

François Grosjean



In Search of
Roger and Sallie

English copyrighted version of *A la recherche de Roger et Sallie*. Hauterive, Switzerland: Editions Attinger. 2016. ISBN: 978-2-88256-211-1

The author was brought up by nannies, foster families and in boarding schools. In his youth, he never ceased to ask himself questions about his parents: Who was Roger, a French Air Force pilot who had made his way to London during the Second World War? What about Sallie, a young English theatre stage manager? How had they met? Where and how had they lived, first in England and then in France? Why had they separated? Had they really loved each other? Why did they have two children when clearly they were not meant for each other? And why did their children never live with them?

At age 57, the author set off to find out about his parents. His father had died thirty years earlier and for decades he had had no contact with his mother. His search lasted twelve years. Finally, thanks to unpublished manuscripts and letters he managed to obtain, as well as military archives he was given access to, he was able to reassemble their life together, find answers to his questions, as well as gather surprising new information. His quest in Paris, London and Rome, delved into the worlds of fighter pilots, double agents and espionage, haute couture and jazz, horse breeding and archaeology.

This book presents the story of two astonishing people who were brought together by the secret activities each carried out during the war, and who separated once the conflict was over, leaving two children on the side and, until now, in the dark.

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To Mia, their great granddaughter

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1. In search of my parents

Childhood memories

I grew up without really knowing my parents, Roger and Sallie. My first memories were not of my father or mother but of a foster mother, Madame Wallard, in Villiers-Adam (France), in whose care I had been since the age of three. Before that I had spent time with another foster mother on the other side of Paris. I lived with Madame Wallard for five years. She was quite elderly - it seemed to me - rather thin, and always dressed in black, but she was fond of me and was kind.

The front of the house had a small garden which led down to the main road leading into the village. I would often sit on a wall there and look at the cars go by. I kept hoping that one of them would stop and that either my father or my mother would get out and take me away for good. I knew that my parents would come separately - I realized quite early on that my parents did not live together and were divorcing - but this wasn't really important to me. I simply craved to be taken away by one of them and be a regular child.

My parents didn't visit me very frequently, maybe once every three months. My father would arrive in a rather large car which he'd borrowed from his boss, he'd tell me, and he would take me out for a full day. I'd sit in front with him and we'd drive for a long time to reach Gournay-sur-Marne where he lived. He'd ask me a question or two about what I did at Madame Wallard's and, a bit later on, about my school activities. But he didn't speak much and always looked rather worried. He also smoked a lot, I recall. When we arrived in Gournay, Jackie, his second wife, would come out to welcome me. She basically took care of me for the rest of the day and was a happy and fun person to be with.

My mother Sallie, who was English, would also come to take me out from time to time. She was always dressed elegantly and drove a sports car with a retractable roof which she'd open when the weather was nice. I never felt comfortable with her, even less so than with my father, maybe because of the remarks she'd make which I always found strange and sometimes hurtful. From the very beginning therefore, I was wary of her. This might also have been due to the first years of my life that I had spent with her.

My sister, Brigitte, who was 14 months older than me, had spent a couple of years with Madame Wallard but had then been put in a religious boarding school. One day in Paris - were we both with Madame Wallard at that time? - we found ourselves in a large room with beautiful ladies who would come in, take off the dress they were wearing, put on another one, and after having been checked out by other ladies, would leave quickly, only to return soon after. We were at our mother's workplace and they were presenting the season's fashion. Sallie was a star model with the *haute couture* celebrity, Jacques Griffe, and on that day they were celebrating Saint Catherine.

Not living with my parents had an impact on my everyday life. Thus, on my first day at school, I was the only child who was not accompanied by my parents, or at least one of them. Madame Wallard was there, of course, and I cried in her arms before entering the school, but I remember thinking that it wasn't the same thing as having a mother or a father with me. Madame Wallard got me to write to my parents from time to time, either to my father or my mother, to give them

some of my news. Here is a short letter, translated from French, that I wrote to my father in September 1953 when I was seven and a half: "My dear daddy, I had a good time during the holidays with my friends and I had lots of fun. I am the best runner of my group. I am now doing my homework for the holidays. Come and see me, daddy, I'd be so happy. Your little boy who gives you a big kiss. François Grosjean."



The author aged seven

Never did I realize when I wrote that letter that I wouldn't be seeing my father that soon. My life with Madame Wallard ended abruptly in December when my mother arrived to take me out for the day, supposedly. She had arrived in a chauffeur-driven car and, after having stopped off at her hotel in Paris for a few hours, we went to Orly Airport where we took a plane to Switzerland. So much for the little outing! In Geneva, André, her new partner, was there to welcome us. I learned later that he was a very wealthy Franco-Italian businessman who had encouraged her to move to Rome where she had started breeding racehorses as well as training them.

The next day, we left by car for a *home d'enfants*, a preschool boarding school, in a little village in the Vaud mountains, Chesières. That was where I was reunited with my sister who had been there for some six months and whom I had not seen for a long time. Several years later, I learned that this sudden change of home and country had been done without our father's consent. My parents' divorce has been finalized six months before after some six years of intense legal fighting and our mother had obtained the care of both children. Our father, however, had visiting rights twice a month. Taking us to another country in what was clearly a case of parental child abduction took us out of French jurisdiction - international aid on these questions did not exist at the time - and made his visits all the more difficult.

Three months after my arrival, our father came to see us. He only stayed a few hours as he was on his way to Corsica to start a job as an archaeologist for the CNRS, the French National Center for Scientific Research. He was to discover some quite amazing artifacts which resulted in his being recognized later as one of the founding fathers of Corsican prehistoric archaeology.



Sallie in 1954

My sister and I stayed in the *home d'enfants* for some seven months and then our mother put us in English boarding schools in Switzerland. My sister went to Chatelard School in Les Avants, in the Vaud Canton, and I was put in Aiglon College which was in Villars-sur-Ollon before moving to Chesières. I suppose that my mother wanted to cut all bridges with France and make her children as British as possible. I thus began ten years of boarding schools, six years at Aiglon and four years at Ratcliffe College in England.

When my mother came to visit Aiglon that spring, she had her photo taken and was wearing her starfish brooch that I remember to this day. When I look at photos of my parents from that period - I knew they had met in England during the war and that my father had been a fighter pilot there - certain traits still come through. My mother was quite tall, slender and



Roger in 1954

elegant, but she had a piercing, hard look. My father was of medium height, slightly stout, with thinning hair. He was a calm thoughtful man, and even-tempered. I never felt close to him but, on the other hand, he was in no way threatening; I simply didn't know him very well.

I arrived at Aiglon as a French monolingual, and left six years later, a French-English bilingual. Many boys and teachers spoke French to me at first but I learned English quite quickly and by the end of the school year, it became my everyday language. After her first visit, my mother never came back to Aiglon. As for my father, he visited me three times, just for a few hours in the spring, on his way down to Corsica and his new digs. My sister and I would also go to see him in Paris, but this didn't occur very frequently.

Our visits to our mother in Rome were also irregular. We would usually stay in school during vacations or, at the last minute, we were sent to another school or to a *home d'enfants*. I even spent a few weeks once in my sister's all girls school! When we did visit our mother, she was always extremely critical of us and of our father whom she seemed to loathe. We didn't know how to react and slowly developed strategies to avoid her as much as possible. It was during those visits that she told us that she preferred animals to people, notably children; she would repeat this to us very often thereafter.



At Aiglon (age 11)

She always seemed to be putting on a show in public and I was very conscious of it. She'd arrive with her dog pulling on its leash - she always had a dog with her, most often a bull terrier - and she was soon the center of attention. She was an elegant and rather beautiful woman - not that it mattered to me - and made sure she attracted attention wherever she went. Most men were under her charm.

After six years at Aiglon, my mother wrote to me one day to tell me that I would go to another school the following term, this one in England. The reason she gave me was that Aiglon was not sufficiently strict and that I needed to get a gentleman's education! And so it was that I became a boarder in an English public school, Ratcliffe College, near Leicester in England. It was a Catholic school run by the Rosminians. I thought I knew about life in a boarding school after my six years at Aiglon but I was surprised by Ratcliffe - there were far more boys, most of them from the Midlands, we slept in large dormitories, and the school had corporal punishment.

Throughout my years at Ratcliffe, where I would spend my vacations was always a problem. My mother was often too busy, or didn't want me in Rome, much to my delight. So, quite early on, she asked my aunt to find me a family where I could be a paying guest. That is how I came to know the Mooney family in Gerrards Cross. It was the first time that I lived in a real family with two parents and four children, and very quickly I felt at home with them. This said, I did continue to go to Rome at least once a year until I was sixteen. I would spend difficult days there as my mother never ceased to show me her dislike, and she would constantly pour scorn on our father in front of us.

At Ratcliffe, after a difficult start in my studies, I caught up and slowly moved to the front of my form. In my final year, I obtained first prize in all my subjects. But I was a bit of a rebel, and I never made it to prefect or to a rank higher than corporal in the College Cadet Force. I was often very lonely but after a couple of years, I turned to a priest, Father Wood, who took me under his wing and spent many hours talking to me about my childhood.



At Ratcliffe (age 16)

When I was 17, my mother wrote to me to inform me that she would no longer continue paying for my education in England after my A levels. She told me to ask my father to finance my university studies and so I wrote to him to ask him for his help. I felt uncomfortable doing so but he replied that he could indeed help me. I had to come to Paris, however, as university studies were less expensive there. So I came back to my home country, ten years after having left it.

My childhood memories linked to my parents stop at age 18 as it was then that I cut off all ties to my mother. I started to live by myself in Paris as a student and went through some lonely few years, without friends or family, in a country that was no longer mine. I never went back to Rome and only met my mother on three occasions, for very short moments, most notably my grandfather's funeral. Sallie lived until the age of 88; I was 63 at the time. We had become such strangers to one another - 35 years had gone by without seeing one another - that I was not mentioned in her will, nor was my sister. Upon her death, which I will come back to at the end of this book, a friend of hers, Alda Dapelo, worked hard to find my name, address and phone number, so as to tell me that she had passed away.

As for my father, he lived in Paris part of the year when I was a student there, but we saw each other only rarely. He would invite me to dinner from time to time but even though Jackie, my step-mother, would do everything to liven up the atmosphere, I never stayed very long as I didn't feel comfortable in his presence. Roger died of a heart attack just before his fifty-fifth birthday (I was 29 then). I kept in touch via postal mail and phone with Jackie whom I sometimes went to see when we would go up to Paris. When she died in September 2017, I grieved for the wonderful and caring person I had known as a boy. It also dawned on me that she had been the last living link of that generation that I had to my parents.

A long investigation

After my university studies, I had a career in academia, first in France, then in the United States, and finally in Switzerland. I also met my wife and we had two children together. Throughout those years, I would often think about the questions I had asked myself in my youth concerning my parents whom I had not really known: Who was Roger, that young French fighter pilot in the 1940s in England? What about that young woman, Sallie, who was to become my mother? I knew nothing about their childhood, in France for the one, in England for the other. How had they met and how had their life together been, first in England and then in France? Why did they stay with one another for such a short time? Was their love mutual, at least at first, or was it one-sided? My mother would constantly criticize my father when I was young, whereas he never mentioned her. Why was that? Why did they have two children given that they must have realized quite early on that they shouldn't be living together? Were we

wanted or were we accidents in the life of a short-lived romance? Finally, why did neither my sister nor I ever live with either of them?

It was only when I was 57 and had a bit more free time on my hands that I decided to find answers to these questions. But how do you start this kind of investigative work when one parent has been dead for some thirty years and you have lost contact with the other? I decided to start with the easiest part. I wrote to Jackie and asked her if she could share with me all my father's personal documents. She said she would try to find them, and several weeks later, on a trip to Paris, she kindly gave me a box full of papers which she had carefully kept: identity papers and certificates, photos of Roger as a child and as an adult, a few diplomas, various CVs written at different times during his life, a number of military documents, both French and English, decorations that he had received, a presentation book with a few photos and personal commentaries, copies of letters sent and received, extracts from a diary he had kept from December 1943 to March 1945, the file of his divorce with Sallie, newspaper clippings, and a few unpublished manuscripts. Never did I realize that this would be the beginning of a twelve-year quest that would uncover an incredible story involving both my parents!

I started going through the documents and discovered a number of surprising things such as his journey through Spain and Portugal during World War II to reach England. I also learned of his role in the Free French Air Force (FAFL) in London. This led me to contact various institutions in France and to write to historians specialized in that period. I then started to separate events that were clearly established from others that needed more work. Among the first were various life events such as his birth, his childhood, his schooling, the beginning of his military career, all accompanied by various documents and photos. As for the second, I sought out converging evidence from various documents and archives. For example, Roger had a number of air force records: the one he started with in France, the one he had in England in 1943-1944, and the one he then had in Morocco in 1944. Some dates and events didn't appear on all three, some contradicted others - recall that we are dealing with a five-year period during a world conflict - and so I had to undertake additional checks to get a correct set of data. This also applied to the CVs I found as well as to letters.

Much more work was needed when the documents seemed to have a more fundamental problem. Here are a few examples. In a letter of December 30, 1945, Roger writes to his cousins in Faverois, Territoire de Belfort (France): "So many things have happened since the beginning of 1943 when Dad wrote to cousin Louis to ask him if one could cross over to Switzerland to escape the Germans. Following his response in which Louis told us they guarded the border very closely, I contacted an English network that helped me cross into Spain, then Portugal, and on to England. It took me 14 days to go from Paris to London, a record at that time! I was promoted to second-lieutenant and after having worked for General Koenig at the General Staff, I was transferred to an RAF squadron where I remained until July 1944. During that period, I went on missions along the Norwegian coast and over Normandy at the start of the second front. In July 1944, I was sent to Meknes in Morocco, North Africa, where I took command of a fighter squadron (American fighters this time). I became very tired and the consequences of various fractures made me suffer. I was discharged on medical grounds and I am waiting to leave the air force as I have had enough. It no longer has the spirit that we had found in London with the Free French Forces. (...) Let me end by telling you that in January 1944, I married in London and that we have had a little girl who was born at the end of December 1944."

This letter contains numerous pieces of information that were all new to me and that I started checking out to make sure they were correct. When one writes to family members, one can easily make certain things more attractive, avoid talking about other things, even tell untruths, and, of course, make mistakes concerning places and dates. So I wrote to the General Register Office in England that has the population's birth, marriage and death data, and asked for my parents' marriage certificate. Their answer was clear: there was no trace of their marriage in 1944, nor in 1943, the year my father arrived in England, nor in 1945 when they were back in France! It is only much later on that I found out that they had married on August 1, 1945, at the 17e arrondissement mairie in Paris! So why mention a marriage at the beginning of 1944? The reason is simply that two of Roger's cousins in Faverois were priests who would not have seen with a favorable eye the birth of my sister out of wedlock!

The letter contained other military data that needed to be checked: the RAF squadrons, the missions above the North Sea and Normandy, the command of a squadron in Meknes, etc. A letter to the RAF Personnel Records Department and a visit to the French Air Force Archives (BARAA) in Dijon allowed me to clarify things. Some of what Roger had written was correct, other things were exaggerated, some were wrong.

I was also able to discover new aspects concerning his military career. For example, I investigated two airplane accidents he had whilst he was a fighter pilot in France. The first one was well documented and clear, but the second remained a bit of a mystery for quite some time. He wrote in his presentation book, "June 1940. Shot down by an Italian fighter plane (Var)... hospitalized for three months". Now, in a presentation book that is eminently personal, one can sometimes stray towards some form of fiction, and that seemed to have been the case this time. I found no trace of this accident in his military file nor in any books or reports from that time. I contacted an expert on the air battles that took place between the French and the Italians in the South-East of France in June 1940 and he told me that this particular battle had not happened. In fact, Roger did have a serious plane accident in the Var region but it was in 1941, not 1940, aboard a Bloch MB152. This was confirmed by Serge Joanne in his monumental work, *Le Bloch MB152*, which appeared in 2003. I also found photos of the crash in my father's files. Clearly, Roger would have preferred to have been shot down during a combat mission but that was not the case.

Another example of data validation concerns the Ecole de l'Air (pilot school) in Salon-de-Provence for enlisted men who wanted to become officers. In several CVs, Roger indicated that he had obtained a place in the school in 1941, but did he ever attend it? I wrote to the school, checked out the dates in various documents, and concluded that he had never actually gone there. His second airplane accident followed by a long recovery period stopped him from doing so.

A major challenge that I had when piecing together Roger's life as a pilot was to separate fact from fiction in an important document my step-mother had given me: his unpublished book on his war years, *Le soleil dans le lion* (The Sun in Leo). It is largely autobiographical and it tells the story of François Perrin, a young fighter pilot, his passage to England during the German Occupation, what he did there, and how he met a young woman, Sallie! The work does contain elements of fiction at the end such as the fact that François headed a fighter-squadron in the South of France during the summer of 1944. Roger never did that. As we will see later, there was a good reason for wanting to end the main character's military career in this way. This said,

the book on the whole is faithful to what Roger actually lived through during those years. I'll cite it often but only when the facts in question have been checked externally.

An astonishing finding

Before starting to tell the story of Roger as a pilot, it's important to reveal something I discovered that neither Jackie nor I were aware of. In his handwritten CV dating back to 1949, he writes: "Réseau renseignements britanniques ; appelé GB début 1943" ("British secret service network; called to England in 1943"). And in his unpublished work, François is an MI5 agent. Could it be that during the war, Roger had been in touch with Her Majesty's Security Service (MI5) or had even worked for them?

I decided to find out and wrote to MI5. I asked whether Roger had been in contact with them in 1943 and whether they had helped him reach England. In the same letter, I asked if they had a file for my great-aunt, Faith Shipway, who might also have worked for them. A few weeks later, I received MI5's response, dated May 11, 2004 and signed by T. Denham for the Director General. It was short and it is worth citing an extract: "We are not in a position to say whether we hold a record for your father. Any record we might have would be unlikely to be releasable in the foreseeable future. We have no record of Faith Shipway".

The first line corresponds to the usual "neither confirm nor deny" response of the British secret service on a topic they do not want to discuss. The beginning of the third sentence, though, which states that they have no record for my great-aunt, shows what they could have answered in the same way for my father. The fact that they didn't reveals that they do indeed have something for Roger. I remain amazed to this day, some thirteen years later, that they slipped up in this way and did not use the same "neither confirm nor deny" response for both Roger and Faith.

To find out more, I contacted a number of secret service specialists to see if they had ever encountered my father's name in their research. One memorable evening, in December 2005, Nigel West, a recognized expert on British intelligence during World War II, wrote me an email to confirm that Roger had indeed worked for MI5 under the code name, FIDO. He kindly pointed out a few books that mention him, among them the one by John C. Masterman, who ran the Double Cross system which controlled double agents during the war¹. Nigel West had also edited the diaries of Guy Liddell, MI5's director of counter-espionage at that time, and in them Grosjean/FIDO is mentioned several times². There is even a mention of "an English girl" in a section dealing with Roger and this is no other than my mother, Sallie!

Each time that I discovered new material linking my father to MI5, I would write to them to ask to be able to see his file. Invariably, I would receive a negative response. For example, in 2006, I contacted the Advisory Council on National Records and Archives. It verifies that the civil service deposits its documents in due course in the National Archives in Kew, England. They wrote to MI5 to ask for Roger's file but they too received a refusal. I even appealed to the Investigatory Powers Tribunal, the judicial body that oversees the secret services and that receives complaints about them. My request was turned down but I learned later that this was

¹ Masterman, John C. (1972). *The Double-Cross System*. Yale: Yale University Press (see page 143).

² West, Nigel (Ed., 2005). *The Guy Liddell Diaries*. Vol. II. 1942-1945. London: Routledge, 2005 (see pages 92, 101, 103, 152, 167, 182, et 196).

not surprising. Ian Cobain, a journalist who works for The Guardian, revealed in an article in 2014 that the Tribunal is secretly operating from within the Home Office, which oversees MI5. As a consequence, "no complaint against any of the intelligence agencies has ever been upheld".³ The Tribunal's independence has been questioned by many and, according to one eminent barrister quoted in the article, it is a "kangaroo court".

So, could Roger, who was a fighter pilot and member of the Free French Air Force, also have been involved in the activities of the British Security Service? Did that man whom I perceived as calm and thoughtful, and who enjoyed physical comforts when I knew him, have such an eventful war? Thanks to the investigation I conducted over several years, I can tell his story in the next chapter.

In my search for my parents, I still had nothing on my mother - where she had spent her youth, what she did for a living in England, who her first husband was, how she met my father, why they had two children so quickly, why they separated and divorced, and why she hated and denigrated my father so. I was despairing that I would ever find anything, especially as I had broken all links with her. I did write to her in 2003 to tell her that I was interested in discovering the English side of my family. I had started work on two ancestors, Henri Jean-Baptiste Victoire Fradelle, a Franco-British historical painter, and Major General Charles Compton Pratt of the Royal Marines. But she never replied. In 2006, on the day I turned 60, I wrote again and said a few nice words, but once again no reply came back.

One Tuesday in December 2009, the phone rang and Alda Dapelo was on the line. She told me she had been a good friend of my mother's and that she was sorry to say that Sallie had just died. I thanked her for everything she had done for her and asked her to please put aside any family documents that she might find as I would like to have them. She replied that it might be difficult as the house was in a very sad state and that many boxes of documents in the cellar had suffered from water damage. But she'd do her best, she promised. A few weeks later she contacted me again and told me that she had been able to save a number of documents. Could I come down to Italy to get them? I did so nine months later.

As I started going through them, I realized that many were complementary to, and confirmed, my father's documents that I had received from Jackie six years before. There were identity papers and various acts covering some fifty years, as well as photos of Sallie. Among these, a hundred or so from her days as a star model for Jacques Griffe in Paris. These I digitized and gave to the Musée des Arts Décoratifs (Museum of Decorative Arts) in Paris since Griffe was a highly regarded *haute couture* creator in the 50's and 60's. There were also the letters Roger sent to Sallie from December 1943 to February 1945, a divorce file, paper clippings concerning Sallie, letters from Francis, her father, as well as her partner André, and a few extracts from her diary. But above all, comparable in importance to my father's unpublished war memoir, there was the beginning of Sallie's autobiography that covered the period from her birth to 1952 when she left for Italy.

I couldn't have been a luckier investigator. I who had absolutely no information on my parents most of my life was now faced with a trove of documents thanks to Jackie who had kept my

³ Ian Cobain, "'Independent' court scrutinizing MI5 is located inside Home Office", The Guardian, March 5, 2014. <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2014/mar/05/independence-ipt-court-mi5-mi6-home-office-secrecy-clegg-miliband>

father's files for more than 30 years and to Alda Dapelo who had gone hunting in my mother's cellar to find her personal documents. With these, I was able to reconstruct their short life together as well as their separation. The story that I am about to tell is that of a young couple not meant to live together, but also that of World War II, the Free French Forces, the British Security Service and their double agents. It is fascinating and original. And, as amazing as it may seem, totally true. In the next pages, I first describe Roger's life as a pilot until 1945, and Sallie's early life until she met Roger. I then recount their three years together and I end with Roger's life after Sallie, and Sallie's life after Roger.

2. Roger⁴

Roger Augustin Eugène Grosjean was born in Chalon-sur-Saône (France) on July 25, 1920, the son of Joseph Grosjean, a judge in Lunéville, and of Henriette Boudet-Cauquil, originally from Montpellier. He spent his early years in the north of France, changing cities as his father changed postings (e.g., Lunéville, Briey, Lille, even Paris for a few years). Letters from Joseph to his cousins in the Territoire de Belfort gives us a few insights into Roger's very early years. When he was 2 1/2, his father wrote that he was like a little eel; not a minute of rest... (but) he was doing well and growing very fast. He already looked like a 4 year old. When he was 7 1/2, Joseph stated that he liked his class, was good in math and was beginning to read well. But he was still a scatterbrain!

Photos of Roger in his youth show a lively, happy boy, always very active and curious. From the ages of 14 to 18, he attended a well-known Catholic school, the Collège de Marcq en Baroeul, near Lille, where he was a boarder. His parents would visit him every Sunday and continue to spoil him, Joseph writes. Clearly more interested in sports than in his studies, he excelled in rugby and track and field. In the latter, he was a youth French record-holder in the discus in 1936. He passed the first part of his baccalauréat (the end of high school exam) but then veered off toward becoming a pilot.

Fighter pilot



Roger in 1940

Roger was accepted into the French Air Force pilot school in 1939, and he was trained in Clermont-Ferrand and Ambérieu. After having obtained his pilot's license, he went on to specialize as a fighter pilot in Etampes, where he flew on Morane-Saulnier 406 and Dewatine 500 aircrafts. He graduated second of his class at the end of 1939 and was appointed sergeant.

During the drôle de guerre (the "phony war") from September 1939 to May 1940, Roger stayed at Etampes and flew several missions. However, in early May 1940, just before the Germans invaded France, his plane was hit by Allied antiaircraft fire and he was wounded. As a result, he was unable to take part in the Battle of France (May 10 to June 22, 1940). His father told his cousins that his base at Etampes was destroyed by German bombers and about ten of his mates died in a hut in which they had taken refuge. Roger had had the intuition of sheltering somewhere else. He helped dig the grave of his friends and attended their wake before they were buried, Joseph continues.

⁴ Much of this chapter is based on the academic paper I wrote for the *Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence* in 2010: "FIDO: French Pilot and Security Service Double Agent *Malgré Lui*", 23(2), 337–352.

Roger ferried planes to the rear as the Germans advanced on French airfields. When he left for La Rochelle, his father writes, he saw a German convoy near Chartres and attacked it. He heard bullets fly by him as well as shells. When the armistice was signed, Roger remained in the Air Force (he had signed up for five years) and was posted, first to Montpellier and then, in 1941, to the Fighter Group (GC) 2/1 in Le Luc, Var, part of Vichy France. The Germans allowed Vichy to keep a reduced army, air force, and navy to defend its territory. The mission given to Roger's group was to protect the French fleet in Toulon, which they did with their Bloch MB152s armed with two cannons and two machine guns. Joseph relates in June 1941 that Roger flew every day over the Toulon fleet, sometimes as high as 8,900 meters. After his accident in May 1940, Roger was happy to be a regular member of a fighter group, and the reports he received from his superiors were excellent. Lieutenant Dubied wrote that he was a very outgoing young non-commissioned officer, who would improve with training. He did well and was of good disposition.



Roger in his Bloch MB152 in 1941

Unfortunately, in late September 1941, the engine of the plane Roger was flying suddenly stopped and he crashed into a forest in Flassans-sur-Isole, Var. Roger described this accident in his unpublished book. When he realized he had a problem, it was too late to bail out. So he cut the motor and glided down, trying to find a landing site. He saw a clearing containing a vineyard and aimed for it but his speed was too great and he quickly reached its end. He finally

crashed into the trees beyond. Badly injured, he spent several months in hospital until the beginning of 1942, and then several more months convalescing in Lille, Orange, St. Maxime, etc. In the spring of 1942, he asked to be posted to French West Africa but to no avail. He spent some more time in hospital because of his injuries, and in the end never got back to his fighter group in Le Luc. He had been accepted into officer school at Salon-de-Provence - he was a master sergeant by then - but he was unable to attend.

There are many indications in the documents I obtained that Roger was clearly on the Allies' side. In his unpublished book, he wrote that the main character, François Perrin (a pseudonym that he was to adopt in 1944), had wanted to fight the enemy in 1940 but was unable to do so. He had also been confined to barracks in Le Luc for a full week because he had said publicly that the Germans had practically lost the war when they attacked Russia in June 1941. In his presentation book, next to de Gaulle's famous June 18, 1940, speech, Roger had written that it had woken him up from a deep slumber. His many friends during the war such as the famous French Resistance fighter, Marcel Degliame, and the honors he received at the end of the war, all indicate that he was not himself a collaborator.

The first part of his Air Force career ended in November 1942 when the Germans invaded the unoccupied part of France and the remaining French military were demobilized. Much of what happened the following year probably had its roots in Roger's rather unhappy military career till then: he had missed the fighting in 1940 because of his first accident, he had been badly injured in his second accident, and he had failed to go to officer school because of his injuries.

Many of his friends were either in North Africa or in England fighting with the Free French Air Force or Britain's Royal Air Force (RAF). The 22-year-old trained fighter pilot was seeing no action; even worse, as of November 1942, he could no longer fly.

We learn what happened to Roger after that from his unpublished book and from the report that was written on him in 1943 at the London Reception Center (LRC) - an interrogation center operated by MI5 for new arrivals from continental Europe⁵. The report indicates that after having been released from the French Air Force, Roger started law studies, first in Lille and then Paris. He rented a small flat in Paris at the beginning of 1943 and went to lectures, but clearly his mind was elsewhere. In his unpublished book, the main character⁶ thinks of stealing a German plane and flying it to England, but he never does so as it is too dangerous: "He thought of no longer attending lectures and, instead, of stealing a German plane, a fighter if possible, with which he would leave for England.... It was theoretically possible, but how would he approach and then enter a Luftwaffe airport? And then, how would he prepare the plane, check it was filled up and ready to fly? After all, he didn't know a word of German. After having taken off, things would be easier even if the enemy forces on the French coast would have been warned of the theft."

Around May 7, 1943, according to the LRC report, Roger met fellow pilots, Georges Montet and a Commandant Lacroix, at the Cercle Européen. The Cercle was a notorious meeting place for German officials and French collaborators. A question arises as to what Roger was doing there, as clearly he was not himself a collaborator. Montet, a lieutenant in the French Air Force, was currently head of the "Centre pour l'Espagne" (Center for Spain), a cover for the work he did for the Germans. One of his activities was to recruit pilots for them. Roger told him that he missed flying, and Montet proposed that he work as a ferry-pilot for Lufthansa. After telling Montet he would think about it, Roger phoned him the next day to tell him that he accepted.

As this is a crucial first step in Roger's double agent life, we can ask what was going through his mind. He may have thought that this was his chance of stealing a plane and flying it to England. But Lufthansa planes were rather slow workhorses, and he might well have been shot down, either by the Germans or the Allies, before reaching England. Was this a chance he was ready to take? Something else will need to be checked out when his file becomes available - his contact with the British Intelligence Service through intermediaries in France. In two different documents—his book and his war CV— Roger writes about this. Thus, in his book, he mentions speaking to a British agent named "Richardson" who worked as an engineer in a battery and accumulator factory in Lille. Richardson told him: "You must pursue this route ...They need young men like you. Observe, listen and retain everything.... keep in mind all that happens around you.... I'll need a full report from you...".

When the French version of the current book came out, I received an email from Jean Leclercq, originally from Lille, who confirmed that there had indeed been a battery factory there, the Tudor factory in Wattignies, and that there were a number of English people and their

⁵ Report on Roger Grosjean, London Reception Centre (LRC) at the Royal Patriotic School operated by MI5, subsection B1d. Now document KV4/25 at the National Archives, Kew, England.

⁶ Since Roger's book is autobiographical, and in order to facilitate reading, I will not use the main character's name (François Perrin) in what follows. I will, however, usually indicate where the information comes from - Roger's unpublished book, his diary, or the London Reception Center (LRC) report.

descendants living in the area. There is also the case of Georges Montet. His brother, Lucien Montet, also known as Christian Martell, was part of the resistance movement and a member of the Alsace fighter group in England. At first sight, Georges was a collaborator but there is increasing evidence that he was in fact a double agent, working for the British but pretending that he was on the Germans' side.

A few days after their first encounter, Roger accepted to meet Montet at his apartment near the Champs-Élysées. Two other people were there: a German colonel in civilian clothes, who was introduced as “Pierre,” and “Boris”. Both were to play an important part in getting Roger over to England. According to French author Patrice Miannay, “Pierre” was probably Pedro Köpke⁷, who worked for the German Intelligence Service (Abwehr). In his book, Roger describes Pierre as rather small, well-built, blond but losing his hair, with blue eyes, and no accent in French. He had been in Spain during the Civil War and he lived at the Hôtel Louvois in Paris. “Pierre” told Roger, “You should know that we have done a background check on you in the pilot schools you attended, but also on your family. The results are excellent.”

He then stated that he had a more interesting job to offer him. Roger would be sent on a mission by the Germans to an Allied territory, where he would enlist in the Free French Air Force, and would thereafter send back information on aircraft, troops, weapons, instruments, and other technical matters by means of letters using secret ink. He would also steal a plane equipped with new navigational equipment and fly it back to German-occupied territory. “Pierre” told him that the mission involved no danger and that he would be back in a few months. Roger expressed tentative acceptance. Basically, this would be his way of reaching England, and in his unpublished book he noted that accepting the Germans' offer to send him there coincided fully with his stratagem: “It was wonderful and unexpected.... He would no longer see the awful faces of the occupiersHe would fly again and would fight with fury”.

A few days went by and, finally, on May 19, Roger told Montet that he accepted the assignment. Roger agreed that everything he would earn would be paid directly to his parents in Lille. He was to tell them that he would be sent to Spain on a business trip by the Vichy Government. He was also informed, notably by Boris, that if he brought back an important and recent model of an airplane, he would be rewarded highly.

Roger saw “Richardson” again in Lille, who told him, “Don’t worry about anything. You’ll always be protected. You can leave feeling reassured.” In two places in his book, Roger reiterates that this British secret agent assured him that the Intelligence Service would look after him if he pretended to work for the Germans.

Roger leaves for England

Roger's passage to England with the help of the Germans, and then the British, is clearly explained in the LRC report. On June 5, 1943, Roger met “Pierre” at the Gare d’Austerlitz in Paris; they took the night train to Perpignan, a city close to the Spanish border, and arrived the next day around midday. “Pierre” told Roger to meet him in front of the post office at 4:30 p.m. “Pierre” arrived in a chauffeur-driven car and they drove to Le Boulou. A bit further on, they changed chauffeurs and drove on to Le Perthus, the French–Spanish border. Roger was given

⁷ Throughout this chapter, to facilitate reading, I will use the name "Pierre" even though in Spain he was known as "Pedro".

a German newspaper to read and told to act German and not to speak. They passed through the French, German, and Spanish controls without difficulty. They then drove on to Figueras, where they went to a large country mansion whose owner was a German in the ham-canning business. Roger spent two nights there. During a conversation with his host, Roger was asked, "You are another aviator, aren't you?," showing that he had not been the first to go through with the help of the Germans.

An unknown German then took Roger to Barcelona, via Girona. "Pierre" and another man, "Grégoire", came to fetch Roger at a café and took him to a safe house, where "Pierre" told him he should grow a beard in order to look as if he had had a difficult journey over the mountains. In his book, Roger writes that he spent a week in an apartment near the General Hospital; surprisingly, it happened to belong to an English businessman. Though he was locked inside, he simply climbed out of the window when he wanted to go outside.

The LRC report states that two days later, "Pierre" came to give Roger his cover story for the British. He was to tell them that he had been in contact with an Allied organization in Paris and that they had sent him to Perpignan where, at the Café Thierry, he had obtained information on how to reach the Spanish border. "Pierre" gave him several details, including the fact that he had obtained transportation from lorries until he arrived in Barcelona on June 11. He had paid the drivers for the lifts. Roger asked Pierre where he would be going. He was told North Africa or the UK. North African security controls were easier to pass through but the latest aircraft were to be found in the UK.

After several days, perhaps on June 14, "Grégoire" took Roger by taxi to a spot near the British Consulate, into which he walked and applied to be evacuated from Spain. He also went to the United States Consulate in the hope of being evacuated more rapidly. Roger spent a few more days in Barcelona, and during that time "Grégoire" gave him instruction in secret writing. He gave him a matchhead which he was to hold with a propelling pencil or tweezers for use in writing the letters; he also gave him a cover address in Barcelona. In his book, Roger adds a few details. He was ordered to write to a fictional girlfriend, "Consuelo Stabilito", in Barcelona. Enough room had to be left between the lines to write a second, hidden, letter in capital letters. For this second one, he was to use the special matchhead, which he would hide in the lining of his trousers. The secret letter had to be signed "Le chasseur" (The Hunter). He was also given a phone number in Barcelona in case there was a problem.

According to the LRC report, when Roger returned to France with a stolen plane, he was to pretend that he was in trouble and waggle his aircraft's wings to avoid being fired on. Upon landing, he was to ask to speak to a senior German officer and say that he belonged to the German Intelligence Service (Abwehr). He was also told that, should the Allies land in France, and if he himself was still in France at that time, he would be given prisoner-of-war papers and put in a camp. "Grégoire" warned him that if they did not hear from him after a certain time, he would be considered a traitor and reprisals would be taken against his family. In addition, he would be liquidated in the UK by the German "Special Brigade," which was there for that purpose.

On June 19, unexpectedly rapidly, Roger was sent by the British Consulate to Saragossa in the company of two other French Air Force personnel, Capitaine Pichon and Sergent-Chef Olivarez. The LRC report states that he left so suddenly that there had been no time for him to receive final instructions from "Pierre" as to the precise objectives of his mission. Before his

departure, Roger wrote a letter in secret ink saying that he was leaving for Lisbon. He wrote another one when he arrived in Lisbon. The LRC report notes the “startling similarity of this case to that of Feyguin,” who had arrived in England in May/June via the same route and with the help of “Pierre”. It even corresponds down to the small detail of Pierre leaving the final instructions until too late. One entry concerning Feyguin appears in Guy Liddell’s diary⁸. Liddell, director of counter-espionage in the Security Service (MI5) during the war, wrote on June 30: “A French naval officer named Feyguin has arrived in this country. . . . [He was] recruited by the Germans for a mission for the Abwehr in this country. He was extremely badly trained. The French are anxious to use him as a double-cross but it is very doubtful whether he will be suitable for this purpose. He will probably go to Camp 020.”

Roger’s journey across Spain and Portugal with his two companions is related in his unpublished book. They took the train to Saragossa, then Valladolid, and then Zamora. They then walked during five nights and changed guides twice. Roger describes the hardship of having to walk at night only, sleeping in forests and barns during the day, and having to make detours to avoid the border patrols. They crossed the border over the Rio Douro and then took the train to Lamego, Porto, and finally Lisbon. Roger became, briefly, one of many agents and double agents in this city, either passing through or based there. For example, double agents such as CARELESS, CARROT, and TRICYCLE passed through Lisbon on their way to England. GARBO actually worked there for a while before moving to England.

In Lisbon, Roger reported to the British Embassy and had to wait for a few days for a seat on a plane to England. On June 30, he was issued an affidavit from the British Vice Consul indicating who he was and that he had no travel document “owing to circumstances beyond my control.” He needed this document “so that the necessary visa permitting me to proceed to the United Kingdom may be affixed thereto.” From Lisbon Roger wrote a postcard to his grandparents in Montpellier, France, indicating that he was on a business trip for Vichy and that he would be leaving Lisbon soon.

So far, I have found no trace that the Vichy Government had collaborated in any way with the Germans to send Roger over to England. However, one gray area still needs to be elucidated: Roger had not been able to attend the officer training school in Salon because of his second accident. And yet, before leaving for England, he had apparently been appointed “sous-lieutenant” (the equivalent of pilot officer). Was it an automatic rank change upon demobilization that came through only a few months later? Or was it linked in some way to his pending journey to England? What is clear is that his new rank was accepted by the Free French Air Force when he joined them later on in the summer and, just a few months after that, he was promoted to full “Lieutenant.”

Roger took a night flight to England on July 1 and arrived in Bristol the next day. He was then interned in a transition center in Bromley for a week, and then in another center in Camberwell for the better part of the month while he waited for a place at the London Reception Centre (LRC). Roger finally arrived at the Centre at the Royal Victoria Patriotic School on July 24 and was given number LRC 15, 766. As the LRC report states: “On the same day, (Grosjean)

⁸ I will quote from Guy Liddell's diary several times in this chapter as he is certainly the one at MI5 at the time who mentions Grosjean/FIDO the most. The full reference is: Guy Liddell (2005). *The Guy Liddell Diaries*. Vol. II: 1942-1945. Edited by Nigel West. Abingdon, England.

reported that he had something of importance to communicate. When he was seen, he stated that he had been recruited by the Germans for a mission in this country."

Roger spent some ten days there, being debriefed. This is what he writes in his book: "He related the events that had occurred these last months.... From time to time, the captain present would note down some important points he could come back to later or check out to make sure he was telling the truth. Roger continued giving all the information he had, and added many details of what he had seen or heard. Thus, he gave some names and described the people concerned, he also gave addresses and phone numbers, even license plate numbers of cars used by the Germans and their collaborators."

At the end of the interrogation period, Roger was recruited by section B1(a) of the Security Service. In his diary, Guy Liddell wrote on July 28: "Baxter reported on the case of a Frenchman called Grosjean who confessed on arrival that he had been recruited by the Germans. His case is somewhat similar to that of Feyguine [sic]. He had no intention of carrying out his mission but was anxious to keep the fact to himself till he arrived in this country. He has spoken of a new type of secret ink which is in plastic form and can be used on a match. He also mentioned a new type of pencil holder which the Germans were issuing to their agents and which was used to hold the match."

In his book, Roger writes that he was interrogated for six days in Office 27, and that once he had signed his deposition, he met a tall man with graying hair and a cane, probably a colonel, who asked him to work with the British against the Germans. Could it have been Colonel T. Roberston or Gilbert Lennox? They had studied his report carefully and had found it very useful; it offered many precise details which they either didn't know or were vague about. They would use him to correspond with the Germans since he had their trust. They wanted to find spies that were in Great Britain, as well as give the Germans false information as to their forces and other military aspects. He could choose to accept to work for them (he would then be allowed to fly but not above enemy territory) or to refuse (he would then become an Air Force instructor).

In fact, Roger's active fighter pilot career had come to an end right there. Both for his own safety, and because he knew too much, he could no longer be allowed to do what he enjoyed doing the most. He accepted the Security Service's offer but in his book he expressed the ambivalent feelings he felt at the time: "(His) mind was tortured by a kind of paradox: maybe he too could have been considered a spy if the English had not checked out his trustworthiness; and yet, he had come over as a loyal ally wishing to fulfill his duty as best he could. For the first time, he started to regret the trouble he had gone through to bring over, with loyalty, all the information he had gathered over several months. He had the feeling that he would not be shown much gratitude in this new activity, even if it would not be incriminated. And, above all, it would prevent him from participating in the war the way he wanted to."

Roger as a double agent

Roger became one of a select group of Double-Cross agents in World War II. There were about forty of them, the best known being Joan Pujol Garcia (GARBO), Nathalie Sergueiew (TREASURE), Roman Czerniawski (BRUTUS), and Dusan Popov (TRICYCLE). Their task was to send false information to the Germans primarily about the allied landings planned for June 1944. By mixing correct, but unimportant, and false information, the British managed to convince the Germans that the landings would take place in the Calais / Dunkirk area. Hence

they kept a number of divisions there, even after the Normandy landings had taken place, and as a consequence, numerous allied lives were saved. Roger arrived at an important moment in the project. Each agent worked with one or two case officers and in Roger's case, they were "Wilcox" and "Carnegie", that is, most probably Baxter and Christopher Harmer. We know this in part from Roger's diary, where he wrote, a few months later, that he had an IS (Intelligence Service) appointment with Christopher and his friend. Case officers organized the agent's life, prepared the messages and letters to be sent out, and kept a sharp eye on their daily activities.

Roger relates in his book that before leaving the LRC, he was asked to write his first letter to Consuelo using the special matchhead. Here is the translation of the letter written in French: "My dear little Consuelo. It's been a month already since we said goodbye to one another and it feels like an eternity. There are so many things I would like to tell you and I'm so sorry I did not say them when we were chatting about various topics including the past and future. We forgot to talk about our feelings for one another which are often a prelude to being in love, wouldn't you say? I have wonderful memories of our walks together along the sea on those warm nights. We would come back to your place late at night, switch on the record player, and listen to dance music from your country which I appreciate so much. I am now so worried you will forget me. Please write to me and tell me once again those words you whispered to me when we parted. They will help me live through my current loneliness. I must leave you now and I hope that this letter reaches you very quickly. With all my love, Jacques."

And here is the hidden letter written in caps between the lines: "FINALLY RELEASED FROM PATRIOTIC SCHOOL AND AM FREE. STOP. EVERYTHING HAS GONE PERFECTLY UP TO NOW. STOP. NO PROBLEMS AND NO SUSPICIONS. STOP. BRITISH HAVE TOTAL CONFIDENCE IN ME. STOP. AM SURE I CAN DO WHAT YOU REQUEST. STOP. HAVE FOUND OUT IN PATRIOTIC SCHOOL THAT CORPORAL PETER CROSS IN GUARD ROOM ACCEPTS MESSAGES, LETTERS AND ERRANDS WITH THE OUTSIDE FOR A SMALL FEE. STOP. HAVE LEARNED THAT A SWISS, JOSEPH BONN, HAS BEEN ARRESTED AS A SPY BY BRITISH AUTHORITIES. STOP. MY PERMANENT ADDRESS IS INDICATED AFTER MY SIGNATURE. STOP. PLEASE CONFIRM THAT YOU HAVE RECEIVED THIS LETTER. THE HUNTER."

Of course, the names are probably different and the wording may not be totally right, but it does give an idea of the kind of strategic message that was sent to the Germans in Barcelona. This is visible in the mention of "Corporal Peter Cross" who was probably not a corporal at all but a member of the Security Service, ready to meet any German agent who would try to contact Roger. It is also evident in the reference to "Joseph Bonn." His arrest was either true (some real information had to be given) or false, depending on what the Security Service wanted the Germans to know or infer.

Roger was released from the LRC on August 5 along with several of his compatriots, and he then went to the Free French Air Force headquarters (Forces Aériennes Françaises Libres [FAFL]) to sign up. On August 16, Guy Liddell wrote, "FIDO [xxxxx] has been taken on by B1(a)," and on August 19, he stated, "FIDO has joined the French Air Force". Clearly, the Security Service had worked out an agreement with the very highest echelons of the French Air Force to make room for Roger in their midst so as send the right signals to the Germans. Roger's French Air Force file in Dijon reflects this. He was given a desk job at the Air Force General Staff, first in the "Chiffre" section (communication and codes), and then in the "Deuxième Bureau" (intelligence service).

Roger tells us about his first contact with General de Gaulle: "One morning, a young cavalry officer came to see our center's commanding officer and asked him to choose ten escapees, recently arrived, to meet General de Gaulle at his office in Carlton Gardens. Without delay, the group was welcomed by the General who said a few kind words to each one. Then, to all those present, he declared with a soft tone of voice, "You are now in London, and that is good! But you have only done your duty! You belong to a handful of men whose exploits will be part of history!"

Only a very few top French officers knew about Roger's ties with the British. Other officers and men did not understand what his situation was, and some were suspicious of him as word may have gone around that Roger had contacted the Germans in Paris. In his book, Roger describes an interview he had with the French counter-intelligence service, the Bureau Central de Renseignements et d'Action (BCRA). He had been told by the British Security Service at Patriotic School not to tell them how he had come over to England with the help of the Germans, and he had promised to keep his status as double agent a total secret. The two services - MI5 and BCRA - did not trust one another and MI5 actually recruited only two French double agents during the war so as to make sure that no information was leaked to the BCRA. Roger was asked by the latter what kind of work he would be doing for the British, and he answered that he had promised not to say anything. The French captain interviewing him responded as follows: "... you are clearly forgetting that you are a French officer and that you have just signed on to be part of the Free French Forces. You cannot keep anything secret from the BCRA. Why didn't you reserve the information you have for the French?"

Roger replied: "If I have acted in this way, it is that the German Intelligence Service have sent me to England with the aim of impeding the British....; it seemed only natural, therefore, that I communicate with them directly." Of course, the words uttered at that time were probably slightly different (Roger's book is dated 1954), but they do point to something that will trouble Roger throughout his stay—the fact of having to work for the British Security Service and not being able to inform his own intelligence service about his actions. This was the beginning of a rather miserable period of Roger's military career.

As we stated in the preceding chapter, the Grosjean/FIDO file at MI5 has not yet been released but, fortunately, Roger's quite official French Air Force file, which gives a rather detailed description of his activities with the French during his stay in England, is available. In addition, his unpublished book, as well as his war diary, in which he relates what he did for the Security Service, are also at hand.

According to Roger's book, some fifteen days after his release from the LRC, his case officers gave him an appointment at 10 Dover Street. There he wrote a second letter to Consuelo. This is a translation of the secret ink part, as it appears in his unpublished book: "HAVE BEEN POSTED FOR SEVERAL MONTHS TO THE FRENCH AIR FORCE GENERAL STAFF BEFORE GOING TO FLY FOR THE RAF. STOP. WHAT SHOULD I DO? WAIT WHERE I AM OR GO AHEAD WITH FINAL MISSION WHICH I FEEL I CAN DO? STOP. IF YOU CAN SEND ME YOUR ORDERS, PLEASE DO SO. STOP. THE BOMBING ON THE 18TH DESTROYED THE EXCHANGE THAT RECEIVES MESSAGES FROM FRANCE. STOP. NOTHING ELSE OF IMPORTANCE TO REPORT. STOP. I REPEAT FOR THE SECOND AND LAST TIME MY ADDRESS STOP. GOODBYE. THE HUNTER."

Again, the content is probably not exactly what Roger wrote but the gist is there. The problem was that Roger had left Barcelona in a hurry and “Pierre” had never told him how he would be contacted. Clearly, in this message, he is trying to get the communication link open at both ends. In his book, Roger states that four more letters were sent before the end of the year. Answers probably didn’t come through, however, since Guy Liddell writes in his December 8 entry: “SNIPER and FIDO and BRONX appear to be secure, but the first two have not yet really got going.”

Roger relates in his book the kind of work he did for the Free French Air Force’s “Deuxième Bureau.” One of his jobs was to make sure that French pilots had everything they needed in case they were shot down over France: Vichy identity papers, civilian clothes, money, addresses of safe houses, etc. Another was to debrief pilots who had been shot down over France and who had managed to come back to England. Some had incredible stories to tell. He relates how two members of a Boston light bomber crew had crash-landed in France and had managed to escape from the wreckage unharmed. They took off their flying gear and, dressed in civilian clothes, stopped a bus going into town. On it, much to their horror, were two police officers who were asking passengers if they had seen a bomber crash-land nearby. The two answered that they had indeed seen it and they pointed in a given direction, away from the aircraft. They realized afterwards that both had been smoking Craven A cigarettes - unavailable in France at that time - while talking to the police! Another pilot was shot down over Normandy and went to hide in Le Havre, where he had family. When things had quietened down a bit, he went to Bordeaux to see his fiancée. Within days, they got married and then the two of them came back to England via Spain and Portugal.

Working with his fellow pilots clearly revived Roger’s desire to see action which he was not getting, either in his office job or in his letter-writing for the Security Service. So, on September 23, 1943, he wrote to the head of the Free French Air Force, General Martial Valin, and asked to be posted to the Fighter Group “Normandie” in Russia. His request received a favorable recommendation from a senior officer. However, marked in red across the top, one can read, “Reste en Grande Bretagne” (Stays in Great Britain). Clearly, the Security Service had been contacted and had refused. They wanted him to stay close to them while they were attempting to get the Germans to react to the letters they were sending them through FIDO.

Even though some of his fellow pilots probably had reservations about him, Roger was promoted to Lieutenant and he received the support of his senior officers. One sign of this was that he was chosen to broadcast on the BBC the New Year greetings of the Free French Air Force on January 1, 1944. Here is a translated extract of what he said on the program, “Quart d’heure français du matin”: “You, my fellow compatriots, who are listening in France, and who wish to share our thoughts at this end of year, here is what I can tell you: all my fellow pilots from our squadrons, “Lorraine,” “Alsace,” “Ile-de-France,” “Normandie,” “Bretagne,” “Picardie,” are in communion with you today..... They know that soon they will be fighting next to you as fellow combatants who have come together on our national soil.”

As for his private life, about four months after having arrived in England, he met Sallie - “the English girl” Liddell mentions in his diary - and he was no longer alone (we’ll devote two chapters to their life together). But he had great difficulties communicating with his parents in Lille who were very worried. Henriette, his mother, wrote to her cousin, Emilie, in October 1943: “We’re both so worried as we haven’t heard from Roger. We don’t know where he is, nor if he is alive or dead. I can’t sleep anymore, I’m losing weight, and I feel despondent.”

Roger can finally fly again

A major change occurred in January 1944. Roger had probably kept pestering his superiors about his wish to fly and do his job as a fighter pilot. The Security Service finally agreed to let him fly. They thought it might lure any German spies already in England who might want to make contact with Roger. In addition, they wanted to show the Germans that Roger was indeed flying, and hence could very well steal a plane for them and fly it back to occupied territory. So, on January 21, Roger was sent to the RAF base in Caistor, Lincolnshire, for a refresher course on a two-engine plane, the Airspeed Oxford. His first flight took place on January 23, the first time he was back in a plane in more than a year! By February 14, he had already logged in twenty-five hours of flying time. He was sometimes allowed to fly by himself, as he relates in his diary, but probably the tanks were not totally full (the British were constantly wary of their double agents). For several weeks, he either flew or trained on a Link Trainer so as to learn the Beam Approach (BABS).

When Roger wasn't busy at the air base, Sallie and he would go riding or help take care of animals on the farm. But the Security Service was never far away. On March 18, Roger writes the following in his diary: "As for the IS matter, I had to go to Grantham (Lincolnshire) to meet Christopher and his friend. We worked until two in the morning; I wrote what was probably the most important letter asking for an answer on Radio Toulouse. If they said, "If you come back, do not ask me for my forgiveness" it would mean "Yes"; if they said, "Flowers are love messages" it would mean "No."

In his book, Roger tells more about his meeting. He indicated in the letter to the Germans that he would be at RAF Poulton (Cheshire) in about a month to train on planes with special equipment for night flights and bad visibility conditions. He wrote that at that point he would be ready to attempt to steal a plane and fly it to Stavanger, Norway. He asked for confirmation. His case officers also asked him to look over photographs of Germans in Paris, as well as Vichy people, to see if he recognized any. Among the photos were those of Montet, as well as "Pierre".

At one point, Roger had to go to the FAFL's London Headquarters. He wrote in his diary that he talked to Admiral Muselier's son, who told him that he wasn't liked very much among the FAFL community in London. Roger wondered why, but he showed his defiance by writing that he would show them what he could do as a pilot after having started to fly again. He ended by writing: "How many of my fellow pilots are condemned to death in France like I am?" This clearly shows how difficult and frustrating it was for him to be simply a letter-writer and lure for the enemy, instead of being a regular fighter pilot. It also shows that the Germans were now aware that he was working for the British. There wasn't much hope, therefore, that the Grantham letter would produce anything.

In late March, Roger spent a week to ten days at RAF Poulton (Cheshire), where he continued training on the Beam Approach. Since a Coastal Command squadron was there, he may have flown in one of their more recent planes. His stay was cut short, however, as he may have met by accident another Double Cross agent there, Henri Arents (FATHER). To prevent them from talking about their MI5 work, Liddell tells us in his diary, Roger was asked to go back to Caistor. By late April, Roger was back in London, where he lived with Sallie in the Gloucester Road area. On May 14, he wrote in his diary, "I am still at Camberley, abandoned by my British

friends, in bad terms and misunderstood by the General Staff. . . . I've decided to hang on, to do what I'm told to do until we can return to France where I'll re-enter civilian life."

At precisely this time, May 15, Guy Liddell brought together Tommy (Tar) Robertson, John Masterman, Hugh Astor, and Blanshard Stamp to talk about FIDO. This shows that his case had continued until then. Liddell was perplexed that FIDO was sending parcels to his parents in Lille (probably through Portugal). In fact, this is not so surprising, as life was very difficult in occupied France at the time, and Roger's mother was ill (she was to die of cancer in 1948). Liddell continues: "Another point was the weakness of FIDO's cover story. Was it possible that the Germans had never bothered much about it as they really intended FIDO to plant himself on us and then double-cross us? In general, there seems to be some element of doubt about the case although the odds are that even if FIDO had intended to carry out his assignment, he gave up the project before he made his statement at the London Reception Centre."

Clearly, the Security Service had remained somewhat suspicious of Roger throughout his time with them. This said, they probably trusted him more than they mistrusted him, as can be seen in Guy Liddell's statement on page 92 of his diary: "He had no intention of carrying out his mission (for the Abwehr)...." My reading is that Roger never realized how difficult it would be to convince the British that he had simply used the Germans to come over to England. If he did indeed have a Security Service contact in France ("Richardson", maybe even Montet), then he may have put too much faith in what was said to him, namely that the Security Service would take good care of him when he arrived in England. The remainder of the meeting was spent talking about what to do with FIDO. As Liddell wrote: "The point to be aimed at was to ensure that in so far as it might be humanly possible he did not get into a plane and fly it back to occupied territory. It was further necessary to ensure that he got no access to operational information of any kind and that he was as far away from the zone of operations as possible." Without doubt, at this meeting the Security Service closed the FIDO file.

The end of Roger's military career

The Security Service probably told their French Air Force contacts that Roger was no longer needed in England and requested that he be sent far away from the front line. Hence, Roger was posted to Algiers and then to Meknes, Morocco. While in Algiers, he changed his identity to François Perrin so as to protect himself in case he ever fell into German hands. In Meknes, Roger (now officially known as François Perrin) was an instructor on P39s for a number of months. He described his work in the following way: "Meknes was a real breeding ground for pilots of fighter groups in North Africa. The activities on this base were quite astonishing - flights and briefings followed one another at a rate that was similar to that found in England."

Roger spent six to seven hours each day training pilots, as he writes in his book: "Every hour he would take off with two other pilots and there followed moments of flight in tight formation followed by wild chases which would start at 15,000 feet and end skimming over wadis at the bottom of valleys, then bombing runs - simulated or real dive bombing - as well as shooting practice On landing, whilst the tanks were being refilled, he would smoke a cigarette, debrief those whom he had accompanied, and then take off again with the next pair of pilots."

At the end of November 1944, Roger probably returned to England for a short trip, as evidenced by the "Passenger Air Movement Notification" document dated November 29 that is in my possession. Why he was called back is open to conjecture. Was it to confront some of the

people he had interacted with in Paris and Barcelona and who were now in British hands: Montet, Lacroix, "Pierre", "Boris," "Grégoire"? At the end of the year, Roger was sent to the Lille Air Base in France and then down to Paris to work at the Air Ministry. He was employed there until the end of 1946.

Roger finished his career with the rank of Captain in the Air Force Reserves. He was given several decorations by the French Government, notably the Croix de Guerre and the Legion of Honor. He was also one of a few to receive the Commemorative Medal of Voluntary Service for the Free French, along with a certificate on which General de Gaulle had handwritten the following: "You answered France's call when it was mortally wounded by joining the Free French Forces. You were part of the volunteers - our brave companions - who maintained our country in the war with honor. You were among the first men to lead us to victory. Now that our aim has been achieved, I wish to thank you cordially and simply in the name of France. C. de Gaulle."

Roger felt the need to write his book, *Le soleil dans le lion*, nine years after the end of the war. Once he had finished it, he most likely asked MI5 if he could publish it and they must have refused as it remains unpublished. It is only much later that the first books on the Double Cross system came out such as John C. Masterman's, *The Double Cross System*, in 1972.

Roger never talked to his family (his second wife, children) about his double agent status during the war. Thus, throughout his life, he respected the promise he had made to the Security Service. He did let me read his unpublished book when I was thirteen, though. When I said how much I had enjoyed it, he replied, with a smile, that it was his attempt at being an author before he became an archaeologist. Never once did he ever tell me that he was François Perrin, the main character in the story. Only in these last years, several decades after his death, have I been able to uncover this dangerous, certainly frustrating, but also very courageous part of his life.

This said, Roger must have been greatly disappointed by his military career, which was impeded by accidents at crucial times of his life, and by the ban on flying and fighting that the British had imposed on him while he was a double agent for them. In addition, he probably wanted to forget his life with my mother, Sallie, whom he had met only a few months after starting to work with MI5. But who was this "English girl" and why had Guy Liddell mentioned her in his diary?

3. Sallie

Angela Xarifa Pratt was born on August 2, 1921, in the district of Paddington, in London. Her parents, Ruth Helen Shipway and Francis Gordon Pratt decided to call her Jill, and it is only when she met Roger at age 22 that she changed her first name and became Sallie. She switched back to Jill after they separated. To facilitate things, we will use Sallie in what follows.

Francis was a naval architect and the owner of the shipyard, Cox & King, in Wivenhoe, near Colchester, Essex. The firm, with its main office in London, had done very well at the turn of the century under Gustavus Pratt, Francis' father. It designed, brokered and later built luxurious yachts for the European royalty as well as for very rich British and American businessmen. Francis was an elegant, rather distinguished, looking man whose hair had turned grey early in life. He was 10 years older than his wife. As for Ruth, this is the way Sallie described her in her autobiography: "Mother was a tall, thin woman with a pale clear white skin, thick, raven-black hair and beautiful clear blue eyes. Her features were classic"

The family was well off and Sallie spent her first years in a beautiful 18th Century property, Copford Place, in a middle of a park which also contained a small farm. In her autobiography, she gives an impressive list of the staff that worked there: a cook, a cook's help, a scullery maid, three upstairs maids, two parlor maids, a nanny for the two little girls, a chauffeur and three gardeners! Sallie and Sheila, her older sister by four years, received the kind of upbringing the gentry gave to their children, with outdoor activities, most notably riding, being important components of this life. From this, Sallie developed a real fondness for horses which will be at the center of her life later on, but also of dogs, of which there were several at Copford Place, as well as other animals - cats, rabbits, hens, ducks, etc.

When Sallie was seven, Cox & King entered a difficult period: the war and the financial crisis in the late 1920s reduced the demand for yachts, brokers were by-passed by buyers who went straight to the builders, and the firm itself was embroiled in law suits with the British Admiralty. The family left Copford Place and moved to a more modest house with a reduced staff. This said, Sallie's childhood was a happy one and because of her outgoing, tomboyish character, she recalls that she was the only little girl the boys allowed to play with them!

Sallie entered a boarding school at the age of 10 and stayed there for a few years. This is where she discovered the theatre and she took part in both plays and pantomimes. One day, in the middle of a term, when she was 13, her mother came to fetch her to take her out of the school as the family had gone bankrupt! She reports that she was not perturbed by this but instead that she found it very exciting! From then on, it appears that the finances of the family were run separately. Ruth kept her inherited allowances which allowed her to live comfortably for the rest of her life. She and Francis lived in different homes shortly thereafter. Francis found a job as a regular naval architect and he continued designing rapid motor boats, most notably experimental torpedo boats for the British Navy such as MTB Tarret.

For reasons that are unclear, Sallie didn't go back to school and started having small jobs here and there, most of them with animals. Her parents could easily have financed her schooling but she probably decided she preferred not to continue, and convinced them to that effect. When she would tell my sister and I that she had been forced to start working at age 13, we didn't know what to think. Now that I have been able to check this out, she was clearly and

deliberately making us feel bad as she could have kept going to school but had chosen not to. She started by helping the woman who had bought their house and who had horses as well as a dog-breeding business, most notably Dalmatians and Airedales. She exercised them, prepared them for dog shows and showed them off in the ring.



Sallie at 17

She then left to work for a young couple who ran boarding kennels in the Midlands. After that, she joined her sister, Sheila, who was with a professional stable of show jumpers. She first started doing little jobs such as running errands, preparing the horses for the events, taking care of them afterwards, and so on. She was then given more responsibilities and became a full member of the show jumping team. As can be seen in the photo of her at 17, she was quite tall (5ft7), and was a good rider although she always thought that Sheila was far better than her.

As she grew older, her love of the theatre led her to become an assistant stage manager and part time actress using the name, Jill Shipway. She writes in her autobiography: "Just before World War 2, I joined the Colchester Repertory Company during their summer season at Clacton on Sea. I was assistant stage manager, and also did bit parts ...". She then joined the Tonbridge Repertory Company and then worked at the Duchess Theatre in London for the Ibsen play, "Ghosts" with Katina Paxinou. She was promoted to stage manager and went on tour with various plays, "The Magic Garden" with Arthur Valner, "Wuthering Heights" with Mary Morris and Renée Ray, and so on. She'd find herself in cities of various sizes, such as Workington, Bradford, Bath, Nottingham, and in addition to her stage manager tasks, she'd be ready to replace any actress if need be. Her salary was not very substantial but her father paid her an allowance and she managed quite well.

Her first real love was an actor and singer she calls John in her autobiography. Here is an extract of what she wrote about him: "Whenever I hear "Stardust" or "Deep Purple", I am immediately back in the wings in my white taffeta evening dress waiting to go on and join John ... slight, slim, standing full stage. The last notes fade away. I wait until the applause dies down and then there I am ... as I run up to John, my John." She stated later on that she had never been so in love with a man, attracted as she was by his looks and his star aura: "He taught me all I knew. He was my master." A life with John was not possible, however. She didn't say why in her autobiography although it was probably a question of age and that he was already married.

In 1942, at the age of 21, Sallie met a young man her own age, Rowland Phillip Peter Cross, whom she married without delay. The person who officiated at the ceremony, Lester Pinchard, was Francis' very cousin, and vicar of St. John the Baptist Church in Kensington. Francis was in Egypt at the time, helping to salvage and refit merchant ships that had been damaged during the fighting there. Here is what Lester wrote to Francis just after the wedding: "You know Sallie well enough for it to be hardly necessary for me to remind you of her extraordinary determination to have her own way. Having fallen in love with Rowland, she was absolutely determined to marry him to the extent of getting married (at a Registry Office) if her mother did

not give her consent. So I arranged for her banns and his to be put up here, and as you know they were married at St. John's."

Lester then added this about the couple: "I do not know much about Rowland but he also has a strong will of his own, no little self assurance, is rather good looking, and has the manners of a gentleman. I do not think Sallie has ever been so docile with anybody as she more or less is with him. ... In the end both want to go to the country, Sallie to look after animals, and Rowland to learn a bit about farming and eventually to have a small holding.... Problems arrived quickly, however. They found a small cottage near Aylesbury, sans light, sans warmth, sans sanitation. All this, coupled with the fact that Sallie is not highly domesticated. They had a first class row when Rowland would not eat porridge that was burned ... They are ready to continue, though, as they know these things happen."

Unfortunately, things broke down very quickly, and six months later, they separated. Sallie writes about it in her autobiography: "Rowland was quite beautiful. He was young with dark hair and green eyes. All my friends were getting married and so I did too. It was a big mistake. What a nasty time it was. How could I admit to anyone that after only a few weeks of marriage, I knew it to be an enormous error. I was very unhappy indeed. Out of work, I avoided all people I knew and all places where I might meet them."

This was when Sallie acquired her first dog, Sally [sic], the first of many, and this is how she talks about it: "One day I went to Battersea Dogs Home and adopted a small dog, a cross between a Cairn and a Scottish Terrier. I can still remember how very composed and happy she was as she preceded me up the stairs of the bus proudly sporting her new collar and lead. She was a continual joy to me and I have never been without a dog friend since."

Several years later, Sallie wrote about the importance of animals in her life: "Animals are so kind and trustful; they bolster up my ego by never asking awkward questions. They make me feel important and needed, and they look at me in such a friendly way, happy in the knowledge that I will not forget their comforts." When I read this some sixty years later, it reminded me of what Sallie had told us in Naples when my sister and I were children - she preferred animals to children!

One day, out of desperation, Sallie attempted to commit suicide: "I tried to kill myself by jumping off a bridge into a canal. Little Sally jumped off the wall after me. We both swam to the bank and a fellow fishing pulled us out. We went home and dried out. That same evening, I started to walk to London. I had no money. I fainted in the middle of the road, and when I came to, I saw a lorry driver trying to help me. But Sally was growling viciously and wouldn't let him get too close. However small she was, she was prepared to die on the road with me, and until I came around, no one was to touch me."

Finally, Sallie and Sally climbed into the cabin and the lorry driver dropped them off in the suburbs of London. The Pinchards welcomed her at The Vicarage and she stayed with them for a while. Francis, her father, wrote to Lester in April 1943 and said: "I don't think Ruth sized up Rowland well; he is slightly deranged and he has been cashiered out of the RAF. It is abundantly clear he is unfit to be married. In addition, he would not let Jill go on with her career and he even went to her bank and tried to get all her money from there. "

With the Pinchards' help, Sallie slowly recovered from what she went through. It is noteworthy that she did not go to stay with Ruth who had a flat quite close to the Pinchards' house. Clearly, the two did not get along that well. In fact, both Lester and Francis mentioned this in their letters. The former stated, "I do not think Ruth has ever understood Jill..." and the latter mentioned their incompatibility, "... something which neither can help, though both may try to overcome it". Some 30 years later, when Sallie was writing her autobiography, she noted that it is sad that children often fail to understand their parents before it is too late, and added about Ruth: "I don't think she was ever happy. I don't know why. In fact, she was a very good mother and only hit me once when I kicked our Labrador!"

Clearly, Sally got on far better with her father and she would write to him often when she was on tour and he was in Glasgow for his work. She always tried to go and see him when she was in the north of England, and the letters she would write to him always ended with words of affection: "Take care of yourself; with all my love, Sallie." or "Please write soon. Much Love." After having left Rowland, Sallie went back to her work as stage manager and went on tour once again. In a letter to her father in April 1943 (a few months before meeting Roger), she wrote: "Arrived safely this morning in Brighton and found digs. The air raid siren went off a minute or so ago and there are a few planes buzzing around. No one takes any notice. I am sitting near a gun but it has not as yet been fired. If I suddenly blot the paper, you will know what has happened."

The cities she visited were not all as nice as Brighton. Two months after, she was in a small town and wrote: "(Here) the musical hall is of the lowest order. The local stage manager thinks that all the visiting stage managers are his perks. The whole thing is rather a shambles. We play twice, and yesterday the curtain went up on the first act with one of the stage hands and myself doing everything as the stage manager and electrician had not come back from tea!"

Between her tours, she lived in London and was active in the show business world. She played small roles in films being made in Elstree, she worked for the impresario, Emile Littler, and she organized events such as concerts for the troops. She called on friends to help out and she also did a few numbers herself.

In addition - and this is important for our story - she worked part time in the Free French Club. In her autobiography, she mentions three pilots she met there, a Belgian, 'Pitane (she never gave his real name) and two Scandinavians, Paul and Olaf. Paul flew Mosquito planes which were new and quite sophisticated. We should note that just after she starts to talk of the three in her manuscript, nine pages are missing, and on the tenth page, we discover that 'Pitane is now in prison. This is how she continues: "..... on my return to London, I enquired about prison visiting hours, took a bus and asked at the main gate if I could see 'Pitane. I was not taken into the visitors room but instead asked to wait just inside the big heavy entrance doors. After a few minutes, 'Pitane came in. He looked well, if thinner. He embraced me warmly and chatted for a few moments about that tour I had just finished. He then grew serious and told me that I must forget the three of them. I shouldn't write or visit again. And I did as he asked." The page that contains this paragraph ends abruptly with, "Many years later, I ran into a friend who knew a little....". This time, four pages are missing. Could it be that 'Pitane, Paul and Olaf had been part of a serious incident involving a fighter plane? And who removed these pages from her manuscript?

In different places in the documents I obtained after her death (the autobiography of her younger years, extracts from her diaries, letters, etc.), one finds personal comments which allow us to see what she felt at the time. For example, concerning studies, she wrote, "I won't think about schools and studying, it's too depressing and gives me an awful inferiority complex." Clearly, she regretted having stopped school when she did. As for her riding skills, she would repeat that although she didn't ride as well as her sister, Sheila, she did so with enthusiasm.

On her impatience, she wrote: "I've been in a hurry all my life. Too much to see, too much to learn, too many places to go, too little time to do it, and too much to say. I talk too much." As for her naivety in her youth, she wrote, "Lots of people couldn't believe that anyone could be as slow witted as I. They took my hesitations in front of things I couldn't understand as strong, controlled silence!" Finally, on the topic of love, she stated: "I was desperately romantic when I was young, and in love with the idea of a wealthy Prince Charming who would sweep me off to his palace where he would have kissed, cuddled, and protected me!". Sallie was just about to meet Roger. Would he be the Prince Charming she had been waiting for?

4. Roger and Sallie: The good times

Roger and Sallie met in October or November 1943, most probably in the Free French Club where French pilots would get together and where Sallie worked part-time. Francis, Sallie's father, noted in his diary on November 18: "Met Roger Grosjean, Free French Airforce, who called to see Jill."

Their first months together

In what follows, we will mainly quote Roger who, through his unpublished book, his diary which he started at the end of December 1943, and his letters to Sallie, gives us a first-hand account of their first months together. Here is how he met Sallie in the eyes of François, the main character of his book: "One evening, in a club, he met the woman of his life, so he thought. She was tall, had brown hair, and a pretty face; she was stunning, as can be young English women François wanted to get to know her. Like his fellow countrymen, he had three main assets: his uniform, his home country, and his strong French accent! It was the primarily the second which won her over." Sallie, in her autobiography written 30 years after the facts, was clearly less sentimental about Roger: "He was a fighter pilot. This time in the Free French forces. Not as handsome as the first (Rowland), perhaps a prettier uniform. The fascination of the Latins? I started smoking Gauloises. I still do."



Roger was smitten by this beautiful English girl to whom he wrote at the end of November: "My love, you are my ray of light now that I know you". He then described what attracted him in her, notably her love of dogs and horses: "We spent entire evenings on the topic of how to breed and take care of Dalmatians, or how to manoeuvre a pony in a polo game". He also described her love for the theatre: "She was an excellent stage manager. When she had the time, she would recite with passion extracts from the classics. She identified so fully with the characters that she expressed beautifully their feelings and reactions, laughing or crying, just like Sarah Bernhardt. She

would even break anything she could find, and her eyes would shoot lightning when she had to express hate, anger or jealousy."



When Roger started his diary in December 1943, he expressed a few premonitory feelings about their future together: "Why have I started to love Sallie? I find her wonderful but there are also aspects of her that I dislike strongly. Does she attract me because of her sensuality, her beauty, and her exquisite charm? Of course, but I am also drawn to her for her temperament, her kindness, and her foresight. We have personality conflicts, perhaps because we are of the same astrological sign, the terrible and powerful sign, Leo. Does she really love me? As much as I love her? Why would she? I don't think she's after something. If I do start to love her as I feel I could, even though I have never loved before, I will either be very unhappy or very happy with her."

At the beginning of the new year, Sallie fell ill and came to stay with Roger for a while. At the time she was living at 11, Ossington Street, London W2. Roger remarks: "I hope it's not serious; she's resting in bed and tells me about her feelings constantly. One day, I'll get to know whether she is sincere." When Sallie got better, they went out like young couples who have just met: "We went to the cinema and then looked for a restaurant. Finally, we found one that was quite charming and rather chic, with a small band. Despite her aches, we danced and only went back home at midnight."

Sallie decided to move permanently into Roger's lodgings and he wrote on January 6: "Sallie has some wonderful ideas. Yesterday, she bought everything we need to cook and not just make tea. She's awesome but one part of her character is constantly in conflict with mine. Why is that?" A few days later, they invited friends to dinner: "The room was full of smoke but when we opened the window, we literally froze; the meal lasted three hours and it was just great."

It's at this time that MI5 organized a refresher course for Roger at Caistor, the air base he moved to on January 21. About ten days before his departure, Sallie suggested that she change her name so as to be able to be with him all the time. This is how Roger talked about it in his diary: "She has amazing ideas, this girl. She'd like to follow me everywhere, including France after the liberation. We'd have to get married but she won't get her divorce before a year or so. She can't follow me to France under her name as it would disadvantage both of us. So she thought of changing names which you can do in England for £ 20 and she would adopt my name, Grosjean. That way, she would be known everywhere as my wife, Madame Grosjean. What would my family say, I wonder. All this seems quite incredible but also quite feasible."

During their last weekend together before Roger's departure for Caistor, they went down to Bournemouth with Henri Gardet of the Free French Navy who was to give a talk at the French Club there. They stayed at the grand Royal Bath Hotel and they must have made a handsome couple as Roger had his lieutenant's uniform on: "For the first time, I was wearing in public my new uniform with its two gold stripes," he writes. They had to have separate rooms and went through all kinds of tactics to find themselves in the same room: "It was crazy in the evening when I had to steal my way into my love's room following several phone calls, meeting in the corridor, opening up my bed to pretend it had been slept in, etc. In England, being caught in flagrante delicto is punished severely. The next morning, we went through the same procedure but in reverse!"

On their last day together, Sallie who loved the performing arts so much, recited Ruth's declaration to Roger: "Don't urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the Lord deal with me, be it ever so severely, if even death separates you and me." (Ruth 1: 16 & 17).

The day Roger arrived at his base, Sallie changed her name officially. She abandoned "Angela Xarifa Cross" and took on the name "Sallie Henriette Grosjean". The announcement appeared in the London Gazette on January 21, 1944, and was signed by W. G. Street & Co, solicitors at 12, Whitehall, London. In order to please Roger, no doubt, she took on as her middle name, Henriette, the name of his mother. Roger learned about this the next day in Caistor, and wrote in his diary: "She has given me some good news she will soon be called Madame Grosjean. How wonderful this is; it's certainly a proof of her love for me!"

Clearly, Roger was madly in love with Sallie and his feelings were intensified by the loneliness he felt in Caistor. This is what he wrote to her: "Sallie, my love, life is simply impossible without you and, even more, without you right next to me. We should adopt a motto: the two of us together, all our life, and forever". Roger was also jealous and shows it in his diary: "What is she doing in London with my friends who are not really my friends, apart from Gardet whom I like very much....I've just had a jealousy crisis the like of which I've never had before; I could picture the one I love in the arms of my friends. Could it be the doctor? But she told me that he was just nice, quite simply. My suspicions are based on nothing and the more I think about it, the more I see that it's stupid. Only the future will tell me if I'm right or wrong."

A second surprise occurred almost at once: Sallie stopped her stage manager's job and came to live with Roger in Caistor! She arrived on January 27, hardly a week after Roger had left London. He was overjoyed: "Since Monday evening when Sallie arrived, I'm in a dream; life is so beautiful; it's a life of love.... Now I believe that I can trust Sallie; she has proved to me several times that she is incapable of doing something to harm me; my worries of last week were based on nothing. But I'll continue to observe her in the future."

The two obtained a lodging with the Wilcox family at Manor Farm, Nettleton, near Caistor, where they were made welcome. This marked the beginning of the best part of their short life together. When Roger was not at the base, flying or practicing on a trainer, they would go riding: "Sallie's mare is well trained and is a joy to ride. As for me, she has found me a horse that I can ride when I want to. He's a retired racehorse, I'm not sure why, quite fast but not in the greatest of shapes. I'm starting to be able to control him...". Roger doesn't know much about horses, unlike Sallie, and he's surprised by what he learns: "... such as how to recognize a horse, a hunter, a racehorse, or a pony. Then there is how to feed them, and water them. There is also everything to do with riding, something I knew nothing about when I arrived. I learned ... mainly by looking at Sallie ...you have to know how to control the horse, get it to walk, trot, canter and gallop."

Roger also went hunting with Byron, the head of the family, who lent him a rifle that Roger took care of. The two of them became friends and they often went to the village pubs where they drank beers and played dominoes. As for Sallie, "She's totally at home on the farm and could probably head one one day. I know she would be up to it; she works more or less continuously and has incredible energy for the physique she has." But the two also quarreled a lot, and Roger remained wary of her.

On March 3, he wrote: "We have had really terrible quarrels ... that affected both of us. But they never last very long as she always calms things down. Maybe it's because she knows it has an effect on the love we have for one another. Or maybe it's because she doesn't want to lose me? Could this be because she loves me, or because I'm the type of person to keep as I'll introduce her to many interesting things. It's probably a mixture of all this. She knows that if she doesn't change, she won't be my wife. She knows also that if I find her cheating, or learn about something of the sort, she won't stay one more minute with me, even if I have to suffer later, maybe the rest of my life. I won't budge on this."

During his short stay in Poulton in March, Roger received a few letters from Sallie who told him of her love for him. He wrote in his diary: "Today I received two charming letters, if indeed they are sincere but I think they are. She tells me that she can't live without me, that she'll change

and be my slave, but I don't ask for that much. I'm dying to see her again." And when he got back to Caistor, he wrote: "I was thrilled to see Sallie again; she was so gentle with me and told me she had suffered so much when I was away; she must have felt what I had felt during my first week in Caistor... now, I really have the proof that she loves me." However, a few days later, things had worsened once again: "... I've been really unkind to Sallie, and she to me; we really don't get on anymore. What should I do, dear God? Never will I find a woman with her qualities; I'm sure that they are more numerous than her failings. She's so much better than I am."

The two continued to live with the Wilcoxes and Roger would sometimes reflect on life in the country in England: "I've seen life on an English farm; it's a life of hard work but it remains, basically, an English life.... Farmers in England belong to a privileged class, far above the working class or bureaucrats. They are proud to be farmers, not because they work for the country and produce, but because they live close to nature and to animals... It's not rare to see cows with a pedigree, and hence their price is far superior than those found in France. Farmers usually have several cars, often quite nice and comfortable, tractors, modern farming equipment, saddle horses, and sometimes racehorses. All that improves the quality of what they offer. The milk is safe because the animals are healthy and are often checked by vets."

Weeks went by and Roger had less to do on the air base and had fewer contacts with MI5. He complained about this in his diary: "I'm still on leave, at the farm with Sallie, and life is not that interesting. And yet, it should be! We eat as much as we want, up to four eggs a day, enjoy great ham quite often; food is good and it makes me forget regular English cooking. I realize I should be happy but I simply can't be. I'll never find a place like this farm where I can be happy with Sallie. This said, we are both tired of this quiet life, but don't quite realize it."

Sallie would often go to see the doctor in Caistor and, in a one-on-one conversation with Roger, he told him that she had personality problems. Roger wrote: "She is not well and despite the progress she has made, as long as she is not fully cured, her temperament will get the better of her and will make us unhappy. If one day she is cured, something I pray for everyday, she'll still have a few failings. I can't hold it against her, though, as I have a bunch too, some rather serious. I don't know if we'll be happy being married; only the future will tell."

In mid-May, when MI5 closed the FIDO file, the two were back in London and living in a small room at 32, Elvaston Street, in the Gloucester Road area. Roger stopped writing in his diary at this time and would only start again at the end of 1944. Here are his last words: "I have some wonderful news; Sallie is expecting a baby in eight months, my baby. It's both wonderful and surprising given our current life. I don't quite apprehend this major event and the joy that accompanies it."

In sum, in the space of six to seven months, since the previous October or November when Roger and Sallie met, Sallie came to live with Roger, she changed her family name, gave up her work as stage manager, followed him to his air force base, and became pregnant with their first child! Did all this happen simply because she was in love with Roger?

A possible explanation

Before continuing to relate their short life together, it is worth stopping for a moment and thinking about an explanation that slowly dawned on me when I thought about my father's time

in England, the way he met my mother, and their first months together. Could it be that MI5 had asked Sallie to keep my father under surveillance during his stay in England, and that everything that had happened from that time on was due to it?

We should remember that the Double Cross operation had reached a very sensitive stage when Roger came on board and had started sending letters to the Germans via Barcelona. The disinformation, by which the Germans were made to believe that the 1944 landing sites would be in the Calais / Dunkirk region and not in Normandy, had to continue and had to be believed. No obstacle had to get in its way. The Germans simply could not doubt for one second that the British were tricking them as the stakes were very high. Nigel West, the well-known expert on the secret services, writes in his Introduction to the Guy Liddell diaries⁹: "A single blunder, a casual indiscretion or a deliberate leak could jeopardize tens of thousands of lives on D-Day...". Double agents were therefore carefully monitored by case officers who worked with them, dictated the content of their messages, and kept a close eye on everything they did. When an agent was travelling or was based somewhere else, like Roger in Caistor, additional surveillance was put into place.

As we saw earlier, MI5 had two aims when they accepted that Roger go to Caistor for a refresher course at the beginning of the year. First, they wanted to lure any German spies already in England who might have wanted to make contact with Roger. Second, they wanted the Germans to believe that he was preparing to steal a recent fighter plane and fly it to German occupied territory. It was normal, therefore, that he should be watched in Lincolnshire. And what better way of doing this than asking a good-looking young lady to get close to this unmarried pilot, get him to fall in love with her, and stay with him so as to report any out of the ordinary behavior?

This might sound like an Ian Fleming James Bond story but we have to keep in mind that the spy world, the real one, has always known situations of this type and most notably the use of honey traps. Recently, the English press has begun to reveal, some seventy years after World War II, how young ladies were used for certain intelligence tasks that were kept secret until now. Two examples involve the Special Operations Executive (SOE), created by Winston Churchill. Its aims were to give support to resistance groups in occupied Europe, destabilize the enemy, obtain information and spread disinformation. It used good-looking young ladies to make sure that the newly trained agents did not reveal anything about their training and their future activities. Here is an illustration. One evening, Noreen Riols, aged 18 at the time, was supposed to dine with a young Danish agent at the Royal Bath Hotel in Bournemouth along with a training officer. At the last minute, the latter excused himself (this had been planned in advance) and Noreen met the agent by herself. During and after the meal, she asked him a number of questions on his activities, and before the evening was over, he revealed that he would be going back to Denmark on a secret mission. This was a fatal mistake and the next day, in a meeting where Noreen Riols was present, he was crossed off the list of SOE agents and the reasons were given to him.

Another example concerns Marie Christine Chilver, 22 years old, originally from Latvia, whose father was British. She had received a similar mission. She was to meet and question young agents who had just finished their SOE training. One of them was José Tinchant who was on a

⁹ Guy Liddell (2005). *The Guy Liddell Diaries*. Vol. II: 1942-1945. Edited by Nigel West. Abingdon, England.

trip to Liverpool. She met him in a café and spent the day with him. She wrote in her report that by the evening she knew everything about him and his training as an agent. In the end, he too was crossed off the departure list. Of course, foreign agents like the two just mentioned were fairly easy prey as they were alone, in a country that was not their own, and far away from their natural environment. As the famous MI5 spymaster, Maxwell Knight, once said, "A clever woman who can use her personal attractions wisely has in her armoury a very formidable weapon."¹⁰

Given that honey traps of this kind did occur, and are starting to be revealed, what are the different facts that point towards Sallie having been asked to keep Roger under surveillance? First, she'd been working part time in the Free French Club for several months already. It was easy for her to look out for Roger, his description having been given to her by MI5, and to keep an eye on him from afar before getting to know him. She might well have done the same thing for 'Pitane and his two friends. Let's recall the missing pages in her manuscript when she talks about them. Could they have been removed by the secret services when she showed them the document? As for pretending to fall in love with Roger, before actually doing so to some extent (we'll come back to this), it was not too difficult to pull it off for someone in the performing arts. Sallie played all the roles she was given with ease, and doing so for a cause as important as this one was quite acceptable to her.

Here is another indication that my explanation may be correct. Sallie moved into Roger's lodgings at the beginning of 1944 although she still had her own room at 11, Ossington Street. And until Roger's departure for North Africa in July 1944, she stayed with him, either in Caistor or in London. Living with him was an efficient way of keeping him under surveillance, especially when the stakes were so high. It was crucial to control his movements throughout his stay in England in case he wanted to contact the Germans without referring back to MI5. As we have seen, this had never been his intention, but the British were not completely convinced of this and felt they had to keep an eye on him.

Two additional elements are clearly circumstantial evidence. The first is that Sallie changed her family name officially in January 1944. This is quite an amazing event and can only be justified by the importance of the cause. Out of the ordinary also is the fact that she took on a totally French name, Sallie Henriette Grosjean, even though she didn't yet speak French, having left school at the age of 13. Of course, there were at least two advantages for changing her name. The first is that it delighted Roger who saw it as a proof of her love for him. The second is that it allowed Sallie to live with him in Caistor and hence keep him under surveillance. Things would have been much more difficult if she had kept her own name. The other circumstantial evidence is that Sallie gave up her work as stage manager to come to Caistor hardly a week after Roger's arrival. Who would give up a job of this kind in London to go to a small country town, far away from the show business world? Since it was critical not to leave him alone, Sallie accepted this mission.

I have often asked myself why MI5 has refused to release my father's file more than 70 years after the events, and more than 40 years after his death. Files of other Double Cross agents are now available at the National Archives, most notably those of Arthur Owens (SNOW), Joan Pujol Garcia (GARBO), Dusan Popov (TRICYCLE), Nathalie Sergueiew (TREASURE), Roman Czerniawski (BRUTUS) and Elvira de la Fuente Chaudoir (BRONX). So why not the one for

¹⁰ BBC News piece, 21 May, 2004.

Grosjean / FIDO who played a much smaller role than some of the above? The fact that my mother was keeping him under surveillance is probably the reason. All the more so as she was still alive when I asked MI5 about my father for the first time in 2004. The Security Service guarantees that it will keep secret the names of its employees, present or past, and that it will protect them. This they did when my mother was alive. But now that she is dead, why continue the pretense? It may well be that MI5 quite simply do not want to admit that young English women were sometimes used for surveillance duties of agents during World War II, and that there were unwanted consequences from time to time. In this case, there were two children who were moved around during their childhood, from foster mothers to boarding schools, across three different countries. But surely MI5's preference should have little weight compared to finally telling them the truth about their parents.



On two occasions, I consulted Nigel West about my mother's probable involvement in the FIDO case. He is one of the very best specialists on the British secret services and the author of numerous books concerning them. In 2005, he indicated that the explanation that I was proposing, that MI5 was protecting my mother, was entirely plausible. And then, in 2014, following my second article in the *International Journal of Intelligence and Counter Intelligence*¹¹, in which I explained my position, he wrote that there is "something unpalatable in the personal file" that MI5 does not want to tell me about. My proposal may be very close to the mark, he concluded¹².

I also contacted two people who had known my mother well. The first is Milton Gendle, a famous American photographer who has lived in Rome for many years, and who was close to Sallie. He wrote the following to me: "I am fascinated by what you have discovered so far and find your suppositions perfectly plausible." The other person is my mother's French friend, Sophie Decrion, who first met Sallie in the 1970's. She wrote: "Why not; she was sufficiently whimsical to play that kind of game...I'm not sure she wouldn't have enjoyed it...Why not, after all?" Finally, a friend who belongs to the American military secret services concurred with this. What is sure is that we'll only know with certainty when my father's file is released by MI5. But will it ever be?



There remains the feelings my mother had for my father during this first part of their life together. Roger was clearly much more in love with Sallie than she was with him, but she was most probably attracted by this good looking French fighter pilot and

his accent, his uniform, and his Gauloises! It would appear that their life together in Caistor charmed her and that she enjoyed being there with Roger. She doesn't say much about this

¹¹ Grosjean, François (2014). The Security Service and a family's right to know. *International Journal of Intelligence and Counter Intelligence*, 27(2), 428-430.

¹² In later messages, Nigel West evoked another possibility along with the one I have exposed. Roger may also have been communicating with the Secret Intelligence Service (MI6), and the operational data involved remains sensitive. As for Sallie, I have sometimes asked myself whether she might have been in touch with them too later on in her life, in France and then Italy.

period but she does write: "[We] took digs in a farm house near the aerodrome where [Roger] was stationed. I played hide and seek with my boyfriend, he in his plane, I on my horse. The war seemed far away from the quiet countryside. I went to a lot of trouble to have a baby, even going to a doctor to ask what to do as I did not remain pregnant."

Let's return to their story together. As of July 1944, when Roger left England for Algiers and then Meknes, Sallie no longer needed to keep him under surveillance. She was expecting their first child and they were a couple. But how would their life together evolve? Could it develop further, now that the main reason for their getting together was no longer there?

A nine months separation

In early July, Roger embarked for Algiers in Greenock, near Glasgow. On arrival, he changed his name and became François Perrin. He then left for Meknes in Morocco where he became an instructor on P39s. Sallie and Roger remained separated a full nine months before she arrived in Paris in March 1945. Clearly, Roger was distraught at having to leave her and he wrote numerous letters that were part of the documents that Alda Dapelo found in my mother's cellar. Unfortunately, none of Sallie's letters were there, but one can get an idea of the feelings she had by examining how Roger reacted to them.

The main topics they discussed ranged from the rather trivial to the more profound. Among the first, Roger would often ask if she had received his letters and complain that nothing has arrived for him in days. For example, "Still nothing at the Post Office from you. It has now been almost ten days that I have been without news. What torment this is!" When he received something, on the other hand, he was overjoyed: "Your letters please me so much, my dear; I'd love to receive some everyday. It's a part of you that arrives and they have your fragrance. I kiss the place where you sealed the envelope because I know that you have put your lips there!" The two also talked about money as Roger was sending her a large part of his salary. He tried several ways of sending money to her, through a bank in Meknes, another bank in Algiers, and sometimes even through friends heading back to England.

The topic of his English would crop up often as his letters were written mainly in that language. He expressed his frustration at not being able to express exactly what he wanted to say, and the lack of depth he felt in a language he didn't know well: "Excuse me my English, but I'm writing without a dictionary. After a busy day, I'm too tired to look up the words that I need." And, "I am sad because I cannot tell you in English all the love I feel for you. My knowledge of it is so basic. Please learn French." Sometimes, he would quite simply write in French as in a letter in September 1944: "You'll be surprised to receive this letter entirely in French and it will be a change for you. I've chosen this language because I can express myself better in it. It will also be a fine exercise for you to translate this letter into English." But he nevertheless ended in English to please her: "And now I am finishing my letter in English. Darling...it was so much easier for me to tell you all my love in my first language....".

Among more profound topics, one finds the feelings they have for one another. On August 16, Roger thanked her for her letters and wrote: "I've reread all your letters, from the first to the last, and find so much affection in them. I felt that you were sincere and saw that you were giving your love to me ... just me. Do not forget the oath we took together." Sallie asked him if he wore the ring she had given him and he answered: "Of course, my dear, all the time and everywhere. As you'll see soon, my hands and arms are suntanned except for two places: where I wear my

ring and where my watch is situated. But there is another ring that I wear; it is in my heart and it will never leave me. When you slipped that ring on my finger, you gave something that cannot be removed from my heart."

Sallie also spoke to him directly about her feelings for him as can be seen in another of Roger's letters: "Darling, please do not excuse yourself for speaking about your love for me in your letters; it's so beautiful!". And elsewhere: "You write such beautiful letters; they allow me to enter your deepest thoughts. Please never stop talking about love; I will never tire of reading you and listening to you on this matter." When Sallie forgot to tell him she loved him, he complained: "In the telegram you sent me, you forgot to send me your love at the end. A little 'I love you' wouldn't have cost you much, and would have pleased me so much! I'm sure that you simply forgot, and that yours wasn't a business telegram. You trust me and I trust you; neither of us can disappoint the other as our love is too strong, too powerful, for anything to come between us."

One day, Sallie wrote that she felt lonely and depressed. Roger answered back immediately: "Why do you write, 'I'm so lonely and I hope you haven't forgotten me'? Don't you believe in our promises to one another? Don't you believe in eternal love? Don't you know what true love really is? It's something so timeless that nothing can affect it, neither time, nor age, nor distance. Love is something above everything else, and is always there." But he too expressed his sadness that he was so far away from her: "I feel that because of our separation, my strength is leaving me; I'm growing more and more sad." And also: "I'm so sad because I'm so far away from you, and I only want to live happy near you...Do you remember all of our projects that we talked about so often before I left for North Africa? Well, I think about them constantly; they haunt me, as you do, in fact. I promise that we will make them come true, and that they will be even more beautiful than in our dreams."

He also spoke about Sallie's condition and of the baby whom they called "Junior". On July 29, Roger wrote: "I want to stress what I had already said: please don't go riding, don't carry anything heavy, take care of your health, sleep and eat well..." In another letter, he mused about whether the baby was a boy or a girl: "Like you, I'd like the baby to be a beautiful, healthy little boy; he'll have lots of toys - trains, boats, planes - so that I can play too! And later, he'll be a fine student, and he'll play rugby or football. If ever a new war were to be declared, he'd be a courageous pilot or sailor, ready to defend his country's freedom. And when we'll both be older, we'll sit with him and listen to him tell us about his latest findings or his recent travels since he'll be an engineer or an explorer! Of course, if the Lord gives us a girl, she'll be beautiful and we'll be proud of her... and then we'll try to have a boy the next time!" (That is exactly what happened, in reality; they first had a girl and then a boy!)

Roger would often mention his faith and the fact that Sallie had promised to convert to Catholicism. He wrote at the beginning of September: "Darling, I'm so pleased that you are going to church and that you are speaking to the priest. I'm doing the same thing here as it's the only way to be in communion with you through Our Lord. Please tell me if, with time, you are feeling less irritable, more serene, and increasingly at peace with yourself." A few days later, he asked: "Do you see the priest regularly? Are you increasing your knowledge of your catechism and, especially, do you feel better?" On another occasion, he wrote, in French this time: "It's Sunday today and I too have just returned from Mass in a lovely little church where I prayed to Our Lord that we be reunited as soon as possible. Then, I prayed that you would convert very soon and be sincere about it, and, with the Church's blessing, that you'll soon see the end of

your nightmare with Rowland." (This concerned her divorce with her first husband which was to come through at the end of November 1944.)

With the liberation of France making headway, and travel re-established between the various parts of the country and with North Africa, Roger wrote more often to his parents to give them his news. This is how he described his life with Sallie as depicted in the letters his mother, Henriette, sent to her cousin, Emilie. On November 20, 1944, she wrote: "We have some good news from Roger who is now a Flight Lieutenant. He got married in England and they are expecting a child for January. He's currently in Morocco but will soon come back to France. We're so impatient to see him! What joy it will be! His wife, who is five months pregnant, has remained in England. She is called Sallie but we don't have any other information about her." Two months later, Henriette told Emilie a bit more: "He's very happy with his marriage and I think it will be a success. Sallie comes from a very good family; her mother has French roots and her father is an engineer and makes planes and boats. Roger and Sallie were engaged for six months and got married last January, almost a year ago. We're expecting the baby for Christmas; it'll be a little Jesus! Sallie is currently in a large farm in the center of England where she'll have the baby. When she will have recovered, in the spring, Roger will get her to come to Paris." Apart from a few errors - Ruth didn't have French roots, Francis was a naval architect and not an engineer, Roger and Sallie were never engaged and, of course, they hadn't got married - this reflects quite nicely the couple's situation at the end of 1944.

As indicated by Henriette, Sallie did indeed stay in Caistor, at the Wilcoxes farm, during her pregnancy. To have her child, she went to the maternity home at Cleethorpes, near Grimsby, the town nearest to Caistor. She described Brigitte's birth on December 30, 1944, in her autobiography: "I had a bad time. The aged local doctor had spent most of his best years in the army. He gave me castor oil to help with the pains. I was confused [especially as] my 'husband' was in North Africa." In a letter to Henriette, Sallie described the birth in more detail which Henriette then shared with Emilie: "The delivery was extremely painful; they had to use forceps and the baby remained a long time without breathing; she was all blue when she arrived (like Roger, do you remember?)..." When Sallie went to declare the birth, she had a few problems: "The registrar wanted to see my marriage license or at least a recognition signed by the father. I had neither. But he was a decent fellow and as at that time it was still awful to be [born out of wedlock] ... he gave me a proper legal certificate for the baby."

Roger was now back from Morocco and in Paris, working at the Air Ministry. He would have liked to have been with Sallie for the birth but he didn't get the necessary permissions. This is what he wrote in his diary which he started again on December 30 and which he finished writing three months later: "Sallie was so much looking forward to see me come for Christmas and the New Year; her disappointment must be even worse than my own." Finally, he received the news by telegram on January 3: "Sorry to disappoint you with a girl. She has your nose. I love you darling. Sallie Grosjean." Roger's reaction in his diary was beautiful: "Since yesterday when I learned the good news, I feel proud and happy... The baby is a girl, my girl and I am a father. I'm really having a hard time realizing what is happening to us in our situation. All the obstacles that we have to face are nothing, and nothing will be able to separate us. I have discovered love, true love, and I realize it is more powerful than anything else. I hope that Sallie has understood this too, the way I have. If so, then we will be happy together."

The mail service was not yet working well between France and England, and Sallie didn't receive his letter of congratulations. So she sent him a nasty telegram: "My heart is broken."

Your coldness must mean that you have found other interests. Your loving but rejected wife and your daughter without a name." Roger was devastated as can be seen by his reaction in his diary: "Thank heaven I received another telegram cancelling the first one. This said, I will write to her tonight to tell her what I've been through for her; I don't hold it against her because I'm very happy that I love her. I will do everything I can to get her over here." He then added: "This evening, more than ever, I miss Sallie so much. When will she arrive? When that day arrives, it will be exceptional and I'll thank God for having given her to me. I'm not saying that everything will be simple and easy when she's here, but I hope that she'll understand how things are and will help me."

The next two months, Roger took care of all the papers needed to get Sallie to join him in Paris. He also prepared the small flat that he had found in the 17th arrondissement in Paris. He wrote in his diary at the beginning of January 1945: "I have moved into 8, rue Emile Allez. Well, 'moved into' isn't quite correct as I'm really camping in the middle of debris, ladders, smelly paint... it's an indescribable mess. This said, it's home, symbolized by the small writing desk that I have put in place, the radio, and mainly the wonderful photo of Sallie that presides all of that." In his spare time, he saw friends who had all been involved, in one way or another, in the fight against the Germans and the liberation of France. They were Marcel Degliame, the well-known resistance fighter, member of the FFI and "Compagnon de la Libération"; Henri Wolliner, a member of the Free French, whom Roger had met in England and who has just joined the Foreign Office; Jean Le Martelot, whom Roger had backed in his request to leave for the Russian Front and who came back with the aura of numerous victories; and, finally, Henri Gardet, of the Free French Navy, with whom he had gone down to Bournemouth one year before and who now worked at the Ministry of the Navy.

In England, Sallie left Caistor with Brigitte and settled down in London at 26, Queensbury Place. This was near to her mother, Ruth, so that she could get some help but also be closer to the places where she would finally obtain the documents she needed to travel to Paris. She noted in her autobiography that she took many meals at the Free French Club which was close by. All this worried Roger, still jealous, and he wrote this to her: "Don't stop loving me in London with all that entertainment and fun you find there." In his diary, he noted: "In the span of 15 days, I have only received two letters from Sallie; I'm starting to be worried and my jealousy is eating me up. I'd feel so much more reassured if she were in Paris. Let's hope she doesn't fall victim to temptations." And in another letter to her: "I'm worried that you'll do something foolish, something stupid, but you know what the consequences will be. It would be terrible...Excuse-me, my darling for having this thought. It's stupid because I know that you love me a lot. You have already given me proof of your love, and I have too, right?"

Roger was worried, for sure, but also deeply in love as can be seen in his letters: "Do not forget to love me every minute of the day, every second, my darling. That's the way that I understand the love, the union, that bind us. Nothing in the world can stop the feelings that I have for you. My dearest wife and friend, you will soon be able to come over, and you'll be in my arms for ever." On another occasion, he wrote: "This evening, I have to write to you because I need you; I miss you so much. I love you so deeply; I adore you!" This said, Roger remained level headed concerning this woman he did not yet know well. He wrote in his diary at the beginning of March: "If I see that Sallie is really great in every way, I'll be one with her. But if she is the way I fear, then I'll distance myself from her (without her realizing it) and I'll concentrate more on my own life."

Roger travelled back and forth between Paris and Lille where his parents lived and where their house was heated and the food rich and plentiful, as he wrote in his diary. He also tried to get discharged from the Air Force or be declared physically unfit to continue serving. Henriette wrote this to Emilie in February: "Roger has arrived to get a bit of warmth and to eat since in Paris he was both cold and hungry. He has a small apartment in the 17th arrondissement, at 8, rue Emile Allez. He doesn't have much to put into it, poor dear, and so I gave him some linen and cutlery. That said, I only have old things. Roger doesn't have the money to buy what he needs; everything is so expensive. He's only starting, and little by little, things will get better. ... Our little guy is working hard and going from one Ministry to the next to get the required visas to allow his wife and his daughter to come over. He has just written to tell us that things are working out and that he hopes that Sallie will be there by the end of March." Henriette also said a few things about Sallie: "She writes me very affectionate letters; she's now in London, and is waiting impatiently for the time when she'll be able to come over to France to be with Roger... We're looking forward to meeting her; it would seem that she is charming in every way."

Roger was steadily getting the apartment into shape, and he even went so far as to invite Henri Wolliner to dinner. He too had a wife in England whom he was trying to bring over. Roger wrote: "It was, I think, the first time in my life that I have prepared dinner. It was composed of snails, saucisson from Arles, pork chops with fried potatoes, potato and onion omelette, coffee, and digestifs. We talked a lot about the difficulties we had in getting our wives over." Since the war was not over, it was practically impossible for civilians to travel between the two countries. Several types of permits were needed, from the countries the person was coming from and going to, as well as entry and exit visas. One month before Sallie's arrival, Roger wrote: "I received a letter from Sallie via the diplomatic bag". This might mean that MI5 was helping out, in one way or another, to help her travel to France.

On March 14, Roger received the telegram he had been waiting for such a long time: "Arriving tomorrow, Thursday, March 15, at 10.00 pm." He wrote in his diary: "My happiness was a mixture of thanksgiving to God, immense joy, and a feeling of duty...." Sallie described her journey to France in her autobiography: "It was grey that day [and the boat was] loaded with soldiers returning from leave. The civilians were a group of nuns, and myself with the baby in a carry-cot. I dumped her sound asleep in a cabin and went on deck to get some air. The sun came out as we approached the French coast [and] everything seemed brighter. The soldiers bundled around picking up their kit-bags, tin hats, bayonets and guns. The nuns crowded forward for their first glimpse of French soil after [five] years. I nipped below to pick up the baby, change her nappy and pop her back in the carry-cot. 'Thank goodness she is good', I thought as I lugged out the heavy luggage ... and started struggling along. ... I stepped off the gang-way onto French soil ... beside a sailor who had offered to carry the luggage and cot as far as the waiting Paris train All the men working nearby started clapping and wishing me luck! I looked around anxiously: What was going on? 'The baby, madam,' said the kind sailor who was helping me. 'It's the first baby to land in France after so many years!'

Roger was waiting for her at Gare Saint-Lazare and wrote that very night: "It's not really worth describing how I waited for the train which arrived on time, my search for Sallie, seeing her next to her luggage with no-one really helping her. Brigitte was in her cot like a small cat, and I took care of all the other luggage. Then there was the agony of going back home in a crowded métro. Sallie was in pain and I suffered to see her so tired. Finally, after having requested the help of porters and having taken a cab, we arrived. I can't sleep and I'm waiting for the dawn to arrive..." Sallie's description in her autobiography was a bit more down to earth and shows

some slight disappointment: "My husband was there to meet me and he was in civvies. His clothes seemed strange to me and I did not like them. We had to take the crowded metro as there were no taxis; only bicycles pulling little carts like rickshaws."

Roger's wartime diary stopped on that day with the following written in capital letters: "SALLIE HAS FINALLY ARRIVED". It's difficult therefore to describe their life in the apartment that Roger had prepared with so much care since January. Sallie just noted the following in her autobiography: "I settled down to domestic life which amused me for a while, [as] it was all so new. Most of my time was spent in queues, where I learned French and took cooking lessons!"

5. Roger and Sallie: The hard times

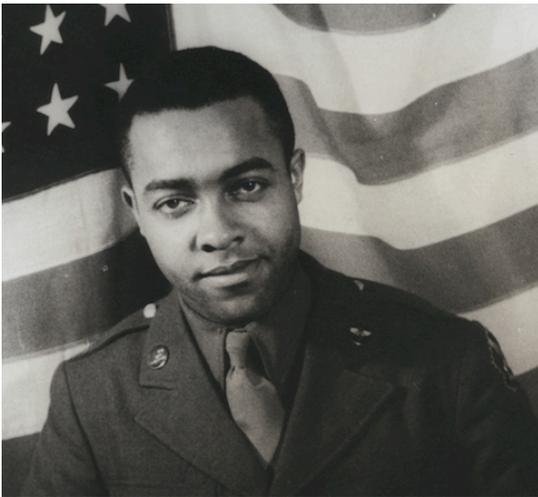
After a few weeks in Paris, Roger, Sallie and the baby went up to Lille to stay with Roger's parents. An extract of a statement Roger's father, Joseph, gave in 1949, showed that Sallie had problems adjusting to her new life, and to a husband who had practically returned to civilian life. (He was paid by the Air Force until the end of the year). Here is what Joseph said: "In April 1945, having returned from Morocco, my son came to Lille to introduce us to his wife and their baby of a few months. During their short stay... his wife showed on several occasions her character which was volatile, sulky, and angry. She would stop a conversation and go find refuge in her room. She would also frequently show us her bad mood, even when we watched her change the baby!" It's difficult to imagine Roger's state of mind after having felt such love for her during their separation and having dreamed of a life together when they were reunited. Was he beginning to realize that his life with Sallie would not be as heavenly as that which he had imagined during those moments of loneliness in Morocco and in Paris?

Roger and Sallie left Brigitte in Lille and came back down to Paris. In this last year of the war, life was very difficult, and many things were not available. Roger had his officer's salary but it wasn't sufficient and so Sallie looked for work. She returned to her stage manager job and got hired by the Entertainments National Service Association (ENSA) which provided entertainment to British armed forces personnel. She worked in two Parisian theatres, the Théâtre Marigny and then the Théâtre de la Madeleine.

Jimmy Davis

In August, Sallie realized that she was pregnant once again, this time with me. She thought of getting an abortion and talked about it in her autobiography. It was only in 2010, at 64 years of age, that I learned about this. It left me speechless but also allowed me to understand, at least in part, her attitude towards me in my childhood. Here is what she wrote: "My second child was not desired at all, and I had desperately tried to find a way of aborting. I was too new in town and it was still illegal. One day [my husband] brought home to dinner an American soldier, Jimmy Davis, a musician. He had just finished writing a song called 'Lover Man' which became a big success. He persuaded me that it was wrong to abort. With his help, I decided to keep the baby."

For a few minutes everything around me stood still as I read what my mother had written and I immediately thought back to a dinner in my father's home when I was a student in Paris, some 45 years before. When I arrived, I saw that there was a guest there who must have been in his 50s. My father introduced him to me, "This is Jimmy Davis." He then added something like, "...and you owe him a lot." I asked my father, "How so?" He told me that Jimmy had been friends with him and my mother when they were still together, just after the Second World War, and that Jimmy had encouraged my mother to have me, or something to that effect. It was rather vague. I don't remember much more about our dinner with Jimmy Davis and as the years went by, I almost forgot about him. From time to time, I would tell family members or close friends that an American musician had played an important role in my early life, but I was no longer sure how – not that I ever really knew. Little by little my memory of that evening faded away.



Jimmy Davis in 1942

man, another in army uniform with Billie Holiday a few years later, and one by himself, also in uniform, which I am reproducing here¹³. I was struck by his eyes – beautiful dark eyes that reflected intelligence and kindness.

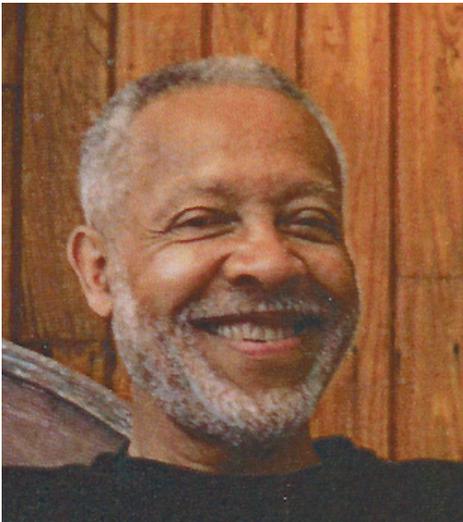
As for listening to his voice, I had to wait a few years until recordings of him singing were reissued on the web. The ones I have been enjoying are part of a record digitized by the French National Library and entitled "Jimmy 'Loverman' Davis". There I discovered his voice, melodious, warm and teasing at times, in the three languages he sang in: English, his first language, French, the language of the country he lived in most of his life, and Spanish. One particular song – he wrote many during his career – is called "C'est Beau" (It's Beautiful) and in it he lists some of the little things in life that he finds wonderful. One particular verse has struck a chord with me: "A baby who sleeps quietly in his cradle ... it's so beautiful; his upturned nose, his small hands ... that's so lovely." When I hear those words, I can't help asking myself whether he had seen me asleep in my cradle. As it happens, I do have an upturned nose ... and it was even more striking when I was a baby.

This said, I still didn't know where or when he was born, when he had settled down in France, what his contribution had been to the world of songs and music, nor when he had died and where he was buried. I contacted a few jazz specialists who knew him by name, and I even found a few people who had been at his funeral service at the American Church in Paris at the end of the last century, but none of them could tell me anything about his life and his career. I was disappointed that I could not find any more information after several months of research and so, during a short stay in Paris in November 2014, I went to the registry office at the City Hall in the 14th arrondissement in Paris where he had lived. I stated that I was not a family member (something that is important in France to get personal data) and then explained why I was interested in Jimmy Davis. The person behind the desk looked at me slightly longer than usual and I already imagined that he would tell me that I couldn't have the information. But then he typed a few things on his keyboard, the printer started whirring, and out came a sheet he gave me. It was Jimmy's death certificate and it contained a lot of other information I had desperately sought for many months.

¹³ This photo of Jimmy Davis is by Carl Van Vechten. It is at the Beinecke Library at Yale and is reproduced by permission of the Van Vechten Trust.

James Edward Davis, who had lived at 33 bis avenue Reille, Paris 14e, was born in Madison, Georgia, USA, in 1915 and had died in Paris 12e in 1997 at the age of 82. I was already in the 14th arrondissement so I went to the building he had lived in. I came to one of those imposing oak doors one finds on avenues in Paris, firmly locked, with a letter key press system to open it. Without a code, I waited around but no-one entered or left. Then I saw that right next to the building, there was an architect's office and I went in to enquire about the door. Again I explained what I was trying to do and asked if there was a concierge I could speak to. And, once again, luck was on my side. One of the people working there came out with me, typed in the code, and then knocked on the concierge's door. She came out and I again repeated my story. She remembered Jimmy Davis well and took me to his downstairs neighbor, a friend of his, who was still there and who invited me in.

I couldn't believe my luck. In less than an hour, I had found out a lot about him and where he had lived, I had entered his building, and was now talking to a person who had known him well. I told my story once again and we chatted for over an hour. She told me a lot about her friend, Jimmy, and how he would often come down for dinner in his later days, showed me photos of



Jimmy Davis at 70 years old

him, and handed me the phone number of his closest friend in France. Just before leaving, she went to another room and came back with a hand painted portrait of Jimmy by the Portuguese artist, Jacinto Luis. I started admiring it but then she said with a smile, "It's for you!". I was dumbfounded and asked her why. Her answer went straight to my heart: "Jimmy gave me this portrait when he was still alive. I took great care of it as I knew that someday, I would pass it on to somebody special. You are that person and you should have it!" What an amazing gift that was! A few days later, I met Jimmy's long time and best friend in France, a rather elderly lady who radiated kindness and warmth. We spoke for three hours in a small Parisian café and she told me, among other things, that she had met Jimmy for the first time in the early 1950s. They had stayed close friends during his many years in France, all the way to when he died. She described him as an exceptional person, with a natural elegance, and a friendly personality¹⁴. All those who knew him simply loved him.

I have now reconstructed the life of Jimmy Davis with the help of the information I obtained during my stay in Paris and also with data from the United States, such as newspaper articles and his US Army file, but above all, his 25 year correspondence with his friend, Langston Hughes, the great African-American poet and writer. Here is a summary of what I learned. After a few years in Georgia, Jimmy's family moved to Gary, Illinois, and then to Englewood in New Jersey. He went to the local high school there, and as he was an extremely gifted musician, he got accepted into Julliard where he studied piano and composition. A benefactress paid for his schooling while he was there. In the late 1930s, he composed the famous song, "Lover Man", with Roger (Ram) Ramirez and Jimmy Sherman but couldn't get it recorded. Finally, he offered

¹⁴ The photo of Jimmy Davis at 70 years old was taken by Jacqueline Baraduc.

it to Billie Holiday who, a few years later, did so. It was an immediate hit and it quickly became a classic sung by the very best.

In the early 1940's, Jimmy Davis tried to make a living as a songwriter and composer but had to do small jobs to increase his revenues such as giving private piano lessons. His life was to change dramatically when the United States entered the war. He enlisted in the Army and as an active member of the NAACP, he asked to serve in an integrated unit, not a segregated one. He even offered to do his military duty in the Canadian Armed Forces which did not separate its soldiers according to their origin, but this was refused. The case of "Private James Davis" became quite well known and he received the support of numerous people including Richard Wright and Langston Hughes (that's probably when he met him) who wrote articles in the New York daily, *PM*. Finally, he spent 13 days in jail before resigning himself to joining the unit he had been assigned to. He spent three and a half years in the Army, was appointed Warrant Officer, and made a band leader. Unfortunately, he did suffer from the discrimination that was still rampant in the Army and this had an impact on his health as can be seen in his letters to Langston Hughes.

In March 1945, Jimmy Davis was sent to France with his band. He stayed there only six months but this short trip marked him and would have an important influence on the rest of his life. As soon as he arrived, he wrote to Langston Hughes that Paris was "exactly what the doctor had ordered". That summer, when he met Roger and Sallie, he followed a French language and culture course offered to American soldiers by the University of Paris. He also travelled a bit around the country and met many French people who befriended him. He returned to the US in the fall of 1945, left the Army, and moved to Hollywood where he followed acting courses at the Actors' Laboratory Theatre. He tried to find some work but was once again confronted with discrimination - he was only offered stereotypical roles when his talents would have allowed him to have leading roles. That's when he decided to move to France for good and he arrived back in Paris in late 1947. The welcome he received was extremely warm as his classic, "Lover Man", had preceded him. It's at that time that he changed his professional name to Jimmy "Lover Man" Davis. The famous French writer, Boris Vian, wrote in the magazine, *Jazz Hot*, that one of youngest and friendliest American composers had just arrived. The next ten years were to be the most creative and successful in Jimmy's life. He composed many hits, some of which were sung by well known artists at the time such as Yves Montand with "J'ai de la veine", Maurice Chevalier with "Trinque, trinque", and Josephine Baker with "You're The Greatest Love".

Life in France at that time was difficult and Jimmy couldn't count just on his royalties. So he took singing classes and went on tour doing one-man shows during which he sang his songs and played the piano. He toured in France but also went to Italy, The Netherlands, Spain and Switzerland, among other countries. Seven years after having arrived, he released the LP mentioned above which was digitized and reedited later by the French National Library. On it we discover his charming American accent in French as well as his melodic and playful voice. The songs are varied with blues such as "Blue valley" and "Amour est venu sous mon toit", swing as in "Darling you are so delicious", cool swing with "Why is a good girl so hard to find", and typical French songs such as "C'est beau", and even tango as in "Un dia sin tí" sung in Spanish. He also interpreted his own "Lover Man" on the record.

Jimmy Davis composed some 130 songs during his career (lyrics and/or melodies) according to the French Society of Authors, Composers and Publishers of Music (Sacem). In addition to his

work as a pianist and singer, he was a talented actor and had parts in plays (e.g. "Pas de week-end pour un espion", or "Des souris et des hommes") as well as in movies ("La putain respectueuse", "Mélodie en sous-sol" and "Je t'aime moi non plus"). As the years went by, Jimmy was one of the few American expatriate musicians from the 1940s and 1950s, along with his friend Aaron Bridgers, to remain in France. But with changing tastes in music in the latter part of the century, he had difficulties getting his work accepted, and he lived his last years very thriftily with his royalty earnings. This said, his numerous friends made sure that he was never alone and on his eighty-second birthday, they came to celebrate him in his retirement home and show him their affection. Jimmy Davis' ashes rest in a small cemetery in the center of France, the country which welcomed him and which he adopted. There, a small plaque states, "You, our friend, Jimmy Davis, will remain forever our "Lover Man", because it was so."

An unwanted second child

We now return to Sallie's account of her second pregnancy which she did not want and which was an ordeal for her. It's the first time she spoke of problems in her marriage even though she and Roger got married at the City Hall of the 17th arrondissement in Paris on August 1, 1945 in order to legitimize Brigitte. She wrote: "A folding marriage that had never been was not a good basis on which to bring another child into the world. It was bad enough already to have a little one to look after ..., and to have to go to work in the theatre every evening, clean the house, look after the baby, shop, cook, and so on, while my husband - now a civilian - just lived off me. It was indeed hard and tiring and I became more neurotic every day." Then things got worse: "What a bad moment this became. My mother came over to visit bringing me my little dog, Sally. I was overtired and over worked. My husband did not like his mother-in-law and quarreled violently with me in front of her, poor Mum. She did not have a happy time and I was unable to take her sightseeing." Sallie wrote this some 30 years later, after an acrimonious divorce, so it's difficult to know if it reflects completely the situation back then, but it probably does to some extent.

Roger's parents in Lille did not seem to realize what was happening to Roger and Sallie and they worried more about their well-being. In October, Henriette wrote: "Do you have enough potatoes? I've been able to get some ham which is still in the butcher's cold box; you can take some home when you come, as well as some butter, and some beef fat for French fries... I'm sorry that Sallie cannot come with you next week. If my business gets back on track, I'll come to visit her in November, but nothing is sure. I'll answer her letter when I've received the translation... Much love to both of you."

One month later, in a letter to Sallie this time, Henriette wrote: "Because you are pregnant, you can have a few benefits, and you should use your priority card so as to avoid lining up as it's very tiring and eats up time. You can also have more food and get a shoe coupon for Brigitte that is given when the baby is nine months. I agree that you should wait until April to have your suit made; the baby will be there and you will have recovered your slim waist; you'll then have it new for the summer... In March, I'll come for Junior's birth and take your mother's place if she can't come over. You can count on me, my little dear... Dad and I send you our love."

This said, Sallie did not want the child she was carrying and expressed this clearly in her autobiography: "I couldn't love it.....It stopped me working and bringing in money that we

desperately needed." When I read her words, I told myself that I must have felt her stress, her resentment, and her misery during her pregnancy. I am convinced that those nine months, and her behavior after my birth, marked me permanently. Unfortunately, the birth itself was not a happy moment either. Sallie wrote: "I woke up my husband when the pains were coming every four or five minutes. 'Hey, wake up! The baby is on its way,' I shook him as I spoke, and then added: 'Hurry up. You must go for a taxi!' With no reaction on his part, I left him alone and went to call a couple who lived on the next floor. They had a car and rushed downstairs to get it. That's when my husband turned up carrying my suitcase. The three of them took me to the nursing home." I was born at 1.20 am on March 11, 1946.

Then Sallie tried to explain in her autobiography why we had become estranged from one another. It surprised me as at the time she wrote it we had not communicated for more than twenty years: "We are not good friends, François and I, even now that he is in his forties and I in my seventies. I am fully convinced that the reason that he cannot accept me is not because I had to farm them out and earn alone their keep and education. I had to be a provider and couldn't be a mother. This would be fully understood by an adult person, themselves a parent, after so many years. There must be something else, some very strong reason or aversion, yes, maybe really an aversion towards me. He knew that I had wanted to get rid of him and he was not wanted. He had continued to grow in my womb, hating me. I had menaced his existence. This I often feel has been the reason that François has avoided me for all these years. He would lose part of himself if he discovered that I am not too bad, just another human being with all the qualities and faults of humans. He would have to forgive himself too, and accept his faults and his own weaknesses and not mine! ... This said, I feel that I have lost forever one of my children and, as a result, my grandchildren."

When I read those words, which I reread many times, I asked myself if an unborn child could hate the mother carrying him. Of course, once born, the baby will certainly have all kinds of feelings. But in my case, hate was never present. Rather, it was fear; my mother terrified me. I did everything I could to avoid her and finally managed to separate myself from her when I was 16. I did not hate my mother. On the contrary, I hoped for a long time that she would change and that I could love her. But she made me feel terribly nervous and frightened, even when she was not there, and that is why I distanced myself from her, despite my craving for maternal love. That intense and deep fear lasted for many years after our separation; it was an open wound which took time to heal. My bouts of anxiety, even at my age, have their roots in my childhood and my contacts with my mother.

After my birth, Sallie and Roger lived another year together, this time with two children. The apartment was very small and, according to various people who visited them at the time, I used to sleep in a box either on top of a cupboard or out on the balcony, even when it was very cold! Sallie went back to her job in the theatre and Roger looked for part-time jobs that could pay him something. Thus, he helped his father-in-law, Francis, with his contacts with the French administration, writes Joseph to his cousin, Emilie, in September 1946: "His father-in-law is negotiating with the Ministry of the Navy concerning the use of a boat invention of his that greatly interests them. If this comes through, Roger would have a fine job!" He was also involved in an export project aimed at India. Henriette wrote to him about it: "Maybe something will take off on the India project... you'd earn a good day's pay what with the bicycles and the cognac. We hope this will work, as well as the boat project."

Roger's parents were always trying to help them as much as possible. Henriette told Roger in June 1946: "If you could bring the large American box in which I sent you potatoes, I'll try to give you some more, even though we hardly have any. What a difficult year it is ...I sent you some meat this morning as well as some chicory. Tell me quickly if it has arrived. Please give a hug to everyone for us. Don't get too tired; take care of yourselves. Kisses." Five months later, there was a shortage of food and Henriette wrote: "It's time to go and fetch potatoes from the parents of your employee who are farmers; if you wait too long, you won't find any more and I, unfortunately, cannot send you any. Potatoes are absolutely essential for everyday meals."

Henriette did not mention Roger and Sallie's marital problems. On the contrary, she told her son that instead of coming up to Lille, he should enjoy the fall and go out on family outings: "... you should take advantage of your Sunday and the last beautiful days to go into the woods with Sallie and see the marvelous foliage that the trees have this fall." That said, the problems between the two were definitely present as Sallie wrote in her autobiography: "My husband was boring me. Since leaving the Air Force, he did not work and did not bring in any money. He would not even babysit."

Just before they separated, Roger and Sallie welcomed Roger's parents as well as his grandmother from Montpellier. This is Joseph's account of what happened: "On May 13, 1947, my mother-in-law arrived at the station from Montpellier. Her wish was to see her great-grandchildren at once, so we went to Rue Emile Allez as agreed upon with Roger. After the meal, he had to step out for a moment, and his wife took advantage of his absence to reveal who she really is... She got up and declared the following: First, that when they came up to see us in Lille (in March 1945), they were not married, contrary to what we believed at the time. And second, that she had retained her nationality and had remained Protestant. And yet she had promised Roger that she would adopt French citizenship and convert to Catholicism." One can only imagine the outrage that these three traditional and church-going people must have felt!

To get an idea of what Roger thought of Sallie during these difficult times, it is worth reading the description he gives of Helen, one of the main characters in a short story he wrote a few years later entitled "Lover Man": "...it appeared to me that the personality of this young woman, whom I had first perceived as soft and open, had started to slowly reveal itself as being somewhat perverse and selfish... She was beautiful and this clearly was not a superficial trait. As often happens in cases like these, and without realizing it, I had become attached to this person despite our differences in character and values. At times, for no apparent reason, we would start to quarrel, and I suffered a great deal when I discovered in her an evil power to which she obeyed and which governed her behavior. It neutralized the reactions I should have had in moments like those. In her defense, this might have been because of her fatigue due to her tiring work at the music-hall. But I realized I was wrong when she spent a month without working and, despite this forced hiatus, her character did not improve."

A painful breakup

Did Sallie tell Roger, during one of their clashes, that she had been asked to keep him under surveillance in England? In any case, he could no longer put up with her and he left, or was expelled, from the apartment in late May, 1947. So began now a long period of acrimonious accusations on both sides, as well as legal proceedings before their divorce became official in 1953. In the documents I obtained, I found what my mother accused him of as well as his answers in note form. For example, Roger was accused of being violent and thoughtless. His

reply was, "Neither before nor after; we weren't happy together". He had not given her enough money for the household; his reply was: "She controlled the funds and had everything she wanted, including a maid and nanny". He had forced her to return to her household chores ten days after my birth in March 1946 and hence had violated the doctor's orders. He replied, "In fact, for those who know her, she does as she wants. She became angry with the staff at the clinic and made their life difficult because she wanted to go back home. Once there, she started to work again". He often went out at night and came back very late. He replied, "It was to get away from her and her bad temper, and to be with my friends whom she no longer wanted to see."

Sallie also mentioned the incident the evening of my birth and the fact that Roger had not been considerate enough despite her cramps increasing in frequency. He replied: "Sallie didn't go to bed, but was very busy despite my telling her to rest. And who went to get the taxi near the police station, Place des Ternes?" Could it be that the neighbors had not driven them to the clinic? In other documents, one finds other complaints concerning the one he had loved so much hardly two years before: does as she wants; is ill tempered; is irritable, sneaky and hypocritical; is very arrogant and difficult; lies; considers him as inferior; treats him shabbily; has domestic rows and causes humiliation in front of Roger's friends; and, finally, relates what happens in their home to everyone, even intimate secrets.

Faced with this conflict, the district court issued an order in June 1947 by which Sallie was given custody of the two children, with visiting rights for Roger two Sundays a month. He had to pay alimony to Sallie (6,000 francs per month), and she could stay, temporarily, in the apartment rue Emile Allez since she had the children. But things got even worse between the two and Sallie took Roger to court for having abandoned his family; she also had his car seized. In the following months, Roger proposed to find a friendly solution by which Sallie would recognize that their life together had become impossible due to their incompatibility, and that she had no real complaints about him. She would withdraw her claim that he had abandoned his family, would give him back his apartment once she had found another one, would give him back his furniture and everything that belonged to him, and would get the car released. In return, Roger would continue to pay alimony and reimburse her part of the car. But none of this was accepted and the litigation continued.

One of the clauses in Roger's proposal concerned the children, me in particular. He wrote: "A witness (Mrs. F.N.) has told me that Madame Grosjean, after our separation, treated the children in an unbelievable manner that is not maternal. For example, she told the maid: "Do not give milk to the children as I won't have any for my breakfast tomorrow morning." She clearly prefers Brigitte, the elder, and treats François, the younger, as if he were totally unimportant. He always gets less than Brigitte, materially and in terms of affection. He is brutalized according to the Mrs. F.N.'s concierge. I therefore request the custody of the younger child, François, who is very badly treated by his mother. She doesn't take care of him and has entrusted him to friends these last five months." If what my father wrote is true, and there is no reason to doubt it, then it explains the fear I felt towards my mother from my very youngest years. I started to recall that fear on her visits to Madame Wallard's.

Sallie agreed to Roger's request and I lived with him and his father, Joseph, for a few months in Gournay (Henriette was in hospital at that time). But this didn't last for very long as Roger had plans to leave with the Paul-Emile Victor expedition at that time. Here is how Joseph explained it to his cousin, Emilie: "This is why he returned little François to his mother. Since I'm alone, I

could not take care of him, and the nanny in Gournay feared for his health because of the flooding here. Roger doesn't know what Sallie has done with him as he's not at her place. He has asked to have him next week to have him baptized and if she doesn't agree, Roger will go to court."

What saved us from our mother, in the end, is that she couldn't, or didn't want to, take care of us. So she put us in foster homes, the first one with Madame Briare in Varennes-sur-Seine at the end of 1947 (I was one and a half at the time). We stayed there for at least 18 months but I don't remember anything from that time. Two letters from Madame Briare to my father in 1949 when our mother took us back, clearly showed her affection for us. In the first one, she wrote: "I have received a letter from Madame Grosjean who asks me to send back all the children's clothes as well as their bedding... I'm so sad as I loved your children, and took care of them as if they had been my own.... but I do realize that they are not my children." And in the second: "I would have loved to have news of the children. You know, Monsieur Grosjean, I behaved with them as if they were my own children. There is no reason to blame myself. ... I would love to see my little François again as well as Brigitte."

Joseph gave Emilie some news about Roger in his letters to her: "Roger has made a stupid mistake getting married, and is now divorcing... He gets on well with the concierge of his building, rue Emile Allez, and she gives him all the mail he receives at that address... He'll come with the children tomorrow to show them to us. Last Sunday, the third Sunday of the month, he was supposed to have them but he couldn't get his car started as it had been affected by the humidity these last two months. His wife had it seized but we got it released in the end."

The divorce litigation only came to an end on June 13, 1953, with the divorce granted on grounds of mutual fault. The clauses followed closely the order of June 10, 1947: Sallie kept the children and Roger had to pay alimony until they reached the age of 18. In addition, he had visiting rights two Sundays a month and could take the children out but had to return them on the same day. I have often asked myself why my mother had insisted on having full custody and had not wanted to share it with Roger. She did not love us and so it wasn't out of affection for us that she was doing it. My feeling is that she wanted to continue taking revenge on Roger, and that her pride, and the admiration she received from others, played a big role in her decision. In addition, starting in 1952, André, her rich partner, paid for our nannies and our schools, as well as her move to Italy and what she needed there (we will come back to this in a later chapter). Her financial problems were now over and she could do as she pleased.

Things should have quietened down after the divorce, but they didn't. Sallie abducted Brigitte in March 1953 and placed her in a *home d'enfants* in Switzerland; she did the same thing with me in December of that same year! Joseph informed his cousin Emilie of this at the beginning of 1954: "Roger is very sad not to be able to see his children, and this is Sallie's fault. Several months ago, she removed their daughter from the school she was at and took her to Switzerland. ... She has just done the same thing to François who is now with his sister. All this without warning Roger and, of course, without his permission. At different times, he told the foster mother, Madame Wallard, that he was coming to take François out but she replied that his mother had removed him for good and she didn't know where he was. So Roger lodged a complaint for child abduction and he asked me to accompany him to the courthouse to find out what the next steps will be... Clearly, this woman wants to hurt him, and uses the children to do so. As she is a foreigner, any condemnation will have no effect if she decides to live abroad. Poor Roger never realized the difficulties he would have when he married her... Of course, she

could be condemned by the court and he might even get custody of the children if he requests it, but how can one enforce a decision abroad. There are so many complications due to an error, or his recklessness, [but also] due to the war and his stay in England where he met her..."

In a letter to Madame Wallard at the start of 1954, Roger gave his point of view: "François was taken away from you by surprise under the pretext of the illness of Madame Grosjean's mother. He didn't go to England but joined his sister in Switzerland. It's typical of Madame Grosjean, who did this without a word of explanation or an excuse. I will keep you informed of the progress I make in trying to bring back our little François. Unfortunately, there is against us her recent wealth and, as you know, money is the master of everything, even sometimes of normal procedures and justice."

As the years went by, things finally calmed down. My sister and I stayed in Switzerland, and our father came to see us three times in all. We also went to Paris to see him. His new life as an archaeologist in Corsica took up a lot of his time and he didn't have the energy, nor probably the means, to bring us back to France. Sallie and he wrote to one another once or twice a year to organize our holidays, but they no longer saw each other. Sallie continued to hate him, and constantly spoke badly of him in front of us until I left her. Roger, on the other hand, never spoke of her. He was a prudent, level-headed and friendly type of man, and he didn't want to criticize the mother of his children in front of them. In addition, he probably had in mind the strong attachment he had for her during those few years together. Both Roger and Sallie rebuilt their lives but without their children who stayed in their boarding schools.

6. Roger without Sallie

The difficult years

Roger went through a difficult period from 1947 to 1954. He tried his hand at several jobs such as getting involved in import / export with The Three Oceans Trading Company, or overseeing various businesses such as the printing firm, Les Presses Rapides. Some jobs he kept for a longer time, such as being the personal secretary of a manufacturer in Suresnes, just outside Paris. That was when he would come and fetch me for the day with his boss's car. Joseph, his father, told Emilie about this particular job: "I think he has found a great job there thanks to one of his friends whom he met in London. He should become a junior director soon and be able to benefit from the company's profits. He is very busy, especially on the outside, which suits him fine as he doesn't like office work. His boss trusts him fully and this is clearly important to him."

Roger also went into the editing business, probably in his spare time, and it is still possible to find a few books printed under the label, "Les Editions Roger Grosjean". The address was his father's house in Gournay-sur-Marne (9, rue de la Rotonde). One of the books was a collection of poems by Gilbert Charles, *La source des songes. Poèmes 1932-1943*. The cover had an illustration by Jean Cocteau, writer, artist and film director, and the preface was by the journalist and author, Joseph Kessel. Roger himself wrote short stories such as "Lover Man" (1948), "Chercheurs d'or en France" (1949), "Rue Dobropol" (1951), "L'Eléphant bleu" (1953) and "L'Homme des neiges" (1953) but it is unclear if any were actually published. Then, of course, there was his unpublished book, *Le soleil dans le lion* (The Sun in Leo) in 1954.

Starting in 1945, maybe before, Roger became involved in the jazz world. He met and became friends with Hugues Panassié, the founding president of the Hot Club de France and cofounder of the magazine, *Jazz Hot*. It was probably through Hugues that Roger met Jimmy Davis who played such an important role at the beginning of my own life. Hugues asked Roger to be the administrator of the *Bulletin du Hot Club de France*, and Roger accomplished this task until his death in 1975. In addition, from 1950 to 1954, the *Bulletin* was published by his own Les Editions Roger Grosjean.

Throughout this period, Roger dreamed of adventure, and Joseph mentioned this in his letters to Emilie: "Roger is the type to follow his ideas and wishes. Were we the ones who pushed him into the Air Force which he joined at the beginning of 1939? Were we the ones who advised him to go to England in 1943? Certainly not. And today, the same thing is happening." Joseph then described two projects Roger was involved in but which never came to fruition. The first concerned the polar expeditions of the ethnologist and explorer, Paul-Emile Victor. Roger was to be in charge of the team flying in supplies to the expedition. For Joseph, it would have allowed him to travel, earn a good salary, and then come back to France with a military rank higher than the one he had when left the Air Force. The other project also concerned an expedition, this one led by his friend, Colonel Marcel Degliame, which had the task of developing the French Southern and Antarctic Lands, in particular the Kerguelen Islands, and St. Paul and Amsterdam Islands. Roger was again to be in charge of air transport using seaplanes this time.

It is unclear what happened to Roger's participation in the Paul-Emile Victor expedition. As for the second one, with Colonel Degliame, we know from Roger's files that they never received

the funds they needed from the government. Roger even wrote to General de Gaulle to ask him to intervene but nothing seemed to have come of it. Was it because Degliame had left wing leanings? In his files I also found a letter written in 1951 in which Roger asked to be reintegrated into the French Air Force. He wrote that he was now 30 years old, had recovered from his war injuries, and was keen on coming back since he should never have left! This was the last letter I found in his file in the Air Force Archives in Dijon.

Times were also hard for him on a personal level. This was the period that Henriette, his mother, suffered from terminal cancer. He would go to visit her often in hospital and in his diary he wrote how difficult this was: "How sad it is to see her so aged, so ill, so changed, when she was so strong before, and so cheerful. Why are cherished ones taken away from their families? Why must one see a mother who is so good... so kind and devoted, reduced to this state ... She cries almost continually and I think that to the very end she will grieve for the state she is in... Poor mother!". Henriette was to die a few months later.

Roger met Jackie, my step-mother, at the end of the 1940's and the life they started together calmed him down and encouraged him to continue looking for a job that he would care about. He had a passion for archaeology that had probably increased during his year in England where he would fly over Roman ruins, and so he started following courses in various Parisian institutions, the Sorbonne, the Musée de l'Homme, and the Institut de Paléontologie Humaine. He also learned the profession by going on digs with the famous French archaeologist, Abbé Henri Breuil, and with Raymond Vaufrey. It was with their help that he obtained a position at the French National Research Centre (CNRS) in 1954 and asked to be posted to Corsica. Nobody believed for a second that he would find anything of interest there but he would soon show them how wrong they were.

Roger, the archaeologist¹⁵

His first project in Corsica was to survey the few prehistoric monuments and menhirs (upright monoliths) that had been found over the years and maybe find others. He crisscrossed the island with Jackie, spoke to members of the local authorities, contacted school teachers, asked shepherds who were often in the maquis - that distinctively Corsican dense, scrubby vegetation - and he even did discovery flights over parts of the island. The result of his survey was a list of archaeological sites - most not yet researched - that was to give work to generations of prehistorians.



His job with the CNRS became permanent and starting in 1955 he spent each spring and fall on the island. The rest of the time, he was in Paris, or Brittany where he had bought a small house on the coast, writing reports and articles, preparing talks and conferences and, of course, organizing his next archaeological digs. Several people had told him about Filitosa, a small hamlet in south-west Corsica, among them Dorothy Carrington, an authority on Corsican culture and

¹⁵ Parts of this section first appeared in an article I wrote for *British Archaeology*, "Roger Grosjean and the stone men of Corsica". 2012, July August, 24–27.



Filitosa V

history. She had visited the island in 1948 with her husband, the painter Sir Francis Rose, and had visited Filitosa at that time. They were shown four crudely sculpted monoliths, two of them half buried, and she later wrote in her book *Granite Island* that she had a premonition that this was of great significance, but she did not follow it up until Roger arrived. She accompanied him to Filitosa and they examined the monoliths carefully. They rolled one over and saw a sculpted face with deep-socketed eyes, and a dagger carved on the upper part of the body. As she wrote about Roger's subsequent work, "Then began a time of almost daily discoveries – of dolmens, menhirs and statue-menhirs".

As a trained archaeologist, Roger knew what to look for and where to excavate. For instance, one evening he was sitting on a rather large stone with the owner of the land, Charles-Antoine Cesari. The latter belittled Roger's interest in the stone, saying he had used it as a bench for some 20 years. Nonetheless Roger had it turned over, and there lay what is now one of the best known statue-menhirs in Filitosa, known as Filitosa V. The face is outlined by a V, the nose and eyes are clearly marked, and on the body there is a dagger in its sheath and a long, vertical sword. This statue now welcomes visitors at the entrance to the site.

On another occasion, just before going back to Paris, Roger was intrigued by a spur covered in maquis. Cesari said that there had been an old convent there but when Roger finally worked his way through the trees and bushes, he found cyclopean rocks clearly signaling an important prehistoric fortified site. It contained a tumulus and a partly demolished tower.



When Roger returned in 1956, he had the maquis cleared away and he started excavating the spur. Over the next few weeks, numerous statue-menhirs were uncovered, many of them broken into two or three pieces. Two stood out for their remarkable beauty, Filitosa VI and Filitosa IX. The former came in three pieces. The head was complete and, according to Roger in an *Illustrated London News* article published the following year, it represented a higher state of evolution than any of the menhirs and statue-menhirs previously found. It had eyebrow arches, almond-shaped eyes, and a projecting nose and chin. Dorothy Carrington, who saw it a few weeks later, characterized it as "astonishingly, disturbingly realistic", with a likeness "of some formidable warrior, some prehistoric Tamberlane".

As for Filitosa IX, according to Roger, it was the megalithic masterpiece of Corsica. It had a remarkable face in low relief, the skull was fully three dimensional, and the features were

Filitosa IX

regular and symmetrical. Carrington talked of a stately, aristocratic face, a face of intimidating authority. As these statues were being aligned at the base of the central

monument, Roger wrote that the Corsican sun alternately accented or diminished the shadows, giving them different, almost human, expressions.

The reaction in the media, French and international, was outstanding. Headlines proclaimed “An unknown civilization has been discovered in Corsica”, “The mystery of the stone-men”, “Enigmatic masterworks of 4000 years ago” and “The brooding masters of Filitosa”. An article in Time Magazine on July 12, 1968, started thus: "There they stand in the landscape, great, granite figures—some 13 feet tall and weighing up to 2 1/2 tons. Their hollow gaze seems to follow the visitor; their enigmatic expressions change from minute to minute in the shifting sunlight." In the years that followed, television crews arrived from France, Germany and England, and the BBC spent an entire week filming Roger's excavations. In addition, his own mentors were full of praise for his work. Thus, l'Abbé Breuil wrote that his magnificent discoveries had led to the uncovering of a megalithic Corsican civilization that no-one had dreamed of. All this must have been rather humbling for someone who, only a few years earlier, was undecided as to where his career was taking him.

Roger pursued his search for statue-menhirs at Apazzu, Palaghju, Taravo and elsewhere, and excavated large stone monuments similar to the megalithic tower he had found at Filitosa. He called these sites Torrean – based on Torre or tower – several of which he excavated: Alo-Bisucce, Cucuruzzu, Torre, Tappa, Araghju and others, not to mention the one at Filitosa. Roger developed a theory which is worth expounding even though it has been much debated (and some say proved wrong). According to him, there had been two distinct cultures present at the same time in that part of Corsica, between 1500 and 1000 BC, or thereabouts (archaeologists would now say nearer 2500–1500 BC): the Megalithic culture and the Torrean culture. Members of the former, who built the dolmens and menhirs, were shepherds and goatherds who had a religion which included the representation of human beings, either themselves or their enemies. Thus, the finely sculpted statue-menhirs portrayed the Torreans with their weapons and equipment, maybe in the hope of capturing their strength and magic.



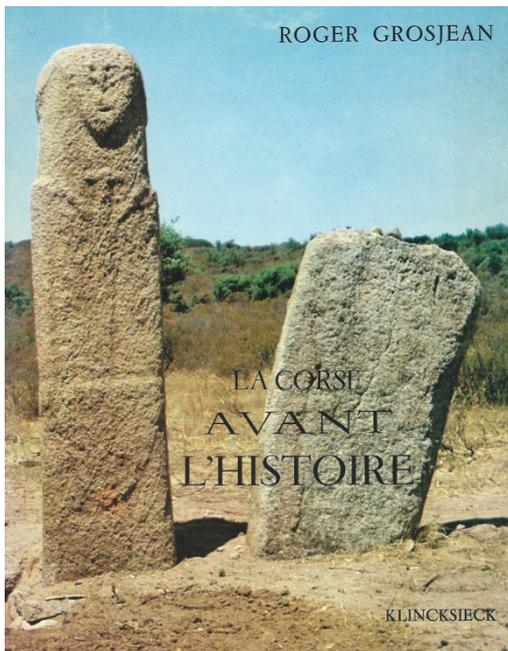
Alo-Bisucce fortified monument

The Torreans, on the other hand, were skilled in war and navigation (they had arrived on the island more recently), and it is they who built the cyclopean fortified monuments as well as cone-shaped cult and living sites. Contrary to the Megalithic builders, they never represented the human figure in their art. The two cultures clashed repeatedly and when the Torreans won, which they often did as they had bronze weapons, they took over the Megalithic sites, broke the statue-menhirs and reused the fragments in their new fortifications and cult monuments. Filitosa was one of the sites which had been taken over by the Torreans,

hence the broken statue-menhirs in the central tower. There remained the question of where these Torreans had come from. Roger found his answer when he started working on the Cauria

plateau in 1964. It was as rich as the Filitosa site although more spread out. There were two alignments of menhirs as well as dolmens. The I Stantari alignment site was cleared of maquis and the wall in which menhirs were incorporated was displaced. The excavation revealed two impressive statue-menhirs: Cauria II (on the left of the book cover below) and Cauria IV.

In an article written for the journal, *Antiquity*, in 1966, Roger noted the strong similarity between the features on these statues and the relief at Medinet-Habu in Egypt depicting one of the Sea Peoples, the Sherden or Shardana. The statue-menhirs had lateral holes on the tops of their heads that had probably held horns, short swords in a scabbard slung from the shoulder, a loincloth or girdle carved around the statue and other details. Roger concluded that the Torreans were in fact the Sherden. He pursued his work for several more years on some 30 sites in all.



In 1966, Roger published his book, *La Corse avant l'Histoire*, written for a general public. As Dorothy Carrington wrote in *Granite Island*, a few years later, "Roger Grosjean was able to tell an astonished public that pre-Graeco-Roman Corsica, far from being sunk in abysmal barbarism, had produced two vigorous and wholly original cultures, one the work of a race of master-builders, the other of a metaphysical, visionary people whose sculptors, about a millennium before Praxiteles, groped their way, unaided towards the classical ideal." Roger's book was reviewed by his English colleague Glyn Daniel who wrote in the journal *Antiquity*, equally laudatory words: "Prosper Mérimée discovered the archaeology of Corsica in 1839 at about the same time as La Marmora was discovering the nuraghi in Sardinia; but while Sardinian archaeology became well known, Corsica was forgotten - a backwater until the author of this book.... started work there in 1954. In the last 12

years he has achieved wonders of discovery....". Glyn Daniel noted that a lot more work needed to be done in Corsica, "...and it is good to know that Grosjean is going to do it." Unfortunately, Roger continued only nine more years after this review before his untimely death.

When a heart attack struck him in the summer of 1975, he was at the height of his career and was working in his new museum in Sartène. I would see him occasionally and I realized that his many responsibilities as head of a research team, administrator of a museum, and author and public speaker, stressed him considerably. In addition, he did not take care of his health - he was overweight, he smoked too much, and he did not exercise. Roger was taken by helicopter to the hospital in Ajaccio where he was put in intensive care but nothing could save him and he died on June 7, a few weeks before turning 55.

In a bit more than 20 years of research, he had contributed to making Corsica one of the most exciting archaeological areas in the Mediterranean. And yet, as he said in the interview he gave to Time Magazine, "I have only scratched the surface. There is enough digging here to keep ten full-time archaeologists busy for the next 200 years." Renown came to him after death. He is now recognized as one of the founders of modern Corsican archaeology, both among his peers and the general public. His name figures in most tourist guides, alongside those who have had

an impact on Corsican history and culture. For example, the Petit Futé guide, *Corse 2015*, puts his name next to those of Christopher Columbus, Pasquale Paoli and Napoleon Bonaparte. One can read, "You don't recognize his name? That's not surprising as scientists are less known than army or sports figures. In addition, he is not Corsican himself. And yet, Roger Grosjean did a lot, indirectly, to make Corsica culturally attractive. This specialist in archaeology and prehistory contributed to a better comprehension of Corsican archaeological sites, and to major discoveries of faraway civilizations, in particular that of the Torreans." In sum, as his friend, Yves Coppens, Professor Emeritus at the Collège de France, wrote recently: "The whole of Corsica remembers Roger Grosjean", despite the fact that he has been dead for more than 40 years already.

7. Sallie without Roger

Jacques Griffe's star model

Sallie's stage manager job for the Entertainments National Service Association (ENSA) did not last very long and she had to find some other employment. She did a bit of dog-grooming, something she had learned in England in her youth. But it didn't pay that well and so she tried to get hired as a model with Marcel Rochas. After a one month trial, she did not get the position as she was not experienced enough. But Fernand Aubry, the famous Parisian hair stylist, advised her not to give up and got her an appointment to see the *haute couture* creator, Jacques Griffe. They hit it off immediately and she was taken on by him. This is how she relates their first meeting in a Daily American Weekly article in 1961: "I stepped inside the door and discovered to my delight that the manageress of the house was an old friend of mine whom I hadn't seen for years. I lost track of the time chatting with her. Consequently, I kept the great man waiting at least 15 minutes. He was so flabbergasted by this kind of treatment that he hired me on the spot!" The reporter added: "She became 'Sallie', his star model, with police escorts everywhere she went to protect her and the millions of dollars of jewelry she wore."

Sallie worked for Jacques Griffe from 1948 to 1952. In her unpublished autobiography, she talked about her work there and gives us a glimpse of this very elite world. "We were eight at the time. I was the only foreigner. We would arrive at 10 a.m., undress, hang up our street clothes and put on short white cotton cover-alls keeping on only our undies and stockings. We would fix our hair and make up and be ready either to show clothes to clients or go up to Monsieur Jacques' studio if he was creating, and desired to pin half, whole or quarter "toiles" on us. A toile was a kind of natural colored cotton material used to create the original clothes - from coats and suits to evening dresses; the actual materials and colors were chosen after the toile had taken shape."



Sallie, top model in Paris

"The "boss" draped nearly all his toile over one girl, the girl who inspired him the most. I became an inspiration for Monsieur Jacques who increasingly created on me. I was tall, as thin as a rail, and very good for the eccentric numbers and everything sportive and simple. At one point, he prepared practically all the collection on me before dividing it up between the models. This meant very long hours in his studio standing in high heeled shoes or later in the atelier for fitting."

"Working for a couturier gave me a certain stability although money was always scarce and the hours were long and hard. I was lucky to be chosen to represent Jacques Griffe at several international shows and met the girls from other fashion houses. Bettina from Jacques Fath became even more famous because of her friendship with Prince Ali Khan. There was also Eilette Mouret who worked for Dior and who was to marry Herbert von Karajan later on. Griffe was faithful to his models and there [were] not be too many drastic changes with the changing seasons. The 'stars' would remain, the lower ranks would fluctuate. As the years went by, I was

increasingly asked to work outside the house for photos and galas. We did photographic work from 12.00 to 2.00 and galas at night."

Sallie had given the apartment in the 17th arrondissement back to Roger, and she got a room at 27, rue de Tournon, in the Latin Quarter. It's a lovely street, leading up to the Palais du Luxembourg. Each time I go to Paris, and pass by, I wonder if she ever took us there. Probably not, as we were in our foster homes by then, in Varennes-sur-Seine and then Villiers-Adam, both outside Paris. Sallie continues thus in her autobiography: "My free time was spent mostly with Monsieur and Madame Boubal, the owners of the Café de Flore in St. Germain des Prés. I made numerous friends there. The Flore was frequented by existentialists and artists of all sorts, but was not yet so very famous outside the Quartier as to be inundated with tourists and sightseers. It was still a very nice family place to meet up and spend some time with friends. We all had a running bill which we paid when we had the cash."



To make ends meet but also to maintain her ties to the horse racing world, Sallie would go out to Maison Laffitte, the track near Paris, and help train the horses there. In her Daily American Weekly interview, she explains: "Every morning, very early, before going to work, I'd put on some old clothes and [go] out to Maison Laffitte, the race track, to work out the horses in Jean Doumen's stable." She added in her autobiography: "I learned to race ride, and by keeping my eyes peeled and my ears open, I soon picked up what were the general training standards at that period. I learned to know many of the trainer's horses and where he walked them." She would then get to work by 10.00 a.m. "I was definitely the worst-dressed model when I arrived for work in the mornings in old gabardine trousers and a jacket of tweed." But then, for the rest of the day, she wore some of the most beautiful dresses in the world and "million dollar jewels" as she later said in an interview!

Sallie's partner at the time was Jean-Jacques whom she met at the Café de Flore. He was tall, had brown hair, and green eyes. Unfortunately, he was crazy about Annabel at the time: "I wanted Jean-Jacques and he wanted Annabel...the gorgeous creature I frequently saw by his side." But Sallie persisted and finally, "I got him! Women usually get what they want! It's keeping them which is more difficult." Jean-Jacques would spend some of his time at rue de Tournon helping her with administrative work linked to the fact that she had the care of two children, even though they were rarely with her. Sallie and he remained friends over the years and it is Jean-Jacques who put me up for a few days in Geneva when I was 16.

During a short vacation in Stresa, Italy, in 1952, Sallie met André, a rich French-Italian business man who fell madly in love with her. He proposed that she move to Italy to be with him; in return he would pay for an apartment in Rome and a horse-breeding farm outside the city, as well as take care of her financially. Sallie accepted and resigned from her job with Jacques Griffe. This marked an important change in her life. Not only did she change countries and jobs, but she came back to the world of affluence that she had known as a little girl. André kept his word

about the apartment and the farm. In addition, he bought her racehorses, a sports car, gave her a monthly allowance, and also paid her children's schooling in Switzerland starting in 1953!

Italy, Sallie's new country

The apartment André offered Sallie in Rome was in the Palazzo del Grillo. Here is how she described it: "... it was a charming flat in one of the loveliest quarters of Rome, in a beautiful baroque Palace considered to be the finest example in Rome. I can well believe it; it was lovely with a beautiful garden on the level of the first floor complete with two Bellini fountains and orange trees [There was an] old lift...and lovely marble stairs.". The apartment became her base when in Rome and it is there that she met André most of the time (he worked in Milan when he wasn't travelling for his business). It was basically out of bounds for my sister and me when we were in Rome. In his 2009 obituary of my mother in *Trotto & Turf*, Mario Berardelli recalls being invited there one day and seeing the walls covered with photos of Sallie as a top model in Paris - one of the most beautiful women in the world, he added.

Sallie was now known as Jill Shipway Pratt, a name she would keep for the rest of her life. She started searching for a stud farm, and found one, Mannarese, outside Rome, at Villanova near Tivoli. It had a main building, several stables, a small house in which she could lodge visitors, and four vast paddocks for the horses. This is how she describes it in her autobiography: "When I bought it... it had been a stud for many years. Lying under Tivoli and bordered by a fast running stream which is the overflow from the fountains of Villa d'Este, it never lacks water in summer as tourists frequent Tivoli longer hours; the fountains play and heavier becomes the overflow. Continual irrigation is therefore possible." When I came to Mannarese for the first time in 1957, everything had been redone, a wall had been built around most of the property, and the buildings were in that beautiful redbrick color so typical of Italian houses.

Mannarese became Sallie's country base for the next fifty years; it is there that she bred racehorses many of which became champion racers in their various categories. Little by little she built herself a fine reputation, in Italy and abroad, and many of her horses were sold in France, England and even the United States. She was one of the very first women trainers and breeders in Italy and was highly respected. In an Associated Press article in 1971, one can read: "Tall, dark-haired and shapely in her 40's, Mrs. Pratt still looks like a model. But now instead of mixing in the high fashion world, she breeds animals...She is [...] the English woman who trains horses in Italy for "win-place-or-show" placings in European thoroughbred races. For her skill, Italy granted her the first horse-training licence issued to a woman in a sport that men dominate and women usually only watch." Sallie talked of her daily schedule: "In the winter, I get up at 5:30 in the morning to go out to Capannelle [the Roman race track] and train my horses. In the summer, I get up at 4 o'clock. In the afternoons, I take care of the animals at home." Clearly the reporter was smitten by her: "Despite this rigorous routine, Mrs. Pratt still looks and dresses like a model. She plays up her Jean Simmons kind of beauty (short-cropped black hair, wide, hazel-colored eyes) with black jersey sweaters, and beautifully tailored suits."

In 1961 or thereabouts, Sallie and André separated for reasons that I do not know. She didn't remain single for very long and her new partner was another very rich businessman, Carlo. He took care of her financially for the next ten years or so and, in addition, he offered her beautiful cars such as Jaguars and Porsches. But since they did not live together, as had been the case with André, the two also had affairs on the side from time to time. This said, she was very attached to Carlo and when he started seeing other women, she suffered from bouts of

jealousy. This is what she wrote in her diary in 1966: "The end of the year was quite awful with Carlo making me as jealous as hell." One time, she tried to commit suicide but a member of her household found her and took her to the local hospital. A few days later, she wrote: "In spite of all, I love him..... I only wish they had let me die; if they had, I would not suffer so much now." A few years later, she added: "He is no help as a friend, [but] financially he has always been quite wonderful.he has always been the only man who really has understood me."

In addition to horse breeding and training, Sallie looked into several other projects which would gradually allow her to gain some financial freedom from her rich companions. For example, she went into the animal boarding business. She repeated to a Daily American Weekly reporter in 1961 something she had already told my sister and me several times: "I like animals better than people". The reporter added: "When they are boarded with her, they are 'paying guests', afforded all the privileges they are accustomed to at home. Personal attention is everything. If the animal needs a special kennel, she'll build it. If they are outdoor animals, they have the run of her 15 acre farm... If they are indoor pets, they can romp about her house." It reminded me of a time she left me alone for a few days at Mannarese my last summer there, and told me to take good care of her bull terrier, Kim. If anything happened to him, she would punish me severely. So, for a week, I did everything to make him happy and he knew it full well. He was the master and made me feel it! In the end, nothing happened to him, thank heaven!



Another project she worked on, reported in *The Tatler* in 1971, was to set up an International Racing Relations office. It was to be a consulting service for conferences and informal meetings, and would also serve as a center for those interested in racing and breeding. I'm not sure whether it ever got off the ground. Finally, she started importing Tersk horses from the Caucasus. They are intelligent and graceful animals, and have good endurance. In the photo taken by Milton Gendle¹⁶, the well-known photographer, Sallie is seen with a Tersk she kept for her own use.



When she reached 50, Sallie came back to her first love, acting, and played various roles in movies using the name "Jill Pratt". She took part in Gianfranco Mingozzi's "Flavia the Heretic", Antonio Bido's "Watch me when I kill", and especially, Larry Peerce's "Ash Wednesday" alongside Elizabeth Taylor, Henri Fonda and Helmut Berger. Larry Peerce was extremely pleased with her acting and told her so in a letter after the filming. He underlined her professionalism and her enthusiasm, and noted how well she worked with others.

With the years going by, Sallie spent more and more time at Mannarese. She rented out her Rome apartment and then sold it. She then sold Mannarese in exchange for a down payment and regular cash installments for the rest of her life while continuing to live there (the viager

¹⁶ This photo is part of the Milton Gendle collection. He very kindly gave me permission to use it in this book.

system). She continued to take care of a number of animals with a bit of help from local people who came in to work daily. One of them told me later how she would start her day. She left the house at 7:15, stopped off at a news agent to buy *Il Tempo* and *Trotto & Turf*, and went to Bagni di Tivoli for breakfast. Then, after a bit of shopping, she would come back at 9:00 for a full day's work.

Unfortunately, different physical problems began to impede her such as a meniscal lesion, cataract which led to an operation, a left foot fracture, and then cancer. She slowly became a recluse, wary of people from the outside and, increasingly, refused to see potential visitors. Her house, and the farm in general, fell into a state of disrepair. In her last months, she was bedridden and no longer left her room. A local person, Luigina, would come in everyday to take care of her. The conditions were so bad that she would actually bring in pails of water along with her as there was no longer any running water! Sallie died early on the morning of December 15, 2009, in the hospital in Tivoli. She had made sure beforehand that the few animals that remained - a horse, a dog and a cat - would be adopted by Alda Dapelo, her longtime friend.

After her death, Alda tracked me down through acquaintances she shared with my mother and gave me the news. It took her several days to find me as I simply did not exist in any of my mother's papers, and some people could not, or would not, give her the information she needed. Over the next few weeks, I contacted some people who had known Sallie. Some had worked for her and others were friends. I wanted to know more about her last years and find out if she had changed in anyway from the time I knew her in the 50's and 60's. What came through clearly is that with people she dominated such as members of her staff, she could be despicable, even cruel. This was no different from the person I had known many years before. How many times did I hear, as a child, a lad or a member of her household tell me, slightly embarrassed, that she was unbearable. How many time did I witness people getting fired often for minor reasons. This clearly had continued for the rest of her life. Sophie Decrion, her longtime friend, summarized this behavior with a curt: "She simply threw people away!"

My wife and I went to Italy in 2010 to visit Alda Dapelo and obtain the documents she had put aside for me. Once I had gone through them, most notably Sallie's unpublished autobiography and extracts from her diaries that she filled in everyday, I had a better understanding of what she had lived through, and her state of mind, since 1962, when I left her for good. Clearly, she often suffered from loneliness. For example, when she came back from a trip to the Caucasus with a group of fellow breeders, she wrote: "I am quite profoundly sad. I think the ten days away, with the sense of companionship, of working and laughing together, of collaboration, of kindness and thoughtfulness one for the other, is something that I enjoy as any human does, and which I lack totally in my life. To see them so happy to be on home soil, to rush in Milan to telephone their families, and me to have no one waiting for me except Kipper [her dog], no one to telephone to, has made me very sad." A few days later, she added: "I am very lonely, and very very unhappy. I have no one to tell about my adventures, no true friends to tell them to." Five years later, she wrote: "I wonder what I live for. I'm afraid that it's only an escape from death in a losing battle which I find very depressing. [I feel] miserable when I think of everyone going off to spend the weekend together and having fun. I have no one and am stuck here."

On our way to visit Alda Dapelo, my wife and I stopped off to meet Luigina, her last housekeeper, and we spent a few hours with her. She told us how difficult it had been to work for Sallie, but that, with time, she had become quite fond of her and the feeling had been

mutual. According to her, Sallie was impenetrable and would rarely show her true feelings. At times, but very rarely, she might talk about her family, notably about her two children, and express some sadness that she no longer had ties with them. But she was too proud to try to reconnect with them. I should add that she also knew that I, for one, would have been cool to the idea, not wanting her to hurt my own family in the way she had hurt me.

As for those who remained friends with her, Mario Berardelli, a journalist who wrote a fine obituary of her in *Trotto & Turf*, stressed the fact that she had incredible charm, like few others, but that she also had a cutting personality, and was rarely diplomatic. One had to accept her as she was or leave her. Milton Gendle, who had known Sallie since the 1950's, said she was fascinating despite being, or perhaps also because, she was deeply wary of the human kind. As for Sophie Decrion, also a longtime friend, she too stressed Sallie's cutting personality but added an interesting perspective. She believed that Sallie could have different personalities, and this came through especially when they changed languages. In French, she was the top model with the outspokenness of independent and unconventional women. In English, her very classic and upper class schooling came through; upbringing and horse racing were paramount. And in Italian, she was the diva, the star, surrounded by a flock of admirers who were scorned by her, and by a few ordinary people as well as jockeys and lads whom she would respect.

Those few friends that Sallie had kept until the end of her life, with others such as Alda Dapelo, were often rebuffed by her. But they did everything they could to stay in touch, and would come back after a certain amount of time. They deserve credit for this and I am sure that Sallie, deep down, was grateful to them for it. As Elbert Hubbard once wrote, "A friend is someone who knows all about you and still loves you."

8. Twelve years later

It has taken me twelve years to uncover the lives of Roger and Sallie and to find the answers to the questions I asked myself as a child. I know who my parents were when they met, I have a better understanding of why their life together was so short, and why their love was not mutual. I also know under what circumstances my sister and I were born, and why we were put in foster homes so rapidly. But above all, I have uncovered extraordinary aspects of their lives that I knew nothing about. Among them are the way Roger escaped to England during the war, his work for the Security Service, and my mother's probable surveillance of him. This could explain why MI5 keeps refusing to release his file, despite my repeated requests, more than 70 years after the facts. It would probably be embarrassing for them to have to admit that a young English woman was given the task of keeping an eye on a French allied officer and that at least one child was born because of this mission.

Roger's passion for Sallie, as seen in his love letters and his diary, against a backdrop of war and espionage, is very touching. But unfortunately it was one-sided and ephemeral. After a difficult separation for both of them, Roger finally found what he had been looking for, reciprocated love with Jackie. Sallie, on the other hand, was courted by numerous men, two of whom offered her a life in luxury. But she was not able to escape solitude nor the demons that haunted her.

Roger and Sallie were exceptional, adventurous people. They found their vocations after they left one another, Roger in archaeology and Sallie in the horse racing world. But they did not know how to do so with their children, loving them and keeping them close to them. I know now that I was not wanted and that I owe my life to a remarkable human being, Jimmy Davis, who found the words that were needed to convince my mother to keep me. The few years that I then spent with her were difficult and explain in large part the bouts of anguish and fear that I felt as a child, and that still affect me today. But the affection I was given subsequently, by foster parents and by those who took care of me when I was in school, comforted me and allowed me to move forward.

I can now put this childhood behind me, as well as Roger and Sallie, and appreciate fully the life that I now have. I have been given the chance to enter the world of normal emotions and feelings, after those dark years, and I realize that this could not have happened without my wife and my two children. It is thanks to them that I now have a life filled with love, happiness, mutual support, and comprehension - the type of life I dreamed of as a child. It is a wonderful gift for which I am truly thankful.

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