

Friday 1st December 1922

This afternoon, Taylor, Heaton and I went for a long walk, it being such a glorious day, warm sun, blue sky, and a gentle breeze made walking a pleasure. Went past Alwiyeh, to Hinaidi Polo Ground and home by the bund. Bar Tel Mohammed the bund, which is about 12 feet high is the only high ground in the district, and runs for miles as part of the Hinaidi defences, like a wall of earth. Poor old Heaton developed a sore foot half way, and arrived home with two big blisters on the sole of his right foot. We did about 9 miles.

Saturday 2nd December 1922

Did a good day's work, and can now see that I shall have no difficulty in clearing up by the 9th. The mail arrived today but there wasn't much fresh work came in by it, and there won't be very much to hand over on the 9th to the R.A.F. Audit staff. I have some important questions still to clear, but if the work isn't very heavy I shall have time enough during the week and a few days leisure before I leave on the 14th.

Took my photo frame back to the silversmith for a slight alteration and ordered a cigarette case for myself – price arranged, Rupees 25 and a bottle of whisky! These Amarah men love a drop of Scotch, but they won't buy it themselves – it's against their religion, I believe; but they may apparently accept it as a gift.

Sunday 3rd December 1922

This morning after Holy Communion went to the Office and put in 2 hours work on the question of Military lands in Iraq. The with Cole for a tour round the bazaars, trying to buy a camel bell. The paper always says that trade in Baghdad is at a standstill but, it certainly isn't on Sunday mornings for the Bazaars were crowded, so that we could hardly force our way through. It is a picturesque throng and I shall miss it I expect when I leave the city. Every Eastern here, except the Chinaman, every colour in the rainbow is worn and though the Bazaars are smelly they are chock full of life and interest.

We eventually found our way into the copper bazaar and I found 2 copper bowls I liked and two coffee pots, and after haggling as usual, got the bowls for Rs.3 and the coffee pots at Rs.4.

It is very cold these nights, and the thermometer drops to 40deg. or below, but there is no rain to speak of yet, and I don't mind the cold so long as the

rain holds off.

Monday 4th December 1922

In the afternoon at 4.30 went to tea at the Bilkerts with Heaton. Major Yates (of railways) and Donald were there. Went by arabana to Chelsea Terrace and from there across the river by bellum. There was a terrific stream running in the centre of the river and as we crossed it we were carried at a swift pace down stream beyond our starting place. These Arab bellumchis know their river, but when one considers how many lives have been lost when the floods were on by boats getting beyond control and being dashed to pieces against the bridges, it is clear that it is best to leave the Tigris to itself when it is in flood.

Tuesday 5th December 1922

This evening went to dinner at the Senior Audit Mess, now in occupation of the R.A.F. Senior Audit Staff. They have made a very comfortable place of this nice riverside Mess. They have turned one of the bedrooms into an ante-room and had the whole place painted and poshed up. Each man has a chest of drawers and there is all sorts of new furniture. The R.A.F. are managing to provide what the Army didn't.

Wednesday 6th December 1922

I was the guest last night of Donald, though I sat on the left hand of O'Neill. The old man was not so aggressive as usual and seemed less pompous, except when he said he could run the country (Iraq) at a profit if only he had the chance! Played bridge afterwards and took their money. Contrary to my expectation I quite enjoyed the evening.

Yesterday I swapped one of my pairs of saddlebags and Rs.20 for a rather nice Baluchi Prayer mat (about the size of small hearth rug) I have got my servant Joseph to wash it today and it looks very nice. Another bargain, I think. I have now 9 rugs! It is the sort of rug a devout Moslem keeps especially for saying his prayers upon. There are the usual spaces for each hand and the forehead when he prostrates himself.

Mr O'Neill came to tea with me today at my room. He is taking quite a fancy to me lately and at first he positively hated me! He is not popular with his own staff. Toplis and Rice detested him and he is poison to Heaton. I'm afraid the old man won't stick this country long.