

## **Daisy Frances Frobe - 14 Dec 1924 / 2011**

Daisy Frances entered this world with two brothers, Richard and a brother that died shortly after birth, to Edith "Minnie" Nunn and Victor John Jesshope.

Daisy, who later chose to be known as Frances, (named after Minnie's Aunt Frances (French?)), and Richard, were "middle children"; her siblings from eldest and down, being Phyllis (Pippa), Reginald (Reg) John, Herbert (Bert) Victor, Frank Roger, Arthur (Pat) Valentine, the triplets Daisy Frances, Richard (Richie) Geoffrey and Dorothy (died at the age of 5 months), Doris (Dorie) Lilian, Olive Jean and John. (I think this is the right order).

Victor was a qualified bootmaker (shoes were not massed produced at that time), he handmade shoes/boots as well as repairing them. The Depression times were tough, in need of help Minnie took Daisy to London in hopes of garnering some financial assistance from her wealthy Aunt Frances. The visit did not go well, and they returned home empty handed.

A few words about Minnie and Victor... Minnie came from a good, large and solid family, her father (Thomas J. Nunn) a baker and from 1891 until 1902 Publican and maltster of the "Crown" in Sandon, Essex (also known as the Old Crown). She was a voracious reader, by the time her youngest child, John was 13 maybe 14, she had "out read" every library in Fareham, was a heavy smoker, knitted and liked to listen to Victor play the flute to her whilst in front of the sitting room fire ... sometimes crumpets/thick bread were toasted on the fire on the end of a long wire toasting fork. In the Spring Minnie would take Margaret for walks to the woods just across the fields to pick bluebells/ primroses. She would let her help to pick lavender from the garden, and involve her in the making of lavender bags. Victor was a kind, gentle but firm person who adored Minnie and music ... he particularly liked marches ... he took Margaret from Fareham to HMS Victory Portsmouth, where from sitting up on his shoulders she could witness firsthand the stirring music of the Royal Marine Band.

Daisy and Richie were very close for their entire lives... when he died; I think in the mlate 80s, Daisy had a brief nervous collapse.

As a child, Daisy did not like or excel at school, wanted to climb trees, and play with the boys... she described herself during this period as a tomboy. On completion of school Daisy went into service for a Miss Berry of Hambledon, until the war. The war years saw her working in the NAFFI canteens. Victor was strict with Daisy, she was not permitted to go to a dance without one or more of her brothers in attendance... this was usually either or all, Richie, Roger and Bert. They were responsible for her wellbeing and returning her home. Daisy loved to dance.

Towards the war's end she met and fell in love with Robert Norman Rendle, he was serving in the Air Arm of the Royal Navy. Bob was taken home to meet her father, where he asked for her hand in marriage, which was granted and that took place circa August 1946

March 17 1947, saw the arrival of Margaret Susan. Daisy went by ambulance to St Mary's Hospital Portsmouth, Robert then left the marriage. Daisy's stress levels went even higher, when on one occasion, the wrong baby was brought from the nursery and given to her to feed, distraught and crying she demanded her baby... the mix up was eventually sorted... but she never forgot it, she had thought it a ruse to take Margaret. Daisy was now 22 years and 4 months of age and a single mother.

The authorities strongly urged Mrs Rendle to relinquish her baby. Daisy flatly refused, "this is my daughter, and I am keeping her". So, Margaret Susan Rendle became a Ward of the Court... and remained so until departure for Australia. This meant the child's location must always be known to this authority, that unannounced they could visit to inspect the child's condition, clothing and housing, and if any one of these did not meet the expected criteria, Margaret would be removed from her care. These were challenging times, for a single mother just after the war, trying to find employment / accommodation, having to live on ration coupons and meeting the required standards of the department in order to keep Margaret Susan.

Initially, Frances (I will call her that now as it is about now, with her life changed she began to use this name), went to London as housekeeper for an American Jewish lady, who allowed the baby to be part of the deal. The lady was kind, and Frances grateful, it was win-win for both parties.

When the lady returned to USA, her good friend Kath suggested she work as barmaid/ housemaid in her father's hotel. Frances again, was grateful, as the problem of accommodation, income, food and keeping Margaret was solved. Margaret may have been about two, as she remembers sitting on the bar and playing with the cash register, she loved the "ding" made by every sale transaction. Frances was introduced to George whilst working here, a wealthy business man who fell in love with her, wanted to marry and would accept the little girl; however, she didn't love him and so declined his offer.

It was about this time when Minnie and Victor took care of Margaret on and off, interspersed with stays with Frances's sister Phyllis, husband Reginald and their young son Paul. The visits always went well, and they developed a great affection for Margaret. After much consideration Phyllis and Reg offered to adopt her. Frances refused. Without the hindrance of a child more jobs became available, she gained employment at one of the many camps in Southern England... it was a "live in" position and allowed her more freedom. Life in England after the war was difficult, but there was always a dance somewhere.

Each Saturday night Frances went to one particular dance venue, it was here that she eventually met a blond and handsome foreigner that would change her life. Every Saturday they would dance... his name was Alfred Erich Frobe... then one Saturday he asked her to be his wife. She told Margaret in later years, she felt her heart would burst with happiness, but before answering, she asked him where he was from, he had never spoken of it before, she had assumed he was from Poland or Netherlands and that his experiences were too painful to speak of. The reply came "I am from Leipzig Germany and am a British prisoner of war". Good God ... that was not what she had expected. However love was stronger than politics and war ... and she joyfully accepted his offer. Frances then told him that she would not be able to marry until a divorce from her husband Robert was obtained, also that she had a small child who was being cared for by family. Fred said he would wait and would accept the child. So it was that Frances took Fred home to meet her parents and family. Not easy given that her brothers had been fighting the Germans only a few years previous... but he was accepted and became over time a well-liked and respected member of the family.

Alfred Erich Frobe was born on 27 July 1923, in Leipzig Germany, (home of Johann Sebastian Bach from 1723 until his death 1750). The Frobe family were respected and successful confectionery bakers, had been since the late 1800s / early 1900s, and those of the family that didn't follow the tradition were all high achievers. Fred excelled at school and sport (particularly soccer and swimming) and enjoyed classical music, told me of the wonderful concerts he had attended in the family box at the Leipzig Opera House as a young man. The war broke out, and leading up to that, many of his family's friends suddenly disappeared, his mother told him do not ask questions. He was called up for military service, first in Poland, then in the Panzer Tank Division going to North Africa under Field Marshall, General Rommel. Fred was shot and was badly wounded. He, along with many others were evacuated to one of the Red Cross ships, laying off the North African coast. Before Italy had been reached a number of the ships had been sunk. In Italy he was admitted to a Catholic hospital, some of the bullets were removed and he was generally patched up. When sufficiently recovered, he was attached to another unit in Southern Italy. One day he was in a convoy carrying armaments, when they came under enemy fire that destroyed the convoy, Fred survived but was once again severely wounded; his foot was almost blown off. Fred was transported to a Catholic Hospital on the edge of Lake Como, he was in a bad way, the surgeon wanted to take the foot off, but Fred said he would rather die. Clearly he didn't die, but was in the hospital a lengthy time before being deemed sufficiently rehabilitated to return to active duty. The war was closing and the short version of a long story is that after he resumed duty, he was captured by British soldiers and taken to England as a prisoner of war. He was held, I thought at Aldershot, but I think it was one of the camps closer to Fareham. The government had an arrangement with nearby farmers for them to use trusted POWs as farm hands; this is what Fred was doing when he met Frances. He was also playing soccer weekly, getting a name as a reliable and accomplished goal keeper at the local soccer club. (Fred played football until the arrival of Rosemarie; he was very good and was urged to take it more seriously).

Initially Fred and Fran boarded with Emily and Len Saunders, a lovely couple in Tadley, who became their lifelong friends. Eventually they were able to afford a modest flat on the third floor of what had been a grand house, (a share toilet on each floor) in Reading, opposite the cinema. Margaret then came into their lives. The next farmer he worked for offered a small farm cottage in Mortimer, which was most welcome. Frances was offered work milking cows; Frances told Margaret that when she tried to milk the first cow, she, the stool and bucket went in three different directions, much to the huge amusement of Fred and the farmer. Her brief career as milk maid came to an abrupt end. The cottage was just 4 rooms and no power or water (water was hand pumped from a well)... there were no nearby neighbours. It was December 1950 and Christmas was a few days away, Frances wanted a Christmas tree, they couldn't afford to buy one, so given that the King's forest was not far away, they decided to steal one from the forest. Frances told Margaret to be good, they would not be long... they came back cold but triumphant with a tree that was duly decorated ... this was their first Christmas as a family. Over the years, no matter the circumstances, Frances always tried to make Christmas special... and for me it always was. The next farm job was at Silchester, Hampshire. The farm house here was much better, it had water to the house, a wood stove that heated water and a big garden it, Frances's pride and joy, and she grew all our vegetables. However one day the farmer's pigs got out and ravaged her garden... she was Fury personified, would not listen to any excuse from the extremely apologetic farmer. Fred and Frances were very happy here, and it was whilst they were at Silchester, that they married.

The marriage is registered at Basingstoke on the 14 December 1951, they returned to the farm house for celebrations. In attendance were friends and neighbours, the farmer and his wife gave me a huge golliwog. Pieces of lovely wedding cake were sampled, (the farmer's wife had made it, and with dried fruit... which was hard to buy due to rationing) the bride and groom were toasted with glasses of sherry amid well wishes, stories and laughter. Approximately mid 1952 Fred and Frances moved to a farmhouse in Wokingham Berkshire, the farm house was a great improvement, it had tap water to the house, electricity plus a big garden for vegetable growing and chickens... and no farmer's pigs. Richie came home from the sea and visited Wokingham, bringing with him a koala bear for Margaret. He told of the places he had been, adventures he'd experienced, and his exciting news that he was going to Australia to live. A very joyful event took place on 26 July 1953, with arrival of their beautiful daughter Rosemarie Jean. A midwife saw to the home birth. Rosemarie was baptised at the Wokingham Baptist Church, according to Frances. Rosemarie was named after Fred's much loved sister Rosemarie, and Jean was after Frances's much loved sister Jean.

Wokingham was Fred's last farm job, he was well liked, and well regarded by all of his farmers, and he had a natural talent for calming difficult farm animals, was respectful and worked hard.

At some point the British Government offered Fred repatriation to Germany. Frances was adamant she wasn't going to Germany. Correspondence between Fred's brother Walter and his beloved sister Rosemarie continued for several years, urging him to return. Meanwhile his mother died of cancer, and his brother escaped from a Russian Gulag not knowing the war had been over for years, arriving in the west and back into the arms of his family who had long given him up for dead.

The opportunity arose in Newbury to work for a tyre company, the position was as tyre fitter and caretaker of the large site, and it included an on-site caravan for him and his family. It was here he learned all there was to know about tyres. Both girls were growing, Margaret was at school and Rosemarie, now an enchanting curly blond haired toddler was being minded whilst Frances worked in a bakery, often bringing home delicious fresh breads. Rosemarie was a bubbly little girl who captivated every one's heart, including Margaret's, she loved to make her little sister laugh and she knew exactly how to do this, when she was in the pram Rosemarie loved the pram to be pushed as fast as possible, the faster it went the more she screamed with delight and laughter. On this day Margaret was charged with keeping Rosemarie occupied so that she wouldn't be calling for Frances. Margaret had a great idea, and off they went, the pram going faster and faster, squeals of joy and laughter filling the air... and then disaster... the pram went over a bump, toppled over and Rosemarie tumbled out, screaming now with fright. Frances came flying out of the caravan, and thought Margaret had deliberately tipped her sister out of the pram. When all had calmed, and a punishment considered, a small fire was lit outside, and Margaret watched as her only 2 books, doll and 4 toys were burnt. A stern lesson to ensure she would be more careful in the future.

Fred and Frances continued to be employed by various tyre companies; all provided accommodation on site, usually old manor houses with courtyards and stables... the last one in Winchester was four hundred years old. Fred was a trusted, valued, and knowledgeable employee. Frances always found work. The Winchester years saw Frances work in a machinery factory; the tyre company office; then in a sack factory which was walking distance from home, she liked each of these jobs. Rosemarie started school at All Saints Primary just a short walk from our Bar End Rd home. Margaret's schools were, All Saints Primary, St Michael's Primary, and Danemark Secondary.

Fred and Frances never owned a home, car, refrigerator or TV in England. Life was simple, but not easy, particularly when it came to purchasing coal for winter heating, putting food on the table (meat was usually a once or twice per week occurrence) and school uniforms. However when times improved, Fred would hire a car for a day trip. First we travelled the 60 miles to London, such a big journey; the endless planning of this very special day was legendary!! Next was to Western Super Mare, Somerset... a sandy beach with endless mud flats, where the sea seemed to totally disappear when tide was out. Finally a day trip to Corfe Castle and the perfect Lulworth Cove, on the Jurassic Dorset coast... a magnificent day of picnics, swimming fun shared with family, where someone got stuck on Durdle Door cliff with the tide fast incoming, all were sunburnt plus foot sore from the stoney beach and Fred lost his denture in the sea, it was a wonderful and memorable day. The day trips were such a fantastic luxury

Fred always wanted something better for his wife and family, and when he finally accepted that Frances was never going to Germany, much to his and his family's disappointment, began thinking of alternatives. Many job opportunities were being offered in Africa, with good money. No matter her love for Fred, there was no way Frances taking her daughters to Africa to be slaughtered or worse. The discussion seemed to dominate the evening meal most nights. Home at this point was Bar End House, Bar End Rd Winchester, in Hampshire. Fred shifted tactic, Richie, Jean, Minnie and Victor were already in Australia, John and Jill were being posted there, perhaps if we applied we would be accepted for the Assisted Passage to Australia program. Bingo!!! Frances agreed. Two obstacles arose, Frances, Rosemarie, and Margaret would be accepted, however Fred was an Alien, he would have to pay full passenger fare. The second obstacle was that Margaret could not leave England without the Court's approval. Both obstacles took quite some time to overcome. Frances wrote to her younger sister about their hopes, Jean was now happily married to Ray Gill and living in Law St Redbank Qld, she wrote back that she and Ray would sponsor the family, and would try to find a housing commission house for them... a house was secured a few houses away from Jean and Ray's home, meaning that Australia's newest citizens would not have to endure a migrant hostel. A huge relief. Richie, was now married to Ipswich tailoress Maureen, living in Townsville wrote, he was delighted at the prospect of their arrival.

The Silchester and Winchester periods were their best times in England, the connection with close friends and family important, so there was some sadness in leaving, but huge excitement about what lay ahead.

In 1961, Alfred, Frances, Rosemarie and Margaret boarded PO SS Orontes bound for Australia, via Mediterranean, Suez Canal, Ceylon, across the Indian Ocean to Fremantle, Melbourne and finally disembarking at Sydney, a passage taking approximately 4 weeks.

The final leg of the journey now began, it was very slow and seemingly endless as we travelled north from Sydney through wilderness/mountains in wooden carriages with open windows pulled by a steam train, it was an adventure and revelation for all of us. In Brisbane we changed trains, caught the Ipswich train, alighting at Redbank ... a joyful reunion as both sisters hugged each other and shaking of hands as Ray met Fred ... Then a big walk with our bags to their Law St home, uphill in the humid summer heat ... life in Australia had begun.

Basic pieces of furniture were obtained so residence could be taken up in the new home, which included a refrigerator, plus electrical appliances jug and toaster, the first they had ever owned. Mosquitoes made the hot, steamy nights even more uncomfortable and unpleasant ... the next acquisitions were mossies nets and coils.

Frances found the plentiful supply of fruit and meat just unbelievable and wonderful, and to have oranges, bananas and passion fruit growing in her back yard, well, it was like something out of a book or movie.

Jean and Ray were helpful on every level, their two little boys John and Jamie won Fred and France's hearts, and would remain there always.

Fred immediately started job hunting, difficult when trains were the only means of transport and Redbank so far away from the city. After much disappointment and wasted train fares, he secured a position at the Redbank Woollen mill. Margaret's first job was at the Salisbury Brockhoff biscuit factory, then at the local Stanfield family Store. Rosemarie was enrolled at the Redbank State School. Frances was anxious to see her brother, and finally, months after arriving in Australia she caught the Sunlander train to Townsville to see Richie at last. She stayed a few months, found a job as a cook/ housemaid in a hotel. Richie taught his sister to drive his Vauxhall, and Frances secured her driving licence.

On her return home to Redbank, Frances gained employment at the Redbank Woollen Mill as a shift worker, and made some good friends.

The chance to buy their first home came about through friends who heard that a deceased estate house would soon be available to purchase, with a lot of luck and the kindness of the solicitor, they bought the Church St Redbank property for £1200.00. Possibly about 1964/1965. Not long afterwards possibly 1966 ... the outside "dunny" (can toilet) was replaced by an inside flush toilet... it was very nice.

Fred became a tradesman's assistant, working on the construction of the Swanbank Power House. Rosemarie was doing well at school; a car was purchased; Margaret caught the Sunlander train to Townsville, became a retail assistant in a Flinders Street shoe store, lived with Richie and Maureen and their two boys Geoffrey and Christopher in the Townsville suburb of Mundingburra; Frances continued to work at the Woollen mill, until the Stanfield family asked her to work for them in their store, which she accepted. Norma Stanfield and Frances become great friends.

February 1966 Margaret flew to New Zealand on a 12 month working holiday; September 1967 entered the Women's Royal Australian Army Corp for three years; 1971 became a qualified and registered ship's radio officer, at that time only the second female to do so on the Australian Eastern Seaboard. Margaret was employed as a ship's radio officer, and remained at sea until she met and married William Ian Westerman; together they founded a transport business; operated motels/ restaurants. Margaret went on to be State manager of a number of transport companies (Vic and Qld); Operation manager of a Melbourne bus company. They sailed the Qld coast in their yacht Marian for a number of years. Margaret and Ian enjoyed an enduring and loving marriage that lasted until his death 2012 Ian was her soul mate. They were not blessed with children. Margaret became Librarian of the Proston Library 1999, holding that position for 17 years until her retirement in June 2016, aged 69. Minnie would have been very pleased. Margaret located and made contact with her father Robert Norman in early 2000, flew to England November 2000, to meet him for the first time in her life (4 months before his death). She met his second wife Dorothy and their son, her half-brother. Margaret liked Robert, and he was proud of her achievements; they shared common interests archaeology, sailing, reading, classical music. It was an emotional time for all parties. Enroute, Margaret stopped in Netherlands to see Dorie's son David and his wife Eva, special people that made her time there more than special. In February 2015, against all odds, and at the age 68 Margaret found love again when David Hunter came in her life.

David had nearly 50 years in hard metal mining, working his way from the bottom of the ladder to the top, has a love of 60s 70s music, and a great sense of humour. A kind and thoughtful man, that when needed is hard and implacable. Like Margaret, never dreaming that when his soul mate died suddenly, he would ever find love again. Margaret and David did much travelling overseas in their first 5 years. Creating many wonderful memories. Theirs is a deep loving relationship.

Rosemarie finished primary, went on to high school... always excelling. In the 70s, Rosemarie married her childhood sweetheart David Munday; they bought a house, selling it later to buy land in the Lockyer Valley for the house they would build. Their first child David arrived, and then Laura Jane ... two beautiful blond haired children with lovely natures. Sadly the marriage failed, Rosemarie left with the children. Matt Venz became Rosemarie's second husband, a good man and devoted husband. A gentle giant, with a loyal and generous heart, who is happier in "the big outdoors" than inside, and loves to BBQ. Matt worked for many years on many large construction sites over southern Qld, and was very good at his job. Matt and Rosemarie have one child, a boy they named Luke. They both have a great love of family, camping, fishing just being outside, country music (Rosemarie has a good voice for country music and may have sang at the Mt Tamborine Hotel) and enjoying their friends company, whilst sipping a refreshing beverage or two. Like her mother, Rosemarie grows her own vegetables, has chickens and a dog, loves to read a good mystery, and is very house proud. Rosemarie became a skilled and safe truck driver, sometimes driving 400 to 500 km per day. Her love of speed has remained with her. Rosemarie later worked as a school cleaner in the Lockyer Valley area, for the Qld Education Department for many years, her reliability, honesty and work ethic making her a valued employee. Rosemarie and Matt have always been there for their children, and their families, as they grew and developed. A few years ago they took off in their caravan around Australia for maybe a year... they had many, many adventures. Rosemarie and Matt remain happily married to this day.

Fred and Frances had achieved the dream, they owned a home, car, colour TV, had more time and freedom than they could ever have imagined and plenty of good food; their daughters lives were unfolding, they had family to visit (John and Jill, later John and Elly in SA; as well as to Richie and Maureen in Townsville) then there was Frances's pride and joy... the pool in the backyard... and peace. Visiting family to their Redbank home were always a pleasure, they included, siblings Phyllis and son Paul (he had just turned 21), John, Ritchie, Jean; nephew Alan (son of Bert) and Peter? Carrington (either son or grandson of Great Aunt Lil) from Newcastle NSW, to name just a few.

Jean and Ray moved house but were still just down the road as their family grew to include Patsy Ann and Donna. The Frobe and Gill family's lives were intertwined... and typical of family, it wasn't always plain sailing. Minnie and Victor died in 1968, within a few months of each other. Frances returned to UK in the early 80s (by air... her first time flying) to see her remaining siblings one more time. Fred worked for Country Courier Services until he retired.

It gave them pleasure when over time they were able to help Rosemarie and Margaret in different ways. Their grandchildren, Rosemarie's children, David, Laura Jane and Luke were the joy of their lives.

A Caravan was purchased and many caravan holidays enjoyed, whether it was fruit picking in Southern states, visiting wineries, exploring the Queensland outback, or fossicking in Northern NSW and Western Queensland... they were living a life that they could never have imagined... and together... Fred's great love for Frances never faltered.

Fred and Frances were never judgemental, as Rosemarie and Margaret moved through their lives, taking decisions that I have no doubt they struggled with, they would listen, perhaps add advice if asked, and roll with whatever it was... and then, if necessary help to pick up the pieces later without recrimination.

Fred's war injuries came back to haunt him. The bullets that had entered his body in North Africa had travelled around his body until at last they lodged in his spine. Surgery was necessary, and urgent. The operation took place and was successful, thus preventing paralysis from the waist down.

Fred liked to make ginger beer, which frequently exploded under the Church St house, later he began making wine from all kinds of fruit, and then home-brew beer. He was house proud always doing renovations at Frances's direction. Frances loved renovating their home; she did an interior decorator's course, which she used to the full effect on their home, with sometimes bazaar outcomes.

In the early 80s the air pollution from the new much used freeway about 60 metres away, caused them to sell their Redbank home, they bought land and built at Godwin Beach just back from the water, they both loved the sea.

Towards the late 80s Fred was experiencing abdominal pains that were eventually diagnosed as pancreatic cancer. Alfred Erich Frobe died in 1993 at his Godwin Beach home with Frances, Rosemarie, Matt and family, Margaret and Ian there.

A difficult time followed for Frances, she sold the house and went to Glenelg South Australia, where thanks to her brother John and wife Elly, was able to rent a lovely single bedroom unit in a government housing development for the aged. Frances would walk Glenelg beach most days, she loved it. December 14 1994 Frances celebrated her 70<sup>th</sup> birthday John, Elly and their family put on great party for her, which Rosemarie and Margaret travelled to SA from Qld to attend. Frances looked great. During her time in SA, she had a bi- femoral bypass and knee surgery.

As time passed she decided to return to Queensland, wanting to be nearer to her family, bought a caravan and made that her home in Laidley, near Rosemarie and Matt.

Frances was diagnosed with dementia, and spent her final years in a pleasant and caring aged care facility in Rosewood, not far from Laidley and Rosemarie. As her life drew to a close, she suffered a number of health issues. Daisy Frances passed away with Rosemarie by her side in 2011



## **January 2022, Proston**

Some family members are unaware of the early years (before arriving in Australia) of Frances and Fred, so I have recalled this period and later, to the best of my ability. My memories plus what Frances and Fred have spoken of over the years have been my source for the above writing. The time lines may not be exact, but this story is not about time lines, it is about two very special people that stayed the course, and achieved the goal. I have only dealt with the bare outline of their lives, there is so much more. I have not written it in the first person as it is not about me, though I admit I was a big part of it at the beginning. I had hoped for Rosemarie's collaboration, but that was not possible.

**David Hunter and Margaret - 2016**



**Fred, Frances and Rosemarie with dog Nicky – C. 1962**



**Alfred Erich Frobe and Daisy Frances**



**Xmas Redbank 1973 Fred David Rosemarie David Laura**



**Daisy Frances Rendle with Margaret Susan**

