## A life of contrasts

Montie Porch—born into the family of landed gentry, Oxford, volunteer in the Boer War, adventurer, archaeologist, artist, an administrator in the Colonial Service and a soldier in the military in Africa before and during the First World War, husband of the most famous and glamorous woman of her time, then of the daughter of an Italian aristocrat, a fortuitous refugee from pre-war Italy; and an elderly gentleman living quietly, until a peaceful death at the ripe old age of 87, in the town of his birth.

This is clearly a life of extraordinary contrasts, a life lived to the full in momentous times and, in some part, among the great and the good. Some have described Montie's as a charmed life. It would seem so.

Over the course of this short biography we shall try to unravel some of the mystery that is Montie, to reveal the man behind a rather secretive veneer, who shunned the limelight but who was once irresistibly drawn to it for ever through his love for a woman nearly 30 years his senior.

## Sources

It is no surprise that the information about Montie's life for the few brief years of his famous marriage is plentiful, but, on the whole, quite scarce for the rest. Indeed, readers who have accessed the excellent article on Montie on the Churchill Centre website and the relevant sections in the biographies of Jennie Churchill may be disappointed not to discover much that is new in what follows. It is also quite possible that there are some who knew Montie himself and could add more to his story. Therefore, apologies are offered for any aspects of this biography that may be considered inaccurate or inadequate.

As already stated, Montie's life is, obviously, explored to a greater or

lesser degree in the many biographies of the Churchill family and of Jennie in particular, most notably, in the two-volume *Lady Randolph Churchill* by Ralph G. Martin, which draws on quotes from an interview with Montie himself that appeared in the press in 1959, and from details contained in the Oswald Frewen Papers.

Other biographies and sources used are listed in the Acknowledgements, together with the names of those who have generously contributed to the biography in different ways.

## Early years

Montagu (occasionally with a final *e*) Phippen Porch was born on 15 March 1877 at the Abbey House in Glastonbury, the third child of Reginald and Anne Porch. Reginald was the second son of Thomas Porch Porch *(see family tree on centre pages)* and therefore younger brother of John Albert Porch, the last "Squire of Edgarley", while Anne,

*Wedding party of Reginald Porch and Annie Austin at Abbey House, 1870*

who was born in Geelong, Australia, was the daughter of James Austin, several times Mayor of Glastonbury, and the then owner of the Abbey and the Abbey House. James was one of the many Austins who had made their fortune in Tasmania and Victoria, but he was one of the few who came home to flaunt their influence and wealth, and spend it on such things as the Abbey!

In the photo of the wedding party of Reginald and Annie, as she was known, outside the Abbey House in 1870, stands Reginald's father Thomas Porch Porch on the far left, with Reginald's elder brother, Albert, next towards the centre.
Annie's father, the white-haired James Austin, is just behind her on her left.

The first photo of Montie, aged about 4, must have been taken around the time of the 1881 census when he is recorded as living at the Abbey House with his maternal grandparents, James and Rebecca Austin.

By then, three children had been born to Annie and Reginald, the eldest, Austin, in Bengal.

*Montie, about 4 years old*

Besides Montie and his brother, the 1881 census lists two girls, Jessie, 9, born in Glastonbury, and baby Ethelind (better known as Queenie), who was born in Weston-super-Mare. Yet to arrive is Montie's youngest sister, Winifred, born the following year in India.

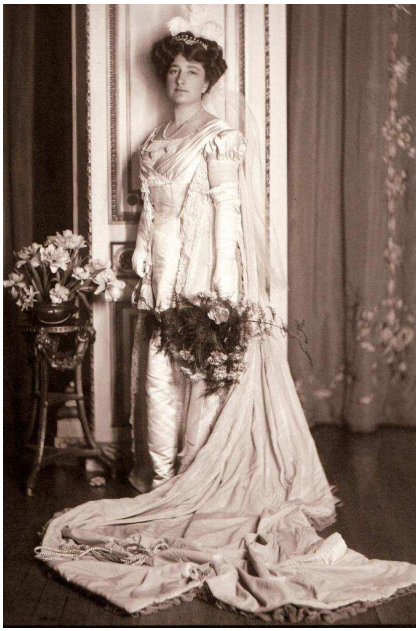
If Montie's parents were not on the 1881 census, where were they? Well, doubtless in India, where Reginald had been a civil servant since 1861 and where Annie was pregnant with Winnie. It is quite possible that the photo of Montie in sailor outfit was taken to send to Reginald so that he

could see his son for the first time.

## Immediate family

Austin, who was educated at St Peter's in Weston-super-Mare, Clifton College and Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, where he matriculated in 1889, became a private tutor and breeder of Great Danes. He married Eileen Greenslade in 1897 but the marriage was destined not to last because of his homosexuality, although there was a son Esmé, who became a professional soldier with the East Surreys, a regiment in which several other Porches served, and a daughter, Bryda. Of Esmé's two marriages, the first was a very favourable one to the Burma Oil heiress Vivian Finlay, the prolific romantic novelist who wrote mainly under the names Alex or Vivian Stuart, who bore him two daughters, Gillian and Jennifer. From his second marriage, Esmé inherited a son and a daughter. His sister, Bryda, also married twice, and had one daughter, Sally, from the first marriage.

*Austin and Montie, about 1888*



*Montie's sister Jessie at Court, 1912*

As for Montie's sisters, the eldest, Jessie, never married despite being presented at court by Mrs Patrick Campbell. She lived at Edgarley Lodge from 1927 for some years, also in Magdalene Street, then at Southfield in Bere Lane, becoming known as one of the two elderly Porch spinsters residing there—Dorothy Porch, a cousin, was the other. Eventually Jessie had to move to Mount Avalon, at that time a residential care home on Windmill Hill, where she died in 1966.

Ethelind, or Queenie, married Edward Gillmore, an architect and well-known local rugby player and cricketer from Weston-super-Mare, in 1905. They went to live in Paddington for a time, but eventually divorced. Queenie then married a Reginald Horton in 1935 at St Audries, West Quantoxhead, where she died, childless, in 1967, at the age of 87.

Winifred ("Winnie"), the youngest of Reginald and Annie's children, was born in India in 1882. She never married and lived in Glastonbury for most of her life, including at Edgarley Lodge from 1927, and at the red-brick Elton Cottages, near Edgarley. However, we know from a letter Montie wrote in 1957 that Winnie was a patient at Bailbrooke Mental Hospital near Bath, where in fact she died just a year later, aged 76.


*Ethelind ("Queenie") in later life*

*Winnie in middle age*

One other relation who seems to have been a mainly lifelong Glastonbury resident, was Montie's cousin, Dorothy, the only child of his uncle Arthur and aunt Elizabeth. Dorothy, who never married, lived at Southfield from 1932 until her death in 1967. She trained as a nurse and was in the Women's Royal Naval Service in the First World War, but was better known in Glastonbury as the owner of a stubborn Pyrenean Mountain dog and as a woman who possessed the unusual ability, for that time, to decarbonize her own car, a Hillman 80!

*Southfield, in Bere Lane, Glastonbury, was the home of cousins Jessie and Dorothy Porch until 1967, and of a nephew, Robin, and his family until 1969. It then became a boarding house for Millfield School. Finally in 2004 it was demolished to make way for a small development of houses called Porch Close.*

## The absent father

The first family photo to have come to light, taken around 1888 when Montie was about 10 and Austin 18, is significant for the absence of one particular member. As it is, we have Jessie at the back, rather statuesque, Queenie on the right, with a bit of a twinkle in her eye, and, on the left, dear Winnie, looking wistfully beyond the camera.

One might, at first glance, assume that Reginald was continuing to carry out his colonial duties in India. Sadly, no; her dress and the look on poor Annie's face tell all—that there was no longer a head of the family, for Reginald had died of fever at Poona in June 1886.

*The 1888 family photo was taken at the studio of Edwards Bros in Weston-super-Mare.*

A fine stained-glass window in the south transept of St Benedict's Church, Glastonbury, where Montie was almost certainly baptized, was put up by Annie in memory of her husband.

Annie continued to bring up her children without the help of a second husband and seemed to remain close to them. She lived in Weston-super-Mare until 1925, when she moved back to Edgarley Lodge to be looked after by her two unmarried daughters, Jessie and Winnie, until her death early in 1932 at the age of 75. Her obituary in the local paper states, rather sadly, that she was an invalid for most of the seven years she was back in Glastonbury and, having spent long periods abroad, was "not well known to the current generation".

## School and Oxford

In 1891, five years or so after his father's death, the census has Montie, at the age of 14, living in Bath and attending Bath College for Boys, which was originally situated in Bathwick at the old Sydney Hotel (now the Holburne Museum). The school was founded in 1878, but clearly did not flourish, closing before the end of the century.

As for the rest of the family, which now included Montie's youngest sister Winnie, aged 9, the census records them as living at 4 South Road, Weston-super-Mare, in a property known as Bancoorah House—so named in memory of Reginald after the town and district (now Bankura) in Bengal for which he had responsibility. Bancoorah House is now incorporated into Addington House, Madeira Road.

After Bath College for Boys, Montie progressed to Madgalen College, Oxford, as a "commoner", or student without a scholarship or exhibition, spending three or four interrupted years there, 1897–99 and 1901–02.

One might assume that Montie was not unhappy to be away from Glastonbury around this time, given that 1897 was the year, so catastrophic for the wider Porch family, that his cousin, Edith, Squire Albert's only daughter, was found guilty of murdering her husband—a crime that effectively put an end to the Edgarley Porches' peerless reputation and influence in this part of the world. (The poisoning case, which took place in Japan, is covered in full in my companion booklet *Victorian Edgarley: the fall of the House of Porch*.)

## The Boer War

As the Madgalen College archives do not show what he read, we must assume that Montie studied for a Pass degree, which was less demanding than an Honours. This was just as well, perhaps, since he obtained a special dispensation to break off his studies in 1900 to serve in the Boer War, enlisting in the February, at the age of 22 years 10 months, as a

Trooper (Private) in the 47th Company, 13th Battalion of the Duke of Cambridge's Own Special Corps of Imperial Yeomanry (nicknamed the "Millionaires' Own" because of the number of hugely wealthy men in its ranks!).

Montie's medical examination states that he was 5 feet 7 inches tall and weighed 138 pounds, and that he had dark blue eyes, black hair and a scar over his left eye.

Montie's 188 days of service in Transvaal and the Orange Free State were undoubtedly far less glorious than that of two of Squire Albert's sons, his cousins Bertie and Cecil, in particular the latter, who was welcomed back to Glastonbury as a hero after being wounded at the battle of Spion Kop. Indeed it is almost certain that Montie was involved in one of the major reverses of the whole war: in May 1900, the 13th Battalion under Lt Col Spragge, having allowed themselves to be lured into a trap, surrendered near Lindley following a battle at Yeomanry Hills, a surrender when relief was but minutes away.

The 500 prisoners, of whom Montie was doubtless one, were released a few months later when British forces captured Pretoria, but the loss of this elite battalion of landed gentry caused a national outcry in England and resulted in an Imperial Commission into what became known as the "Lindley Affair".

Montie, having been awarded a Queen's Medal and three clasps, returned to Oxford to complete his studies, receiving his BA in 1902 and his MA in 1904.

## Archaeology in Sinai

Montie may well have studied and developed a love of archaeology at Oxford, since local newspapers in Weston-super-Mare in 1903 report on his donation to Weston Museum of flint chips he had discovered in the Hutton and Banwell Hills, and their display in glass cabinets.

*Montie's flints in the Flinders Petrie Museum.*

This interest took him much further afield in the winter of 1904–05, when we find Montie in the Sinai peninsula with the eminent archaeologist Professor Flinders Petrie and his Egyptian Exploration Fund, exploring the area to which the ancient Egyptians had gone to mine turquoise. Margaret Drower in her book *A Life in Archaeology* describes how "Montague Porch, a gentleman of independent means, who was anxious to add to his collection of palaeolithic flints, asked to accompany the expedition for part of the time."

Early in December 1904 Montie and his Italian manservant joined the party at Wadi-el-Maghara (Valley of the Caves) and they set up an enclosure with tents. They needed to be on guard, for the local Bedouin had a reputation for being untrustworthy and uncooperative. True to form, they not only refused to disclose the whereabouts of the nearest well (Petrie eventually found one, much to the Bedouin's wonderment, by simply keeping his eye on a lone camel walking in the direction of the well!) but also stole stores. In fact one day Montie's manservant, Lorenzo, caught two of the thieves in a trap, although unfortunately they escaped before the others in the party could respond to Montie's gunshots.

Two days after this incident Montie left the expedition to look for palaeolithics in the Nile Valley.

In 1905 Montie gave a paper to the Somerset Archaeological & Natural History Society about the expedition, and in Flinders Petrie's own report,

*Researches in Sinai*, he describes Montie as the "discoverer of a well-marked flake of flint at 15ft. deep in an old filling of Wady Meghara".

The flint that Petrie mentions may be one of the three which made their way, in the first instance, to the Weston-super-Mare Museum and then many years later, in 1960, to the Flinders Petrie Museum at University College London, where they still are.

Montie's search for flints in Sinai was not to the exclusion of all else, as testified by a small sketchbook of his, now in the possession of the Hucker family in Glastonbury. In it are some delightful miniature watercolours of desert landscapes, plus others of rural and hunting scenes from the southwest of England, painted either from memory in Egypt or upon his return.

In view of all this it is entirely likely that Montie was acquainted with the Abbey archaeologist Frederick Bligh Bond, who, coincidentally like Montie's sister, Winnie, lived for a short while at Elton Cottages in


*Montie's watercolour of Bedouins at Kosseir (dated January 1905).*

Coursing Batch, Glastonbury, and, like Montie himself much later, at Abbot's Leigh, adjacent to the Abbey ruins. Additionally, Bond's family lived very near the Porch home in Weston-super-Mare, and Bond had attended St Peter's School in Weston as Austin had, and Bath College, like Montie.

## West Africa

His studies at Oxford and adventures in Sinai over, it was time for young Montie to find a career for himself. It was Africa that called him back—this time the west rather than the northeast—proving the old colonial maxim that it was to this continent that second sons went to further themselves, while first sons went to India.

So in 1906, when his future stepson, Winston Churchill, was Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, Montie applied to join the Colonial Service. Interviewed by Sir Edward Marsh, Churchill's private secretary, he was assigned to Nigeria as a Third-Class Resident. Later Montie was quoted as saying, in typically unassuming fashion, that he remembered Marsh asking him if he rode and that because he was able to reply he had—with the Taunton Vale Foxhounds—he was given a job in Northern Nigeria! (There were four grades of Administrative Officer in the African Colonial Service—First, Second, Third Class and Assistant Residents.)

In 1907 Montie was placed in charge of the division at the town of Jema'an Daroro in Nassarawa province (now part of Plateau state) serving under four successive Residents who were stationed at the provincial headquarters in Keffi, 500 miles northeast of Lagos.

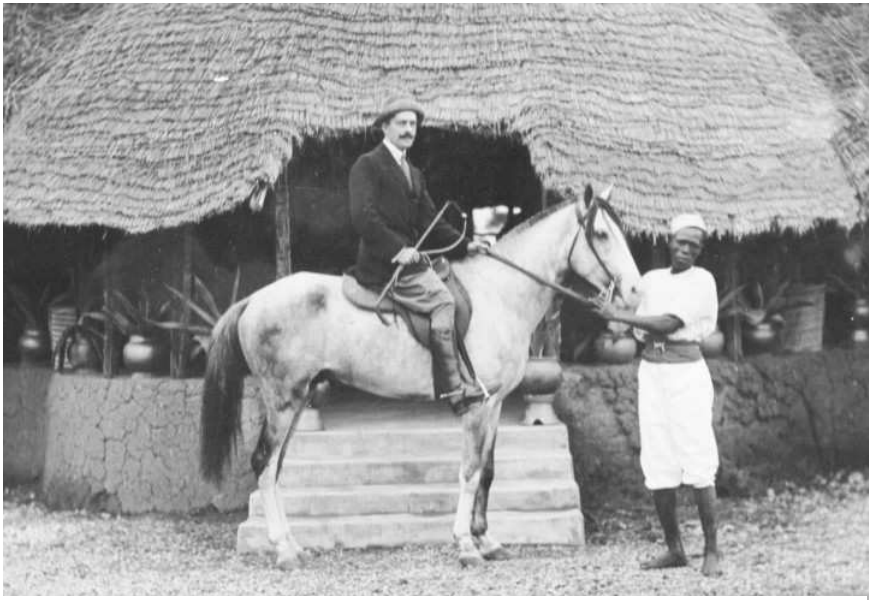
Northern Nigeria was not at all an easy posting. Sir Percy Girouard, the then Governor, described the region as "backward and unsatisfactory", and was very uncomplimentary about its main tribe, the Kagoro.

It is not surprising, therefore, that Montie, who had been told to collect "tribute", did so with some difficulty. In fact on several expeditions his

detachment was fired upon, and on one occasion there were several casualties, including one death, among his men.

After an investigation of these events, Montie was, rather harshly perhaps, held responsible by the Resident and was relieved of his post. However, the following year he was given a reprieve by the Governor and allowed to return to Nigeria, this time to the provincial office in Zaria, a town 500 miles northeast of Lagos, which today has half a million inhabitants.

Montie was never again entrusted with the charge of a division, but he seems to have done well, particularly at road-making. In later life he claimed to have built the first town of Kaduna, the settlement created for the construction of the railway line. This was certainly a time of



*Montie on his horse Purde, winner of the maiden race at the first Durbar, 24 June 1911 at Zaria in Northern Nigeria. The Durbar festival was introduced to Nigeria by colonial administrators, and there is little doubt that Montie would have been instrumental in setting up the very first race in Zaria. The race is now the central part of the internationally famous Durbar festivals which mark the end of Ramadan, the Muslim month of fasting, at several cities in that part of Nigeria.*

opportunity and growth for Nigeria, and Montie's efforts would have been instrumental in the development of trade.

In this long, settled period from 1908 to 1914, Montie built for himself a large, impressive house in traditional Northern Nigerian style, near the Emir's palace in the centre of Zaria City.

## Jennie

His time in Nigeria is crucial to the next step of Montie's life since it is there that he becomes the friend of Hugh Frewen, Assistant Resident in Northern Nigeria, and Private Secretary to the Governor. Hugh was the son of Moreton and Clara Frewen (née Jerome), the sister of Jennie Churchill, and it is in 1914, at Hugh's wedding in Rome to the daughter of an Italian duke, that Montie and Jennie meet.

Anita Leslie writes that Jennie was attracted to Montie in various ways: the eerie feeling she had for ancient Egypt where Montie had gone with Petrie, and the admiration she had for men who had volunteered to fight in the Boer War. She also records that Hugh's was a mixed marriage — a rarity then — and that, "when the Roman Catholic priest delivered more a scolding than a blessing, Montie's humorous black eyes met Jennie's in amusement".

At the wedding party, Montie asked her to dance, but Jennie smiled and suggested that he go and dance with some of the younger girls. Montie was then 37, three years younger than Winston.

They met at lunch the following day and then several times over the next fortnight, visiting monuments and discovering a shared love of music. Both played the piano *[see footnote page 43]*. Their friendship deepened to the point where Jennie felt able to comment on the snow-whiteness of his hair, and shortly afterwards she described in a letter to her sister, Leonie Leslie (the third of the Jerome sisters), how she had met a young man she would probably marry.

## The Great War

Back in Nigeria that same year, Montie is soon involved in military activity. The German authorities in the Cameroons had sent troops into the southeastern extremity of Northern Nigeria, and a company was sent to drive them out. Montie accompanied the column as Intelligence Officer, attached to the Nigeria Regiment, with the rank of Temporary Lieutenant, and was well reported on by the commanding officer.

Letters between Jennie and Montie started to flow in both directions. Montie's brimmed with a mix of information and restrained emotion.

His first, written on the boat which had taken him to Nigeria, describes the aspirations he held for his country, and for her friendship and approval. He also writes about the young soldier servant and the dog he has taken with him—a Great Dane, perhaps one of the pedigrees bred by his brother Austin at his home "Dane End", in Northwood, Middlesex.

In other letters, in October 1914, he describes the difficult conditions in the fighting against the Germans:

> Your dear letter written on the eve of "Armageddon" finds your humble friend at the front beating back the attacks of the covetous Hun.

*Montie in 1918, at the time of his marriage to Jennie.*

> Lots of scrapping we had & I lost some gallant comrades. As yet our campaign has received little recognition—far greater dangers than trench work have been endured by our men who winter and summer have braved swamp and jungle, fever and bush ambuscades, heavy marches & fighting in terrible heat. Tormented by insects, stung by all the creatures of the bush, scorched by un-shaded sun in the fiercest heat of an African summer —such has been our lot.

In a letter dated 2 October 1915 he tells of his return to Zaria as Resident and his task of collecting taxes from tribes who had been emboldened upon learning that "all white men of consequence" had gone off to the Great War.

Three weeks later he is about to return by boat to the UK:

> I am 5 months overdue for leave and sail on October 26th. I shall go straight to Kewstoke Somerset, where a patient old housekeeper & a man await me in a roomy cottage poised on a spur of the Mendip which dips into the Bristol Channel. I dread the first few days in Somt. Relations to be visited & tenants seen. I shall hie me to town. I shall live at the United Empire Club quite near you but won't be a nuisance. I'll only come when I'm called. Edgarley Lodge my little place near Glastonbury has just been let on a seven years' lease!—Thank goodness.

Montie is not unaware of the horrors unfolding in Europe, not least because of deaths in Jennie's family, and writes in the same letter of late October 1915:

> Ohimè *["Oh dear" in Italian]*, this horrible sickening war, will it ever end. Almost all the men one has ever heard of seem to be either killed or wounded. Poor Lady Leslie, I heard of her loss. All my men kith & kin are in the trenches save brother-in-law Gillmore who is with his regiment in India.
>
> It is well for you that you have lots to do, dear friend, you will then have less time for grief and heartache. I am indeed glad you are running the American hospital. History repeats itself. Jan: 15 years ago, I, a trooper coming of age on my way to the front, passed a gorgeously equipped American hospital run by one of the most brilliant & beautiful women in

> England. Now you are again taking your part in this bigger & more frightful war.
>
> I too have played my small part all they would let me do.
>
> Au revoir, dear Lady Randolph,
>
> Your devoted friend
>
> M.P.

The hospital ship Montie refers to is the converted cattle transport—the *Maine*—which Jennie had famously kitted out in 1900 to care for the wounded of both sides in the Boer War. Montie may be stretching the facts a little here—to encourage a hoped-for shared destiny perhaps—since the *Maine*, with Jennie aboard, had already arrived in South Africa in January 1900 whereas Montie's troop ship did not reach Cape Town until late February, when the *Maine* was berthed in Durban.

In June 1916 Montie is back as Resident in Zaria in bullish mood, describing the three railways in his Province and his confidence that Kaduna would become the future capital of Nigeria.

On his next leave in November 1916 he meets Jennie again. By then he had fallen in love.

At this point Ralph Martin writes:

> Montagu Porch resembled George Cornwallis-West [Jennie's second husband, whom she had divorced in 1914] only in that they were both very handsome. But Montie was a much less forceful man, and he did not have George's aggressive gallantry with women. His background was that of a country squire in Glastonbury. His neighbours there described him as "nature's own gentlemen", "a quiet man and a kind man", "a man of old-fashioned courtesy". "You never knew what he was really thinking and he seldom told you..." "...At a meeting he would always agree with the majority."
>
> A close friend was later quoted as saying "He was a very dapper man—the kind of man you would expect to wear spats, though he never did."

## Engagement and wedding

1917 was another year of service in Africa for Montie. Then early in April 1918, on leave again, he and Jennie were invited to the beautiful estate of Jennie's brother-in-law, Sir John Leslie, at Castle Leslie in County Monaghan, Ireland. They stayed for two weeks, a happy, comfortable couple who had seemingly come to an unspoken understanding about their future together: many years later, Montie admitted that he couldn't remember proposing!

The Sketch

No. 1323—Vol. CII. WEDNESDAY, JUNE 5, 1918 ONE SHILLING.

THE WEDDING OF LADY RANDOLPH CHURCHILL : THE BRIDE AND BRIDEGROOM LEAVING AFTER THE CEREMONY.

The wedding of Lady Randolph Churchill and Mr. Montagu Porch took place on Saturday last. Mr. Porch, who is forty-one, belongs to an old English family. He served with the Yeomanry in South Africa, and has since been attached to the Political Department of the Nigerian Government. He and Lady Randolph are shortly leaving for Nigeria. Originally Miss Jennie Jerome, of New York, she married Lord Randolph Churchill in 1874. He died in 1895, and in 1900 she married Mr. George Cornwallis-West, whom she divorced in 1913. —[Photograph by Farringdon Photo. Co.]

*The Sketch, dated Wednesday 5 June 1918.*

As if to seal his life with hers, Montie planted a Glastonbury Thorn in the grounds of Castle Leslie, a thorn that the present Sir John Leslie has recently confirmed still flourishes near the boat house.

Winston, then 44, according to Montie, 41, was "very surprised" by the news of the engagement—without doubt something of an understatement, since it might well be politically

embarrassing for him. He was also reported as saying that he hoped marriage wouldn't become the vogue among ladies of his mother's age.

For his part, Montie writes to Winston the morning of the wedding on 1 June 1918, reassuring his future son-in-law of his commitment to his mother, and his willingness to share all her difficulties and obligations.

He adds rather poignantly: "It seems almost incredible that today, when our world is in anguish, I should be allowed so much happiness", and he ends with the promise that he and Winston would be "good friends".

The wedding was unheralded and simple. The couple arrived at the Register Office in Harrow Road quite unnoticed. Jennie wore a grey coat and skirt and a light-green toque, Montie an officer's uniform—which may not have been a good move, as we shall see.

The *New York Times* had announced the engagement on 31 May—as had the London *Times*—and followed it up with a report on the marriage itself two days later, one day earlier than the London *Times*:

**LADY CHURCHILL WED TO MONTAGU PORCH**

**DIPLOMAT TO LEAVE FOR NIGERIA, WHERE BRIDE, FORMER JENNIE JEROME OF NEW YORK, IS TO JOIN HIM**

Special Cable to the New York Times

LONDON, 1st June—Lady Randolph Churchill was married to Montagu Porch at Paddington Registry today. The bridegroom leaves Monday for Nigeria, where he is in civil service. His bride expects to rejoin him in the autumn. It is stated that a wife can obtain a passport to join her husband, when a fiancée in these days is often refused a passport to go out and get married abroad. This is understood to be one reason for Lady Randolph Churchill's hurried marriage.

Lady Randolph Churchill was formerly Miss Jennie Jerome, daughter of the late Leonard Jerome of this city. She married Lord Randolph Churchill in 1874, the second son of the seventh Duke of Marlborough. He died in 1895 after a brilliant political career, in which his American wife had a great share. Five years after the death of Lord Churchill, she announced her

engagement to Lieutenant George Cornwallis-West, a close friend of her son, Winston Churchill. But she was divorced from him in 1914 and the courts allowed her to use her more famous name.

Lady Churchill was one of the first women of the English aristocracy to take up war nursing and has been very active in this work during the present war.

The Times reported the marriage on Monday 3 June, in a little more detail but with no mention of Jennie's American background.

The *Tatler* printed their photo on its front page two days later.

It was reported that the witnesses signed the register in the following order: Winston, Sir John Leslie, Mrs Clara Moreton Frewen, Mrs Winston Churchill, Lady Islington, Miss Winifred Maud Porch, Lady Gwendoline Churchill (wife of Winston's brother, Jack) and Lady Sarah Wilson.

The story goes that, having signed the register, Winston said to Montie, "I know you'll never regret you married her", which, Montie said many years later, he never did.


The TATLER

LADY RANDOLPH CHURCHILL MARRIES AGAIN

*Published a few days after their wedding (see back cover of this booklet).*

Afterwards, the bride and the bridegroom left for a destination which was not disclosed—one report says this was Windsor, but there is a strong suggestion that the newlyweds went on to Weston-super-Mare to stay in Montie's house at St George's, one of several properties he had there, which enabled him to introduce his new bride to his mother.

## Trouble on all fronts

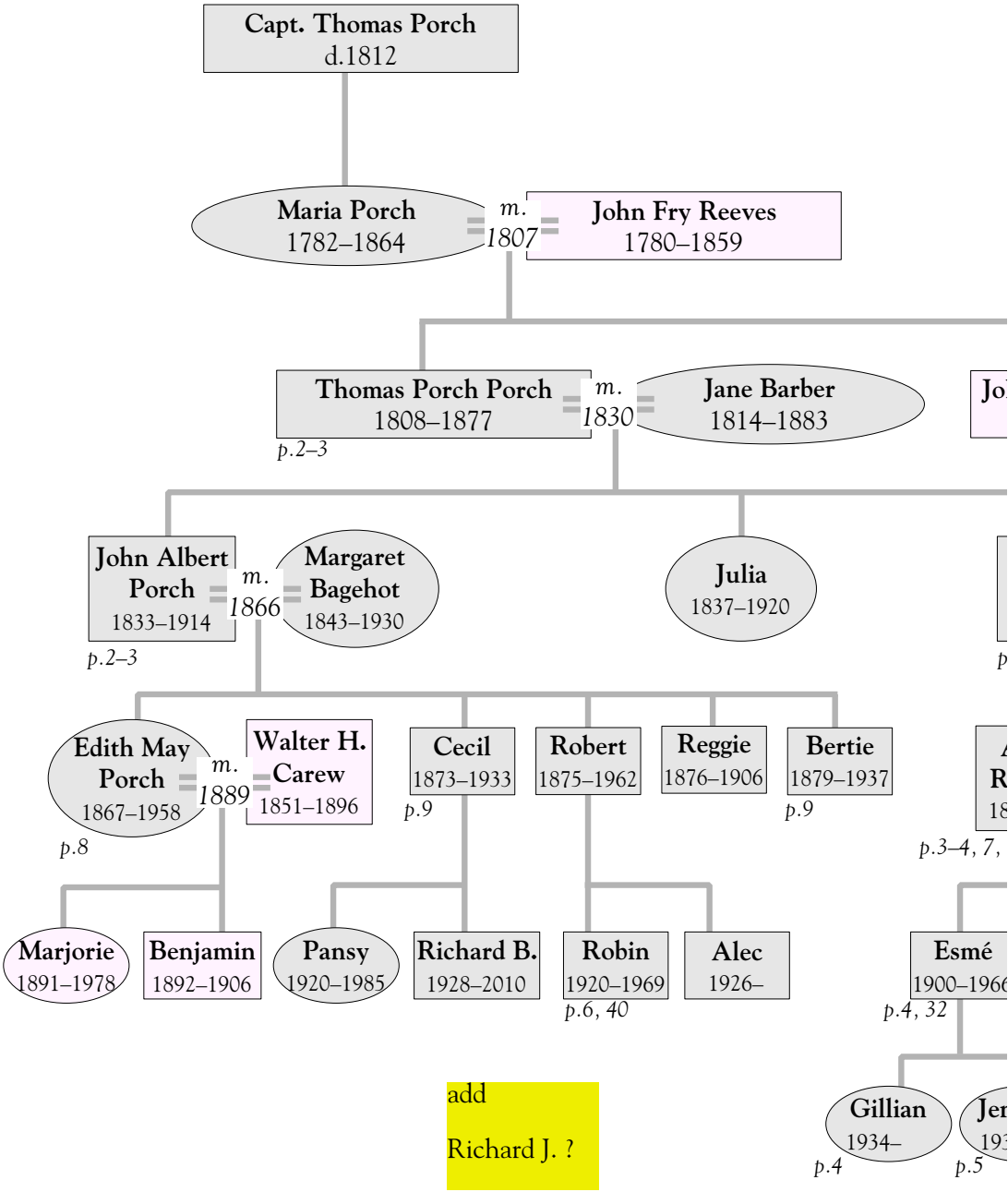
However, Montie got into hot water with the authorities over his absence, since he did not report to Crown Agents on arriving back in England, as officers were requested to do. He was without doubt totally absorbed by his love for Jennie and was quite prepared to bend the rules to please her.

To complicate matters further, he had applied in March that year for permission to accept an appointment to the Hedjaz Mission, which was organizing the Arab revolt against the Turks. However, he failed to mention that his leave had expired, and in any event the Governor-General of Nigeria refused to release Montie because of a shortage of staff.

That wasn't the only problem. Jennie was determined to marry a soldier in uniform as she had with George Cornwallis-West. Montie obliged by obtaining an officer's uniform and added in the marriage register after his name "Lieutenant, West African Frontier Force", which was stretching a point somewhat by claiming a title he had not used since at least 1916!

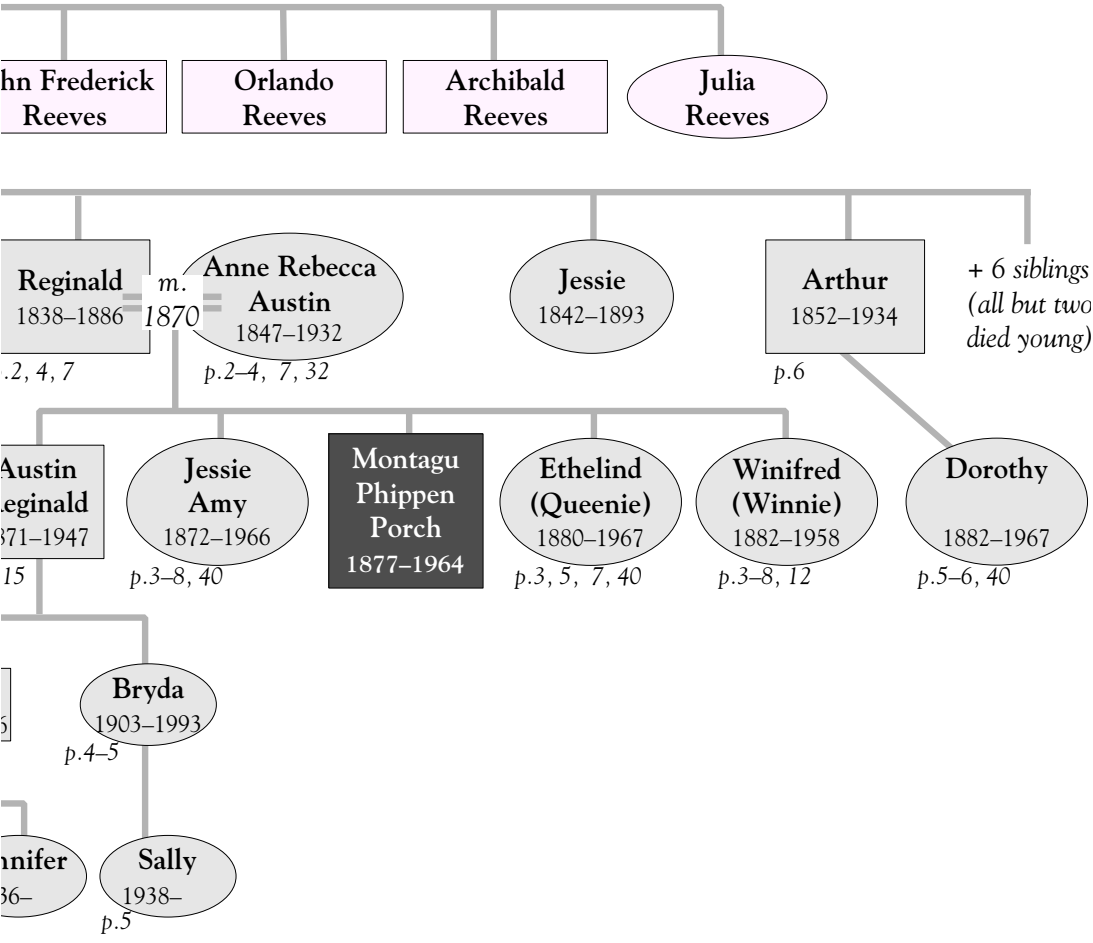
Eventually, newspapers and magazines with photographs of the happy pair reached Zaria, to the obvious displeasure of the Commandant of the depot of the Nigeria Regiment, who threatened to prosecute Montie for wearing a uniform to which he was not entitled. Montie responded that he had been in effect an officer with the Cameroons column, and would have been an officer with the Hedjaz Mission had he been allowed to join it. He also explained his own excitement at his wedding, and Jennie's insistence!

While these matters were being considered, Montie did return to Nigeria, although without Jennie, who was not allowed to accompany him, civilian travel being restricted for the duration of the war. Jennie is said to have tried repeatedly to get permission to go but was refused


Capt. Thomas Porch
d.1812
Maria Porch
1782–1864
m.
1807
John Fry Reeves
1780–1859
Thomas Porch Porch
1808–1877
p.2–3
m.
1830
Jane Barber
1814–1883
John Albert Porch
1833–1914
p.2–3
m.
1866
Margaret Bagehot
1843–1930
Julia
1837–1920
Edith May Porch
1867–1958
p.8
m.
1889
Walter H. Carew
1851–1896
Cecil
1873–1933
p.9
Robert
1875–1962
Reggie
1876–1906
Bertie
1879–1937
p.9
p.3–4, 7,
Marjorie
1891–1978
Benjamin
1892–1906
Pansy
1920–1985
Richard B.
1928–2010
Robin
1920–1969
p.6, 40
Alec
1926–
Esmé
1900–1966
p.4, 32
add
Richard J. ?
Gillian
1934–
p.4
p.5

# Part of the Porch family tree

*page references still to be adjusted*



because of submarine peril. This was certainly the line that Montie took later in life but there were those who felt that, if it had been her former lover Count Kinsky or ex-husband George Cornwallis-West, Jennie would have found a way to get there. However, had she done so, there is little doubt that she would have not enjoyed the heat!

*1915 portrait of Montie in uniform, by Sir John Lavery (courtesy of the Hucker family).*

Indeed, it was fortunate that Jennie had to stay in England, since immediately on his arrival in Nigeria Montie had to face a further legal imbroglio to do with an embittered cook he had dismissed. The serious allegations levelled against Montie were dismissed but not long afterwards he was charged with assault for getting his servants to exact physical revenge on the man. Montie pleaded guilty, was severely censured by the Colonial Civil Service and, his reputation tarnished, was ordered by the Governor of Nigeria to leave the country forthwith.

This Montie eventually did, sailing from Lagos late in July, with the Governor's secretary almost waving him off from the quayside! This was the end of Montie's career in the Colonial Service although it is not clear whether he resigned or was compulsorily retired.

## Public glare in London

Back in London and doubtless happy to be rid of all the unpleasant business abroad, a world away in more than one sense from his new life with her, Montie set up home with Jennie at 8 Westbourne Street, near Kensington Gardens, a prestigious house on which he had bought the lease—Jennie could put all her energies into redecorating and refurbishing it.

But life in the limelight with Jennie was not a comfortable one for Montie: a whole host of anecdotes and smart comments about them began doing the rounds in all the fashionable circles. One cruel but witty observer had already announced around the time of the wedding that the only way he could imagine the newlyweds spending their evenings would be a variant on the Arabian Nights, she regaling him nightly with the account of her amours, in a collection known as the Nigerian Nights!

Such remarks as these soon spread all over the London dinner-party circuit, and even Jennie joked to Montie about it, repeating the famous series of puns: "Miss Jerome went up the Church Hill, to the West, into the Porch." Jennie herself produced some memorable aphorisms, including the much quoted "He has a future and I have a past, so we should be all right."

As to all the unpleasant talk, she would counter them with ripostes such as "They say. What do they say? Let them say!", confident in the belief that she was the envy of all the girls for marrying the "handsomest man in London". In fact many of her friends remarked upon how contented Jennie was with her third marriage and how much younger she was looking.

Indeed, although most of her contemporaries had slipped into social retirement by the end of the Great War, Jennie was, at 64, as young in spirit as her rather conservative husband and certainly not for changing her busy, exciting lifestyle.

So 1919 and 1920 were filled with places (such as Ireland, including a return to Castle Leslie, and France) and people—famous, exciting people such as Stravinsky, Picasso, Ravel, Proust, James Joyce, some of whom later visited Jennie and Montie in London.

Old friends, too, such as Queen Alexandra, came to visit—when Montie had to telephone for a constable to be outside—and the younger set, like newlyweds Zelda and F. Scott Fitzgerald. (Fitzgerald dedicated his second novel *The Beautiful and the Damned* to Jennie's nephew, Shane Leslie.)

On 18 June 1920 Jennie and Montie are reported by the *Times* as being in the Royal Enclosure at the Ascot Gold Cup, Jennie in a gown of white lace over black, with hanging sleeves of black net.

It was clear to everyone how exhilarated Montie was by his exciting new life, as if he had come out of a cocoon into a different world. However, after more than a year of fun and fascinating people, Montie now wanted to take on some work of his own. Moreover, he and Jennie needed money.

## The Gold Coast and tragedy

Montie's qualifications for a career were few, but for a man who knew the continent, Africa was full of opportunities, particularly in the Gold Coast (now Ghana), where trade in gold, palm products, rubber and cocoa, for the burgeoning confectionery industry in Europe, made it an exciting and potentially profitable country to invest in—so much so that Jennie's sons, Winston and Jack, decided to finance Montie's exploratory trip there.

Loath as he was to leave Jennie, Montie was glad not only to make some money to support his wife's extravagant lifestyle but also to get away from the continuing snubs and sneers he had to endure at Jennie's side. He is recorded as saying that he preferred the bullets of the Boer War or the flies of the Gold Coast to the stings of the snobs in a London

*Jennie and Montie stepping out—about 1920. (From a newspaper cutting; title and date were not recorded on it at the time, unfortunately.)*

drawing room, although the quote also emerged as "Better the mosquitoes of Africa than the pricks of London drawing rooms."

He left England in the spring of 1921, and as he went on board ship, Montie found in his coat pocket a letter from Jennie that he always treasured:

> My darling,
>
> Bless you and au revoir and I love you better than anything in the world and shall try to do all those things you want me to do in your absence.
>
> Your loving wife,
>
> J
>
> PS Love me and think of me.

*Mells Manor, where Jennie was visiting Lady Horner.*

At 67 years old and again alone, Jennie accepted most of the invitations that came her way, including a trip to Rome, and then, fatefully, from Lady Frances Horner at Mells Manor near Frome, for many years now the home of the Asquith family.

At teatime on Sunday 29 May, Jennie put on her new Italian shoes (had the maid remembered to sandpaper the slippery leather soles?) and hurried down the well-worn stairway.

Three steps from the landing she fell. Lady Horner heard her fall and cry out and propped her up with cushions. She telephoned for a doctor who came from Frome within a quarter of an hour and set two broken bones directly above the ankle, an ankle weakened years before by a fall on a

grouse moor. There was very little displacement, but considerable swelling of the ankle and foot.

Two days later, Jennie was transferred in an ambulance with a doctor and nurse back to 8 Westbourne Street, where she made satisfactory progress. However, within two weeks, on 10 June, a portion of the skin blackened and gangrene set in. Winston summoned a surgeon, who was forced to amputate Jennie's leg above the knee almost immediately.

Meanwhile in Africa, Montie, though distressed, is still not fully aware of the situation unfolding back in England. Business is going well for him and his newly formed London Coomassie [now Kumasi] Trading Company. He writes a letter which, in his turmoil, he dates 8 May—it should actually have been 8 June—two days before the leg was amputated, and in which he describes his distress and upset, and his promise to love her even more. He offers to return, despite admitting that his flourishing business would suffer if he did.

*Coincidentally, for no reason to do with Jennie or Montie, this staircase at Mells Manor was the subject of a painting by the famous English artist Rex Whistler. (In the private collection of the Asquith family)*

Five days later, upon receiving a telegram from Winston about the amputation and just before the next mail boat, he repeats his love for her, and adds that he is suffering all kinds of anguish, physical and otherwise, in sympathy with her and is seeking comfort from the Bishop of Accra. He finishes with "kisses for the poor little place where the stitches are".

A further letter on 25 June is in much the same vein, despite a cable

from Winston two days earlier, saying that the danger had passed. Montie repeats his reassurances about his business but reveals that he has mortgaged 8 Westbourne Street for more capital. He ends with more expressions of his love and devotion, but one cannot help feeling that Montie is under enormous pressure to prove his worth by providing for Jennie in material terms. Montie even encloses a map showing how the railway would run and help make his fortune.

Jennie knew how worried he must be, and sent a cable on 28 June saying she'd got his letters and was much comforted. She also added that she was all right and was sending him things, such as lavender water and toothpaste!

Back in London, the very next morning, 29 June, Jennie awakened feeling fine, but, after a good breakfast and without warning, the main artery in the thigh of the amputated leg haemorrhaged. Before the nurse could apply a tourniquet there was a heavy loss of blood and later that day she died. At the inquest on 1 July the coroner pronounced Jennie's death as accidental, and she was buried the following day in the Churchill family plot of the cemetery at the quiet country church of Bladon, near Oxford. Montie was not to arrive back from the Gold Coast for another month.

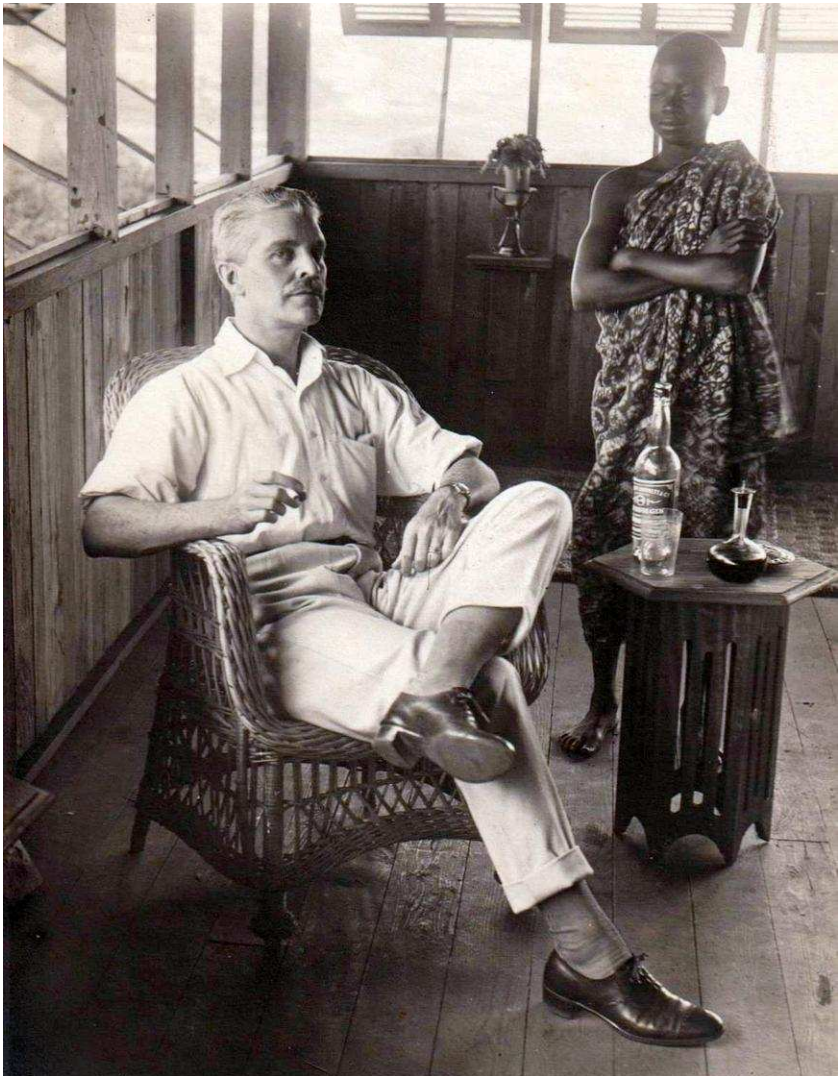
## Empty house

Finally back in England, Montie was greeted by an empty house and Jennie's debts of £10,000, which he and Winston's brother, Jack, had to deal with. To complicate matters, Jennie died intestate, since her last will had been made in 1915, before her final marriage, and was therefore invalid. Montie declined to inherit any of Jennie's property of just under £40,000. Meanwhile, Winston was reported as spending his days weeping.

Montie's two final actions in this chapter of his life were placing an acknowledgement in the *Times* for all the messages of sympathy he had received and a pilgrimage to Mells Manor, where, according to the

Asquith family, Montie collapsed the moment he saw the stairs where Jennie had fallen.

Montie, clearly reeling, returns to the Gold Coast and his thriving business in Kumasi.



*Montie with servant at St Cyprian's, his home in Kumasi, on Sunday morning 5 June 1921, a week after Jennie's fall, when she seemed to be recovering.*

## Marriage in Italy

All goes quiet for a few years and then, out of the blue on 1 July 1926 we find Montie, at the age of 49, in Perugia, Italy, marrying Donna Giulia Patrizi of Umbria, 11 years his junior.

*Giulia at age 22.*

Giulia, judging by the photo of her when she was 22, kindly provided by her great-nephew, Dottore Gianfranco Patrizi di Rasina, was a woman of great beauty, but there is no evidence of how the two met nor is anything known about their life in Umbria (it was, as Dottore Patrizi has described it, "*tutta un mistero*").

Montie appears in the list of mourners at his mother Annie's funeral in Glastonbury in 1932 and they return to England as a couple for Montie's nephew Esmé's wedding in 1933, but otherwise nothing is heard of him or them until suddenly this tribute appears in the *Wells Journal* on 25 November 1938:

**DEATH OF MRS. MONTAGUE PORCH**

**HER CHARITABLE AND POLITICAL ACTIVITIES**

The death occurred on Sunday, October 30th, at her home in the Upper Tiber Valley, Italy, of Donna Giulia Porch, better known as the Marchesa Giulia Patrizi. In 1926 she was married at Perugia to Mr. Montagu Porch.

Donna Giulia was the only daughter of the Marchese Patrizi della Rocca of Umbria and was noted for her beauty and her charm. As a result of her charitable and political activities she was held in high esteem. For many

years she acted as secretary to her father when member of Parliament and Minister of Agriculture.

The obituary then described the hospital work Giulia had done both after the 1917 earthquake in Umbria and during the Great War, for which she was awarded medals, and her involvement with the Fascists in the early 1920s at the time of the famous march on Rome in October 1922 which resulted in attacks upon her and her homes by communists.

Clearly Giulia was not only beautiful but brave and strong-minded, and one of the many in those times who feared Communism above all else.

There is no mention of her age (she was just 50) or what she died of.

Donna Giulia was buried at the lovely Sanctuario della Madonna di Canoscio, 12 kilometres south of Citta di Castello near Trestina.

Giulia's two homes in Citta di Castello and at Pietralunga still exist. The former is the residence of her great-nephew, the latter now a luxurious hotel called La Locanda del Borgo. The secondary school in Citta is named Istituto Superiore "Ugo Patrizi", after her illustrious father.

*The sanctuary of Our Lady of Canoscio, near Trestina.*

## Return to Glastonbury

The last sentence of the obituary states that he had a permanent home in Italy but it could not have been long before Montie, undoubtedly grieving and presumably seeing war clouds on the horizon, returned to England and to Glastonbury. There is an unsubstantiated report that he brought back with him an Italian manservant, who was interned as an alien, and for whom Montie got an exemption through an appeal to Winston, which the great man granted on condition that he not hear from Montie again for the rest of the war!

It is unclear just how much property Montie had in Glastonbury, but sometime around 1940, having lived on his own for a short time at the family home of Edgarley Lodge, he moved into a newly built house in Tor View Avenue, belonging to Hedley and Ethel Hucker, with whom he had become friendly.

Number 13, as it was then (now 27) is not a spacious house and it must certainly have been a squeeze for Mr & Mrs Hucker and their three daughters, plus a 63-year-old man! So when number 12 next door (now 25) became available not long afterwards Montie bought it and moved in. In fact he was looked after just as well, courtesy of a passageway that was knocked through between the two houses.

There is some evidence that Montie still owned property in Italy after the war, since in June 1949 he writes home to Mrs Hucker, whom he addresses as "My dear Hostess", from Trestina, just a kilometre from where Giulia is buried, and mentions a man called Pietro "working on the place". Giulia's great-nephew says that Montie inherited all her property, but given the haste with which he must have left in 1938 and the depressed state of postwar Italy, it is possible that he was obliged to dispose of a lot of it without delay and for a fraction of its value.

Confirmation of this third property came in a death notice which was recently discovered among papers belonging to Montie's great-niece,

Sally Melia, sent from Italy to his family by Montie informing them that Giulia had passed away at her property at Trestina after a short illness.

It seems that Montie brought little back from Italy, and did not keep a vast quantity of memorabilia from either marriage, although there is a story that some of his family papers and letters were destroyed when Edgarley Lodge was eventually sold.

A few items may still be in circulation. For example, it is said that Harry Carter, who used to live in Chilkwell Street, had a chaise-longue which he claimed had belonged to Jennie Churchill and which he had bought at a Cooper and Tanner sale of goods when one of the Porch family died.

Other less credible, but entertaining, stories exist. One of them goes that, because of the family connection, Winston would come in secret to stay at Edgarley Lodge during the war to escape for a day or two from the pressures of official life. This became known to German intelligence, and an elite Waffen SS unit was parachuted onto the Tor in an attempt to capture Churchill, and also to seize the Holy Grail for Himmler while they were in the neighbourhood. Unfortunately for them, their plan was discovered and an equally elite reception party awaited them. A firefight ensued in which the SS men were all killed. They were buried in secret on the moors and the whole matter was hushed up!

## From Lodge to lodger

In 1948 the Huckers moved from Tor View Avenue and bought Abbot's Leigh (better known now as Number 3) in Magdalene Street, and Montie moved with them.

Later on, their daughter Glenys (the late Mrs Phillips) and her husband George bought Abbey Grange close by  and exchanged properties with her parents so that they could offer bed-and-breakfast at Abbot's Leigh. Montie moved with them.

According to former neighbours, when the moves took place, furniture was pushed up and down the pavement, much to the amusement of the locals, who also found interest in the bedroom allocation at Abbey Grange and in Mrs Hucker's hat-covered head, which was often on display to passers-by.

Mrs Hucker was dressy, always wearing one of her vast collection of glamorous hats, one of which is on show at her daughter Jill's wedding to Roy Cleave in September 1953, and often a smart black coat. She bought the latest style and clearly enjoyed the attention it created.

Montie himself was well-groomed and took great care over his appearance, particularly his hair, which sometimes received the blue-rinse treatment. For all that, he had the reputation of being a kindly and charming, if reserved, old gentleman who was happy with the company of his friends the Huckers and the quiet, secure life they afforded him. He was very appreciative of their home and their cooking, and for this they would often receive the ultimate compliment in the still-austere early 50s with his phrase "Just like before the war!"

It is not surprising to know that even when Abbey Grange (and Abbot's Leigh) became a billet for older Millfield pupils in the 1950s and 60s, the boarders saw virtually nothing of the elderly

*Abbot's Leigh (3 Magdalene Street) and …*

*Jill Hucker's wedding, 1953. Her sister Glenys is the bridesmaid and their mother, Ethel, and father, Hedley, are at far right.*

gentleman who occupied two first-floor rooms at the back of the house and enjoyed fine views of the garden, the Abbey grounds and the Tor.

*… Abbey Grange (19 Magdalene Street).*

## In the papers

Montie shunned the limelight but he did not retire from public life completely. For example, he was listed in Jeffrey Wilson's book as a sergeant in the Home Guard during the 1939–45 war, and later he was an active member of the Glastonbury Antiquarian Society; his signature occasionally appears in the minutes as one of the society's vice-presidents. Also, having converted to Catholicism to marry Donna Giulia, he worshipped regularly at St Mary's Roman Catholic Church in the town—just across the road from where he lived—and was a supporter of many local organizations and good causes.

News of him did reach the press, however, usually on the occasion of his birthday. The *Evening Standard* managed to catch up with him in 1959:

*Jennie: the portrait sketch by John Singer Sargent.*

> Returning from Italy just before the war, Mr Porch first lived by himself in Glastonbury [at Edgarley Lodge], and was a regular caller at Mr and Mrs Hucker's fish and chip shop *[sic]*. One day Mrs Hucker noticed that his visits had inexplicably ceased and, calling round to his house, found him ill in bed. "So we invited him to stay with us," said Mrs Hucker. "He is a wonderful gentleman."
>
> Every year he goes abroad for his holidays. This year he visited Rome and Sicily taking his friends the Huckers with him. Indeed my reporter tells me he is quite the most remarkable man for his age he has ever met.

(The reporter made an error: the Huckers did not own a fish-and-chip shop; it was a fishmonger's shop, in Benedict Street adjacent to the Mocha Berry, the café established by Ethel Hucker.)

The following month, on 9 December, the same newspaper printed the photo of Montie in his living room with a short caption. Then it was the *Daily Mail*'s Vincent Mulchrone who managed to interview Montie for a full article on 21 December:

> Mr Montague Porch's favourite chair is so placed that when he looks across the skin of the leopard he shot in '07 his gaze falls naturally on the portrait of the woman he loved, Sir Winston Churchill's mother.
>
> The story of the first meeting, the romance and the marriage has never been told, because the erect figure gazing at the oval portrait has never

*Montie Porch in 1959, aged 82, in his living room at Abbey Grange, Glastonbury.*

> chosen to tell it. Until now. And even now he speaks carefully, the flood of memory checked now and again by a desire not to offend old friends or memories, to keep private those things which should be kept private. As he speaks, his voice never loses the tone of wonderment that she should ever have loved him at all: wonderment even that they should ever have met.

Just a few days later, another article illustrating Montie's close relationship with his hosts appeared in a different national daily, when Montie is described as coming to the door of Abbey Grange and telling the reporter that he is spending Christmas at home with the Huckers to help look after his hostess who is in bed, sick with the flu:

> Mr Porch is an active man and spends much of his time in the garden or working at business papers. Most mornings he takes a stroll around the town's shopping centre. Every summer he and Mrs Hucker take a month's holiday together. Last year they borrowed Mr Hucker's Jaguar to tour North Wales. "They've been all over the world together," said 62-year-old Mr Hucker. "It was Italy a couple of years ago, Turkey before that. As soon as Christmas is over they'll be making their plans for next year. I don't mind not going with them. In business you just can't do that sort of thing. Somebody has to stay behind to look after the shop."

A brief item appeared on the day of Montie's 84th birthday in 1961, wishing him well, and a fuller one in March 1964, which was to be Montie's last appearance in public, so to speak, for he passed away peacefully at home nine months later, on Sunday 8 November 1964.

## Glastonbury's last Porches

The 1960s were a sad decade for those members of the Porch family who had remained in Glastonbury, with the deaths of both of Montie's surviving sisters, Jessie and Queenie, and his cousin Dorothy.

A member of the younger generation too passed away—Montie's second cousin Robin Porch of Southfield, who was the grandson of Albert, the last Squire of Edgarley, a popular figure in the community and the only Porch from Albert's immediate family to have returned after the tragic

events which saw them leave Edgarley at the beginning of the century.

The press reported on Montie's will early the following year, informing readers that the charcoal portrait of Jennie by John Singer Sargent so dear to Montie was left to Winston. It would have been with Winston for precious little time before his own death in January 1965, when it was passed on to Randolph and thence to his son, Winston, who died in March 2010. The original is now with Winston's great-grandson, Randolph.

Otherwise, in Montie's will, after a few particular legacies, including £2,000 and his house in Tor View Avenue to Ethel Hucker, the £50,000 remaining in his estate was left to members of his nephew Esmé's family.

Montie's funeral, which included a full requiem Mass at St Mary's conducted by Father Sean McNamara, took place on Wednesday 11 November and was followed by Montie's interment in Glastonbury cemetery, in the Porch family plot, though curiously and rather sadly, in a grave without a headstone.

[[photo of the family plot in cemetery?]]

[[Check date 1800]]

*Members of the Porch family since 1800 lie in a family plot at Glastonbury cemetery.*

## Montie's destiny

So what can we make of Montie and his "charmed" life, 50 years on?

On the surface of it here is a man to be envied—born into a wealthy, provincial, land-owning family, who enjoyed a private education, and connections which opened the door to adventure and service, not all of it without danger. A man of cultivated taste and enquiring mind, an archaeologist, an able administrator and businessman. A man nevertheless of some contradictions—a generally quiet, undemonstrative man, though clearly capable of impatience and forcefulness when under pressure, an essentially private man, though one willing to dice with fame in return for love and approval; a man perhaps continually seeking a role and a place in the world, but who never quite finds it.

Let us look at the facts. Born to the second son of the Squire of Edgarley into a family stretched between India and England, with his mother and father moving from one country to the other as children are conceived, born and left in the care of an older generation, Montie is unlikely to have had any kind of relationship with his father who dies in Bengal when Montie is just 9.

The next 20 years become interrupted and nomadic—Bath, Oxford, South Africa, Oxford again, Egypt, Nigeria, with frequent returns to England, Weston-super-Mare rather more than Glastonbury. There is an emerging pattern of searching, not settling, the lot perhaps of the second son of a second son in those times.

Then suddenly the *coup de foudre*, as fate introduces him to the most dazzling star in the universe. He is drawn irresistibly into her world, where his search for love and identity comes to a temporary end, only for him to realize that he remains an outsider, destined to live suspended between his privileged but quiet rural roots and the dizzy circles of fame and high society.

Fate then delivers him another telling blow, a blow which even prevents him from standing at his dead wife's graveside with his new-found family. And so Montie not only loses his beloved but also, along with her, his own identity, becoming known to most on these shores as little more than "the man who married Jennie Churchill".

It is hardly surprising, then, that Montie returns to Africa to build another future for himself.

Does the Gold Coast end his search? It seems not, for suddenly, a few short years later, we see another future open up for him, this time in Italy. Sadly, he is not destined to belong to this one either.

Then the final return to England, where Glastonbury and the Huckers now become his family and his world, a safe, comfortable world, a world he previously tried to climb clear of but one which almost inevitably draws him back.

Montie's later life is not without its purpose and its joys, but it is one without the blessing of children, without a home of his own—any more at his death than at his birth—or the pride of a distinguished career to look back on.

So was his a charmed life or was he something of a lost soul?

Whatever the truth of it, one feels that this reserved but resilient man could not escape treading an inevitable path back to Glastonbury—even to an unmarked grave.

**A piano footnote**

By strange coincidence, a Bechstein grand piano, recently donated, has found its way to St Benedict's Church in Glastonbury, where it now has a home in the south transept—just under the stained-glass window set up by Annie Porch in memory of Montie's father, Reginald *(see pages 7, 14)*.

The coincidence is that the piano began its life at Blenheim Palace, home of the Churchills. It is therefore perfectly possible, and intriguing to consider, that Jennie and Montie, who both played the piano, might have spent time making music on this splendid instrument.

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