

23, Garage Lvs Close  
Withersfield Road,  
Haverhill,

Suffolk.

Wed. December 8<sup>th</sup> 1982

Dear Ian, I thank you for your letter & card etc., which I received this morning (I hope I have got your name right, as I am sorry, I couldn't decipher some of your writing.) Well, now to "spill the beans." (I couldn't speak freely to Cousin Margaret when she was here, and she knew it!) but the "home help" was in the front room, making tea, & listening to everything, & I didn't want her to know all the "family history." My mother was always known to me, as Mrs. George Brownlee Paton, but I never saw any "marriage" lines, birth certificates, so knew no different, & nobody ever told me any different! Anyhow, she dominated me such much that if I asked any awkward questions, I was always "put off" anyhow, it wasn't until she had been dead about 6 years, that I thought of sending for a birth certificate for myself, as I had never seen one, & I got nothing of hers, when she died! However I got an



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awful shock when I did get one, as I found his name was not on it<sup>at</sup>, so I will never know who my father was! Which means that she must have had me, when she was "single" & blackened the good name of the family. I think she must have married Mr. Paton, though some time between September 13<sup>th</sup> <sup>1912</sup> (when I was born) and before the 1914 war started, as I seem to remember (although I was only about 3 at the time) that she got <sup>and</sup> Army Pay <sup>Book</sup> ~~every~~ week, & he used to send us postcards from France & Belgium as he was, by then, in the army, & fighting in the trenches. I think that all during the 1914 war, she & I went to live at my grandmother's house (in Newcastle). I think it must have been then that she started to go about with Mr. Frank Barling, who lived about 2 streets away (with his wife & 2 children, who were about 15 yrs old, & 12 yrs old, at the time) She knew what was going on, but



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never divorced him (They are both dead now)  
He was the father of Kathleen Brenda  
my "half sister", born in January 1919,  
and the father also of Kenneth my  
"half brother", born in July 1928.  
Mr. Paton must have come out of the  
Army sometime in 1918, (I presume)  
"shell shocked", & I should imagine  
she was pregnant then, or he had  
heard some "rumours" Anyhow they  
got a small "flat" at the other side  
of the town from my Granny's (Nias)  
but she still went out with the  
other man when her husband went  
out. Anyhow one night, they had a  
terrible row, & he left her, & went back  
to live with his mother. He couldn't  
prove that the coming child was  
not his, as he was living with  
her at the time, so I suppose he  
couldn't divorce her then. My mother



+ J, went to Whitley Bay for a few months until after "Brenda" was born, then she was "fostered" to a childless couple for about 18 months. In the meantime, my mother & I, went back to Grannys until she & grandfather had both died. Then my "Auntie May" (a spinster) who had always lived at home, bought a house in Sunderland where we lived for 5 years.

When she learned that my mother was expecting Kenneth she refused to sleep another night, under the same roof! She sought lodgings, & let my mother, Brenda & I, stay there until we got somewhere else, to go.

Finally, she kept Brenda for a few months, & my mother, Kenneth & I, got lodgings in the town. After 6 weeks we got jobs, so she had to put Kenneth into a "home" temporarily, until



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she got a job where she could have  
her with him (Needless to say, it had  
to be "Domestic Service" so we would  
have a roof over our heads) Finally  
she landed at Cambridge, & worked  
for a very decent man (A widower  
with 4 children) She could have the  
9 children there (I had a job in  
Surrey) He was a Mr. Sidney Brett,  
she worked for 1 year as his "house  
keeper", then married him, but about  
15 months later had an 'internal  
do. operation <sup>1932 (I think)</sup> & died. He married again after  
17 months (If he is still alive he must  
be 90 or more) a few months after she  
married him, I married (in 1932) and had  
3 children (Brenda 1933 Leonard 1935 &  
Sony 1939. Well I was going to tell you  
lots more, but it won't go in the envelope  
Love Shelma