits Philippa Bosanquet at her digs at 2, Bradmore Road in Oxford with a bunch of wild flowers. Philippa is ill in bed with abdominal TB and struggling with Finals. Though they have both been taught by MacKinnon, they do not yet know each other well. (This visit cements a lifetime's friendship.)

**June**

- 7 Frank Thompson writes to IM that she should join the WAAF, get a job as a cipher operator, or come out and join him.

Both IM and Mary Scrutton gain Firsts in Finals, IM's being 'unquestioned'. Their tutor Isobel Henderson arranges a dinner party for them at which they meet A.L. Rowse, the Shakespeare scholar and the Mozart scholar, J.B. Trend.

IM decides to go into the Civil Service (possibly because of her father's job there). She is interviewed for the Treasury and accepted.

**July**

(early)

Only ten days after having sat for her Finals, IM leaves Oxford for London to take up her post as temporary Assistant Principal to the Treasury.

- (mid) IM writes to Philippa Bosanquet from 55, Barrowgate Road, Chiswick, a street away from her parents' bomb-damaged house, about the surreal, telephone-haunted world of the Treasury. She feels that she is simply acting a role in her new job.

**August**

- 15 IM acquires a copy (probably from fellow philosopher, Dorothy Emmet) of Martin Buber's *I and Thou*, translated from the original German by Ronald Gregor Smith. She adds

on the rear endpaper that her appreciation of such things as this, as well as the writings of Soren Kierkegaard and Georges Bataille is far too literary, chiding herself for enjoying what seems true without weighing it intellectually.

16 IM writes to a Somerville friend, Marjorie Boulton, that she has found a wonderfully charming studio flat and will move in during September on a three-year lease. (This is 5, Seaforth Place, which she is to keep till the end of her life, with Philippa's sister Marion as a tenant in the 1990s.)

24 M.R.D. Foot writes to Frank Thompson that IM is in good heart, but has become very quiet since joining the Treasury.

IM begins to learn Russian from a White Russian émigré, Malvina Steen.

### September

IM moves into 5, Seaforth Place. It costs £60 a month and is only half-a-mile from the Treasury.

15 Leo Pliatzky writes to Frank that when *he* writes to IM he will convey Frank's undying affection – perhaps expressing it more articulately than Frank himself has managed to do. (As Frank's close friend, he has moved on after his own brief affair with IM in their first year at Oxford and wishes to promote Frank's cause with her.)

IM writes to Frank that she is reading mainly theology but tells him that she will make sure she does not have a sudden conversion experience.

### October

19 IM writes to Frank Thompson, who is in hospital in Persia with jaundice, that she is settled both in her flat and in her job. Despite making more mistakes in the Treasury than anyone, she is now beginning to respect Administration as a genuinely serious profession.

### November

22 IM writes to Frank Thompson about her restlessness and desire to go abroad and about her feelings for him: she talks about heroism but also of her fears for his safety. She speaks of the general admiration for T.S. Eliot among her literary/bohemian circle. She is reading Pushkin in Russian, Pindar (from Fraenkel's gift volume) and Edmund Wilson, whom

she considers better on literature than on history. She has enormous admiration for T.E. Lawrence, whose *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom* she is rereading, and could imagine herself giving up everything to follow a man like him.

IM is now working a six-day week, often until 7pm on weekdays and until 4pm on Saturdays. She frequently writes poetry or letters late into the night. Every tenth night she is on fire-watch duty.

## 1943

In three letters during this period, IM writes to Marjorie Boulton about the Communist Party: despite being extremely imperfect, particularly in Oxford with its infighting, it still appeals to her because of what she sees as its clarity of vision and its sense of comradeship. She writes almost evangelically, of her hopes that Marjorie, as a prospective recruit, will soon share her own deep and permanent certainty about the truths of Communism. (Marjorie in the end doesn't join the Party.)

Like all CP members IM is expected to feed information about her work to the Party: she does so, but later in life regrets this. Sometimes she has to pass on information by dead-letter drop, probably in a tree in Kensington Gardens. (It is unlikely that IM's work was of any great importance to the Party.)

### January

This year, Jean-Paul Sartre publishes *L'Être et le Néant* (translated very soon into English as *Being and Nothingness*).

20 IM writes to David Hicks about her eight foot square desk and piles of blue files. She is working at the 'New Public Offices' looking onto the north front of Westminster Abbey and enjoying herself despite mistakes. She speaks of her pleasant, humorous colleagues and reminds Hicks of the complexity of human lives and the difficulty of understanding people because of their imperfections and inarticulacy.

22 IM writes a ten-page letter to Frank Thompson, addressing him for the first time simply as 'Darling', about her pleasant flat near St James's Park. She is lonely and much in need of the intellectual closeness she has with him, she says. He has told her that she and his parents and brother are the only four people in England to whom he can speak in letters as clearly as in conversation. (IM's letters are to be the only ones of the many he receives, that he preserves.) She speaks



of her desire to write – to escape the external confusion of time into the coolness and structure of art. She also tells him that she has lost her virginity, which she presents to him as a good thing since it has freed her from obsessiveness and made her feel calmer. She says there have been two men but that she is in love with neither of them. Begging him not to be angry with her, she insists she is in control and is not just behaving erratically.

(One of the ‘two men’ may have been Noel Eldridge who asked her to marry him before he joined up in August 1940. She refused, saying she would be willing to sleep with him instead. Leo Pliatzky believed that *he* had been her first lover, in her parents’ house in Chiswick. Other contenders are Paddy O’Regan and Derrick Brooman from Queen’s).

IM has a review published in the January–March 1943 edition of the *Adelphi* magazine, edited by John Middleton Murry. In it, she three times disclaims being a Christian. She is attempting to understand the ‘spiritual pilgrimage’ described in the book she is reviewing, *Midnight Hour* by ‘Nicodemus’. (In two further reviews, this and next year, she insists that Christianity must engage with the real world before it can attract her generation.)

## February

17 IM writes to Frank that the Oxford University Labour Club and the Democratic Socialist Club, after years of discord, have re-amalgamated with no animosity.

She also declares that he and she are both really Romantics at heart.

28 IM, troubled by David Hicks’s cynicism in his letters, writes (but does not send to him) a poem, ‘To DH (may he rot)’. (This is one of many poems she writes to him but does not send.)

## March

20 IM writes to Frank Thompson about the future and her dreams. They are discussing *Antony and Cleopatra* by letter. In a later letter she enquires about the extent of his own sexual experience while in Iran, asking if he has had any Iranian lovers. She seems worried about the different paths they are taking and the difficulty of keeping closely in touch.

IM praises the Communist Party to Ruth Kingsbury, a graduate of Lady Margaret Hall. (It is probable that she is allowing CP meetings to be held in her flat in her absence.)

IM and M.R.D. Foot go away for a weekend to Dorset. He has been pursuing her for months, but on this holiday she refuses him.

In London, IM buys and annotates a copy of Søren Kierkegaard's *Fear and Trembling: A Dialectical Lyric by Johannes de Silentio*, translated from the Danish by Robert Payne (1939). (She is to come back to this book again in 1953 and 1964.)

## April

- 2 M.R.D. Foot writes to Frank Thompson about his sense of having been knocked down after his rejection by IM.
- 20 Massacre of Jews in the Warsaw ghetto.
- 22 Frank has received IM's letter about her loss of virginity. He writes an equally long reply, saying that he cannot be glad at the news. He identifies two major difficulties with her position, one the dangerous violence in men, a deep misogyny which IM has yet to experience because of her respectable choice of lovers. The other seems to be more to do with his own reaction to what she has done. He identifies a dichotomy in his own mind, which he takes to be typical of most men, the distinction between women to sleep with as opposed to women to be friends with. He tries to soften this condemnation by suggesting that he realises it may be unfair to both kinds of women. He struggles to suggest that he realises he should be glad that IM has escaped from 'cold virginity' but for himself, declares that abstention is the better course until one falls completely in love. (The implication being that he has not yet done so.)

## May

- 18 Frank writes to his parents asking them to tear up his will and an accompanying letter. (This may have been linked to his receiving IM's letter about her loss of virginity.)
- 25 M.R.D. Foot writes angrily to Frank, having received a desperate, melancholic letter from him, warning him not to take suicidal risks.

IM in London is given a copy of Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams* by the philosopher, Dorothy Emmet.

## June

- 2 Frank writes casually to IM, impressed that she is trying to learn Turkish.

## July

- 6 IM writes to Frank about her rejection of most Eastern philosophies, which seem to her to depend on the suppression of the individual, saying that she prefers almost any Western philosophy – the Epicurean, the Kantian, or (she implies best of all) Christianity.
- 9 IM starts an affair with M.R.D. Foot in his rooms at 48, Rochester Row in London, near the Seaforth flat. She tells him that her first lover had been from Queen's College, Oxford. That night the Sicilian invasion is to begin. Foot knows this through his role in Intelligence, though he cannot tell IM. (He does not at this point know that Frank Thompson is to take part in the landings.)
- 15 M.R.D. Foot, writing to Frank Thompson, quotes Leonie Marsh as reporting that IM has not changed her worldview (possibly implying that she is still a member of the Communist Party.)
- 20 Frank meets another Oxford admirer of IM, Hal Lidderdale, while both are serving at the front, and writes in his diary that their rivalry over Iris, since she is so far away, actually only serves to cement their friendship.
- 29 IM writes a short poem, 'For Michael: Bettiscombe in July.' Having been told by M.R.D. Foot that Frank must be in Sicily, she writes to him, on a hot breathless evening, asking for a postcard telling of the Sicilian antiquities he has preserved from the British hordes. She ends by begging him to keep safe.

The July – September edition of *Adelphi* magazine edited by John Middleton Murry carries IM's second article for the magazine, a review of *The Rebirth of Christianity* by Stanley Cook and *Taken at the Flood* by Kenneth Ingram, discussing, as an outsider, the doubtful relevance of Christianity to today's young people.

## September

IM's close friendship with her former philosophy tutor, Donald MacKinnon, has to be suspended because of his wife Lois's resentment.

Frank Thompson volunteers for the dangerous Special Operations Executive.

- 16 IM writes, a love poem to Frank, 'For WFT', in which she contrasts their merely physical closeness in Oxford with the growing spiritual closeness they share now that they are apart. She does not send him the poem.

Philippa Bosanquet borrows ‘Tommy’ Balogh’s empty cottage in Dorchester. She and IM stay there for a week. IM is reading the deeply Romantic ‘Sturm und Drang’ poetry of Friedrich Hölderlin. She has an asthma attack, but sends a postcard to her parents praising the beauty of the countryside.

### October (mid)

Philippa Bosanquet, having got a job at Chatham House in London, moves in to share IM’s flat. The two give a party to which Tommy Balogh, the economist and Philippa’s old Oxford tutor, comes. Philippa’s sister Marion and cousin Rosalind, economist Nickie Kaldor, the poet Stevie Smith, Jane Degras (through whom Philippa knows Stevie Smith) Jane’s lover, Mark Benny and James Meary Tambimuttu, the Ceylonese writer, are all in the party circle.

IM is reading Proust, Joyce, de Montherlant, Woolf, Balzac’s *Eugenie Grandet* (which does not move her at all) and *Celine*. Both she and Frank read Louis Aragon’s *Creve-Coeur*, a current cult success, banned in Britain because of references to Dunkirk.

IM writes to Frank asking for his photograph and promises to send one of her own.

### November

IM is learning Italian, inspired by Frank and finding it, as he had predicted, easy.

She writes to him from her parents’ home in Blackpool, suffering from jaundice, which Frank had had a year earlier.

IM tells Philippa Bosanquet, to the latter’s great distress, that she and Tommy Balogh have become lovers. They are now sharing passionate weekends in Balogh’s Dorchester cottage. Philippa herself, like several other women, had been sexually involved with him and feels jealous. (Thomas Balogh, having experienced Soviet oppression in his native Hungary, is fiercely anti-Communist. At last, under his influence, IM begins her painful emotional withdrawal from the Communist Party.)

## 1944

This year Max Beckmann, who is to become one of IM’s favourite artists, paints ‘Self-Portrait.’

### January

In her fifth annual letter to David Hicks IM remarks on how little they have actually met. She worries that she may have turned him into an

almost fictional character in her mind and wishes they could start their relationship all over again; she admits that she does have a tendency to make up myths from real life. She feels she is incompetent at administration, that the civil service is not for her and that she would like to escape and work for the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Agency (UNRRA) in Europe; even a menial job would do, just so long as it occupied her completely.

### March

IM writes an account of her reactions to a bomb falling on the flat of her friend, the Hungarian economist, Nickie Kaldor, in Chelsea Cloisters: she cannot stop watching her own reactions, she notices, even when alone.

### April

M.R.D. Foot, missing IM, visits the Seaforth flat in her absence. Philippa Bosanquet falls in love with him at first sight.

IM believes (wrongly) that she may be pregnant. Thomas Balogh talks of them marrying.

21 Frank, engaged in a dangerous Special Operations Executive mission and having escaped death narrowly on the Bulgarian/Macedonian border, writes to IM declaring that he can honestly say that he has never been in love. When he pined for IM he was too young to know what he was doing. He adds an apology for his frankness and hopes that he will find time to experience love. He advises her not to fall for any emotional bullies. (This is perhaps a reference to IM's affair with Balogh.)

### May

IM and Philippa Bosanquet give a second party in the Seaforth flat. Among those present, as at the first party, are Thomas Balogh and Nickie Kaldor the economists, Dorothy Thorn and Vera Hoar from Somerville, Mervyn James and Vernon Saunders from Oriel, Jane Degras and Mark Benny, Stevie Smith and James Meary Tambimuttu.

IM tells David Hicks in a letter that she is running two affairs at once, but that one is simply from a sense of duty. She describes the embarrassment of sustaining deception and the agonising situations she is finding herself in.

Under the influence of Balogh, she at this time ends the affair with M.R.D. Foot.

IM is also taking part in the bohemian life of London – the area between Fitzroy Square and Belgravia known as Fitzrovia – and spending time in pubs like the Wheatsheaf and the Pillars of Hercules in Greek Street. She gets to know Dylan Thomas, Arthur Koestler, Dan Davin the novelist, Mulk Raj Anand, Canadian poet Paul Potts and the editor of *Poetry Wales*, Keidrych Rhys. The last-named joins the long list of young men who propose to her and are refused.

This month IM begins a collection of popular songs in English and French which she calls 'Make a Joyful Noise'. (This goes on until 1962 and eventually fills two quarto exercise books.)

## June

6 D-Day: the Normandy landings

Between 7<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Frank, fighting with the partisans in Bulgaria, is captured at Litakova north of Sofia. He shows great courage but, despite his British uniform, is shot and killed with eleven partisans. (The news does not reach IM until late September.)

7 IM, listening to live radio reporting of the Normandy landings, wants to cry and cheer at once. She is moved at seeing the wild delight of the normally-reserved English crowds (obviously still thinking of herself as an outsider, not English).

This month, IM applies to join the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA). On the application form she names A.H.M. Hillis as her Treasury Principal and describes her job as dealing with various questions of pay. Her referees are Nickie Kaldor, Eduard Fraenkel (she misspells his name 'Frankel'), Isobel Henderson, Donald MacKinnon and her old Badminton headmistress, Beatrice May Baker (BMB). She says she wants to serve the liberated peoples, if possible in France. She is accepted, and leaves the Treasury.

12 IM has been assigned to 'rehabilitation' with UNRRA, her plans for going abroad having come to nothing. She has started work at the European Regional Office of UNRRA at 11, Portland Place in London.

In the early summer she manages to extricate herself painfully from the affair with Thomas Balogh. (She is still struggling with her feelings for him three years later.)

## July

IM has completed her second novel.

In the July – September 1944 edition of *Adelphi* magazine, in her third article, IM reviews *Worship and the Common Life* by Eric Hayman,

continuing her argument that Christianity needs to engage with the real world to survive.

The Soviet government helps set up a Communist Committee of National Liberation in Poland. Having pushed the Germans out of Russia, the USSR now begins its inexorable advance through Eastern Europe.

## August

- 8           The Warsaw Rising. The Polish Resistance rises up against the occupying Germans, expecting support from Russia which never comes.
- 30          The Russians enter Bucharest and gain control of Rumania.

## September

IM is refused a job with the flying squad since she cannot ride a motor-bike.

- 5           The USSR declares war on Bulgaria.
- 24          IM writes to David Hicks, describing the pain of her break-up with Thomas Balogh. She is reading Henry James eagerly and compares herself to one of his heroines, suggesting that, like them, she may have a wild streak. She describes herself as also having a restrained and polite affair with a French diplomat, Olivier Wormser.
- 26          Noel Eldridge is killed in Italy.
- 27          Frank is reported in *The Times* as 'Missing, Believed Killed'. A week later MacKinnon alerts Philippa to this and she tells IM, who weeps.
- 29          The USSR moves into Yugoslavia.

## October

- 1           IM writes to David Hicks (with whom she has begun to correspond more frequently) about the physical attractiveness of James Meary Tambimuttu, with his wonderful dark hair.
- 18          IM's Somerville friend, Margaret Stanier, sends her a popular song to add to the collection she is compiling.
- 23          The USSR advances into Hungary.

## November

IM visits the Rehabilitation Centre in Egham, Surrey. She finds she still cannot make a direct connection between her work and the plight of the displaced millions.

IM submits her second novel to T.S. Eliot at Faber & Faber, but soon receives a rejection directly from Eliot himself.

She is now active in Labour Party politics, though she has little confidence in the Party.

## December

1 IM writes sympathetically to Noel Eldridge's twin sister Lilian from Seaforth Place. (Noel has recently been killed on active service in Italy.) She speaks of her first visit to Egham, to see the Rehabilitation Centre. She explains that she has escaped from the Treasury and is now working for UNRRA which she describes as run by pleasant but ineffectual people. She comments that her affection for Noel is not in the least diminished since his death.

27 The Russians surround Budapest, preparing to take control of Hungary.

IM writes to David Hicks of the death of Frank Thompson, whom she calls an old friend, acknowledging his vivid manliness and his high moral qualities and placing him above most of the other men she has met. She tells him too of the death of Noel Eldridge, quite a different sort of character, not heroic but certainly loveable.

## 1945

This year the philosopher Martin Buber publishes *For the Sake of Heaven*.

During this year IM writes to David Hicks thirty letters.

## January

17 The Russians take Warsaw.

19 The Russians continue their advance into Poland and take Cracow.

23 The Russians take Poland's third city, Tilsit.

## February

13 Budapest falls to the Russians who now have control of Hungary.

(late) M.R.D. Foot, who was captured by the Germans in the late summer of 1944, is repatriated following a prisoner exchange. Philippa Bosanquet soon moves out of the Seaforth flat to be with him.



IM declares in a letter to Hicks her dislike of seeing her rejected second novel which she can't bring herself to send to another publisher.

She writes to David Hicks of his continued impact upon her, which she puts down to the fact that when they met she was at an impressionable age.

## March

8 IM, grieving for Frank, lonely after the affair with Balogh, her French diplomat having returned to Paris, writes to David Hicks of her desperate need for closeness and for forgetting everything in the experience of being in love. She comments in the same letter on her love of Jewishness and Jewish people. She tells him (perhaps to suggest how much she has changed) that she is pinning her hair up, to appear more mature.

10 IM writes to David Hicks of the bitter cold winter and the impossibility of imagining warmth and humanness again.

IM is (like many English intellectuals at the time) in love with France: she tells Hicks that she sees the French as the real Master-Race. She is fascinated and inspired by French existentialism.

19 IM is reading and annotating the German philosopher Wilhelm Dilthey. She has also been rereading Fyodor Dostoevsky's *The Possessed* and the poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke.

## April

Some time this month, Hal Lidderdale sends IM a popular song to add to her collection, 'Make a Joyful Noise'.

## May

4 The Russians reach Berlin.

5 (Fri) IM stays the weekend with her Somerville friend, Vera Crane, in Leighton Buzzard. They travel to London for the Victory in Europe (VE) Day celebrations on the Tuesday.

8 (Tues) VE Day IM goes to give thanks in Westminster Cathedral, then to a party at the flat of Treasury Principal Hilary Sinclair off the Strand, then dances among the crowds in Piccadilly until 2am.

9 The Russians have reached Czechoslovakia. On this day, they take Prague.

- 11 Writing to David Hicks, IM describes the wild irrationality she sees in the world at the moment. She talks of Hal Lidderdale, another of her Oxford admirers, and speaks fondly of his unpretentiousness, love of life and lack of pettiness. She writes about Albert Camus and the current fascinating developments in French literature and philosophy.
- 14 IM writes to Frank's close friend, Leo Pliatzky. They have obviously been discussing Frank's state of mind when he embarked on the final expedition. IM declares that she is sure he loved life too much to risk losing it rashly and even suicidally.
- (late) IM is reading Arthur Koestler's *The Yogi and the Commissar*, a violent attack on Communism. (There is no evidence, however, that his earlier, equally savage attack, *Darkness at Noon* (1940) had had any effect on her views while at Oxford.)
- IM is now on the interviewing panel for prospective Labour parliamentary candidates, most of whom she finds wanting.
- 21 (Mon) IM records in her Journal that she has received another popular song for her collection from 'Bill'.

## June

- 1 IM writes to David Hicks that she believes Arthur Koestler to be the only writer who has identified the real moral problems of the day. (She seems to mean his synthesis of the saint and the revolutionary in *The Yogi and the Commissar*, rather than his fierce anti-Communism.)
- Philippa Bosanquet and M.R.D. Foot are married.

Following the end of the war, fifty precious paintings are returned to the National Gallery from storage in a slate mine in North Wales, including some of IM's favourites by Van Eyck, Bellini, Mantegna, Titian, Rembrandt and Claude. She is thrilled, saying that this really feels like peace.

- 16 IM writes to Leo Pliatzky about Koestler's *The Yogi and the Commissar*, saying she finds it clever but unpleasant.
- IM visits Dublin during the summer, to be godmother to Arnold, the second of her cousin Eva Robinson (now Lee)'s four sons.

## July

- 20 IM describes the strange habits of the Americans who run UNRRA: they chew gum and use people's Christian names.

- 26 British General Election: a massive Labour victory. Clement Atlee becomes Prime Minister.
- 27 IM writes to David Hicks after the Labour Party's landslide victory in the General Election: she is thrilled at the courage that the people of Britain have shown in voting out their wartime Prime Minister, Winston Churchill. She feels, with Wordsworth, that 'to be young is very heaven.'

## August

- 1 IM returns to Westminster Cathedral and is very moved as she remembers Frank lighting a candle to the Virgin Mary there: she records in her Journal how glad she is that they shared that time together. As she comes out she is enormously cheered by seeing the sun shining on a bank of pure white cloud.
- 11 Victory in Japan (VJ) Day. Londoners imitate New Yorkers in showering torn paper everywhere.
- 25 Paris is liberated. This means that IM can soon acquire copies of new French books, notably Raymond Queneau's *Pierrot mon ami*.

This month IM at last gets her wish and is sent by UNRRA to Brussels, to prepare to be transferred to Austria. Philippa's sister Marion Bosanquet moves into the Seaforth Place flat.

## September

- 4 IM in Brussels witnesses the Fete de la Liberation. She finds Brussels intoxicating, in particular its ever-open cafes where she imagines people endlessly talking over the new ideas.
- 8 IM meets Hal Lidderdale in Brussels. Some time during her stay she also encounters Noel Martin, driving a jeep in the Place Du Nord. They meet for dinner and she talks of Thomas Balogh.
- 16 IM writes to David Hicks of her loneliness and begs him to write to her.
- 24 She requests an up-to-date photograph of Hicks, declaring that she has entirely forgotten what he looks like. (They have not met now for seven years.)

Apart from her high-brow reading she also buys a paperback of the satirical 1934 novel *Clochemerle*, by Gabriel Chevallier.

**October**

- 4 IM writes to David Hicks that she has discovered a wonderful novelist, Simone de Beauvoir.
- 10 IM writes to Hicks from Brussels about the French novel which seems to her much more exciting than the English novel at the moment because French writers, probably because of the continuing influence of the Church, are still fascinated by the basic struggle between Good and Evil. She explains Existentialism to him as a theory of the self and its relations with others and of the self's attitude to death. She is really interested, she says, not so much in the theory itself, as in what the novelists do with it. She reveals at the end of the letter a homesickness for London, and especially for the London pub.
- 20 IM has received a letter from Hicks which revives their romance. Planning to meet him in London in November, she goes over their earlier relationship. He was, she reminds him, the first man for whom she felt a physical passion, and the first man to kiss her. She also reminds him that he had very quickly rejected her. She presents him in this letter as Byronic and bad, while seeing herself as quiet and good. Yet it is his wildness, she admits, that attracts her.
- 24 The United Nations Organisation (UNO) comes into existence. IM, in a letter to Hicks, worries at the greater cynicism this time round (after the earlier failed League of Nations).  
IM attends Jean-Paul Sartre's lecture in Brussels, making many pages of notes in English and French. Her notes begin (after a quotation from Simone de Beauvoir) with the statement that there is a Christian and a non-Christian variety of existentialism. Sartre is mobbed by large crowds, but IM is introduced to him at a select gathering after the lecture.
- 25 With many other admirers, IM attends a long café session with Sartre.

**November**

- 3 IM records in her Journal her dissatisfaction with what strikes her as the shallowness of English ethicists like

Sir W.D. Ross and H.A. Prichard. She asks Hicks if he has read Nietzsche and Schopenhauer, saying that she prefers their great mistakes to the careful liberalism of the English writers like Ross and John Cook Wilson. Sartre's talk she describes admiringly as fierce and clear. She has also, to her delight, heard Charles Trenet sing.

IM telephones Chico Marx, while he is in Brussels at the same time as Sartre. (David Hicks is a Marx Brothers fan), but he is not encouraging and she does not meet him.

- 6 IM writes to Hal Lidderdale of her thrill at encountering Sartre's ideas, which she compares to first reading the Romantic poets, Keats, Shelley and Coleridge, when she was very young.

Writing to Marjorie Boulton from Brussels on the same day she gives an optimistic picture of Europe as a café society full of witty and poetic conversation. She has hung in her Brussels office a reproduction of Breughel's 'The Fall of Icarus', which she considers one of the most poetic of great pictures.

- 10 IM writes to David Hicks that Thomas Balogh has married an extrovert woman from the English upper class with a great deal of money. The Balogh affair, she tells him, lasted about eighteen months and made her despair and hate herself.
- 13 IM has been watching a film by Jules Berry. She writes to ask Hicks if she may come over to meet him in London, calling him her prince.
- 16 IM leaves Brussels to meet David Hicks in London. They spend a whirlwind few days together (she later confides to Hal Lidderdale). On the second day they decide to marry.
- 21 While in London IM rereads Frank's letters. They make her feel both very unhappy and very proud she tells Frank's mother Theo, who visits her at Seaforth Place.

## December

- 1 Back in Brussels, IM considers herself engaged to Hicks and surprises herself by how happy and free she feels. She feels their love was inevitable, given the emotional build-up to their meeting. She says that she wants to marry him and have his children, while at the same time admitting that she has received so much adoration in all her other relationships that she is generally confident, even arrogant, but that with him she always feels insecure.

She has found a copy of William Faulkner's *Sanctuary*, which she describes as excellent and has also just read his *Absalom*, which she sees as powerfully tragic but with fewer purple passages. Faulkner, she tells Hicks, sharpens her own zest for writing.

3 IM writes to Hicks of the next move UNRRA have planned for her, to Innsbruck in Austria, and worries that she will have no time to master Sartre and to write her novel. She is thinking over Sartre's idea of the difference between love in presence and love in absence: she says it raises the question in her mind of how far one is really present to the people one loves. (There may be an implicit questioning here of Hicks's attitude to her.) She has recognised that for her it is not Nature or landscape which gives her that sense of presence but books, or the act of thinking or, occasionally, moments by the sea.

She is excited that the bookseller Ernest Collet of *Horizon*, newly returned to Brussels from a trip to Paris, thinks he can get her translation rights to the novels of the French writer Raymond Queneau. She records that Queneau has expressed a desire to meet her. She is reading Sartre's *Being and Nothingness*, signed by the author and feels she is returning to philosophy again after her four years of wartime service.

IM writes to Hicks for a second time on the same day to say that she was shocked to hear herself refer to him as 'my fiance'. She insists that she has not been unfaithful with Tournai, a Frenchman she has mentioned. She admits (at the end of another long letter) that in writing she can be very talkative.

Before the end of the year, IM moves from Brussels to Innsbruck.

She writes at length from Innsbruck to Frank Thompson's brother E.P. (Edward Palmer) to contribute to *There is a Spirit in Europe*, the family's memorial to Frank, which is to be published by Gollancz. She tells him of Frank's pure goodness. She mentions too a shift in her opinions about the Communist Party.

## 1946

### January

5 IM writes to David Hicks from her new UNRRA posting in Innsbruck. She is staying comfortably in a hotel in the mountains and comments on the delights of having

American army rations rather than French – though she is obviously guilty at being so well-fed when around her people are so short of food. The letter is full of expressions of her love and longing for him.

- 13 IM writes in delight to David Hicks, having at last received a letter from him. He has read Martin Buber, at her instigation. She feels Buber can be read and reread endlessly. She asks about the people Hicks is working with in Prague, particularly the poet Edwin Muir. She describes her daily routine, going down the mountain from the hotel by funicular, having time to read, write and learn to ski. She is reading a French book of essays on the novel by Henri Rimbaud: she disagrees with Rimbaud about the relative unimportance of form in the novel. In her own work, she explains, formal perfection comes first: her writing is an intellectual attempt to express specific ideas – though she adds a wry remark about the possibility, as with skiing, of losing control. She describes her love of religious observance and her intention to go to Mass in the cathedral, alone, where she can enjoy the smell of incense. She recommends Bernano's *Diary of a Country Priest*. Despite her sexual restlessness, the letter expresses deep confidence in their relationship.

- 19 IM writes to Hicks, full of questions about his job. She warns him ironically that he will have a wife with expensive tastes: Kierkegaard in two volumes costs two guineas, for example! She worries whether her own lack of domesticity will affect the marriage and wonders whether she will she bury herself selfishly in books and drag him out to restaurants instead of cooking herself. There is a reference to having children: this should be delayed, she believes, until Europe is more organised and better food is available for them. She is having German lessons and still adores the Russian language. She admits to desiring to be dominated by a man while having a joyous, primitive urge to resist too. She is weary of her novel: in trying to remove herself from her characters, she has only succeeded in making them unreal. At the same time, she loves having these characters about her and wondering what they will do when the next crisis in the plot happens. She admits to having slept with a French driver after a drunken party, but insists it means nothing. She still hopes to be living with Hicks, with or without a job, by early summer.

- 22 IM writes to Hicks of her taste for mid-European civilisation. She is reading a book called *The Destiny of Austria*, has heard the Vienna Boys' Choir (too much Johann Strauss, not enough Mozart, she feels, in Austrian culture) and has picked up a copy of Fontaine. She quotes a fine remark by Gabriel Marcel, the French philosopher, that we are condemned to exist with the same degree of reality that we attribute to others.
- 25 IM recounts to Hicks her dramatic involvement in the sad story of a young Yugoslav man, a 'Displaced Person' who, having smashed up an UNRRA truck, tried to escape over the border but was arrested by the French. IM, as the only French speaker, had to interpret. The UNRRA HQ has to make a decision and will probably have to return him to Yugoslavia, where, as a King Peter partisan, he will certainly be shot.
- 27 Still no letter from Hicks. IM is continuing to struggle with the novel, but worries that her characters seem to her to be too precious and intellectual.
- 28 IM is hungry for political news. In a letter to Hicks she worries about the future for the United Nations Organisation (UNO), since everyone seems to be embarking on the internationalist project so much more cynically this time.

## February

- 4 IM still struggling with the novel and wishing she could express there the things she feels inside her. She describes the experience of skiing in blazing sunshine. She quotes Rilke about the time and endless patience needed for artistic creation. She has a photograph of Rodin's 'La Cathedrale' showing two hands held up, facing each other with fingers touching slightly which she offers Hicks as an appropriate emblem for marriage. Friends have kindly sent her books from home – Sean O'Casey, D.H. Lawrence's poems, Sidney Keyes – but she would prefer Kierkegaard. She quotes Simone de Beauvoir's striking and intelligent idea about the relationship we have with other people.
- 6 IM recalls in her Journal her conversation with Philippa Foot about time. Are the truths of time 'timeless'?
- 9 IM is reading her beloved Rilke and also Max Brod's *Kafka* in German. She is spending the weekend at Landeck further



- along the Inn valley and refers in a letter to Hicks to a pair of Maquis Parisian boys, devoted to each other, like the pair in *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom*.
- 12 IM admits to Hicks that she has now been to bed with André, one of the Parisian boys. She dislikes the hierarchy in this community and, as always, finds herself preferring the lower stratum to the upper.
- 16 (Sat) IM meets Raymond Queneau when he comes to lecture in Innsbruck, which is the capital of Austria's French Zone. The conference he is addressing is on 'The Crisis in French Literature'. He is deeply impressed by IM. They climb up Mount Igls and drink late into the night. He notices that she is sad.
- 17 Queneau and IM climb an even higher peak, the Patscher Kofel, and watch a snowstorm together. They talk of Queneau's psychoanalysis and he records later that he feels their understanding of each other growing.
- 18 IM receives a letter from David Hicks, written on 21 January, in which he calls off their engagement. He has found someone else. She replies at once, admitting to having been shocked, as the relationship had seemed, despite its volatility, to be ultimately stable. She warns him against marrying the new girl in his life without considerable reflection and suggests he think instead of 'Mulock' who had adored him at Oxford. She insists that he is not to worry about her as she can see the wisdom of the decision and is not shattered.
- 21 (Thurs) Queneau looks for IM at the Club Franco-Allie. Their friendship continues to develop and they say goodbye tenderly. Queneau sums her up in his journal as Irish, big and blond, and goes on to enumerate her wide reading and novelistic ambitions, noting her move from the Communist Party to the Labour Party.
- 25 Raymond Queneau gives IM a presentation copy of his novel, *Pierrot Mon Ami*.
- 28 IM writes to Raymond Queneau, in French, of the dangerous and important question of finding the right literary master.

On the same day she writes to Hal Lidderdale an account of her affair with David Hicks.

## March

IM has been to several front-line refugee camps. She meets and makes friends with Yugoslavs, Poles, Albanians, discovering that hardly any want to go home again. Once, when a Yugoslav Tito man appears to persuade his countrymen to go home, they surround him and nearly lynch him. At Puch camp, having at first been mistaken for the typist (since she is the only woman), she meets some bright and handsome young Serbs and helps several to get to England. (Years later, having lost touch with one of these protégés, she advertises in vain in *The Times* to try to find him.) She helps set up the telephone exchange there. At the same time, she realises that she doesn't want to make a career in UNRRA but to return to the academic world. She therefore applies for a lectureship at Sheffield University and for a Commonwealth Scholarship at Vassar, New York. Her father, Hughes, is for once angry with her for proposing to give up a decent UNRRA salary.

4 IM writes to Leo Pliatzky optimistically about how glad she is to have been born into this interesting age.

17 On leave in London, IM talks to Philippa Foot about Philippa's recent discussion with Elizabeth Anscombe on the 'cogito' proof of existence: she records in her Journal that it is the most incommunicable of all proofs as you can only do it yourself.

(late) IM arrives in UNRRA HQ in Klagenfurt as Registrar, having travelled out via Vienna where she visited the art gallery and adored the middle period self-portrait of Rembrandt. (She always claims affinity with him, having been born on the anniversary of his death.) At Klagenfurt she is lodged in a beautiful farmhouse but the actual job involves only mundane office work.

## April

11 IM writes to Raymond Queneau that she has translated *Pierrot Mon Ami* into English but has had great problems with the idiom and with his use of slang and expletives.

(late) IM reaches her final posting at Graz in a front-line camp, Hochsteingasse, where she stays for two months. Here, in the British Zone, she helps refugee university students to complete their studies. IM finds hope here, whereas in the other camps, particularly for the elderly, there is no hope. One of her jobs is to count the calories of the refugees and

to beg food from the British Army when the calorie count (on two bowls of soup a day) was too low. Here she befriends a medical student, Jože Jančar and his wife, Marija, from Slovenia, and helps them eventually get to England. (He is later to become head consultant at Bristol Royal Infirmary.)

## May

28 David Hicks writes to IM from Bratislava criticising her insistence on self-examination and praising his new love, Molly, for her greater compliance. He admits to having been terrified at the prospect of marrying IM who, he says, is formidable in every way – as an intellect, as a personality and as a sexual being.

## July

1 IM resigns from UNRRA, says a difficult goodbye to the friends she has made at the Hochsteingasse camp, and returns home via Paris where she meets Queneau.

4 In Paris, IM buys a copy of Sartre's *L'Être et le Néant* (1943). Among the annotations she makes is the comment that one's freedom to choose one's past cannot be decided with Wittgensteinian clarity. She sees Edith Piaf and Les Compagnons de la Chanson at the theatre.

She returns to her parents' home in Chiswick, where she remains, unemployed and depressed, for the rest of the year.

## August

IM hears that she has won but cannot take up the Vassar Scholarship in the USA because she has (unlike others in her position) openly declared her past membership of the Communist Party. The McCarren Act forbids her from entering the US.

(Bertrand Russell and Justice Felix Frankfurter later become involved in her case but to no avail. The continuance of the McCarren Act means that for the rest of her life IM has to ask for a waiver whenever she wants to enter the US.)

1 She writes to Queneau that she has seen *Huis Clos* in London, thought it formidable but has been disgusted by British poor taste which has given it bad reviews here.

During the next few months she thinks of studying at Reading, Bangor or Cardiff and also applies for a Smithson studentship in philosophy at Newnham College Cambridge.

## September

- 14 David Hicks has sent IM a photograph of his future wife, Molly. IM replies from her parents' home in Chiswick that she looks delightful. She describes her excitement at current developments in philosophy – Sartre himself, Unamuno (Miguel de Unamuno y Jugo, Spanish philosopher and poet), Martin Heidegger, Nikolai Berdyaev – and says she is thinking of trying for an academic job. She describes Oxford's extreme logical positivism and its suspicion of anything relating to psychology, history or religion. She reports her efforts to understand Kant and Hegel intellectually rather than, as is her usual practice, intuitively.
- 15 IM writes to Raymond Queneau that this is a difficult and desolate time for her.

## October

- 3 (–9) IM, drawn to Anglo-Catholicism, visits the Anglo-Benedictine Malling Abbey in Kent and its Abbess, Dame Magdalene Mary Euan-Smith. (She later borrows much of the routine there for *The Bell*.)

## November

IM has her translation of Raymond Queneau's *Pierrot Mon Ami* rejected by John Lehmann. (She had anticipated that his wild vocabulary and bizarre use of French would cause problems.)

## December

- 31 IM concentrates on making New Year resolutions: It is very important to make them and to keep them, she believes, as they could alter the whole direction of one's life.

# 1947

## January

- 20 IM has a dream of Christ and the Virgin Mary, with her father and Donald MacKinnon. (This is to reappear thirty years later in *Nuns and Soldiers*.)

## February

IM visits St Ives in Cornwall and its community of painters.

- 28 IM writes of her love for Donald MacKinnon, which gives her a deep joy even though it is impossible for them to meet.

## March

- 2 IM hears Gervase Mathew preach a sermon in Westminster Cathedral on the life of charity, the compassion of God and the temptation to despair after sin.

This month, IM's old headmistress, Beatrice May Baker (BMB) gives her Volume 1 of Saint Augustine's *The City of God*, translated by John Healey (Dent, 1945).

During the Tuesday of Holy Week IM meets Donald MacKinnon again, in London from 3pm to 7pm. The relationship remains chaste but intense, IM seeing him as Christ, herself as Mary Magdalene.

- 5 She recognises in her Journal her impulse towards the dramatic and condemns her own thoughts, insisting to herself that the best thing to be is a good person.

IM wins a Sarah Smithson studentship at Newnham College, Cambridge to do a PhD. She thinks of studying Edmund Husserl, but decides no one has heard of him.

## May

IM feels depressed after receiving a letter from Donald MacKinnon, who has now left Oxford to take up the Regius Chair of Moral Philosophy at the University of Aberdeen.

## July

- 26 IM and Philippa Foot talk about subjectivity and objectivity in morals. They are trying to relate Kant's noumenal self to present-day metaphysical backgrounds.

IM listens to Sartre's *The Flies* on the Third Programme (based on Aeschylus's *Oresteia*) and wonders if she can invent a new myth. In her Journal she rewrites the Orestes story autobiographically, centred on her relationship with MacKinnon.

- 31 IM speaks at Badminton School on Existentialism but her Journal shows how insincere she feels in doing so.

This month Donald MacKinnon gives IM a copy of Martin Buber's *Moses* (1946).

## August

- 4 Visiting Cambridge, IM writes to Philippa Foot about Berdyaev's *Eschatological Metaphysics*. She agrees with Philippa that possibly a certain kind of symbolism just suits certain people and that it is the desire to find frames and concepts to explain obscure experiences that makes them say 'that's it'.

- 17 IM receives another popular song for her collection from Hal Lidderdale. She records that he is 'chez Janie'.
- 27 IM notes Donald MacKinnon's birthday. She is transcribing his writings and feeling more peaceful about him.

### Summer

IM stays in Bledlow in Buckinghamshire for two nights with Frank Thompson's recently-widowed mother, Theo, who has just returned from a trip to Bulgaria with Frank's younger brother, Palmer (E.P. Thompson). Probably it is during this stay that IM is given the volume of Catullus which was found on Frank's body.

IM visits Paris with Mary Scrutton and Tom Greeves, taking bicycles and on a shoestring budget. She goes alone to visit Raymond Queneau and with him watches Juliette Greco who, she is fascinated to learn, is bisexual. She later claims that she had various adventures during this visit, some of them homosexual ones. She enjoys the café talk of writers like Henry Miller, and Jacques Prévert, preferring to listen rather than to join in. (Paris is always to be essential to her and she visits it every year for most of her life.)

### September

She writes to David Hicks that she has never felt more cheerful and serene.

### October

(early) IM arrives in Cambridge, staying at The Pightle on Newnham Walk. She is to be supervised by C.D. Broad.

She reads and admires Camus's *La Peste*, which moves Queneau to jealousy.

She is baffled by Kant and Hegel but identifies with Johann Gottfried von Herder, the German Romantic Idealist.

- 17 Elizabeth Anscombe, Ludwig Wittgenstein's star pupil, talks to an excited IM about the possibility of meeting the great man.
- 20 IM writes to David Hicks from Newnham, hoping to arrange a meeting in London in November.
- 23 (Thurs) IM meets Wittgenstein in Room K10, Whewell's Court, Trinity College, Cambridge, the introduction effected by Elizabeth Anscombe. (She finds him alarming and is to meet him on only one further occasion.)
- 24 IM has contacted Father Denis Marsh, chaplain of the Anglican Franciscan House in Cambridge. She feels guiltily that in doing so she is joining the enemies of the Communist Party.

- 25 IM and Hicks have arranged to meet on 3 November, when she records that she will have to be in London to meet a French philosopher from the boat-train.
- 29 The meeting with Hicks has to be postponed, as IM will now not be in London until 5 November.

## November

- 4 IM meditates on Wittgenstein and on metaphysics, recording in her Journal that the basis of metaphysics seems to her to be man's obscurity to himself. She tries to link the medieval mystic, Julian of Norwich, to Wittgenstein in her attitude to the self.
- 6 IM writes to Raymond Queneau about her assumption that love and happiness are in opposition to one another.

IM changes supervisor from C.D. Broad to John Wisdom, ironically a disciple of Wittgenstein's. She is spending most of her time, not in Newnham, but in Trinity College, with two postgraduates, Wasfi Hijab, a Palestinian, and Kanti Shah from south India, both of whom have studied with Wittgenstein. Another friend is Georg Kreisel, the mathematician/logician who is sceptical about Wittgenstein. (Wittgenstein admires Kreisel, however, as does IM, who is to transcribe his letters copiously over the years.) IM meets Philippa and M.R.D. Foot again and feels hopeful at last of rediscovering their old friendship.

## December

Wittgenstein leaves Cambridge for Ireland. IM has come to regard him as charismatic but dangerous.

Louisa Murdoch, IM's grandmother, dies.

# 1948

## January

- 20 Mahatma Gandhi is assassinated.
- In Cambridge, IM is reading F.H. Bradley's *Appearance and Reality: A Metaphysical Essay* (1946). Her copious marginal notes include the comment that one should see G.E. Moore on how to refute Bradley.

## March

- 1 IM records in her Journal, of Sartre and Wittgenstein that, by reducing the inner life, they over-privilege 'I' and do not sufficiently respect the 'Other'.

**April**

23 (Fri) Jože Jančar, IM's protégé in the Hochsteingasse refugee camp, arrives in her room in Newnham. She helps him settle into a job (and later pays for him to continue his medical studies).

Philippa Foot, knowing how eager IM is to return to Oxford, sends her details of a philosophy tutorship at St Anne's College.

IM, Shah and Hijab go punting on the Cam.

30 IM takes Jože Jančar to London for the day to meet the Duchess of Atholl, who had said she would help him get into Oxbridge. IM takes him to Nelson's Column and the Houses of Parliament and they both kneel and pray in Westminster Cathedral.

**June**

1 IM gives a paper to the Cambridge Moral Sciences (ie Philosophy) Club on 'Objectivity and Description'. To her horror, her friend Hijab walks out before the discussion, apparently believing simply that there is nothing to say about it.

4 IM records in her Journal her suspicion of the seductive power of speech.

12 IM has been for her St Anne's College interview at Oxford, talking to Mary Scrutton, Philippa Foot and Elizabeth Anscombe – recording in her Journal what a female world it is there.

**July**

11 IM has won the philosophy tutorship at St Anne's Oxford, beating Mary Scrutton among others. She is now a Fellow of St Anne's.

**August**

6 – 7 IM makes her second visit to Mallory Abbey in Kent.

**October**

IM returns to Oxford to take up her tutorship at St Anne's College, lodging with Philippa and M.R.D. Foot at 16, Park Town. (She is to stay there for more than a year.) At Oxford she discovers she is now regarded as someone who knows about Wittgenstein – simply because she has come from Cambridge.



- 22 IM writes to Raymond Queneau of her reluctance to teach the prescribed Latin in her new job.
- (late) IM attends the inaugural meeting in Christchurch of the 'Metaphysicals', a group of eight High Anglicans including Eric Mascall, Austin Farrar, Ian Crombie, Michael Foster, Basil Mitchell, Dennis Nineham and Richard Hare. IM is the only woman. Nineham thinks she dresses like a fisher-girl.

## December

IM meets Dylan Thomas again at Kay Dick's party; she decides she prefers the company of Bohemians and artists to that of intellectuals. Among others, her friendship with the eccentric Yorick Smythies, one of Wittgenstein's two star pupils, prospers. (He is later a model for Hugo Belfounder in *Under the Net*.)

- 10 IM begins an intense three-day relationship with Elizabeth Anscombe which is apparently not physical but which involves IM deeply.
- 12 IM reminds herself in her Journal that one of her most fundamental assumptions is that she has enormous powers of seduction.

This month at St. Anne's IM is reading a new edition of *The Politics of Aristotle* translated with notes by Ernest Barker (1948). Her marginal notes in her own copy include questions on whether the good man is a good citizen and vice versa and whether the fact that Aristotle was pre-occupied with the city state makes his conclusions irrelevant to later politics.

## 1949

### January

One of IM's new admirers at Oxford, Fred Broadie, a protégé of Donald MacKinnon, who helped him get into Balliol, tells IM that he has seen her eagerly waiting for Elizabeth Anscombe outside Schools, her face lighting up when Anscombe appears.

### February

- 25 IM writes to Raymond Queneau about Lenin's *State and Revolution*, which she says has reminded her of her youthful rationalism. She reports her teaching syllabus in moral and political philosophy – Plato, Aristotle, Kant, Descartes,

Berkeley, Hume. (Her tutoring often strays from the curriculum, which does not help weaker students working for their 'Schools' exams, though she inspires the academically stronger ones.)

## March

1 IM has tea with a favourite student, Mother Grant, a nun in the Sacred Heart Order.

## April

IM makes her annual trip to Paris, where an admirer, Sydney Afriet, sees her outside the Collège Franco-Britannique and is struck by her stillness.

4 She writes in her Journal of her love of ballet, which one appreciates with one's whole body.

18 (Easter Monday) The Republic of Eire is formally proclaimed in Dublin.

## May

IM is reading André Maurois, Martin Buber and T.H. White's *Mistress Masham's Repose*, which she tells Philippa Foot protects her from dangerous depression.

## June

16 There is a Communist purge in Hungary.

The relationship with Fred Broadie has developed to such an extent that IM is becoming obsessed with him.

## July

23 IM records quarrelling with Fred Broadie, who quietly defuses the situation by insisting they do philosophy together.

31 Broadie talks of his attraction to Judaism after his mother's death.

## August

2-4 IM makes her third visit to Malling Abbey in Kent, during a retreat taken by Canon Dart.

## September

IM records in her Journal that learning what goodness is means changing oneself.

## October

- 15 IM gives the first of two talks on Existentialism (probably at St Anne's Church, Soho).
- 20 IM writes to Raymond Queneau of her love for Oxford – its very preciousness and the sense of belonging to an enclosed community.
- 22 IM gives the second of her two talks on Existentialism.
- 27 IM decides to abandon her current attempt at a novel, 'Our Lady of the Bosky Gates', which is about a spiritual seeker in Tibet, and meditates in her Journal on what sort of novel to write, expressing determination not simply to rework her own life. She has discovered that the first person male narrator form works for her and is beginning to write a new novel (which is to become *Under the Net*.)

## November

Fred Broadie ends the relationship with IM, realising that he wants more from it than she does.

- 11 (–13) The Polish United Workers' Party is purged of members who are thought to have Titoist leanings.
- 17 IM writes to Raymond Queneau about Simone de Beauvoir's ferocious manner in *The Second Sex*.

## 1950

Max Beckmann this year completes his 'Seven Triptychs' (which he began in 1932).

Arthur Koestler edits a collection of essays called *The God That Failed*. During this year, IM's father, Hughes, retires from his 'personal grade' of Assistant Registrar General. He has been working at Somerset House on census returns.

This year IM signs a contract with Bowes and Bowes to write on the French Existentialists. (Though this book never gets written, the work she does on Sartre does eventually lead to her first book in 1953.)

## February

IM meets Wallace Robson, an English Fellow at Lincoln College, Oxford, and formerly a star pupil of David Cecil's. The relation-

ship blossoms. Robson has just had a breakdown and needs to be comforted.

- 26 IM broadcasts on the Third Programme on 'The Novelist as Metaphysician.' (She has been commissioned by Prue Smith, who had met her at the Foots' home, 16 Park Town.)

### March

- 3 IM writes to David Hicks that she will be going to London soon and will spend most of the Easter vacation there.
- 6 IM gives a second Third Programme broadcast on 'The Existentialist Hero.'

She has left the Foots' home and is now living further down the road, at 58, Park Town, North Oxford.

- 16 IM's talk, 'The Novelist as Metaphysician' is published in *The Listener*.
- 17 Jože Jančar, who is now at medical school in Galway, receives a cheque for £100 – representing several months' salary – from IM.
- 23 IM's essay, 'The Existentialist Hero', is published in *The Listener*.

### April

- 17 IM gives an address on Communism to a conference of clergy and youth leaders in Carmarthen. She argues that Communism has enormous ethical power and that Christians must learn from Communists.

In the April edition of *Mind*, IM reviews both Simone de Beauvoir's *The Ethics of Ambiguity* and Jean-Paul Sartre's *The Emotions: Outline of a Theory*.

IM is the bridesmaid at Mary Scrutton's wedding this year to Geoffrey Midgley.

### September

- 21 IM has received a letter from political philosopher Michael Oakeshott (possibly in reply to one of hers) suggesting a meeting. This proves impossible because of IM's other

social commitments. She is obviously already fascinated by what she knows of Oakeshott. It may be that she is reminded of Frank Thompson: Oakeshott too served with the intelligence unit Phantom during the war. (Much older than Thompson – he was born in 1901 – he never saw active service.)

(end) From Chiswick, IM makes further efforts to contact Oakeshott.

## October

(early) In Oxford, where both have returned for the new term, IM meets and is instantly smitten by Michael Oakeshott. There follows a short but passionate love affair. Oakeshott is teaching at Nuffield College Oxford and has a flat at St. Aldate's; Murdoch, teaching at St Anne's, has a room in Musgrave House on South Parks Road. Despite the intense physical attraction, there is a piquant disparity between their philosophical positions, Oakeshott's scepticism sitting uneasily with Murdoch's idealism – though they have each been influenced in a different way by Plato. Oakeshott is suspicious of what he sees as post-war Britain's slide into socialism and of all Utopian projects. He disbelieves in the existence of any 'universal good.' The affair seems doomed from the beginning – though that may well have been part of its attraction for IM. She hopes, in her Journal, that Oakeshott doesn't break her heart before Easter, and recognises that she seems to need unhappiness in love. She expresses absolute certainty about her feeling for him, and only a dim recognition of the anguish the affair is causing Wallace Robson.

21 Chinese forces occupy Tibet. (The young Dalai Lama at this stage has conversations with Chinese officials. He does not flee the country until 1959.)

During this month, the affair with Oakeshott is at its height.

## November

17 IM's first paper to the Oxford Philosophical Society is on 'The Stream of Consciousness.' (She is to return to this theme in 'Vision and Choice in Morality' in 1956.)

**December**

5 (Tues) In Oxford, Oakeshott breaks the news to IM that he has fallen in love with another girl. Both parties cry as they part. IM returns to Chiswick in great distress. They exchange letters and later in the month she writes to him affectionately for his birthday on 11<sup>th</sup>.

**1951**

IM's room for tutorials is in Musgrave House, 1 South Parks Road. Among her students for political theory is Jennifer Dawson: both hate the prescribed text, Rousseau's *Social Contract*, so instead they study Plato, utopian philosophy and Simone Weil's *Waiting on God*.

At some time this year, Georg Kreisel and Elizabeth Anscombe go into IM's room in Park Town in her absence and make fish soup, straining it through a blue silk scarf given to IM by her mother.

**January**

IM is finding lecturing difficult after the ending of the affair with Michael Oakeshott. He has now moved to London to become Professor of Political Science at the London School of Economics.

**April**

29 Ludwig Wittgenstein dies and is buried in Cambridge.

**May**

11 The Czech anthropologist, Franz Baermann Steiner, researching in Oxford, writes in his diary, 'Enter Iris Murdoch.' (He remembers her from a chance sighting in 1941.) During the following months they meet six times, usually drinking at the Lamb and Flag pub in Oxford.

**(Summer)**

IM contributes to the *University: A Journal of Enquiry* volume, reviewing Gabriel Marcel's first volume of Gifford lectures. She is also published in the annual 'Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society', alongside A.C. Lloyd and Gilbert Ryle.

IM visits the Festival of Britain with her cousin Sybil and husband Reggie.

## October

25 The Conservatives under Winston Churchill return to power in the British General Election.

IM's Journal shows that she is very clear about her love for Wallace Robson.

## December

14 IM records in her Journal a query about whether goodness is identical to saintliness.

# 1952

During this year IM becomes close to Arnaldo Momigliano, Professor of Ancient History at University College London. He comes up every weekend to use the Oxford libraries and spends Saturdays from 4pm in her flat, talking about the Classical world and feeding IM's enthusiasm for Dante by reading the *Divine Comedy* with her in Italian.

## January

IM is seeing the New Year in with Wallace Robson in Dover. They ring IM's parents with New Year greetings. (They have met each other's parents during the previous year, preparatory to their proposed marriage.)

9 IM records in her Journal again her certainty about Robson.

12 There is doubt in the Journal entry: IM sees herself and Wallace Robson as mere shadows of what they each might be. Her hope is that they may help each other towards fulfilment of their potential.

## February

(mid) IM and Wallace Robson sit quarrelling in the Mitre pub in Oxford. IM accuses him of not reverencing her.

During this month IM is reading and annotating her copy of H.J. Blackham's *Six Existential Thinkers* (1951), as part of her preparation for giving a paper this (Hilary) term on 'The Existential Political Myth' to one of the Monday meetings of the Socratic Club (which had been started by her Somerville friend, the poet, Stella Aldwinckle, in 1941 with C.S. Lewis as President. She is to praise this club for years to come for its courage in reintroducing philosophy and theology to each other.) Her fellow-speaker at the meeting is the Christian philosopher, Dr. E.L. Mascall. IM's paper discusses Existentialism not as a literature, a

morality, a psychology or an academic discipline, though it can be all of these, but as a political myth which celebrates the individual.

She also this month in Oxford buys a copy of W.H. Auden's *Nones* (1952).

## March

- 3 IM records a conversation with Franz Baermann Steiner in the Golden Cross pub about attitudes to the past. To his surprise (and alarm) she has held his hand.
- 4 IM has a phone-call from Elizabeth Anscombe to say that she is going to Paris with Kreisel and Gabriel Andrew Dirac of Kings College, London and that it would help very much if IM came too. IM cancels her tutorials and takes the 9.50a.m. train to London to get her passport. Unfortunately Anscombe then goes down with 'flu. Kreisel hints that she will be expected to carry something – she realises this is an attempt to smuggle sovereigns into Paris (where they would make a huge profit) in her underwear. She quickly returns to Oxford and rebooks her tutorials.

## April

- (late) IM ends the relationship with Wallace Robson. She records, less than certainly, that she *thinks* she has left him completely and that he has become part of her past. (The affair is rekindled once or twice before finally ending.)

## May

- 1 IM has been on holiday at the Court Hotel, Charmouth in Dorset – but left her Journal behind. She is now living in two unfurnished rooms at 13, King Edward Street at £7 a month, with an unpleasant landlady.
- She records her talk with Franz Baermann Steiner in the Crown about poetry and philosophy. She feels she has learnt so much about literature from Wallace Robson and from Franz, especially about Rilke and Eliot.
- 14 IM and Franz spend the evening together at the Victoria Arms.
- 22 (Thurs) IM and Franz study German together. IM records her feeling of peace. (She is later to tell A.N. Wilson that Steiner was one of Hitler's victims, but was also witty, optimistic and good-natured.)



## June

- 1 (Sun) IM meets Franz but has also been to Abingdon in Berkshire, walking and laughing with Arnaldo Momigliano.
- 9 IM's first paper to the Aristotelian Society in Bedford Square, London, is entitled 'Nostalgia for the Particular.' A.J. Ayer challenges her and is very abrasive. She catches the mid-night train back to Oxford and is surprised and delighted when Franz meets her. (The paper is later published in the *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* (1952)) She also this year publishes her Socratic Club paper on 'The Existentialist Political Myth' in *The Socratic Digest* (Oxford) No.5.
- 24 IM's correspondence with David Hicks continues to be emotional: IM today apologises for her last letter, explaining that she was reacting to a brusqueness in *his* last letter: she admits how much anything to do with him can still move her and confesses that she is tired and in need of settling down to some work.

Some time this month IM goes with Peter Ady (female Economics tutor at St Anne's) to a big party at Burcot Grange on the Thames at which Asa Briggs, historian from Worcester College, falls completely in love with her. She drinks a great deal and she and Peter Ady kiss madly in the car on the way home.

- 29 IM records in her Journal visiting Feruccio Rossi-Landi in his rooms in Oxford. He tells her of his lover in Milan. They kiss passionately as she leaves.

## July

- 15 On her thirty-third birthday Franz gives IM a wineglass inscribed with a German love poem.

## August

IM travels with Arnaldo Momigliano in Italy and they become lovers.

- 8 IM lends Franz the manuscript of the newly completed *Under the Net*. She is pleased that he reacts well, guessing that it is because the humour is quite Slavonic. (He is the only person allowed to read it.)
- 14 IM warns herself in her Journal about the dangers of her intense emotions, suspecting, however, that she will probably go on inevitably living in this way.
- 15 (Friday) IM sees Franz off to Spain.

- 24 Visiting Paris, IM sits in the Gare D'Austerlitz and writes Raymond Queneau a fourteen-sided letter declaring her love. (His reply makes clear that he is not in love with her.)

## October

- 11 IM records in her Journal her intense sexual attraction to a friend, Maurice Charlton, who has unexpectedly visited her and warns herself to keep away from him.
- 18 IM meets Franz at Oxford station on his return, carrying a bunch of gentians for him.
- 25 Franz has a severe heart condition which makes him think, as he records in his Journal, of the myth of Tristan and Isolde – as if there were a sword in the bed between them. He makes an exhaustive record of his affair with IM, in which he writes of his wonder at how much they love each other, how great is their experience of love and how, strangely, they are also afraid of each other.
- 26 At 6pm IM collects Franz to visit Elizabeth Anscombe at 27, St John Street. He agonises in his journal that the affair will end.
- 30 They have lunch at the Abingdon Arms, where a French girl works to whom Franz is also attracted. He wants to show IM there is nothing to fear from anyone else and to make public their love for each other.

This month IM buys a copy of *Selections from the Notebooks of Leonardo Da Vinci* edited by Irma A. Richter (1952) and lists two pages of references on the rear endpaper.

- 31 IM, forgetting Franz's Jewishness, orders a ham sandwich for lunch. He fears she is moving away from him.

## November

- 17 IM stays with Franz, who is in pain from his heart condition, and they talk of love. IM is having to act as nurse as well as lover.
- 18 (Tues) Franz records in his Journal that he thinks of IM as the most wonderful woman he has ever met; despite her reciprocated love for him, though, she still refuses to marry him.
- 26 Franz shows IM his poem, 'Über dem Tod' and tries to explain that this means, reading the German accurately, *above* Death, not 'about' it.
- 27 Franz dies in the evening. IM registers his death. (Elias Canetti later tells the story that Franz died in her arms as a

result of their love-making. It is certain that IM saw him as he lay dead and that she felt great guilt at his death.)

28 IM cancels all further tutorials that term. Franz's funeral is at 1pm at the Jewish cemetery. IM stands near the grave alone as chief mourner. There are no flowers or speeches. Elias Canetti, a friend of Franz, is there and renews his acquaintance with IM.

30 (Sun) IM falls in the snow, spraining her ankle so that she is in plaster for a week. She writes desperately in her Journal of her great crippling grief and seems utterly lost and unable to think of a way forward. There is a real danger that the bereavement will break her.

Her friends rally round to console her. Wallace Robson tells her of his continuing deep love for her. Arnaldo Momigliano, in confessing his feelings, realises that they are not reciprocated.

## December

IM's Journal is full of remorse and grief for Franz.

10 IM records that the only person she wants to see in her pain is Elias Canetti, since he was Franz's friend.

12 IM writes to Raymond Queneau of how absurd and meaningless her whole life now seems.

IM has a tense lunch with her old Somerville friend, Lucy Klatschko, who finds her unusually strained and silent. Lucy is about to be received into the Roman Catholic Church.

16 IM writes to David Hicks of her sense of collapse and of having lost the person closest to her (whom she does not name). She declares that they would very probably have married and calls the death sudden and unexpected, despite there having been a heart ailment some years before. She cannot bear the poignancy of all their shared energy and hopefulness having ended and seems unable to think or plan ahead.

## 1953

## January

IM and Elias Canetti have started a love affair. (It is to last three years and be crucial to IM's development.) She records in her Journal his influence upon her. It is so great that she has to rethink completely her religious views.

- 10 IM writes in her Journal again of her love for Canetti: she has told him he is bound in her mind with Franz. (They keep the affair very secret and are thought by others to be merely friends. Canetti's mistress, Friedl Benedikt, is dying and Canetti therefore, like IM, is struggling with grief and guilt.)
- 12 IM records that she tells her deepest secrets to Canetti who helps her cope with her grief over Franz, allowing her to reproach herself less.

She has received the deed giving her rights to Franz's burial plot. She tells Canetti of her closeness to Arnaldo Momigliano and to Asa Briggs.

## February

- 8 IM describes in her Journal Canetti's domination of her in their love-making. (The Canetti affair is the only time she describes the physical details of love-making in her Journal.) They make love in Canetti's marital home and his wife Veza makes a meal for all three afterwards.

## March

- 21 Canetti, unobserved, watches IM and Arnaldo Momigliano in the Porcupine pub on the Charing Cross Road in London.
- 27 IM has finished the second draft of the novel which is to become *Under the Net* at Little Grange, BMB's art deco house near Bristol. (She uses the house name for one of Jake's winning horses in the novel.) It fills seven notebooks and she worries about what she sees as its sentimentality. She is still unsure of the title, considering 'Up the Ladder and Down the Wall: A Reflective Pursuit' or 'In Solemn Stillness All'. Canetti (he later claims and IM in a 1985 interview agrees) posts the notebooks to a talent scout for Viking, Gwenda David, and thus can (and does) claim credit for 'discovering' IM the novelist.

Within days IM is contemplating another novel, which is already present in her imagination. (It is to become *The Flight from the Enchanter*.)

- 30 IM records that Canetti often distrusts what she says. She seems to be aware herself that she can mislead people (presumably about her feelings for them) and worries that she can say things to her friends that are not strictly true.

During this month, IM has returned to reading and annotating her 1943 copy of Søren Kierkegaard's *Fear and Trembling, A Dialectical Lyric by Johannes de Silentio*, translated by Robert Payne.

## April

3 (Good Friday) Canetti's lover Friedl, whom he identifies with IM, dies after terrible suffering. (IM goes on meeting Friedl in her dreams.)

IM is making great progress with *The Flight from the Enchanter* for which she already has a first draft. The main characters, she notes in her Journal, are Jewish.

## May

1 Today in Oxford IM buys a copy of the new edition of Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* (1953), translated by her friend and rival, Elizabeth Anscombe. Her own help with the work is acknowledged in the Translator's Note. She goes on to annotate her own copy heavily.

6 IM records a meeting of the Metaphysicals with Richard Hare, Michael Foster, Basil Mitchell and the Keble College chaplain, Christopher Stead, present. (Hare is a dominant voice in moral philosophy but IM finds his ideas too restrictive, in particular his privileging of the will.) Under Canetti's influence she feels that she is no longer a proper member but more like a fellow-traveller. (She is to leave the group later in the year.)

On the same day she records in her Journal getting a lift across Oxford from her friend, Geoffrey de Ste Croix and how tenderly he kissed her at parting.

11 IM writes to David Hicks from St Anne's saying how much she enjoyed meeting his new fiancée, Katherine, and asking for the date of the marriage. She describes lecturing on Existentialist moral philosophy in Oxford and the beauty of the city in May.

13 IM records that Canetti has taunted her that he has spied on her and threatens a terrible scene if he discovers that she has deceived him.

14 IM is working on her Sartre book (which becomes *Sartre: Romantic Rationalist*). In it she reveals a continuing nostalgia for the Communist ideal. She writes that she believes that Sartre's novels speak for all (like herself) who felt the

Spanish Civil War as a personal wound and are struggling with their disappointment and their vain passion for Communism.

She has been thrown out of her digs at 13, King Edward Street by her landlady (about whom, she tells David Hicks, she feels murderous) and is about to move to a pair of basement rooms on Southmoor Road, belonging to Dr Alice Stewart of Lady Margaret Hall.

## June

1 IM takes David Hicks and his new wife, Katherine, to dinner at the Randolph Hotel: they are too poor to have a honeymoon. She is now established in her new flat at 48, Southmoor Road.

## July

10 To Aymer Maxwell, Canetti's loyal and adoring friend, IM admits that she believes Canetti to be a great writer.

19 IM feels she has made astonishing progress with what is to become *The Flight from the Enchanter*, but decides to 'unmake' it and start again. At her parents' home in Chiswick she begins a new notebook with the title 'The Education of Annette'.

Elizabeth Anscombe gives IM for her birthday a copy of her own translation of Wittgenstein's *Investigations*.

To celebrate the sending off of *Under the Net*, IM rows Yorick Smithies to the Plough pub in Wolvercote, near Oxford, in her canoe. She records in her Journal that he behaved more like Hugo Belfounder (in *Under the Net*) than she could ever have imagined.

## August

5 Gwenda David from Viking sends the manuscript of *Under the Net* to Norah Smallwood at Chatto and Windus. (In 1985 IM recalls that this too was at Canetti's instigation.)

6 IM writes in her Journal of the impossibility of marriage, of having only one man.

She is now writing Volume 2 of what is to become *The Flight from the Enchanter*.

She travels to Italy for a second time with Arnaldo Momigliano.

## September

21 Norah Smallwood has lunch with IM, whom she finds charming.

- 24        Norah Smallwood replies to Gwenda David about *Under the Net*, saying how much she enjoyed and admired the novel and how much she enjoyed meeting its author.
- 25        IM completes Volume 1 of 'The Education of Annette' and starts on Volume 3, which is untitled. (All three later make up *The Flight from the Enchanter*.)

### October

- 3        IM records that Chatto and Windus and Viking are both taking *Under the Net*. (This is a rare reference in her Journals to her literary career.)

### November

- 16        Gwenda David writes to Chatto and Windus that IM is having enormous trouble deciding on the title of her first novel: the only one she says she doesn't hate is 'Truth and the Jester' – but she has promised to try to think of something better soon.

*Sartre: Romantic Rationalist* is published by Bowes & Bowes in a series of 'Studies of Modern European Literature and Thought.' It is dedicated to IM's parents, Irene and Hughes Murdoch. Patrick Gardiner, a philosopher from the newly-opened St Anthony's College next door to St Anne's, and his friend John Bayley (JB), a member of St Anthony's studying English Literature, throw a party to celebrate the publication. (IM has recently met Bayley at a cocktail party given by Elaine Griffeths, who teaches English at St Anne's and who was on JB's degree viva panel.)

### December

At the Cosmo café-restaurant in Swiss Cottage, IM is moved by Aymer Maxwell's devotion to Canetti: looking for him in the restaurant, he refers to him as 'the master.'

## 1954

### January

IM comes across Canetti's voice on the radio from Stuttgart, reciting his play, *The Comedy of Vanities* which she is busy translating into English.

Later that month she writes him a sonnet – her first poem for him.

After a party, JB (who has already fallen in love with IM from seeing her riding her bike past his window) contrives to bicycle home with her and she confesses to him that she has written a novel – but that she doesn't want anyone to know. (It turns out that she has in fact told many people already.)

## February

- 5 IM mentions in her Journal for the first time her fondness for her new admirer, John Bayley. She has already visited him at his college.

## March

IM and JB meet three times this month, at her basement flat in Southmoor Road and at his first-floor room in St Anthony's. They exchange drafts of each other's first novels. They sing German and English songs together. On one occasion he kisses her on the lips as they say goodbye. She refers often in her Journals to his laughter.

IM is diagnosed as partially deaf, a condition likely to get worse. She begins to attend lip-reading sessions at the Radcliffe Infirmary, Oxford. Over the Easter holidays, IM visits Ireland, travelling to Glengarriff on the Beara Peninsula west of Cork. She notes what she calls her only partly fabricated feeling of being at home there. After this visit she writes what is to be her only short story, 'Something Special', set in Dun Laoghaire.

## May

- 1 Lucy Klatschko is accepted by Stanbrook Abbey near Worcester as a postulant.
- 14 (Fri) At a dance at St Anthony's, Dee Wells (later to marry A.J. Ayer) notes IM and JB dancing wildly round the room and prattling like children. IM notes in her Journal that she has fallen deeply in love with JB and determines to try not to harm or hurt him.
- 20 *Under the Net* is published, dedicated 'To Raymond Queneau'.
- 23 IM has explained to JB the importance of Arnaldo Momigliano, Asa Briggs (who is teaching her about modern history, in Worcester College) and Elias Canetti in her life: in one of her poems to him she explains that she can offer only a *sort* of constancy.



## June

- 1 *Under the Net* is already becoming popular: it is, for example, the June 'Book of the Month' at the *Newcastle Journal* (*North Mail*). The editors point out, in their letter to Chatto and Windus, how unusual it is for them to select a first novel as Book of the Month.
- 3 JB invites IM to a party at St Anthony's. Afterwards they go back to his room and fall into each other's arms. They talk and babble together like children (JB later recalls.) IM's Journal entry simply says that at the St Anthony's dance she fell down some steps and seems also to have fallen in love with John. She notes that they didn't dance much.
- 15 IM drags JB away from a dance at St Anne's when she sees Asa Briggs with another partner and is filled with jealousy.
- 28 IM replies to Queneau's queries about *Under the Net*. (He is its dedicatee but has replied very casually to the letter telling him this.)
- 30 JB writes to IM at home with her parents in Chiswick, calling her 'Darling' and begging her not to give him up. (Their affair has been reported to Canetti and IM is afraid of reprisals.) She recognises in her Journal her considerable capacity for dividing her heart into compartments and giving apparently her whole attention to several people at once.

On a hot summer Sunday morning, JB and IM cycle out together to see Cassington Church but the heat turns them back. Instead they go swimming in the Cherwell. They then go to lunch with Maurice Charlton, who has a research appointment at the Radcliffe Hospital. JB is sure Charlton is in love with IM and that he had expected her to come to lunch alone.

## July

JB arrives at Victoria Station in London, to visit IM at her parents' home in Chiswick. He is carrying a rucksack and she notes in her Journal his beaming smile when he sees her. They go to Trafalgar Square and she tells him that Canetti has decreed that she and JB must stop sexual relations. JB says that, though the sex wasn't important before, now it is. They go to the London Library and find a quiet place among the bookstacks where they can make love.

- 7 IM from Chiswick writes to her old Somerville friend Stella Aldwinckle in South Africa: she is on her way back to Oxford for an Aristotelian Society meeting, but confesses

that she prefers to observe the philosophers rather than listen to their papers. Stella, she says, is much more of a real natural philosopher than she is.

15 For her thirty-fifth birthday, Canetti gives IM a copy of the *Ching P'ing Mei*, about a man with six wives. He mentions his great expectations for the second novel.

18 IM visits Lucy Klatschko at Stanbrook Abbey.

19 IM writes to Stella Aldwinckle about her uneventful thirty-fifth birthday but seems shocked to have reached that age. She is desperate to get to work on her next novel (*The Flight from the Enchanter*) but is being constantly interrupted by the telephone. She is going soon to Bristol to stay with her old headmistress (BMB), (presumably to escape interruptions). She describes the writer's feelings of aggression towards anyone who gets between her and her work.

25 On his birthday, Canetti tells IM twice that he loves her and then regrets having said so.

26 IM stays with BMB in Bristol, for a fortnight. JB, to his delight, is invited to meet BMB, who remarks to IM that he does not look very strong.

IM and JB go briefly to Paris but she now insists that they obey Canetti's decree and stay in separate hotels. JB hates Paris.

## August

1 IM has begun paying the rent of a pleasant flat at 25, Beaumont Street, Oxford.

4 JB rings IM in Bristol and cheers her up about the progress of *The Flight from the Enchanter*. She records in her Journal his remarkable qualities of humility and simplicity.

10 IM writes from Bristol, where she is about to end her holiday with BMB, to Stella Aldwinckle that she has realised that the novel she is writing will not do. She describes the disorientating experience of having been so deeply involved in the world of the novel and then to find it disintegrating. She regrets deeply having been neglecting philosophy simply for this.

11 IM returns from Bristol to London.

15 (Sun) IM travels in Italy and in France with John Simopoulos, (a Greek/Jewish philosopher who is to be the dedicatee of *The Bell*.) She has told Stella Aldwinckle that she does not want to go but is desperately in need of the sun, since it has rained for weeks in England and still feels like March.

Later in the month she sends Stella Aldwinckle a letter from Italy, but expresses concern that it will be lost en route by the Italians!

JB teaches IM to drive. On one occasion he crashes her Hillman Minx into a stationary lorry, but is forgiven. He helps her replace it with a 1946 dark-green Riley (which she puts into *The Sandcastle*).

## September

IM and JB become lovers again, despite Canetti's decree. They meet at a friend's flat in West Halkin Street in London. IM is still depressed at the progress of her second novel.

## October

4 (–8) IM meets the novelist Brigid Brophy at the Cheltenham Literature Festival, where *Under the Net* is runner-up to Brophy's *Hackenfeller's Ape* for the prize for a first novel. A second prize has been especially created by the judges on this occasion to acknowledge the merit of *Under the Net*. Brophy is awarded £50, IM £20.

IM is full of creative energy. She records that she knows now that her task is to write: that at least is certain. She regularly attends the Sunday evening gatherings in Joyce Cary's Oxford home, afterwards saying that it felt like a writers' pub.

## December

IM takes home to Chiswick a lonely St Anne's student, Julian Chrysostomides, who is to become a life-long friend. (She has a twin brother, Nikos, which feeds IM's fascination with twins and doubling.)

# 1955

## February

20 In Oxford, IM completes the second draft of *The Flight from the Enchanter*. IM is now very close to JB, but has still not dared to tell Canetti.

## March

2 IM writes to 'Dear Mrs Smallwood' – Norah Smallwood from Chatto and Windus – about her income tax situation. IM, with friend and fellow tutor at St Anne's, Peter Ady, works to put together a wedding reception for a St Anne's student, Deirdre Levinson Bergson, whose parents do not approve of her marriage. (Deirdre later recalls IM's kindness to her and to another student, Louisa Worsley

who had been ill. She also remembers that at her admissions interview, IM had asked her, terrifyingly, for a summary of T.S. Eliot's *Four Quartets*.)

JB publishes his first novel, *In Another Country* which is a success. (He is to write no more novels for 35 years, because of the meteoric rise of IM's novel career.)

26 JB gives IM a copy of his novel, inscribed 'Horror-Comic for IM from JB'.

## April

5 Winston Churchill resigns as Prime Minister and is succeeded by Anthony Eden.

IM gives a talk during a day-school at Wedgewood Memorial College in which her response to a question on love makes a powerful impact on the novelist, John Wain, and on Richard Lyne from the Delegacy for Extra-Mural Studies who had organised the event.

## June

The magazine *Twentieth Century* publishes an Oxford Number entitled 'Philosophy and Beliefs', which contains a debate between four Oxford philosophers, Anthony Quinton, Stuart Hampshire, Isaiah Berlin and IM. IM declares that a consequence of analytic philosophy is that it tends to trivialise real human problems in morals and politics.

## August

IM travels for a third time in Italy with Arnaldo Momigliano.

29 IM has begun the first draft of her third novel, *The Sandcastle*.

## September

18 IM has completed the first draft of *The Sandcastle*, in eight notebooks, writing it at Chiswick and at St Anne's College, Oxford. She is at the same time still working on her short story, 'Something Special'.

## October

1 IM writes to Stella Aldwinckle that she has been to Burgundy (her first holiday with Peter Ady) since she last wrote.

13 IM writes very formally to Isaiah Berlin from St Anne's thanking him for talking to her about the Irish novelist, Elizabeth Bowen and hoping that she may be able to meet her at some stage. She asks if one of her students, Miss Stevenson, may be able to join his class. (She later asks

permission for another student, Miss Mcnaughton, to join too and says that she is also looking forward to coming herself.)

IM leaves her Journal of her affair with Canetti out in her Beaumont Street flat, to which JB has a key. JB is deeply upset. He has won a Fellowship at New College, Oxford, and now occupies a large set of rooms there.

During the autumn IM has an intense relationship with Brigid Brophy.

## November

Brigid Brophy is sending IM love letters and telegrams.

## December

IM is dreaming frequently about marriage. She has met JB's parents at Nettlepole, their house at Pluckley, near Charing in Kent. JB's mother Olivia comments that she looks like a little bull.

# 1956

This year, Colin Wilson publishes *The Outsider*.

## January

8 IM completes the second draft of her third novel, *The Sandcastle*, which has taken only four months to write. The longhand manuscript is 495 leaves in length.

## February

15 IM records in her Journal her attraction to JB and the probability of marriage, but still expresses hesitation.

JB drives IM to London to take her parents out for a meal at La Coquille and on to see the musical, *Salad Days*. (This is probably the only musical they ever go to see together.)

This year Brigid Brophy sends IM a copy of her novel, *The Crown Princess*, inscribed 'To Iris with regret.' Their affair is fading.

IM makes friends this year with the Anglo-Irish novelist, Elizabeth Bowen, whom she meets at 7, Linton Road, Oxford, the home of Lord David Cecil, a Fellow at New College and JB's mentor.

## March

17 IM writes to her editor at Viking about what Ireland means to her: a dream country where everything happens differently.

- 23 *The Flight from the Enchanter* is published, dedicated 'To Elias Canetti'. At Gwenda David's Chatto and Windus party for its publication, Canetti tells JB that he likes him, thus apparently bestowing his blessing on the union. IM records her joy at a return to a simpler life. IM, helped by her mother, Rene, is dressed glamorously for once, with mascara and lipstick. IM's article, 'Vision and Choice in Morality', is published in the *Aristotelian Society Supplementary Volume*.

## April

IM's father, Hughes Murdoch, is operated on for lung cancer.

During one of their meetings, IM compares Canetti to Moses, suggesting he has horns. He blames her for them.

IM goes on her second French holiday, to Burgundy, with Peter Ady.

## June

- 9 *The Nation* magazine carries a review by IM of *The Mandarins* by Simone de Beauvoir (translated into English by Leonard M. Friedman). It is called 'At One Remove from Tragedy'.

## July

IM stays with Elizabeth Bowen at Bowen's Court, County Cork. Bowen talks of her own closeness to her late husband, Alan Cameron, and of the importance of marriage.

- 10 Norah Smallwood writes to IM that she has sent *The Sandcastle* to Metro Goldwyn Meyer, but has just had it returned with critical comments about its unsuitability for filming.
- 15 IM returns the copy of Dante given to her on her birthday three years ago by Arnaldo Momigliano, because of a rift between them caused by her decision to marry JB (but see also July 1979).
- 26 President Nassar of Egypt seizes the Suez Canal.
- (late) IM is still hesitating about marriage because of her closeness to two philosopher friends, John Simopoulos and David Pears.

## August

IM meets JB's beloved middle brother Michael for the first time, in the Catherine Wheel pub in Henley. It is an unpropitious beginning, as JB

leaves them to attend a meeting and Michael then has to drive IM back to Oxford, using up his petrol ration.

14 IM and JB are married in an Oxford registry office, with a party at New College afterwards. IM wears a bright blue silk dress, under a mackintosh. Her Journal account records the event simply with the date and the fact. IM's mother is delayed by having to nurse her husband and doesn't arrive until the ceremony is over. Among the guests is JB's old friend from Eton, Lord Altrincham (who gives up his peerage in 1963 and becomes John Grigg.) JB and IM take JB's Austin 10 van to Henley, then to the Jersey Arms at Middleton Stoney and then to France and Italy for three weeks. Eventually they reach Borgo San Sepulcro and see Piero della Francesca's painting of the Resurrection. JB sees the Christ-figure as a pagan nature god, but IM insists on the Christian meaning. They return to live together in IM's flat at 25, Beaumont Street, Oxford.

(end) IM writes to Stella Aldwinckle that she has just got back from Italy – a good journey, wonderful weather and beautiful cities. (She doesn't mention that it was also her honeymoon.) They are now trying to buy a house, about twelve miles from Oxford, with a big garden.

*Vogue* magazine carries an article by IM entitled 'What I see in Cinema 1'.

## September

24 (Mon) IM has lunch with Norah Smallwood to discuss publishing plans.

## October

6 IM records in her Journal the simplicity and joy of her new life. They are about to go to visit the Cecils at Cranborne in Dorset.

16 Marshall Best, her Viking editor, writes to IM that he is glad to hear from Gwenda David at Chatto and Windus that she is thinking of giving up university teaching to devote more time to her writing.

22 The Hungarian Uprising against the USSR and the Communist regime begins.

31 Anglo-French troops bomb Egyptian airfields. There is an outcry in Britain.

**November**

- 2 The *Spectator* includes IM's article, 'Knowing the Void', a review of the *Notebooks of Simone Weil*, translated and edited by Arthur Wills.
- 4 The Russians attack Budapest.
- 7 Ceasefire in Egypt.

**December**

- 5 The British begin an ignominious withdrawal from Suez.
- 11 The Bayleys move to Cedar Lodge, a country house fourteen miles out of Oxford in the village of Steeple Aston. (They are to live there for thirty years. They live mostly in the kitchen and never really inhabit the whole house. The unfrequented rooms become a haven for mice and, for a time, rats. Eventually several ageing Volkswagen Beetle cars accumulate in the garden, as well as a pond for IM to swim in.)
- 14 The *Spectator* carries a review by IM of S.T. Coleridge's *Confessions of an Enquiring Spirit*. It is called 'Let Them Philosophise'.

IM's parents learn that Hughes has cancer in his remaining lung.

**1957**

This year, Samuel Beckett publishes *Endgame*. JB publishes his first major critical work, *The Romantic Survival: A Study in Poetic Evolution*.

IM's short story, 'Something Special', is published this year by Macmillan in *Winter's Tales*, Volume 3. Her article 'Metaphysics and Ethics' appears in *The Nature of Metaphysics*, edited by her friend David Pears.

**January**

- 9 In the aftermath of the Suez debacle, Anthony Eden resigns as Prime Minister.
- 10 Harold Macmillan becomes the new Conservative Prime Minister of Great Britain.

**February**

- 4 Broadcaster T.R. Fyvel writes up a recent interview with IM in which they discussed her working schedule, *Under the Net* and *The Flight from the Enchanter*. IM praises the contemplative life and comments that the refugees in *Flight*



from the *Enchanter* appropriately symbolise modern man. She seems to be dissatisfied with Existentialism and equally with the label 'satirist'. The interview is later published by BBC European Production's *Meeting Writers* series.

- 17 IM's second review of Simone de Beauvoir's *The Mandarins* appears in the *Sunday Times* entitled 'Important Things'.

## April

IM spends a week in Paris with Carolyn de Ste Croix, the daughter of her friend, Geoffrey de Ste Croix, lecturer in Ancient History. Carolyn suffers from depression and IM is trying to cheer her up. (She later gets her a job as temporary research assistant to J.B. Priestley.)

She sends a 'Springtime in Paris' postcard to Norah Smallwood at Chatto and Windus.

- 22 J.B. Priestley writes to Norah Smallwood (who has sent him a copy of *The Flight from the Enchanter*) that he doesn't like it – he feels it's not in IM's true line of progress.

## May

- 7 *The Sandcastle* is published, dedicated 'To John Bayley'.  
25 IM's review of Sartre's *Being and Nothingness*, 'Hegel in Modern Dress', is published in the *New Statesman*.

## June

- 3 At Cedar Lodge IM begins writing the first draft of 'The Great Bell' (later to become *The Bell*).

IM writes to Norah Smallwood that she would rather not see any of the reviews of *The Sandcastle*: she knows what is wrong with her writing without being told, she implies.

JB gets glandular fever. (He thinks he has caught it from Geoffrey de Ste Croix.) IM develops a milder version. They enjoy being ill together.

- 26 IM writes to Isaiah Berlin to thank him for the invitation to meet the Jewish scholar and mystic, Gershom Scholem, but reluctantly declines as she now has glandular fever. JB, she says, has had it for three weeks. She mentions a friend in London who idolises Scholem.

## July

- 12 'Existentialist Bite', IM's review of Everett W. Knight's *Literature Considered as Philosophy: The French Example* appears in the *Spectator*.

At the end of term when JB has recovered from his illness the Bayleys visit John Grigg's house in Tamariu, Costa Brava, built by his grandfather, Lord Islington (Grigg is officially Lord Altrincham.)

### August

The Bayleys spend a week with David and Rachel Cecil at Cranborne in Dorset. The glandular fever returns and JB is laid up for a month. He records that IM nurses him extremely well.

### September

- 4           The Wolfendon Report on 'homosexual offences and prostitution' is published.
- 22          At Cedar Lodge IM completes the first draft of *The Bell*, having filled eleven notebooks.
- 25          IM is Guest of the Week on the BBC Light Programme's *Woman's Hour*, broadcast live at 2pm.

### October

Both IM and JB have returned to teaching.

- 20          IM is Guest of the Week on the BBC Home Service's *Home for the Day* programme, broadcast live at 9am.
- 22          IM begins the second draft of *The Bell*.
- 23          IM writes to Vera Crane, her old Somerville friend, that she plans to reduce her teaching hours in order to leave more time to write.
- 25          The *Manchester Guardian* carries a review by IM, 'Concepts or Blood', of *Religion and the Rebel* by Colin Wilson.

## 1958

### March

- 1 (Saturday afternoon)   Hughes Murdoch dies at home in Chiswick at the age of 67, of lung cancer, having remained cheerful to the end. IM and JB receive a police message and drive down from Steeple Aston, arriving at eleven at night, to find Rene beside herself with grief.
- 5 (Wed)           To Rene's distress, there are only six mourners at the funeral, near Syon House, IM and JB, Rene, her cousin Sybil's husband, Reggie, Hughes's solicitor and a neighbour, Mr Cohen. None of Hughes's ex-colleagues attends.

IM inherits £3,374 in shares from a rich uncle, William Hughes Murdoch, a doctor in Liverpool.

(end) JB breaks his leg while trying to start his car. IM drives him to the Radcliffe Infirmary for treatment.

IM unexpectedly meets her former lover, Michael Oakeshott, in Oxford.

IM contributes an essay, 'A House of Theory', to a left-wing political collection, *Conviction* (edited by Norman Mackenzie) in which she argues for Guild Socialism. She also this year contributes an essay, 'A Woman Don's Delight', to *The Compleat Imbiber: An Entertainment* edited by Cyril Ray and another, 'T.S. Eliot as a Moralist' to Neville Braybrooke's collection of essays, *T.S. Eliot: A Symposium for his Seventieth Birthday*.

Christopher and Lucy Cornford and John Grigg (Lord Altrincham) spend a weekend at Cedar Lodge. They play 'adverbs' and Christopher Cornford memorably imitates Bertrand Russell. (The Bayleys have met the Cornfords through a friend, Dominic De Grunne, a tutor at Wadham College, Oxford.)

## June

5 IM writes to Michael Oakeshott arranging to meet him in London.

## July/August

IM and JB take Rene to Dublin to find a new house. They stay at the Shelbourne Hotel and drive around Dun Laoghaire and Sandy Cove, full of memories of IM's childhood holidays.

Some time this autumn IM talks to a London School of Economics (LSE) society and afterwards tries in vain to contact Michael Oakeshott there.

## October

IM and Michael Oakeshott exchange several letters this month, discussing political philosophy, and meet in London where he tells her of the misery of his current love affair.

## November

3 *The Bell* is published, dedicated 'To John Simopoulos' (IM's Greek/Jewish philosopher friend). IM is thinking of visiting Malling, upon which the community in *The Bell* is based, but is nervous of their reaction to the novel.

There are positive reviews in the *New Statesman*, *The Times*, the *Spectator*, the *Times Literary Supplement*. To the *Spectator* reviewer, IM is now the foremost novelist of her generation.

Despite her heavy College timetable, IM exchanges many letters this month and next with Michael Oakeshott, offering more comfort in his emotional difficulties.

IM's mother, Rene, is considering taking a new flat in Baron's Court in London.

IM is treated again at the Radcliffe Infirmary for Meniere's Disease, an incurable affliction of the ear.

11 (Tues) IM travels to London for a 2.30pm appointment at the BBC to record a discussion programme with Stuart Hampshire and Charles Taylor on liberalism.

19 (Wed–22 Sat) IM takes her mother to Ireland for a second time to look at houses to buy.

24 (Mon) IM speaks to the Universities and Left Review group. She then goes back to her mother's house in Chiswick to begin the painful business of dismantling her childhood home.

26 An interview with IM is published in *Bookman*.

28 The discussion programme with IM, Stuart Hampshire and Charles Taylor is broadcast on the BBC Third Programme at 8.15pm with the title, 'The Habit of Violence'.

IM is despondent during this period about the quality of her novels and eager to find someone to help her improve. (It is about this time that she gets in touch again with Canetti and arranges to meet him in London.) During this year she has been writing a novel called 'Jerusalem' about idealistic Utopian Socialists. (She refers to this later as her 'Trades Union' novel.)

## December

4 IM stays overnight in Oxford after teaching, because of thick fog.

10 (Wed) IM is in London for the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament's anti-nuclear rally.

IM spends two or three days in London before Christmas.

22 IM takes her mother out to lunch in London.

Christmas is spent with JB's parents at Pluckley in Kent.

27 IM writes to Norah Smallwood that she hates her current novel more and more (This is 'Jerusalem', which she eventually abandons.)

## 1959

This year, the Obscene Publications Act for the first time permits the publication of Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita* in Britain.

### January

This month IM and Michael Oakeshott continue to exchange frequent letters.

The Bayleys go to a wedding in Bath.

JB's mother comes to stay. IM gets on with her very well, though it does mean having regular meals.

13 IM stays overnight in Oxford after teaching.

29 (Thurs) IM gives a talk at Birkbeck College, London and has lunch with Elias Canetti. (She has written to him to suggest this, feeling the need of an abrasive opinion of her work.) He tells her that what she has written so far is weak and sentimental. She discusses a tougher idea for a new novel: incest. There is thick fog over Hampstead and she stays in London overnight.

23 *The Times* carries a letter from IM commenting on the new Corgi edition of Nabokov's *Lolita*.

During this year Harold Solomon, an Oxford postgraduate, commits suicide by gassing himself. He has been undergoing psychoanalysis. (IM is deeply affected by the death and her later Journal entries about psychoanalysis become markedly less favourable.)

### February

Spurred by her meeting with Canetti, IM ties up the manuscript of 'Jerusalem' and writes on it 'Abandoned', adding that it must never ever be published. She writes confidently in her Journal that she knows this is the right course of action. She is sickened by praises for *The Bell* and feels that she has achieved an easy success. What she really wants is to move up from being a second class novelist to a first class one but harsh criticism is needed. She is attempting a series of poems but feels they are all mediocre. Her mood is one of restlessness with no apparent cause.

She records in her Journal her romantic fascination with a female colleague at St Anne's, referred to as 'The Chumman'.

At the end of the month IM is sharply reminded of her own emotional state by David Cecil's quoting every year the line 'Comes the New Year, reviving old desires'.

## March

IM is working on her new novel dealing with incest. (It is completed within the next nine to twelve months.)

7 (Sat–8 Sun) The Bayleys spend the weekend in Blackheath at the home of Lord and Lady Altrincham (soon to become John and Patsy Grigg, when John gives up his peerage).

IM's mother, Rene, decides not to take a house in Ireland after all. She will be satisfied with the flat in Baron's Court. She writes apologetically (but defiantly) to all her relatives in Ireland who have been looking forward to seeing her soon.

17 The Dalai Lama escapes from the Chinese regime in Tibet and is granted asylum in India.

29 On Rene's birthday IM's childhood home, 4, Eastbourne Road, Chiswick, is sold.

Lord Snowdon photographs IM. She is beginning to receive fan letters, all of which she answers by hand.

JB's former English teacher, George Lyttleton, meets IM and records her tousled appearance, her unglamorous flat shoes and laddered stockings, but also her obvious energy and intelligence.

## April

12 (Sun–Easter Day) The Bayleys spend Easter with JB's parents in Kent. They then go on to stay with David and Rachel Cecil at Cranborne in Dorset. During the stay, there are visits to churches and manor houses interspersed with charades and French cabaret on the gramophone. They also dine with Cecil Beaton, who has an eighteenth century house redecorated in Edwardian style, nearby. Among the guests is Truman Capote.

28 Philippa and Michael Foot are parting, Michael having fallen in love with his secretary in London. A flurry of letters between IM and Philippa Foot results in a meeting and the re-establishing of their old friendship (after the estrangement which had resulted from their triangular relationship with Michael.) This at last gives IM the opportunity of thinking properly about her own past.

## May

Letters between IM and Michael Oakeshott are continuing, though rather less frequently than before.

17 The *Sunday Times* prints a 'Portrait Gallery' interview covering IM's childhood and schooldays. She reveals her passion

at school for the classics and for jujitsu. The writer stresses IM's warmth and kindness and describes her delight in her Oxfordshire garden. In the same edition is IM's 'Simone, Antoine and Anne' (review of Simone de Beauvoir's *Memoirs of a Dutiful Daughter*).

## June

1 World Refugee Year officially begins.

During this month IM manages to meet Michael Oakeshott in London, combining it with a visit to her mother.

IM is a judge for the Prix Formentor and spends time in Majorca during the ceremony.

## July

The Bayleys holiday in Ribes, Haut-Loire at the chateau belonging to Dominic de Grunne (tutor at Wadham College, Oxford), with Christopher and Lucy Cornford. They then drive on into Germany, visiting baroque churches.

## August

On her visits to London, IM has been moving her mother into her new flat in Barons Court.

## September

The Bayleys visit Madrid and Toledo. IM is enthusiastic about the paintings of El Greco.

## October

8 Harold Macmillan leads the Conservative Party to victory in the British General Election.

(mid) IM has been invited to Yale University in the USA for several weeks and is longing to see New York, but worries about the quality of her lectures.

IM travels to America, staying at Timothy Dwight College, Yale University for several weeks and giving two lectures, including one on 'The Sublime and the Beautiful Revisited.' She stays in the University President's house in New Haven, which is a palatial, pseudo-colonial building.

21 IM is working hard at Yale giving talks to undergraduates, women's groups, philosophy groups and literature groups. She has also done one broadcast and two formal lectures.

- 23 IM reaches New York, having left Yale and travelled to Boston and Washington. She is now beginning to be homesick. (This is to be the only foreign trip she undertakes without JB until her three weeks in China in 1979, when again she is terribly homesick.)
- 30 IM writes to Isaiah Berlin in Oxford from 122, East 66 St in New York, sending him via a returning Englishman, Peter Owen a novel of which she thinks highly. She tentatively asks if Berlin would consider contributing favourable comments for the publisher's blurb.

### November

- 4 IM sails for home. She has found America much more alien than she expected.

Back in Oxford, IM supervises, among others, Stephen Metcalf and A.D. Nuttall, both from Merton College.

IM's article 'The Sublime and the Good' is published in the *Chicago Review*.

IM writes to Philippa Foot about how glad she is that they will still be friends in the future. It increases her optimism about what lies ahead.

- 18 IM writes to thank Michael Oakeshott for sending her a copy of his *The Voice of Poetry in the Conversation of Mankind*.
- 26 IM writes apologetically to Isaiah Berlin from St Anne's: he has apparently refused to write any complimentary blurb for the book she sent him, by her protégé in America, in October.
- 29 IM's 'Mr Gellner's Game' (review of Ernest Gellner's *Words and Things*) is published in the *Observer*.

### December

IM's review of *Dr Zhivago* by Boris Pasternak appears in *The New Reasoner: A Quarterly Journal of Socialist Humanism*.

The *Yale Review* publishes IM's autumn lecture on 'The Sublime and the Beautiful Revisited' in which she talks of the need for a novel to be a 'fit house for free characters to live in.'

## 1960

This year, Alain Robbe-Grillet publishes *Dans le labyrinthe*. JB publishes *The Characters of Love: A Study in the Literature of Personality*.



## January

8 Having produced eighty pages of preliminary notes, IM begins to write a full first draft of her fifth novel (including the theme of incest), *A Severed Head*.

An interview with IM is published in the Danish magazine, *Perspektiv*.

16 IM contributes a letter to a debate in *The Times* about women's education and the danger of their being seen as 'second class citizens'.

## February

1 In the *Guardian*, Dilys Rowe publishes an interview with IM, whose kindness and gentleness she praises. Apart from biographical information, IM speaks of her respect for the nineteenth century novel especially Henry James's *The Golden Bowl*, and of Tolstoy's influence on her novels.

3 Harold Macmillan gives a keynote speech in which he talks of a 'wind of change' in international affairs.

## April

3 At Cedar Lodge, IM has completed the first draft of *A Severed Head*, filling six notebooks.

4 IM begins the final draft of *A Severed Head*.

## June

IM is for the second time a judge for the Prix Formentor. This time the ceremony is held in Corfu and JB is allowed to come too. He notes that the prize is awarded to the Italian novelist, Carlo Emilio Gadda, who is supported by the rather gangster-like Albert Moravia, whose *Pale Fire* is the runner-up.

IM reviews Ernest Gellner's *Words and Things* for a second time in the *Partisan Review*. She also contributes an essay about Tolstoy, 'Negative Capability', to the *Adam International Review*.

IM writes to Isaiah Berlin's wife, Aline, looking forward to seeing Aline and Isaiah in Venice.

## July

25 At Cedar Lodge, IM has completed the final draft of *A Severed Head*, in 308 handwritten pages.

The Bayleys holiday in Italy, visiting Lake Como and staying with Ernesto de Marchi.

They also visit Venice and enjoy the hospitality of Sir Isaiah Berlin and his wife.

## September

During this month and next, IM is in constant correspondence with a lawyer from Penguin Books, for whom she has prepared a defence of D.H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* in its approaching trial under the Obscene Publications Act. (In the end, her statement is not used in the trial, at which the book is finally vindicated.)

8 (–14) IM is in Denmark at the Hotel Alexandra in Copenhagen.

## October

5 The British Labour Party leader, Hugh Gaitskell, battles with unilateralists at the Labour Party Conference.

18 (–19) IM is staying in Oxford during the teaching week rather than going home to Cedar Lodge.

## November

2 IM receives typed confirmation from St Anne's governing body that she has been reappointed as a tutor for seven years from 1<sup>st</sup> October.

14 IM has completed 79 pages of notes for her next novel (*An Unofficial Rose*) and begins to write out the first full draft.

## December

3 IM sends the blurb for *A Severed Head* to Norah Smallwood at Chatto and Windus: it is partly composed by JB, as she has found summarising it very difficult.

# 1961

The first, New Testament, section of the New English Bible is published this year.

## January

IM's essay, 'Against Dryness', is published in *Encounter*.

IM thinks JB looks very loveable as he works on the pond in their Cedar Lodge garden.

Ved Mehta, the blind Indian academic, interviews some of the St Anne's staff for a forth-coming book on British Intellectuals. (*Encounters with British Intellectuals*, 1965). IM sets out her objections to Richard Hare's moral position (she had known him when both were members of the Metaphysical Society) and talks of the continuing traces of Wittgenstein's influence at Cambridge. Mehta describes IM in a subsequent *New Yorker* article as much more intuitive than intellectual.

## February

- 15 On the BBC Third Programme at 8pm David Pears, Patrick Gardiner, Stuart Hampshire and IM discuss 'Decisions and Predictions'. (The discussion is published in 1963 as *Freedom and the Will*, edited by Pears. It is as a result of this discussion and similar discussions with him at St Anne's, that IM later dedicates *The Italian Girl* to Pears.)

## March

- 17 IM completes the first draft of *An Unofficial Rose*, having filled nine notebooks.
- 28 IM begins the final draft of *An Unofficial Rose*, transferring the notebook material, as usual, to a single, handwritten manuscript.

IM's cousin Muriel in Dublin sends her the *New English Bible* in memory of another happy visit.

IM and JB meet Janet and Reynolds Stone at a cocktail party at Lord David Cecil's. IM writes to ask if they might visit them in Dorset.

## April

- 21 IM writes to Norah Smallwood that she and JB have just returned from Dorset, where they have been visiting Janet and Reynolds Stone at The Old Rectory, Litton Cheney. (This is the first of many such visits. IM is to dedicate *A Fairly Honourable Defeat* to the Stones.)

## May

- 4 John Barrows publishes an interview with IM in *John O'London's* magazine in which she talks of having destroyed five novels before the publication of *Under the Net*. She speaks of her own work as part of an unending investigation rather than as a means of finding any resolution.

## June

- 9 A UN resolution is passed condemning Portuguese action in Angola. Britain and France abstain. (Angola, supported by the U.S.S.R. and China, is fighting for its independence from Portugal.)
- 13 IM writes from Cedar Lodge to Isaiah Berlin, eagerly accepting the invitation to dinner to meet at last the Jewish scholar, Gershom Scholem (whom she had missed because

of illness in 1957). She has read his book on Jewish mysticism and mentions again her friend in London who regards Scholem as Jehovah.

- 15 *A Severed Head* is published. IM worries that it is too private and might alienate readers. (In fact it is well-received, regarded as pioneering in its treatment of incest.)
- 30 Hugh Gaitskell finally faces down the Unilateralists in his party.

## July

- 6 IM writes very apologetically to Isaiah Berlin: he had tried to organise a visit for the Bayleys to the ballet (which she loves) but, because of their absence from home last week, they had not received the invitation in time. JB adds his apology too.
- 16 At Cedar Lodge, IM completes the final draft of *An Unofficial Rose*, on 449 handwritten pages.
- 24 (Mon) IM writes to Michael Oakeshott from Cedar Lodge, asking him to dine with her in London the following Friday (28th), apologising for the short notice (she is rarely in London now) and reassuring him that she often thinks of him.
- 27 IM has found out from the London School of Economics that Michael Oakeshott is away in Dorset. She writes saying they must meet – she hopes he has received the novel she sent him (*A Severed Head*).

IM notes in her Journal the anxiety and rearranging of schedules involved in her relationship with the female Oxford colleague, with whom she is by now passionately involved. The woman wants IM to leave JB for her. (IM's teaching is suffering as she spends tutorials talking about love or sitting in silent contemplation. Students are asking to be transferred to other tutors.)

Barbara Pym meets IM through JB's pupil, Paul Binding, and finds her unprepossessing.

## August

- 17(–18) The Berlin Wall is built, separating Communist East Berlin from the West.

IM and JB visit Aberdeen for a conference on the teaching of English. They both give short lectures.

The Bayleys are both upset when a sick bat they have been nursing is found dead.

## September

The Bayleys are on holiday in Spain, mainly in Prado.

17/18      The United Nations Secretary-General, Dag Hammerskjöld, is killed in a plane crash over the Congo.

## October

21      IM is one of the signatories to a letter published in the *Times* about Portuguese action in Angola.

IM writes from St Anne's to congratulate her young Irish friend Anne Marreco on her recent marriage.

## November

4      IM meets her female Oxford lover after class at the Lamb and Flag pub and records the feeling of despair.

18      At Cedar Lodge, IM begins the first draft of *The Unicorn*.

## December

9      Ved Mehta publishes his January interview with IM in the *New Yorker*, 'Onward and Upward with the Arts: a Battle against the Bewitchment of our Intelligence.'

# 1962

## January

15      IM speaks at a meeting at the Central Hall in London, organised by the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. In a talk entitled 'Morality and the Bomb', she demands that morality should be more positively applied to politics. (This is later published in *Women Ask Why: An Intelligent Woman's Guide to Nuclear Disarmament* (London 1962).)

Some time this year a film company try unsuccessfully to film *Under the Net* in Earls Court in London.

This year Brigid Brophy dedicates her novel, *Flesh*, to IM. She sends IM a copy with the cover reading 'Flash, a navel by Brigid Bardot.'

## February

17      IM writes to Nora Smallwood at Chatto and Windus: they seem to meet most often at the moment at CND meetings, she says.

**March**

- 7 IM is in London for an interview with Harold Hobson.
- 11 Harold Hobson's interview with IM, 'Lunch with Iris Murdoch' is published in the *Sunday Times*. The two met in the Ladies' Section of the Union Club in St James's Street in London and then moved to a nearby restaurant for lunch. IM talks of the difficulty of creating character in the modern novel. Her teaching of moral philosophy she thinks has influenced her presentation of the characters' differing moral stances in *The Bell*. She reveals that Beckett's *Murphy* and Queneau's *Pierrot Mon Ami* were the two major influences upon *Under the Net*. She argues with Hobson about the emancipation of women: it is only just beginning, because men's belief in female inferiority is still deep-seated.
- 27 IM has completed the first draft of *The Unicorn*, recording in her notebook that this was on 'Pussy's' (JB's) birthday (25<sup>th</sup>).

During this month, IM receives a popular song for her collection, 'Make a Joyful Noise', from Brian Medlin.

She delivers the Ballard Mathew Lecture at the University College of North Wales on 'The Idea of Perfection'.

**April**

- 8 IM begins the final draft of *The Unicorn*.

**May**

- 15 IM writes to Anne Marreco from Cedar Lodge with detailed comments on Anne's latest novel.

**June**

- 6 IM's sixth novel, *An Unofficial Rose* is published, dedicated to Margaret Hubbard (a colleague at St Anne's).
- 17 The *Observer* prints a Profile of IM and her career, in which she reiterates that *Under the Net* was in fact her sixth novel. She rejects the label 'satire' for *A Severed Head*, which she sees rather as a myth.
- 23 An interview with IM is published in *Elseviers Weekblad*. She talks of keeping in touch with only three modern writers, Raymond Queneau, Elias Canetti and J.B. Priestley. She explains that her most important theme is the conflict between the saint and the artist.

- 26 IM is overcome by tears and misery as she tries to end the affair with the female Oxford colleague.

## July

- 5 In her Journal IM records her belief that the affair with her female lover is not at all over.
- 6 The female lover comes to Cedar Lodge, is contemptuous of its comfortable Englishness and treats IM cruelly and contemptuously. IM adds in her Journal account how much she loves JB.
- 10 IM writes from Cedar Lodge to invite the visiting American academic, Professor Robert Bernard Martin ('Dearest Bob') and his friend Dr J. Walker, from Worcester College, Oxford to lunch on Friday 13 July.
- 18 IM completes the final draft of *The Unicorn*.
- 26 IM is on holiday in Scotland.

## August

- 30 Frank Kermode's interview with IM appears in the *Listener*. They discuss the 'crystalline' and 'journalistic' distinction made in 'About Dryness'. IM talks of her desire to create free characters – 'not me' – but of the constant tendency as the work progresses for these characters to be drawn into the structure of her own mind.

## September

- 7 In the *Spectator*, in 'Mass, Might and Myth', IM reviews Elias Canetti's *Crowns and Power* (translated into English by Carol Stewart). Although her initial notes give a mixed and often critical response, she turns the final article into unqualified praise, extolling Canetti's greatness as a writer.
- 29 Michael Codron the theatre director and IM have been discussing her possible adaptation of *A Severed Head* for the stage, but have put the idea into cold storage: she is feeling discouraged and ineffectual about playwriting. (It is shortly after this that she sends her play script to J.B. Priestley.)

## October

- 20 IM writes to Norah Smallwood that she feels odd about *The Unicorn*, as she did about *A Severed Head*: it seems to be quite a private thing which others won't like. *An Unofficial Rose*, in

contrast, is much more a public object in the traditional sense. As for script-writing – she has given up that idea.

## December

- 21 IM writes to the Principal of St Anne's College, Lady Mary Ogilvie, resigning her Fellowship so that she may devote more time to her writing. (An additional, unstated, reason is the desire to end the intense relationship with her female colleague, which is in danger of causing scandal.) She apologises to the Principal for any inconvenience her resignation will cause.

*Encounter* magazine publishes interviews with a range of British intellectuals about the possibility of Britain joining the Common Market. IM declares that the move appears to her to be hasty and not carefully considered.

Among her Christmas greetings, IM sends a postcard to Michael Oakeshott hoping they can meet next year.

IM and JB spend Christmas with John's family at Pluckley. John's mother asks about the link between her son Michael and Felix Meecham in *An Unofficial Rose*. IM is deeply upset at what she sees as a simplistic confusion of life and fiction.

## 1963

### January

This year's January and February are the coldest in Britain since 1740. During the bitter winter IM and JB go ice-skating (sharing his pair of army skates) on the frozen Cherwell and on the lake at Blenheim.

John Robinson, the Bishop of Woolwich, this year publishes *Honest to God*, advocating a more liberal theology.

Pope John XXIII delivers his encyclical, *Pacem in Terris*, designed to bring a peaceful settlement to disputes between Catholics and non-Catholics.

- 18 Hugh Gaitskell, moderate Labour leader, dies.

- 29 Great Britain is refused entry into the European Common Market.

IM has given the novelist and dramatist, J.B. Priestley, a draft of a play she has written based on *A Severed Head*. Priestley declares that it won't do and is rewriting it.

IM gives to Norah Smallwood, for safe-keeping at Chatto and Windus, a hundred-page cycle of poems, 'Conversations with a Prince'.



She says she would like one or two at least to survive. She deposits with Ed Victor, Smallwood's associate, a copy of 'Eldorado', JB's Newdigate poem, her own family tree and her short story, 'Something Special'. (She is to ask in 1989 for the poems to be returned.)

*The Unicorn* is published, dedicated to David Pears, with whom IM had discussed Platonism and the myth of the Cave and the Sun, at a dinner at St Anne's. IM had told him she would write a novel about these matters. (Lecturing in Berkeley the following year, Pears confesses that he can't in fact understand the book.)

## March

- 22 The government minister John Profumo, suspected of having jeopardised national security by sharing a lover, Christine Keeler, with a KGB agent, declares his innocence in a statement in the House of Commons. (It is later revealed that he has been lying.)
- 27 IM records in her Journal that *The Unicorn* is no good: it is full of nightmare and claustrophobia.

## April

A preliminary run of the Priestley adaptation of *A Severed Head* opens in Bristol. IM writes exultantly to Priestley after the opening night, certain that they have together produced a terrific play.

## May

- 9 IM gives an interview to Kenneth Hudson for *Western Horizons* on BBC TV about *A Severed Head*.
- 18 At Cedar Lodge IM begins the first draft of her next novel (to become *The Italian Girl*).

## June

- 3 Pope John XXIII dies.
- 17 IM writes to Anne Marreco from Helsinki, about the pleasures of her trip to Finland.
- 21 An official letter arrives offering IM a part-time job on the staff of the General Studies Department of the Royal College of Art. The post has been set up by the Bayleys' friend, Christopher Cornford, who is Dean of General Studies. IM will have a starting salary of £515 a year, will teach one day a week (Wednesdays) and will draw a quarter of a tutor's salary until August 1967.

- 25 On leaving St Anne's College, Oxford, IM is made an Honorary Fellow of the College. She is to have her portrait painted as a parting gift to St Anne's. The artist she has chosen is Marie-Louise von Motesiczky, a friend of Elias Canetti's, whom she has known since the mid-1950s. She offers to pay the difference between the College's contribution and Motesiczky's normal fee (£200–£250).
- 26 IM is a signatory to a public declaration against performances of plays in those South African theatres which operate a colour bar.
- 27 *A Severed Head*, starring Robert Hardy, Heather Chasen, Sheila Burrell and Paul Eddington, opens at the Criterion Theatre, London. (It runs for 1,111 performances and brings IM in £18,000 in the first two years.)

In the *Elizabethan* magazine IM is interviewed under the title, 'IM regrets that she was never a teenager.'

### July–August

IM and JB visit Canada under the auspices of the British Council. (They are both now on the British Council list of speakers and will travel widely from now on.)

They visit Stratford, Ontario, from where IM sends postcards to, among others, Michael Oakeshott.

### August

- 5 Britain, the United States and the U.S.S.R. sign the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty.
- 8 IM records in her Journal that *The Italian Girl* is in a way a reversed version of *A Severed Head*.

On the same day, IM writes to Anne Marreco from Stratford, Ontario, comparing Canada to Ireland. She also sends postcards to, among others, Michael Oakeshott.

Louis MacNeice, poet and radio producer, dies. (He had reportedly asked, on his deathbed, for an IM novel.)

Carolyn de Ste Croix, daughter of IM's friend Geoffrey, stays at Cedar Lodge for a weekend. IM tries in vain to cure her of depression.

The Bayleys travel to the USSR with John and Patsy Grigg, he having given up his peerage under the new Peerage Act.

IM visits Kingsley Amis and his second wife, Elizabeth Jane Howard at their house 'Lemmons' in Barnet. She and Howard also lunch together in Kensington.

### **Late August/early September**

IM begins her portrait sessions with Marie-Louise von Motesiczky.

20 IM completes the first draft of *The Italian Girl*, having filled five notebooks.

Within a few days she has begun the final draft.

### **September**

26 Lord Denning publishes his report on the Profumo affair.

### **October**

18 Harold Macmillan resigns. (Eventually Sir Alec Douglas-Home emerges as Conservative Leader and Prime Minister.)

19 IM completes the final draft of *The Italian Girl*, in 203 handwritten pages.

IM writes to her research student, Nicholas Veto, that *The Unicorn* is full of the influence of Simone Weil.

At dinner with JB's colleague, John Buxton, IM bursts into tears when she sees him looking sadly at his old dog. (The dog dies a few weeks later.)

### **November**

4 Marie-Louise von Motesiczky writes to Elias Canetti about the progress of her portrait of IM: the actual sittings are infrequent but she feels she has managed to capture IM 'by heart'.

22 President Kennedy is assassinated in Dallas, Texas.

IM is settling into her new part-time job in the General Studies Department of the Royal College of Art on Kensington Gore. During academic year 1964–5 she has four second-year tutorial groups, studying Sartre, Gabriel Marcel, Kierkegaard's *Fear and Trembling* and Mill's *Utilitarianism*. She spends Tuesday and Wednesday nights during term-time at the flat she has had since 1960 in Harcourt Terrace SW10. It is only two tube stops from her mother, now living at 97, Comeragh Road in Barons Court. Unlike JB, IM finds great joy in the city. She starts to learn Russian again. She is both appalled and delighted by the 1960s bohemianism of the RCA students.

## **1964**

This year Arthur Koestler's *Act of Creation* and Jean-Paul Sartre's *Les Mots* are published.

## January

- 19 IM's review of Brigid Brophy's novel, *The Snowball*, 'A Jewelled Occasion', appears in the *Sunday Times*; she praises the novel's artistic boldness.
- 24 At Cedar Lodge IM begins the first draft of her next novel (to become *The Red and the Green*).
- 31 IM's young friend, Carolyn de Ste Croix, from St Anne's, who has suffered from depression for many years, commits suicide. (The death is not discovered until the following month.)

## February

- 9 The suicide of Carolyn de Ste Croix is discovered. IM speaks, unscripted, at her funeral. She is haunted by guilt that she has not paid enough attention to Carolyn.
- 10 IM writes to Anne Marreco, hoping to visit her soon in Ireland.
- 13 An anonymous interview with IM in *The Times* contains an account of her creative method: she plans everything very exactly before beginning to write. She talks of her love of Dickens, George Eliot, Jane Austen, all of whom she rereads, though in a haphazard way. The only writer, however, whom she knows to have influenced her directly is Henry James. She claims not to be a philosophical novelist in the same way as Jean-Paul Sartre or Simone de Beauvoir. She never reads critics: she knows very well what is wrong with each novel and her motive in writing a new novel is always to correct the mistakes of the previous one.
- 16 (Sun) IM records in her Journal that, on the previous Thursday (13<sup>th</sup>), while she was sitting for her portrait by Marie-Louise von Motesiczky, Elias Canetti surprised them both by suddenly appearing and demanding that the artist should show the sitter the (unfinished) portrait – an ordeal for both parties. IM is astonished to find that Motesiczky has captured her in such a sad and frightening way, with her 'demons' and wonders how she knew so much.
- 19 IM meets David Hicks at his flat.

## March

- 19 The script of *A Severed Head*, attributed jointly to IM and J.B. Priestley, is published.

The Bayleys make major alterations to Cedar Lodge. They buy an adjoining cottage and barn and now own six acres. (They don't keep up the cottage and it becomes an eyesore.)

IM's essay, 'The Idea of Perfection' is published in the *Yale Review*.

## April

Over Easter the Bayleys holiday in Greece.

David Morgan, final year painting student at Royal College of Art (RCA), comes to the Junior Common Room building at 23, Cromwell Road for his first tutorial with IM. They begin an intense platonic friendship.

12 IM writes to Anne Marreco, planning the itinerary for the approaching trip to visit her in Ireland.

18 IM writes to Norah Smallwood about her Greek holiday.

## May

The Bayleys visit Ireland to stay with Anne Marreco at her home on the River Foy in Donegal. They hire a car in Dublin and drive to Donegal. IM swims but finds it very cold.

25 IM completes the first draft of *The Red and the Green*, having filled seven notebooks.

During this month, at Cedar Lodge, she returns again to reading and annotating her 1943 copy of Søren Kierkegaard's *Fear and Trembling: A Dialectical Lyric by Johannes de Silentio*, translated by Robert Payne.

## June

20 In a letter to her protégé, David Morgan, at the RCA, IM mentions the fact that she still has a broad Irish accent.

She begins the final draft of *The Red and the Green*.

IM has contributed a long article. 'The Moral Decision about Homosexuality', to the magazine *Man and Society* (7, Summer 1964) in which she argues for homosexuality to be legalised.

IM is by now answering up to ten letters a day from admirers of her novels. In one week this year she receives seventy fan letters. She still answers them all by hand.

## July

5 IM is at her flat in London. JB notes in his diary that there is a rat in Cedar Lodge.

- 8 Brigid Brophy writes to IM that IM's genius and her own are extraordinarily opposed.
- 15 The Bayleys spend IM's birthday at the Cecils'. There they meet Francis Partridge, who notes in her diary their touching devotion to each other.

## August

- 15 IM's eighth novel, *The Italian Girl* is published, dedicated 'To Patsy and John Grigg'.
- The Bayleys spend two days in Paris to visit the Louvre, then travel on to Ernesto de Marchi's house near Lake Como.

## September

- 27 IM writes to David Hicks on behalf of her old friend Peter Minkus, a Czech refugee: he has a Cambridge PhD but needs an ordinary job teaching English. She wonders if Hicks can suggest any openings.

## October

- 15 In the British General Election, the Conservatives are narrowly defeated and the Labour Party under Harold Wilson comes to power for the first time since 1951.
- 17 IM completes the final draft of *The Red and the Green*, in 485 handwritten pages.
- 21 IM has a drinks party in her London flat (59, Harcourt Terrace) to celebrate the beginning of term and the Labour Party coming to power.

During academic year 1965–66 IM gives 24 lectures at the RCA on 'Moral and Political Pictures of Man.'

JB has a sabbatical to write his book on Tolstoy.

IM visits Ireland to become the first woman ever to address the Philosophical Society at Trinity College Dublin. She talks on 'Job: Prophet of Modern Nihilism.'

## November

- 1 IM records in her Journal her visit to Dublin and how oddly moving it was to be feted in what she thinks of as her native city. She is researching Irish history for *The Red and the Green*. The Bodleian Library in Oxford has provided her with contemporary pamphlets giving her a rich sense of atmosphere.

- 21 IM notes in her Journal that she has become very fond of Frederic Samson (a colleague at the RCA) but that he is moody and has refused to lunch with her.

## December

- 8 There is heavy fighting in Vietnam between American and North Vietnamese forces.

The magazine *Arion* publishes the response to a questionnaire to writers about the classics. IM says that her classical education has been enormously influential on her work and regrets the lack of knowledge of Greek and Latin in schools today.

## 1965

This year A.S. Byatt publishes a seminal study of IM's early novels, *Degrees of Freedom*, which consolidates IM's reputation as a serious writer.

A Max Beckmann exhibition is held in the Tate Gallery this year and, later in the year, a Pierre Bonnard exhibition at the Royal Academy. The Post Office Tower is opened in London.

## January

JB notes in his Diary the extensive alterations to Cedar Lodge. (These in fact only make the cold house even colder. It is also extremely dusty as neither JB nor IM is interested in house maintenance and they refuse to employ anyone to clean for them. Some visitors find it smelly, others find the whole atmosphere magical. The Bayleys entertain frequently but eccentrically. Their close friends, the Griggs, with whom *they* stay very often, notably only ever stay one night at Cedar Lodge.)

- 4 T.S. Eliot dies.
- 7 IM notes in her Journal her over-romantic response to painters – she wants to project her own dream life in her novels, as a painter would.
- 17 IM records missing the characters of *The Red and the Green* and awaiting the arrival of another novel. She intends to reread the whole of Shakespeare. (She takes four years over this study.) Some time after its publication she writes to ask Chatto for the payment for *The Red and the Green*, as she wants to lend money to a relative.

IM writes to Norah Smallwood that, at JB's instigation, their house is being remade.

24 Sir Winston Churchill dies, aged 90.

This month IM is reading Martin Heidegger's *Being and Time* in an English translation by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson. Her notes in her copy include the comment that she can put much of what he says into her own terminology.

## February

23 (Tues) IM takes David Hicks and his wife Katherine (Kay) to lunch, meeting them first at the Three Greyhounds pub on Old Compton Street. Before they meet she has to fit in an appointment with a student who has a problem.

## April

15 At Cedar Lodge IM begins the first draft of her next novel (to become *The Time of the Angels*).

## May

1 IM is at David Hicks's party, which she thoroughly enjoys.

27 (Thurs) IM comes to London to record an interview with Peter Orr for the British Council and then meets David and Kay Hicks for lunch, again at the Three Greyhounds pub in London.

9 (Wed) IM gives a party at her London flat, 5.30pm (59, Harcourt Terrace). She has asked David Hicks to contact their old Oxford friend, John Willett and his wife Ann, to remind them to come too.

15 IM writes to invite Charles Osborne from the Arts Council and his partner to supper on Thursday 24 June. She will also invite Brigid Brophy and her husband, Michael Levey.

## June

13 Martin Buber dies.

29 The United States bombs Hanoi in Communist North Vietnam. The British Labour Government dissociates itself from the bombing of populated areas.

The Bayleys holiday in Pisa and Florence.

## August

7 IM writes to Norah Smallwood that she and JB have returned from Italy a little earlier than intended, as they got homesick.



- 23 IM completes the first draft of what is to become *The Time of the Angels*, having filled nine notebooks.

IM is now a popular interviewee, though she dreads each encounter. In an interview by Ruth Heyd for the *University of Windsor Review*, IM talks about homosexuality, the creation of characters and the influence of Simone Weil and Kierkegaard on *The Bell*, *Under the Net* and *An Unofficial Rose*.

## October

- 14 IM's ninth novel, *The Red and the Green* is published, dedicated 'To Philippa Foot'.
- 17 IM has completed the second draft of 'The Reign of the Angels' (eventually published as *The Time of the Angels*).
- 22(-24) The Bayleys travel with Philip Larkin to Belfast for a celebration in honour of scholar and critic, Sir Maurice Bowra. During their three days there, they visit IM's Chapman cousins.

*Frontier* magazine's autumn edition contains a recent interview IM had with John Wilkins in which she talked of Christ and the power of myth.

## November

- 11 IM writes to Norah Smallwood to ask about the state of her credit with Chatto and Windus. She explains that her god-daughter, Janet Jones, aged thirteen, will be writing to Norah for information on IM's books as part of a school project.
- 28 IM writes to David Hicks about an out-of-work pupil, David Morgan, an Associate of the Royal College of Art, who is looking for a teaching job. She says she has recently discovered Hicks's old letters to her, including the momentous one from Prague (in which he broke their engagement) and has been moved.
- 30 IM arranges for her young friend, Phillida Stone, daughter of Janet and Reynolds Stone, to hold a twenty-first birthday party in IM's Harcourt Terrace flat. She also invites some of her own friends, including David Hicks.

## December

- 6 IM writes to Norah Smallwood that she has a novel ready for her called *The Time of the Angels*.

In sending Christmas greetings to Toby and Irene Milsom, IM asks Toby for some legal information she needs for the novel she is writing: she needs to know something about a legal enquiry, rather like the one Lord Denning conducted on the Stephen Ward case and the Profumo affair. She wants to know how such enquiries are set up and conducted. They have so enjoyed their evening with the Milsoms, she says, that she is emboldened to ask for help.

## 1966

### January

This month IM writes twice to Leonard Woolf.

### February

- 4 (Fri) IM has written (at Frederic Samson's suggestion) to her old Oxford professor, Eduard Fraenkel: they meet in his rooms in Corpus Christi College in Oxford and are reconciled after their long estrangement. (Fraenkel had criticised her novels several years ago, possibly because he recognised himself in the character of Max Lejour in *The Unicorn*.) She walks back with him to his house on Museum Road and records later in her Journal what a great teacher and a great man he is. She loves him, physically as well as emotionally. It was marvellous to touch him again, she adds.
- 14 IM writes to David Hicks on Valentine's Day (adding a heart with an arrow through it at the bottom of the letter) inviting him and his wife Kay to lunch on Wednesday 23 February. It will be the first day of Lent, but they're not to be alarmed. (This meeting has to be postponed twice because of IM's work commitments.)
- 26 At Cedar Lodge IM begins the first draft of her next novel (which becomes *The Nice and the Good*).

### March

- 13 IM's Journal shows that she is thinking about the 'great void' of Kant's Categorical Imperative: she is reinforced in her belief that love is the way and the only way.

### April

- (early) IM writes again to Toby Milsom with specific questions to help her develop the plot of her current novel.

- 12 IM receives a very unpleasant letter from Brigid Brophy, calling her a poor girl who only just got into a rich girls' school (Badminton). The immediate cause seems to have been IM joking with Michael Levey, Brophy's husband, about her latest project, a book called *Fifty Works of English and American Literature We Could Do Without*. (This is completed and published in 1967.)
- 13 IM feels ill, probably as the result of the letter from Brigid Brophy.
- 16 IM writes back in delight to thank Toby Milsom for his prompt reply to her legal enquiries for her current novel.
- 18 IM writes to David Morgan about a teaching career: the best teachers are possibly the rather sadistic ones, she says.
- (late) IM and Brigid Brophy, reconciled, have been to Bristol where IM buys her a keepsake from a West Country market. IM also visits the 90-year-old Beatrice May Baker (BMB), whose life-long companion, Lucy Rendall, has just died. (Over the next few years, Brophy and Michael Levey regularly visit Cedar Lodge and Brophy and IM regularly go for weekend breaks together, with neither husband disapproving.)

## May

- 27 IM writes to Richard Wollheim to thank him for sending her his novel to read.
- (end) IM writes again to Richard Wollheim with detailed comments on his novel which she thinks is very good. She is already expressing great nervousness at the prospect of the philosophy lectures he has persuaded her to give in November.

## June

- 7 IM, in London, has a Russian lesson ending at 5.30pm and then fits in a drink with Richard Wollheim (to discuss his new novel) before going off to a dinner engagement.
- IM sends a postcard to David Hicks's wife, Kay, with names and addresses of her friends in Dovepol in Ireland (where the Hickses are about to go on holiday): they are Anne and Anthony Marreco: Anne, she says, is a novelist who has also written a biography of the Countess Markiewicz.

## July

- 1 IM writes to Michael Oakeshott, now Professor at the London School of Economics, to support the application of an ex-pupil of hers.
  - 8 A.S. Byatt's second novel, *The Game*, is sent by Chatto and Windus to IM: Byatt is particularly keen that IM should be the first reader.
  - 12 IM completes the first draft of *The Nice and the Good*, having filled eleven notebooks.
  - (mid) The Bayleys visit Italy, staying again with Ernesto de Marchi near Lake Como.
  - 25 IM begins the final draft of *The Nice and the Good*, noting in her Journal that it is going to be very long.
- JB and IM make their last visit to the Bayley family home, 'Nettlepole', in Pluckley, near Charing in Kent. JB's widowed mother is moving to Smith Terrace, Chelsea, to a small house her son Michael has found for her.

IM publishes a review, 'The Darkness of Practical Reason', in *Encounter* of Stuart Hampshire's book, *Freedom of the Individual*.

In an internal RCA memo to her PhD student, Rachel Fenner, IM comments of herself that she is really just an old traditionalist.

## August

IM later (1971) calls this the summer of 'the three Ss'. She revives an attachment to the philosopher Stuart Hampshire and develops new relationships with the architectural critic Stephen Gardiner and to gay Canadian PhD student at King's College, Scott Dunbar.

She writes in her Journal of how she misses Frank Thompson more and more. She feels almost as if she could see and talk to him, she wants it so much.

IM writes to Richard Wollheim to confirm dates for her November lectures and to apologise for leaving his party early. She mentions her reluctance in setting off for America, where she is to stay for a month.

IM travels to the USA, to Bowdoin College in Maine, for a study group on the Foundations of Cultural Unity. She gives a paper entitled, 'On "God" and "Good"' (later reprinted in *The Sovereignty of Good* (1970)).

## September

- 8 IM's tenth novel, *The Time of the Angels*, is published, dedicated 'To Eduard Fraenkel.'

- 16 IM writes to Anne Marreco mentioning her recent trips to the United States and to Italy.
  - 18 IM writes to thank David Hicks for his letter, suggesting it was the one she enjoyed most (presumably praising *The Time of Angels*) and sounding delighted that he is planning to buy land in Ireland. She addresses him with much of her old affection.
  - 19 IM bemoans in her Journal the fact that no-one at all understands her. She seems to realise that she is being foolish but records that she can't help her feelings.
  - 21 IM writes to Norah Smallwood, thanking her for fending off the *Sun's* request for an interview.
- Stephanie Nettle publishes 'An Exclusive Interview' with IM in *Books and Bookmen* in which IM disclaims the label of philosophical novelist. She believes in the realist tradition, in which scenery and weather are important: fog, for example, is crucial in *The Time of the Angels*.
- 28 IM writes nervously to Richard Wollheim to confirm the time and place for her first University College London lecture next week – Thursday at 11am.

## November

- 3 (Thurs) IM delivers the first of a short series of lectures at University College London under the title 'On the concepts "Good" and "Will"'. She is very nervous and delivers them verbatim from a script, with her head down. They nevertheless are well-received. IM writes to thank Richard Wollheim for organising the lectures for her earlier in the month and for not letting her back out of them. She asks him if he can recommend someone to mark the essays she has just set her forty to fifty RCA students on Sartre, as she will be away and unable to deal with them.
- 30 Frances Partridge, doyenne of the Bloomsbury Group, gives a dinner for IM, who wears an antique black military coat with gilt buttons and looks splendid. Partridge notes her Joan-of-Arc-like quality.

## December

- 9 IM writes in her Journal, remembering how lonely she was all those years with her female Oxford lover. Now she has such good friendships, with Frederic Samson, Richard Wollheim, Stephen Gardiner and Dominic de Grunne.

- 11 IM in her Journal queries her own sexuality, her identification with male homosexuals and with sadomasochism.
- 18 IM completes the final draft of *The Nice and the Good*, in 559 handwritten pages.

## 1967

This year, Jacques Derrida publishes *De la Grammatologie*. (*On Grammatology*). IM buys a copy in French and annotates it closely. She also buys at this time a copy in French of Derrida's *L'écriture et la différence* (*Writing and Difference*) (1967) and comments, in her annotation of one section, 'Force et Signification', that Derrida is here making a better attack on structuralism than she could herself.

There are demonstrations against the Vietnam War in Washington, London and other capital cities. IM is still travelling to London for two or three days every week to teach at the Royal College of Art; thanks to Richard Wollheim she now has contacts at University College London. She writes to a correspondent, Tony Forster, about missing Frank Thompson so much and feeling as if, somehow, she could really see and talk to him.

Some time this year, at an Oxford party, IM and JB meet Borys and Audi Villers for the first time. IM startles Audi Villers by asking at once if she believes in God.

### January

- (mid) IM writes gloomily to Norah Smallwood that she and JB are soon setting off on a long journey to Australia: she will leave the manuscript of *The Nice and the Good* with Norah. The Bayleys travel to Australia and New Zealand with the British Council.

### March

- 1 IM writes to Charles Osborne from Brisbane, where she and JB have been swimming off the Great Barrier Reef. They travel home via Singapore.

### April

- JB has won the Heinemann Memorial Prize for his book on Tolstoy.
- 23 At Cedar Lodge IM stalls over a request from Richard Wollheim that she give a second series of philosophy lectures at University College London. The RCA term starts

at the beginning of May, she says, after which she will be in London again and they can talk. She expresses her weariness with doing philosophy, but hopes she may soon recover her enthusiasm for it.

26 IM writes to Norah Smallwood asking for news of her financial position: she wants to give loans to various impecunious friends and relations.

28 David McGill publishes an interview with IM for the *New Zealand Listener*, based in Wellington, in an article called 'Talking with a Traditionalist'.

Brigid Brophy sells the manuscript of *Under the Net* to the University of Iowa for £500. IM has given her permission to do so and thereafter herself sells other manuscripts to Iowa.

Homosexuality is legalised in Britain; IM supports Senator David Norris's campaign to have it legalised in Ireland too.

## May

12 IM writes nervously to Richard Wollheim to confirm the date he has arranged for her to give another paper at University College London.

13 Norah Smallwood has prepared the blurb for *The Nice and the Good*: IM approves (though is later to insist on writing her own blurbs).

15 IM asks Norah Smallwood for half of the advance on *The Nice and the Good* and also half the money in the kitty. She suggests Margaret Pugh to design the book's cover.

16 President Charles De Gaulle of France vetoes Britain's entry into the European Economic Community.

24 (Wed) IM goes to Richard Wollheim's party in London.

IM writes an article on her relations with her characters (not published until after her death, when it appears in the 1999 *Iris Murdoch Newsletter*). She says that after she has finished a novel she feels lonely – but occasionally she will hear a remark of a character from a book finished long ago. She is engaged in adapting *The Italian Girl* for the stage. This process shows up the strong and the weak characters. The fight between character and form is at the centre of the novel-writing process: she always finds, sadly, that form wins, though she would prefer it if a character wrecked the form. She never dislikes *any* of her characters. There is a character in her current novel (*Bruno's Dream* – still only in note form) of whom she is so fond that she feels she can refuse him nothing, which is dangerous.

## June

- 5 (–10) The Six-Day War in which Israel extends its boundaries against surrounding hostile Arab states.
- 17 At Cedar Lodge IM begins the first full draft of her next novel (to become *Bruno's Dream*). She comments sadly in her Journal that she feels she has been giving a great deal of affection recently to people who don't really care at all.
- 18 IM comments again in her Journal on the limits of one's identification with other people's happiness.

## July

- 6 War is declared between Nigeria and the break-away province of Biafra. The writer Wole Soyinka is soon thrown into prison for attempting to prevent the conflict.
- 19 IM has dinner with Norah Smallwood. She is busy preparing a lecture for Cambridge next year, she says.
- 27 The Sexual Offences Act decriminalises homosexual acts between consenting adults in Britain.

## August

- (early) The Bayleys go to Dorset to stay with Reynolds and Janet Stone and then travel with them to Pembrokeshire, where they all stay in a cottage on the coast belonging to Janet's sister.
- 24 The US/USSR draw up a non-proliferation treaty in Geneva.
- 30 In a letter to Lucy Klatschko (Sister Marian), Honor Tracy, IM's Irish novelist friend, is scathing about IM's support for homosexual law reform in Ireland and the United Kingdom.
- 30 Norah Smallwood replies to IM's query about money. IM's contract with the RCA finishes this month, though she maintains her contact with the College for many years.

Brigid Brophy falls in love with Maureen Duffy, leaving IM feeling lonely and without an object for her affections.

## September

The Bayleys travel to India with John and Patsy Grigg. IM sends post-cards home from Delhi declaring that she finds the country quite marvellous.

- 21 IM's article against the Vietnam War, 'Political Morality', appears in *The Listener*.



She also contributes to *Authors Take Sides on Vietnam: Two Questions on the War in Vietnam Answered by the Authors of Several Nations*, edited by Cecil Woolf and John Bagguley.

IM commutes to Bristol for rehearsals of the dramatisation of *The Italian Girl*, by the young playwright, James Saunders, which is to open at the Bristol Old Vic. She gives an interview to W.K. Rose, professor of English at Vassar College, for the journal, *Shenandoah* in which she expresses the desire to write a propaganda play about Vietnam. She declares that the war should never have happened, that the whole notion of containing Communism is misguided; the Vietnamese should have been left alone to work out their own form of government. She talks about the divide in her novels between the 'open' (*The Nice and the Good*) and the 'closed' (*Bruno's Dream*, which she is currently writing) but admits that possibly the novelist is just a slave to the unconscious mind and can't really plan how to write. She talks of her writing routine: beginning at 9am, going on until 1pm or so, then domestic tasks in the afternoon and then another writing session from about 4pm until about 7.30pm. She admires Jean Genet but fears his subject matter harms his writing: she herself would like to be thought of as a realist writer in the traditional sense.

## October

This month IM attends a party in honour of the novelist L.P. Hartley.

- 1 IM completes the first draft of *Bruno's Dream* having filled eight notebooks.
- 8 IM begins the final draft of *Bruno's Dream*.
- 26 IM questions Norah Smallwood's blurb for *Bruno's Dream* and alters it.
- 29 IM sends a postcard to Norah Smallwood thanking her for 'the nice and good news' that *The Nice and the Good* has been made World Book Club Choice and that the royalties are doing well.

## November

- 3 IM makes a short contribution to a book, *For God's Sake, Care*, about the work of the Salvation Army.
- 7 The USSR celebrates the fiftieth anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution.
- 14 IM gives the Leslie Stephen lecture in Cambridge on 'The Sovereignty of Good over other Concepts.' (This later becomes the third essay in a book commissioned by

D.Z. Phillips for Routledge and Kegan Paul in the series *Studies in Ethics and Philosophy of Religion*.)

- 29 *The Italian Girl* opens at the Bristol Old Vic, to mixed reviews. IM later sends a postcard to Norah Smallwood, thanking her for coming to Bristol: the support of friends made such a difference and made her feel much more robust.

## December

Philippa Foot moves IM deeply by talking of the importance to her of their friendship. IM tells her that she herself could live in letters.

- 21 IM completes the final draft of *Bruno's Dream*, in 438 handwritten pages.

## 1968

### January

IM's Journal this year shows her wrestling with doubts about her own Platonism: She worries that she may have come to the end of the path which she started many years ago when she first read Simone Weil.

The publishers Samuel French, bring out the play version of *The Italian Girl* adapted by James Saunders. Some time this year, IM comes especially to London from Cedar Lodge to help A.S. Byatt through a health scare.

IM is delighted when she meets Hergé in Hamley's toyshop. She has been a Tintin fan since having been introduced to the books by her Oxford friend, John Simopoulos.

- 1 IM apologises to Norah Smallwood: she can't get to London for her book launch as JB had broken his ankle and she can't leave home.
- 12 Russian dissidents Yuri Galankov and Alexander Ginsberg are sentenced to hard labour in the USSR.
- 22 IM's eleventh novel, *The Nice and the Good*, is published, dedicated 'To Rachel and David Cecil'; there is a reprint within the month. During this period, the Bayleys are frequent visitors at the Cecils' home, at Cranborne in Dorset, often combining visits there with visits to Reynolds and Janet Stone at The Old Rectory, Litton Cheney, also in Dorset.
- 28 IM and JB have received a copy of Robert Bernard Martin's new novel. IM writes to thank him and thanks him too for his kind comments on *The Nice and the Good*.

- 30 Peter Lewis's interview with IM is published in the *Daily Mail* as 'Crying Blue Murdoch.'

## February

- 3 IM worries in her Journal whether her sense of having strong companionship is in fact misguided.
- 14 IM records an interview with Ronald Bryden and A.S. Byatt (later published in *The Listener*), particularly about *The Nice and the Good* and the play of *The Italian Girl* which is now playing at the Wyndham's Theatre in London. She discusses the difficulties of dramatising a novel and distinguishes her own work from that of nineteenth century novelists: they focused on the larger society while her novels are more psychologically and mythologically centred. She admires in Shakespeare his ability to combine mythical pattern with 'free' characters.

She also comments on the difference between RCA students and students from Oxford: the former take nothing on trust and have no belief in religion.

- 22 JB for once is ill and depressed, saying he hates life. This makes IM so miserable that she can do no work and can't even bring herself to write fully in her diary.
- 23 Peggy Ramsey, the theatrical agent, writes to IM about the possibility of filming her novels, warning her that the cinema is a nightmare of plots and counter-plots.

## March

- 6 IM attends a dinner at the Dorchester in London to honour Dame Edith Evans. *The Times* report, referring to her as a playwright rather than a novelist, describes her as wearing black and not smiling.

The Bayleys travel to Italy and Switzerland with the British Council.

- 23 IM proudly writes to tell Rachel Fenner, her PhD student at the RCA, that she has given a lecture in Italian.

## April

- 9 IM notes in her Journal the inadequacy of her spoken Italian.  
The British Race Relations Bill is published.
- 10 President Lyndon Johnson signs the Civil Rights Bill in the USA.

- 20 Conservative Minister Enoch Powell gives a speech in which he says that if immigration into Britain is not controlled he can foresee 'rivers of blood' in the future.
- 18 IM writes to Robert Bernard Martin to thank him for the invitation to Yale University, but says it would be for too long a period. JB could not get away for that length of time as he's to have a sabbatical next spring, so she will have to refuse.

## May

- 21 IM writes to Norah Smallwood asking her to return the envelope she had left with Chatto and Windus marked 'To be opened in the event of my death.'
- 31 Peace talks between Nigeria and the break-away region of Biafra break down.

At a Royal Academy dinner IM flirts with Yehudi Menuhin and meets Ralph Richardson, who kisses her hand.

IM, Richard Wollheim and Frank Kermode agree to issue a joint letter expressing solidarity with the French students demonstrating in Paris.

IM advises Frank Kermode against sending his daughter to Badminton School, saying that she herself had not been totally happy there.

IM drinks champagne with Brigid Brophy and Brophy's new lover, Maureen Duffy, and feels they both behave like amiable strangers to her.

IM stays overnight at Philippa Foot's home and records that she is still rather afraid of her. She seems numinous and taboo. They have a brief physical affair but agree that this is not the way their friendship is best expressed.

## June

- 3 At Cedar Lodge IM begins the first draft of her next novel (to become *A Fairly Honourable Defeat*).
- 10 Commenting in her Journal on her Jesuit student, John Ashton, IM remarks on how the people she loves are the unworldly people.
- 18 IM's letter attacking the British government for keeping French student activist Daniel Cohn-Bendit out of the country is published in *The Times*.

IM notes, in a letter to Philippa Foot, that she is growing fond of her 'demon' character, Julius King (based largely on Canetti) in *A Fairly Honourable Defeat*.

## August

- 8 IM is in correspondence with Peggy Ramsey, who advises her about her new play, *Joanna, Joanna*, pointing out that 'noises off' is a very old-fashioned theatrical technique. (During this period IM is working hard at writing plays but finding the whole process difficult.)
- 14 IM warns Chatto and Windus that her friend Stella Aldwinckle, a saintly lady, will be sending them her long poem: IM feels quite unable to judge it herself.
- 15 The Bayleys holiday again for a fortnight in Italy, which is hot, but where the temperature doesn't spoil the holiday, notes JB.
- 20 The USSR invades Czechoslovakia and arrests the Reform leaders.
- 24 The US and the USSR draw up a non-proliferation treaty at a conference about disarmament in Geneva.
- 31 IM's letter opposing the continuing war in Biafra is published in *The Times*. (The Biafrans are being blockaded by the Nigerian Government forces and there is much suffering and even starvation.)
- (late) The Bayleys stay at the Cecils' home in Cranborne, with Frances Partridge. During a discussion of executions, the men say that they would prefer to be executed in public; the women opt for private execution, though IM adds that, if she were dying for a great cause, she would want to make a good speech.

## September

- 8 IM has finished reading Robert Bernard Martin's latest novel, which she found thrilling. She sends him detailed comments and suggestions and hopes he has already written another.

In replying to a question posed by *the London Magazine*, 'Should the writer be a polemicist?' IM says that the artist's first duty is to his art but that he also has a duty to be active in the politics of his country.

## October

- 1 IM completes the first draft of *A Fairly Honourable Defeat*.
- 6 IM begins the final draft of *A Fairly Honourable Defeat*.
- 27 In London there is a huge popular protest against the Vietnam War.

**November**

16 Five thousand civil rights marchers defy the ban on demonstrations to march in Londonderry.

IM discovers her diaries for 1945 in a chest and rereads them. Looking back, she finds her sudden falling in love with one person after another in those days, rather sickening.

17 IM, looking back on her long affair with the female Oxford lover, records how awful it was. She has a sense that there is less drama in her life now and there is a feeling of growing old.

30 Violence erupts between Catholic and Protestant demonstrators in Armagh, Northern Ireland.

At this time, IM quarrels with Stuart Hampshire (over what he sees as her idolisation of Eduard Fraenkel) and with John Simopoulos (about his criticism of the archaic language and values in *The Nice and the Good*): both fear that she is becoming reactionary.

**December**

21 IM completes the final draft of *A Fairly Honourable Defeat*, in 700 handwritten pages.

**1969****January**

6 IM, working on *A Fairly Honourable Defeat*, notes that she is here critiquing her own Platonic ideas. She is determined this year to dedicate herself to writing plays, which involves much rereading of Shakespeare.

16 IM's twelfth novel, *Bruno's Dream*, is published, dedicated 'To Scott Dunbar', her young Canadian friend, a philosopher of religion.

Jan Palach burns himself to death in Prague in protest against the Soviet invasion of his country.

21 Norah Smallwood receives a letter from J.B. Stutter of Harbottle and Lewis Solicitors, London about IM: they say that she is working on a new novel with the working title 'A Fairly Honourable Defeat' and that she has decided to give the copyright to her mother, in a deed of gift dated 18 January.

24 (–19 Feb) The London School of Economics closes after student disorders.

- 29 The Bayleys set off for their first trip to Japan, organised by the British Council.
- 30 Reception with Japanese scholars at the British Embassy in Tokyo.
- 31 IM lectures on 'Freedom and Virtue in Modern Literature' at Waseda University, Tokyo. She refers to Basho and to Daisetz Susuki, the Zen philosopher.

## February

- 3 IM repeats the 'Freedom and Virtue' lecture at the British Council in Tokyo.
- 5 Return from Japan.
- 16 IM writes to Charles Osborne of the Arts Council suggesting that he contact Chatto and Windus for a photograph of her: she is looking forward to the Arts Council jamboree.

IM is rereading *King Lear* and *The Tempest*, noting that the latter immediately makes her weep. She goes on thinking about the play during the spring. It concerns, for her, the triumph of the free power of the spirit over the obsessional power of magic.

- 17 IM records in her Journal a dream in which one friend, David Hicks, doubles for another, Alasdair Clayre: she had never consciously linked the two before.

## March

- 14 Martin Jarrett-Kerr interviews IM for a Sixth Form series on Religion, 'Good, Evil and Morality'. They discuss possible definitions of 'good'. IM this year writes 'on "God" and "Good"', published in *The Anatomy of Knowledge* ed. Marjorie Grene.

IM joins the second Arts Council tour, to Lancashire, with Adrian Henri the poet, John McGrath the playwright and Julian Mitchell the novelist. In one week, they visit twenty-one schools and colleges.

## April

- 1 IM begins reading and annotating the second volume of R.H. Blyth's *Zen and Zen Classics*, commenting, on the rear endpaper, that the issue is the final acceptance of one's temperament and the ability to live even in its perversions.
- 11 Ronald Eyre tapes the responses of the writers to their Arts Council Writers' Tour in March. IM says that the evening performances made her nervous as she couldn't see the audiences beyond the bright lights.

- 20 Post Offices in Northern Ireland are bombed by the IRA. British troops have to guard them from further attack.

## May

- 7 IM goes to Paddington station to watch the filming of *A Severed Head* by Dick Clement. Afterwards she talks to Claire Bloom, who plays Honor Klein, and finds her touchingly enthusiastic about the part. IM has reservations about Frederick Raphael's screenplay.

She records in her Journal the new insight that all her novels centre on a conflict between two men.

- 12 IM notes in her Journal how sentimental she is and wonders what she can do about it.

- 14 US President, Richard Nixon proposes mutual withdrawal of US, allied and North Vietnamese forces from Vietnam.

- 26 IM writes to Stella Aldwinckle: she has been very impressed by her poem, particularly the link between the abstract and the concrete. She promises to write in more detail about it later.

- 29 At JB's request, IM records in her Journal that this year, because of the late spring, the mulberry tree in their garden is not yet in leaf.

Lord David Cecil has just retired from academic life to his home in Cranborne. During their frequent visits there, IM often engages him in friendly arguments in which both jump up and down and shout at each other. (He describes these affectionately later to Frances Partridge.)

## June

- 4 On a cold evening IM seems to hear a message saying 'WAIT'. She is still working at her plays and is uncertain about future novels. She is writing the play, *Joanna, Joanna*, into which she puts a student riot. (It is never performed, but the plot is altered and used in *A Word Child*.)

## July

- 16 The Bayleys are with Reynolds and Janet Stone at their home in Dorset; IM describes Janet Stone in a mauve gingham dress with a parasol as looking like a summer nymph.

They are again combining their visit to the Stones near Dorchester with a visit to the Cecils at Cranborne. They then journey with the Stones to Ireland, taking a holiday home for a fortnight in West Cork. They also visit Honor Tracy at her cottage on Achill Island, County Mayo and the painter Derek Hill at Letterkenny, County Donegal.



- 20 The American astronaut Neil Armstrong becomes the first man to walk on the moon.

### August

- 12 (–14) The ‘Battle of the Bogside’: in Londonderry, Police clash with nationalist demonstrators.

### September

- 7 IM notes in her Journal that she feels so much more strongly about ordinary private things than about politics.  
Esme Ross Langley, founder of the lesbian magazine, *Arena 3*, is in love with IM.

IM notes in her Journal ‘a vacancy for a close woman-friend.’ Neither Esme Ross Langley nor Honor Tracy is quite right for the role.

- 18 IM records in her Journal that for her, Happiness is to be utterly absorbed in at least six other human beings.  
21 The Bayleys are in Dorset on another short visit to the Stones and the Cecils.  
26 After spending happy times with the Cecils at Cranborne and the Stones at Litton Cheney, IM nevertheless records in her Journal on her return that, fond as she is of them all, she can never quite communicate with them.

The March interview with IM by M. Jarrett-Kerr, ‘Good, Evil and Morality’, is published in *CR: Quarterly Review of the Community of the Resurrection*.

### October

- 3 IM comments in her Journal that she likes people who are humble, adding that everyone has some reason to be so.  
11 IM comments that she is getting old and wants real committed friends, not wayward people.  
25 IM’s Journal records JB walking at the bottom of the garden and looking so sad.

### November

- 22 IM produces a brief foreword to a novel by the Czech writer, Herma Svozilova-Johnova.

The theatrical agent Peggy Ramsey is considering taking the film rights for *A Fairly Honourable Defeat*.

With IM’s encouragement, Stella Aldwinckle sends her long mystical poem to Chatto and Windus.

## December

- 1 IM records an interview with Frank Kermode on 'Myth, Reality and Fiction.'

The Bayleys give dinner at New College so that Janet Stone can meet Isaiah Berlin and his wife Aline. Reynolds Stone comes too. IM's Journal records her fondness for all of them.

At a sherry party given by JB for his pupils, A.N. Wilson, a first-year undergraduate, meets IM for the first time. He notices in JB's study the prints of American birds she gave JB. IM asks if he is left-wing or right-wing, declaring that she herself is broadly in sympathy with the Left. JB then comments that she has rather fallen out with Labour over education.

- 31 IM notes in her Journal the passing of this remarkable decade. She feels the coming of a new novel. (It is to be *The Accidental Man*.) She recalls her father, years before, in her childhood, wishing the cats goodnight before putting out the lights.

## 1970

IM's essay, 'Existentialists and Mystics: A Note on the Novel in the New Utilitarian Age' is published in a volume of *Essays and Poems Presented to Lord David Cecil*, edited by Cecil's star pupil (and IM's former fiancé), Wallace Robson.

This year, IM rents a new London flat, Flat 4, 62 Cornwall Gardens, South Kensington (and two years later buys the top flat at number 29 at the opposite side of the square. She is to keep them for the rest of her life.)

Also this year, IM becomes a Member of the Irish Academy.

The complete *New English Bible* is published. Elizabeth Bowen publishes *Eva Trout*.

The Japanese novelist, Yukio Mishima, commits ritual suicide.

## January

IM is suffering badly from arthritis in her right hand and arm.

- 5 IM writes to Norah Smallwood: she and JB are both ill – she has never felt so ill in her life and is in bed with gastric trouble.
- 13 IM notes, as she begins thinking about *An Accidental Man*, how oddly different the atmosphere of one novel is from another.

In a letter to her old Oxford friend, Leo Pliatzky, she comments teasingly that she is now a member of the establishment. (The Bayleys are going next month to a party at 10, Downing Street. The Labour Prime Minister, Harold Wilson, is noted for being aware of popular trends in society.)

- 15           The surrender of Biafra to Nigeria ends the Biafran War.
- 15           IM writes to Norah Smallwood about having written another play – which she says will be her last offering to the theatre for the foreseeable future. She is now beginning another novel (*An Accidental Man*).
- 29           IM's thirteenth novel, *A Fairly Honourable Defeat* is published, dedicated 'To Janet and Reynolds Stone'.

## February

- (early)    Eduard Fraenkel's wife, Ruth, dies. Fraenkel commits suicide by taking an overdose of barbiturates. IM feels sad for them, and sad too for herself, as always happens, she records, in bereavement.

The Bayleys spend a week or so in Yugoslavia, having arranged with Norah Smallwood to have money put into the bank for them in Dubrovnik, as they don't want to have to go to Belgrade.

- 28           IM and JB attend a party at 10, Downing Street and then join German lecturer David Luke to go to a sit-in at the Clarendon Building which is being occupied by students. IM speaks briefly to them but later records her fear of what is actually, however polite, basically mob-rule.

For a filmed interview with David Pears (*The Idea of Freedom*, 1971), IM wears a tangerine-coloured plastic mackintosh with a purple outfit.

## March

IM tells Norah Smallwood to refuse her invitation to the Booker Prize ceremony in October: (*A Fairly Honourable Defeat* is on the 'long-list'.) she is convinced that she will always be the bridesmaid and never the bride. (She has been nominated twice already, without ever winning the prize.)

- 29           A police station is attacked in Londonderry.

## April

- 1           Riots break out in Belfast.
- 15           IM tries to get a job at Chatto and Windus for Miranda Robinson, the daughter of an old friend from St Hilda's College, Oxford.

- 18 At Cedar Lodge IM begins the first draft of her next novel (to become *An Accidental Man*).
- 20 IM has to write in her Journal with her left hand, because of arthritis in her right.
- 21 IM rebels and returns to writing with her right hand. (The Bayleys consider moving to Oxford to a less damp house, but eventually the drug, Voltarol, helps the pain and they can defer a move.) She nevertheless manages to write to Norah Smallwood to promote the interests of a young writer, Lucy Ramberg.

## May

- 4 IM begins a tour of Cheshire with three other writers, Paul Ableman, Paul Bailey and Giles Gordon, for the North West Arts Association. They appear first at the Town Hall, Chester and go on to the destinations listed below.
- 5 Hartford Methodist Hall in Northwich.
- 6 Sandbach Library, Sandbach.
- 7 Council Offices, Wilmslow.
- 8 Glossop Hall, Glossop.
- 9 Town Hall, Buxton

IM sees the Dick Clement film of *A Severed Head* and notes in her Journal that it is terrible.

In her Journal IM compares A.S. Byatt with Brigid Brophy, Esme Ross Langley and 'the Chumman' (her female Oxford lover): she feels that Byatt ('Toni') has touches of greatness, is intellectually tough. She wants, she says, to pay homage to her.

## June

- 7 IM captures in her Journal a moment on this very hot evening: JB wearing red braces, going down the centre path between tall grass.
- 11 IM writes to ask Norah Smallwood to send her a complete set of her novels: she has discovered that she has promised to give them away as the main prize in a village raffle.
- 19 In the General Election, Edward Heath leads the Conservatives back into power.
- 26 Violence breaks out again in Belfast as the Republican MP Bernadette Devlin begins a prison sentence.
- 30 Great Britain, Denmark, Norway and Eire begin negotiations for membership of the European Economic Community (EEC).

## July

IM agonises in her Journal about not hurting her friends or her disciples.

- 6 The Irish Foreign Minister criticises the behaviour of British troops in Northern Ireland.
- 23 Marches in Northern Ireland are banned for six months.
- 26 IM muses in her Journal about whether madness might be a slow erosion of one's sense of identity.

*The Sovereignty of Good* is published, based on IM's earlier philosophical essays, including 'On "God" and "Good"' from 1969.

## August

- 13 An IRA bomb store is found in London.
- 20 The Bayleys travel in France for a fortnight, visiting Bordeaux and hiring a car to drive around the region. At IM's instigation they visit Lourdes – which to JB seems a terrible place.

## September

- 7 IM completes the first draft of *An Accidental Man*, having filled fourteen notebooks.
- 9 IM is interviewed by Ronald Hayman for *The Times* about the approaching opening of her play, *The Servants and the Snow*, which she calls an exercise in political philosophy.
- 9 Palestine hijackers take over a BOAC aircraft.
- 30 The Hayman article is published in *The Times*, as 'Out of the Tutorial.'

IM hears of the death of her first romantic attachment, her early Irish penpal, James Henderson Scott. She feels that their attachment was the first event in her adult life and that he was a good man and a good influence upon her.

IM contributes 'A Note on Drama' to *Cue: The Greenwich Theatre Magazine*.

## October

IM's play, *The Servants and the Snow*, at the Greenwich Theatre in London, has been a failure. IM sees it twice in its four-week run, the second time in the company of Cecil Day-Lewis. Alun Vaughan Williams finds her in tears at Greenwich Station.

- 11 IM treats Norah Smallwood to lunch at the Pillars of Hercules in London.

- 17 IM writes in her Journal that she feels neglected and in need of love and maybe of fun. She has seen Philippa Foot, who is always cheerful but who is absorbed at the moment in moving house.

### November

- 8 IM writes to thank Robert Bernard Martin for sending his latest novel. It was good to see him in the summer.
- 22 JB is worrying about income tax: IM is trying, with Norah Smallwood's help, to find a way through their financial difficulties. She tells Norah that she would do anything to resolve his tax worries.

### December

- 13 The Polish government increases fuel prices. There is rioting in Gdansk and elsewhere.
- 30 IM completes the final draft of *An Accidental Man*, in 734 handwritten pages.

## 1971

This year, JB's *Pushkin* is published.

Paul Newman and Joanna Woodward buy the film rights to *A Fairly Honourable Defeat* but IM dislikes Peter Ustinov's script and the project flounders.

### February

- 5 The first British soldier is killed in Northern Ireland.

### March

- 10 Mrs Indira Gandhi's Congress party wins a landside victory in India.
- 13 There are riots in East Belfast when the IRA fire on an Orange Parade.

President Nixon withdraws 100,000 more troops from Vietnam.

- 18 In her Journal IM recalls her father's characteristic facial expression of nervous irritation: she fears she has inherited it. She meets Noel Coward while dining at the Connaught in London. He declares that he is a great Murdoch fan, but their conversation is cut short by the arrival of Princess Margaret.

## April

- 16 IM realises, and records in her Journal, the need to live alone with one's daemon.
- 24 IM records in her Journal JB putting a bunch of periwinkles beside her while she was sleeping, which made her so happy when she awoke.

Jane Taylor publishes an interview with IM in *Books and Bookmen* about *The Sovereignty of Good*. IM disclaims any close connection between her philosophy and her novels. She says (as so often in interviews) that she thinks of herself as in the English realist tradition.

## May

- 5 At Cedar Lodge IM begins the first draft of her next novel (to become *The Black Prince*).

## June

IM writes that she longs to be spoilt and pampered with flowers: her admirers Elliott Kastner and his wife Tessa have, in fact, just sent her a huge bouquet.

- 27 IM records in her Journal the nightmares that have found their way into *The Black Prince*.
- 29 IM writes to Chatto and Windus to recommend that they consider a novel by an old acquaintance, Honor Arundel, which she thinks has a period charm. She has also rewritten the blurb Norah Smallwood has prepared for *An Accidental Man*: Norah's version, she feels, gives too much away.

## July

With the philosopher, Marjorie Grene, the Bayleys attend an Arts conference at Cerisy, Normandy. Richard Wollheim and his wife are there, to their great relief, as otherwise they find it a rather strange gathering. They fly on to Northern Italy, following Wollheim's suggested itinerary, visiting Viterbo, Todi, Spoleto, Narni, Tarquinia and then back to Rome. They find Italy greatly enriching (particularly the food and drink) but IM later confesses to Wollheim that they were glad to return to the gentleness of England after the ferocity of Rome.

- 21 IM comments in her Journal that a human being's craving for love is *infinite*.

## August

- 9 In Northern Ireland arrests are made for the first time under the new Special Powers Act, which allows for Internment of suspects without trial.
- 12 IM records in her Journal that there are not many people one would want to know about oneself. She is thinking about Buddhism and eastern religions in general and likens her own, western, discovery of them to the butcher's boy discovering the circulation of the blood.
- 19 After sharp exchanges between Edward Heath and President Jack Lynch of Eire, Anglo-Irish relations are at breaking-point. JB comments in his diary on the alterations to the house and the unreliability of the central heating, which may be the fault of their favourite old builder, Palmer, whom they haven't the heart to blame.

## September

- 9 IM writes to Richard Wollheim about the Italian trip in July, about which he had given advice. She hopes to meet him when she is back in London at the end of the month.
- 10 IM completes the first draft of *The Black Prince*, having filled fourteen notebooks. She recalls in her Journal her own wartime work, describing herself, at the age of twenty-three, as the slave of circumstance.
- 15 IM begins the final draft of *The Black Prince*.
- 25 The Bayleys travel to Hampshire and on to visit the Stones in Dorset, before the term starts.

## October

In their October party conferences, the Labour Party comes out strongly against entry into the EEC, while the Conservative Party is strongly in favour of entry.

- 21 IM's fourteenth novel, *An Accidental Man* is published, dedicated to 'Kreisel', (Georg Kreisel, the Oxford philosopher).
- 27 In a forty-minute programme on BBC TV, A.S. Byatt interviews IM about *An Accidental Man* and about how she constructed the novel. IM says she began with the central event, the running over of the child, and the people involved, and then let the action wind around that.

## December

- 21 IM completes the final draft of *The Black Prince*, in 716 handwritten pages.



## 1972

This year the poet, Cecil Day-Lewis dies. IM writes warmly and sympathetically to his widow, Jill Balcon, and also to Norah Smallwood who, as his publisher at Chatto and Windus, knew him very well. IM mentions in her letters her happy memories of talking to him about Ireland (He too had an Irish background.)

**January**

3 IM writes to thank David Hicks fulsomely for his last letter. There are power cuts during the Heath Government's battle with the unions. JB records that they spend from 6–9pm in the dark with candles, which they rather enjoy.

14 IM is reading about Buddhism. She debates in her Journal whether art, thriving on secret gratifications, with purely imaginary glories, can ever relate to the spiritual quest at all.

30 'Bloody Sunday': British troops shoot dead thirteen civilians when violence erupts at an anti-internment march in the Bogside district of Londonderry.

IM gives a series of lectures in Yorkshire in the middle of the month, returning to London in early February.

**February**

David Hicks and IM meet in London.

2 Demonstrators burn down the British Embassy in Dublin.

16 David Hicks writes ecstatically to IM about the happiest meeting they have had for ages. He records weeping with pleasure on the tube returning to the office and calls her an absolute darling. He insists that next time he will pay for their meal.

22 Seven members of the Parachute Regiment are killed in an IRA attack on a barracks in Aldershot.

28 Striking coal miners riot at Saltley coke depot. (They keep up their action until mid-November.)

**March**

JB arranges the heating for the pool in the greenhouse – 'Iris's wallow.' The Bayleys see the film, *The French Connection*. (This is probably the last film they ever visit. They have no television and tend to avoid the twentieth century media.)

4 Bombs explode in Belfast, killing two people and injuring 136.

- 17 IM writes to Norah Smallwood about the imminent trip to America: they can be reached through Marjorie Grene at the University of California. IM says she feels homesick already!
- 25 The Bayleys fly to Mexico on their British Council tour. They spend a week there, then on for a month in the USA, going first to San Francisco where they meet philosopher Marjorie Grene.
- 30 Great Britain assumes direct rule in Northern Ireland.

## April

- 2 (Sun) The Bayleys spend Easter in San Diego, where IM notes, in a letter to Richard Wollheim, that they see pelicans, sea otters, sea lions and grey whales.
- 4 The USSR refuses to allow Alexander Solzhenitsyn to receive his Nobel Prize for Literature.
- 11 The Bayleys are in Saint Louis, from which IM sends post-cards to, among others, Professor Robert Bernard Martin. They have also been to Mexico and to luscious California. They feel they are seeing the country for the first time.
- 14 A discussion between IM and JB on 'Problems in Fiction' is tape-recorded at Washington University, St Louis. IM talks of definitions of a work of art, calls the novel the most precious art form and declares that it has declined, as we live today in a post-heroic era. Novels are essentially comic in form, whereas poetry and the theatre are tragic. She talks of her admiration for Samuel Beckett, even though his later works have become, she feels, too private.
- 21 IM's lecture, advertised as being about 'Themes in My Novels' is tape-recorded at Washington University, St Louis. She talks in fact on 'Ideas of Unity in Art and Morals', arguing that unity is basic in philosophy, science and human nature. Though Plato and Freud attack art as falsehood, IM believes it can be a strong unifier and a force for good. Good art can show any genuine disunity in the self whereas bad art simply presents a false picture.
- 27 Five Oxford colleges admit women for the first time.

## May

- 8 IM writes to David Hicks about the American trip. She is now about to fly off to New York – she thinks she must be mad. She is to deliver the Blashfield Address to the

American Academy of Arts and Letters. Her title is 'Salvation by Words' and is a defence of the value of art in re-establishing formal unity in a chaotic, hostile world.

IM writes to Robert Bernard Martin from New York commenting on how often she seems to be in his country this year.

Later in the month, IM visits the exhibition of Reynolds Stone's engravings which is at the New Grafton Gallery from 11 to 31 May.

- 13 In her Journal IM recalls prayers at Froebel School. She refers to Jesus as her only Jewish boy.

IM writes to Sir Isaiah Berlin apologising for troubling him at such a busy time of year: she is trying to help Stefan Morawski, formerly Professor of Aesthetics at Warsaw, expelled for political dissidence. He is anxious to come to England in September 1973 and needs some sort of post. She says that she and JB had met him at a conference and that he has been teaching at Berkeley, adding praise for his frank and optimistic personality, perhaps untypical for someone with a Polish background. She encloses his CV.

- 14 Sir Isaiah Berlin replies to IM's request for help for Stefan Morawski: he wants to help but knows that his college will not offer payment. He gives further suggestions, including an application to the Society for the Protection of Science and Learning. His college could provide a Fellowship, but no money.

- 15 IM's article, 'Salvation by Words', appears in the *New York Review of Books*.

The Lebowitzes, great friends from Saint Louis, come to stay at Cedar Lodge.

- 17 IM thanks Isaiah Berlin for his advice about helping Stefan Morawski and asks for the return of Morawski's CV, her only copy.

## June

- 1 Battles break out between Protestants and Catholics in Belfast, leaving six people dead.
- 21 Twenty-two bombs explode in Belfast.

## July

- 3 IM recommends to Chatto and Windus a manuscript by JB's ex-student, Peter Conrad, *The Victorian Treasure House*, which she considers to be a young man's book, very enthusiastic and crammed.

- 22 IM is in Lewes in Sussex. She writes to Norah Smallwood who is recovering from illness, saying how much she is missed at Chatto and Windus and hoping she has reached that stage of convalescence where quiet reading or just existing is pleasant. She comments that recovery from illness can often enable us to reach a contemplative mood, where we can simply live in and enjoy the present.
- 30 At Cedar Lodge, IM begins the first draft of her next novel (to become *The Sacred and Profane Love Machine*). The Bayleys holiday with Janet and Reynolds Stone in Janet's sister's cottage on the Pembrokeshire coast.

### August

JB's mother comes for a successful visit. (The Bayleys often visit her in Smith Terrace, Chelsea, and IM's mother in Baron's Court.)

- 9 In Northern Ireland, British troops clash with the Ulster Defence Force.

### September

This month, IM buys the top-floor flat at 29, Cornwall Gardens which she is to keep for the rest of her life.

- 1 The Bayleys fly to Naples and hire a car, touring the Mezzogiorno. IM writes a poem about the green inscription there.
- 21 Northern Ireland Secretary of State Willie Whitelaw ends internment without trial in Northern Ireland. The Provisional IRA agrees a cease-fire.

IM writes to Anne Marreco, encouraging her to send her novel, *The Spanish Princess*, to Viking.

IM breaks arrangements to be with A.S. Byatt after her young son has been run over and killed by a car. All she can do is listen and weep.

### October

IM's play, *The Three Arrows*, opens in Cambridge with Ian McKellan in the lead.

- 24 Hugh Hebert publishes in the *Guardian* an interview with IM, made as she attended the opening of *The Three Arrows*, calling the piece 'The Iris Problem'. She discusses the symbolism of the play, her strengths and weaknesses as a playwright and her difficulty, in her novels, of moving beyond the professional classes whom she knows best. She misses her teaching and talks of the loneliness of the writer's life.

## December

IM has contributed 'Ten Observations (for Kay Bennett)' to *A Festschrift for K.F.B.* edited by Tambimuttu.

- 3 IM completes the first draft of what is to become *The Sacred and Profane Love Machine*. (It is at this point called *The Monster and its Mother and the Sacred and Profane Love Machine*.)
- 20 IM begins the final draft of *The Sacred and Profane Love Machine*.

## 1973

This year, Great Britain and Eire become full members of the enlarged European Economic Community (EEC).

## February

- 22 IM's fifteenth novel, *The Black Prince*, is published, dedicated 'To Ernesto de Marchi' (the Bayleys' friend with whom they often stay in Italy). This time (and from now onward) IM has written her own blurb for the back cover, feeling that she is best able to give readers a clue to the book's meaning.

On the same day, Elizabeth Bowen dies, aged 74.

## March

- 4 IM completes the final draft of *The Sacred and Profane Love Machine*.
- 8 IRA car bombs in London kill one and injure 238 people.
- 20 A White Paper from the British Government proposes a power-sharing agreement in Northern Ireland.
- 25 IM writes to Norah Smallwood, asking her to be her literary executor in the event of a plane crash.

The Bayleys fly to Egypt for a British Council tour. JB breaks his leg (for the second time) in Cairo.

## June

IM has been asked by Harcourt Brace Jovanovich publishers in the USA to write a thriller and/or a biography of Florence Nightingale. She politely rejects both ideas.

**July**

- 1 IM writes to Norah Smallwood suggesting Edward Bawden to design the cover for *The Sacred and Profane Love Machine*: he had produced an excellent cover for *The Flight from the Enchanter*. She feels they can't ask Christopher Cornford again. (In the event, Cornford *does* do the cover.)
- 2 Responding to the comprehensive schools movement, IM has a letter published in *The Times* defending selective education.

The Bayleys travel to the Greek islands and Menton with John and Patsy Grigg.

- 29 At Cedar Lodge IM begins the first draft of her next novel (which is to become *A Word Child*).

**August**

- 5 An Arab terrorist attack at Athens airport kills four people. The Bayleys stay for the first time with the poet Stephen Spender and his wife, Natasha, at their home, Mas Saint-Jerome, near Mausanne in the Alpilles in France.

**October**

*The Three Arrows* and *The Servants and the Snow* are published as a single volume, dedicated 'To Lucy and Christopher Cornford'. (Christopher Cornford had been IM's boss at the Royal College of Art and had also illustrated the covers of four of her books.)

**November**

- 23 IM completes the first draft of *A Word Child*, filling thirteen notebooks.
- 30 IM begins the final draft of *A Word Child*.  
*The Black Prince* wins the James Tait Black Memorial Prize – IM's first literary award.

**1974**

This year JB moves from New College to Saint Catherine's College, Oxford, as Warton Professor of English.

**January**

- 6 IM writes to thank Anne Marreco for a recent lunch party.

- 14 Talks break down between Edward Heath and the Trades Unions over the miners' dispute over pit closures.
- 22 IM writes to Norah Smallwood praising the cover design Christopher Cornford has produced for *The Sacred and Profane Love Machine*.

## February

- 4 An IRA bomb kills twelve at Catterick in Yorkshire.
- 10 A national Miners' Strike begins.
- 14 IM writes to Anne Marreco to congratulate her on having found a publisher and suggests that perhaps she should submit her earlier novels too.
- 27 IM completes the final draft of *A Word Child*, in 727 handwritten pages.
- 28 In the British General Election there is no overall majority. Edward Heath resigns and Harold Wilson returns to power at the head of the Labour Party, with two of IM's old Oxford Labour Club friends in his Cabinet, Denis Healey as Chancellor of the Exchequer and Roy Jenkins as Home Secretary.

## March

According to A.N. Wilson, it is during this month and this year that JB suggests to him, after dinner at High Table in New College Oxford, that they drop in on Eric Christiansen, Fellow and Tutor of medieval history at the college. They find him in his room, entwined on his bed with IM. IM suggests that they all have a drink and the evening ends with laughter about a horror film Eric has seen involving a man living in the Underground. (The situation and the Underground story are found in *A Word Child* – a complete draft of which had, however, been finished by the end of February.)

- 11 The striking miners accept a £103 million pay deal. The Miners Strike ends.

IM writes to Sir Isaiah Berlin asking for help for Miron Grindea who is desperate to come to Oxford to research into 'Oxford and French Literature'. He wouldn't need to be paid but does need some sort of college attachment.

- 21 IM's sixteenth novel, *The Sacred and Profane Love Machine*, is published, dedicated 'To Norah Smallwood', who has recently been ill. (Smallwood has been her contact at Chatto and Windus since 1953 and in 1975 becomes Managing Director.)

**April**

- 18 *The Sacred and Profane Love Machine* wins the Whitbread Literary Award for Fiction. In presenting the prize, the novelist C.P. Snow admits that this may not be her best novel, but that the award acknowledges her achievement as a major British writer.

Sir Isaiah Berlin replies to IM's request for help for Miron Grindea: he too admires Grindea and will do all he can to help. He recommends she try, among others, John Simopoulos at St Catherine's College. He addresses the letter to 'Mrs John Bayley' and signs it 'All my love'.

**May**

- 24 IM writes to Robert Bernard Martin: once again they can't come to Yale and Princeton, as JB couldn't get away for so long. He is presently on sabbatical, she says, writing a book and she wouldn't go away for so long without him. She comments on her own difficulties with writing at the moment and the temptation simply to look out of the window and watch JB at work in the garden.

Some time this year, IM writes a poem about JB called 'John Sees a Stork at Zamorra'.

**June**

- 17 An IRA bomb explodes outside Westminster Hall in London, injuring eleven people.

**July**

- 1 IM suggests to Norah Smallwood that she ask Edward Bawden to do the cover for *A Word Child*.

- 17 An IRA bomb at the Tower of London kills one and injures thirty-seven,

Alexander Solzhenitsyn is expelled from the USSR after publishing *The Gulag Archipelago*.

The Bayleys make a long visit to the Spenders, as last year, at their home in Provence and also visit the Griggs in Tamariu in Spain. (It is during this visit that IM bribes some children to release a trapped fish – an event that re-emerges in *The Philosopher's Pupil*.)

**August**

- 17 IM begins the first draft of her next novel (to become *Henry and Cato*).

The Bayleys stay at John and Patsy Grigg's house, 'Guisachan', in Inverness.



- 24 While staying in Inverness, IM begins to read Jacques Derrida's *La Dissemination* (1972). (She is to refer in *The Fire and the Sun: Why Plato Banished the Artists*, to Derrida's section in this book on 'La Pharmacie de Platon,' calling it brilliant.)

## October

- 1 Asked by The New Fiction Society to nominate her favourite among her own novels, IM opts for *The Nice and the Good*.  
 5 IRA bombs kill five and injure sixty-five in Guildford, Surrey.  
 10 In the British General Election, Harold Wilson and the Labour Party are returned with a safe majority.

There are riots and arson at the Maze Prison in Northern Ireland.

The Bayleys are invited by A.S. Byatt to a seminar at University College London, chaired by Frank Kermode. She introduces them to young academic Richard Todd, who is to write on IM. There is an intense two-hour discussion with 25 to 30 people present.

The Bayleys are delighted to receive a poem from Philip Larkin which is to be included in the Christmas Supplement of the Poetry Book Society. IM writes back to him that, like so many other poems of his, this one has enriched their mythology.

IM writes to Brian Cox about the Black Paper on Education.

## October

*The Sacred and Profane Love Machine* is nominated for, but fails to win, The Booker Prize for Fiction, which is won jointly this year by Nadine Gordimer, for *The Conservationist* and Stanley Middleton for *Holiday*.

## November

- 13 Nigel Rees interviews IM on *Kaleidoscope* on BBC Radio 4 about *The Sacred and Profane Love Machine*.  
 28 Following the spate of IRA atrocities, the Prevention of Terrorism Act is passed in Britain, allowing police to hold suspects without charge for five days.

## December

- 6 In the *Times Literary Supplement*, twenty-five eminent people have been asked to nominate books which influenced them deeply in childhood. IM explains that her father encouraged a broad range of reading. She chooses two books that suggest her two major interests, philosophy and action, *Alice in Wonderland* and *Treasure Island*. She is sure she would have loved *The Lord of the Rings*, had it been available then.

## 1975

This year sees the end of Internment without trial in Northern Ireland.

## January

- 17 IM writes to theatrical agent, Peggy Ramsey about the possibility of putting on *The Three Arrows* in America. Some time this year Simon Raven adapts *An Unofficial Rose* for radio.

In *Black Paper 1975: The Fight for Education* edited by C.B. Cox and Rhodes Boyson, IM contributes a paper on 'Socialism and Selection' in which she argues for ways of combining the two.

## February

- 2 IM completes the first draft of *Henry and Cato*, having filled twelve notebooks.
- 11 Margaret Thatcher becomes leader of the Conservative Party.

## March

- 6 IM writes to Norah Smallwood to recommend a cookery book by her friend Mrs Pamela Hewitt. She thinks Phillida Gili (daughter of Janet and Reynolds Stone) could illustrate it well.

- 9 IM begins the final draft of *Henry and Cato*.

- 13 IM writes to Chatto and Windus on behalf of her friend Stephen Gardiner's work on Oxford architecture, which she thinks will make a fine book.

IM sends a postcard to Norah Smallwood to say that she has just finished reading a novel she has enormously enjoyed, called *Shardik*.

- 17 Norah Smallwood has lunch with IM at her Cornwall Gardens flat.

- 18 IM writes to Robert Bernard Martin that they are just going away but will be back in mid-April. She wishes him luck with his writing.

- 22 The Bayleys visit Japan for the second time, under the auspices of the British Council.

- 23 (Sun) Rest day.

- 24 Reception at the Japan Pen Club, Tokyo.

- 25 Visit, at IM's request to Kyoto, to the Daihonzan or temple of Ishiyamadera, a site connected with her favourite early novel, *The Tale of Genji* (from which IM takes the cat-stealing scene in *The Nice and the Good*). They meet the Abbot, Ryuko

- Washio, who performs the tea ceremony for them. Later he and IM talk in private.
- 26 Seminar at Kyoto University.
- 27 IM lectures on 'The Role of Mythology in Politics and the Novel Today' at the British Council in Kyoto.
- 28 Travel back to Tokyo.
- 29 Visit to Hiroshima.
- 30 (Sun) Rest day.
- 31 Departure from Hiroshima.

## April

- 6 Visit to Nagoya.
- 8 IM lectures at Tokyo (Kamaba) University.
- 9 Departure for UK.
- 13 IM's article, 'Doing Down the Able Child: A Socialist's Case for Saving Our Grammar Schools', is published in the *Sunday Telegraph* (after having been included in the *Black Paper 3 on Education*, edited by C.B. Cox and Rhodes Boyson, under the title, 'Socialism and Selection').
- 17 IM's seventeenth novel, *A Word Child*, is published, dedicated 'To Peter Ady' (IM's friend and colleague at St Anne's). It contains various references to people around her, including a character called 'Jenny Searle', which is the name of one of IM's research students.
- 25 Honor Tracy writes to Lucy Klatschko (Sister Marian) that IM has been to Japan discussing the English novel with Japanese students, and then on to America where JB was to lecture. She mentions IM's fine paper on education. In her opinion, IM is still pretending to be a Socialist but is not one at all. She has written to tell IM so, but has not yet received a reply. In her opinion too, the novels are a waste of her exceptional talents.

## May

IM writes to Chatto and Windus on behalf of the children's author, Vera Panova, whose work she admires: she asks if it has been translated into English.

- 8 IM writes to Chatto and Windus to promote the work of Peter Conrad, JB's ex-student: she admires his work and hopes he might even write some novels one day.

9 Norah Smallwood replies, telling IM that she acts as a wonderful friend to fellow-writers.

This year, IM's mother, Rene's mental health begins to decline. She often stays at Cedar Lodge and has begun to confuse IM with her own dead sister, Gertie.

## July

15 The Bayleys spend IM's birthday with the Spenders' at Mas St Jerome in Provence. IM is reading Plato. As always, they find the place enchanting and every afternoon go down to the river for a swim.

16 Honor Tracy writes to Sister Marian of IM's religious confusions: she had persuaded one of her students, a Jesuit, to remain in the Society even though he is having a love affair. The student had later decided to leave the Jesuits after all. Honor feels that IM is fascinated by the Church but does not really understand its implications.

IM contributes a short piece on her favourite reading to Frederick Raphael's *Bookmarks*.

## August

27 An angry letter from IM is published in *The Times* in which she attacks Stowers Johnson's book, *Agents Extraordinary*, for portraying Frank Thompson as a fanatical 'Lawrence of Bulgaria' figure. She talks instead of his brilliance, bravery and goodness, his sweetness and charm. She writes more approvingly to another author about to publish on Frank, Slavcho Trunski, whose book, *Grateful Bulgaria*, described Frank as quiet, modest, an English eccentric, who died in a way he would have found fitting.

## September

16 IM writes to Norah Smallwood asking her to see her friend Ernesto de Marchi to discuss the English publishing scene in general. She describes him as a Piedmontese business man and scholar who has already written in Italian on European history.

## October

15 IM completes the final draft of *Henry and Cato*, in 703 handwritten pages.

Gill Davie interviews IM for the *Woman's Journal* in a piece entitled, 'I Should Hate to be Alive and not Writing a Novel: Iris Murdoch and her Work.'

27           The Labour Government abolishes Direct Grant Schools.

## November

13           IM completes the first draft of the Romanes lecture, 'Why Plato Banished the Artists', which is to be delivered in February.

Two of IM's poems, 'Too Late' and 'John Sees a Stork at Zamorra' appear in the *Boston University Journal*, vol. 25, nos 2 and 3. The former is a narrative of an eternal triangle in which an old admirer reacts to news of the death of the husband who had usurped him. One line deals with the 'old flame' or possibly the woman's, relief that there were no children from the marriage. After the husband's unexpected death, it is the old lover who feels liberated from his emotional bondage, whereas the widow finds herself truly mourning her husband who, it turns out, was the real love. The second poem is a tender and loving glimpse of JB throwing up his arms in delight at the sight of a stork, during a holiday in Spain.

## December

6 (-12)     An IRA gang is besieged in Balcombe Street in London and eventually surrenders.

# 1976

This year, JB's *The Uses of Division* is published.

## January

13           IM writes to David Hicks, hoping they can meet. She comments on his new home in Worcestershire, that she thinks the most beautiful country in the world lies about twenty miles west of Evesham.

23           Mrs Thatcher gives a robustly anti-Communist speech which prompts the Red Star newspaper in Moscow to dub her 'the Iron Lady'.

Sir Isaiah Berlin sends IM good luck wishes for her Romanes Lecture: she sends a postcard thanking him but saying she would rather *no-one*

came on the 13<sup>th</sup>! The postcard carries a portrait of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. IM comments in a postscript on the modernity of Rousseau's face, which is one that she loves.

## February

- 12 IM sends Norah Smallwood the blurb for *Henry and Cato* and suggests the subtitle 'A Tale of Two Prodigal Sons'. She wants to use for the cover a painting belonging to Morton May, which is in a cupboard in the vaults of the Art Museum at St Louis.
- 13 IM gives the Romanes Lecture to a packed Sheldonian Theatre in Oxford. Her subject is Plato and her title is: 'The Fire and the Sun: Why Plato Banished the Artists'. Afterwards she dines awkwardly with Alastair Clayre from Brasenose who will not discuss the lecture, which has not gone well.
- 27 Malcolm Bradbury interviews IM for the British Council. IM is interviewed by Sheila Hale for a feature in *Harpers and Queen* on ten women writers, to be published in October. She admits to not being deeply touched by George Eliot, much as she admires her; she comments on the lack of excitement in the world today, which she attributes to a disillusionment with socialism and a dull distaste for religion. There *is* excitement, she adds, to be found in Simone de Beauvoir's writing. She admits to having written to de Beauvoir once in Paris: de Beauvoir replied on a sheet of graph paper, rejecting a meeting. Though IM insists that she supports feminist causes, the subject itself she believes can become boring – women making themselves part of an inferiority movement. She feels her own characters are androgynous: she does not believe in a male mind and a female mind.

## March

- 16 Prime Minister Harold Wilson resigns for health reasons.

## April

- 5 James Callaghan becomes the new Labour Prime Minister.
- 11 IM writes to Pamela White Hadas, American poet, thanking her for her letter and the poem she has sent.
- 28 IM writes to Norah Smallwood saying that she is absorbed in preparing her essay on Plato for the Oxford University Press.

## May

- 4 IM writes to Chatto and Windus to recommend Mrs Anna Laure Momigliano's book on Tintoretto.
- 12 IM writes to Norah Smallwood in delight at the news that they are to be allowed to use Beckmann's painting, 'Acrobat on Trapeze', free, for a book cover.
- 26 Martin Heidegger dies.

## June

- 21 The IRA assassinates the British Ambassador in Dublin, Christopher Ewart-Biggs.
- 23 IM is interviewed in her London flat by a young lecturer from the University of Saint Thomas, in Saint Paul, Minnesota, Michael Bellamy. (The interview is published in Spring 1977 in *Contemporary Literature*.) IM contrasts the nineteenth century sensibility of Proust with the twentieth century sensibility of D.H. Lawrence. Proust, she feels, has a larger scope, whereas Lawrence seems very local. She speaks of her move from the light-heartedness of the earlier novels to a greater calm which has come with age. She admits to identifying more with men than with women, hence the male first-person narrators. When asked about structuralism, she argues that this is simply a trend of thought which has been going on for some time; however, she dislikes the jargon and objects to the intrusion of such terms into literary criticism and ethics. She is now an anti-existentialist. She is inspired by religion but does not believe in any dogma.
- 23 IM writes to Robert Bernard Martin, currently lecturing in Oxford, suggesting that they meet. She suggests next Friday (27<sup>th</sup>).

## July

- 4 The British Council have asked for a list of works that have influenced IM. The first draft reads: '*Iliad, Symposium, Tempest, Sir Gawain, Mansfield Park, Wuthering Heights, Our Mutual Friend, The Golden Bowl, Fear and Trembling, L'Attente de Dieu, Brothers Karamazov*. Proust?'
- 15 (Thurs) IM has invited Norah Smallwood among other friends to lunch on her birthday at Cedar Lodge. (This is the first time Norah has been to IM's home and IM sends her a detailed hand-drawn map of the village.)

IM comments in her Journal that, like Socrates, love is the only subject upon which she is really an expert.

### September

- 22 IM is interviewed by Paul Vaughan on BBC 4's *Kaleidoscope* on the eve of the publication of *Henry and Cato*.
- 23 IM's eighteenth novel, *Henry and Cato*, is published, dedicated 'To Stephen Gardiner' (IM's young architect friend in London).
- 25 Simon Blow publishes an interview with IM in the *Spectator*. She criticises her own character-drawing and says this vitiates her novels since, she believes, character should come first and plot second.

### October

- 20 In Norwich, at the University of East Anglia, IM is interviewed on video by Malcolm Bradbury and Lorna Sage for the *UEA Interviews* series. She talks of her difficulty in writing about Ireland, as the current troubles move her so much. She says she loves the ambiguity of painting and would have liked to have been a painter. She insists that there is little connection between her novels and her philosophy. The novels are overall about morality and love, reconciliation and redemption.
- 25 Raymond Queneau dies in Paris.
- 26 At Cedar Lodge IM begins the first draft of her next novel (to become *The Sea, The Sea*).

In the magazine, *Hollands Diep*, IM is interviewed about her philosophy. She expresses distaste for experimental novels and discusses her plays and their relative lack of success.

### November

Stephen Glover publishes an interview with IM in *The New Review*. She comments that our generation is less talented than its ancestors and can never hope to emulate their achievements. She feels that, whereas Alain Robbe-Grillet is deliberately obscure, Samuel Beckett's obscurity is different, more innocent. She argues for Dickens being a deep writer. She is deeply upset when Glover suggests that her later novels are less funny than the earlier ones: she feels, in contrast, that they are more profoundly funny. She mentions her two sorts of speech patterns: Oxford English and Irish English which has different rhythms alto-



gether. She wishes that she had made more of Joe in *Henry and Cato*: if she had, it might have been a better book. She feels more sympathetic now towards religion, without wanting to adopt any formal belief system. She is close both to Buddhism and to Anglican and Roman Catholic Christianity, though she does not believe in the divinity of Christ.

23           Norah Smallwood writes to thank IM enthusiastically for her recent party.

30           IM has lunch with Yorick Smythies who lives in Charlbury in Oxfordshire and is at long last bringing out a book on Wittgenstein. She writes to Norah Smallwood to say that Yorick is an odd character but would she look at his work to see if it is publishable.

## December

IM demonstrates on behalf of political prisoners in Russia, including someone she has never heard of: Zshverdlin. She celebrates the release of Vladimir Bukovsky.

13           In an interview published in *Publishers Weekly*, IM discusses her early work, her writing techniques and the authors who have influenced her (James, Shakespeare, Homer and Austen).

15           IM goes by invitation to lunch at Buckingham Palace to be presented with the Companion of the British Empire medal. At her request, only her mother, Rene, accompanies her. In her Journal, all she records is the presence of the Royal corgis.

## 1977

### January

6           Roy Jenkins becomes President of the European Economic Commission.

16           The Bayleys are depressed by the malicious gossip at a dinner party. They feel they have been unwillingly drawn into complicity with the malice by taking part in the conversation.

IM records in her Journal her distress at her mother's decline, her slowness and helplessness. It is hard to be completely patient although she stresses Rene's amenability.

## February

- 12 IM completes the first draft of *The Sea, The Sea*, filling fourteen notebooks.
- 19 IM meets Arnaldo Momigliano again after an estrangement of twenty-one years caused by her marriage, and they are reconciled.

## March

- 5 IM begins the final draft of *The Sea, The Sea*.

Some time this year IM makes her first visit to Israel, as part of a cultural delegation also including Beryl Bainbridge, Bernice Rubens, Michael Holroyd, William Trevor and Melvyn Bragg, to meet Israeli writers. IM wants the Palestinian case to be included in the final press statement and is incensed when this does not happen.

In *Folio* magazine, IM chooses her favourite forthcoming *Folio* titles: *Laxdaela Saga*, *Kilvert's Journey*, *Abelard and Heloise* and *Wordsworth's Poems* (with Thomas Bewick's engravings).

## May

- 12 IM writes to Peggy Ramsey about an enquiry over permission to film *The Black Prince*: she would like to see a decent film made of one of her books, in any language, before she dies.

According to A.N. Wilson, JB tells him around this time that he married IM without knowing her as she emerges in her novels. After they married she wrote *The Bell*, which appalled JB as he found the novel and its narrative voice completely uncongenial. She had also used in the novel secret things he had told her in confidence. He has never told IM this and in fact has never read the later novels, though he pretends to and tells her how good they are. She probably knows and accedes to the pretence. (ANW is unsure whether to believe this confession, as JB later urged him to read *Henry and Cato*, saying IM usually wrote one good novel followed by a failure.)

This year, in the *Boston University Journal*, vol.25, 2, IM publishes a poem to Frank Thompson's memory, called 'The Agamemnon Class 1939', recalling Eduard Fraenkel's Oxford seminars and juxtaposing death in Bulgaria with the death of Achilles in the Trojan War.

On a Saturday late in the month, A.N. Wilson and his wife, Katherine Duncan-Jones, are invited to lunch by the Bayleys. Two quiet ladies in their sixties are there too. When they have left, IM

announces that JB was once engaged to one of them, Katherine Watson, who had been at the time a postulant nun. A.N. Wilson realises that this is the situation that JB had referred to, which was used in *The Bell*.

Jack Biles, Professor of English at Georgia State University, interviews IM at home in Oxfordshire. (The interview is published the following year in *Studies in the Literary Imagination*). IM expresses her admiration for Joyce Cary, whom she knew, but explains that their ways of writing are quite different, hers involving much meticulous planning before writing begins. Talking of her plays, IM confesses that she doesn't often go to theatre and that in fact she rather dislikes it. *A Severed Head* ran for two years in London and *The Italian Girl* (an adaptation which she did not like) started in Bristol, moved to the Wyndham Theatre in London, and ran for more than a year. IM says she would never collaborate with anyone again. She talks proudly of *The Three Arrows*, which starred Ian McKellen – though neither this, nor *The Servants and the Snow*, has had a London run. She bemoans the absence of a larger moral framework in society and declares that she is now against Existentialism. She explains the increased length of the later novels by a greater relaxation in her writing: she is no longer worried about breaking the form by blurring it.

## June

The *Transatlantic Review* carries three of IM's poems, 'Poem and Egg', 'The Brown Horse' (dedicated to Reynolds and Janet Stone's younger daughter, Emma) and 'The Public Garden in Calimera' (a Greek stele in Southern Italy).

- 11 The Bayleys drive A.N. Wilson and his wife to a wedding in Dorset in a newish Volkswagen. (The driveway leading up to Cedar Lodge is littered with earlier Volkswagens which have been jettisoned.) IM tells A.N. Wilson on the journey that she plans every novel carefully in advance in notebooks. She will never sell these, though she does sell the finished manuscripts and typescripts to the University of Iowa. On their journey through Wiltshire, they explore Fonthill Gifford. IM observes that all great artists have been bisexual, by which she doesn't mean they were practising bisexuals, but simply that they must imaginatively inhabit both sexes. They lunch with Reynolds and Janet Stone and then go on to the wedding at St John the Baptist, Tisbury.

At the reception IM dances romantically with Caroline Dawnay, whom they nickname 'the Queen of the Upper Volta' because of her outfit.

16 *The Listener* carries IM's poem, 'Motorist and Dead Bird', about a separated couple, including a line expressing the husband's relief that they are childless.

24 IM writes to Norah Smallwood on behalf of her friend Antonia Byatt, saying that Byatt is busy marking exam papers at the moment but will soon be getting back to her novel.

A few weeks later the Bayleys invite J.B. Priestley and his wife Jacquetta Hawkes, together with A.N. Wilson and his wife and some neighbours, to lunch at Cedar Lodge. Wilson sees IM as being very respectful towards Priestley, who was a wartime hero of hers because of his radio broadcasts.

## July

This year, IM is made an Honorary Fellow of her old Oxford college, Somerville.

*The Fire and the Sun: Why Plato Banished the Artists* is published, dedicated to John Bayley. (Later, the director Michael Kustow reads this book and writes to ask IM if she could write a piece of Platonic dialogue for actors. From this springs *Acastos*, first produced in 1980).

30 IM records a good time on holiday at the Spenders' summer home in France. She is beginning to feel at home in the Provence countryside and believes that she could now write about it. (The Spenders' home and the landscape surrounding it are later used in *Nuns and Soldiers*, which is dedicated to Natasha and Stephen Spender – and which also includes the near-drowning experience IM had on one of these holidays.)

## August

6 A letter is published in *The Times* from IM, expressing shock at the proposal that the British Council should be abolished.

## September

8 IM completes the final draft of *The Sea, The Sea*, in 951 handwritten pages.

In *Soviet Literature* 11, Valentina Ivasheva includes two letters by IM, written in 1969 and 1971. In the first, IM observes that no-one in *The Nice and the Good*, is, in fact, good. In the second she refers to herself as a Platonist but observes that in many ways she is anti-Freud.

## October

- 28 Bryan Magee interviews IM for the *Men and Ideas* T.V. series, on philosophy and literature. (This is published in book form at the end of 1978.) She expresses her admiration for the way Shakespeare's characters seem independent yet serve the shape of the plot, but suggests too the need for randomness in art.

## November

- 16 IM writes to Norah Smallwood on behalf of David Luke, her friend who lectures in German, who is depressed as there have been no reviews yet of his book on Goethe.
- 19 Barbara Pym records a recent meeting with the Bayleys, who were very pleasant, at a drinks party.

*Books and Bookmen* runs an interview with IM by H.D. Purcell called 'Faust Lives OK.'

IM's tastes in contemporary writing at this time include (says A.N. Wilson) Tolkien (whom she discusses with the author's son, Christopher, an Oxford academic). She also enjoys Patrick O'Brian's *Hornblower* stories and regards Elizabeth Bowen, (whom Wilson sees as her mentor) and A.S. Byatt (whom he sees as her disciple) as 'beloved beings.'

## December

- 1 IM writes to Chatto and Windus on behalf of her old friend, the eccentric Yorick Smythies, asking them to consider his novel seriously for publication.
- 11 IM writes in her Journal that she is only beginning to understand how exactly the war changed her life.

# 1978

This year, JB's book, *Essay on Hardy* is published.

## January

- 4 IM records in her Journal JB singing in the kitchen downstairs, and comments on his goodness.

- 12 IM records in her Journal that her feelings of depression are dispelled as usual by JB. She recalls her school days and the prayers said kneeling on the parquet floor.
- 17 IM writes to Norah Smallwood declining any TV arrangement as she may be away in May.
- 18 IM writes again to Norah Smallwood declining a *Sunday Telegraph* interview.

Radio New Zealand broadcasts a commissioned interview with IM by James Mellen.

IM and JB, on a trip to Paris, visit the Louvre and see two of Rembrandt's self-portraits, one as a young man and one as he grew old. IM thinks they reveal just how much Rembrandt had learnt during the course of his life by looking at Nature.

The following day a symposium takes place on IM's works at the University of Caen, organised by Jean-Louis Chevalier. IM begins with a paper entitled 'L'Art est l'Imitation de la Nature' and this is followed by five further papers, in French. IM closes the symposium by pulling together and responding to the points raised by the earlier papers. She makes explicit the symbolism of *A Fairly Honourable Defeat* – Julius and Tallis battling over Morgan, the human soul – and explains that *Under the Net* refers to the 'net' of language. She talks of the rising nationalisms in the four nations of the United Kingdom, describes herself as Irish rather than English, and speaks sadly of the current Irish Troubles.

## February

- 20 IM writes to apologise to Norah Smallwood for being unable to take part in an interview for Southern TV.
- 28 IM writes to Norah Smallwood that she has been talking to Antonia Byatt and is convinced her novel will be a major achievement but that it is just in its nature a long novel. (This is to become *The Virgin in the Garden*.) She herself is leaving Peggy Ramsey as her theatrical agent and moving to Robin Dalton, whom she has only met once but likes very much.

## March

- 15 The Bayleys travel to the USA.

Some time this year IM discusses the significance of the Welsh language with A.N. Wilson. She thinks it is a wickedness to teach a child Welsh or Irish – there are too few speakers.

The interviews IM gave at the University of Caen are published as 'Rencontres avec Iris Murdoch' in a collection edited by Jean-Louis Chevalier.

IM writes several times this year to David and Katherine Hicks, expressing deep affection and sympathy: their son, Barney, after a long depressive illness, has committed suicide at the age of twenty-two.

## July

- 11 At Cedar Lodge IM begins the first draft of her next novel (to become *Nuns and Soldiers*).

The Bayleys holiday with Janet and Reynolds Stone in Assisi, where Reynolds falls ill. (He and JB in any case prefer home to 'abroad'.)

During the year, IM produces twelve short bird poems, one for each month, with Reynolds providing an engraving for each. This is published in Tisbury, Wiltshire, in a limited edition of 350 signed copies, as *A Year of Birds*, designed by Reynolds's son, Humphrey Stone.

## August

During the Italian holiday with the Stones, while they are on the Rocca St Angelo, IM is reading Donald MacKinnon's *The Problem of Metaphysics* (1974).

- 24 IM's nineteenth novel, *The Sea, The Sea*, is published, dedicated 'To Rosemary Cramp', IM's Oxford friend and colleague.
- 31 On a trip to Paris, IM talks about *The Sacred and Profane Love Machine* on French public radio.

## October

- 4 IM writes to American author and poet, Howard Nemerov, thanking him for lending her the Washington University magazine, which contains photographs of him receiving, she says, a well-deserved literary honour.
- 16 IM arrives early at a party given by Alan Hollinghurst, Stephen Pickles and Andrew Motion in Oxford. She talks excitedly with John Fuller and A.N. Wilson about today's election of the first Polish Pope, John Paul II, which she thinks is a wonderful development.

*The Sea, The Sea* wins the Booker Prize for Fiction.

Two of IM and Reynolds Stone's 'Year of Birds' are printed in advance in *Harpers and Queen* magazine.

## November

22 IM is interviewed by Jackie Gillott on Radio 4's *Kaleidoscope* and suggests that in *The Sea, The Sea* the theatre is made to be a microcosm of the world which is full of deceptions.

23 Peter Lewis publishes an interview with IM in the *Daily Mail* called 'On the Crest of a Wave.'

On the same day, Philip Howard in *The Times* interviews IM, who talks of the way in which life is always odder than fiction.

24 Beryl Bainbridge interviews IM on BBC TV's evening news magazine programme.

26 Peter Lennon publishes an interview with IM in *The Sunday Times* called 'The Odd (but Triumphant) World of Iris Murdoch' in which she talks about her problems with Existentialism. On the same day, the *Observer* runs an interview by D. May called 'Iris Murdoch's Best Seller in the Swim'. Also on 26<sup>th</sup>, Ivan Rowan interviews IM for the *Sunday Telegraph*. She admits that, when Charles Arrowby describes his father, he is actually describing her own father. Something of her own Christian Buddhist approach is in James Arrowby. She dismisses the novels she wrote before *Under the Net* as ridiculous and funny.

## December

2 In *The Tablet*, A.J. Ayer, chairman of the Booker Prize judging panel, praises *The Sea, The Sea* for its imagery, character-drawing and descriptive power.

4 IM thanks Howard Nemerov for his letter and wishes him and his wife a happy Christmas.

22 IM completes the first draft of *Nuns and Soldiers*, having filled fourteen notebooks.

23 Iain Finlayson interviews IM for the *Glasgow Herald* after she has won the Booker Prize. She talks about her youthful politics and says that she now feels she wasted much time on Communist activities in her university days. She had tried once to write a book about trades unionists and MPs



but had to give up because she couldn't understand them.  
(This was the abandoned *Jerusalem*.)

31 IM begins the final draft of *Nuns and Soldiers*.

## 1979

'The Winter of Discontent': severe industrial unrest in Britain results in twenty-two one-day strikes during the winter of public sector workers, often closing schools and hospitals. Rubbish is uncollected and there are some well-publicised cases of problems with the burying of the dead.

### January

12 IM writes from Cedar Lodge to American poet, Pamela White Hadas, discussing the book, *Designing Women*.

Coming back from giving a lecture in Italy IM encounters A.N. Wilson, who bemoans his loss of Italian – he has not kept it up. A week later, she appears on his doorstep with an Italian Grammar and two books which are very precious to her, *Il Gattopardo* by Lampedusa and *La Coscienza di Zeno* by Italo Svevo. (This is the sort of gesture, A.N. Wilson thinks, that IM may have picked up from Simone Weil, by whose work and life she is much influenced.)

### February

13 IM writes from Cedar Lodge to thank Pamela White Hadas for her book of poems, praising them highly. She suggests they might go well on radio. She mentions the strikes going on around her but says that she and JB are struggling on with their work.

IM and JB respond enthusiastically to a request from Rachel Trickett in Oxford for their signatures to a letter to *The Times* about the parlous state of English in schools: they both think it is an excellent idea and agree to sign.

### March

The Bayleys stay with Janet and Reynolds Stone at the Old Rectory, Litton Cheney. IM is reading Philippa Foot's book, *Virtues and Vices*.

10 IM is the subject of a film profile on *The Book Programme* with Robert Robinson on BBC2.

26 IM writes to Pamela White Hadas, enclosing a letter from Michael Heffernan, Editor of the Script Unit of BBC Drama,

who likes Hadas's play, *Mother's Day* but suggests she makes cuts to it. IM gives suggestions and offers to send the script to one of her own agents.

## April

- 6 The Bayleys travel to Romania with the British Council. Afterwards IM writes to Norah Smallwood that they saw much that was good there and much that was dreadful.
- 23 IM writes to Pamela White Hadas wishing her all the best in her new job.
- 25 Norah Smallwood writes to IM worrying that she is exhausting herself too much.

## May

- 2-5 At a symposium on 'Structure in Science and Art', The Third C.H. Boehringer Sohn Symposium, held at Kronberg, Taunus, IM gives a paper on 'Structure in the Novel'. In the subsequent discussion she speaks of her distrust of the after-effects of the Romantic Movement on the structure of the novel. She also speaks of the artist's desire for his work to endure.
- 3 In the General Election the Conservatives sweep to power, making Margaret Thatcher Britain's first woman Prime Minister.

## June

- 8 IM is interviewed for a Bulgarian cultural magazine about Frank Thompson. They use a line from one of Frank's letters to IM at Christmas 1943, in which he quotes from *Julius Caesar*: 'if we should meet again, why then we'll smile' and in which he talks idealistically about his hopes to improve the world for those who follow.
- 19 IM is interviewed on Thames TV by Cate Haste and Diana Potter.
- 25 Reynolds Stone dies of a massive stroke at the age of seventy.

## July

- 18 In the quad outside the Bodleian Library in Oxford, Arnaldo Momigliano presents to IM the copy of Dante's *Rime* which he had first given to her in 1953, and which she had returned to him when they were estranged over her marriage in 1956. Inside is a birthday card which links her

birthday in 1954 with her birthday this year and in which Momigliano reveals that she still possesses his heart.

- 20 IM gives the eulogy at Reynolds Stone's memorial service at St James's Piccadilly. She talks of his lack of pretension and of his child-like quality of attentive wonder, a quality also evident in the philosopher. She praises the true ambition he showed, which is to aim for perfection, and mentions the joyful refuge he and his wife created for their friends at the Old Rectory, Litton Cheney. She rejoices at his good fortune in having been able to go on working until the very end of his life and concludes with the traditional 'God rest his soul.'

### July/August

After a visit to the Spenders at Mausanne in Provence (Mas St Jerome), the Bayleys go on to Spain, by train from Avignon, to Tamariu, Costa Brava, to spend a week at the Griggs' house by the sea. Roy and Jennifer Jenkins are also there.

### August

- 27 Lord Mountbatten is murdered by an IRA bomb.  
At Tamariu, IM is reading and annotating Paul Tillich's *Systematic Theology* (second impression 1978).

### September

Four poems by IM are published in the first edition of the relaunched *Poetry London/Apple Magazine*: 'Fox', 'No Smell', 'Gunnera' and 'Edible Fungi'.

### October

- 8 IM writes in her Journal of the difficulty for women of finding time to be alone and to think.  
23 Vaclav Havel, the writer, and five other Czech dissidents are charged with subversion in Prague.

IM visits China for three weeks without JB. She notes that they have hardly ever been separated for more than a couple of days since her month-long stay in Yale in 1959. She writes a 10,000 word Journal, recording her dreadful homesickness and yearning for JB and rings him from the airport as soon as she returns. During her stay, she records seeing four bloody operations carried out using acupuncture as the anaesthetic.

## November

- 18 IM writes to Robin Waterfield refusing a request to write a preface to a book of poems.

## December

- 5 Christopher Bigsby of the University of East Anglia interviews IM in London. IM describes her move away from both Marxism and Existentialism. She is still, however, a Wittgensteinian. She comments on her interest in Buddhism: James in *The Sea, The Sea*, she says, may be a Buddhist but he is too much of a fantasist and therefore a demonic figure. She believes that paranormal things probably happen, especially in Tibet, and that one should believe in the paranormal event in *The Sea, The Sea*. She comments on what she can't get right in her plays – probably the structure. She has written verse all her life but has only managed about eight true poems. She attacks Sartre and Roland Barthes for being so eager to expunge the word 'bourgeois' that they suggest that *all* values are relative, socially constructed. She declares that she knew all the postmodern ideas that Barthes and his like think they have invented, doubt about the status of language and so on, back in the 1930s and (as Bigsby points out) they are there already in *Under the Net*. She admits to admiring Beckett less than before – she thinks he should have gone on writing in English.

## 1980

This year Russian dissident Andrei Sakharov is sent into 'internal exile' in Gorky.

## February

The first of IM's two Socratic dialogues, (later published as *Acastos*) is presented at the National Theatre as 'Art and Eros', starring Andrew Cruikshank as Socrates and Greg Hicks as Plato and directed by Michael Kustow.

IM dreams vividly that she has somehow married both JB and Frank Thompson and that they are all happy, though rather awkward together.

## March

- 13 IM and JB give a drinks party at St Catherine's College at 6pm to celebrate the beginning of term, in the room of Denis Morgan, inviting, among others, Professor Robert Bernard Martin.

## April

- 15 Jean-Paul Sartre dies.  
16 An interview is broadcast on BBC Radio 4 in which Hugh Sykes asks IM about Jean-Paul Sartre and his legacy. She stresses his continuing importance today as a moralist.

The Bayleys make a British Council visit to Iceland, staying for four to five days and each giving a lecture and then a joint class.

Some time this year they make their first visit to Diana Avebury, staying in her top-floor flat in Lepe House, overlooking the Solent in Hampshire. They have met her through Michael Campbell and Bill Holden, who are their neighbours in Oxfordshire.

## June

- 20 At Cedar Lodge IM begins the first draft of her next novel (to become *The Philosopher's Pupil*).

## July

- 1 A steep increase in meat prices prompts industrial unrest in Poland.  
10 As part of its shift towards the Left, the British Labour Party issues radical proposals for nationalisation and price controls.  
IM records in her Journal her own strength of will in her work but weakness in wanting to please others.

## August

- 14 Polish steel-workers occupy the Lenin shipyard in Gdansk.  
20 The USSR jams Western radio broadcasts to prevent news spreading to the rest of Poland about the striking steel workers in Gdansk.

## September

- 4 IM's twentieth novel, *Nuns and Soldiers* is published, dedicated 'To Natasha and Stephen Spender'. (It contains French landscape based on the Spenders' home in Provence.)

- 12 IM is interviewed by Ruth Pitchford of the *Western Mail* as she watches rehearsals for *The Servants*, an opera based on her play *The Servants and the Snow*, with music by Welsh composer William Mathias. It is about to open at the New Theatre, Cardiff, performed by the Welsh National Opera. Adrian Slack is the producer, Anthony Hose the conductor and Patrick Robertson and Shirley Vercoe the designers. Professor Mathias had heard the play on the radio and had written to ask if he might set it to music. IM had, she says, already tried in vain to get Benjamin Britten to join her on just such a collaborative venture. IM talks of her worries about the survival of political freedom today, particularly in Russia and Chile. She classes herself as being on Labour's right-wing but says that she was very briefly a Communist at Oxford.
- 13 Michael Oliver records an interview for BBC Radio 3's *Music Weekly*, in which William Mathias and IM introduce *The Servants*, IM, who wrote the libretto, explaining the issues involved in turning a play into an opera.
- 15 Tom Sutcliffe publishes an interview with IM in the *Guardian* to coincide with the premier of *The Servants*, IM acknowledges its debt to *Hamlet* and suggests that play probably haunts all her work.
- IM finds the production wonderful. JB sees the play with the recently-widowed Janet Stone. (The music is later published by the Oxford University Music Department.)
- 16 IM is to speak, on one of her frequent trips to Paris, on the French culture programme, *Matinées*, introduced by Roger Vrigny, on 'le salut et la perdition.'

## October

- 1 At their party conference the Labour Party votes for unilateral disarmament and withdrawal from the EEC.
- 10 At the Conservative party conference, Margaret Thatcher declares that 'The Lady's Not For Turning' – that she will continue to pursue monetarist policies.

## November

- 10 The Left-winger Michael Foot beats Denis Healey to become leader of the Labour Party.

## December

- 21 An interview with IM is published in the *Washington Post* 'Book World', in which Joanna Richardson discusses with IM her early life, her love of languages and her writing routine. She talks about the artist's task, which she sees as being to celebrate the world's strangeness.
- 28 The *Sunday Telegraph* publishes a series of short pieces by IM and others on 'What I Hope for in 1981'. IM hopes for the establishment of democracy in Poland and, in the world of literature, more traditional novels.

## 1981

This year JB publishes *Shakespeare and Tragedy*.

## January

- 16 On BBC Radio 4, IM reads from *Nuns and Soldiers* and talks about the role of the author, who, she feels, should remain unobtrusive in the work.
- 25 The 'Limehouse Declaration': four prominent members of the Labour Party – Roy Jenkins, David Owen, William Rogers and Shirley Williams – break away from the increasingly left-wing Labour Party under Michael Foot to set up their own party, the Social Democratic Party – the SDP. IM declares herself in letters to be generally very glad about this development, since she strongly disapproves of what she sees as the Labour Party's move to the Left. (This is an ironical counterpart to Oxford University Labour Club events in the early 1940s, also involving Roy Jenkins, when IM stayed with the hard-line Left.)

During this month she is reading and intensively annotating Don Cupitt's *Taking Leave of God* (1980). She adds at the end the comment that Cupitt is too Trotskyist.

## February

- 6 In Belfast, the Reverend Ian Paisley stages a midnight parade of five hundred Protestants to demonstrate against both the British Government and the IRA.

## March

- 22 The USSR, determined to clamp down on social unrest in Poland, extends its Warsaw Pact manoeuvres there.

An interview with IM is published in the American edition of *Vogue*. She feels that philosophical ideas should not be overt in a work of art. Art should be about the overcoming of ego, both in writer and reader.

### April–May

The Bayleys spend a semester at the University of Berkeley, California, going on to Boca Raton in Florida for a holiday – a week at a hotel organised by a rich corporation, where they can go sea-bathing. Later they are in Geneva working with Andrew Harvey, the writer, ex-student of JB and now the youngest Fellow of All Souls.

### May

16 IM completes the first draft of her next novel, having filled sixteen notebooks. She is toying with three possible titles: 'The Dragon's Riddle', 'The Story of Caliban' or 'Pupil and Teacher'. (It eventually becomes *The Philosopher's Pupil*.)

### Late May

IM is on the jury in a Knightsbridge drugs case.

The death is announced of IM's friend and often-difficult colleague, Frederic Samson of the Royal College of Art. IM ponders over the possibility that it was suicide.

### June

15 IM begins the final draft of *The Philosopher's Pupil*.

### July

8 For BBC 1 Television, Terry Jones and Paul Theroux talk to IM about the differences between her philosophical activity and her novel-writing. She declares Existentialism to be a philosophy of the will, not based on fact and claims never to have been an Existentialist.

Travelling by train to Norwich to accept an honorary doctorate, IM is accosted by a stranger who has mistaken her for Margaret Drabble. Afterwards, at a lunch party at the home of University of East Anglia academic Dr John Fletcher, she meets her future biographer, Peter Conradi. Hearing of his interest in Buddhism, she recommends to him John Blofield's *Way of Power: A Practical Guide to the Tantric Mysticism of Tibet*.

IM is also awarded an honorary doctorate from Bristol University. After the formal dinner there, she forces her companion, Professor



Dennis Nineham, to share a midnight exploration of her old school, Badminton, even though it is still term-time. Later she tries to force her way into the Roman Catholic Cathedral at Clifton.

## August

- 3(-5)      Solidarity, the Polish workers' movement, blockades Warsaw city centre to protest against food shortages.
- 17         IM writes to Pamela White Hadas thanking her for sending a book of her own poems, *In Light of Genesis*, saying how much she admires it. She comments that she herself is trying to write philosophy but is having difficulties.

## September

The Bayleys holiday in the Mediterranean, where JB breaks his leg (for the third time).

IM has bought a copy of Martin Buber's *Eclipse of God* (1979) which she inscribes with her name, month and year and 'MTS Orpheus' and annotates.

During this month JB's mother dies.

- 4            An interview IM has recorded with Icelandic TV is broadcast on BBC TV's *Bookmark* programme.

## October

IM takes part in a conference, in French, on the modern novel, at the Pompidou Centre in Paris.

In a published interview for an edition of *Soviet Literature* 12 (1981), IM talks about the importance of Dostoevsky: he shows the centrality of religion in human life; he addresses the battle between good and evil; he shows how to be both extremely serious and extremely funny. She counts him as a great inspiration for her own work.

## November

- 4            Crisis talks in Poland between the Prime Minister, Lech Walesa of Solidarity and the Roman Catholic Primate.
- 20         In a letter to writer Robin Waterfield, IM describes herself as a 'Buddhist Anglican'.

With the help of a translator, IM gives a short talk in Russian on the BBC World Service.

## December

- 4            In a letter to Robin Waterfield, IM describes her religious beliefs.

- 8 (postmarked 7<sup>th</sup>) In a letter to a new correspondent, the Indian academic, Suguna Ramanathan, who works in a Jesuit college in India, IM comments on how fortunate Suguna is in being able to see both into Christianity and into the great Hindu tradition of blending religion and philosophy. In the west, only the greatest philosophers are able, tentatively, to join religion and philosophy together. She feels that the best people she has known have been quiet school-teachers, not at all 'demonic'. She much admires the work of Philip Larkin, though she regards him as not a truly great poet like W.H. Auden. She thinks Suguna should try writing a novel herself – her experience gives her marvellous material. She explains that she has visited India once and feels a deep affinity with the country. She hopes to return one day.
- 31 In *The Listener* Veronica Grocock conducts an interview with IM in which she talks about the television adaptation of *The Bell*, filmed in Oxfordshire. IM says she does identify a little with the Abbess. She talks of her doubts about contemporary courses in women's studies.

## 1982

During this period, IM's routine is to go to her London flat at the start of the working week and return towards the end, while JB stays at home in Steeple Aston. According to A.N. Wilson, IM and JB like the word 'telegamous' of their marriage.

A note from Norah Smallwood some time this year tells IM that the sum of £200,000 is being kept for her: her novels are selling 25,000 in hardback.

This year, IM is made an Honorary Member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, which she records in *Who's Who*.

### January

- 9 An interview with IM is published in the *Radio Times* to mark the serialising of *The Bell* on BBC1 TV, in an adaptation with Reg Gadney. IM points out the weakness in the construction of the character of Paul Greenfield, a weakness she only realised during the process of adaptation. (The serial goes out over six weeks and is a popular success.)

- 19            200 per cent rise in food prices in Poland. Martial Law is imposed.

## February

- 17            IM writes approvingly in her Journal of Roy Jenkins, and of his role in setting up the SDP.

## March

- 18            IM completes the final draft of *The Philosopher's Pupil*, in 1086 handwritten pages.

Norah Smallwood retires this year from Chatto and Windus because of ill health. (Her successor, Carmen Callil, soon complains of being unable to persuade IM to make any cuts at all in her increasingly long novels. Andrew Motion, Chatto's Editorial Director, writes to Allegra Huston of their problems with IM's spelling and her refusal to check details.)

## April

- 4            Thanking Harry Weinberger for his gift of a Tibetan ritual dagger, IM writes of how much she enjoys objects and her gladness that we live in a world so full of things.

Interviewed on BBC Radio 4, IM observes how important it is to remember acutely that people are suffering elsewhere in the world.

- 18            Interviewed by Pamela Callaghan on BBC Radio 4 *Weekend*, IM argues strongly in favour of seeking happiness and pleasure. She describes herself as consumed by ambition, but only in the sense that she always wants to improve her writing.

- 27            In recording a Radio 4 interview with Susan Hill, to be broadcast in May, IM explains that, when writing is going well, she cannot write quickly enough; once her novels are finished, they seem to carry their message independent of her, like a space probe beaming light long after its release. She talks of the importance of refugees in her novels, explaining that her life has brought her into contact with many such people.

IM is fascinated by Don Cupitt's work at this time and comments to Dennis Nineham (her old Oxford friend and former member of the

Metaphysicals) about Cupitt's *Taking Leave of God* (1980), that on the basis of that book she could go to church again.

## May

This month IM and JB are invited to the University of Caen for a conference on Irish History. IM gives a paper. JB is amused that IM is considered to be an Irish writer.

- 13 IM meditates in her Journal about whether autobiography has a purpose. She finds it morally unpleasant and feels that the effort to be good in actually living one's life, rather than writing about it, is what really matters.
- 30 IM records in her Journal that to be a steady and reliable recipient of love is to be a benefactor of the human race.
- 31 IM writes to Philippa Foot about the effect of religion on politics: she notes that China, a country without religion, can feed its people whereas India, with religion, cannot.

## July

- 2 Roy Jenkins is elected leader of the SDP.

## August

There is a family holiday for the whole Bayley family (John's two brothers and their wives) in a house borrowed from a family friend in Dumfriesshire. (These continue in various places such as Cornwall, North Wales, Shropshire and Suffolk, until the mid-1990s.)

- 12 IM quotes in her Journal from Milarepa the lines about the importance of going and staying alone.
- 13 In Poland, riot police break up a Solidarity demonstration against martial law.
- 29 IM's letter about Elias Canetti is published in the *Sunday Times*.

## September

- (late) IM meets the young academic Richard Todd, who has published a book on her in 1979, for a pub lunch off Carfax in Oxford. She talks animatedly and at length, is interested in Todd having a Dutch wife and wonders whether any children will be bilingual; she also recommends an itinerary in case he should ever visit Ireland.

**October–November**

IM gives the ten Gifford lectures in Edinburgh, her theme being that ‘chaste love teaches’ and that the world needs ‘fewer prophets and more saints’. The third lecture deals with the importance of icons. Although she rewrites them several times, the audience shrinks during the fortnight in which they are delivered. Afterwards, she feels deeply dispirited about the lectures. She later says that they were about Kant and Plato, about Schopenhauer and Wittgenstein and about what she really thinks, which is difficult to convey successfully. She had considered going to Edinburgh for the whole term but can’t bear to be parted from JB and Oxford. He travels to join her. While they are away, vandals break the statues in the garden at Steeple Aston, to IM’s great distress. She feels (probably without justification) that she and JB are not wanted in the village. JB later drives to an estate agent in Summertown to look for a new house.

Late this year IM writes to Philippa Foot about the shift in her political allegiance: she doesn’t like the Tories, but, in the light particularly of the Labour Party’s education policy, she can’t see any alternative.

Christopher Bigsby publishes an interview with IM in *The Radical Imagination and the Liberal Tradition: Interviews with English and American Novelists*, co-edited with H. Ziegler. There is a long discussion of the characters of Charles and James Arrowby in *The Sea, The Sea* and of the relationship between Tallis Browne and Julius King in *A Fairly Honourable Defeat*. IM talks of her main philosophical influences, Wittgenstein, Plato and Kant. She talks also of Camus, Beckett and Sartre and of what she sees now as the limitations of the existential hero figure.

**November**

- 11        The Northern Ireland Assembly opens – though it is boycotted by Sinn Féin and the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP).

**December**

The Bayleys make another visit to Caen.

**1983**

IM’s poem about her old headmistress, ‘Miss Beatrice May Baker, Headmistress of Badminton School, Bristol from 1911 to 1946’ is

published in Susan Hill's collection, *People: Essays and Poems*. It is influenced by W.H. Auden's 'September 1, 1939', and talks about BMB's monumental confidence – greater than courage.

During this year, Richard Todd sends IM the outline of a book on her, which he has planned for Methuen. She politely suggests that she does not approve; he subsequently writes a new version which she does like (*Iris Murdoch* in the *Contemporary Writers* series, published in 1984. In writing to thank him for a copy, she adds how delighted she is to hear of the birth of his first daughter.)

## February

28 Yorkshire and South Wales miners are called out on strike because of pit closures.

## March

3 Arthur Koestler and his wife die in a suicide pact.

IM is interviewed in London by John Haffenden, Professor of English Literature at the University of Sheffield. (The interview is published in the *Literary Review* in April.)

She confesses to having had *The Tempest* in her head when writing *The Philosopher's Pupil*, as she did when writing *The Sea*, *The Sea* – the giving up of magic being the central idea. She admits to not having solved the structural problem of what to do with the minor character of Stella in the novel. She talks of the significance of water in the novels – and in her life: she visited a bath establishment when in China and warm pools in Iceland; she was also reminded of the film *Les enfants du paradis*, where there is a murder in a swimming bath. She mentions too having herself once nearly drowned (while at the Spenders' home in Provence). She envies painters, who can live with the visual world. She explains that JB has no critical input into the novels and only reads them when they are absolutely finished. She reiterates her love for Simone Weil and says of religion that she cannot give up Christ, who travels with her, though she doesn't believe the supernatural aspects and would like to connect with Buddhism through the notion of destroying the ego, though not with ideas of reincarnation. (She is at this time talking a great deal to Peter Conradi about Buddhism: they meet regularly for lunch at Dino's on the Gloucester Road.)

19 At Cedar Lodge IM begins the first draft of her next novel (to become *The Good Apprentice*).

26 (to 24 April) IM has written an introduction to the catalogue produced for the exhibition of Harry Weinberger's paintings and drawings at the Herbert Art Gallery, Jordan Well, Coventry. She writes that all art, even that which has grim subject matter, is a celebration of the world, a benign white magic linked to religion. Weinberger's art is full of joy, sometimes reminiscent of Beckmann, and celebrates the spirit of India, gaudy yet spiritual, Africa's dark demons and the witty yet simple decorativeness of China and Japan.

## April

25 IM is at Janet Stone's house in Salisbury (to which she moved, from Litton Cheney, after being widowed). She is interviewed there by Rachel Billington for *The Times* and discusses religion, aesthetics, politics and her support for women priests.

28 IM's twenty-first novel, *The Philosopher's Pupil*, is published, dedicated 'To Arnaldo Momigliano' – with whom she was reconciled, after a long estrangement, in 1979.

IM and JB are interviewed in French by Jean-Louis Chevalier for a Grande Bretagne edition of *Études Anglaises* (published in September). IM talks about the relationship between writing and social class, her opinion now of her early essay, 'Against Dryness' and her worries about the development of the feminine/feminist distinction in women's literature.

The Bayleys stay for the first time with Borys and Audi Villers on Lanzerote in the Canary Islands. (IM in 1989 is to dedicate *The Message to the Planet* to them both.)

During this month IM writes to Peter Conradi saying that she likes his work on her (a Ph.D. thesis published later this year as *The Saint and the Artist*, 1983). She feels it is on the right lines, but warns him not to overdo the Platonism, as this makes critics think that *that* is the key to all her work.

## May

27 'The Round Horizon', a cantata in five parts, with music by Christopher Bochman, words by IM, is performed at Badminton School as part of its 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Concert and to celebrate the opening of the new Music School. The five songs are: *Song I, The Small Room I, Song II, Water on the*

*Land, The Small Room II.* It involves electronic sound effects and is extremely experimental.

## June

- 9 In the General Election the Conservative and Labour Party are presenting extreme right-wing and left-wing policies. Mrs Thatcher leads the Conservatives to victory. In this election, IM votes Conservative.
- 12 IM argues with her old Oxford friend, Mary Midgley about Ireland, defending the actions of Dr Ian Paisley and the cause of the Ulster Protestants, with whom she strongly identifies.
- This month IM writes to Peter Conradi one of many letters about Buddhism, saying that there are many books on the subject and that she recommends reading around and finding the bits that seem striking.

## July

- 4 A Spanish admirer, A. Zamora, gives IM a copy of Shakespeare's *Sonnets* translated into Spanish by Agustin Garcia Calvo.
- 18 IM is interviewed at Cedar Lodge by William Slaymaker, Professor of English at Wayne State College, Nebraska. (The interview is later published in *Papers in Language and Literature* in Autumn 1985.) They discuss Slaymaker's paper on the aesthetics of freedom in her fiction. IM argues throughout the interview that she has a more positive approach to freedom than Slaymaker has suggested. She declares that she is increasingly interested in religion, that she was never an Existentialist: she believes that part of a good life is to become more free through self-knowledge. Art can be good for people, can make them free, but so can other things too: Plato after all, she says, was suspicious of the artists. The fundamental battle in her novels she sees as being between magic and freedom or magic and goodness.
- 29 IM is interviewed in Oxford by Anne Pons for *Le Nouvel Observateur*. She talks about the literary influences behind her work, about her own relative freedom, in the university, from the sexual discrimination practised in everyday life, and also about the importance of her homosexual characters, whose relationships (the interviewer observes) are often happier than those of the heterosexual characters. IM says she knows many homosexuals.



A seminar is held at the University of Caen in France on *The Unicorn*. IM responds (in English) to a paper by Jacqueline Genet, 'La Licorne dans *The Unicorn* d'Iris Murdoch'. She says that it was the impact of the Cluny tapestries which inspired the novel: it is about courtly love, captivity, acts of penance and the exercise of power. She also interwove Jungian and mystical ideas into the story. Denis Nolan is a precursor of Tallis in *A Fairly Honourable Defeat*. She expresses concern that she is too drawn to myth: she would like to create more ordinary characters.

### August

This year the Bayleys have to cancel holidays in Provence and in Spain because of IM's mother Rene's mental state. Rene needs to stay at Cedar Lodge for weeks at a time but is occasionally violent and eventually has to be taken to the expensive St Andrews Hospital, Northampton, where IM visits her frequently. Rene has a stroke and on her partial recovery, is moved first to Mariela Lodge Nursing Home in Northampton and later to an Oxford old people's home at 111, Woodstock Road.

### September

- 11           An interview with IM is published in the *Independent*.
- 15           Rene has run wild at the old people's home and has to be removed to a mental hospital in Banstead, Surrey. She is furious on arrival and demands to be taken back to her flat. IM leaves her and weeps on the journey home. JB cheers her up by reading to her from the novels of Barbara Pym.
- 20(–22)   IM is at Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge for the Virginia Woolf Centenary Conference. She takes part in a panel discussion, chaired by Gillian Beer, alongside Bernard Bergonzi and John Harvey. *The Voyage Out* and *To The Lighthouse* she declares to be her favourite Woolf novels. She disagrees with Woolf about there being a difference between male and female minds. She greatly fears relativism – which she sees as implying that it doesn't actually matter how you behave. Though tragedy is central to art, everywhere in life she says, she finds comedy.

### October

- 5           The Nobel Peace Prize is awarded to Polish Solidarity leader, Lech Walesa.

- (mid) Rene is moved to a small nursing home in Oxford and finally to a small home in Fulham which the Bayleys pay for and where she is looked after by a district nurse. IM and JB visit Dundee University.
- 20 They contribute to the University Writers' Group.
- 21–22 They join the English Department's Reading Party at Edzell, JB giving the opening talk on *Othello* and IM ending the weekend with a talk on 'Loss of Faith in the Twentieth Century.'

### November

- 26 The Royal Academy's exhibition, 'The Genius of Venice 1500–1600' opens. During its run (until 11 March 1984) it is visited both by IM and by the artist, Tom Phillips.
- Theatre director Michael Kustow holds a dinner party during the winter at which IM and Tom Phillips meet and discuss their (shared) favourite painting at the exhibition, Titian's 'The Flaying of Marsyas'. (Tom Phillips is later commissioned to paint IM's portrait and to design the hardback covers of the novels, from *The Good Apprentice* onwards.)

## 1984

This year Ed Victor becomes IM's literary agent and sets about negotiating an improved contract for her with Chatto and Windus for future novels.

### January

- 26 IM completes the first draft of *The Good Apprentice*, having filled 12 notebooks.

### February

- 4 IM begins the final draft of *The Good Apprentice*.
- IM is interviewed in Oxford by Simon Price, a lecturer in ancient history at the university. (The interview is published in *Omnibus* in March.) They talk about language. IM is worried about the collapse of the English language and quotes approvingly John Carey's Sunday newspaper article, reviewing and criticising the prose of the three political party manifestoes. She still reads Homer for pleasure (with a crib) and can read poetry (which she describes as her main motive for learning languages) in French, German, Italian, Spanish and Russian,

to varying degrees. In Latin, she feels a great affinity with Horace. She feels much closer to the *Iliad* than the *Odyssey*. Her two favourite characters in literature she says are Achilles, and Mr Knightley in *Emma*. She has been disappointed that readers haven't noticed that 'Loxias' in *The Black Prince* is the name of Apollo – whom she regards as a terrible murderer and rapist, not a figure of cold rationality. She talks of a 'miracle' when she was in Delphi, where she willed a huge winged beetle, which was trapped in the restaurant, to fly over and rest on her chest so that she could rescue it.

- 11 In a letter to Jeremy Lewis, her copy-editor at Chatto and Windus, IM defends her use of the old verb 'to cote' in *The Good Apprentice*. (She now refuses all efforts to edit her novels in any way.)

### March

- 12 The British Miners' Strike spreads to 100 pits throughout Britain. Meeting Jeremy Treglown, editor of the *Times Literary Supplement*, on a train during this period, IM responds to his expression of sympathy with the miners by observing that she thinks they should be put up against a wall and shot.
- 22 A letter appears in *The Times*, signed by IM and others, expressing deep concern at the arrest of the Polish writer, Marek Nowakowski.

### April–May

- 6 IM is a signatory to an advertisement supporting the work of Amnesty International which appears in *The Times*.
- 12 Arthur Scargill, the miners' leader, vetoes a national secret ballot on the pit strike.

The Bayleys have a joint six month Fellowship at Berkeley, California. An American doctor diagnoses JB as suffering from glaucoma and high blood pressure. IM talks on Platonism, JB on Poetry. Jacques Derrida is also at Berkeley. IM attends one of his lectures and is astonished at his 'pop star' popularity, which reminds her of Sartre's when she saw him in 1945. While in California she records a conversation with the spiritual thinker Jiddu Krishnamurti, to be broadcast in October, about the nature of man and how one should live one's life. They discuss how to make sense of the notion of a spiritual path when at the same time there is only the 'now' of immediate experience. IM believes in a journey of transmutation, from

Plato's Cave to the Sun and then a necessary return to help others – but she is prepared to take the part of a student (ephebe) to Krishnamurti's mentor, in the dialogue (he is 89, she is 65) and to accept his different way of thinking.

Wendy Lesser, editor of *The Threepenny Review*, becomes a friend while they are in California.

At home, the Bayleys make regular visits during this period to Diana, Lady Avebury, in Lepe House in Hampshire, and to Lady Mary Clive and her son, George, at their eighteenth century house and gardens at Whitfield in Herefordshire.

IM starts portrait sessions with Tom Phillips. Because she is in London only occasionally, the sittings are to span three years. There are to be about fifteen of them, each two hours long, with coffee breaks.

## May

12 IM writes to aspiring writer, Louise Walthall Horton, who lives on a Texas ranch, about the problems of being a writer.

## July

15 IM writes to Carmen Callil at Chatto and Windus, expressing delight at discovering that they share a birthday and wishing her many happy returns.

The Bayleys spend two weeks in France.

## August

14 J.B. Priestley dies.

The Bayleys make one of their now-frequent visits to Borys and Audi Villers at Lanzerote, taking with them IM's friend and lecturer in German, David Luke. JB does not enjoy this particular visit.

## September

22 Eric Robson talks to IM for a Border Television programme called 'Revelations' They discuss religious icons and particularly Titian's 'Flaying of Marsyas', which IM sees as embodying the dissolving of egoism; she believes this, she says, to be the most crucial moral act. She explains why she chose the painting for the background of her Tom Phillips portrait.

## October

- 7 IM completes the final draft of *The Good Apprentice*, filling 986 handwritten pages.
  - 11 Norah Smallwood dies. (She has been ill and in retirement from Chatto and Windus for the past two years, during which time IM has sent her frequent postcards.)
  - 12 The IRA bomb the hotel where Mrs Thatcher is staying during the Conservative Party Conference. There are many injuries, but she is unhurt.
  - 31 Indira Gandhi is assassinated by her Sikh bodyguards.
- The Bayleys visit Korea with the British Council.

IM's videoed interview with Krishnamurti is broadcast, under the title, 'Who is the Experienter?' (A book follows in 1996.)

## November

The Bayleys visit Germany with the British Council, including in their itinerary a visit to Auschwitz (which IM manages to fit into *The Good Apprentice*).

- 29 Gerald Priestland interviews IM for the 'God' Programme on BBC Radio 4.
- 30 At Norah Smallwood's Memorial Service in St Martin-in-the-Fields in London, Laurens van der Post gives the address and Jill Day Lewis (Jill Balcon) reads the lesson.

## December

IM recalls in her *Journal* her father reading Ernst Junger's novel about the First World War when she was a child (*The Storm of Steel*).

# 1985

IM is rereading Dostoevsky's *The Idiot* every year during this period and thinking about meekness.

## January

- 25 IM sends Carmen Callil at Chatto and Windus, the blurb for *The Good Apprentice* which she has as usual composed herself.

## February

- 11 IM asks Jeremy Lewis, who is attempting to copy-edit *The Good Apprentice* at Chatto and Windus, to reinstate all the punctuation alterations he has made to her manuscript.

She mentions heavy snow at Cedar Lodge.

IM makes a brief visit to the USA.

- 21 IM writes to Jeremy Lewis, explaining her use of the Dash in her prose. (She is still refusing any alteration to her manuscript whatever.)
- 26 IM admits to Jeremy Lewis that she is a bad proof-reader and adds her own list of changes to *The Good Apprentice* manuscript. She adds that she is glad the snow is over now and the snowdrops are out.
- 28 Carmen Callil writes to Patricia Mulcahy, IM's American editor at Viking Press in the USA to explain that IM is not open to any editing, but that, as she is such a remarkable writer (and woman) she should be given whatever she wants.

### March

- 16 At Cedar Lodge IM begins the first draft of her next novel (to become *The Book and the Brotherhood*).
- 18 IM writes to a mysterious correspondent, Roly Cochrane, who has been sending her a series of postcards. She says she is delighted that he has added his address to the latest one, so that she can at last reply. She says she imagines that he is American and hopes that he will communicate again.

### April

- 29 IM writes to Jeremy Lewis asking him to excuse her fuss over alterations to *The Good Apprentice*: in many cases, she says, she has taken his advice.

### May

- 15 IM continues her correspondence with American writer, Louise Walthall Horton, about writing novels.
- 20 IM writes to Chatto and Windus asking if they have pursued her idea of publishing Honor Tracy's earlier books.

### June

- 4 IM thanks Roly Cochrane for his splendid letter which, she says, deserves a detailed reply. She says she is going away soon and will reply properly on her return, adding that she

had guessed he was American, not from his spelling but from his tone.

14 (Fri) IM talks to A.S. Byatt at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London about Byatt's new novel, *Still Life*.

20 IM writes to Jeremy Lewis, saying she was glad to see him at the ICA and had enjoyed the discussion.

21 IM writes at length to Roly Cochrane, as promised. She is curious to know if he is an only child. She imagines he must be about thirty. In reply to his comments about taking drugs, she says that she feels hostile about drugs, and has never touched them. She is interested that he regards *An Accidental Man* as a turning point in her work: she would say rather *An Unofficial Rose*. She doesn't think he will like her current novel, *The Good Apprentice*, so much and suspects she is moving into another phase. She talks about there being little difference between men and women, asks if he plays an instrument and wonders if they will ever meet, suggesting that it may be a mistake to do so.

## May

20 IM writes to Chatto and Windus about the sculpture of the head of a boy she needs for the cover of *The Good Apprentice*: she believes there is one suitable in a museum in Copenhagen.

## June

20 IM writes to Chatto and Windus that she has now transferred her affections (for *The Good Apprentice* cover) to a boy in the Acropolis museum in Athens, who looks, she thinks, more like an individual, whereas the Copenhagen boy is more a magical object.

28 IM writes to Indian academic Suguna Ramanathan with thanks for sending her analysis of *Nuns and Soldiers*. She can't herself see any specific links with *Hamlet* (whereas she recognises that *The Sea*, *The Sea* does have a shadowy conversation with *The Tempest*). She doesn't object, however, she says, as long as Dr Ramanathan's ingenious idea has helped her to comment on the book. For IM herself, Anne is the genuinely unselfish disciplined person in the novel, whereas Gertrude's desire to be loved is an exercise of natural selfishness. Her own aim she says is to assert the humanist tradition of the past; she is, humbly, in the tradition of the English and Russian novels.

## July

- 1 IM speaks about Raymond Queneau on an archive programme presented by Richard Mayne.
- 4 IM writes to Suguna Ramanathan politely suggesting that searching for 'clues' in her novels and linking them with each other is not as rewarding as actually studying a given work for itself.

IM receives an Honorary Doctorate of Letters from Trinity College, Dublin. Writing in her Journal afterwards she remarks on the dark, mad side of Ireland, which contrasts with its charm.

- 15 On her birthday IM writes to Suguna Ramanathan to thank her for her kind and understanding remarks about *Henry and Cato*.

In *Books and Bookmen* IM interviews A.S. Byatt on the publication of the latter's novel, *Still Life*. They discuss the aesthetics of the novel and IM says that Byatt's work can be used to refute the deconstructionist theories of Jacques Derrida.

- 22 IM's interview with Niall MacMonagle is published in the *Irish Times*.

## August

IM writes to Suguna Ramanathan saying how fortunate the latter is to know deeply about eastern religion, whereas Western people are always outsiders in such things. She thinks *The Sovereignty of Good* may be out of print but says she will try to have a copy sent out to her.

- 29 In *Liberation* magazine, IM responds to the question 'Pourquoi écrivez-vous?' by saying that she wants, not acclaim, but to write a great work of art, since she sees art as a major force for good in society. She talks of meeting Raymond Queneau in the winter of 1945–6 when he came to lecture in the French Zone of Austria. She later tried unsuccessfully to translate *Pierrot Mon Ami* into English. She thinks the French translation of *Under the Net* sounds like Queneau, who influenced it greatly. Through Elias Canetti she met the London agent for Viking Press and, on Canetti's advice, went to Chatto and Windus for the British edition of *Under the Net*. These two publishers have always enjoyed good relations with her French publisher Gallimard, she says.

- 30 Rene has a massive stroke. On the same day IM is broadcast on BBC1 in taped conversation, for *Eye to Eye*, with Rachel



Trickett, Principal of St Hugh's College, Oxford and herself a novelist, about *The Good Apprentice*.

## September

- 5 Rene dies without regaining consciousness after her stroke. IM is desolate, full of the terrible sense of her absence. She is given an Anglican burial service, with blue irises on her coffin, and is cremated at Mortlake.
- 10 IM is being honoured by St Bartholemew's Hospital in London.
- 26 IM's twenty-second novel, *The Good Apprentice* is published (dated 1986), dedicated 'To Brigid Brophy'. Brophy has just been diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. Her husband, the art historian Michael Levey, is grateful to IM for visiting her. (Brophy is to survive for ten more years and to publish two more books.) Carmen Callil takes IM to lunch to celebrate the publication.
- 29 In an interview with Adam Mars-Jones in the *Sunday Times* ('Conversation with a Master-Mind'), IM argues passionately for monogamy and against promiscuity. She sees homosexuality as a natural part of our world; she has reservations about Freudianism, which, she believes, has made us mistrust idealism and undermined love of virtue.

IM writes to Roly Cochrane, telling him that *The Good Apprentice* has been published and that she will send him a copy. She thanks him for his comments on *The Time of the Angels*, a novel which seems extremely remote to her now. She says that she hopes he is always writing some fiction. About her religious views, she comments on her father's Ulster relations, who have the kind of religion she can respect: they much esteem telling the truth. She describes Anglicanism as being the prevalent religion in the UK – though she adds that nowadays there is more often no religion at all.

IM is interviewed by Jo Brans from the English Department of the Southern Methodist University in Dallas, who begins by talking about the large number of *dogs* in her novels. (The interview is later published in the *Southwest Review* (1985)). IM believes that dogs are often figures of virtue. Zed, the tiny Pomeranian in *The Philosopher's Pupil*, she says is drawn from life. (It is in fact based on Lady Diana Avebury's papillon, Zelda.) She thinks people sometimes read her because she asserts old-fashioned values, and insists on the reality of virtue. She is much exercised politically by the dangers of unemploy-

ment, since she feels strongly that there is a need for everyone to have work to do. She feels that religion is so pervasive that it is like breathing. She discusses what it means to her, saying that she had thought when she gave up belief in God that religion had gone out of her life, but that this wasn't the case. Prayer for her is a sort of meditation. The country she believes should spend more money on education, on teaching people how to learn. She ends optimistically that people try for a long time to do what is right and then suddenly they are rewarded and made cheerful. She sees it as a right, even a duty, that one should try to be happy.

## October

- 18 In the *Times Literary Supplement*, IM nominates Brigid Brophy's *Palace without Chairs* and Honor Tracy's *The Straight and Narrow Path* as unjustly neglected novels, in an article called 'Neglected Fictions.'
- 23 Hermione Lee interviews IM for Radio 4's 'Book Four' programme, about *The Good Apprentice*.
- 28 IM is at the Booker Prize dinner in London, *The Good Apprentice* having been nominated for the prize. It is won by *The Bone People* by Keri Hulme.

## November

This month IM is given an Honorary Doctorate of Letters by the University of London.

- 18 IM writes to Louise Walthall Horton in America with more advice on being a writer.

## December

- 1 The Bayleys have bought 68, Hamilton Road, Oxford. They have sold Cedar Lodge (which has become too much for them to cope with) for £225,000 and bought the much smaller house for £90,000.
- 12 IM writes again to American writer, Louise Walthall Horton.
- 15 IM meets young Irish writer, Josephine Hart, for lunch at The Connaught Hotel. The meeting lasts four hours and Hart is most impressed by IM's attention to others and by her goodness.
- 16 IM writes to American poet Roly Cochrane about the problems of 'shedding the ego'. She says she finds hypocrisy to be a property of all Christian (and other) groups.

## 1986

IM is invited to Maynooth a catholic seminary near Dublin, to talk to the trainee priests about Plato and *The Sovereignty of Good*. According to the account she later gives to A.N. Wilson, she begins her talk about the Good by asking them if they support the IRA (which for her is a completely evil organisation).

## January

- 1 Lord David Cecil dies, aged 84.
- 3 IM has been interviewed in London just before the French publication of *The Sea, The Sea*, by Eribon Didier for *Le Nouvel Observateur*. The interview is published today. IM talks about her meeting with Raymond Queneau, about reading Sartre's *Being and Nothingness* in 1945, about the excitement surrounding Jean-Paul Sartre and of her talk with him. *Being and Nothingness* led her back to philosophy, though she was never a disciple of Sartre. She counts herself a feminist, but that is not a major aspect of her novels. She is currently at work on philosophy, a dialogue between Plato and Kant, between abstractions and common sense.
- 14 IM writes to Roly Cochrane, pleased that he likes *The Red and the Green*. She confirms that she is herself 100 per cent Irish Protestant, though she left at a very early age. (She was actually four months old.)

## February

- 6 IM completes the first draft of *The Book and the Brotherhood*. Her new agent, Ed Victor, has negotiated her a much-improved advance of £50,000 from Chatto and Windus. (For earlier novels she had a £10,000 advance and 50:50 royalties.)
- 11 IM begins the final draft of *The Book and the Brotherhood*.
- 14 IM writes to American writer Louise Walthall Horton.

## March

- 2 The Bayleys prepare to move from Cedar Lodge. For IM it is terrible. In her Journal she quotes *Hamlet*: for thirty years

they have been 'kings of infinite space' and they are now going to 'live in a nutshell'.

16 JB records in his diary the last night at Cedar Lodge before the move.

17 The Bayleys move to their new, much smaller house, 68, Hamilton Road, Summertown, Oxford.

Despite the move, IM travels to Shropshire this month for David Hicks's seventieth birthday party.

27 *Acastos: Two Platonic Dialogues* is published, dedicated to Michael Kustow the theatre director, who had given her the idea for the dramatisation.

IM writes from 68, Hamilton Road, to David Hicks, suggesting that she should set up a contact for him with her Viking publisher, Pat Mulcahy. It is Spring in Summertown, she says, and there are four white daffodils in their new garden.

## April

7 IM writes to Suguna Ramanathan about Suguna's latest article, hoping she can place it in *Modern Fiction Studies*. She finds it very interesting, though she doesn't always agree, adding encouragingly that this doesn't matter and that she is very grateful for Suguna's reflections.

14 Simone de Beauvoir dies.

## May

IM writes to David Hicks that her American publishers, Viking, *will* look at his novel. He is to send it to Pat Mulcahy. She hopes that Honor Tracy's advice about publishing may be helpful.

In *Books and Bookmen* this month, interviewed by Nicolette Jones, IM talks of her early reading – *Treasure Island* and *Kim* (from which she could quote great chunks) and the *Alice* books.

In a book by Edward Whitley on *The Graduates*, IM is interviewed about her left-wing days at Oxford. She regrets the gulf today between students and tutors during student protests.

## July

8 IM writes to Louise Walthall Horton about novel-writing. This year, IM is made an Honorary Fellow of Newnham College, Cambridge.

## August

The Bayleys holiday as usual in France with Sir Stephen and Lady Natasha Spender. Christa Worthington interviews all four of them at the Spenders' Provence farmhouse which was the inspiration for Les Grandes Saules in *Nuns and Soldiers*, the novel dedicated to the Spenders. (The interview is published in the autumn in *W* magazine.)

## September

- 4           At 68, Hamilton Road, Oxford IM completes the final draft of *The Book and the Brotherhood*, covering 752 handwritten pages. She is also struggling to reread Heidegger and Wittgenstein, cramped in the new house, which is too close to a noisy crèche.
- 18          IM writes to Roly Cochrane of the great pain of leaving Cedar Lodge: sorting out thirty years worth of letters, manuscripts and so on. She had not just to throw them out but to destroy them, which was both very tiring and demanded great concentration. She admits, however, that it was something of a relief to jettison such a quantity of possessions. She describes the new house as being on a corner so that they have only one set of neighbours, who seem pleasantly congenial intellectual people. She tells him of the proposed British Council trip to Amsterdam, hoping that they can at last meet.

Later in the month she writes again to Roly Cochrane about the new house, saying she has no real regrets about leaving Cedar Lodge, which was cold and falling down. It will be much better with the people who have bought it, she thinks, since they have children and ponies. The new house is warm and easy to clean (important, as she and JB couldn't ever employ anyone to clean for them) and she describes it as having a charm of its own.

## October

- 13 (Mon)   The Bayleys have dinner with Borys and Audi Villers.
- 16          The Bayleys visit the Netherlands with the British Council.
- 17          Borys Villers writes to Carmen Callil from his home at Lanzarote about IM's goddess-like qualities, saying that she is full of her new book.

In Amsterdam, IM is interviewed before her lecture by Liesbeth Wytzes for *Haagse Post* (published on 18 October). She talks about how one should strive for good, about Buddhism, about her belief in poltergeists and flying saucers. She is afraid, like Rozanov in *The Philosopher's Pupil*,

that relativism will prevail. She also talks of the opposition between Jesse and Stuart Baltram in *The Good Apprentice* – the former seeking for power, the latter for good.

17 IM gives the annual 'Van der Leeuw' lecture at Groningen, on the northern tip of the Netherlands. Her title is 'How to Prove the Existence of God: Some Reflections on the Ontological Proof.' Richard Todd, who teaches at the Free University in Amsterdam, drives the Bayleys with English academic Diana Phillips, back to Amsterdam, 120 miles, in his VW Polo. He notes that IM only drinks white wine and that the Bayleys chuckle together over a private joke about 'polder tabbies'. The Bayleys are staying at the Hotel Ambassador.

19 (Sun) The Bayleys see three Vermeers in the Mauritshus in the Hague. In the evening, at a party given by the head of the British Council, Julian Andrews, in Amsterdam, IM at last meets Roly Cochrane, who lives in the city.

20 and 21 (Mon and Tues) At an informal symposium held to discuss her work, at the Free University, Amsterdam, IM comments briefly after each paper. Present, together with Diana Phillips, are John Fletcher and Cheryl Bove, Peter Conradi and W. Bronzwaer. IM suggests that N in *The Philosopher's Pupil* could be the psychiatrist, Sir Ivor Sefton. On *A Fairly Honourable Defeat*, she acknowledges her keenness for the religious allegory but says it can also be read as a straightforward story. She cuts through critical discussion about rival responses to Morgan by saying that perhaps she is just not a very successful character. She defends the length of her later novels by arguing that they have space for more descriptions of all kinds, which makes them, she thinks, more realistic. Mr Loxias in *The Black Prince* is, she says, Apollo, god of art and of artists. She would be glad if someone could tell her how to make her novels better, but she believes that the help can only come from very deep inside the soul and the unconscious mind.

While in Groningen, IM has been interviewed for the feminist magazine, *Opzij*, by Lia van Bekhoven, about her shift from Communism to support of Margaret Thatcher's Conservatism. The article is published as 'Iris Murdoch: From Communist to Right-Winger.' IM talks about her respect for Mrs Thatcher's controlling of the trades unions and of her own liking for the SDP. She has also left the peace movement, having been persuaded that nuclear weapons are a necessity.

- 22 IM writes to Louise Walthall Horton in Texas about how to get published.
- 27 IM writes to tell Roly Cochrane how glad she was to meet him and that she feels that their letter-writing personae `have not thereby been damaged, but enriched: she finds him still suitably mysterious. JB, she says, was also delighted to meet Roly.
- 28 Borys Villers writes to Carmen Callil, cheerfully accepting the rejection of his novel; he says he had never been particularly keen to be published and seems to have been inspired to try only by IM's magical encouragement. He attributes it all to her. He says he had known since reading *Under the Net* over thirty years ago that IM was the greatest living English writer. Callil has suggested that she may now have produced her masterpiece (*The Book and the Brotherhood* is being prepared for publication). According to Villers, IM's genius has been a beacon in his life.

## November

- 1 In the left-wing *Vrij Nederland* daily newspaper, IM, interviewed during her recent visit to Amsterdam, expresses disappointment that the Iceland summit and the Strategic Defence Initiative have been unsuccessful. She talks about her collection of stones, about her portraits (one by Kokoschka which makes her look like a refugee, and the other by Tom Phillips where she has a Buddha-like calm.) She expresses the desire to write a musical. She reveals that the details of Auschwitz in *The Good Apprentice* came from her own observation (in November 1984) and retells the story of her near-drowning in Dorset. She talks of her parents and of her grief at their deaths.

IM has given financial support to Honor Tracy, now an invalid, getting her into an Abbeyfield home in Oxford and paying for her to have talking books through the Royal National Institute for the Blind. However, Honor Tracey talks at length to A.N. Wilson during this period about what she sees as the sham of the Bayleys' marriage. According to Wilson she says that they are not a proper couple and that IM has fooled JB all her married life.

## December

- 1 IM writes to Suguna Ramanathan that Suguna's piece has found its way to the Jesuits at Heythrop College (in the

University of London). She herself knows many Jesuits, has many ex-Jesuit pupils and knows the Heythrop scene well. England, she says, is full of Catholic institutions.

During the Modern Language Association Convention in New York City this month, the Iris Murdoch Society is set up, with John Burke as president and Barbara Stevens Heusel of the University of North Carolina as Secretary-Treasurer. There is to be an annual newsletter.

- 22 IM writes from 68, Hamilton Road to Roly Cochrane, full of enquiries about his life. She suggests he tidy his flat, arguing wryly that tidying can improve spiritual well-being.

## 1987

This year Jacques Derrida publishes *Of Spirit: Heidegger and the Question*

### January

In the New Year Honours List, IM is made a Dame of the British Empire. She thinks the word 'Dame' has a comfortable old-fashioned sound.

- 10 IM flies to New Delhi to attend a conference to commemorate assassinated Indian leader, Indira Gandhi. (They had been contemporaries at Badminton.) On the plane she sits next to E.P. Thompson, younger brother of Frank, who is disgusted that IM has accepted an honour from what he regards as a contemptible government.
- 12 (–16) New Delhi conference on Indira Gandhi. IM makes 52 pages of notes on the trip and on the conference speeches. Her notes for her own speech talk of the good new things in the world: we now speak of 'planet earth'; children, women, homosexuals are better treated; good new beginnings in Hungary and Poland. She quotes Martin Buber and praises the United Nations.
- 14 (Wed) (IM mistakenly writes 'Wed 15<sup>th</sup>') In three pages of diary-type notes at the end of the notebook, IM records small events: today she feeds hooded crows on the window ledge of her hotel room.
- 16 (Fri) IM is cheered up by the presence of a cheerful black Labrador sniffer dog in the conference room. In the afternoon, her speech seems, to her surprise, to go well. Dinner in the evening is at Hyderabad House where she is the guest of the Vice President and sits beside his wife, whose shyness she finds appealing.



- 17 (Sat) IM visits a park and sees monkeys, green parrots, bulbuls, peacocks and mongoose. She then visits the old city.
- 19 Immediately after her return from India, IM is back to coping with her correspondence, writing to Louise Walthall Horton about getting her novels published.
- 20 IM writes to Roly Cochrane, glad that he responded to her last letter by tidying up his flat. She talks about the possibility of dangerous simplification in philosophy: she likes Plato's ideas best and warns him that the lure of Hegel seems to be his setting up of fascinating triads.
- 26 IM writes to Suguna Ramanathan, to whom she has recently spoken by telephone: she has been delighted to hear her voice and to talk to her on the phone. She speaks of her wonderful visit to India: it was a marvellous experience to see the country again.

## February

This month the National Portrait Gallery puts on show IM's new portrait by Tom Phillips.

- 5 IM replies to Louise Walthall Horton about getting her work published.
- 7 *The One Alone*, IM's play with music about political prisoners, is being premiered on BBC Radio 3 and is described in the *Radio Times* today. It has music by Gary Carpenter and stars John Church with mezzo-soprano Fiona Kimm and tenor Bonaventura Bottone from the English National Opera. IM speaks of her great admiration for political prisoners. The play concerns an un-named female prisoner and an angel, possibly the voice of her conscience.
- 13 *The One Alone* is broadcast on BBC Radio 3 at 9.15pm. *The Book and the Brotherhood* is being prepared for the press, with its echoes of Frank Thompson in the debate about remaining true to Marxist ideals. (There is also, on the fringes of the plot, a brother who dies young.)
- 15 Chatto and Windus send IM a copy of a new novel by a young Irish writer, Glenn Patterson, whom she has encouraged.

IM nominates Roy Jenkins, her old Oxford Labour Club sparring partner, for the Chancellorship of Oxford. (In his inaugural speech, he nominates her for an honorary doctorate.)

In an interview in Spanish in *Revista de Occidente* magazine with Jaime de Salas, IM talks of her nouveau-realist style and of salvation through love.

### March

- 12 IM writes to Suguna Ramanathan, hoping they can meet when Suguna is in the UK.
- 17 IM writes to tell Roly Cochrane of her approaching journeys to New Orleans and then to Italy. She confesses she is rather keen on avoiding travels at the moment but hopes these trips will be pleasant ones.
- 18 IM and JB fly to Tulane University, New Orleans.
- 24 (Tues) IM and JB in conversation before a large and appreciative university audience at Tulane debate the role of the novel, problems of creating character and other literary matters.
- 26 IM conducts an hour-long seminar at Tulane on *A Fairly Honourable Defeat* and *The Black Prince*. She is forthcoming and frank about her authorial intentions. At one point, asked who killed Arnold Baffin in *The Black Prince*, she replies that there is no doubt about that: his wife did.

### April

After returning home briefly, IM and JB travel to Italy. It is a marvellous trip and involves much visiting of art galleries. IM sees paintings she has not seen before.

- 17 IM is home from Italy. She writes to Roly Cochrane that New Orleans was disappointing: she had expected to see the great Mississippi Delta, swamps and alligators, but there was no delta, the river was austere and contained and the only alligators were in the zoo. He has asked her about writing advertising copy: she replies that the nearest she has come is the writing of her own blurbs for each of her novels: she *has* to write them because, left to anyone else, they are terrible. She tries to see them as little works of art, a chance to say what the novel is really about, without giving away the plot.

The writer and holocaust survivor, Primo Levi, commits suicide. (IM has a similar suicide, that of Marcus Vallar, in the novel she is currently writing, *The Message to the Planet*; however, according to a letter written to Sister Marian much later from 30, Charlbury Road, although she had read Levi's books, she had written the fictional suicide before the real one occurred.)

## May

IM makes one of her frequent brief trips to Paris.

- 8 In an interview in French for *LeVif/L'Express* magazine, IM talks about the violence and frequent unhappiness of love – but says she's not a pessimist because she does believe in successful love too. She agrees that she is influenced by Henry James in characterisation but feels closer to Dostoevsky (if one admits, she says, that a great writer can influence a lesser one).

## June

- 3 IM writes delightedly to Suguna Ramanathan expressing her pleasure at their recent meeting and wishing her well on her journey home. She says how much she enjoyed their conversation but apologises that she has had no time to read Suguna's friend's stories as she has been away.
- 11 In the General Election Mrs Thatcher wins a third term in office for the Conservatives. IM again votes Conservative and shows continuing admiration for Margaret Thatcher.
- 14 IM is busy with corrections to the proofs of *The Book and the Brotherhood*.
- 25 IM writes to Chatto and Windus disapproving strongly of the photograph they have chosen for the back cover of *The Book and the Brotherhood*.

## July

This year, IM is given an Honorary D.Phil from the University of Oxford.

- 10 (postmarked 9<sup>th</sup>) IM writes to Suguna again about the pleasure of their recent meeting and with the promised detailed comments on Suguna's friend's short stories. The friend should read Joyce and Chekhov: the short story is a difficult form. IM points out that she herself has only ever written one. ('Something Special')
- 17 Ed Victor writes to Carmen Callil suggesting guests for the small dinner party IM has agreed to let Chatto and Windus organise, to celebrate the publication of *The Book and the Brotherhood*.
- 27 Barbara Stevens Heusel, now president of the Iris Murdoch Society, who teaches at Northwest Missouri State University

in the USA, interviews IM. (The interview is published in the *University of Windsor Review* the following year.)

They talk of Ireland: IM mentions the primitive behaviour of the IRA. She feels it is a waste of time to preserve Gaelic and Welsh, believing that school children should concentrate on other major European languages. She insists that she herself is in the second league of writers and writers like George Eliot are in the first league. She says she cannot make any connection with a lengthy question from Heusel about Bakhtin and the carnivalesque – except through the mention of Dostoevsky. Throughout the interview, she resists the pull towards theorising, though she accepts that it might help critics in their reading of her novels.

## August

- 3 IM sends a recommendation to Chatto and Windus for a book by her friend Michael Kustow, Commissioning Editor for the Arts at Channel 4, about the running of the Arts programmes.

IM and JB are invited to the annual summer conference of the Wordsworth Trust at Dove Cottage in Grasmere in the English Lake District.

- 5 JB gives a paper to the conference on 'Wordsworth's Short Stories.'
- 7 IM gives the annual Pete Laver Memorial Lecture to the Wordsworth conference on 'Philosophy and Poetry: A Relationship'.
- 9 IM comments in a letter to Roly Cochrane on the demands made upon her by endless correspondents asking her to give a lecture, take out a subscription, write a review, give advice on novel-writing or on how to get into Oxford.

## September

- 1 Arnaldo Momigliano dies.
- 10 IM publishes her twenty-third novel, *The Book and the Brotherhood*, dedicated 'To Diana Avebury' (the Bayleys' kind hostess in Hampshire). IM has agreed to a small dinner party organised by Chatto and Windus, to celebrate. The *Guardian* carries an interview by Polly Toynbee, 'Agony's Great Aunt', in which IM's religious and political beliefs are discussed.

## October

- 1 Mikhail Gorbachev is elected President of the USSR.
- 4 IM writes in detail to thank Suguna Ramanathan for a beautiful skirt she has sent, saying that such rich colours could not be produced by western dyes. She speaks of her pride and pleasure in wearing it. She encourages Suguna not to be put off by the publication of Peter J. Conradi's *The Saint and the Artist* (1986) because the book *she* is working on will have a value of its own.
- 6 The *Dublin Sunday Tribune* carries an interview with IM by Niall MacMonagle, who spoke to her in Oxford, about *The Book and the Brotherhood*.

An interview with IM is broadcast which was made by the Icelandic State Broadcasting Service, discussing her writing and her views on language, on how to write novels, on the discipline needed to produce good art.

*The Book and the Brotherhood* is nominated for the Booker Prize (which is eventually won by *Moon Tiger* by Penelope Lively).

Some time this year IM writes a Foreword for Chris Maslanka's *Pyrgic Puzzler: Classic Conundrums*.

## November

- 2 Mrs Thatcher visits Poland and meets Lech Walesa.
- 4 Carmen Callil writes to Carey Gatenby in Toronto to say that IM has refused the invitation to come to the Harbour-front Festival there. She is in the middle of a novel.
- 8 The IRA bombs a Remembrance Day service at Inniskillen, Northern Ireland, causing deaths and injuries.
- 30 IM writes to Suguna Ramanathan, with sympathy that she is feeling low. She recommends Suguna to read and enjoy the great books of the past. She will get her publisher to send her a copy of the latest novel (*The Book and the Brotherhood*).

## December

Letters exchanged between Carmen Callil and Jonathan Burnham at Chatto reveal their frustration at IM's changes of mind about which photographs of herself she finds acceptable for publication.

In correspondence with writer Barbara Fisher, IM remembers her friendship with novelist Joyce Cary and her regular visit to his writers' gatherings on Sunday evenings in the 1950s. They shared a belief in the good and she feels he was in the best sense a moralist. (The interview is published in 1988 in *Joyce Cary Remembered*.)

## 1988

This year the Educational Reform Act allows state schools to opt out of local authority control and become 'grant-maintained.'

## January

- 3 IM writes to Roly Cochrane of having had a very festive Christmas in London and New Year by the sea.
- 23 IM is interviewed by Bryan Appleyard about her fears for the future of language and about the fading of philosophy and theology from our culture.
- 31 The *New York Times* carries an interview by Jo Thomas in which IM explains that the central theme of *The Book and the Brotherhood* is Marxism – whether it makes sense – whether it makes for a decent society or not. She claims that she herself was no longer a Marxist after the age of twenty.

## March

*Vanity Fair* carries an interview with IM, 'The Abbess of Oxford', conducted at 68 Hamilton Road after the publication of *The Book and the Brotherhood*, in which she tells anecdotes of Oxford life and talks of her current philosophy project, which is rethinking her ideas about Plato onwards.

- 14 *The People Weekly* produces a popular magazine article about the Bayleys at home, showing them at breakfast and IM with statue of Aphrodite and Cupid tapestry behind her. It discusses her friendship with Frank Thompson and her daily writing routine.

## April

- 3 An interview is broadcast by Granada Television between Jonathan Miller and IM in a programme about religious belief, *My God*. IM says that her mother was an Anglican and her father a Quaker and that she was taught to say her prayers every night. God was abruptly replaced at university by Karl Marx. Philosophy and Plato later began to take the place of God in her thinking. She objects to the banishing of Cranmer's Prayer Book and its great words. She talks of the need to pass beyond egotism to a recognition of the reality of other people and from falsehood to truth, which

means, she says, recognising virtue. She reiterates her central point, that she does not believe in the divinity of Christ, but that this does not affect her sense of the sacredness and numinous quality, nor the truthfulness, of Christian mythology. She still attends Christian services though she doesn't take the sacrament.

The Bayleys are in Hampshire, on one of their frequent visits to Lady Diana Avebury, for the first week of April. IM sends Roly Cochrane a postcard of the Beaulieu River, with advice on how to write a novel. She is staying, she says, in a house at the mouth of the river and can see the sea – she has been swimming in it, cold glassy and full of seaweed.

- 6 IM writes to Roly Cochrane that she hasn't been anywhere much except to view the sea at the Isle of Wight. She says how sad she is not to be nearer to the sea, since Oxford is about as far from it as you can get in England.
- 12 BBC Radio 3 carries a discussion between playwrights and novelists including Howard Brenton, Alan Massie, Kate Saunders and IM about censorship and the artist's moral responsibility. IM says that novels can be dangerous and should not be allowed to be turned into political pamphlets.
- 16 IM writes to Louise Walthall Horton about getting published.
- 24 IM writes a four-page letter to Kenneth Baker, Secretary of State for Education and Science, attacking the Conservative Higher Education policy which, she believes, is eroding the independence of universities. She mourns the decline of the classics and the stress on publishing and 'relevance'. (Baker in response invites her to join his committee on the English Language Curriculum, which she declines, writing to him again at length about the plight of badly-off children from homes without books. She also drafts notes on the Teaching of English in schools.)
- 25 IM writes to Louise Walthall Horton about how to create characters in a novel.

At a meeting of the Psychoanalytic Society in London IM argues against psychoanalysis, in a debate with psychoanalyst Juliet Mitchell (author of *Psychoanalysis and Feminism*).

## May

- 11 IM is in Germany, accepting the award of the FVS Foundation Shakespeare Prize in Hamburg. She makes an acceptance speech which is later published in Germany.

- 22 IM writes to refuse an invitation to lecture in Australia: she argues that the dates would be too difficult for JB and that she has in any case stopped giving formal lectures, preferring increasingly to take part in impromptu talks.

## June

- 4 A.N. Wilson is asked by the publishers, Hutchinson, if he would like to write IM's biography. He has been JB's student and knows the Bayleys well, but he does not think the friendship could survive the necessary research into their private affairs. He declines.
- 5 *The Daily Telegraph* runs an article by Sue Summers about 'The Lost Loves of Iris Murdoch', in which IM revealingly talks about her feelings for Frank Thompson and Franz Baermann Steiner (reprinted in the *Mail on Sunday* in 1989).
- 7 IM phones A.N. Wilson and asks him herself if he will write her biography. She is worried that Richard Cohen at Hutchinson's will find someone uncongenial to write it, unless she steps in with her own suggestion. Wilson's wife, the critic Katherine Duncan-Jones, strongly urges him not to accept, on the grounds that it would be extremely boring as well as embarrassing. After a lunch at St Catherine's, JB also asks Wilson to be the biographer, explaining that they both trust him and think well of his books. At the end of their meeting, he says he will inform IM that Wilson has agreed.
- 11 IM is accepting a Hawthornden Prize. She sits next to Alan Bennett who notes her unworldliness and her constant stream of questions – whether he drives a car, where he has parked and so on.

IM oversees the publication of and writes the Preface for *Thinking Faces: Photographs 1953–1979*, Janet Stone's collection of photographic portraits, which include some of her favourite images of herself and of JB. In the Preface she discusses her friendship with the Stones and their visits to The Old Rectory, Litton Cheney.

## July

- 23 In one of many letters to the artist, Harry Weinberger (four hundred or so altogether), IM declares her liking for the works of Francis Bacon, Egon Schiele and Titian and her reservations about Lucian Freud, Giacometti and Picasso. Of the last-named she observes that, though he was a great painter, his personality showed too much in his work.



- 28 IM writes in great detail to thank Suguna Ramanathan for the beautiful scarf she has sent. She adds that she hopes the critical work is progressing well and suggests (as she so often does) that perhaps Suguna will follow it up by writing novels of her own.

IM is interviewed by Jeffrey Meyers, a fellow of the Royal Society of Literature, at 68 Hamilton Road, which the interviewer finds to be comfortably untidy. She talks of her brief time in the Communist Party in Oxford. (She is later to expand this section, for publication in 1991, to say how glad she was, having seen from the inside what a terrible organisation the CP was, to witness its destruction. It is an example, she thinks, of the damage that can be done by a small number of ruthless people with strong views, as has happened too in Lebanon and in Northern Ireland.) She describes her writing routine – writing always by hand and never making a copy – and her domestic life: she washes up and buys food while JB does the cooking. She goes to bed early and starts work very early. The beginning of a novel, she says, is the worst moment: she has to wait for characters to emerge. IM makes a distinction between fantasy and imagination which she says is different from Coleridge's: to her, it is the difference between the expression of selfish feeling and the loss of self in genuine artistic creation. They talk of IM's use of painters – Max Beckmann in *Henry and Cato*, Bronzino in *The Nice and the Good* and Titian in *The Sacred and Profane Love Machine*. IM admires Beckmann very much. She has only recently seen Titian's 'Flaying of Marsyas' on its exhibition here, on loan from Czechoslovakia. She admits to not reading much contemporary fiction, though she enjoyed Kundera's *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, Kazuo Ishiguro's *A Pale View of Hills* and especially A.S. Byatt's *Possession*. She also admires John Cowper Powys, her favourite novels of his being *Wolf Solent*, *A Glastonbury Romance* and *Weymouth Sands*. She names as friends who happen to be writers, Kingsley Amis, A.S. Byatt, A.N. Wilson, Andrew Harvey, Bernice Rubens and Vikram Seth (whom she met at a conference in Delhi). She cannot bring herself to talk about Ireland, saying that it moves her too much: she sees the IRA as at the extreme of human wickedness. She ends optimistically by looking at positive recent changes in Eastern Europe.

## September

- 7 IM writes to Louise Walthall Horton about novel-writing. Travelling in Italy with Borys and Audi Villers, the Bayleys visit the small town of Ascoli Piceno and see an evening parade (which IM later

uses in *The Green Knight* in 1993, together with images from their visit to Spoleto, where IM is too frightened to cross the bridge).

Peter Conradi brings his collie dog Cloudy, at IM's request, to meet her. (She is later to put the dog into *The Green Knight* as Anax).

## October

- 20 IM writes to Chatto and Windus requesting Humphrey Stone (Reynolds and Janet's son) to be chosen to design the jacket cover for *The Message to the Planet*. She asks for a copy of *The Philosopher's Pupil* to be sent to a friend in Bucharest.

## November

- 22 IM writes to Roly Cochrane of her trip to Italy and hopes he is safe from hurricanes.

## December

- 6 Carmen Callil writes to Jonathan Burnham: she has had lunch with IM who has now agreed to a dinner party for her seventieth birthday, in London rather than Oxford, with about twenty people: she does not want a big party.
- 9 Carmen Callil writes to Michael Kustow that IM is insisting that he charge a fee for reading *The Message to the Planet*, at IM's request, to check the accuracy of the Jewish sections. IM will pay the amount herself.
- 21 IM rereads her 1943 diaries and comments in her Journal on the intensity and rage they contain about the conditions of the time.
- 22 Carmen Callil, in a letter to Ed Victor, says that she is unable to persuade IM to take part in enough publicity activity for her novels. She asks Victor to try to persuade IM to allow Chatto and Windus to organise an official seventieth birthday party for her next year, adding that IM has so far rejected the idea.
- 25 IM rings Peter Conradi to invite him to Christmas lunch in Oxford. Since it is already Christmas Day, he is unable to change his arrangements in time to accept.

A.N. Wilson is working on the IM biography and hears from an IM fan, Arthur Green, who has made a study of the names in the novels and points out how many family names she uses. He puts Wilson in touch

with IM's Irish relations. IM herself has told him that none are still alive, but he meets her Aunt Ella, her cousins Muriel and Sybil and another cousin, Max White. According to Wilson, when IM finds out she is furious, but she relents when Wilson returns from Ireland with her father's war medals and some photographs.

This year, Salman Rushdie publishes *The Satanic Verses*.

## 1989

During this year A.N. Wilson's marriage breaks up. IM writes him long comforting letters and they start to meet frequently for lunch at her favourite restaurant, Dino's on the Gloucester Road. He is working steadily on the biography. He realises her unworldliness when she asks him quite seriously to explain the rules of the game, 'Mornington Crescent' on the Radio 4 comedy programme, *I'm Sorry I Haven't A Clue* (the point of the joke, which has completely escaped her, being that it *has* no rules).

She is at this period a great listener to BBC Radio 4 and a fan of the long-running series *The Archers*.

This year, the writer and critic Robin Waterfield republishes IM's 1952 paper for the Oxford University Socratic Club, first published in the *Socratic Digest* of 1952. It is dedicated to IM's Somerville friend, the poet Stella Aldwinckle, who set up the club, with C.S. Lewis as President, in 1941.

### January

- 7 In her New Year greetings to Roly Cochrane, IM comments on how interesting it is to see one's goods in a new place. (He too has recently moved house.) She says she hopes 1989 will be full of good things.
- 16 IM writes to Carmen Callil, who is still trying to plan her seventieth birthday celebrations, that she wishes her approaching seventieth birthday could be forgotten by everyone, but that she sees that this is unlikely: she doesn't want anything at all, but she thanks Chatto and Windus and Penguin for their consideration in planning the event for her.

### February

- 14 Ayatollah Khomeini in Iran passes a 'fatwa' – a sentence of death – on Salman Rushdie for allegedly committing blasphemy in *The Satanic Verses*.

- 24 BBC Radio 4's *Kaleidoscope* carries Paul Allen's interview with IM about ethics.

### March

- 3 (-9) The *Times Literary Supplement* carries a petition signed by IM and others supporting freedom of expression and repudiating threats to the life of Salman Rushdie.
- 7 China imposes martial law in Tibet.
- 14 IM has been destroying letters for the past four years, commenting in her Journal of the strangeness of reading about passions so long gone.

### April

The Bayleys are trying to buy 30, Charlbury Road from JB's colleague, Josie Harris. It is close to Hamilton Road but quieter and larger.

- 16 The *Sunday Times* carries an interview by Nigella Lawson with IM, conducted before the dress rehearsal of *The Black Prince*, adapted for the stage with the help of IM's protégé and friend, Josephine Hart, in which IM talks of the way in which she has been adapting and rewriting it as rehearsals have progressed. She thinks drama is more like classical art than the novel is, more intense and closer to poetry.
- 17 Solidarity is legalised in Poland.
- 22 Ed Vulliamy in the *Weekend Guardian* has interviewed IM about the difficulties of adapting *The Black Prince*. She mentions that she has a philosophical work still in progress.
- 25 *The Black Prince* opens at the Aldwych Theatre in London. (In this stage version Bradley Pearson survives, so the effect is less tragic than the novel itself.)
- 29 The *Independent* carries a biographical article in which IM talks of being inspired by her Badminton English mistress, Miss Hynes, to read English at Oxford, but that the Somerville classics don read her General Paper and she was persuaded to read Greek and Latin. She mentions her Somerville teachers Mildred Hartley and Isobel Henderson.

### June

- (early) In Oxford IM meets William C. Carter and an American film crew from the University of Alabama, who have come to make a documentary film about Marcel Proust. Carter had read *The Good Apprentice*, with its Proust expert, Willy

Brightwalton, and rightly guessed that IM would have interesting things to say about Proust. Recorded in JB's rooms at St Catherine's, she talks of Proust's wonderful tapestry of characters and of her own belief in salvation by art. She makes a sharp distinction between a great book, which gives a feeling of truthfulness and an inferior work which simply indulges the egotism of the writer.

13 Honor Tracy dies in an Oxford nursing home.

IM writes to Lucy Klatschko (Sister Marian) that she has been overwhelmed by Honor's death: Honor had spoken so often of there being a light beyond and of death as a return home that IM feels she should have expected it, but the death, she says, was still a shock to her. She praises Honor's warmth and humour, her courage and nobility.

Solidarity wins the Polish elections.

## July

In *Women Writers Talk* edited by Olga Kenyon, published this year, David Gerard has interviewed IM about the relationship between the subconscious and the imagination, about studying for Greats at Oxford and about her reactions to Camus's *L'Étranger*, which she feels is complicated by the figure of Meursault. She talks of the problems facing young writers: they need to have other paying jobs but there should be Arts Council grants for emergency cases.

This month, as she approaches seventy, IM asks Chatto to return her poems (which she had deposited with them in the 1960s).

The *Telegraph Weekend Magazine* carries a feature on 'Iris Murdoch at Seventy' which is full of anecdotes from her friends. Roger Lewis recalls traditional Christmas gatherings at the Bayleys. A former student talks of the reading that was expected for her tutorials – the Bible, Plato, Simone Weil, Shakespeare, St Augustine, Marx and Engels. Carmen Callil, in an article called 'A Dangerous Dame', refers to IM as the 'Queen of Chatto'.

12 Jane Turner of Chatto and Windus holds a small private party for IM to mark her birthday.

15 On IM's seventieth birthday she comments in her *Journal* on the kindness of everyone.

The *Woman's Journal* (July) carries a long piece, under the title 'A Fabulous Story Teller', on Murdoch's background, writing career and political views – particularly on women's liberation. She reasserts her belief that there should be no separation between the sexes. She chooses as her luxuries on a desert island, the works of Pushkin, a late Beethoven quartet – and JB!

- 20 Rosemary Hartill, the BBC's religious correspondent, broadcasts an interview with IM in *Writers Revealed* on Radio 4, called 'Flight to the Enchantress'. IM talks at length about *A Fairly Honourable Defeat*. She says she is currently voting Conservative as she cannot accept the Labour Party's defence policy, its doubts about Europe and the line many of its members take on Ireland. She thinks the Thatcher government has done some good things. Plato, she says, has come to dominate her thinking. Her attitude to Jung is more complex: she sees him as a magician who wants people to come to terms with the dark side of their soul, to find harmony, like the pre-Socratic philosophers. This is the opposite, she explains, of what *she* believes, which is that life is a constant battle between good and evil. When asked if she allows people to edit her books she looks startled, then chuckles and says that she doesn't – but that her publishers are understanding. She describes working all day and then relaxing by reading or listening to music or sewing. She can't imagine not writing, she confesses, and thinks that she would be very unhappy.

## August

- 1 The Bayleys move to 30, Charlbury Road, Oxford.
- 14 IM writes to Suguna Ramanathan immediately after the move, saying that she will get Chatto to send her a copy of the new novel (*The Message to the Planet*).
- The Bayleys holiday in Italy.

## September

During one of her regular lunches with A.N. Wilson for her prospective biography, IM suggests that it was JB's influence which moved her away from belief in God.

- 1 IM requests copies of *The Message to the Planet* to be sent to friends in Poland and Basrah in Iraq. (The latter seems to her, she says, to be a very long way away.)
- 30 The Somerville College, Oxford, Third Literary Luncheon is given in IM's honour. She reads from *The Book and the Brotherhood* and answers questions. She is later interviewed by A.N. Wilson for a *Bookmark* programme to mark her seventieth birthday, to be broadcast by the BBC in December. It will also celebrate the publication of *The Message to the Planet*. (IM has only agreed to do the programme if

A.N. Wilson is the interviewer. She wants it to be about her *ideas* but the producer, Kevin Hull, insists on a biographical background. The *Mail on Sunday* has reprinted the 1988 *Daily Telegraph* 'You' article about IM's 'Lost Loves', in which IM had openly talked of her feelings for Frank Thompson and Franz Baermann Steiner. A.N. Wilson is astonished at how freely both the Bayleys have spoken about their private lives.)

After the filming, A.N. Wilson writes to IM of his doubts about undertaking the biography. He does not know how he is meant to deal with the affairs with Thompson, Steiner and Canetti. He teases her that the most important men in her life are Plato, Shakespeare and JB. IM writes an immediate reply, agreeing with this last comment but still not dealing with the important query about how he is to deal with her romantic affairs.

The Bayleys visit Norway with the British Council.

IM then makes a brief trip to Ireland.

## October

- 2 IM writes to Roly Cochrane that she has been away, in Italy, then in Norway and then in Ireland. She speaks of how small the new house is compared with Cedar Lodge. It is a little larger, however, than 68, Hamilton Road and has a better garden surrounded by trees – in a more respectable and expensive part of Oxford.
- 2 (evening) IM's twenty-fourth novel, *The Message to the Planet*, is published, dedicated 'To Audhild and Borys Villers', the Bayleys' close friends with whom they holiday frequently in Lanzarote. (IM has refused the publishers' request to have it published on her birthday.) Penguin Books in conjunction with Chatto and Windus organise a party for her.
- 30 IM thanks an Irish friend, Rupert, for his kindness during a trip to Ireland.

## November

- 9 (–10) The Berlin Wall comes down, amid scenes of great rejoicing. The two halves of Germany are reunited.

## December

- 2 The American President George Bush and the Russian President Mikhail Gorbachev, declare an end to the Cold War.

- 12 Chatto and Windus hold a Christmas party. (IM has had to write to them earlier in the month to be reminded of the details, having lost the invitation.)
- 24 The Bayleys give a homely lunch to Roger Scruton in their Cromwell Road flat in London. He finds the food is strange and the furnishings shabby, but the conversation is wide-ranging and enjoyable.
- Vaclav Havel becomes President of the Czech Republic.
- 29 The *Bookmark*, 'A Certain Lady', programme marking IM's seventieth birthday, is broadcast on BBC1. In it she mentions her first few years having been spent in Dublin (which seems to fly in the face of the recorded facts about her removal as a baby to London). There are interviews with Mary Midgley, Janet Stone and the painter Tom Phillips as well as with A.S. Byatt, Marjorie Reeves (St Anne's colleague and historian, who had helped her with research into *The Bell*) and Jeremy and Bettina Adler. (Jeremy is the son of Canetti's close friend, the writer Hans Gunther Adler).

## 1990

This year Suguna Ramanathan's book, *Iris Murdoch: Figures of Good*, is published.

### January

In her Journal IM recalls the songs her mother taught her, including 'Jesus, tender shepherd hear me' and 'Tell me the old, old story'.

### February

- 11 In South Africa, Nelson Mandela is released after over two decades in captivity.
- 12 IM replies to a card from American academic, Cheryl Bove, glad that they will meet in New York and that Cheryl likes 'Maisie T.' (Tether – in *The Message to the Planet*) – a Henry James name, she explains.
- (mid) The Bayleys travel to New York, where IM receives the National Arts Club's Medal of Honor for Literature. Tributes are given, after the celebration black-tie dinner, by Martha Nussbaum (Professor of Philosophy, Classics and Comparative Literature at Brown University), James Atlas (an editor of the *New York Times Magazine*), Louis Auchincloss (who received the Club's first award in 1969) and the Honorable



Gordon W. Jewkes (Her Majesty's Consul-General for New York). The Master of Ceremonies is Dr Timothy S. Healy, President of the New York Public Library and former president of Georgetown University. At IM's suggestion, Barbara Stevens Heusel, founder and Secretary-Treasurer of the Iris Murdoch Society, joins her at the top table. IM's brief acceptance speech contains an attack on Derrida, whom she calls a brilliant magician and a menace, with his theory of deconstruction.

Interviewed afterwards by John Russell, (interview published as 'Under Iris Murdoch's Exact, Steady Gaze', in the *New York Times* on 22 February), she talks about her introduction to Sartre's work, of her love of Paris and her wish that English readers would make more of Stendhal and Flaubert. She has seen Rembrandt's 'The Polish Rider' at the Frick Gallery. She mentions her latest American character, Maisie Tether in *The Message to the Planet*.

26 Interviewed on National Public Radio in New York, IM reads from *The Message to the Planet* and comments that the message itself is that everything is contingent: there are no certainties and all we can do is to try to be good.

### March

IM tells Roly Cochrane about her week in New York. She is now very tired, glad to be back in Europe. *The Message to the Planet* was out in the UK last October, she says, and she promises to see that he gets a copy. She quotes to him Wittgenstein's 'solution' to the riddle of life in the *Tractatus*, which is that there is no riddle: 'the problem of life is seen in the vanishing of the problem.'

### April

The Bayleys visit Spain with the British Council and IM gives lectures in Madrid and in the University of Castille.

### May

30 IM replies to a letter from Cheryl Bove, saying how much she enjoyed her New York visit and is hoping to see Bove when she is in England.

### July

The Bayleys are on holiday in Herefordshire, which IM finds very beautiful.

15 IM notes her seventy-first birthday in her Journal: she has been rereading old diaries and destroying a great deal. During one of their regular lunches at Dino's on the Gloucester Road, IM tells A.N. Wilson that *The Red and the Green* is the only novel of which she feels ashamed: she now feels it appears to glorify Irish nationalism.

### August

22 (-25) IM and JB both speak at a centenary conference for Robert Browning held at Christchurch College, Oxford.  
Regular Bayley family holiday in Scotland.

### September

6 IM replies to a letter from Cheryl Bove, who with John Fletcher is preparing a bibliography of her work. She draws attention to her 1956 Aristotelian Society paper, 'Vision and Choice in Morality', to her poetry published in various journals, to the radio play *The One Alone* and the short story, 'Something Special'.

11 IM has been to Scotland, where she has been swimming in the cold sea and meeting seals, she tells Roly Cochrane.

30 IM signs all 350 copies of a small volume of her work, *Four Poems and A Story*, published in Helsinki. The story is 'Something Special' and the poems are 'Too Late', 'The Unpruned Pear Tree', 'A Christmas Carol' and 'Music in Ireland.'

### October

During one of her brief trips to Paris, IM's friend, the writer Andrew Harvey, introduces her to the Dalai Lama, who blesses her in Tibetan.

IM this year contributes a Foreword to *Christ's Shadow in Plato's Cave: a Meditation on the Substance of Love* by Stella Aldwinckle.

### November

28 Mrs Thatcher resigns as Prime Minister and leader of the Conservative Party, to be succeeded by John Major.

### December

20 Michael Oakeshott dies.

## 1991

### January

- 7 IM sends Roly Cochrane a postcard of a traditional New Zealand Maori figure: she tells him that it is supposed to bring good luck.

### February

- 7 IRA bombs damage Downing Street.  
25 Mikhail Gorbachev resigns: the USSR ceases to exist.

### March

IM records a three-hour interview about Buddhism with Andrew Harvey for the American journal, *Tricycle*. (This is never published.)

### May

- 29 IM replies belatedly to a letter sent in March by Richard Symonds of St Anthony's College, who is trying to collect memories from people who worked for UNRRA after the war. She has mislaid his letter, and apologises that she has no relevant papers from that period but says that she would be very ready to have a tape-recorded discussion with him.  
31 IM records in her Journal that she always looks forward to dinner parties, but is very frequently disappointed afterwards.

### June

- 28 IM and JB give a recorded talk, 'In Conversation with Martin Dodsworth' in which JB talks about the new 'professionalism' of academic English and about the language of Pushkin, while IM expresses her disquiet at the way young English novelists are focusing excessively on the 'ludic' in language.

### July

The Bayleys, including JB and IM, have their regular family holiday in Scotland, this time in Berwickshire. JB's brothers, David and Michael, are there, with David's wife Agnes, Johnnie and Jackie Stratton-Ferrier and IM's cousin, Gloria Richardson.

IM and JB then make a holiday trip to America.

- 17 In California, in an unpublished interview with her friend, Richard Wollheim, from University College London, IM suggests that Badminton School had encouraged her and her generation to retain a dreamlike, unrealistic view of the world, which had helped her go on believing in the Soviet Union as a good rather than an extremely bad state. She adds that she still retains her belief in Socialism as practised by the Labour Party.
- 31 In the *Independent*, when asked to choose required reading for a student beginning an English degree, IM opts for Chaucer, Milton, Coleridge, Shelley and T.S. Eliot. She adds all the classic nineteenth century novels from Jane Austen as well as the novels of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky.

Borys Villers dies of cancer. IM and JB travel to comfort his widow, Audi.

## August

- 13 Carmen Callil writes to IM that Chatto and Windus are turning down her protégé, Michael Casey's first novel but tells IM that she can be quite encouraging when she writes to him, as they are very interested in reading his next novel when he completes it.
- 23 Jane Turner, IM's copy-editor at Chatto and Windus, writes to Carmen Callil and Jonathan Burnham that IM wants no changes at all to writing, punctuation or spelling in the Gifford Lectures book she is working on (to be published as *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals*) – that in fact she becomes extremely upset at the prospect of having even a single word changed. Very little editorial work can therefore be done on the book.

In the *Iris Murdoch Newsletter* No. 5, IM discusses the titles of her recent novels and talks about her foreign travels. *The Message to the Planet* was originally called 'The Dragon's Riddle' and then 'The Language of the Planet'. *The Good Apprentice*, is of course, Stuart, who is trying to be good without God. She had great trouble with *The Philosopher's Pupil*. She feels one has to wait until the book itself tells you its name. Her travels have taken her to every European country, east and west, apart from Albania and Bulgaria. Beyond Western Europe she has been most deeply moved by Russia, India and Japan. She has been only twice to Japan, twice to India and once to Russia, but she feels extremely at home in these places.

In *David Cecil: A Portrait by His Friends*, published this year, JB talks of his own long marriage and adds his wife's memories of long walks with the Cecils at Cranborne. She has asked JB to mention how they read Cecil's books together and how much she admires his lively, communicative style.

IM contributes a prose paragraph on the letter 'C' to accompany an *Alphabet*, with drawings by David Hockney, edited by Stephen Spender, on behalf of the Aids Crisis Trust, published this year. This year she also contributes a poem for Stephen Spender, 'Merciful Solution', to a volume to celebrate his lifetime's achievement, *A Garland for Stephen Spender*.

## November

- 5 IM is interviewed in Oxford by Richard Symonds of St Anthony's College about her memories of UNRRA. She talks in detail about the Displaced Persons camps she visited and the splendid people she met there, but declares that she was the lowest sort of Commissioned Officer on the scene and jokes that the only worthwhile thing she did during her time with UNRRA was to improve her German.

## December

- 16 IM writes to Lilian Eldridge, thanking her for sending on her brother Noel's letters. (Noel had died on active service in 1944.) She will think of Noel as still present, she says. The past moves her very much and she believes it is good to hold on to it.

IM writes to Kay Hicks about the death of her husband, IM's old friend and former lover, David. She thanks her for sending on the obituary, saying there is much she wants to say about David and hoping that Kay has friends about her who will help her return to life.

- 30 IM writes again to Kay Hicks, speaking of her many memories of David. She talks of his many qualities, calling him good, brave, clever, joyful, imaginative, inventive and loveable. She is thankful that he had a quick departure surrounded by love. She promises to think of them both on New Year's Day.

## 1992

IM writes to her MP for a copy of the Maastricht Treaty, which is under discussion and about which she is suspicious. (It eventually comes into force in November 1993.)

She supports the Irish Peace Movement this year.

*The Sea, The Sea* is adapted for Radio 4 by Richard Crane.

During this period, IM is active, among many other areas, as a Friend of the Tyndale Society and as a Trustee of the Jan Hus Foundation and is also an Honorary Vice-President of the Dickens Fellowship. She is now spending up to four hours a day answering letters, since she cannot bear to have a secretary.

## January

- 1 IM replies to a letter from Cheryl Bove, thanking her and John Fletcher for their work on the bibliography. She expresses diffidence and doubt about the progress of the Gifford Lectures book, saying that it will be published at the earliest, if at all, in September. (*Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals* is eventually published in October.) She is finding it much more difficult than writing a novel. She hopes for a better world in 1992.

## February

- 7 In a letter to the Editor of the *Radio Times*, IM and others urge the three party leaders to make a commitment to the future of the BBC and to confirm that they will continue to support the licence fee, keeping it in line with inflation.

## March

- 30 IM writes the Commendation for a book of poems, 'Raw Material Poems', published today in Oxford by Sarah Maw, which are an autobiography of mental illness.

## April

- 8 A.N. Wilson and his second wife, Ruth, have supper with the Bayleys in IM's flat in Cornwall Gardens. They find the flat grubby and the meal unsatisfying, but Wilson identifies some good pictures, a small Samuel Palmer and some modern painters including Gerald Wilde. They discuss Joyce Cary's *The Horse's Mouth*. They explore the notion of A.N. Wilson writing IM's biography as a Socratic dialogue. IM says she has rejected her early belief in Socialism and Marxism. Next day is the General Election and IM wants a promise that the Wilsons will vote for John Major and the Conservatives: she can't believe, she says, that they can want Neil Kinnock, the leader of the Labour Party, to become Prime Minister.

- 9 In the General Election, to IM's great relief, the Conservatives are returned to power for a fourth term, under John Major.
- 25 As a Friend of the Tyndale Society, IM signs, with others, a letter to *The Times* proposing that there should be an official celebration of the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of William Tyndale's birth, on 6<sup>th</sup> October 1994, and that a committee should be set up to work towards this end.
- 26 IM is interviewed in the *Sunday Times* about her joining the protest against men being admitted to Somerville. She doesn't want the change, she says, because she believes that it will spoil the monastic calm needed to study.

## May

- 23 An interview with JB is published in *The Times Saturday Review* as 'Mad Dog and English Man' in which he talks of his happy marriage.

## July

JB retires as Warton Professor of English. He begins in his retirement to write a novel trilogy.

IM contributes to an 'Early Childhood Collection' at Froebel College, Roehampton Institute, describing herself as an obedient child. In her capacity as official School Visitor she has written an oratorio for the Badminton School Choir.

In the *Iris Murdoch Newsletter* No. 6, IM is asked about sexuality and about her interest in Jewishness. She says her writing about sex is intuitive, augmented by experience and reading. On Jewishness, she has lived in a Jewish milieu, meeting many Jewish girls at school and at refugee camps during the war, and feels especially close – not as if she is writing as an outsider.

- 7 Tom Phillips agrees to design the cover of *The Green Knight* for less than his usual fee. He tells Chatto and Windus that he does not want this to be a precedent, but says he will, as ever, do anything for IM.
- 24 IM rings Jane Turner at Chatto and Windus about details of the copy-editing of *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals*. As usual, Jane Turner has guaranteed not to alter any phrasing whatever, though she writes to her colleagues that she has picked up some definite spelling errors such as 'paeon' for 'paean'.

Later this month IM asks her publishers to consider accepting a novel by the Indian writer, Suman Gupta. She writes to Jonathan Burnham of Chatto thanking him for his letter about *The Green Knight* and expressing satisfaction that he likes the characters.

### August

IM plans a flight to Zurich to see Canetti who has settled there, but has to cancel the trip when he telephones to tell her he is unwell.

The Bayleys holiday with Audi Villers, going to Sorrento and Capri. They stay at Lanzerote and are visited there by Peter Conradi.

25 IM adds a short tribute in the *Guardian* to Eve Watt's obituary of Esme Ross Langley, the passionate campaigner for women's rights, who set up a magazine for lesbians in the 1960s.

### September

8 Angela Lambert interviews IM at 30, Charlbury Road in preparation for the publication of *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals*. She says she probably won't write another such work, commenting that, though it is imperfect, it does convey her beliefs. She declares that she would have been happy to have been a painter. She speaks sadly of the world's inexorable decline and of the collapse of any belief in goodness. She says that in her own life the two great sources of happiness have been her marriage and the opportunity she has had to use her mind creatively.

Peter Conradi visits IM in Oxford while she is writing *The Green Knight*, into which she has put the dog 'Anax', based on his dog, Cloudy. He later writes to her, as if from the dog, to correct some errors of fact or detail in the portrayal. IM writes back, directly to the dog, and corrects the errors (something she will never do for her editors at Chatto).

### September

13 The *Independent on Sunday* carries an article in the series 'How We Met' in which IM and the young writer Josephine Hart describe their friendship.

### October

3 Bryan Appleyard's interview with IM is published in *The Times Saturday Review* to mark the publication of *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals*. He describes their book-filled



Oxford house, with a huge fig tree in the back garden and two great redwoods in the front. IM explains her philosophy as a disagreement with structuralists and science, which both seek to undermine moral responsibility. She talks of modern technological culture as being deprived.

- 8 *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals* is published, based on the 1982 Gifford Lectures and dedicated to the Oxford philosopher and IM's rival and friend, Elizabeth Anscombe. On the publication day the *Guardian* publishes an interview with IM by Michael Kustow. She talks of the link between goodness and courage and cites the example of Vladimir Bukovsky, the Russian dissident who went on insisting on the truth even when under threat of being sent to a mental hospital. She mentions her meeting with Sartre. She says that, though she loved her UNRRA job, she did not feel unselfish enough to devote her life to work with refugees. They talk of the genesis of *The Fire and the Sun*: Kustow had asked her to write a piece of Platonic dialogue for actors. Though she had initially refused, a few months later she had posted him the first script, 'Art and Eros'.

- 14 IM lectures at the Arthur Miller Centre at the University of East Anglia. The lecture is taped and concerns the moral value of art and the conflict between Plato's ideas and those of Sartre. IM answers questions about her male characters and expresses once more her distaste for the ideas of Jacques Derrida.

Hal Lidderdale dies.

## November

IM gives a series of talks in Spain for the British Council, including one at the University of Santiago de Compostella and attends a conference on 'Morals and Writing' at the Universidad de Alcala de Henares at which she and JB respond to a paper by Peter Conradi on 'Iris Murdoch and Plato'. This conversation is later transcribed in a collection of the conference papers. IM talks of her fears regarding the waning of traditional Christian iconography in the West, saying that people no longer have adequate pictures of good and evil.

- 27 In a long letter to Indian academic, Suguna Ramanathan, who is researching into her views, IM explains in detail what she takes to be the difference in contemporary British

politics between left-wing and right-wing. She says that she left the Labour Party because of their destruction of the Grammar schools. Another issue is that of the Trades Unions, which have become too powerful: she objects to the ‘closed shop’ and to ‘block votes’. The Tories have now got rid of the closed shop. She then goes on to discuss critical theory. She is worried by the way in which Derrida’s elaborate language threatens what she calls the plain truth. She also dislikes the divide set up between those who know the theoretical jargon and those who don’t.

## December

- 16 Chatto and Windus give a party to celebrate the publication of *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals*. IM has requested as always that this should be a low-key event.
- 25 An interview with IM is published in *Le Monde* to mark the French publication of *The Message to the Planet*. She says that Marcus Vallar believes in a pre-existing truth which explains the world. The novel itself, however, does not necessarily endorse this view. She quotes Meister Eckhart, the medieval German mystic, who says that we should look for God in our hearts. IM says she has been pondering on this question and on the dangers of deconstruction which, if carried too far, will kill the novel, since societies need to believe in their stories.

## 1993

Some time during this period, A.N. Wilson abandons the idea of writing IM’s biography.

## February

- 2 IM, writing to Chatto and Windus, finally agrees to the use of Rembrandt’s ‘Polish Rider’ for the hardback cover of *The Green Knight*. She had wanted an image of the Green Knight himself, since he is a demonic figure who yet offers redemption and this is central to the book’s theme. She

is reluctant to engage in the publicity activities arranged for her.

22 (Mon) IM brings the finally corrected manuscript of *The Green Knight* into the Chatto and Windus office in London.

Elias Canetti, in Zurich, is writing down his memories of his time in England, including his affair with IM. He condemns her throughout, particularly for her Englishness: he declares that he lived in England for forty years and hated it and that IM has become during that time an embodiment of all that he detests there. He blames her for being self-interested and for never having suffered.

## March

4 In an interview published in the *New York Review of Books*, IM talks of the delights of swimming, in rivers never in swimming baths; the latter, she declares, are simply exercise machines.

IM writes to Chatto and Windus with the suggestion that she collect many of the odd essays, poems and reviews she has lying around and make a volume of them.

## April

16 IM, travelling without JB, is given an honorary doctorate by the University of Alcala in Spain, which she visited last year.

IM's twenty-fifth novel, *The Green Knight* is published. Two scenes come from holidays with Borys and Audi Villers, the Bayleys' old friends in Lanzarote – the evening parade and the scenes on the bridge.

IM faces Chatto and Windus's demands for publicity activities to promote *The Green Knight*. She agrees to very few of their suggestions.

IM appears on a Channel 4 TV programme about her friend Andrew Harvey, whom she has helped in his spiritual search.

After a short period away from home, IM finds seventy letters awaiting her.

## May

8 IM is a signatory to an advertisement in the *Guardian* demanding justice for Tibet, which is under threat from China.

This month sees the start of the Bayleys' third and last trip to Japan with the British Council.

- 21           Arrival in Osaka.
- 22           Sightseeing in Kyoto.
- 23 (Sun)   Sightseeing in Kyoto.
- 24           IM leads a seminar based on 'Against Dryness' at the British Council, Kyoto.
- 26           IM and JB lead a seminar on poetry at the British Council in Kyoto.
- 28           IM lectures on 'The Modern Novel' at the Kobe Institute of St Catherine's.
- 29 (Sat)   Visit to Okoyama. Reception at the Royal Hotel Kobe, with old friends from earlier visits, including the writer and critic, Yozo Muroya.
- 30 (Sun)   The Bayleys drive with Yozo Muroya, Chris Heywood, Neil McEwan and others to see the Seto Ohashi Bridge, the largest bridge in the world.
- 31           They return to Kobe.

## June

- 1           IM gives a house lecture at the Kobe Institute of St Catherine's.
- 2           Return to Tokyo.
- 3           IM lectures on 'The Craft of Fiction' at Waseda University, Tokyo.
- 4           IM repeats the lecture at Johchi University (Sophia University).
- 5           Departure for London.

## July

Having just returned from Japan, IM has to go immediately to Ireland to give a talk and to receive an honorary degree. She writes to Roly Cochrane that she hopes soon to be able to settle down in Oxford after all the travelling.

- 13           Jonathan Burnham of Chatto and Windus finally rejects Michael Casey's novel, *Proving Ground*, which had been submitted with IM's backing.
- 14           IM writes to Roly Cochrane that she has been away briefly at Coleraine University (the University of Ulster at Coleraine, where she received her honorary degree). The north coast of

Ulster, she says, is wild and beautiful. She enthusiastically describes its seas and small harbours.

This year IM is also awarded an honorary degree from the University of Cambridge.

A birthday party is organised by Jonathan Burnham of Chatto and Windus for IM and for Carmen Callil.

## August

- 1 IM's Journal entry reads bizarrely of talking to the teacups and spoons, but also talks of her deep and deepening love for JB.
- 20 Caroline Mitchell of Chatto and Windus writes to IM about interviews that have been arranged for her with the *Independent* and with BBC Radio 4's *Kaleidoscope* programme. She sympathises with IM, saying she knows how much she dreads these interviews.

## September

- 2 Ed Victor, IM's agent, writes to Jonathan Burnham of Chatto and Windus that IM has promised to bring in the only copy of the hand-written manuscript of her book on Heidegger. He suggests they photocopy it as soon as she arrives.
- 17 IM writes to Chatto and Windus, wanting to retrieve from them the photograph of herself and JB on a bridge at Stowe, with the lake and temple in the distance. It is, she says, the best she has ever seen of them both.

IM notes in her Journal her difficulty in thinking and writing, reminding herself that she must be brave.

## October

- 19 IM writes to Roly Cochrane wanting more details of his life so that she can picture him, saying she can't quite believe she is seventy-four. Looking out of her window as she writes, she sees a mass of trees, including two very tall Californian redwoods (she gives the Latin name). She can therefore see only a few small pieces of sky.

## November

- 4 IM is awarded an honorary degree at Kingston University and delivers the address to Kingston graduates at the

Barbican in London: she gives an overview of the twentieth century, the collapse of the early optimism after two world wars, the growth of technology and (her particular bug-bears) television and the word-processor. She warns the students against lapsing into a mindless determinism. She also fits in praise for the songs of the 1930s as the best popular tunes of the century.

Proofs of IM's 224-page volume on Heidegger, arrive to be corrected. IM decides it is no good and should be destroyed. It argues for the pre-eminence in the twentieth century of both Wittgenstein and Heidegger and the need for them to be studied together, rather than as two opposing forces. The dedicatee was to have been Professor Stanley Rosen. (The sole known extant copy is now in Kingston Library.)

## 1994

This year, IM is working on what is to be her last novel, *Jackson's Dilemma*.

### January

- 7 IM sends a postcard to Roly Cochrane saying that it is now 1994 and as she prefers '4' to '3' in dates, she is hoping for the best from the year.
- 18 IM hears of the saving from extinction of a species of black-footed ferret in North Dakota and writes in her Journal that she must tell Moy (the character who, in *The Green Knight*, had worried about the animal).

### April

- 3 In a Readers' Poll in the *Sunday Times*, IM is voted the 'greatest living novelist writing in English', just beating Anthony Powell.

*The Green Knight* has been short-listed for the *Yorkshire Post* Book of the Year Award 1993.

### May

- 11 (–13) IM attends a conference at the University of Chicago Divinity School, entitled 'Picturing the Human: Metaphysics, Morality and Religion in the Works of Iris Murdoch'. IM gives some unscheduled introductory remarks and nine

eminent writers and philosophers including Charles Taylor, Cora Diamond and Martha Nussbaum give papers. IM observes privately to Maria Antonaccio that Nussbaum striding to the podium to give the keynote address reminds her of flashing-eyed Athena. She flies back in time for the launch party for JB's novel, *Alice*, at the Museum of Modern Art in Oxford. A.N. Wilson notices the first signs of mental exhaustion in IM, when a large group go back for supper at the Bayleys and IM has trouble finishing her sentences.

IM has written the introduction to Diana Collins's book, *Time and the Priestleys* (which Chatto and Windus eventually turn down). In it she recalls walking on the cliffs on the Isle of Wight, where J.B. Priestley lived with his third, wife, Jacquetta Hawkes. She also writes of visiting them at Kissing Tree House near Stratford-on-Avon and on one occasion going with them to see a performance of *The Merchant of Venice*. Priestley's bon mot, 'The Quality of Meursault is not strained' had become a favourite with JB.

## July

17 In an interview with Sophie Lance for the *Sunday Express*, 'A Very Private Place', IM recalls her two experiences of almost drowning, once off the north coast of Ireland and then again off Chesil Beach in Dorset which, nonetheless, she remembers as very beautiful. She declares that she loves Charlbury Road: she praises its quietness and the quantity of birdsong.

A young PhD student, Bran Nichol, interviews IM about her first-person novels and is surprised when she misremembers and declares that she has only written three (she has in fact written seven). She is disappointed to hear that Nichol teaches structuralism and that he doesn't express unqualified enthusiasm for Henry James.

IM writes to Elias Canetti for his eighty-ninth birthday.

## August

19 Elias Canetti dies.

IM learns of the death through her friend, Rosemary Varty. Jeremy Adler, son of Canetti's old friend Hans Gunther Adler, was with Canetti until the end and phones to talk to IM, who is upset and has difficulty taking in the details of the funeral.

Canetti is to be buried next to James Joyce in Zurich. IM soon writes to Jeremy Adler, asking about Canetti's daughter, Johanna.

**September**

- 15 The Bayleys have lunch with Hardy Amies (who lives in Cornwall Gardens close to IM's London flat) at Langford. James Lees-Milne the diarist notes her good-nature but also her sadness, as if she is on the verge of decline.

**October**

- 7 At the Cheltenham Literary Festival Peter Conradi interviews IM in a session entitled 'Forty Years a Novelist'.
- 13 IM writes in great distress to Suguna Ramanathan, saying that she has lost Suguna's letter and has therefore missed seeing her while she was in England. She says that she would have loved a meeting, feels she has missed something very precious and begs Suguna to forgive her.

IM has written the Introduction to the catalogue for her favourite painter, Harry Weinberger's exhibition at the Duncan Campbell Gallery of Contemporary Art in Kensington.

**December**

- 19 IM writes affectionately to Suguna Ramanathan – so sorry that they didn't meet in Oxford. She says she is trying to write another novel.

**1995****March**

- 13 IM writes to Roly Cochrane to suggest that he consider coming to live in London where he would meet more people. She says she will show his novel to her agent, Ed Victor and speaks very positively about it.

IM writes to Caroline Mitchell of Chatto and Windus, saying that she dislikes appearing on stage but agrees to appear in July with Josephine Hart since Josephine will be able to help her out.

**May**

IM gives an interview to Nancy Schaumberger in Oxford about her links with Dickens. She is an Honorary Vice-President of the Dickens Fellowship and admits that she reveres him. She has read all his works, mostly as a child. She also loves Kipling, as her father did. She speaks of her ambivalent feelings about Wittgenstein. She has no 'favourite child' among her novels, but possibly, of the last three, she would choose *The Book and the Brotherhood*. She says she has met and liked



Margaret Atwood. She refuses the idea that A.S. Byatt is her disciple, insisting that she is a good friend and that in any case she herself is not a guru and has no 'chelas' (followers).

26 The Bayleys attend the Charleston Literary Festival in Sussex and take part in a debate with Victoria Glendinning. They then drive down to Pembrokeshire for Peter Conradi's birthday party at his home in Cascob, staying on this first occasion at the Radnorshire Arms. (For future visits they stay with Conradi and his partner Jim O'Neill.)

29 IM and JB speak at the Hay-on-Wye Literary Festival. IM talks about her 'Christian Buddhism'.

IM writes to Chatto and Windus praising the cover design for *Jackson's Dilemma* and saying that the man on the cover does indeed look like Jackson. She asks for the address of the illustrator (Liz Cooke) so that she can thank her.

## July

16 Sir Stephen Spender dies.

23 IM appears at the National Theatre with her friend, the writer Josephine Hart.

## August

7 Brigid Brophy dies, after ten years of suffering from multiple sclerosis.

19 Malcolm Williamson's musical adaptation of IM's poems for *A Year of Birds* is premiered at the Royal Albert Hall, dedicated to IM's mother, Irene, who began her career as a singer. He talks in an interview of his three decades of friendship with IM, of her own delightful mezzo-soprano voice and of the way her novels have been his companions whenever he has begun composing a large-scale work.

IM and JB visit Thailand.

IM writes to Lucy Klatschko (Sister Marian) of having finished *Jackson's Dilemma* and of longing to start another novel which will not appear. She fears it will never appear. She tells Lucy that she thinks of the past and of the two of them in the past and asks her to forgive the stumbling in the letter.

## September

24 Kate Kellaway publishes in the *Observer* an article fondly detailing the wild chaos of the Bayleys' domestic arrangements.

## October

This month IM's twenty-sixth (and final) novel, *Jackson's Dilemma*, is published, the only one of the novels not to have a dedicatee. (It is received politely by the critics, though some feel it is a confused work.)

5 Jonathan Burnham and Ed Victor drive down to Oxford and take the Bayleys to lunch at the Manoir at Great Milton to celebrate the publication of *Jackson's Dilemma*.

The Bayleys attend the Cheltenham Literary Festival, where IM is very happy at the reception of *Jackson's Dilemma*.

23 IM visits the Chatto and Windus offices in London, at their request, to sign many copies of her books.

## November

14 The Bayleys attend a dinner given by Jonathan Burnham on behalf of Chatto and Windus, for their friend, the novelist Elizabeth Jane Howard.

IM notes in her Journal the death of Frank's younger brother, Edward (E.P.) Thompson. This reminds her once more of Frank.

## 1996

This year Peter Conradi broaches the idea of a biography (A.N. Wilson having long abandoned the idea).

IM's mental state worsens. At Beryl Bainbridge's party, IM puts her arms round the writer, Bernice Rubens, and says that she *used* to write novels. She is trying to send a parcel to Roly Cochrane but it goes astray. JB posts to Roly a pile of letters to him which IM has forgotten to post. Eventually, he writes to Roly himself that IM is in a rather disturbed state and needs to concentrate on her own writing, which is her salvation. He begs Roly only to write short notes for the moment, but assures him that IM worries about him and loves to receive his letters.

## March

The Bayleys visit Delft and The Hague, with Audi Villers, to see Vermeer's paintings. IM speaks constantly of Roly Cochrane and of her need to see him. (This visit inspires JB's next novel, *The Red Hat*.)

## June

17 The Bayleys travel to a house party at the country home of Roger Scruton. After the meal they both go swimming in the garden pond.

## July

The Bayleys spend just over a week with Peter Conradi and Jim O'Neill in Cascob. IM is photographed with their blue merle collie, Cloudy. Singing can still lift her from the sadness she feels as her world seems to recede. She says that she wants to talk to Jackson (from *Jackson's Dilemma*).

- 8 IM's final entry in her Journal is about swimming in the Thames, in the usual secret place, for the first time in the year. She mentions the birds, the countryside, beautiful conversation and ends with the grazing cows and her pity for them.

## August

- 17 The *Mail on Sunday* publishes a contribution from IM (written for her by JB) to a series called 'My First Love' in which she says that as a small girl she fell in love with a slug.

## September

- 21 An interview with IM and JB by Joanna Coles in the *Guardian* describes IM's 'mental block'. JB tries to help her out but she talks sadly of being in a very quiet place. JB has taken her during the previous day to the National Gallery in the hope that looking at pictures will help. He comments that they have been to see doctors, who have offered some hope that things may improve.

## October

The Bayleys make their second visit this year to Peter Conradi and Jim O'Neill in Cascob, Radnorshire.

IM attends the Institute for Contemporary Arts launch of A.S. Byatt's *Babel Tower*, but is confused about the identity of some of the people she meets.

## 1997

IM is finally diagnosed as having Alzheimer's Disease. Her friends help in many different ways: Philippa Foot gives her lunch every Friday; her ex-student, Julian Chrysostomides, takes her for walks. Marjorie Boulton, Audi Villers and many other friends and ex-students rally round to offer their affection and their time.

**May**

- 1 General Election: Tony Blair leads the Labour Party to power (as ‘New Labour’) defeating John Major and the Conservatives.

IM and JB go on holiday to Menerbes, Provence, accompanied by Peter Conradi and Jim O’Neill.

**June**

Even in her illness, as she struggles to retain her identity, IM insists that at least she knows she is Irish.

During this year and next, IM and JB spend at least one week in every three with Peter Conradi and Jim O’Neill at their home in Radnorshire.

**November**

- 5 Sir Isaiah Berlin dies in Oxford, aged 88.

**December**

IM speaks of a friend who has cut off from her since she began what seems to her to be a darkening journey. She tells Peter Conradi of the intense happiness the name of Elias Canetti still gives her.

**1998****February**

- 1 Janet Stone dies.
- 9 At Janet Stone’s memorial service held at St Mary’s Church, Litton Cheney, JB gives the address (as IM had given the address at Reynolds Stone’s memorial service).

**Spring**

IM and JB holiday with Audi Villers in Lanzerote, accompanied by Peter Conradi and Jim O’Neill. They are spending at least a third of their time now with Conradi and O’Neill in Radnorshire.

**May/June**

IM and JB stay with Natasha Spender at her home in France, accompanied by Peter Conradi.

**October**

JB takes IM to the Café Philo, in Bath. He is still looking after her at home and has coped during IM’s illness by writing *Iris: A Memoir of Iris Murdoch*.

## November

- 21 The Iris Murdoch Society of Japan is inaugurated, with Professor Yozo Muroya as its president.

## December

After Christmas Michael Bayley drives John and IM to Radnorshire to stay with Peter Conradi (for what is to be the last time).

JB writes during this period to many friends and correspondents of IM: to Suguna Ramanathan he writes thanking her for her wonderful letter, which he had read to IM who seemed to realise who it was from. He speaks of his dread of eventually having to find a 'home' for IM but says that at the moment he is just managing to cope, with the help of devoted friends like Philippa Foot.

## 1999

In her final months IM is in the Vale Nursing Home for Alzheimer sufferers, in Botley Road, Oxford. She still recognises JB and Philippa Foot.

## February

- 8 IM dies at four in the afternoon in the Vale Nursing Home. Her brain is donated to an Alzheimer's research charity. According to her wishes, she has no one at her cremation, nor at the scattering of her ashes at Oxford Crematorium.

Philippa Foot writes for the *Iris Murdoch Newsletter* (published in September) that IM was the light of her life, adding that she is sure there will be other people who feel this too.

IM's Will leaves bequests to 32 people, including four writers: Josephine Hart, Andrew Harvey, Peter J. Conradi and A.N. Wilson. JB is her sole heir.

## March

- 22 Lorna Sage writes to JB of IM's originality, her energy and daring.

Alan Bennett records in his diary (later published in the *London Review of Books* in January 2000) the high level of praise IM has received. He ponders on the nature of the 'goodness' everyone mentions, suggesting that it was not effortful but a kind of grace.

**September**

The *Iris Murdoch Newsletter* publishes personal memories of IM from Philippa Foot, Eric Christiansen (JB's younger colleague from New College, Oxford) and Josephine Hart.

**2000****June**

10 (Sat) JB marries Audi Villers at Cascob Church in Radnorshire where IM had spent so much of her last few years.

**November**

28 Harold Bloom writes in *The Times* that IM was the last first-rate writer left in Britain.

**2001****August**

15 Lucy Klatschko (Sister Marian) dies after fifty years at Stanbrook Abbey.

Peter Conradi publishes *Iris Murdoch: A Life*.

The Philosophy Department at Brown University, Rhode Island, USA, holds a conference on IM's philosophy.

**2002****February**

Roly Cochrane dies.

**June**

26 The Oxford Iris Murdoch Appeal holds a launch event, 'A Tribute to Iris Murdoch', at the Apollo Theatre in London. The money raised is to be divided between bursaries at St Anne's College and funding a professorship at Oxford to focus research into Alzheimer's Disease.

**September**

14 The Iris Murdoch Society holds its first conference at St Anne's College, Oxford. Audi Bayley and JB attend.

## 2004

### September

- 17–18      The second Iris Murdoch Conference is held at Kingston University, London.
- 17 (Fri)    During the Kingston Conference, the Centre for Iris Murdoch Studies is launched by Professor John Bayley.

# Who's Who

## **Ady, Peter Honorine (1914–2004)**

Economics Tutor and Fellow of St Anne's College, Oxford until 1981, then Emeritus Fellow. She and IM were colleagues in the 1950s and became close friends, went to parties and holidayed together several times in France. IM supported her during a family bereavement. They remained close, and in 1975 IM dedicated *A Word Child* to her.

## **Anscombe, Elizabeth (1919–2001)**

Eminent philosopher who was a star pupil and follower of Wittgenstein and succeeded him to the Chair of Philosophy at Cambridge. From 1946 she was a Research Fellow at Somerville, where she met IM. They had an intense three-day relationship in 1948 and remained friends (and rivals) thereafter. Anscombe converted to Roman Catholicism and in 1941 married Peter Geach, also a Roman Catholic, with whom she had seven children. IM dedicated *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals* to Anscombe in 1993.

## **Balogh, Thomas (later Baron) (1905–1985)**

Political economist who became adviser to the Labour Government in the 1960s. IM may have met him through Philippa Bosanquet whom he taught in Oxford, where he had a Fellowship at Balliol, but they only became friends (and for a time lovers) in London during the war. Balogh, who had been born in Hungary, was extremely anti-Communist after witnessing the 'Socialist Revolution' of 1919 in Budapest as a schoolboy. During his affair with IM over the winter of 1943–4 it is probable that he influenced her gradual move away from the Communist Party. Balogh's rejection of her affected IM greatly and she continued to refer to it to her close friends for years afterwards.



Balogh shared IM's interest in refugees: he helped found the Institute of Statistics in Oxford, which assisted refugee scholars. After the war he focused on the problems of under-developed countries, became adviser to many governments and helped set up the Department of Economic Affairs in Great Britain.

### **Bayley, John (1925–)**

After Eton, John Bayley served in the army from 1943–47. He then gained a First in English from New College, Oxford, was a member of St Anthony's and Magdalen Colleges in Oxford from 1951 and became a tutor at New College in 1955. He and Iris Murdoch were married in 1956. He was appointed Warton Professor of English and a Fellow of St Catherine's College, Oxford in 1974, and retired from the post in 1992. He has written fifteen other books, including five novels. His major critical works are *The Characters of Love* (1960), *Tolstoy* (1966), *Pushkin* (1971), *The Uses of Division* (1976) *An Essay on Hardy* (1978) and *Shakespeare and Tragedy* (1981). After his retirement he returned to novel-writing and produced *Alice* (1994), *The Queer Captain* (1995), *George's Lair* (1995) and *The Red Hat* (1997). During IM's illness he published *Iris: A Memoir* (1998) and after IM's death, *Iris and the Friends* (1999). In 2000 he married Audi Villers, a close friend of himself and his wife, and widow of their friend Borys Villers. In 2001 he published *Widower's House*.

### **Berlin (Sir) Isaiah (1909–1997)**

Political theorist, Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford 1932–38; Fellow of New College, Oxford 1938–1950. Knighted 1957. He came to know IM when, as a young don, she attended his seminars and sent several of her own students to attend them too. She asked him for help for several of her students and protégés and by the mid-1950s the two had become friends. From 1957 to 1967 he was Chichele Professor of Social and Political Theory at the University of Oxford. His inaugural lecture in 1958 on 'Two Concepts of Liberty' was very influential, as were many of his other academic works. The Bayleys stayed at the Berlins' home in Venice in 1960.

### **Bosanquet, Philippa (see Foot, Philippa)**

### **Bowen, Elizabeth (1899–1973)**

Anglo-Irish novelist best-known for *The Death of the Heart* (1938) and *The Heat of the Day* (1949). She published 27 books in all, including an

account of her family home in Ireland, *Bowen's Court* (1942). John Bayley chose her for the *Independent's* 'Heroes and Villains' series in 1995– as a 'hero'. She married the educationalist Alan Charles Cameron in 1923. They had no children but the marriage was a happy one. She met IM at the Cecils' in 1956 and invited her to Bowen's Court in County Cork, where her happy memories of her late husband may have prompted IM towards her own marriage. They shared Protestant Irishness and both felt that they saw England through an outsider's eyes.

### **Briggs, Asa (later Baron) (1921–)**

Eminent historian, friend and sometime lover of IM at Oxford. From 1976 to 1991 he was Provost of Worcester College and from 1975 to 1994, Chancellor of the Open University. His books include *Victorian People* and *Victorian Cities*. Briggs had fallen in love with IM at an Oxford party in June 1952 and comforted her early in 1953 after the death of Franz Baermann Steiner, teaching her modern history in his rooms at Worcester College. When IM was thinking of marriage to John Bayley in 1956, she mentioned to him her closeness to Briggs as well as to Arnaldo Momigliano and Elias Canetti, as potential stumbling blocks. Seeing Briggs at a party with someone else filled her with jealousy a month before her wedding.

### **Brophy, Brigid (1929–1995)**

Feminist writer and critic, with whom IM had a stormy relationship during the 1950s. She met IM at the Cheltenham Literature Festival in 1954, where her novel *Hackenfeller's Ape* won the prize for best first novel, beating IM's *Under the Net* into second place. Her other novels include *The Crown Princess* (1953), *Flesh* (1962), *The Snow Ball* (1962), *In Transit* (1969) and *Palace Without Chairs* (1978). In 1985, soon after she began to suffer from multiple sclerosis, IM dedicated *The Good Apprentice* to her.

### **Byatt, A.S. (Antonia Susan) (1936–)**

Novelist and critic, created a Dame of the British Empire in 1999. Byatt analysed IM's early novels in *Degrees of Freedom* (1965; reissued and extended, 1994). She described IM as her 'literary mother' but IM saw *her* rather as a valued friend and greatly admired her work. Her novels include *The Game* (1967), *The Virgin in the Garden* (1978), *Still Life* (1985), *Possession* (1990) (which won the Booker Prize) and *Babel Tower* (1996).

**Canetti, Elias (1905–1994)**

Born in Bulgaria, with Ladino, a medieval Spanish spoken by Sephardic Jews, as his first language, Canetti moved to Manchester at the age of six. His 1935 novel *Die Blendung* was widely acclaimed when it was translated as *Auto-da-Fe* and published in 1946. IM thought highly of his *Crowds and Power* (1962). He was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1981. Canetti became a central figure in London intellectual society in the 1940s and 50s and IM fell utterly under his spell in 1953, after the death of Franz Baermann Steiner, through whom she had met him. The affair lasted for several years and initially threatened IM's marriage to John Bayley in 1956, and Canetti's influence remained powerful for the rest of IM's life. She portrays him in *The Flight from the Enchanter* in two characters, Mischa Fox and Calvin Blick, who act as moral doubles, as in a morality play. He lies behind other enchanter-figures in the novels, including Julius King in *A Fairly Honourable Defeat* and to an extent, Charles Arrowby in *The Sea, The Sea*.

**Cecil, Lord David (1902–1986)**

Scholar and biographer, second son and fourth child of the Marquis of Salisbury, educated at Eton and at Christ Church, Oxford. In 1932 he married Rachel, daughter of the critic Desmond MacCarthy and in 1938 returned to Oxford as Fellow of New College, where he later taught John Bayley, who became one of his star pupils. His many books include lives of Lord Melbourne (1939, 1954) and of Thomas Hardy (1943) and studies of Jane Austen (1978) and of Charles Lamb (1983). After their marriage, the Bayleys became regular visitors to the Cecils' home in Cranborne in Dorset, where IM and he became good friends and sparring partners. In 1968, IM dedicated *The Nice and the Good* to the Cecils.

**Conradi, Peter J. (1945–)**

English Professor Emeritus at the University of Kingston and an Honorary Fellow of University College London. He is the author of *Iris Murdoch: The Saint and the Artist* (1986) as well as of studies of John Fowles, Dostoevsky and Angus Wilson. He met IM at a literary conference in Norwich in the 1980s and he and his partner Jim O'Neill became close friends of the Bayleys. During the last years of her life, IM and JB spent a large part of their time staying with Conradi and O'Neill at their home in Radnorshire. In the mid-1990s Conradi took over from A.N. Wilson as IM's official biographer, and in 2001 produced the highly acclaimed *Iris Murdoch: A Life*.

**Cornford, Christopher (1917–1993)**

Artist, cartoonist, writer and teacher, Dean of General Studies at the Royal College of Art 1962–79. The younger brother of John Cornford, who died while fighting on the Republican side in the Spanish Civil War in 1936 and was a hero and martyr to IM's generation, Christopher was instrumental in arranging IM's part-time lectureship at the RCA in 1963. They had met at their mutual friend Dominic de Grunne's French chateau in the 1950s and Cornford and his wife Lucy sometimes stayed with the Bayleys at Cedar Lodge. Cornford illustrated the covers of her early novels and IM dedicated her volume of two plays, *The Three Arrows* and *The Servants in the Snow* to the Cornfords in 1973. Like IM an early member of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, Cornford remained loyal to the organisation for the rest of his life. Shortly before his death, CND published a book of his cartoons, *Drawn to Protest*. A great-grandson of Charles Darwin, Cornford was born and died in Cambridge.

**Cramp, Rosemary (1929–)**

Anglo-Saxon scholar, Professor of Archaeology at the University of Durham 1971–90, now Emeritus Professor, she is the author of two volumes on Anglo-Saxon sculpture in England (1984; 1986) and became a Companion of the British Empire in 1987. She went up to St Anne's College, Oxford from Leicestershire in 1947. In 1950 she became a lecturer there and a colleague and close friend of IM's. Cramp read *Beowulf* to IM and in turn read and was impressed by all that she recommended, particularly Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*. She observed sadly IM's serial relationships at this period and the misery they brought her and was privy to her growing feeling for JB and witnessed the increasing happiness of their marriage. She became the dedicatee of *The Sea*, *The Sea* in 1978.

**De Marchi, Ernesto (Tino)**

Political scientist who sponsored a non-Communist Resistance newspaper, *Occidente*, in Italy during the war. He knew IM in the 1950s in Oxford, probably through Rosemary Cramp whom he had met at St Anne's. Originally an admirer of IM, he soon became a good friend of both the Bayleys, inviting them to Italy to visit his father, a retired chocolate manufacturer in Como, and to his own home in the nearby small village of Valbrona. He first invited IM there alone in 1952 but the invitation became a regular one to both Bayleys after their marriage. According to John Bayley, he briefly married a Polish girl in 1960 and

then a Swiss/Italian girl who continued to live in Switzerland but visited him from there. IM dedicated *The Black Prince* to him in 1973.

### **Dunbar, Scott**

Canadian philosopher, a student of IM's at the Royal College of Art. He became a close friend while he was writing his PhD thesis on the philosophy of religion at Kings College, London in the second half of the 1960s. IM referred to him in her Journal in 1967 as a real and permanent friend. She dedicated *Bruno's Dream* to him in 1969.

### **Eldridge, Noel (1918–1944)**

Admirer of IM in her student days while studying at Balliol College, Oxford. She met him when both were writing for the student magazines *Oxford Forward*, *Cherwell* and *Kingdom Come*. He light-heartedly asked her to marry him before he went abroad on war service, saying that he was sure to be killed and she could then enjoy a widow's pension. She refused, but they may possibly have briefly been lovers. Frank Thompson, unusually, disliked him. IM lost touch with him once he joined up and, after a brief courtship, he married Jane Brown McNab in 1943. Two weeks later he was sent abroad to join the Queen's Royal Regiment and was killed by a sniper while fighting the Germans in Italy in September 1944. IM recalled him after his death as light-hearted and loveable. She remained in touch with Noel's twin sister, Lilian, who after the war sent her a collection of Noel's books of 1930s and 1940s poetry which she kept to the end of her life.

### **Foot, Michael Richard Daniell (1919–)**

Distinguished historian, particularly noted for his publication of the volumes of *The Gladstone Diaries* (1968, 1974) and for his record of the wartime Special Operations Executive. He was a close friend of Frank Thompson from their Winchester schooldays together. Part of IM's and Thompson's circle at Oxford, he joined the SAS, trained as a parachutist and became an Army Major in the Intelligence Staff working at Combined Operations HQ in London. He had an affair with IM from 1943–44, by which time she had become bewitched by Thomas Balogh, so that Michael was soon dropped. Taken prisoner by the Germans later that year, Foot was repatriated in 1945 as part of a prisoner exchange and went on to marry IM's best friend, Philippa Bosanquet and to resume his studies at New College Oxford. He and Philippa separated in 1959. A *Festschrift* to mark his eightieth birthday in 1999 was edited by K.G. Robertson.

*Throughout this Chronology he is referred to as M.R.D. Foot, to distinguish him from the Labour Party leader, Michael Foot.*

**Foot, Philippa nee Bosanquet (1920–)**

Moral philosopher, Griffin Professor of Philosophy at the University of California 1988–91, then Emeritus Professor. The daughter of wealthy parents (her grandfather was Grover Cleveland, twice president of the USA) she was brought up in the North of England and came up to Somerville College, Oxford in 1939 to read Politics, Philosophy and Economics. Worried by IM's Communism, she successfully nominated a rival candidate to become president of the Somerville Junior Common Room. However, when IM visited her while she was ill during Finals in 1942, their friendship blossomed. They shared the Seaforth Place flat in London from 1943, while Philippa was working at Chatham House, until 1945, when she left to marry M.R.D. Foot (whom IM had rejected as a lover in 1944). Their friendship had survived jealousy over the relationship she and IM both had with Thomas Balogh, but there was an inevitable embarrassed coolness during the years of the Foot marriage. When Michael and Philippa separated in 1959, the two women returned to being the closest and best of friends. In *The Red and the Green*, which she dedicated to Philippa Foot in 1965, IM presented the contrast she felt between M.R.D. Foot and Frank Thompson in the character contrast between Andrew and Pat. It was Philippa who in 1944 told IM of Frank Thompson's death and she who sent IM details of the philosophy tutorship at St Anne's which enabled her to return to Oxford. She remained a more conventional moral philosopher than IM but they were always intellectually as well as emotionally close. Philippa Foot loyally helped JB to care for IM until the end of her life and hers was the last face, apart from her husband's, that IM recognised.

**Fraenkel, Eduard (1888–1970)**

Classical scholar, born in Berlin, moved to Oxford in 1934; Professor of Latin at Corpus Christi College when IM came up to Somerville in 1938. She and Mary Scrutton (Midgley) attended his renowned *Agamemnon* seminars and he became IM's first important father-figure thereafter. He published his great three-volume edition of *Agamemnon* in 1950. He and IM later quarrelled over her novels (Fraenkel probably inspired Max Lejour in *The Unicorn*) but were reconciled in 1966, after which IM dedicated *The Time of the Angels* to him. He committed suicide immediately after his wife Ruth's death, at the age of eighty-one.

**Gardiner, Stephen (1924–2002) (O.B.E. 2002)**

Architectural critic and writer. He met IM in 1965 and she encouraged him when he wrote biographies of Jacob Epstein and Elisabeth Frink.

**Grigg, John (1924–2001)**

Writer, 2<sup>nd</sup> Baron Altrincham of Tormarton, who gave up his peerage in 1963 as a matter of principle. In 1951 he contested Oldham West (unsuccessfully) for the Conservatives. Educated at Eton with JB, he went on to New College, Oxford and then into the Grenadier Guards. A columnist in the *Guardian* and *The Times*, his publications include *Young Lloyd George* (1973), *Lloyd George, the People's Champion* (1978) winner of the Whitbread award, and *Lloyd George from Peace to War* (1985), winner of a Wolfson Literary Prize. He was at JB and IM's wedding in 1956 and in 1958 married Patricia (Patsy). The Bayleys were frequent visitors at their houses in Blackheath, in Tamariu in Spain and at Guisachan in Invernesshire. The Griggs and the Bayleys travelled together in the USSR (1963), India (1967) and the Greek Islands and Menton (1973).

**Hampshire, (Sir) Stuart (1914–2004)**

Philosopher, Warden of Wadham College, Oxford (1970–84) author of, among other books, *Spinoza* (1951), *Thought and Action* (1959), *The Freedom of the Individual* (1965), *The Freedom of Mind* (1971) and *The Socialist Idea* (1975).

He met IM in the 1950s while working at New College, Oxford and then at All Souls and thereafter encountered her on several television debates. They were very attached to one other, though they quarrelled in 1960 over psychoanalysis, of which IM disapproved. IM became particularly close to him again during the summer of 1966. Though they were good friends, their philosophical views diverged as her interest in Platonism developed.

**Hart, Josephine**

Irish novelist, one of the beneficiaries of IM's will. Hart was thrilled to be invited to lunch by IM on 15 December 1985 and they established a strong friendship thereafter. She was involved in the stage production of *The Black Prince*. Hart has written the best-seller, *Damage* (1992), which became a very successful film, *The stillest Day* (1999), *Sin* (filmed in 2000) and *The Reconstructionist* (2003). In 2006 she published *Catching Life by the Throat: How to Read Poetry and Why* and set up a series of 'Poetry Hours' at the British Library.

**Harvey, Andrew (1952–)**

Writer and mystic, one of the beneficiaries of IM's will. After reading English at Exeter College, Oxford, and studying under John Bayley, he became, in 1974 at the age of twenty-one, the youngest-ever fellow of

All Souls College, Oxford. He completed a PhD on 'Shakespeare and Madness' and then became interested in Indian mysticism, following for a time the mystic, Mother Meera. In January 1994 he moved to San Francisco where he 'married' his long-term partner, Eryk Hanut, in a combined Christian, Buddhist and Jewish service. In 1994 Channel 4 made a documentary about him, *The Making of a Mystic*. His own approach to mysticism denies gurus, and is expounded in *The Direct Path* (2000).

### **Henderson, Isobel (nee Monro) (1907–1967)**

Vice-Principal of Somerville College, Oxford from 1960 to her death. In IM's time she was a Fellow and Tutor there and eagerly encouraged IM's change from reading English (the subject for which she had been accepted) to reading Classics (Mods and Greats). She had set the eccentric General Paper in which IM had acquitted herself brilliantly and in which she had shown her interest in Ancient Greek. From 1940 she taught IM the history of the ancient world.

### **Hicks, David (1916–1991)**

He graduated in PPE from Worcester College, Oxford, in 1938 and met IM while he was studying for a Diploma in Education, during her first year at Somerville. Three years older than IM, he was her first major romance at Oxford, indeed the first man to kiss her, and she spent Boxing Day 1938 with his family in London. He ended the relationship suddenly in early January 1939, and spent the war teaching English for the British Council in Egypt and Persia. IM went on writing to him and after Frank Thompson's death the relationship was rekindled. In 1945 she wrote him increasingly frequent and passionate letters from Innsbruck while working for UNRRA. In December 1945 they managed, after seven years apart, to meet in London and decided almost at once to marry. During that year alone she wrote him thirty letters (about 500 survived in all). However, in January 1946, Hicks, having fallen in love with Molly Purchase, once again dropped IM, confessing that he found her in many ways too formidable for him. Largely because of her magnanimity, their friendship survived and she was able to help him in difficult times, emotionally and probably financially. The marriage to Molly was short-lived, but IM got to know and to like his second wife, Katherine (nee Messenger), and wrote moving and consoling letters when their son Barney committed suicide in 1978. She came to his seventieth birthday party in 1986 and always claimed that something of her remained stored up with him.



**Kreisel, Georg (1923–)**

Cambridge philosopher and mathematician. His Austrian-Jewish parents sent him to England in the 1930s to escape the rise of Nazism. He studied mathematics at Trinity College, Cambridge where he came under the influence of Wittgenstein, who admired greatly his combination of mathematical and philosophical skills. A friend of Elizabeth Anscombe, he became IM's friend too during her time at Newnham College, Cambridge in 1947–48. After lecturing at Reading University, Kreisel (who was always referred to by his surname) moved to Stanford University in the USA where he stayed until his retirement in 1985. IM dedicated *An Accidental Man* to him in 1971.

**Kustow, Michael (1939–)**

Theatre director, educated at Wadham College, Oxford, directed at the RSC (1963–67), founder of Theatregoround, Assistant Director at the National Theatre (1973–81) and Commissioning Editor for Arts Programmes for Channel Four TV (1981–89). He asked IM to rewrite *Acastos* as a dialogue and produced it at the National Theatre in 1980. He also made a television programme about her, *Iris Murdoch's Art and Eros* in 1980.

**Langley, Esme Ross (1919–1992)**

Writer and social reformer, she founded the lesbian magazine *Arena 3* in the late 1960s and in the autumn of 1969 was in love with IM. She had earlier, in 1963, founded the Minorities Research Group, 'Mainland', to help people living in bed-sits. IM admired her work greatly and wrote to *The Times* to add to her obituary in 1992, saying that she had encouraged serious research and genuinely helped the feminist cause.

**Lidderdale, Hal**

A friend of David Hicks, he met and fell in love with IM while reading Greats at Magdalen College, Oxford. She liked his relaxed approach to life. During war service in Libya as Captain in No.2 Anti-Aircraft Battery he met Frank Thompson and they were drawn together by their rivalry over IM. She had stayed with Hal's mother in Woodstock near Oxford and knew his sister Jane, later a top civil servant. After the war IM and Hal met in Brussels in September 1945 and she wrote to him excitedly a few months later about her meeting with Jean-Paul Sartre, her break-up with David Hicks in 1946 and her encounter with

Raymond Queneau. Hal remained a loyal – and unmarried – admirer into the early 50s and IM's engagement with Wallace Robson. He may at some time even have regarded himself as engaged to her. He visited Cedar Lodge on his motor-bike in the later 1950s and did not marry until 1960. He died in 1992. His widow, Mary, has in her possession a hundred letters to Hal from IM.

### **Luke, David (1921–2005)**

Lecturer in German at Christ Church, Oxford, who became a friend of IM's in London in the 1960s. They shared a sympathy for the student demonstrators in 1968. In August 1984, he travelled with the Bayleys to holiday in Lanzerote with their close friends, Audi and Borys Villers. JB recorded that he himself did not enjoy that holiday.

### **MacKinnon, Donald (1913–1994)**

IM's philosophy tutor for Greats and another of IM's father-figures. A genuine eccentric, MacKinnon would suck razor-blades, sharpen pencils or even lecture (male) students from his bath during tutorials; Tom Stoppard used some of his eccentricities in the figure of 'George', Professor of Moral Philosophy, in his play, *Jumpers* (1972). A High Anglo-Catholic, MacKinnon applied his moral precepts to his life and gave his time generously to his students. His wife Lois became jealous of IM and the friendship cooled briefly in 1943, only to revive into an intense (though chaste) passion which involved both in much duplicity until MacKinnon moved to take up the Regius Chair of Moral Philosophy in Aberdeen at the end of 1947. They met again by chance in 1960, by which time MacKinnon was Norris-Hulse Professor of Divinity at Cambridge; IM suggested he visit her in London, but he refused.

### **Martin, Noel**

Fellow student, friend and admirer of IM at Corpus Christi College, Oxford, he won a First in Mods at the age of eighteen. Infatuated at his first sighting of IM, he followed her into Eduard Fraenkel's *Agamemnon* seminar. He worked as an agricultural labourer while waiting to be called up in 1940, and before leaving Oxford phoned IM to propose marriage. Rejected, he married Carol (Grace) Nethersole in 1943. He encountered IM again while in the army in Brussels in 1945, when she spoke to him of Thomas Balogh. He visited Cedar Lodge unannounced in the 1950s and remained a friend for the rest of IM's life.

**Mary Midgley (nee Scrutton, 1919–)**

Philosopher, daughter of a canon who had been chaplain at Kings College, Cambridge. She came up to Somerville in 1938, at the same time as IM, and shared her philosophy tutorials with Donald MacKinnon. During the war she worked in the Ministry of Production; in 1947 she went to Paris with IM, the first of IM's annual visits there. In 1948 she was beaten for the philosophy tutorship at St Anne's by IM but they remained friends for life, IM acting as her bridesmaid in 1950 and in 1979 writing a recommendation for the cover of Mary's *Beast and Man*. Even in the later stages of her final illness, in 1998, IM could still recall their friendship.

**Momigliano, Arnaldo (1908–1987)**

He and his wife and daughter arrived in England from Nazi Germany in 1939. He and IM first met during her undergraduate days in Oxford, but only became close in the early 1950s. In 1951 he became Professor of Ancient History at University College London and would travel up from there on Saturdays to work in the Oxford libraries, spending the evenings in IM's flat. It was he who gave IM her enthusiasm for Dante. They travelled together in Italy in 1952 and became lovers; two further Italian trips followed, in 1953 and 1955. After a break in their friendship following IM's marriage in 1956, they were reconciled in 1977 and in 1983 she dedicated *The Philosopher's Pupil* to him. He later taught at the universities of Bristol, Chicago and the Suola Normale in Pisa.

**Oakeshott, Michael (1901–1990)**

Political philosopher, Professor of Political Science at the London School of Economics (1951–69). His interest in religion led him to philosophy. A philosopher in the Anglo-Saxon tradition, his books include *Rationalism in Politics* (1962), *On Human Conduct* (1975) and *On History and Other Essays* (1983). Despite the difference in their philosophical positions, IM fell in love with him immediately upon their meeting in October 1950. The affair lasted for two months (causing great pain to Wallace Robson, with whom IM was also involved), at which point Oakeshott announced his love for someone else. The two did, however, meet and correspond vigorously again during 1958–9 and remained friends thereafter.

**O'Regan, Patrick (1920–1961)**

Irish pacifist who became an early suitor of IM while studying at Merton College, Oxford. They planned a camping holiday together.

Under her influence, he moved away from pacifism, enlisted in the Royal Army Medical Corps in 1940 and then the Special Operations Executive in 1944. He was sent to Italy, where he won the Military Cross and bar. He then had a distinguished career in the diplomatic service. He sent IM C.S. Lewis's *Allegory of Love* in the summer of 1940 and always claimed that it was she who had given him the incentive to fight.

### **Pears, David (1921–)**

Emeritus Professor of Philosophy at Christchurch College, Oxford. He translated Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* in 1961 and published a two-volume study of Wittgenstein's philosophy, *The False Prison*, 1987–8. As a student at Balliol College in 1941 he met IM on the only occasion he attended the Fraenkel *Agamemnon* seminar in 1941, and was immediately attracted by what he saw as her leonine beauty. He was sceptical of the power wielded over their students by both Eduard Fraenkel and Donald MacKinnon, but it was the latter who helped him continue with his studies when he became disillusioned with his Oxford course. He and IM became good friends only after she returned to Oxford from Cambridge in 1948, while he was Fellow and Tutor in philosophy at Corpus Christi College. Her closeness to him troubled her in the months before her marriage in 1956. She put his essay in *Mind* (on the incongruity of counterparts) into *Under the Net*. Her discussions with him on Freedom and the Will in the early 1960s prompted her to write *The Unicorn*, which she dedicated to him in 1963.

### **Pliatzky, Leo, KCB (1919–1998)**

Born in Salford, the son of a Jewish tailor from St Petersburg, Pliatzky read Honours Mods at Corpus Christi College, Oxford, and became a close friend of Frank Thompson and then of IM. In 1939 he and Frank put on a play, 'It Can Happen Here', imagining a Britain ruled by the Fascists, after which they met IM in another undergraduate's rooms in Ruskin College and became part of a close social group. Pliatzky believed himself to have been IM's first lover (sharing a room with her at her parents' home in Chiswick) and, after a brief affair, they remained close friends. Pliatzky encouraged Frank Thompson in his pursuit of IM. Later, he supplied IM with information about Jewishness for *A Fairly Honourable Defeat*, argued with her fiercely over the Vietnam War (he defended American policy against her attacks) but remained a staunch friend to the end. Pliatzky's time in the

Communist Party was much briefer than IM's. He served in Italy and Egypt during the war, was mentioned in dispatches, returned to Oxford to gain a second First-class degree, this time in PPE, and in 1950 joined the Treasury. After his retirement he completed three books on the management of the economy.

### **Queneau, Raymond (1903–1976)**

French novelist who was also a poet, critic, playwright, film-maker and philosopher. His use of Surrealism led to the development of the New Novel and he has also been compared to James Joyce. Having moved to Paris in 1930 to study philosophy, he stayed there for the rest of his career. The comic audacity of *Pierrot mon Ami* (1943) strongly influenced IM when she wrote *Under the Net*, which she dedicated to him. His *Exercices de Style* (1947) helped revive the picaresque novel while *Zazie dans le Metro* (1959) became a best-seller. IM met Queneau when he came to lecture in Brussels, in February 1946, while she was working there with UNRRA, and they became friends, continuing to meet briefly over the years during her annual visits to Paris. She openly regarded him as her first literary master: 114 letters of the many she wrote to him survive and reveal their shared rich engagement in literary, political and philosophical affairs.

### **Robson, William Wallace (1923–1993)**

Fellow in English at Lincoln College, Oxford, he moved to the University of Sussex and finally to a Professorship in the University of Edinburgh. While at Oxford he helped arrange visits by F.R. Leavis from Cambridge to the Oxford English Faculty. He worked with F.W. Bateson in founding *Essays in Criticism*. IM met him in February 1950, in Oxford, where he had been one of David Cecil's star pupils (along with John Bayley) and IM and he had a two-year relationship which led to an unofficial engagement. They met each other's parents and talked of marriage but, after many stormy periods, IM ended the affair in April 1952.

### **Scrutton, Mary (See Midgley, Mary)**

### **Simopoulos, John Charalambos**

Dean of Degrees and Emeritus Fellow of St Catherine's College, Oxford. The half-Jewish philosopher son of the Greek Ambassador to London, he met IM in the 1950s. They travelled together in France in 1954 and her emotional closeness to him was one of the factors which troubled

her before her marriage in 1956. He introduced her to the *Tintin* cartoons, which she came to love. She dedicated *The Bell* to him in 1958. In the late 1960s he challenged her about what he saw as her growing conservatism.

### **Smallwood, Norah (1910–1984)**

Publisher. She joined Chatto and Windus in 1936 and, after losing both her husband and her brother during the Second World War, threw herself into the firm, working her way up to become a partner, then a director and finally, from 1975, Chairman and Managing Director. A formidable and legendary character, she dominated Chatto and Windus and encouraged many major writers there. She was fiercely loyal to all her writers, including IM, who was one of her stars, and was awarded an Order of the British Empire for services to literature. After her retirement, Chatto and Windus merged with Virago. During the long-drawn-out illness which followed her retirement in 1982, IM sent her frequent postcards. At her memorial service in St Martin-in-the-Fields in London, Laurens van der Post gave the address and Jill Day Lewis read the lesson.

### **Smythies, Yorick**

He and Elizabeth Anscombe were Wittgenstein's star pupils in Cambridge in 1937. He gained a First in philosophy and was a conscientious objector during the war. His father had been a distinguished RAF pilot who was killed in a flying accident. Smythies himself suffered from crippling timidity and only once went abroad. Wittgenstein wrote a warm testimonial for him, helping him find a job as a librarian. He was received into the Roman Catholic Church and married Diana Pollard, but later left her for the wife of a good friend. He failed in an attempt to become a bus conductor, suffered a schizophrenic breakdown and spent time in a mental hospital. His notes from Wittgenstein's lectures were published, and he also wrote a very negative review of Bertrand Russell's *History of Western Philosophy*. IM modelled Hugo Belfounder in *Under the Net* on him and when he died in 1980, she recorded the death in the novel she was writing, *The Philosopher's Pupil*, as the death of Hugo Belfounder. He died in wretched circumstances.

### **Spender (Sir) Stephen (1909–1995)**

Poet and critic. CBE 1962, knighted 1983. Professor of English at University College London, 1970–77, thereafter Emeritus Professor. IM

heard him speak in Oxford on the Spanish Civil War in 1938 and met him again while giving occasional lectures at University College London in the early 1970s. She and JB stayed most summers from 1973 onwards at the Spenders' home, Mas Saint-Jerome, near Mausanne in the Alpilles in France. IM became so familiar with the Provence scenery that she put the house into *Nuns and Soldiers* (1980), which she dedicated to Stephen and his second wife, Natasha. It was during one of her early holidays there that she suffered the near-drowning experience which she also put into *Nuns and Soldiers*.

### **Franz Baermann Steiner (1909–1952)**

An Austrian Jew though born in Prague, Steiner went in 1930 to study Arabic at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. He identified closely with Kafka as a Jewish mystic. He was awarded a DPhil in Arabic from the Charles University in Prague and came twice to England to attend seminars on modern anthropology at the London School of Economics. During the second visit in 1938 came the Munich Agreement: Czechoslovakia was given up to the Nazis and Franz could never return home. He later learned that his parents had died in Treblinka. He became a follower of Elias Canetti, through whom he met IM. He lost all his DPhil research on a train at Reading and had to begin three years' work again, but eventually in 1950 was appointed Lecturer in Social Anthropology at the Anthropological Institute in Oxford. He was also a gifted and powerful poet. The affair with IM was passionate on both sides and made more poignant by their shared knowledge that their physical passion might well be exacerbating his heart condition. He died, possibly in her arms, on Wednesday, 19 November 1952 at the age of forty-three.

### **Stone, Janet (1912–1998)**

When she married Reynolds Stone, Janet Stone gave up a singing career and instead made a career as a much-loved hostess at the Old Rectory, Litton Cheney, the Stones' Dorset home for 26 years. They entertained writers and painters like Frances Cornford, John Piper and John Betjeman every summer as well as the Bayleys. IM, in dedicating *A Fairly Honourable Defeat* to them both, was suggesting their achievement in maintaining a certain sort of civilised Englishness. Janet Stone's photography has captured some of the most telling images of IM and JB. In 1988, with IM's help and encouragement, she produced a book of her photographs, *Thinking Faces*. A collection of her black-and-white prints is in the National Portrait Gallery, all revealing the spir-

itual depth of her sitters. On her husband's sudden death in 1978, she gave up the house and stopped entertaining. At her memorial service in St Mary's Church, Litton Cheney, John Bayley gave the address, as IM had given the address at Reynolds Stone's memorial service. IM was close to all four of the Stone children and allowed their elder daughter, Phillida to hold her twenty-first birthday party in her London flat in the 1980s.

### **Stone, Reynolds**

Wood-engraver and painter. The Bayleys met him and his wife Janet in 1961 at Lord David Cecil's house in Dorset and were regular guests thereafter at their home, The Old Rectory, Litton Cheney, along with many other writers and artists. Stone and IM collaborated on *A Year of Birds* in 1978. The Stones and Bayleys holidayed together in Pembrokeshire in 1972 and the west of Ireland in 1975 and in 1978 travelled together to Assisi, where Reynolds fell ill. He died suddenly of a stroke several months later. IM's address at his memorial service was later published.

### **Thompson, Frank (1920–1944)**

Reading Mods at New College, Oxford, Frank was highly gifted, an idealistic poet who knew six languages and was expected to achieve great things. He and IM saw each other several times before they met properly, after a student play about the rise of Fascism. Frank declared that he found the Liberal Club too frivolous and was immediately recruited by IM into the Communist Party. He read round the subject, found its idealism attractive and agreed to join. In their youthful student set, Frank pined for IM while being himself the object of attraction for IM's friend Leonie Marsh, who was herself adored by M.R.D. Foot. Frank acted the part of the careless student, writing poetry and getting drunk, but revealed his essential serious-mindedness by also working to help Jewish refugees. His sonnet 'To Irushka at the Coming of War' anticipates his own death. He volunteered for the army, having just turned nineteen, the day before the formal outbreak of hostilities, on 2 September 1939 – though he could have remained safe, as an undergraduate, until his twentieth birthday. He was also going against the Communist Party pacifist line at the time. In August 1940 Frank was transferred from the Royal Artillery to 'Phantom', a small intelligence unit, with which he was posted, in March 1941, to the Middle East. The letters between him and IM grew in emotional commitment and intensity for four years and it is obvious that both should become



writers. When IM confessed to him that she had lost her virginity to two different men, neither of whom mattered to her, the effect on the idealistic Frank seems to have been an urge to take more risks – and this meant negotiating a posting to Serbia, where he joined the Bulgarian Communist partisans, was captured by the Fascist government forces, and eventually shot. He remained a powerful presence in IM's heart and imagination for the rest of her life.

### **Tracy, Honor Lilbush Wingfield (1913–1989)**

Irish novelist and travel writer (though born in Suffolk) who delighted in scandalising liberal opinion. She worked during the war for the Ministry of Information and met the Bayleys on one of their visits to Dublin in the 1950s. She and IM were drawn together by their shared English/Irish background. Her comments in letters to Lucy Klatschko (Sister Marian) suggest an acerbic wit at IM's expense and a refusal to sympathise with IM's romanticism and capacity for self-invention. IM generously supported her financially and paid her a fulsome tribute, in a letter to their mutual friend, Lucy, when she died, calling her brave and noble. Tracy produced thirteen novels, often lampooning the Irish literary scene. They include *The Straight and Narrow Path* (1958), *The Beauty of the World* (1967) and *The Quiet End of Evening* (1970). Her best-known travel book is *The Winter in Castille* (1974) and she achieved some success with *The Heart of England* (1983). She was a Roman Catholic but of a very independent type who perhaps never achieved the commercial success she needed to satisfy her need for independence. She settled on Achill Island, County Mayo, but as her health failed IM was instrumental in finding her a place in a nursing home in England and she died in Oxford. IM was deeply affected by her death.

### **Wilson, A.N. (Andrew Norman) (1950–)**

Novelist, biographer and reviewer. A student of JB's at New College, Oxford, he soon became close to IM too. He trained for the priesthood but abandoned the church, first for teaching and then to lecture in English at Oxford. Among his novels are *The Sweets of Pimlico* (1977), *The Healing Art* (1980) and *Gentlemen in England* (1985). He has written biographies of, among others, Sir Walter Scott (1980), Tolstoy (1988) and C.S. Lewis (1990) and was chosen by IM to be her own biographer. Although he soon found the role of official biographer unpalatable, he published *Iris Murdoch As I Knew Her* (2003). His biography of *Jesus* (1992) and *The Victorians* (2002) have both been acclaimed.

**Wollheim, Richard (1923–2004)**

Emeritus Professor of Philosophy at Berkeley, California and at University College London and author of, among other books, *F.H. Bradley* (1959), *Socialism and Culture* (1961), *On Art and Mind* (1973), *Painting as an Art* (1987), *The Mind and its Depths* (1993) and *On the Emotions* (1999) as well as a novel, *A Family Romance* (1969). He met IM in London at a summer weekend joint session of the Aristotelian Society and Mind, and invited her to give a short series of lectures at University College London in 1966. They were good friends while she taught at the RCA in the 1960s and he joined her in expressing solidarity with striking French students in 1968.

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# Appendix

## Works by Iris Murdoch

### Novels

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*Bruno's Dream* (16 January 1969)  
*A Fairly Honourable Defeat* (29 January 1970)  
*An Accidental Man* (21 October 1971)  
*The Black Prince* (22 February 1973)  
*The Sacred and Profane Love Machine* (21 March 1974)  
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*Henry and Cato* (23 September 1976)  
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