

Sunday 1st January 1922

New Year's Day! Up early (6.30) and walked to the Garrison Church for Holy Communion – only 3 there.

After breakfast went to the GHQ to take some photos (my new film having arrived) but found it too misty – almost foggy. So back and worked at the Mess accounts, it being the end of the month, until 11.30, then wrote my letters. At four o'clock, my letter finished, to tea with Major West, who is in bed with sciatica. We had all sorts of Xmas goodies, like kids, Preserved ginger, crystallized fruits, Turkish Delight, Almonds and muscatels, cake, biscuits and toast! That's the way to start the New Year! I have rubbed Major West's leg twice with Esmolin, but it became too sore to use it again. In the evening to Church with Luxon and enjoyed the service very much. We had two carols – very well done indeed, and clearly Barkham is greatly improving the choir. The Church in the Serai is to be given up – we have no troops that end of the city, and a new Church is being built at the South Gate – but not so nice as this, though it will probably attract a larger congregation.

Oranges are now very plentiful, 2 for an anna – tangerines, 1 anna each ordinary ones, good size; and the orange trees in the gardens are a picture crowded with their golden fruits.

Monday 2 January 1922

It is perfectly true that if one wants to see Mesopotamia (I can't get used to calling the country IRAQ) one must get out of Baghdad, or anyway that part of Baghdad East of the Tigris. This day, being a holiday Rice and I fixed up to go to Kadhimain, one of the most holy Mohammedan cities, seven miles from Baghdad. We went by gharri to Kotah Bridge, walked over the Bridge and through Baghdad west of the Tigris to the train Station. That part of Baghdad is said to be older than Baghdad East, and probably covers part of the site of Haroun al Raschid's Baghdad. There is a solid brick foundation visible in the River at low water near Maude Bridge which is said to mark the site of one of the famous Caliph's palaces. It is a more primitive city that side (west) – the houses are smaller and of poorer materials, the streets narrower, the

bazaars have a much closer native atmosphere, you see very few Europeans. You can often walk right through the West Baghdadi bazaars and never meet a white man. I must take some photos of that side when the brighter weather comes. It is a much poorer part.

With the aid of a small Arab boy we soon found the trams, by which we were to travel to Kadhimain. I have described them before. Imagine the most primitive antiquated broken-down trams in the world and you get an idea of them. They were introduced and the track laid for the use of the pilgrims who at certain seasons flock to Kadhimain. They are two deckers and one climbs to the top by means of an upright ladder in the rear. When we arrived the tram waiting was already full top and bottom but we climbed up and the Arabs on top made way for Rice and I too sit on the seats right in the front. We had a strong wind behind us but hardly noticed it in the warm sunshine. Only Government cars and the trams are allowed to use Pilgrims Road which winds through an interesting bit of country, for some part parallel to the Tigris. Some of the orange gardens where the fruit had not yet been picked looked very pretty and the grass and crops a wonderful emerald green after the rains. Women were cutting the grass by handfuls with crook knives – I have never seen a scythe used – squatting down.

Tuesday 3 January 1922

It turned to rain yesterday evening but Rice and Williams and I motored to Baghdad West Station to see the three E&A men off back to Egypt. Funnily enough we found they had been to Kadhimain and bought 8 opium pipes like ours and paid 3 Rupees each for them! We only paid Rupees 1/8 , just half.

It has been a great boon this holiday and now today, the first full day again, the work has poured in. No peace for the wicked!

After tiffin we had a jolly game of Badminton, the "Audit staff" versus the Army, and won 2 games out of 3, and then I worked at the Mess accounts until 5 p.m. just finishing them by then. Our messing plus mess servants works out at Rupees 4 per day as against Rupees 2/12/- last month – but Xmas comes but once a

year! My total bill with rations and drinks is Rupees 256 = £17 approximately. That includes washing, papers, and Club subscription.

After tea back to the Office and did some work and then home, bathed and dressed for dinner (every night's performance) and a jolly sit round the mess room fire yarning afterwards. And so, tired, to bed.

Wednesday 4 January 1922

Beautiful warm day, although a little rainfall in the night. So far we have had wonderful weather for winter – last year frosts were of frequent occurrence; when I arrived at Basrah on 23/1/21, there were frosts each night. Perhaps the wet weather keeps it mild, so we have some compensation for the mud. It is getting drier now, and the first day's winter racing was held yesterday and quite a success.

In the afternoon after our Mess meeting, Williams and I went by car to the Racing Club for Golf. The "rocky road to Dublin" is a fool to the road out of Baghdad to Muadhaim and we got well jolted on the way. Perhaps it jolted me off my game as I played very indifferently and lost to Williams by 2 holes. I was driving much better, but my approach shots and putts were bad and I am out of practice. My opponent has had a lot of practice lately. Guest night tonight – but very quiet after our Christmas festivities, only one guest. However, one can't be always Xmassing and the season has been rather expensive.

Thursday 5 January 1922

Yesterday I sent a cablegram to my dear wife – for her birthday. (34) I am told that it will be delivered on the 6th January. The cost was only 15 annas a word.

It has been a beautiful spring like day and it was a real pleasure playing Badminton under such ideal conditions. I played Waite 3 competition games but he beat me, as most of the members of the Mess will do, as all are great tennis players except me.

In the evening at 7 pm Major Rees sent his big car round and Williams and I went up to Aircraft Park to dinner with the RAF. It was a lovely night and we arrived about 7.30pm. About 40 sat down to dinner, which was very good indeed. It being their Xmas Guest night, wine and champagne was being handed round in bucketsful almost and I had to refuse time after time, if I was to keep sober. These RAF fellows do drink and keep sober. Sherry, short drinks, champagne, port, liqueurs and whisky I had and I'm afraid I mixed them up too much. I had a gadget out of a Xmas cracker and showed them, how to crack one's nose. It mystified them all for a long time and I was obliged to offer it to my host, for everyone was eager to have it, like the big kids they are.

Friday 6 January 1922

Last night when I arrived home I couldn't find Lilly's Photo: nor this morning although I ransacked my room. I felt certain that one of the servants had stolen it until Rice, who had played the trick on me, gave it back to me this afternoon.

Just as if this wasn't bad enough I woke up this morning with a thick head (bally mixed drinks last night, I suppose) and couldn't eat my breakfast. I recovered after tiffin but have felt not very energetic all day.

In the afternoon at my Mess accounts and then walked to the Hospital to see Pickard whose toe was operated on last Monday. He thinks it is a great success and that he will regain complete use of his big toe. There is no doubt we have some very clever medical men in Baghdad. It is no use sending dud medicos out here – there's too much strenuous work to do. I now hear that I am due to be inoculated again for typhoid etc.

In the evening to the YMCA to Captain Williamson's lecture on Wireless Telegraphy. Most interesting including some very new suggestions regarding thought waves and telepathy, which is only possible when two beings are 'in tune' with one another.

Saturday 7 January 1922

Left the office at 12 o'clock today, and after an early tiffin left by motor for the Racing Club for the third days racing of the long-postponed Xmas meeting. The road was crowded with race goers traveling in all kinds of vehicles, and many on foot, Arabs, Jews, Indians, Tommies, and as it was a fine day a big crowd attended. We arrived just after the first race had been run. I was struck by the number of pretty women there, and the number of native women, mostly Jewesses I should say, but there were 20 men to one woman. It was a beautiful clear day, no dust owing to the rain of Xmas. So clear that one could pick out one's jockeys colours the whole way round the 2 mile course. Williams, Luxon, Bray and I went together and had a bad time as regards betting; only Bray had a winner and he was Rs.100 down on the day. I was Rs. 50 down. But the life and colour and movement provided an enjoyable day although we had such bad sport.

In the evening, it being Williams's birthday we had a very merry dinner with champagne to drink his health in and after some music 6 of us started vingt-et-un. I did rather well finishing up Rs.16

Sunday 8 January 1922

Another beautiful mild day. Up early and to Holy Communion at Garrison Church, Serai. We are giving up this Church at the end of January and building a new chapel near South gate which is expected to be ready by then. It won't be such a good Church by a long way, but we have very few troops that end of Baghdad and the congregations are not very big as a consequence. We get a good few civilians from the North end of Baghdad, but the Military Church doesn't exist primarily for other than Military purposes and they will soon get their own civilian chaplain, who is coming out from England. I started my quarterly Church accounts today – they will take a few days in my spare time to get out. What with my correspondence, journal, mess accounts and Church accounts I have plenty of writing to do.

Luxon and I went to Church in the evening where there was a very nice little service and quite good singing. Afterwards to dinner at the P.C's. He has been buying carpets left and right and has apparently got the carpet mania. But he has made his rooms look very nice. Carpets seem to fit these eastern houses and look so

well on the walls and on chairs and settees as well as on the floor – but I don't know whether they will look quite so appropriate or suitable on English walls.

Monday 9 January 1922

I was looking at a chart of temperatures today and was struck by the high temperature line shown for this winter, especially for January to date, January being the cold month for IRAQ. As an instance of this, I may mention that the temperature for yesterday was maximum 66.5 minimum 61.0 almost summer days in England.

In the afternoon had some real strenuous Badminton, doubles and singles. Played a great deal better winning the singles each time and finishing up so wet that I had to change completely. After tea I went up to the Hospital and took Pickard his mail. His bearer, Joseph, apparently is desirous of staying on in Baghdad instead of going home with his master, and wants to come as my bearer. I wanted to know what Pickard thought about it, but he is quite agreeable to let him come to me.

After dinner at night, we played kid's games "Proverbs", "How-do-you-like-it", "Animal, Vegetable or Mineral?" and so on. We are left out here to find our own amusements very often – but you will see that we don't manage so badly.

Tuesday 10 January 1922

Col Hamilton, of our mess, went out shooting on Sunday, shot a wild boar and we had a leg for dinner tonight. Quite good, but more like tender beef (not so tasty though) than pork. They turned out 2 boars, the other one charged one of the party, knocked him down and stamped on him, breaking his leg – and then got away. The pig they shot was 36 inches high. The injured man, Colonel Hammerton, is doing well and his leg has been operated on and set. This happened about 50 miles out of Baghdad, but I have seen wild pig on the island opposite Advanced Base, only 3 miles out. They are very strong and fierce animals, and it wants a brave man shooting wild boar.

In the afternoon, went out with Hirons and Cairns (two of the Audit Staff) to the racing Club for golf. I did well during the first half, but went to pieces in the second half and eventually Hirons just beat me. He has been practicing nearly every day though.

The River is rising again – I suppose there have been heavy rains up Mosul way. I hear that it has been comparatively dry at Basrah. (River = 100.8)

Wednesday 11 January 1922

The weather has turned a bit colder – and I have had to use the stove in my room again. But it doesn't seem to make much difference to the Arab, who mostly wears cotton clothes, and very often has his garments open right down to the waist, showing his chest. This by the way is surely an argument for the V-neck blouse, for he seldom suffers from Consumption. The only real native winter garment that he wears is a pashtun, a sort of overcoat made of sheepskin with the full fleece inside, and that is not often worn by the town Arab. One cannot tell what extra clothes the Arab woman wears, if any, as all is hidden under the black abba. But the Jewesses wear European winter clothes under their bright coloured abbas, and many are very smart, especially in shoes and silk stockings, some even discard the abba and wear smart hats. The Jews always wear boots or shoes and stockings, but the Arab, especially the poorer classes, mostly go barefooted, men and women. This is much simpler in muddy weather, anyway! It is this extraordinary diversity in clothes that makes an Arab crowd so interesting. How monotonous an English crowd will seem – all dressed the same, though there may be many interesting changes in fashion to see, after two years absence!

Thursday 12 January 1922

This morning up at 5.30 a.m. and ready by 6 a.m. to go to Baghdad West Station to fetch Cole and Wood-Heaton who were arriving from India by the Basrah train. They had been running our office at Poona, or rather Wood-Heaton had, But as that had to be closed by W.O. orders they have now to join the Baghdad Office. As usual the car was late, but I arrived at the station at 6.40 and found the train in and Wood-Heaton and Cole shivering

on the Platform. So we soon all came back and I dropped them at the Audit Mess in Chelsea terrace, where they are to stay, leaving their bearers and luggage to come along after.

All the Baghdad railway stations are outside the city. Hinaidi Station, the terminus of the Kut line, is 5 miles out, Baghdad West, the station for Basrah and also for Mosul, is 2 miles out and Baghdad East, the station for Tiaruq from where caravans go into Persia, is a mile outside the the east city. Only one train a day departs and only one arrives at each station but they are of terrific length, and the engines are very powerful. The Kut line is being closed down soon, as we have evacuated Kut and the railway is to be pulled up! We don't leave railways lying about in this country when they're not wanted.

Friday 13 January 1922

Quite cold in the morning but a most lovely day later on, warm, brilliant sun, blue sky and ending with the most gorgeous sunset in the evening I think I have ever seen. The colour of the skyline is of the deepest glowing orange, rising gradually lighter to dark yellow, then light yellow, then green and fading away into the dark ultramarine of the night sky. Against the deep orange stand tall stately date-palms on the horizon, with a square black shadowed house here and there. This marvelous sky colour is one of the most beautiful things in IRAQ.

In the after noon a strenuous game of Badminton nearly up to 4 o'clock and then changed although I had brought home work to do.

In the evening with Middleton-West and Rice to "E" Mess to dinner and a real swagger dinner it was and very jolly company – three Colonels, two Majors, one Captain, Rice and me. After dinner, four of us to Middleton-West's lecture at the YMCA on Spiritualism. Very interesting and impartial, but the conclusions he arrived at were wrong to my mind, and he condemned it by statements which he did not prove. Home and had a strenuous argument on the subject with him and Rice. So to bed.

Saturday 14 January 1922

Today the Zeur Oil trial came on again and I was cited as a witness, as the Government Audit Officer. I got to the Court at 9 a.m. as directed, but except for one enquiry which lasted 10 minutes I was not called and at 1 o'clock I got permission to be absent until Sunday morning at 10 o'clock. This case is being tried at the Civil Court and Friday is their Sunday, while they work through Sunday, just as we work through Friday in England.

The three prisoners were brought in and Hamilton having confessed, pleaded guilty. He was sent away and he will be sentenced later. Gupta and Mohammed Kassim remain to be tried.

The Judge was a grey-haired Englishman who sat at a long table on a raised platform with 3 Arabs on one side and 2 Arabs on the other. There was an Indian interpreter in attendance and another fellow who called himself the Defender, who knew as much about the case as my hat. As all the evidence is asked in English, converted into Hindustani for the prisoners and the whole translated into Arabic for the Arabs at the Judge's table it may be conjectured how slow the case was and what a deadly bore it became and I got fed up and came outside and stood in the sun by the Riverside. Outside the Courts are several refreshment caterers who have little low tables about 3 feet by 2 feet crowded with eatables, around which Arabs sit and select what they desire and eat it then and there. I suppose the proprietor watches what they take and charges accordingly. Some Arab girls who had been eating there came and sat down near me on a sort of brick platform. I think they must have been prostitutes waiting to be licensed, for two of them had their bosom all bare and breasts showing and one actually sat so that I could see under her clothes. Done on purpose, I have no doubt, from the way they were ogling me! They were all three young girls, quite good looking about 17 or 18 years old. They smoked cigarettes, and appeared to be in the charge of a pleasant looking, fat old dame, whose breasts were each as big as footballs, and who must have been nearly 100 inches around the waist. Presently they were called in and they disappeared. They seemed perfectly at ease with everybody and laughed and chatted. There is a special area set apart in Baghdad for these women and apparently the Baghdadi regards whoring as

a recognized calling, for he spoke to the girls freely, policeman and all, and all were quite at ease.

In the afternoon we all went from "C" Mess to see the big football final replay – the Norfolk Regiment v. Aircraft Park. There was a tremendous crowd at the Citadel Ground as may be imagined and it was a fast match from start to finish. During the first half the Norfolks were best and scored a goal but during the second half the RAF asserted their superiority and scored two goals. They won easily as a matter of fact.

Afterwards to the Hospital to see Pickard to see how he was getting on and to thank him for letting me have his bearer, Joseph Rodriguez. I have given my late bearer, Jumma Khan, who is still in hospital, the sack and I hope now to keep Joseph, who I know is a good boy, until I go home.

Joseph started with me on Friday and has already done more work than any other did in a week, except Imam Ali. Khanji, who I had some time was a lazy beggar, and Isman Khan can really only serve one master and that was his own – Rice Sahib.

Sunday 15 January 1922

Up early and Jaques picked me up in his car – going to the garrison Church for Holy Communion. At 9 a.m. received a telephone message that I should be wanted for the trial today much to my great delight. It's evidently going slower than even I thought it would.

It has been a beautiful day again, but with a very cold wind. The warm sun and blue sky takes away the nip, however, and one keeps beautifully warm so long as one doesn't hang about. I wrote all day and even then had to leave some.

Some played Badminton in the afternoon and then went to a football match. Another had a day at Golf. Another went into the bazaar buying carpets. Rice and I worked and wrote.

In the evening Luxon and I went to Church walking through the Bazaars and back the same way. There was a very poor

congregation – nearly as many in the choir as the congregation- but the service was ripping, all except the sermon, which I thought was a bit wet.

I am jolly tired tonight; I suppose it's through sitting in my room all day with an oil-stove which must pretty well poison the air.

Monday 16 January 1922

Another cold day again – about 2 or 3 degrees above freezing. Up to the Law Courts at 10 a.m. and was called about 10.30. I went through the whole of my evidence again although I intimated to the Judge that I would rather confine myself to two counts only, which I rather thought we could prove. Some of the counts we could not prove as the necessary witnesses had been allowed to go home to India. The Judge and I had several discussions, but quite friendly ones and after my evidence was over I went into his private room and talked the case over with him. I don't suppose that could happen in England! I wonder how much the stodgy old Arab gentlemen with him understood of the case? The Judge was a Mr Alexander, at one time a barrister with a big practice in India and Burma and well acquainted with the tricks of the babu.

From what I gathered, he rather sympathised with the half-educated Indian stuck out in the blue with stores valued at thousands of Rupees in his charge, and seldom visited – so it's quite possible that these Indians may get off, or only get small sentences.

Tuesday 17 January 1922

Very pleased with my new bearer, Joseph. He is a nice clean boy, about 24 I should say, a Goanese, and a Christian. He is thoughtful and when he sees I like a certain thing done, he never fails to do it. It is very indeed to have someone looking after me and trying to please me after the bad boys I have had since Imam Ali went. He wanted to have a count over my clothes etc. because he said some of my things had probably disappeared since Imam Ali went. So this afternoon after tea we counted everything. Sure enough, I have lost a lot of things – 3 soft collars, 11 handkerchiefs, 1 dress shirt, 1 vest, 2 pants, 9 pairs socks, 2 boot

brushes; some have got worn and Jumma Khan or Kanjee, instead of mending them, threw them away, or perhaps they just annexed them, regarding anything with a hole in it their perks. That would explain the socks. A fruitful source of loss is the dhobi, if one's servant is not always careful.

In the afternoon, viewed a lot of carpets and made an offer for a Kashan which the dealer wouldn't take. Then a good hours badminton with Luxon. Got wet through with the exercise – changed and had a rub down and felt fit as a fiddle after. Minimum temperature yesterday 32.6°.

Wednesday 18 January 1922

It has turned quite warm again and the day has been delightfully pleasant. I'm sure that even the Riviera could not beat the brilliance of the sun, and the clear sky, and the warmth at this time of year. I played more Badminton this afternoon and had to change completely afterwards. One takes no risks in this climate.

After tea, with Rice for a stroll around the Bazaar. Went into the Goldsmith's Bazaar, an upper floor Bazaar I hadn't seen before. It was certainly the quaintest collection of hovels I had ever seen anywhere. Little old wizened men sat cross-legged over crucibles and charcoal furnaces fashioning gold chains and other ornaments, rubbish and filth outside their doors, and nothing whatever to show that this was one of the richest parts of the Bazaar. I don't suppose the Bazaars of the old caliphs were much better, and it is almost certain to my mind that the magnificence of the Baghdad of their times is a pure myth. I bargained for an amethyst and paid 5/- for it – probably a 1/- more than it is worth. Still, one doesn't mind paying a bit for the amusement, and it is cheap amusement at the price.

Thursday 19 January 1922

After tiffin with Rice for another stroll round the Bazaar and stopped at the precious stone dealer in the Bazaar leading out of River Street. They are making great strides in rebuilding the part which was burnt down in the fire. Our friend has quite a lot of my pretty stones – but no good blue ones. He has plenty of blue

sapphires but all have faults of some sort. It is strange how quickly one picks up the knack of judging a stone. I found one rather good little ruby, which eventually I got for Rupees 2 Annas 12 – or 3/8d., or 1/4d. a carat. I wish I knew what these stones cost in England. Afterwards I bargained for a pair of silver anklets with bells. I didn't intend buying them, just yet anyway, but he came down from 35 Rupees to 24 Rupees and when I refused asked me to name a price. From there to the Copper Bazaar, where Rice and I bought a copper bowl each – mine cost Rupees 2/4/- which equals 3 shillings. Also found that the price of a copper water-pot is less than 8 Rupees – small size. I often think how my friends at home would laugh at the picture of me sitting down on a low stool, bargaining with the turbaned Baghdadi, part in English, part Arabic, part Hindustani, part gesture – but getting on quite well. And I expect the old thief often laughs to himself at the thought of me!

Friday 20 January 1922

Still finding it difficult to get my work clear although I have Heaton with me now. Work had been piling up lately.

After tiffin had some very strenuous and enjoyable Badminton. This is the stuff to keep one's waistline down. It was fairly warm today and I got wet through and had to have a rub down afterwards and a complete change. At four o'clock, went with Rice to the Hospital – and on the way stopped at our old friend the shoemaker and managed to describe to him by gesture and design a letter case Rice wanted him to make – aided by Hindustani, which is a sort of 'lingua franca' of the East. Found Pickard rather disappointed at the slow progress his toe is making.

To dinner in the evening at the Maude Hotel and afterwards to the YMCA to Mr Cook's lecture on "Baghdad: its wonderful past" It was most interesting and one rather novel statement he made was that the college cap and gown are derived from the fez and abba of Baghdad and brought to Europe in the old days by students who flocked to Baghdad when it was the centre of culture and learning to study in its universities.

Saturday 21 January 1922

Yesterday, my late man, Jumma Khan, turned up at the billet. He was still sick, but had taken his discharge from the Hospital, because he was fed up with not getting any better. I wouldn't see him but paid him up in full what I owed him. Very glad indeed to get rid of him. He was never any good to me. My new boy is quite different and I must try and keep him up to scratch.

Gorgeous afternoon. Played Badminton till 3 o'clock and then sat out on the verandah in the sun and read. It was delightful, and so hot as to make one want to take one's coat off. The shade temperature was 63.

Went to the Office at 5 and worked until 7 and now very nearly clear and ready to hand over to Heaton. This I shall be able to do at the end of next week.

In the evening Luxon's birthday party – on his 29th Birthday. This is the third Saturday a Birthday this month and with the RAF dinner the fourth where I have had champagne. A jolly evening, and some of them kept it up until 12 midnight. Rice, West and I came up to bed about 11, but we could hear the others singing away downstairs. No more birthdays now until March.

Sunday 22 January 1922

This morning to early service and found that the pulpit, altar rails and some of the seats had already been removed from the Church at the Serai. This is the last Sunday service at the Serai Church and next Sunday services commence at the new Church at South Gate, which is to be dedicated then and named "St George's Military Chapel". The new garrison Church is to be built at Hinaidi, four miles out. The old P.C. very nice and brought me back in his car.

Wrote all day, four letters and two pages of Journal and at half past 5 with Luxon to the farewell service at Garrison Church. Good service and a very modern sermon by Hutchings.

In the afternoon, Abdul Hardy came with 3 carpets. One I rather liked, but would not buy. However Waite came out and after some bargaining gave 50 Rupees and a hammer for it. This hammer he represented to the Arab as a very ancient Hammer from Babylon, having the name Nebuchadnezzar on it. I firmly believe Abdul took it all in, because he seriously asked for a pass for it in case the Police took it from him! I left while Waite was writing the "pass" out, as I could not hold my laughter any longer. The hammer was an ordinary 1/- Birmingham one.

Monday 23 January 1922

Today is the anniversary of my arrival in Mesopotamia – but a very different day to that of a year ago, which was cold and wet, while today is warm and bright, though there was a little rain in the afternoon. But the real wet months have gone, and there is very unlikely to be any more disagreeable weather now until next November. There'll be some rain but nothing to make the roads like they were in November and December. There have been crowds of labourers playing about with the roads ever since but they are badly supervised. Today there was a gang of about 12 levelling the bumps off our road by "C" Mess, but what they did in the whole day, one hard working man could have done on one hour. As I came home to lunch, one boy only was scratching at the road with a spade, 3 men were fast asleep by the roadside, 7 men were squatting down doing nothing, including a tindal, or foreman, and the other foreman was missing altogether! This is typical of the Arab labourer, who is a lazy skunk unless he is properly supervised, or on piecework. The Jews, on the other hand, are clever and industrious and IRAQ would have a mighty poor future if it were not for them.

Tuesday 24 January 1922

Some rain last night but nothing like enough to upset matters. The same quantity in November would have ruined the roads again, but the sun has gained such power now that the roads were almost dry by mid-day. Temperature (max) yesterday was 66.8° and minimum 45°.

After tiffin played Badminton with Luxon and changed and then Abdul Hardy, a carpet merchant came to the billet. After a lot of bargaining changed my Saruq for a Fenaghan, which I think will be much more suitable for general purposes.

Barkham came to tea, and afterwards we went together to view the new Church at South Gate. It is the large vault-like room on the ground floor of the Western Bastion of the old South Gate. It is a most romantic position, on the old City Wall, near the Tigris, and commanding a view of the road to Hinaidi. The walls, as become the walls of a Fort, are 7 ½ feet thick and although it is much smaller than the Church at the Serai, I expect it will be big enough. It is only 3 minutes from "C" Mess. It will seat about 100 and be lovely and cool in summer. Much better, anyway, than I expected. We are going to bring our bell from the Serai.

Wednesday 25 January 1922

This morning just as I entered the drive to GHQ I saw an Indian orderly running to the Fire Alarm and begin beating it vigorously. The guard came running from across the road, and I also ran, wondering whether it was the Audit Office on fire. It proved to be in the Map Section, and was caused by an oil stove catching fire and setting alight a wooden cupboard. It was put out after about 10 minutes but it was a narrow squeak – it was just under our Registry and if it had got good hold we might have had considerable difficulty saving our files.

After tiffin had a good game of Badminton and after changing enjoyed a read till tea.

Captain Waite has been busy this last week taking life-size shadowgraphs of all the members of the Mess. Most of them have been most successful in portraying the features and there is no doubt whatever whose head it is. When it got dark he took mine and after blacking it in all agreed it was lifelike, but I can't see the likeness, never having seen my profile. Waite has got all these heads placed around the walls of his room – which we now call "The Chamber of Horrors"

A little more rain last night – but lovely mild weather still - 68° max – 46° min.

Thursday 26 January 1922

Today I left GHQ at 9 a.m. by car to go to Hinaidi to inspect the a/cs of No1 Squadron RAF. The two RAF squadrons are situated about 12 miles out of Baghdad and their district is well protected on two sides by the Diala River and River Tigris, on the third by the high bund and the fourth by the strong military camp of Hinaidi. It is about 2 miles to the Diala and 4 to the Tigris and the 12 miles to Baghdad matter nothing to machines whose speed is 120mph – 1 mile every 30 seconds.

The squadron has 12 machines – Sopwith “Snipes” – scout machines, very small - which only carry one man, the pilot, but are filled with 2 machine guns and carry 8 bombs. I inspected one, and a beautiful little `plane it is, capable of anything, capable when flown by the human brain of evolutions no bird could attempt. I found the a/cs pretty good and stayed to tiffin, coming home in a fast RAF tender. The bund is a big wall of earth as wide as a road and 8 feet high intended primarily to protect the camp from being flooded in the event of heavy river floods. There have been very heavy falls of snow this winter in Armenia and Kurdistan and bigger floods than usual are likely this spring when the snows melt.

Had an enjoyable evening – guest night – and didn't get to bed until 12.30. Heaton was my guest.

Friday 27 January 1922

This morning out again to Hinaidi by car, this time to inspect the a/cs of No 8 Squadron RAF. The air was keen and out there so much sweeter than in smelly Baghdad. 8 Squadron is composed of 15 Airco D.H.9a biplane bombers, the same machine I had my big flight in, and extremely useful machines. Some of the land we have vacated at Hinaidi is now given back to agriculture, and side by side with these aerodromes which house the latest word in mechanical movement I noticed two teams ploughing, the

primitive wooden plough, the same as used 4000 years ago, and drawn by 2 oxen. What a contrast!

This was the Squadron (8 Squadron) which had a bad accident on Friday 13 January when one plane took off the tail of another in mid-air and three officers were killed. One plane was burnt completely out. I saw the broken and mangled remains of the two engines. Stayed to tiffin (very good) and found the a/cs very good.

Early dinner and afterwards to the YMCA to hear Professor Webster of the Department of Agriculture lecture on "Mesopotamia, the Granary of the World." He drew a wonderful picture of what this country, now a desert, must have been in the past; 2000 years ago it was a field of verdure from Baghdad to Basrah.

Saturday 28 January 1922

I hear that the rainfall in November was 5 ½ inches – a record and three inches more than the normal. I'm afraid it's going to rain again tonight.

Stayed in the office today writing up my reports on the two RAF Squadrons I visited Thursday and Friday. After tiffin went up to the New Church to lend a hand but found nearly everything complete – the bell up too and the whole Church looking very nice. Brought Hutchings home to tea and bought cake for the occasion (but didn't know till afterwards that it was 6 Rupees ... 8/-!).

After tea walked up to the Hospital to see Pickard and found him very cheery indeed as his toe has lately made great strides towards recovery. Arranged with him about Joseph's pay.

After dinner went by car to Baghdad West Station to see Sheehy off – one of my section. I shall feel his loss very acutely as he was one of the best and most loyal clerks I have ever had. All the Audit staff turned out to see him off and decorated his carriage with coloured paper.

Sunday 29 January 1922

Got up early this morning and went to the New Church but I must have been half asleep for there was no early service on – the building not having yet been dedicated.

The Dedication service took place at 10.30 a.m. and went off without a hitch. The Church was crowded, of course, although it had been a wet night and the roads were very bad. It looked very nice indeed and the whole arrangements were a great success. The High Commissioner and lady Cox were there in the front row and I as Church warden sat in the row just behind. Rice came with me and the two of us went to Tiffin with the Principal Chaplain in honour of the occasion. He was full of beans and very pleased with everything.

Had a small party in my room to tea (Rice and Major West) and an enjoyable talk and then at 5.30 to the New Church to Evensong with Luxon and Williams. Quite a good service, but the Anthem a failure. An awful business walking back in the dark, we having forgotten to take our lanterns. The mud was dreadful. The Church looks extremely nice at night and is called "St George's Military Chapel"

Monday 30 January 1922

It rained again last night and consequently the roads were pretty bad when I went to the Aircraft Park to inspect the a/cs of the famous No. 30 Squadron RAF. This squadron is under a famous flying man, Collishaw, who although quite a young man already wears three long rows of medal ribbons on his tunic. This squadron does a lot of the bombing which is still going on – whenever a tribe out in the desert gets restive and murders someone or commits some hostile act, it is not now necessary to get out a column of troops and send them on an almost impossible journey into the desert. A flight of aeroplanes leaves in the morning, drops a ton of bombs or so on the tribes' villages and destroys them, and is home again at night. The tribes are now beginning to think twice about being saucy.

This squadron also flies the Air mail to and from Egypt.

I was sorry to find its accounts in a very bad state, but it has "delivered the goods" and I must let it down lightly, knowing how severe the Air Ministry is on bad accounts. For the O.C. Collishaw, is one of the very best.

Tuesday 31 January 1922

This morning out again to Aircraft Park, to inspect the a/cs of No.70 Squadron RAF who have recently flown over from Egypt. I found that their a/cs were still in Egypt, being cleared up as regards the stores disposed of there, so there was very little to do except to have a general nose round. I spent some time inspecting the big Vickers Vimy machines – of which there were 8. They are 75 feet in span and 40 feet long and can accommodate 5 persons. They are driven by 2 Rolls Royce engines each having a huge four-bladed propeller, one each side of the fuselage, or body of the machine. I was told they were the safest of them all. The squadron is to be equipped with the big Vernon Aeroplanes – for long distance passenger carrying and two are coming out soon.

Back before tiffin, so was able afterwards to have a little Badminton. Hutchings came to tea, also Rice and we talked over Church matters.

In the evening did my mess accounts as this is the end of the month and the January bills have now to be got out.