

Rambling Art

John Seymour Lindsay's
drawing holidays in
Southern England
1902 to 1910

Paul Middleton



Ford Farm, Ashford, Surrey.

RAMBLING ART

**John Seymour Lindsay's drawing holidays
in Southern England 1902 to 1910**

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THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED

**to John Seymour Lindsay's grand-daughter Pippa, and
my daughters Kate and Jessica, my grandchildren
Rowan, Laurence and Bella,
John Geerts and his sons Richard and Gerald and their families,
in memory of their great-grandfather and great-great-grandfather**

SPECIAL THANKS

**to the following who have helped with the production of this book:
Kate Middleton and Jessica Middleton**

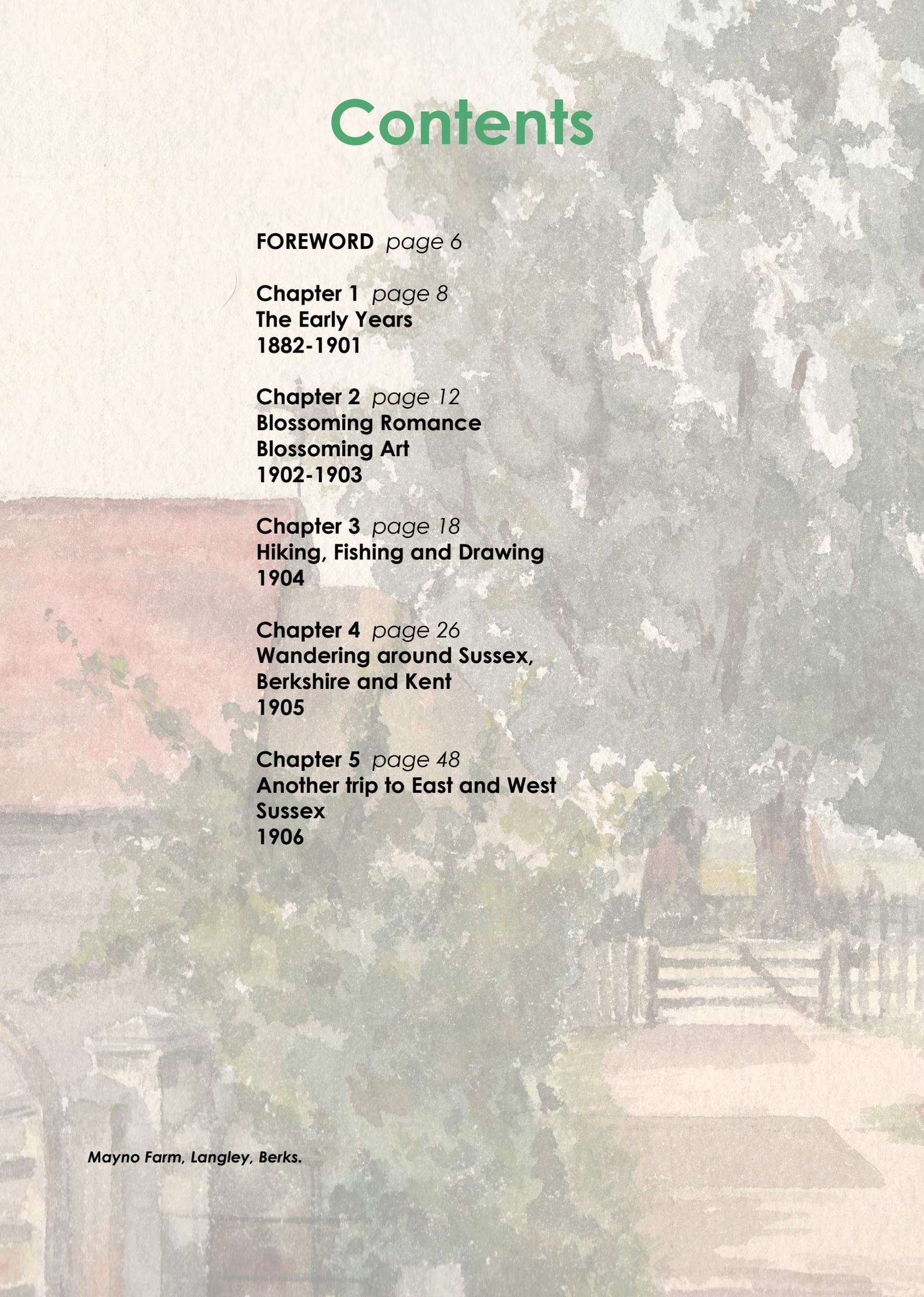
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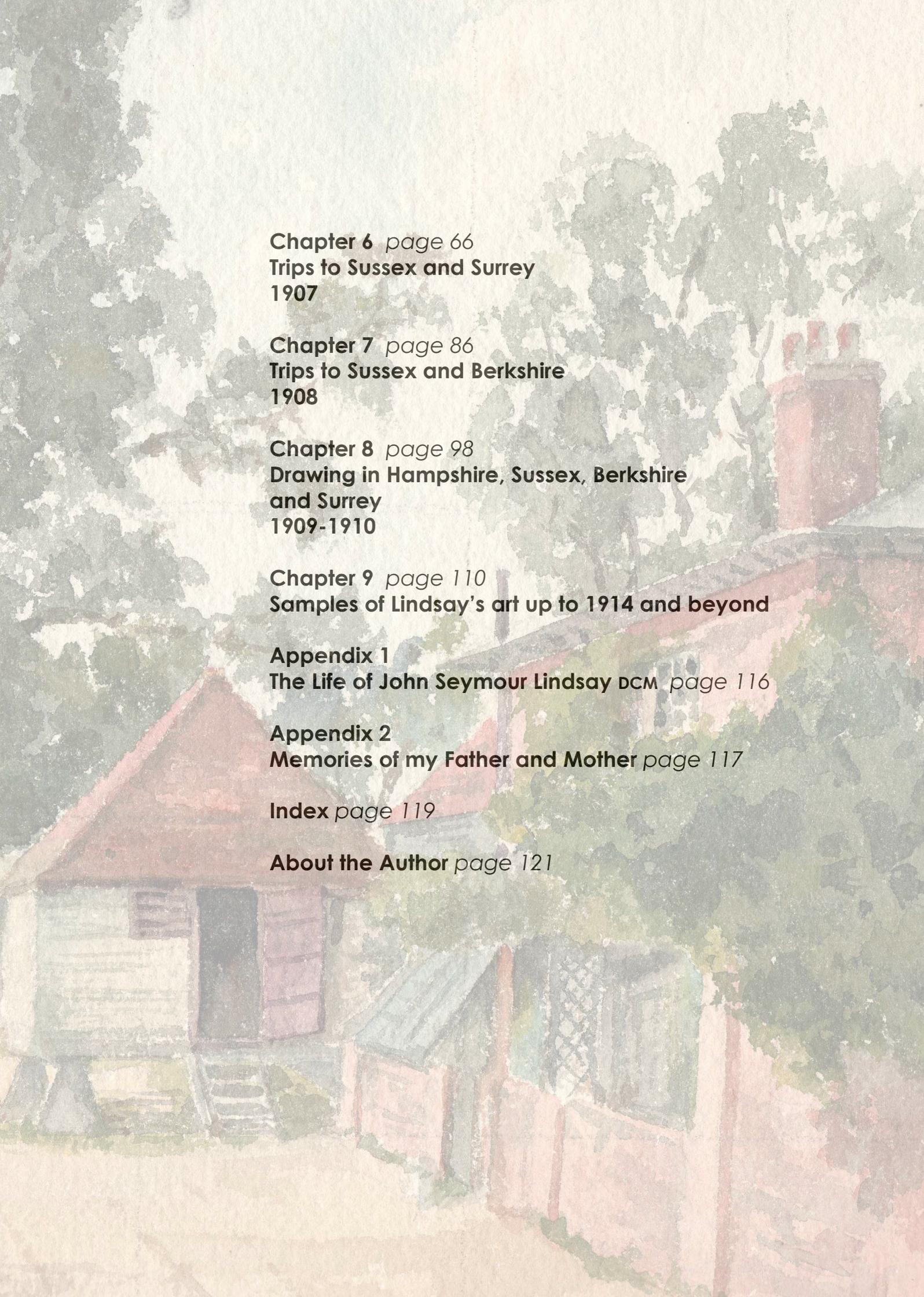
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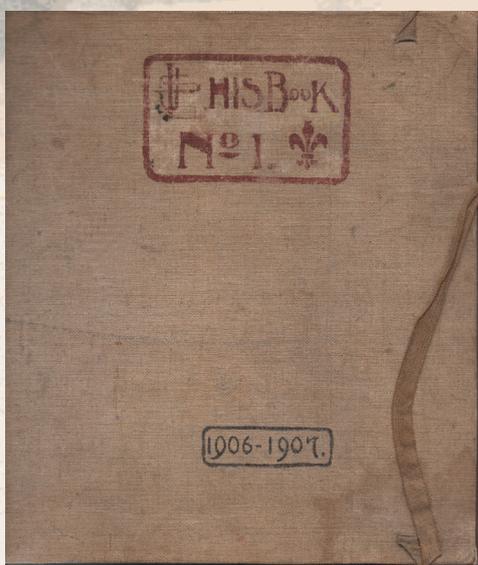
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Foreword

Among the archives left by John Seymour Lindsay were over 50 postcards sent from villages in southern England between 1905 and 1909, to Mildred Ethel Williams his girlfriend and later his wife. Also in the archives were 70 pencil sketches of buildings. When the two archives were matched together it was clear that Lindsay, during holiday breaks from his work as a designer at Leonard Ashford's studio in London, spent a great deal of time with his sketchbook and pencils. He was recording his passion for buildings and street scenes and refining his talent.

I have started this record by briefly describing his early life in Kilburn, the growth of his romance with Mildred and his hiking holidays with family and friends. From the age of twenty in 1902, when he was first attracted to Mildred, he produced some intriguing invitations, cards, cartoons and illustrated letters to demonstrate his growing affection.

Between 1904 and 1906 Lindsay's holidays were mainly shared with his brother Frank and with Mildred's brother Jack. They had a passion for walking, fishing, boating and drinking, exploring the countryside between the south coast and London. All these adventures were captured in a wonderful series of cartoon postcards sent to Mildred through the postal service. Lindsay continued to produce these postcards on variety of subjects up until the outbreak of the Great War. Many of his later postcards contain an image of a lady in a red hat – Mildred – and are addressed to The White House in Churston in Devon.



Lindsay's pencil sketches were captured in a series of cloth-bound dated volumes. Only one of the original volumes still exists.

The Building sketches were in a poor condition when discovered. All of them have been digitally cleaned and the brightness and contrast adjusted to make them clearer and more accessible. What has emerged is a vibrant record of ancient houses scattered through the villages of Southern England. They are beautifully constructed – on some you can see feint remains of the grids which enabled Lindsay to capture accurately the form of the buildings.

The majority of the postcards relating to these buildings were sent through the post. Some were sepia (they have been converted to greyscale), and some were falsely coloured by the manufacturer. They were all addressed to Mildred.

Lindsay had a very fortunate habit which has helped the record. He liked to sign and date his drawings, and he often penciled in the location and name of the building. All this has helped to identify his journeys through these southern villages. I have been unable to firmly identify his mode of transport but railway and bicycle seem most likely.

I have included in this book, many of Lindsay's watercolours. Most are of buildings but other landscapes do occur as well.

All together, this is a fascinating record of a burgeoning talent. Lindsay carried this passion through the Great War, and right up to his death in 1966. He diverged into many different areas – design of silverware, model-making, domestic ironwork and as Chairman of the Langham Sketching Club. This book gives us a glimpse into the origins of his later talents.

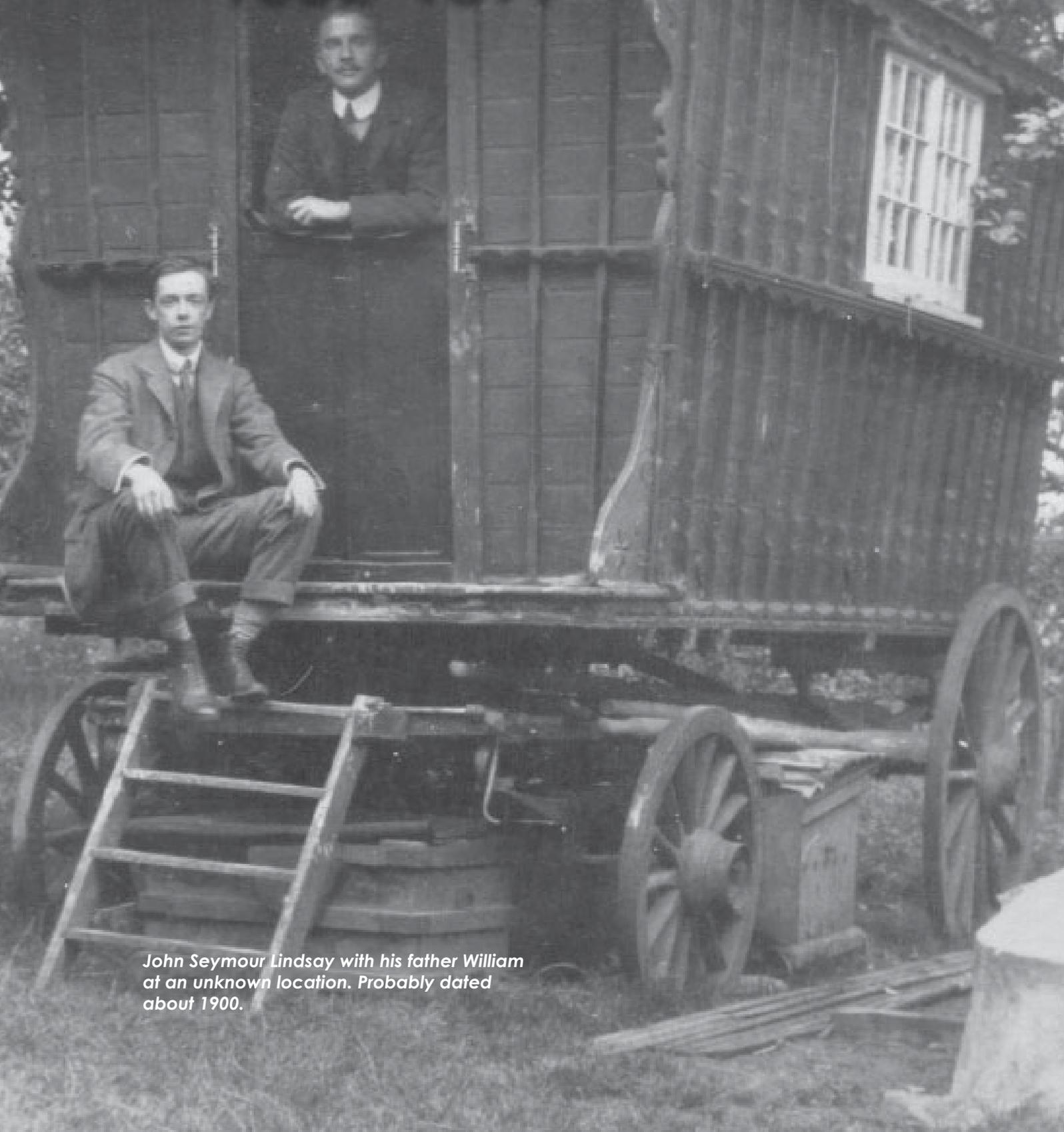
*Paul Middleton
January 2019*

Morley's Cottage, Langley, Ditton, Berks.

Chapter 1

The Early Years

1882-1899



John Seymour Lindsay with his father William at an unknown location. Probably dated about 1900.

Lindsay's Paddington Ironworks, home education with Aunt Esther and apprentice designer

JOHN SEYMOUR LINDSAY, designer and metalworker, was the fourth son and youngest surviving child of William Henry Lindsay, iron merchant and proprietor of Lindsay's Paddington ironworks, and his wife, Alice Charlotte Garman. The Paddington ironworks were situated on the south side of Paddington basin by 1879 but, as Lindsay, Neal & Company, relocated to the north side by 1902. Described as constructional engineers and iron and steel roof manufacturers, the company remained in North Wharf Road until after 1964.

John's mother Alice died in 1894 when he was twelve years old, leaving him and a brother (Frank Eades) to be brought up by a maiden aunt in their father's house. We cannot be sure of this aunt's identity but his mother Alice Lindsay had two sisters Esther Garman (Aunt Esther) and Aunt Rose Garman. One of the two aunts was unmarried and we think it must have been Esther as the photo on the next page shows Ruby Garman as probably a daughter of Aunt Rose as they are seated together in the foreground.

So John Seymour was educated at home by Esther, and from the earliest times showed a great talent for drawing and painting, a characteristic he shared with many of his family.

At the age of seventeen in 1899 he was apprenticed to Leonard Ashford, designer and draughtsman, of 5 St John Street, Adelphi, and later joined the firm of Higgins & Griffiths, electrical engineers, of 21 Orchard Street, London W1, as a designer of electrical fittings and lamps. These were perfect early professions for the young artist as they gave him a firm foundation in design. They were really forms of apprenticeship and it was obvious that his skills and talents were appreciated as they encouraged him to develop them. Higgins & Griffiths likewise were useful to his future post-war careers when he was commissioned to design the appearance of electrical systems in a number of new post-war building refurbishments.

On the 1st August 2001, John Lindsay's daughter Margaret then aged 8, wrote down memories of her father and talked about what she had heard about her father's early life:

Somehow I never knew as much about my father's life as I did about my mothers. He didn't talk much about his family except for Uncle Frank (next in age) and the dreaded

CERTIFIED COPY OF AN ENTRY OF BIRTH
(6 & 7 Wm. IV., CAP. 86).

GIVEN AT THE GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE,
SOMERSET HOUSE, LONDON.

Application Number 72333

REGISTRATION DISTRICT HAMPTSTEAD

1882 BIRTH in the Sub-District of Hamptstead in the County of Middlesex

No.	When and Where Born.	Name, if any.	Sex.	Name and Surname of Father.	Name and Maiden Surname of Mother.	Rank or Profession of Father.	Signature, Description and Residence of Informant.	When Registered.	Signature of Registrar.	Particular Name, if called after, of any relative of Birth.
177	Sixteenth May 1882 11 Greville Road Kilburn	John Seymour	Boy	William Henry Lindsay	Alice Charlotte Lindsay formerly Garman	Iron Merchant	A.C. Lindsey Mother 11 Greville Road Kilburn Hamptstead	Twenty third June 1882	Willm. Paxton Registrar	

CERTIFIED to be a true Copy of an Entry in the Certified Copy of a Register of Birth in the District above mentioned.
Given at the GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE, SOMERSET HOUSE, LONDON, under the Seal of the said Office, the 9th day of December 19 41.

This Certificate is issued in pursuance of the Act 5 & 7 Wm. IV., c. 86, sec. 37 & 38.
Section 38 of the Act provides that "All Certified Copies of Entries purporting to be sealed or stamped with the Seal of the General Register Office, shall be received as evidence of the Birth, Death or Marriage to which the same relate, without any further or other proof of such Entry; and no Certified Copy purporting to be given in the said Office shall be of any force or effect which is not sealed or stamped as aforesaid."
CAUTION.—Any person who (1) falsifies any of the particulars on this Certificate, or (2) uses a falsified certificate as true, knowing it to be false, is liable to Prosecution.

B 49811

(above) Lindsay's duplicate Birth Certificate showing his birth on 16 May 1882.

I imagine he was born in Bristol as he spent his early life there. He seemed to have enjoyed going on excursions with Frank on boats going down to Avonmouth and back again. I don't think the people looking after them knew much about this! His mother died when he was ten (editor: actually 12). She had a baby Norah, who also died some years back and she, his mother, was left with internal injuries due to a difficult birth and from which she never recovered.

His father was never much in the picture in his life at all. He must have been a very hard man and his wife's death left him very bitter. He left Dublin when quite young – couldn't wait to get away from the Ireland of the mid 19th century. He joined the company



(above) John Seymour Lindsay was born and brought up in 11 Greville Road, Kilburn, NW London.

of a ship (sailing) of the Green Line – I know he sailed to India carrying munitions to the army in the Indian Mutiny but not much else about his life at sea. He came ashore and somehow started iron smelting works but this was well before my father was born and he never seemed to know how he got started. Eventually the ironworks grew and grew – Bristol and Llanelli and “Lindsay’s Paddington Iron Works” in the Paddington Basin which frontage was there well into the 1930s, but of course nothing to do with the family by then. They had a large house in Clifton overlooking the Bristol gorge and one at Kilburn in London and seemed to be doing very well.

William Henry, my grandfather, only had any time for his eldest son Willie who was apparently very attractive and clever and eager to make his way in the world.

He was trained up to take over the businesses and was given a free hand to run them – Henry was eager to retire – however he, Willie, made a right hash of them but somehow managed to keep the full enormity of this from his father until it was too late. Then Henry was furious – turned on him and all the family – salvaged all he could from the mess and went to live in France with a new wife. He said he never wished to see any of them again!

Margaret Green (née Lindsay) 1st August 2001



(left) I have to draw some conclusions about the date and participants in this photo. My best guesses are: (from left to right) Frank Eades Lindsay (brother), Henry Lindsay (brother), William Henry Lindsay (father), John Seymour Lindsay, Alice Lindsay (mother). Taken about 1900-1901.



(above) Evidence that John Seymour owned a bicycle in his teenage years. This might have served him well from 1902 (when he was 20) onwards, when his sketching and painting trips became more frequent.



(above) John Seymour Lindsay with his mother Alice in the early 1890s.

Chapter 2

Blossoming Romance

Blossoming Art

1902-1903



Ford Farm, Ashford, Surrey.

Lindsay becomes besotted with Mildred and develops his artistic talents

According to a recollection by Lindsay's daughter Margaret on 1st August 2001, he met his future fiancée and wife in a rather strange way:

'My father joined a firm of lighting designers ... named 'Higgins & Griffiths and stayed there until he joined up to fight in the First World War.



Before that he had met my mother - a meeting brought about in a rather bizarre way. There was a railway accident - I think at Slough Station and my father was on the platform. A train was standing at the station when another one on the same line ploughed into the back of it. There was a nurse standing near him on the platform and he and she ran to see what they could do for the passengers on the stationary train, (one of them George Russell Davies who afterwards became a great friend of my father). The nurse happened to be the one who was looking after my mother's Aunt Anna who lived with the Williams family and she was on her way back from leave. Dad and she became quite friendly after the crash (she was much older than he was so no romance!). However, the nurse Jess Jones, told my mother's family about it all and I think my father must have told her something about his rather strange life as she asked Grammy Williams if he could come and stay with them for a holiday. So he did, and met my mother there.

He became friendly with her brothers and when her brother Sid took a job in the Bank of England, he had digs in London and used to see my Dad. Later, my mother went to London, to the same place when she took a secretarial course at Pitmans so Dad and she met quite often.

My mother was very keen to be a 'career woman' and when she got jobs as a secretary she took them very seriously. Her first job was at Moorfields Teacher Training College where she was secretary to the Head. Later she moved to work at the old L.C.C. (London County Council) building later dissolved and not reinstated under Ken Livingstone. The head of her department was Philippa Fawcett - a great Suffragette and all for freedom for women.

By this time Mother and Dad had become engaged but mother was not in any hurry to marry and settle down as in those days women had to give up their jobs on being married when in the Civil Service.

In 1916 they did get married as Philippa Fawcett agreed to turn a blind eye to the marriage and she kept the name 'Williams' while at work. She, Philippa, realised that so many men were joining up that if the country was to keep going women absolutely had to work!'

Margaret Green (née Lindsay) 1st August 2001

1902-1903

There first meeting then was probably some time during 1902. At this date John Seymour was 20 and Mildred Ethel 21.

He became friendly with her brothers and when her brother Sedley (Sid) took a job in the Bank of England, he had a flat in London and used to see John. Later, Mildred went up to London, to the same place as her brother. She first of all took on a secretarial course at Pitmans so John and she met fairly often. It is very difficult to pin down the precise dates of these episodes of his life but once he had started a relationship the dates become much more precise. This is really because being an obsessive and talented artist John in the majority of cases was very precise as to dates and times, so we are able to plot the changes in his relationship as the years rolled by.



This beautiful 1902 Christmas Card is the first physical evidence of Lindsay having any sort of relationship with Mildred Ethel. It feels slightly formal as there is no mention of love except the arrowed heart, and John Seymour has signed it with his full name.

24.6.03
 64 Mysore Rd S.W.
 My Dear Mildred

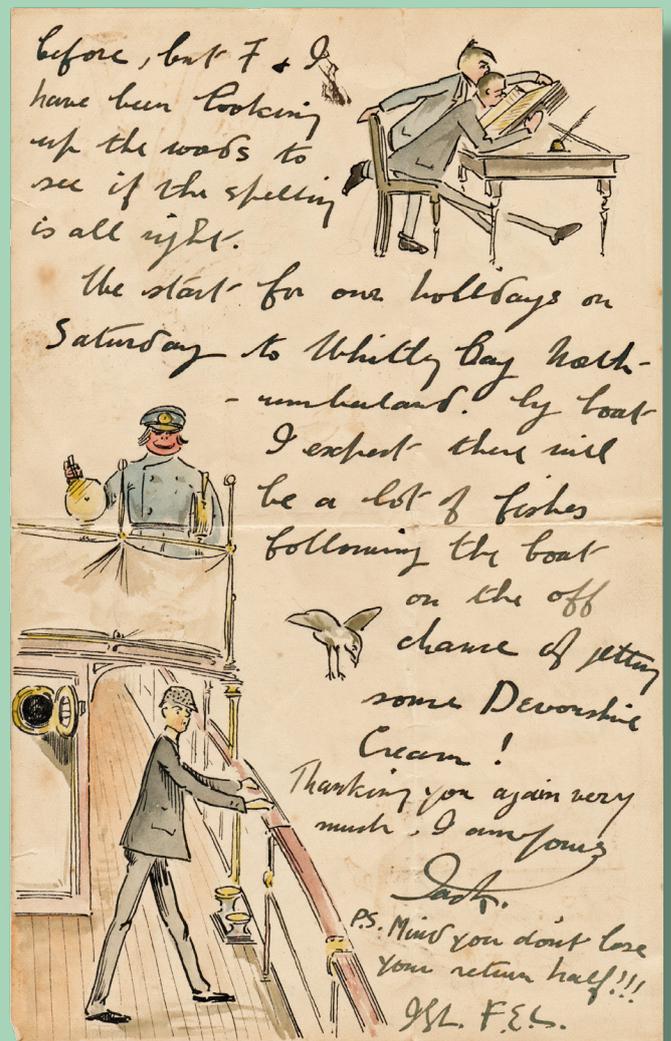
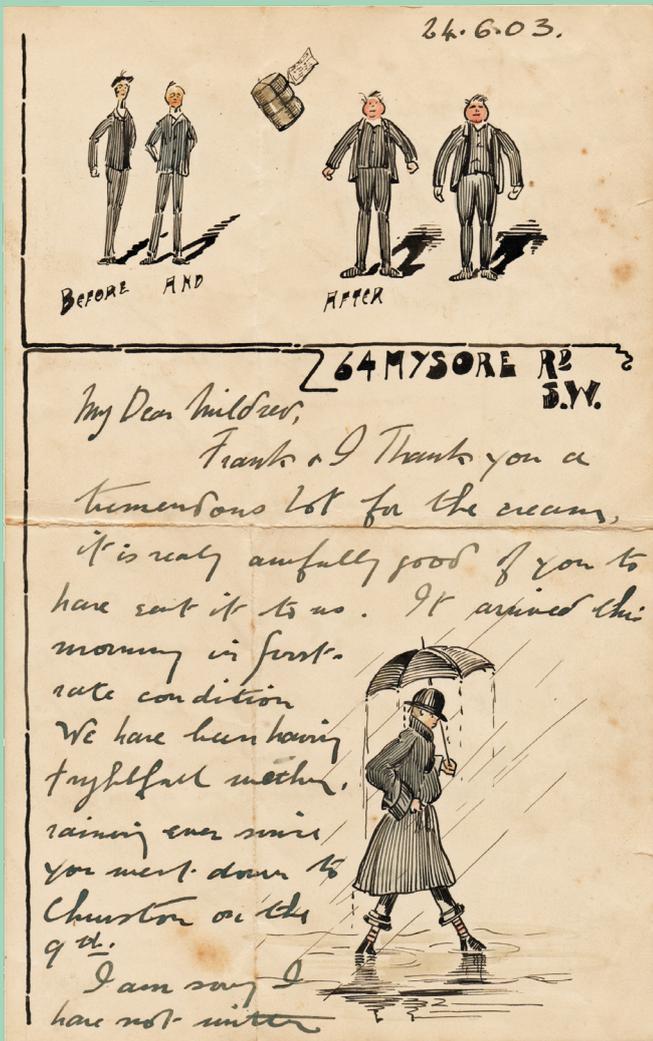
Frank and I thank you a tremendous lot for the cream, it is really awfully good of you to have sent it to us. It arrived this morning in first-rate condition. We have been having frightful weather, raining ever since you went down to Churston on the 9th.

I am sorry I have not written before, but F(rank) and I have been looking up the words to see if the spelling is all right.

We start for our holidays on Saturday to Whitley Bay Northumberland by boat. I expect there will be a lot of fishes following the boat on the off chance of getting some Devonshire cream!

Thanking you again very much. I am yours
 Jack

P.S. Mind you don't lose your return half!!!



By 24 June 1903 the romance with Mildred Ethel had progressed to regular communication. In this delightful letter he is looking forward to his trip with Frank Eades Lindsay, his brother.



Lindsay's creativity is clearly illustrated in this delightful little booklet he sent to Mildred probably early in their relationship as the invite is signed fairly formally. The 'Your Hosts' page implies that he and Frank were the hosts and Mildred and a sister were guests.

A lovely undated portrait of Mildred Ethel Williams who became John Seymour Lindsay's wife on 16 June 1915.



This rather strange birthday card from Lindsay to 'Billy' Williams his girlfriend, sent for her birthday on 29 June 1904, shows another side of his artistic skill. The watercolour scene is probably near Churston, Devon, the White House family home of the Williams clan where Mildred often spent her weekends. It sits within Torbay, and is a coastal village situated between Paignton and Brixham.



(above) These were sent on 14 and 15 September 1904. They are self-portraits and have the inevitable Mildred Ethel in the background with her red hat.