

A WEDDING VASE

March 2025

This is a tale of little consequence but it illustrates the small pleasures that derive from a careful look at the papers left by our parents.

Three years ago, I chanced to meet a lady whose married name was Moorhouse. Going through my father's papers I found a wedding invitation from 1930. I would have cast it aside but I noticed the groom was a Moorhouse. Looking more carefully, I saw that the bride was Diana, a niece of the 4th Earl of Leicester. Knowing that **Lady Evelyn Cobbold (1867-1963) #308** on the web family tree was a granddaughter of the second Earl I wondered why my young, impoverished, newly married parents had been invited to this undeniably posh wedding at St. Mark's, North Audley Street.

Thinking about it I guessed that Diana had had a crush on my mother **Mary (1908-2000) #408** when they were at school together and she just wanted her there on her big day. A little later, and I found the Order of Service for the ceremony bearing the initials DMC for **Diana Meriel Coke (1907-1996) #15293** and SCTM for **Samuel Cecil Trevor Moorhouse (1908-1975) #15305**. One of the hymns, sung kneeling, was 'O Perfect Love, all human thought transcending...' The reception was at 30 Gloucester Place, which was a fine Georgian property in its day but which is currently being converted into flats.

Later, looking through my mother's papers I found a carefully preserved, hand-written letter, addressed to my mother from the Golf Hotel, St. Jean de Luz. *My dear Mary, I've found your letter in my writing case. Thank you so very very much for the lovely vase you gave me. I can't tell you how pleased I am with it & it will be most useful. It was so nice of you. I am so sorry I didn't answer your letter but it was such a hectic rush these last few days. We arrived here yesterday & it is quite the most divine place. Lovely & hot and not too fasionable [sic]. We spend the whole day bathing & paddling about the sea in a canoe. Then golf in the evening. You asked me how old Trevor is, he is 22 & was in the 10th Hussars, which he has now left as they are not allowed to marry until they are 26 or 27 in that regiment & he is now going to work in the Sorbo Sponge Rubber Company which is supposed to be a very good thing. Poor darling – he is at present in bed with what I imagine is a touch of the sun as he will insist on lying in the sun all day without a hat. Must close. Thanking you again so very very much for the lovely present. I am so delighted with it. Yours ever, Diana.*

The marriage did not survive; they divorced in 1938.

Either she made a mistake, or he re-joined the 10th Hussars as the records show that 2nd Lt. S.C.T. Moorhouse of the 10th Hussars was a member of **the British Expeditionary Force** when he was awarded a **Military Cross**, gazetted 27th September 1940. The citation says *Second Lieutenant Moorhouse's cruiser was hit and set on fire, though not before it had accounted for a particularly deadly 37-mm gun, and most unluckily **Captain Wyndham Malet** and **Second Lieutenant J Rowell** were killed in their tank.*

After that lucky escape Trevor survived the war and lived until 1975, Diana died in 1996 and my mother outlived them both. I wish I had asked her about that wedding.

Anthony Cobbold