

## CHAPTER 8

### 'The Children'

In 1942 my son Alan was born. I can remember very little of his birth and early days. It must have been a bad time I was going through with my attacks. But something happened in early 1943 that was about to change everything. Up until then I had been taking tablets; but they didn't seem to be doing me any good. In fact, ever since I had been taking them I felt I was slowly getting worse. I had always kept a diary of my fits in a little pocket book and they had been averaging around the 9-10 per annum. They had slowly begun to occur more and more often and this particular year I had 6 before May. I went to my doctor and asked if I could have an appointment to see a specialist. He was man enough to admit that it did look as if something was wrong and gave me a letter of introduction to the best man in Bristol. The interview was to set me on the road to complete recovery. The specialist really gave me a going over and he was making notes all the time. He began to ask questions about the tablets I had been taking and to my horror he said "Do you realise, young man, that they have been poisoning you?" I must have looked quite pale, because he smiled and said "Oh, don't worry, they wouldn't have killed you, but they are of no use to you whatsoever. They irritate your nerves and make you worse. I shall write to your doctor. Go along to see him in a couple of days and in the meantime – no more of those tablets".

A few days later I went to the surgery. My doctor told me the specialist had recommended a new drug called Phenobarbitone. "Let's hope this will be the answer to all your troubles" he smiled. "I certainly hope so Doctor" I said. He gave me the new prescription and from that day my fits became fewer and fewer.

They went down to 6 in 1944, 9 in 1945 and 6, 7 in 1947, 8 in 1948, only 3 in 1949 and 1950, 2 in 1951 and so on . . . until from 1968

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I have been completely free of them.

I would like to explain the attacks of giddiness I suffered, in addition to the fits. If I felt an attack creeping over me, I would sit down, clench my fists and steel myself, saying "I'm not going out . . . I'm not going to give in" and suddenly something in my head would snap and it was over. I found that once I had beaten them they never came back again. Slowly, even the giddiness became less and less frequent, until now they have passed completely away.

Back to the children. They grew up in a world of no toys in the shops, so I set out to work to make them all the toys they wanted. Dolls houses, forts, scooter, tricycles, dolls, prams, wooden engines . . . anything they asked for and they thought the world of them.

Both children attended the local primary school and both won scholarships. Barbara to Colston Girls School and Alan to Cothton Grammar. Both went on the Bristol-Bordeaux exchange – a system whereby children in Bordeaux hosted Bristol children in their homes and then the Bordeaux children were entertained in the homes of the Bristol students. The idea being to help them to master each others' language [sic.] and learn a little of the life style of their different countries. It proved to be a very successful operation.