

*Dear Family,*

Having spent the first two days of this Whitsun weekend cleaning and painting ceiling and walls of my living room - and that is definitely the last time I deal with a ceiling! - I am spending Bank Holiday Monday doing this News-sheet, some notes to send with them and catching up on some correspondence.

This has been a time of happenings and early in the New Year 1st coz Ron's wife Anne took me to the Thorndike Theatre in Leatherhead to see Richard Todd, prior to his national tour, in Francis Durbridge's 'Sweet Revenge'. Talking with Richard after this excellent piece of theatre, we were able to congratulate him upon his award in the New Year Honours List - which brings me, of course to the well deserved honour given in the same List to our Father Freddie Copleston. Freddie was kind enough to invite me to be one of his guests at the Investiture, the other guest being his much closer cousin, Hermione Copleston. It was a moving experience to see his CBE presented and what a wonderful lunch and celebration we had at Mount Street after the ceremony. The Fathers were all so kind and obviously very proud of Freddie. Hermione organised a limousine to and from the Palace and it was a day to be remembered.

From that time on I was busy with preparations for my visit to Charleston, South Carolina on March 31st. I could never find the words to express the hospitality and kindness shown me by coz Agnes Wade, her family and friends. I had the most wonderful visit and fell in love with Charleston, finding an amazing amount of 'Englishness' there - the population bearing more English names than in any other city I've visited in the US and the atmosphere being full of the history of the place. Agnes took me to Charles Towne Landing, on a walking tour of the City, to Fort Moultrie, Folly Island (where the houses are all on stilts), Grace Church, where Agnes attends and participates in many activities, stores like 'Piggly Wiggly' with such abundance of food choice and lunches out, when I became addicted to crab cakes - the food is definitely out of our world! We also were entertained to sumptuous lunches by various of Agnes' friends, dinner with son Peter and wife Debbie and several meals at son John and wife Donna's BBQ. One of the interesting places is The Market, a series of buildings containing stands at which all kinds of goods are sold, including costume jewellery locally produced, like rice beads, chinaberry beads dyed beautiful colours and rings, necklets and brooches made from pava shell. Also the famous baskets made with palmetto, various kinds of rice, benne seeds (sesame to us) and many varieties of beans.

On April 14th Agnes hosted a family gathering; Art C. from California, Dick C. from Connecticut (Betty was not well and unable to travel unfortunately), who looks so much like his cousin Freddie; Vera and James Caulford from Utah and Larry and Norma C. from Mississauga, Ontario, plus a number of more local family - what a wonderful day! The following day we all went and took pictures of ourselves across from Copleston's Laundry & Cleaners, started by William Sydney C. in 1886. Although there have been two owners since, they retain the name because it is so well known! I was presented by Art with a shirt with the name, address and year of 1886 on it and of course it is among my greatest treasures. After the photography session we went in convoy to embark on the 'Spirit of Charleston' across the Harbour to Fort Sumter, where the first shot in the Civil War was fired - a most thrilling experience for me, having been interested in that part of US history for many years. Parting was, indeed, 'sweet sorrow', for it was marvellous to meet and talk with them all. I was given two instructions by Mabel, widow of William C. (youngest son of William Sydney), to 'stop smoking and have your ears pierced'. Dear Mabel, I am going to have my ears pierced, but I can make no promise regarding the smoking, I'm afraid! (My ears were being pinched by clips and it will be a solution to the problem.) Jean and Lib who were here in 1986 with Agnes took me to Magnolia Gardens and you have never seen such azaleas - in fact the whole Charleston area seemed smothered with them while I was there. Dogwood trees in abundance (my native Provincial emblem).

To come back to England (and down to earth!), I've been reminded by Rosemary Dowie that her mother, Enid Clayton Copleston, widow of Maurice Ballinger Copleston, will be 90 on October 24th. I'm sure everyone will join me in hoping that Enid has a very happy day. She married Maurice on June 6th, 1930. Should you wish to send her greetings c/o Rosemary, the address is 2 Manor Mead, 22 Queens Road, Weston super Mare, Avon BS23 2LQ. We have had a number of nonagenarians in the family, who have seen three generations of its history.

Robert Jago, who is now Asst. Archivist at Wiltshire CRO in Trowbridge, has sent me a long obituary of Mrs. Amelia Emma (Millie) Copplestone who was buried at Liskeard on April 16th. With her husband, Aubrey, she bought the farm and tea gardens at Looe Mills in 1956 and they ran it until 1991, when Millie suffered a stroke and was hospitalised for a long time. Beside her husband, she leaves son and daughter-in-law Terry and Gillian and granddaughter Sarah. Aubrey's aunt, Millie Redmond née Copplestone, will also be 90 this year, in August. They are in the Cornwall 'tree' I have back to Richard and Susannah of St. Winnow in the mid-1700's and I suspect they go to the first marriage of George Copleston of Ley in Morwenstow to Mary Carrant.

I have not, of course, done any real searching this year with all else that has happened, but I will get back to work very soon. Am having a few days in Crediton in June, so may have a day at the Record Office. I have booked myself into the Devon Family History Society's Annual Conference in Exeter on October 23rd and hope to meet a number of people with whom I have done reciprocal research. One of the lectures is on 'Mining in the South West', which should be interesting - our forbears were wardens of Devon stannaries.

Peter, son of Agnes, had a beautiful Coat of Arms created, based on that in Westminster Abbey of Thomas Copleston of Bowden in Yealmpton, one of the Esquires of Baron Walpole. I was given a copy and before I frame it I shall have it copied, so that if anyone is interested in having a copy I can have them made. I do not know how much they will cost, but it won't be a fortune, so if you would like one please let me know and I will send it with a small bill! I am delighted to have mine and I thank Peter again for his kindness. Michael thanks Johnnie, too, for his Bryant's BBQ shirt! (Birthday present.) To think I have a son aged 45 . . . .

I still miss Agnes' yoghurt ice cream, her cheerful and witty company and would love another carriage ride to the Battery behind Jake, the Belgian dray. I'd like another lunch at A.W. Shucks, too! Not to mention dinner at the Magnolia - and I'll always remember Agnes' amusement at my choosing a simple supper at home of a peanut butter and banana sandwich. With all that rich food, Agnes, it was by way of being an antidote!

I should add a little Copleston history - 200 years ago on July 15th 1793, Midsummer Quarter Sessions in Hertford Thomas Copleston took his oath as Officer of Excise. This was 4th son of Rev. Coriolanus, father of William the tailor whose daughter Harriet married Thomas Winkworth. In 1493 Ashburton Churchwardens' accounts show accounts 'delivered to Roger Colpstone and others' - I still look for the origins of these Ashburton Coplestons. In 1693 Amos Copleston(e) of Boconnoc, gent. and his son John released their rights in the manor of Polhorman to Walter Kendall (George of Ley family).

I hope you all have a good summer and I'll hope to have new discoveries to report in December!

*Your Coz,*  
*Muriel.*