

AGNES MILLAR WHITLOCK NOW BUTCH & GRACE HANNAH MATHIESON WHITLOCK:  
DAUGHTERS OF THE LATE ALFRED WHITLOCK & AGNES MILLAR WHITLOCK (Nee Gillespie).  
AGNES BORN 1st June, 1918 & Grace born 23rd May, 1923.

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My beloved sister Grace was named after our paternal Grandmother Grace Hannah Mathieson  
Whitlock and I was named after our maternal Grandmother Agnes Millar Gillespie. We  
were both born in the village of Dunlop in Ayrshire and christened in the Laigh Kirk,  
Dunlop.

We grew up in a home with two wonderful caring parents. Our home was an excellent  
training ground for human development. Our parents were God fearing folks and when I  
was four years of age we moved to Glasgow to the Maryhill district.

Our maternal Grandmother, who was widowed shortly after I was born lived with us and  
I remember her very well. She was a gracious old lady, always dressed in black and very  
kind hearted.

At five years of age we moved to a village called Houston in Renfrewshire. I can well  
remember the day of the removal. Men were tarring the road outside our house in  
Duncombe Street, Maryhill. I was running around playing at our gate and I fell. To this  
day I still have the scar on the palm of my left hand below the fourth finger.

Grace and I had a very happy childhood. Grace never ventured far away from our Mother  
and had a shy disposition. I was rather more outgoing. From the age of four, every year  
I went on holiday for the month of July with Granny and Grandpa Whitlock and Aunt  
Susan (Daddy's eldest sister) and Aunt Emma who was brought up by the Whitlock family  
and whose Grandfather was an old friend of Grandpa Whitlock. Granny and Grandpa's  
holidays were usually spent at Fairlie or Troon and once at Burntisland. After my  
holiday with Grandpa and Granny I would go off with my sister Grace, Mummy and Daddy  
for the first fortnight of August to Troon.

I started school at Houston and my lasting memories of my first introduction to school  
was Miss Lawrie my teacher who at intervals smacked my knuckles with a ruler with some  
force, when I could'nt answer swiftly enough. I was very unhappy at Houston school  
until my Mother decided to speak to Miss Lawrie. School became a happier place for me.  
My Granny Gillespie became very ill with bronchitis and died.

Granny and Grandpa Whitlock came every year to Houston to spend two weeks with us. I  
remember I was very naughty one day. Grandpa always brought his gramophone and records  
with him. He would sit on a chair winding the handle of his gramophone and that particular  
day as he stood up to place the record on the turntable I pulled the chair away and poor  
Grandpa fell with a resounding thud on the floor, to the consternation of the family.  
The punishment was severe and I went to bed with a sore bottom, realising I could have  
caused dear Grandpa severe injury.

Grace and I attended Sunday School regularly and also the Band of Hope. Daddy was a keen  
gardener and despite having to cycle every morning to Johnstone station to get the  
train to Glasgow and cycle back in the evening, he could find time for gardening and  
spending the week-ends with his family. There was no form of transport from Houston  
to Johnstone Station at that time - a distance of several miles, so it was hard work  
cycling in all kinds of weather five and a half days per week.

During the summer months we had picnics to the nearby stepping stones and we also  
collected brambles in the autumn. Mummy made pounds and pounds of bramble jelly. Next door  
to our cottage was an orchard and the owner lived in Glasgow and was'nt interested in  
the fruit, so Daddy was given permission to pick as much of it as he wanted. The result  
was the jelly pan did overtime during the summer and autumn months.

On a Sunday afternoon Grace would be seated in her push chair and off Mummy, Daddy, Grace  
and I would go, weather permitting for an afternoon walk. Sometimes we walked along  
the Ladeside to Bridge of Weir (our Mother's birthplace). The Quarrier's Home always  
fascinated me when Daddy told me about the orphan children who lived there.

The summers never seemed so chilly as they are now. Winters were bleak with lots of snow.  
No radio, no TV, no electricity but Daddy bought an Aladdin lamp which was operated

by paraffin and gave a very good light. People thought we had installed electricity. There was no electricity in the village at that time. We were lucky in many ways - we lived in the country. Everything was fresh and green. There was plenty of time to smell the wild flowers and play hide and seek. We paddled in the burn, its clear water as yet untainted by poisonous effluent. It was joyous to watch the Houston and Renfrewshire Hunt ride down the main street in their scarlet coats, followed by the hounds. The Head Huntsman had a rough haired terrier which had pups and we got one of them. We called him Bruce. He was mischievous and chewed up slippers.

A bus service at weekends was started in Houston at this time. It travelled to Johnstone and from there we got another bus to Glasgow. I remember on one occasion Grace and I were taken to Granny Whitlock's house to see our cousins Grace and Janie Blane who were emigrating to America with their Mother our Aunt Agnes. Their Father our Uncle Robert had travelled to America shortly before them. I remember sitting on a sofa in Granny's parlour and my cousin Grace pushed me off. I thought she was very cheeky that day and I was really hurt at being pushed off the sofa.

When I was eight our parents decided to move to Glasgow. Shortly before we were due to move one evening Daddy arrived home and took such a long time in the hallway before coming in to see Mummy, Grace and I. As soon as he opened the door I knew something was wrong. I heard him tell Mummy that Grandpa had died suddenly.

It was a terribly windy day in January that we left Houston to move to Glasgow. It was strange living in the heart of the city after the quietness of the countryside. Daddy must have found a big difference being on the doorstep so to speak for his work instead of so much time spent on travelling.

The days passed swiftly after our move. Grace and I were duly enrolled at St. David's School. I found the arithmetic quite difficult and every night Daddy sat with me helping me to become proficient at adding. Grace had no difficulty in settling into school life in the big city.

One day when the postman called Bruce our beloved pet ran out and despite phone calls, enquiries to the police and cat and dog home Bruce was never found. We were all heartbroken. Eventually we got another dog called Roy. We already had a cat called Tabby whom we had from Houston days. Poor Tabby would sit on top of the range when it was cool and one day he was struck by lightning and became queer after that so it was necessary to have him "put to sleep" by the Vet.

Eventually I left St. David's School and went to Provanside Secondary School, Grace following three years later. When I was fifteen Granny Whitlock died which was a terrible blow to me. She was such a good Granny to Grace and I. Every Saturday evening was spent at Granny's as we lived not far away. Often she would say to Aunt Susan, "Susie, take Agnes and Grace to the shops and buy them dresses". I can never forget the Saturday Aunt Susan was instructed to take me to the shops. I got a navy nap coat, a red dress, a velour hat, a lovely little grey squirrel fur tie and new shoes. I felt like a million dollars.

We missed Granny dreadfully. Aunt Susan was now alone all day at home as Aunt Emma worked in Uncle Bobby's firm. (Uncle Bobby was Daddy's youngest brother and he trained as a designer eventually becoming a partner in Black & Borthwick, who manufactured tartans etc. Daddy and Uncle Walter (Daddy's eldest brother) never had to buy shirts or pyjamas. They were supplied by Uncle Bobby's firm and Grace and I had all our tartan skirts made by Black & Borthwick's too).

Uncle Bobby married Bessie McDermid and they had one daughter Betty who was born when I was about twelve. Uncle Walter was a civil servant and held a good position in the Ministry of Labour but remained a bachelor until his early fifties when he married Aunt Ivy who came from Macclesfield.

My first job after leaving school was office junior with Kelvin Bottomley & Baird the scientific instrument makers. I started work at ten shillings per week. I had to work very hard but got a marvellous training which stood me in good stead in later years. When I was almost eighteen our family life was shattered by the serious illness of our darling Mother. She died on the 1st April, 1936. Poor Daddy and Grace!

This was the greatest blow which could affect my family. Aunt Susan was with Grace every day and Grace came home just before Daddy and I got home from work. By the end of that summer Grace decided she would remain at home doing the housekeeping.

About a year before Mummy died I met a young man Dugald Robertson at the Bible Class dance. He was still at school and attended Allan Glen's Boys' School in Glasgow. He left school and became apprenticed to Boot's the Chemists, attending pharmaceutical classes at the Royal Technical College. Mummy liked him very much and he became a frequent visitor to our home. After Mummy died Dugald always included Grace when we went out anywhere. His mother and father were kind too. Grace and I joined Mrs. Robertson's swimming club and when we went on holiday Mr. & Mrs. Robertson always came and spent a day with Daddy, Grace, Dugald and I.

I attended Whiteley's Business College for a civil service course, sitting the open competitive exam for Great Britain. When the results were published I was bitterly disappointed to find I had passed in every subject with good marks except hand-writing which had failed me.

I then applied for the position of assistant cashier with Harris & Co. the tobacco manufacturers, leaving to join the Ministry of Food shortly after the outbreak of war in September 1939.

In February 1939 Daddy remarried and Mabel Anne Rossiter from Muswell Hill in London became our Step-mother. She was a good wife to Daddy, an excellent housewife in every sphere of housekeeping. When Mabel came into our home she became very fond of Roy the dog. We were all heartbroken when Roy had to be "put down" by the Vet when he was ten.

By this time Grace had started work with Reid and Mair, Chartered Accountants and made such good progress (she was much brainier than I) that they decided to send her to the C.A. Institute. As women were being called up for war service, fate took a hand and Grace, rather than enter the forces decided to take up nursing which she had always fancied. Meantime I was exempt from war service with being employed in the M.O.F. Grace entered nursing and loved every moment of it. However, nursing was not to be her career after all and she contracted empyema which brought her nursing career to an end, in fact she was so ill that we thought she would not recover. Grace now had to resign from nursing and after a period of convalescence entered the accounting profession again and was employed by Stevenson & Kyles, C.A. where she remained for 43 years.

Meanwhile Dugald had qualified as a pharmacist and we became engaged. By this time James (Dugald's eldest brother who was the Procurator Fiscal of Glasgow) had married also William the second brother who was a civil servant. Dugald was his best man and I was bridesmaid then John the third brother who was an Inspector of Weights and Measures married Maud his childhood sweetheart, so that completed the Robertson family.

Dugald had now become a relief manager in Boots and was sent to Ashington in Northumberland. Our engagement was broken and in 1943 I met Richard Mutch of Edinburgh. He was in the Army and went abroad shortly after our engagement returning from Greece in 1945. We were married on October 15th 1945 at the Barony of Glasgow by the Rev. Dr. Roy Sanderson. Richard was a master baker and was in business with his Father in Edinburgh. In 1946 his Father sold his two businesses in Edinburgh and bought a bakery and grocery business at St. Annes on Sea, Lancashire so when Richard was demobbed from the Army he went to work in his Father's business at St. Annes on Sea. We bought our first home - a semi-detached four apartment villa at Cleveleys Price £ 1,650 and Richard travelled each day to St. Annes which was not very far away. These were affluent days for us.

We owned our house, had a car and life was indeed very pleasant. My Father-in-law then decided to return to Scotland. He sold his business at St. Annes for £ 15,000 which was a lot of money in those days. We returned to Edinburgh having sold our home also. My Father-in-law bought a newsagent's and general grocery in Stockbridge and Richard and I worked in it. It was a good business but my Father-in-law wanted back into the bakery trade. In 1948 he bought a bakery business in Mid Calder. Richard and I went to live there having bought a six apartment cottage with a large garden. We had a lovely Persian cat called Smoky who had been left by the previous owner of the newsagent's business. We could not leave him behind when the business was sold so he came with us to

Mid Calder. On 12th June 1951 our beloved son Michael was born in the Elsie Inglis Maternity Hospital, Edinburgh. He was christened in the Barony of Glasgow by the Very Rev. Dr. Roy Sanderson who officiated at our wedding. In December 1951 we sold our house at Mid Calder and moved into Edinburgh. Richard and his Father did't see "eye to eye" re the business so Richard decided to get a job in Edinburgh. We lived at 96a, Findhorn Place, in the Newington district for about a year. We could'nt afford to buy another house and in August 1952 we moved into a flat at 3, Rankin Avenue.

When Michael was three and a half we enrolled him for Priorsfield Private Nursery School in Lauder Road. He went there for three hours Monday to Friday. He also started elocution classes at three years of age with Miss Beatrice Fisher who was an excellent teacher. Michael continued as her pupil until leaving for University at 19 and attained his F.L.C.M. Fellowship. At five years of age he attended George Watson's College, Colinton Road, Edinburgh and left in 1970 to enter University to study medicine, graduating in July 1976.

In November 1953 I had to undergo surgery and again in July 1959. On the 1st September 1959 I returned to business life and was fortunate in obtaining the position of supervisor of the general office in Black & Gerrardm Stockbrokers at that time in George Street, Edinburgh. They moved in December 1959 to larger premises at Great King Street. I was with them for twelve years then went to Tods Murray & Jamieson, Writers to the Signet in Queen Street in 1971 as Investment Assistant, keeping records of all stock and share transactions for their clients. I worked from 10am until 4pm and enjoyed every moment of my work there, retired in June 1984.

On 23rd September 1982 Michael married Heather McGregor of Buckhaven at Buckhaven Baptist Church. The reception followed at The Old Manor Hotel, Lundin Links, Fife.

Our beloved Father Alfred Whitlock died on 23rd June, 1983. This was a tremendous void in our lives and especially more so for Grace as she and Dad were always together. Dad was always active and enjoyed gardening and Grace was always with him in the evenings on her return from the office.

After Daddy's death Michael and Heather bought a lovely Labrador puppy called Bracken. She was black and we adored her. She was wonderful therapy for Grace after Daddy's death. She will always be very special to us.

On 23rd March 1986 Jonathan Michael Mutch was born to Heather and Michael, followed by Rebecca Janet Mutch on 3rd August 1989. These two lovely children are the joy of our lives.

In April 1987 I was devastated when my sister Grace became suddenly ill whilst staying with Richard and I in Edinburgh. She had a severe stroke and spent six weeks in the Royal Infirmary. However, we have much to be thankful for as she made an excellent recovery. In January 1991 again sudden illness struck her. This time it was a severe cerebral haemorrhage and she was critically ill in the Royal Infirmary, Glasgow. When she was discharged from hospital Michael brought her through to Edinburgh and alternately Grace and I spent a week at her home in Garrowhill and a week at Rankin Avenue. It was then decided that it might be wiser for Grace to move to Edinburgh. One day she and I were down at Portobello and we saw nine new flats being built at St. Mark's Court. Grace decided she would like to live there so there and then we set the wheels in motion and Grace now lives there. She is very happy and has a lovely view of the sea from her lounge and front bedroom windows.

Richard had a stroke in 1990 which has damaged his vocal chords and his balance is'nt so good. He also is registered partially blind and has had a lot of trouble with his eyes due to Glaucoma. He goes out every day and is very brave about it all. So to date this ends my part in the Whitlock saga.

In many ways our childhood compared with today was an age of innocence. We had no television to introduce us to drugs and violence. So what did we bring out of those years! A love of dogs and the countryside and perhaps an exaggerated respect for learning and expectation from education. And, like all those who look back on their lives, a tender but qualified few of the joys of childhood, of loving parents and a happy home life where we were taught that all the money in the world could never buy the real values in life - love, honesty and integrity.