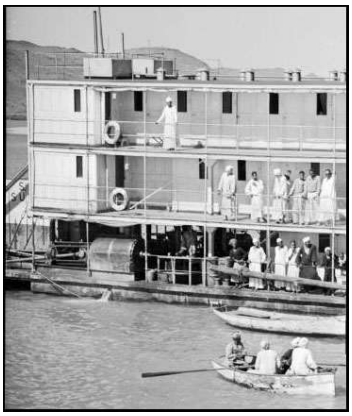
GRANNY'S BOOK

'The Land of the Lake'

Part 6

By Mary Brill

For this end of tour leave we planned and flew home on what was called the Safari Route on a Vickers Viscount, flying only during the day with every night staying in a different part of Africa. Our first stop was Dar es Salaam to refuel and then on to Kenya, staying in



Nairobi at the Norfolk Hotel. Our second night was at Wadi Haifa, where we stayed on a house boat on the Nile, quite an experience eating our food in a dimly lit room because of the awful sand flies thereabouts. We could hardly see what we were eating but it tasted good. Reg said he thought it might be 'desert rat', but it tasted like rabbit or chicken. The next day we flew on to Malta in the Mediterranean, staying there at the Hotel Phoenicia. We had two large sitting rooms and a bedroom - very nice. Robert and Maggie enjoyed this and they had been really good on the journey where the pilot had allowed them into the cockpit as we flew over the desert.

We left Wadi Haifa at about 4 am on an Easter Sunday morning. As we were going by bus to the airport we saw an Arab on a donkey and Maggie said look mummy "Jesus has risen". I shall never forget that child's face. We arrived in London after a short stop at Marseilles to refuel. We were met by my mother, but the next day before going back up to Lincoln we booked for the circus at Olympia. The children really loved this, what a treat for them; they had never seen anything like it before. We visited all the family and then from Lincoln we went to the Isle of Man. It was a long journey up to Liverpool, we set off at 3 am, then over on the ferry to Douglas, which was a very rough journey I remember feeling very sick and we managed to get a cabin.

We stayed with Reg's granny Radcliffe for six weeks. This was a very happy time; we saw a lot of Reg's mum who was then a companion housekeeper to a very nice man who was an Austrian Count. His name was Sammett. We visited a lot of places and we also took Granny Radcliffe out a lot in the car. Reg was a TT Marshall and used to get up at 4 am for the practices - I took him a flask of tea and his breakfast about 8 am.

We returned in June to Lincoln and Reg went to Hendon Police College. The children and I stayed at Mrs Neaves' in Lincoln for a while; during this time I took Rob up to London for a week, we stayed at Hendon with Reg in digs. Rob and I travelled to London every day we visited lots of places like the Tower of London and the Science Museum and many others. We also saw Buckingham Palace and the changing of the guard, we even saw the Queen on the way to Ascot. We walked in the parks and went to the zoo. Rob and I really enjoyed it; it was wonderful to get to all these places without much trouble on the tube.

Maggie stayed in Lincoln with mum, and then when we arrived back mother and I took the children to Devon to stay with a dear friend of my mother, Nellie Ingoll, who lived at Newton Ferrers with her husband Art. We started out from Lincoln at 8 am and arrived at

the house at 6pm, the phone was ringing - it was Reg. He just said, "Well done you have just passed your driving test". It was the first really long journey in the UK, finding my way down to Devon with mums help! We stayed for two weeks, Nellie let us have her caravan, which was at Stoke Fleming on the top of the cliffs, quite near to Dartmouth and Blackpool sands, and we visited lots of places that week, we enjoyed it so much that Reg and I planned to take the children again in September but unfortunately the weather was awful, it rained so much but we did meet up with Betty and Watkin Lewis (on leave from Africa) and Slapton Beach just amazing.