

## Dorrith M Sim

### A brief story of her life

Dorrith Marianne Oppenheim was born in Kassel, Germany on the 8th December 1931 a much cherished only child to Hans and Trude (nee Lindenfeld). She was born into a relatively comfortable lifestyle that allowed her to have an active and happy early childhood. From all the visual imagery surrounding that time we can clearly see that Dorrith was a confident, beautiful child who enjoyed outdoor play and had a supremely loving family life. To Dorrith, this must have felt as if life couldn't get any better. A protective shield must have been provided as the dark clouds gathered and war loomed on the horizon.

Unfortunately Kristallnacht visited Kassel, a well documented era and the beginning of the end for the greater extent of Dorrith's family. Guarded from the worst of the atrocities, she had to make that journey, which would permanently break the link between her and her dear parents, Muti and Vati. She was only seven and a half when she boarded the kindertransport train for her new life in Scotland. Her parents, Hans and Trude were deported to Theresienstadt on the 17th June 1943 and on 12th October 1944 were deported to Auschwitz from where they never returned.

When she arrived in England, she was met by her new foster parents Fred and Sophie Gallimore at Liverpool Street Station on 26th July 1939 and went to live with them in Colinton, Edinburgh. The Gallimores proceeded to have two girls of their own, Rosalind in 1942 and Elizabeth in 1947.

Dorrith attended George Watson's School and was evacuated to Innerleithen during the worst part of the war. She graduated in Secretarial Studies at Skerry's College in Edinburgh and took on her first job where she met Andrew Sim who was working as a law apprentice after gaining a Bachelor of Law Degree at Edinburgh University in 1949.

It was love at first sight, at least for his sports jacket! At the age of nineteen, Dorrith got engaged to Andrew prior to her leaving the UK for Sao Paulo, Brasil, where her foster father, Fred had secured a new position with Siemens. After living in Brasil for 18 months, Dorrith decided that she was ready to return to Scotland to marry Andrew and took a position aboard the Queen Elizabeth cruise ship as a nanny to pay her way.

Andrew and Dorrith married in Rutherglen and had a small but fitting reception at the Marlborough Hotel, Glasgow. They moved to Dundee where Andrew had secured a position in another law firm and they moved into a very small tenement flat. In March 1954 Dorrith gave birth to her first child, Elizabeth. Unfortunately after a full term pregnancy, this little girl was stillborn. Ten months later, however, they were delighted when Dorrith gave

birth prematurely, to non-identical twin girls, Rosalind and Libby. They were still living in their first floor tenement flat and had to struggle carting a large twin pram upstairs and no washing machine. Susan was born 17 months later and they were lucky to secure a lease on a larger council house in Seagate, Dundee. Dorrith was especially happy in her new surroundings and made some good friends during their short time there.

Andrew, still on the look-out for a job with better prospects applied and was successful for a position with James B Black Hay & Co in Prestwick. The new job even came with a tied house and the ever increasing family moved into a semi-detached bungalow in Caerlaverock Avenue in the town. It was here that their fifth and final daughter Ruth was born in April 1958.

Andrew was made a partner in the firm and as the family became more financially secure they bought their first house in the town, 5 The Crescent. This was to be the family home for many years and served its purpose as the family continued to expand and grow not just with children but with a menagerie of mongrel dogs and their many litters, white mice, gerbils and tropical fish. Dorrith settled down well in the town and joined various groups and organisations such as the Young Women's and The Scottish Country Dance Groups. She helped out as a play leader but her most important and memorable time was as a Brown Owl for the First Prestwick Brownie Pack. Past Brownies will have many interesting and funny stories about their experiences at Brownie meetings and camps.

The Family was still incomplete, however, and to everybody's astonishment after a gap of ten years Andrew and Dorrith produced a son and heir, David Andrew, born in April 1968. During the years 1976 to 1980 all four daughters married at huge expense to their parents, leaving a very empty and quieter home - or so they thought! Then the grandchildren began to arrive.....With the onslaught of the grandchildren, Dorrith and Andrew purchased a fisherman's cottage in the village of Ballantrae as a retreat and holiday home. The family and many friends loved it there and spent many weekends playing on the stony beach and on the water with Dorrith's little boat, Alice.

With more time on her hands, Dorrith had time to think about her past. After listening to a talk on Woman's Hour by a lady called Bertha Leverton, who was looking for people like herself, i.e. mainly Jewish children who travelled unaccompanied and who had come to the UK before World War II, to get in touch. Bertha was hoping to arrange a 50th reunion in London in 1989. After speaking with Bertha, Dorrith became involved with helping her to locate ex-kinder from around Scotland, many of whom had come over on the Kindertransport. Dorrith initiated SAROK in 1990, the Scottish Association of Reunion of Kinder. Dorrith also became a founder member of Ayr Writer's Club and only last year was made an honorary member. Her experiences encouraged Dorrith to write and in a need to leave some sort of legacy, produced her book, especially for children "In My Pocket" in 1996. It was important to Dorrith that children understood what happened to her and

the many other children in her situation. Her "raison d'être" in life was to inform others, both children and adults about the holocaust and the persecution of the Jews and she spent many hours talking to children in schools and adults from various groups.

Despite being an only child, Dorrith leaves behind a large lineage of five children, Roz, Libby, Susan, Ruth (Oofles) and David and their respective partners, Johnny, Reg, Iain and Michelle and to date ten grandchildren, Fiona, Christopher, Sarah, Kirsty, Duncan, Nikki, Lisa, Katie, Eilidh and Fraser. She also leaves behind at present seven great grandchildren, Josh, Jenna, Campbell, Megan, Daiton, Fergus and little Abbie and two step grandchildren Kelsea and Rosalind.

Dorrith passed away too suddenly for words on Thursday morning 23rd August 2012. She may be gone, but she will certainly never be forgotten.