

You asked for a long email. You wanted to know what was really going on. Well, here it is. I am going to write this in the first person, fiction style. But it will be all true. I assume that it the search for Eva Margaret Nancy Lindsay that most interests you all. Please excuse whatever excesses in style and error in construction there are; this is very much a “first cut” and has to be written in less than an hour. So here goes.

MY SEARCH FOR EVA AND WHAT I FOUND THERE.

On the flight from Washington I thought a lot about Eva Margaret Nancy. In my half asleep dream state I conjured up all sorts of scenarios about what would happen over the next two weeks. The search I was about to undertake loomed as one of the most important things I would ever do in my life.

I had waited so long for this moment, where I could actually do something about identifying my links, and those of my daughters, with the Lindsay family that it now so dominated my every thought that, in the airless cabin of the Boeing 777, fantasy became indistinguishable from reality and it was if, in that strange truncated night, my conversations with Eva Margaret Nancy Lindsay really did occur. I felt we really did communicate on some level and assure each other that my search was for the best. That night, I guess, I gave myself permission to do what I was about to.

I landed at Heathrow later than expected, but still early in the morning. You know, having a British/Euro passport works! I sped through. That just meant, of course, that I had to wait longer for my luggage. Margaret was wonderful. I'd been somewhat concerned about staying with Judith Cooke's cousin, even for a couple of days, because, over the telephone, she had sounded rather strained when explaining that her husband, Alan, was heartily sick and tired of relatives turning up at their doorstep (I have to say, after I'd heard of some of the Hill excesses, I was with him!). But she guided me by remote control through the underground to Arnos Grove, where she picked me up and bustled me home. Personal warmth and cups of tea ensued.

Margaret had already got details of how to get to Oxford. Later that day, using my all day travel card for the Underground (surely one of the wonders of the world) I travelled to the City and bought a return ticket to Oxford. I actually felt the commitment I was making as I handed over the £16 or so for the trip.

I have to say, the weather was fine. It hardly ever rained whilst I was in the U.K. and Ireland and the sun was out most days than not. But on this auspicious day, it rained all the way to Oxford and then Wheatley on my way to see Carol at NORCAP, who had kindly agreed to help me in my search. First impressions were not good. Prior to our meeting her fax to me with directions and the like, relayed, I seem to recall, through Judith in Australia to Margaret in London, reminded me of the special effort she was making on my behalf and exhorted me not to let her down. And then I discover she chain smokes in her tiny little office, with the door shut and me trapped inside. “Time to

pull out of all this, Simon, get out while you can!” murmured some vicious little voice purporting to be my own.

I have no idea whether Carol was herself an adoptee, or a “relinquishing mother” , or whether she had been successful or otherwise in her own personal search. I was too self obsessed to ask. But I knew, because you don’t get to work for NORCAP if you haven’t, that she shared some common ground with me and it began to show as we spoke. Her advice was clear, concise and spoke of things that I could realistically achieve in my two weeks. She inspired me, but calmed me. “I think it is highly unlikely that I will locate my birth mother in just two weeks,” I heard my self say. This, from a bloke who two nights previously had conjured up a family reunion of epic proportions!

Carol rang Ted for me. Ted has a CD-Rom called PhoneDisc, which enables him to search for addresses across the U.K. Twenty minutes later I held in my hand a fax that listed the five Eva Lindsays living in the U.K. today. One of them, I figured, could be my birth mother. Carol gave me the phone numbers of the keepers of the local electoral rolls for each address and then sent me on my way.

I raced back to London. Who cares about sightseeing? What has Oxford got to offer? And besides, it was still raining.

I went straight to the Office for Family Records. I stared for the first time at evidence that a document I hadn’t even known existed that morning was stored there. Simon James Lindsay had a birth certificate. As required by law, my birth mother had registered my birth. My searches that afternoon revealed no other surprises in the British records. Eva Margaret Nancy Lindsay had not died in the U.K., nor up until 1961 had she married.

But the computer link to the Scottish records revealed that Eva Margaret Nancy Lindsay (tell me she didn’t mean for me to find her when she listed her whole name on my birth certificate) was born in 1926 in the County of Fife.

Despite planning the trip to London and the rest of the UK so that my genealogical searches could come first, reality intrudes and relatives demand. Their view, and a very correct one it is, is that if you’ve come all the way from Australia, you ought spend time with the people who want to see you, thank you very much. So, on Friday, I caught the train to Havant to spend the weekend with my cousin Tracy in Fareham. However, I found time in the morning to get back to the Office of Family Records and order a copy of my original birth certificate. The night before I hadn’t been thinking clearly, apparently. I also phoned Carol and sought advice about what to do. “Go to Edinburgh, young Simon,” was the message.

So, following my “holiday within a holiday” in Fareham (remind me to tell you about this sometime and about how an Australian got sunburnt in England) and a brief stay with Travis, the boyfriend of our babysitter, in Shepherds Bush (and yes, there is a story in

that as well) I caught Tuesday's overnight bus to Scotland, full of hope and dreams. I was getting closer and a cramped, sleepless night in a smelly bus just added to the spice of it all.

The Scots are bureaucrats. I couldn't buy a ticket from them to Sheffield later in the week, because it isn't in Scotland. I couldn't enter New Register House in Edinburgh with my pack on my back. Luggage can only be stored at the railway station (I travelled by bus, remember). Luggage storage via a fully automated system still requires three men to manage it. Photocopies of records cannot be paid for in advance, instead, a quote has to be sent to the country of destination, requiring me to authorise expenditure. Wills are stored in three different places around Edinburgh and it is up to you to know (through Scottish psychic powers apparently) just where your particular forebears will have theirs stored. Form filling is endemic.

Even so, Edinburgh is a beautiful city <g>.

But I was focussed on New Register House. It too, is a wonderful place. The Scots, quite possibly because of their love for all things bureaucratic, have computerised their records system, enabling anyone who pays £17 for the day to SEE (albeit on microfiche) the records they are searching for. The Poms make you order and wait for "certified original copies" of anything you want to read of theirs.

For me, it was a day of highs and lows. I still can't understand why some people get into genealogy for a pastime. It took the whole day of sifting through birth, death and marriage records. Time spent flicking through dusty old directories for Dundee, then applying the simple system Carol had suggested I follow and then of moments of intuitive guesswork. Above all, the day was draining. I was tired from the bus trip and then pushed by the effort of peering at poorly lit microfiche records. But it was one of the most memorable and intense days of my life. I did get closer:

Eva Margaret Nancy Lindsay was born on 31 January 1926 at 8.20am. 12 Hill Crescent, Wormit, near Dundee and quite apparently the family home for a number of years, was where her parents lived at the time. Her parents were both aged 34 when they married on 19 February 1918 at 2 Blackness Crescent, Dundee.

Her mother was Eva Lindsay (as a spinster also known as Lindsay, "assumed and known by adopted parents surname) was a trained nurse, who had been originally known as Eventhea Themaki prior to her adoption. She died on 16 January 1953 at Suda, Newton Park, Wormit, aged 68 years.

George John Lindsay was a chemist and supplier of photographic equipment and services. His business was located in Dundee. Suda, Newton Park, Wormit was evidently his home for a number of years, but the links to Hill Crescent, Wormit continued. He died on 1 June 1964 at 9.30am, aged 82. His parents are said to be

George James Lindsay and Margaret Ann Lindsay, maiden surname Nicoll.

Eva had at least two brothers. George Nicoll Lindsay was born 29 November 1918, married to Moira Forbes on 14 July 1948 and died on 22 November 1990. John Bruce Lindsay was born on 16 January 1920 at 1.40am, married to Margaret Milne on 15 October 1947 and died, aged 53, on 21 February 1973.

George Nicoll Lindsay lived at 5 Hill Crescent Wormit when he died. The telephone books for 1996 still listed an M. Lindsay at that address. I finally had a link, someone still living who knew my birth mother. I had also used the day to eliminate some of the Eva Lindsays Ted had found me; birth records and common sense meant that only Eva Lindsay of 7/41 Lochrin Place Edinburgh was a reasonable bet. God, I wanted to 'phone her and get all of this over and done with!

I rang Carol. She suggested that I ring the person I assumed to be Moira Lindsay (nee Forbes) and tell her that I was an Australian searching for Eva Margaret Nancy Lindsay for my mother who had been a good friend in Australia in the fifties and was hoping to renew old acquaintanceships.

I hung up the telephone in the call box near New Register House and went wandering. I was in a daze. I looked up Lochrin Place and thought about walking there (it would have been some hike) to take a photograph. (Whilst in Fareham, I went in search of the house my birth mother had given as her address when I was born and got Tracy to take a photo of me standing in front) Instead, I walked to Edinburgh Castle, tried calming myself by taking some photos, then went down Princess Street in search of a pub.

Scottish fare is quite fearsome, but I ate without really noticing the grease and offal. What should I do? I then ordered a glass of the best whisky in the house. It was 24 June. My brothers Duncan and Nicholas would have been forty. A bloody whisky was the least I could do for them, I thought. But what was I to do?

Finally, I went to a call box and 'phoned. Heart in mouth. Scared she would answer. Worried that she wouldn't. Concerned that I might not be able to get my story out without making a mess of it. The mother and young daughter who answered were not Moira Lindsay. She, they informed me, had moved to Balmoral. I rang directory assistance, they had two M. Lindsays listed for Balmoral. Without hesitation, anxious to get this over and done with, I rang the first. Moira Lindsay did not live there. The second number rang out.

It rang out each time I rang the next day from Sheffield. And the next. And on Saturday when I called from Stanstead and then Shannon Airports. But she answered when I rang on Monday 29 June 1998 at 7.00pm from just outside the George Hotel in Limerick. Moira Lindsay. She confirmed who she was and listened to my story as I blurted it out, machine gun style, terrified all of a sudden out of my wits. "That would

actually by Nancy Lindsay you would be wanting,' she said. "She would be about 72," I said. "That is right," and here she started to sound very hesitant, as if she was starting to think 'Just what is going on here?', "I don't know if I have her address to hand."

Shit, shit shit, I'm going to lose her. What was worse, I noted, as I looked at the telephone box, was that my BT telephone card was running out. Inspiration. "Moir, my telephone card is running out and you obviously need to find the address. Would it be all right if I ring you at the same time tomorrow?" She agreed. What a relief!

I floated on a cloud that night. I had spoken to someone who knew my birth mother. It was real. This was happening to me. Wow.

Waiting at Covent Garden the next night for Margaret (remember Margaret?) to meet me for a farewell meal, I couldn't wait. Wait, that is to make THE telephone call. So, at twenty to seven I rang Moira Lindsay again. She was so friendly and warm. She gave me Nancy Lindsay's details straight away.

Nancy Payne
8 Simmonds Grove
Greerton
Tauranga
New Zealand, telephone 0647 5787 505

She then said, to my absolute elation, "I rang Nancy last night and told her about your call, She was happy for me to give you her address and said that should tell you that contact would be fine and that she can't wait to hear from you."

So, I was wrong about Lochrin Place. Instead, it entailed a trip half way round the globe to find someone, who, it turns out, lives in our own back yard. Someone who wants to hear from me.

Can I come home NOW?