

A FAMILY IN JAMAICA



JAMAICA DIARY

A 1920'S ARMY FAMILY'S STORY.

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Sadly, as is often the way with stories of 'the olden days' told to us as children the memories are lost in the past. The photos here can only act as an imperfect pictorial Time Machine to glimpse into that past.



THE ALBUM



W.I.R. MEMORIAL



MUM (JOAN), DUS + PLS





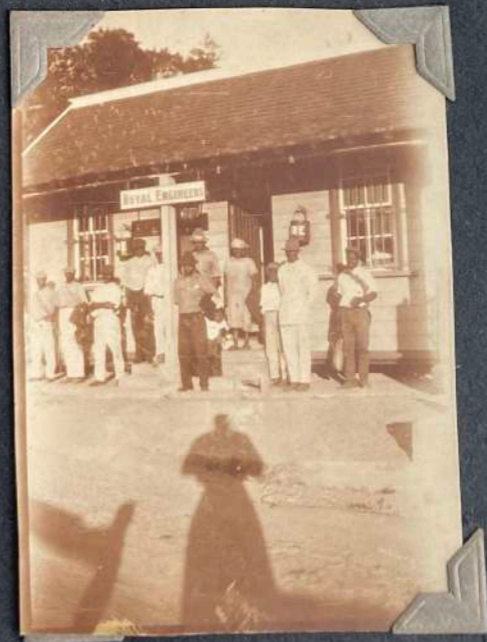
Office NC



on Veranda Steps
NC



on V.C. porch



RE women N

THE STORY

My grandfather I had been told was a RSM, (A Regimental Sergeant Major) in the Royal Engineers. My mother was born at the beginning of 1922 in Chatham, Kent where there was a large establishment of RE troops. I can't be precise about the dates of the postings but the album of photos has Xmas 1927 and 1928 written and shows my Mum and Doug, her twin brother looking like the six to seven year olds that they would have been.

Other fragments of information show the young family, presumably sailing to the posting on a ship named the HMS Cairo that was a C Class light cruiser launched on 19 November 1918 and commissioned on 24 September 1919. *Cairo* was not ready for service in World War 1. After a temporary attachment to the China Station until 1927, she then joined the 8th Cruiser Squadron on the N. American & W. Indies Station based in Bermuda.

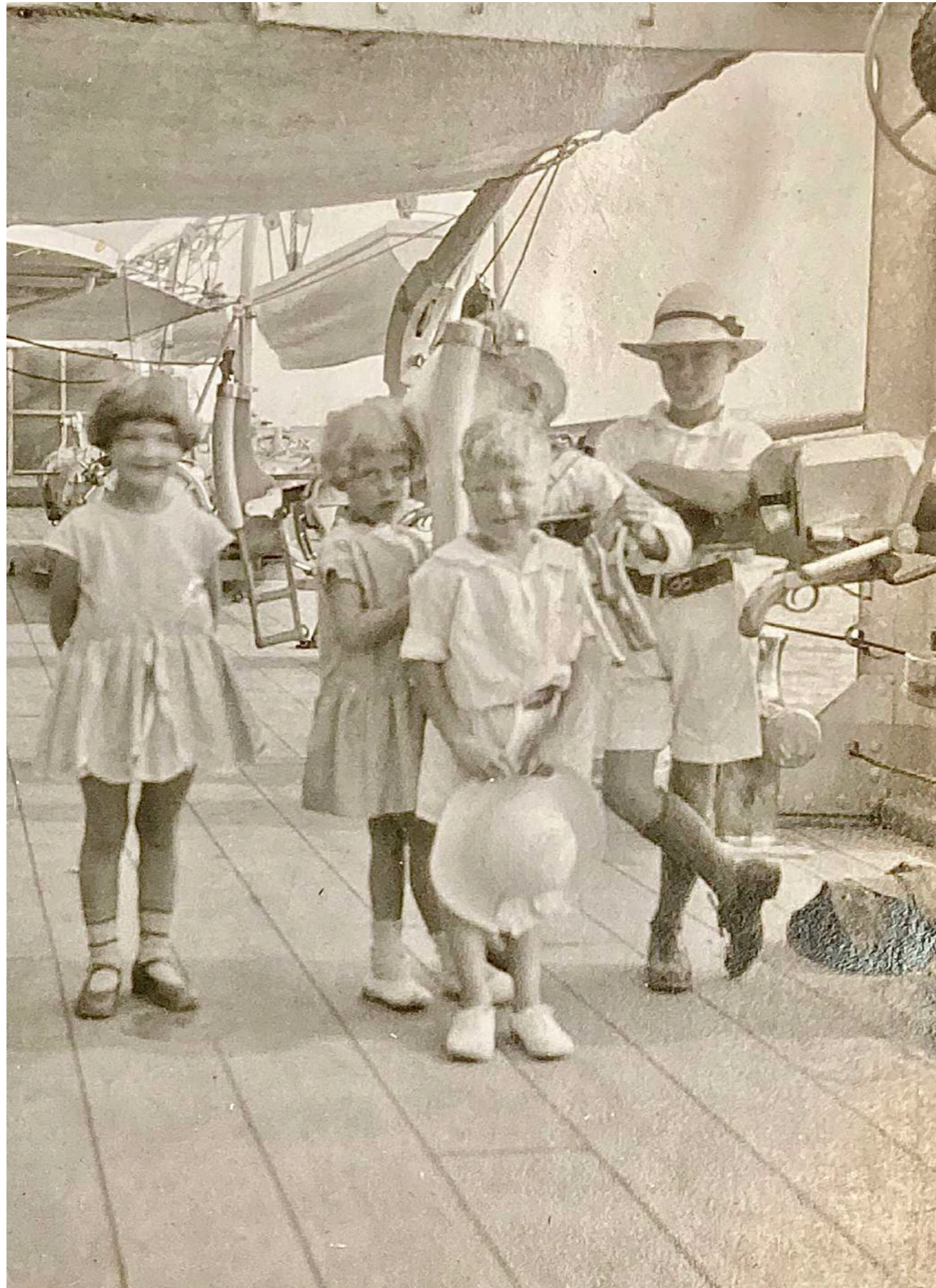
















Place names on some of the pages of the photo album start to build up a picture of the family's life on the island.

Newcastle is mentioned and this is shown on current maps as a training station to the north of the capital of Kingston. It had been established in 1784 and used by the army until 1962. Its height at 3700 feet above sea level was considered healthier than that of Kingston where the British were prone to succumbing to yellow fever.

Up Park camp is also written on some photos, a painting of the camp is reproduced here.









The family were my grandparents Maud and Bill Gale. My mother Joan with her twin Doug and her older brothers, Francis, Arthur and Leslie.

In this photo their dog Buster appears and he seems to be a constant companion cropping up in many photos. Other pets appear in photos along with horses making childhood there look idyllic. The experience was always recalled as a happy time by my mother and her love of animals was life long.

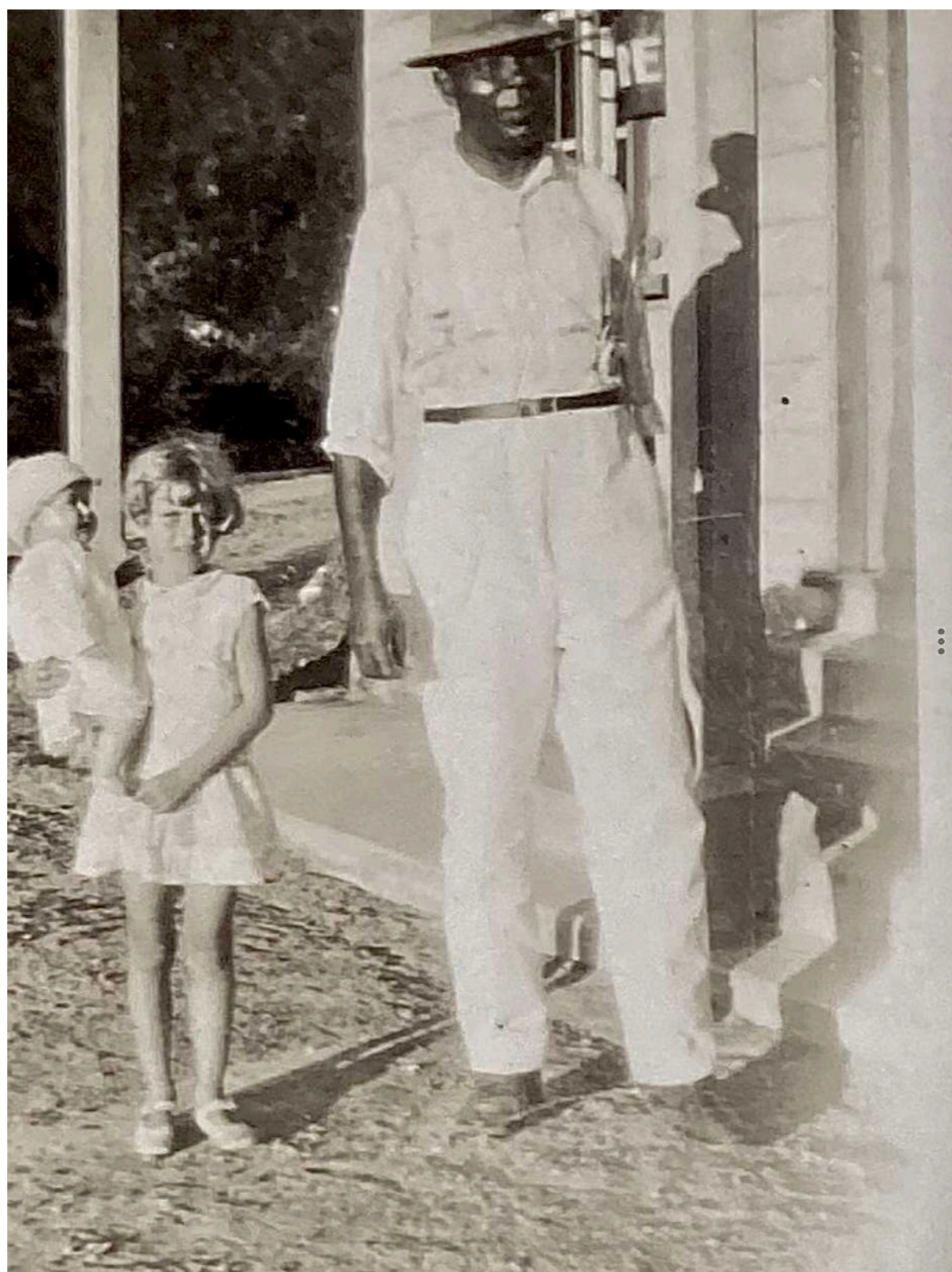
My Mum's large doll Peg was important enough to be labelled and appears regularly in the album with her own pram and house.





Havana Gardens









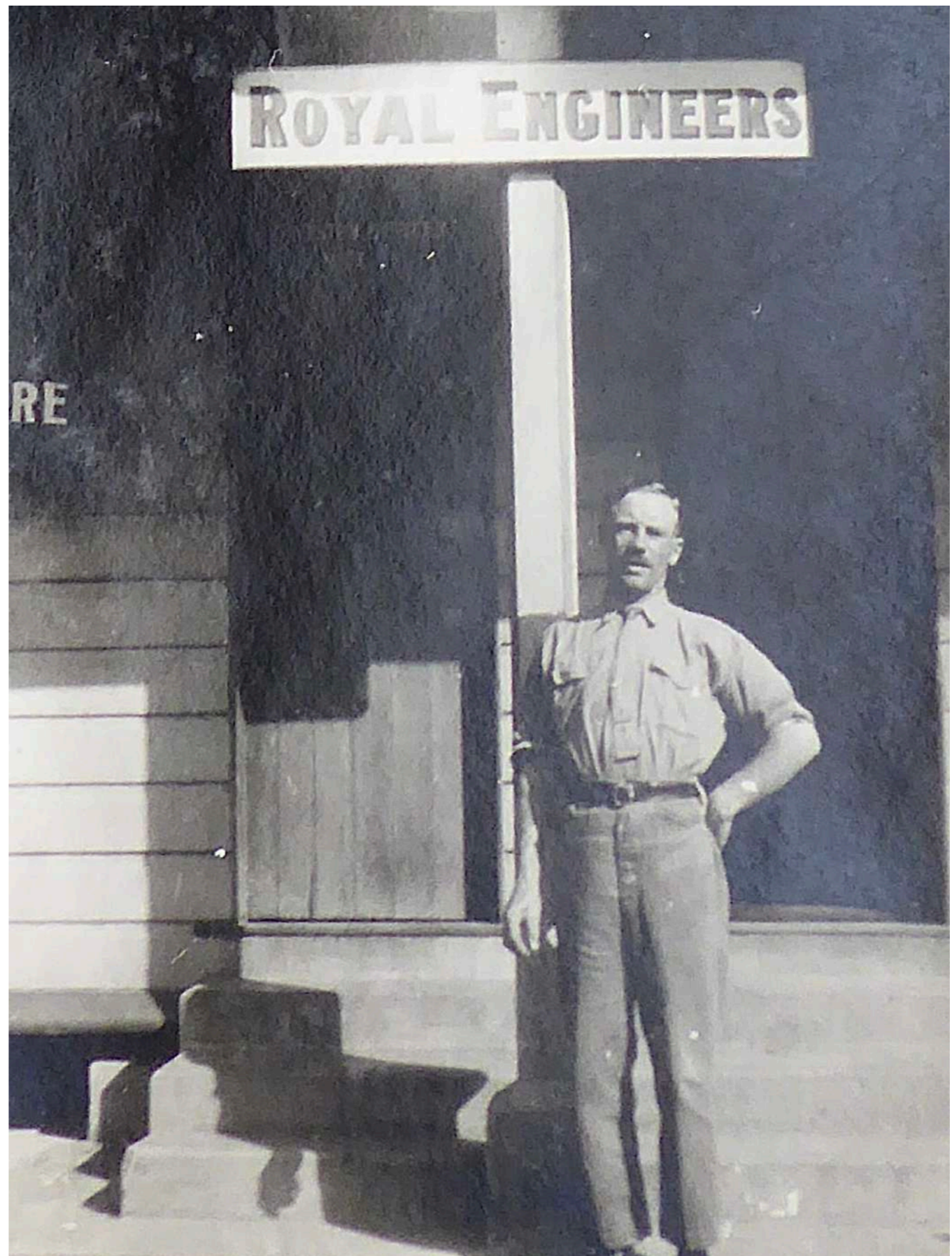


WORK

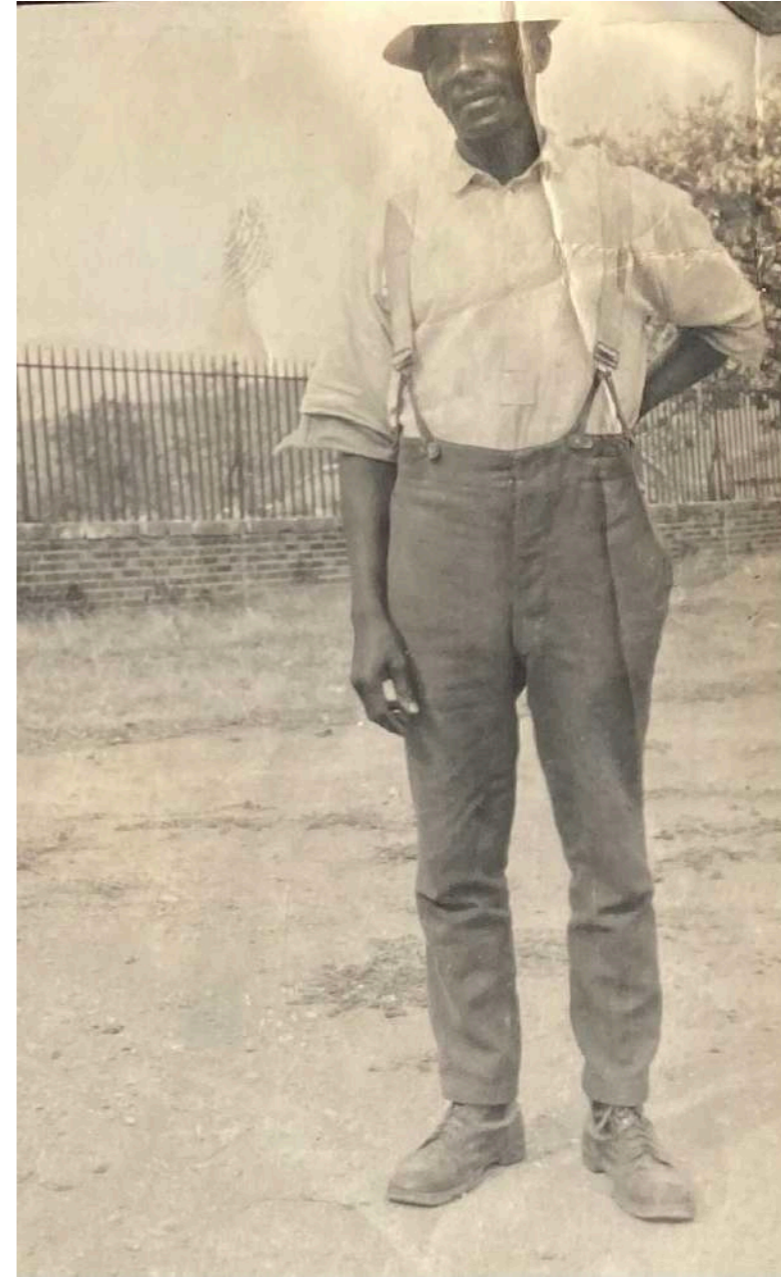
The photos are really a family album of everyday events and I am fortunate to have such a detailed record from almost a century ago. A time when most families would not have made such an extensive record. I wonder whether his job gave my grandfather greater access to photography or whether a member of the family was a keen photographer. I have several wartime and later army service albums belonging to my Uncle Arthur who clearly was a keen photographer in later life. At this time he would have been around 9 or 10 - it's impossible now to know.

The photographs vary in quality and I have only lightly edited them mainly by cropping.

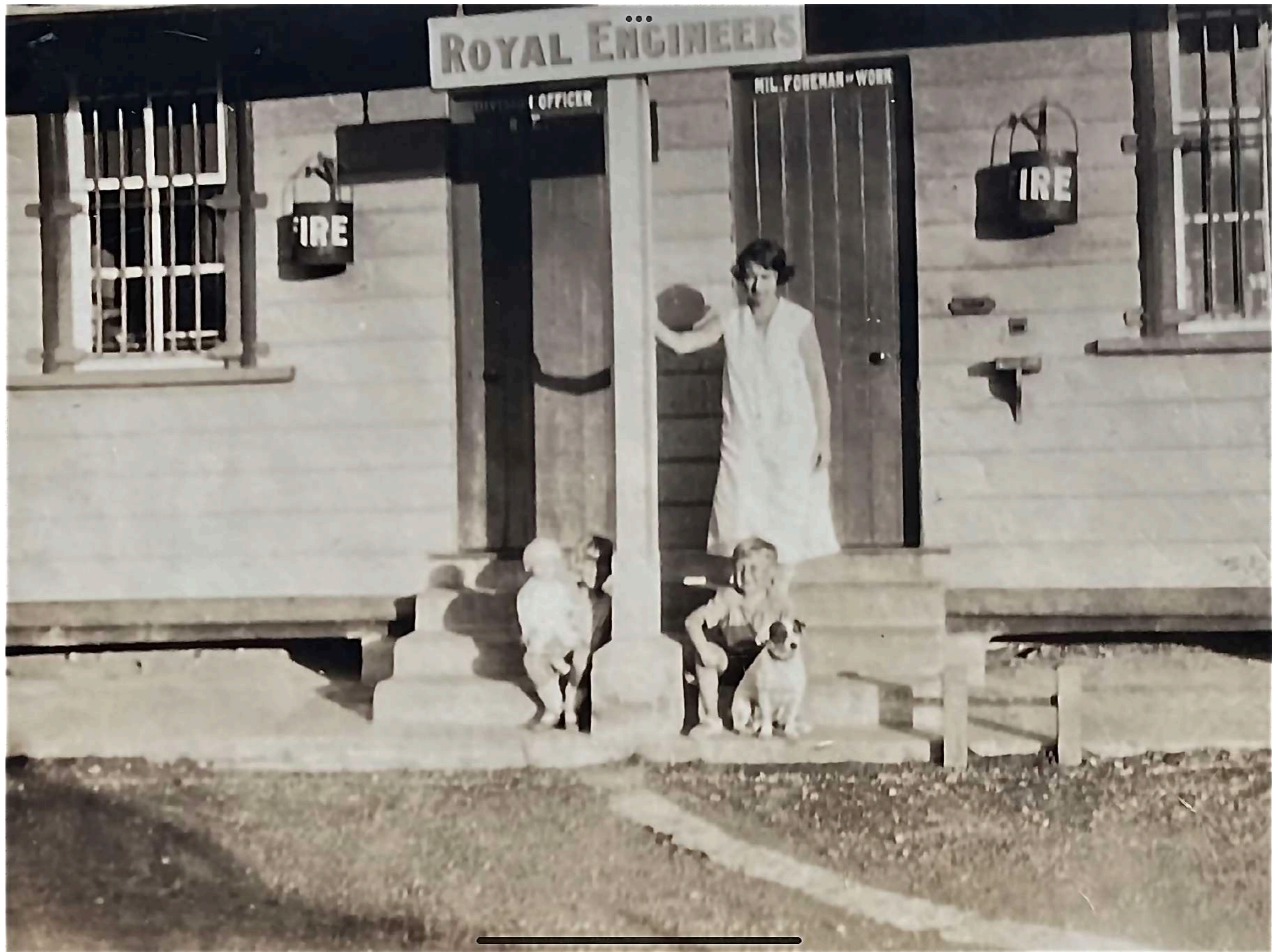
Some rarer work related photos are shown here.















The family seem to be enjoying a lifestyle, certainly superficially, unlike that they would have experienced back home.

Horse riding, swimming and sight seeing all feature regularly in the album









WATER

It looks as if the family made the most of any opportunity to cool off in the warm climate of the island.

I remember my Mum talking about a swimming pool being built at the camp for the families to use.













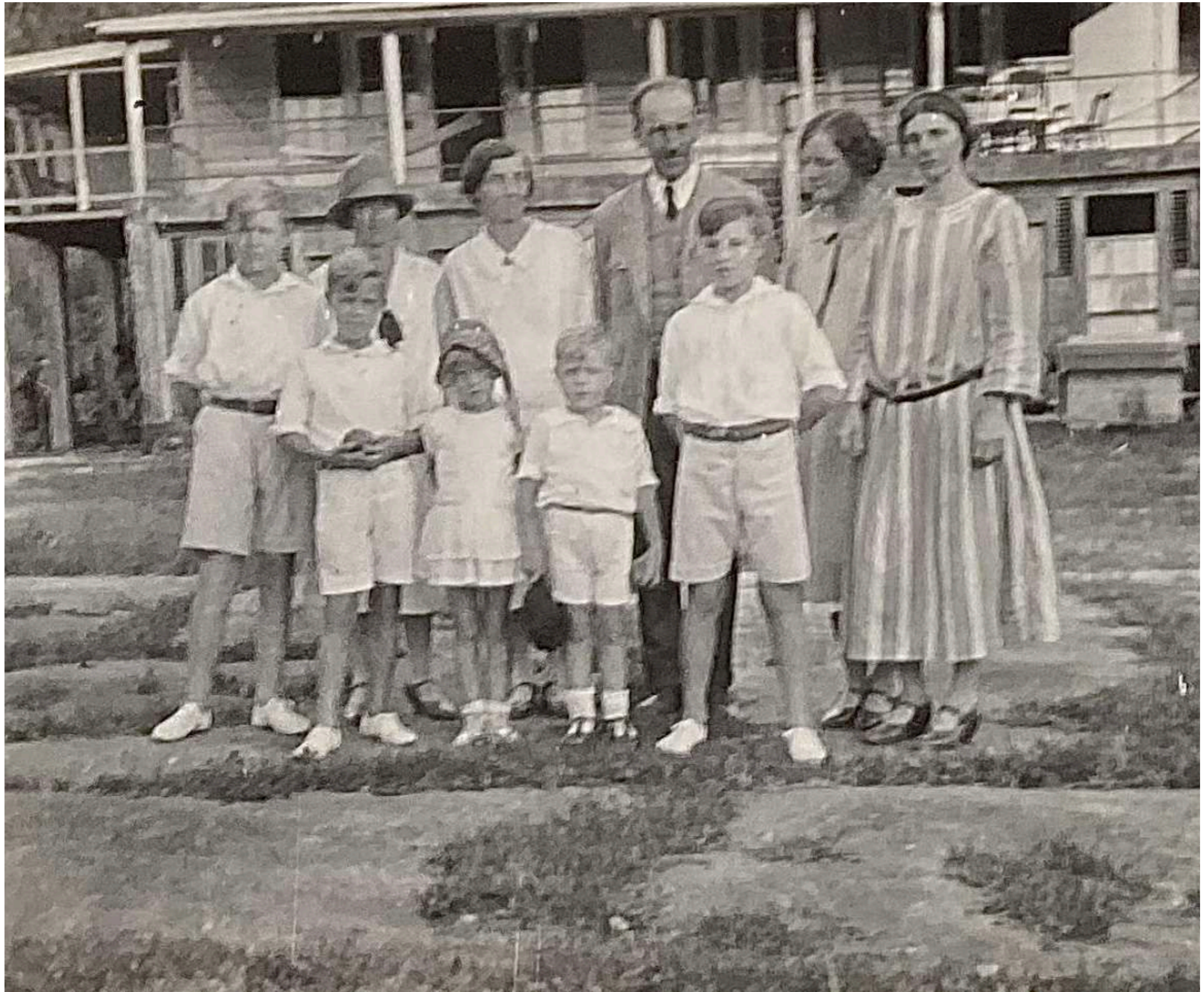




SCHOOL

I was told by Mum that the family returned to the UK for her and Doug to have their secondary education here. I am unaware of the arrangements for her three older brothers all of whom served in the army in later years.







OUT AND ABOUT











...
EARTH QUAKE
RUIINS

ROY. ART. STORE

V. R.
1888

















**A FAMILY IN JAMAICA
PART 2**



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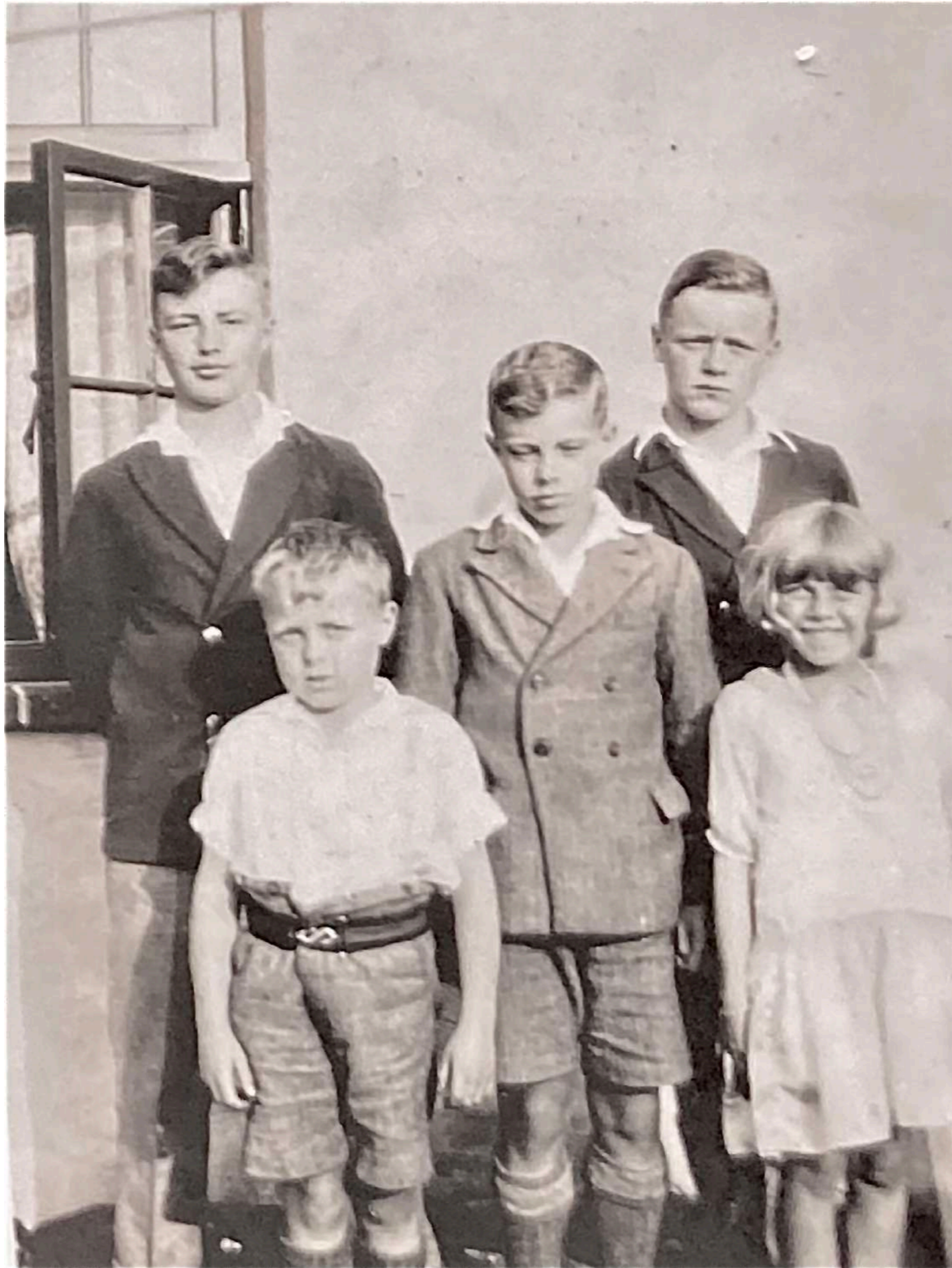
CHILDREN

The family in *descending* age order:-

Francis (top centre), Arthur (top left), Leslie (top right),

Twins, Joan and Douglas.







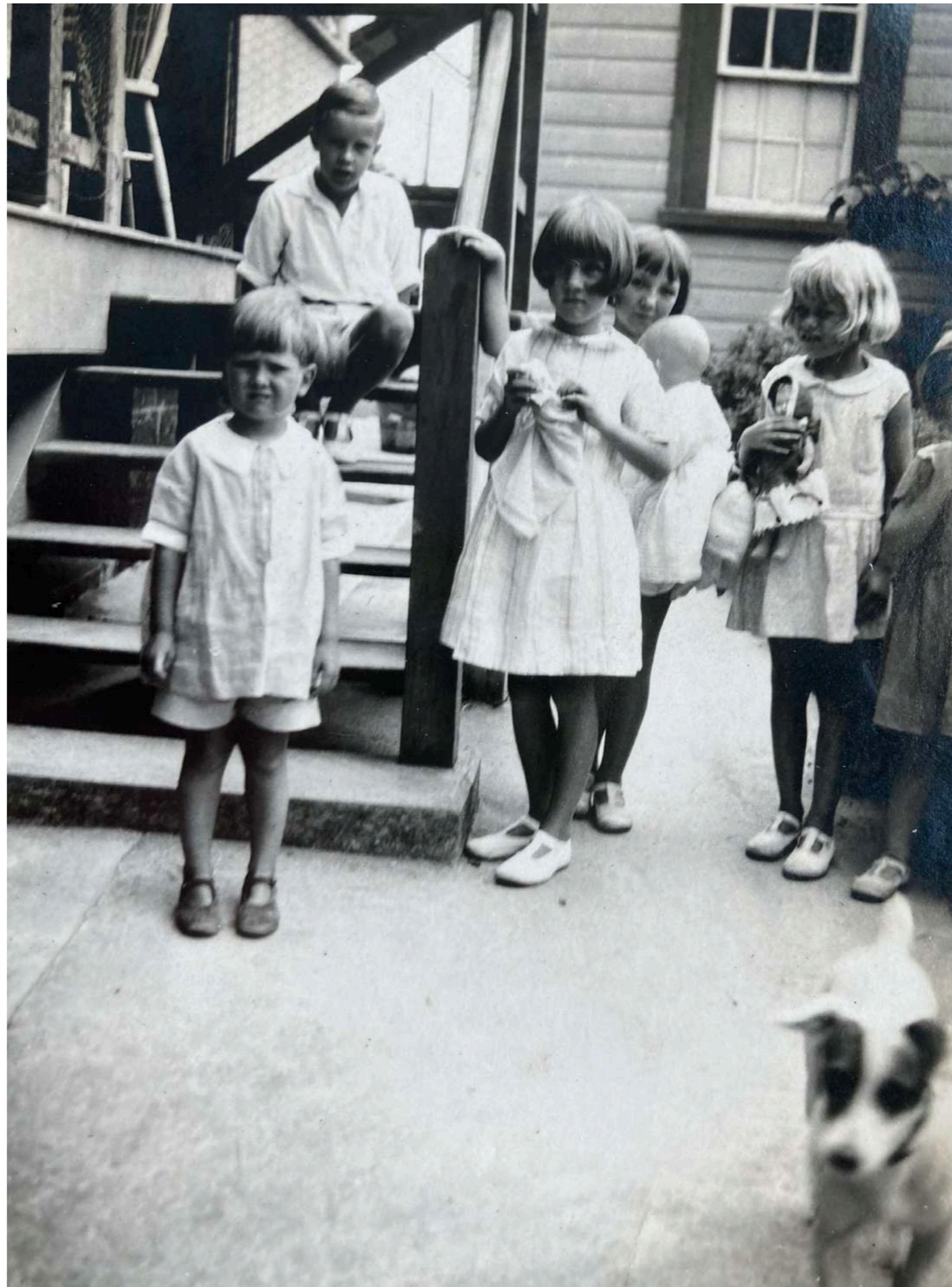
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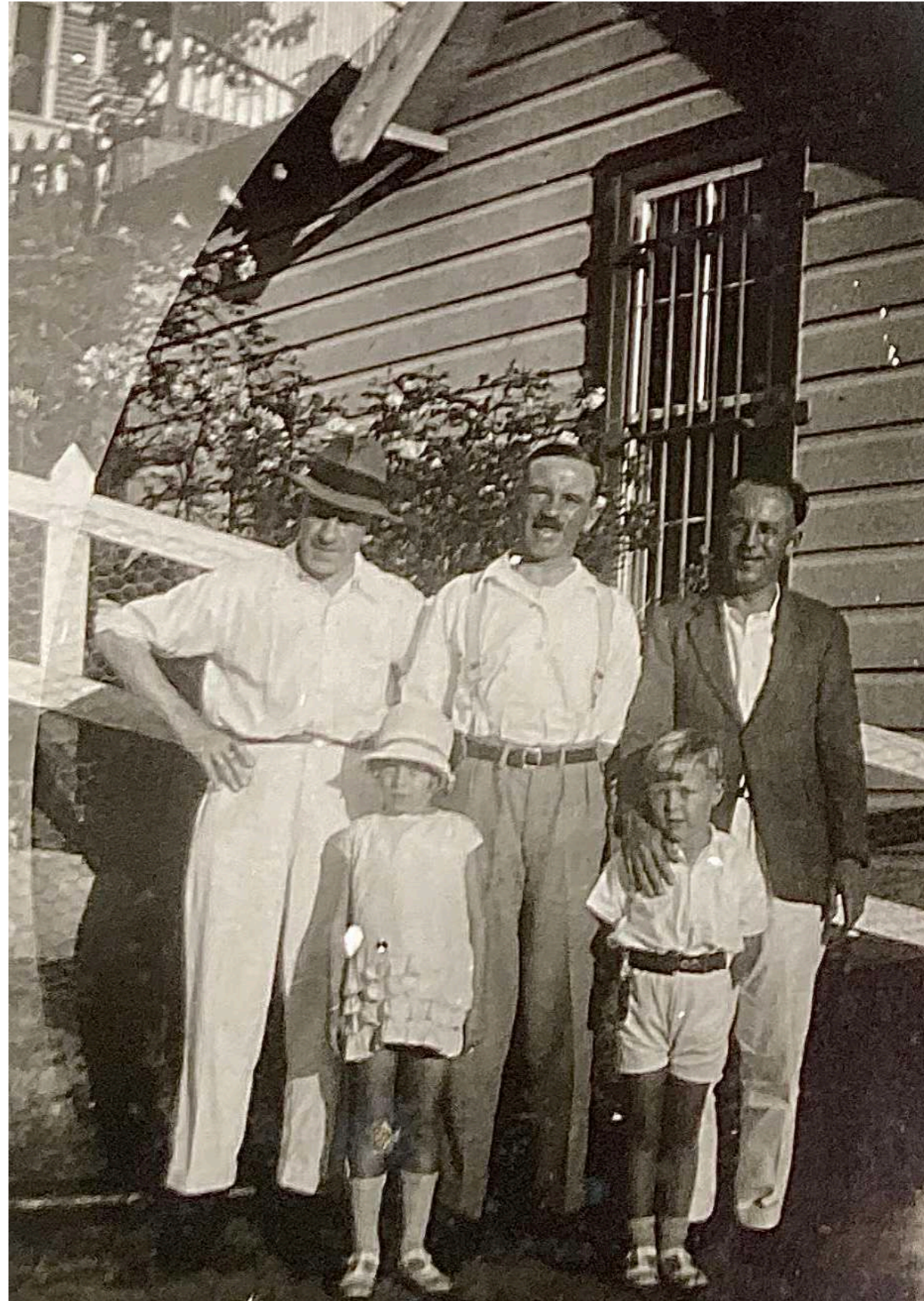






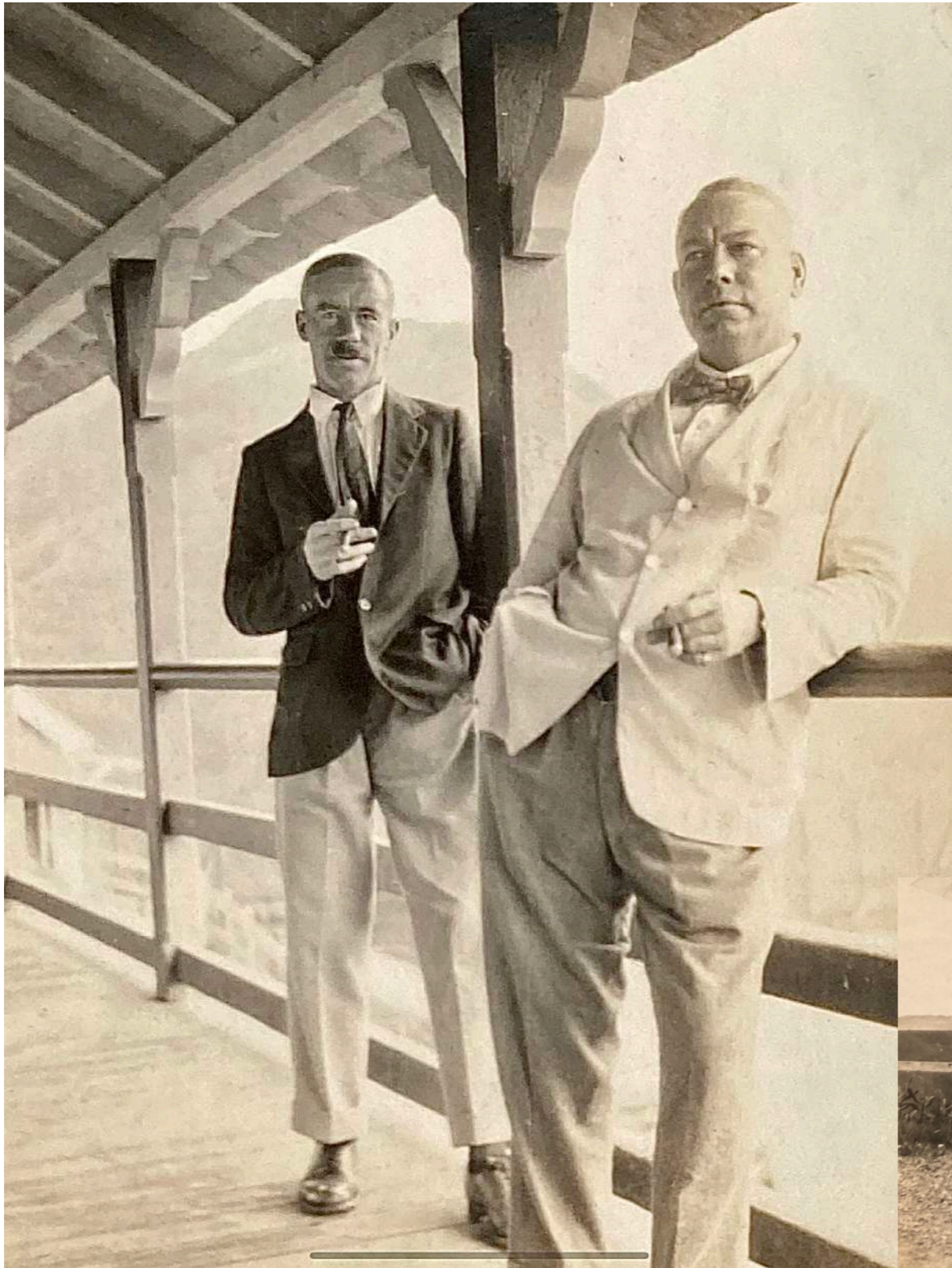
ADULTS

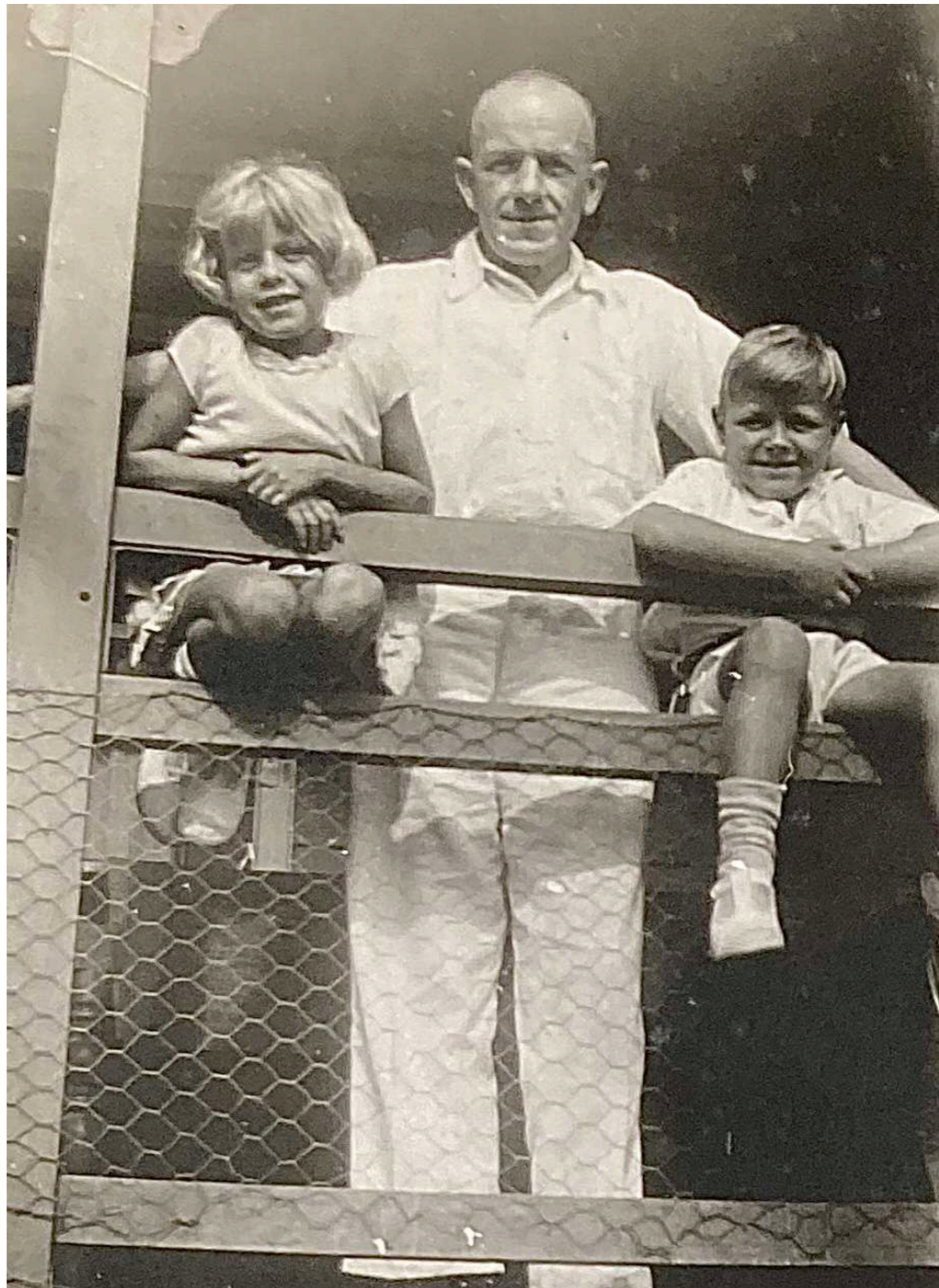
Unfortunately, apart from my grandparents there were few notes identifying other adults apart from Uncle Collins, a Mr & Mrs Benn and a Tim & Peggy.

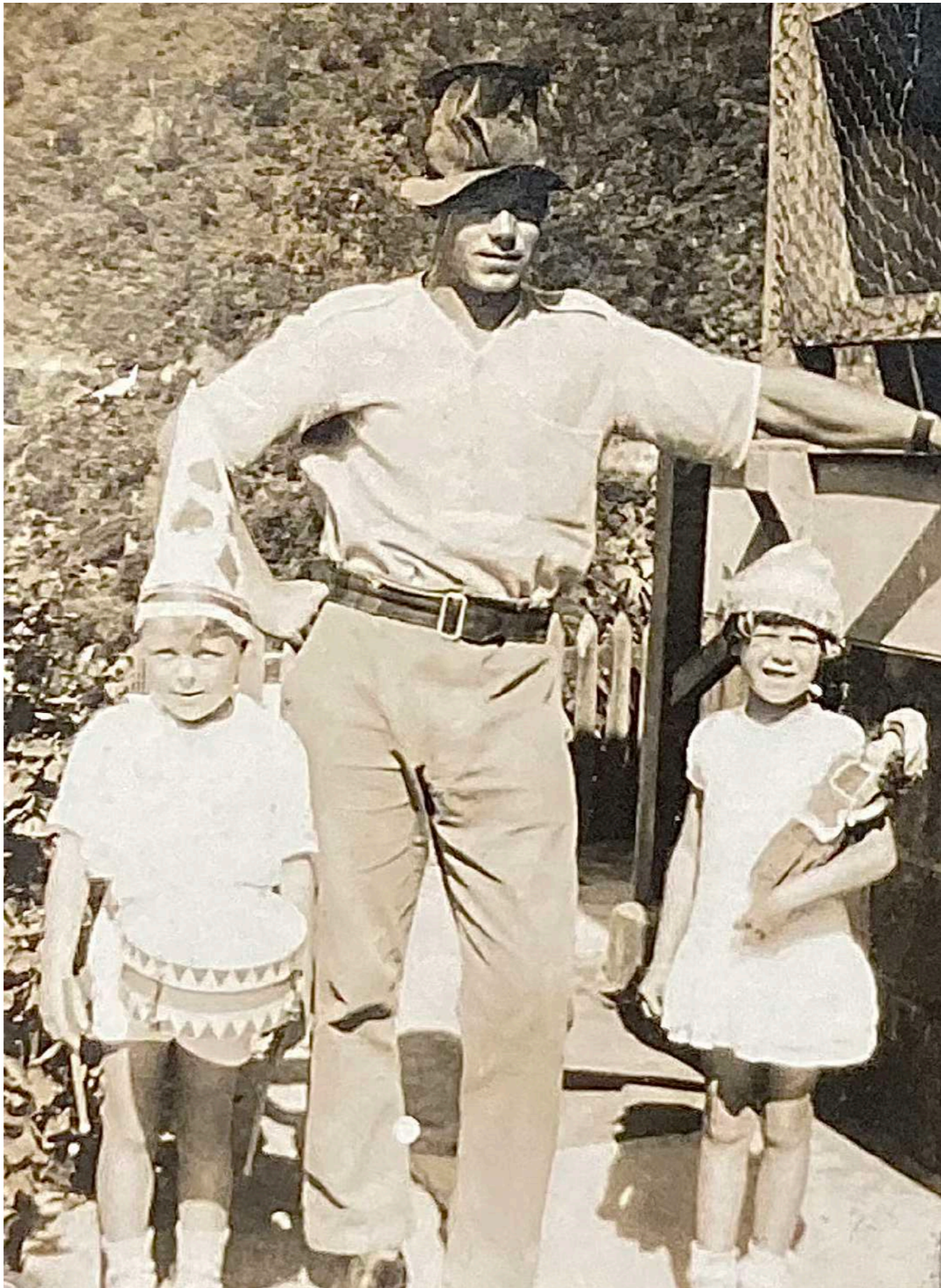
















BACK IN THE UK





Weston's Mare



LATER YEARS

Once back in the UK my mother's family moved around. She talked of living in Abersychan and moving to Coventry in the late 1930's with my grandfather serving as an Air raid warden there.

All four brothers served in the forces during WW2 with my mother joining the WAAF and becoming a corporal. I have found a press cutting that tells of Sergeant Francis Gale being awarded the Military Medal for bravery whilst serving in France. Arthur stayed in the services post was despite being a prisoner of war. Post war he was in Japan and west Africa with a captain's rank.

Doug, my Mum's twin stayed in the RAF and served in France, Germany, Belgium and Singapore as a warrant officer, latterly attached to embassies.

Mum moved with her parents to Neath in South Wales after the war, marrying my Dad from Swansea with my birth in 1950 in Gower.

