

ELINBORG FERRIER

Gudbjorg Elinborg Thordadottir was born on August 14th. 1908 in Isafjordur, Iceland, daughter of Fridrikka Engilbertsdottir and Thordur Bjarnason. Fridrikka came from Dyrafjordur in the Northwest Fjords and had moved to Isafjord to work in the fishing industry. There she formed a relationship with Thordur, a fisherman from Akranes and Elinborg was born. Thordur was already married and had a family in Akranes and would only be in Isafjord during the fishing season.

As Fridrikka was a single mother, she had to earn a living by working in the fishing industry, which was the predominant industry in Isafjord but was seasonal. To fill the gaps, she took cleaning jobs, but times were hard and money was short.

At school in Isafjordur, Elinborg made friends with Maeja Helgadottir, daughter of the local Bank Manager. Maeja was to remain her very good friend for the rest of her life, and the kindness and generosity of her family were a great help to Elinborg, providing her with clothing, secondhand and new for special occasions which Fridrikka could not afford.

After finishing school, Elinborg and Fridrikka moved to Reykjavik and Elinborg took a job at VerzluninEdinborg the best known retail store in Reykjavik, owned by Asgeir Sigurdsson, who was also the British Consul and his office acted as the British Consulate in Reykjavik. While working in the store, Elinborg joined the Verslunarfelagid Merkur, the trade association for shop and commercial workers and after three years became head of the women's section, which she was to remain until leaving Iceland. She started working in the office and was sent to the Pitmans School in Manchester to learn shorthand and speed-typing in English, having studied English the previous winter. While working in the Consulate side of the office, Elinborg was able to help visiting sailors and businessmen with their language problems by acting as a translator. At that time, the first freezing plant in Iceland, the Saensk-Islensk Frystihus, was being built and equipped and a number of British engineers were involved in the construction and fitting out of the plant and installation of the machinery. Through her translating work, Elinborg came to meet her future husband, James Ferrier, who was overseeing the installation work.

They became engaged and were married on the 16th. July 1932, with the reception at the house of Asgeir Sigurdsson. They moved to England and settled in Forest Hill, Southeast London.

James was a departmental manager for a large fish importing company, Bennetts of Billingsgate, involved in the buying of overseas fish. Their first child, Eddad Elinborg was born on the 17th. October 1933, followed by a son, James Arthur, on the 16th. December 1934.

In 1937 Elinborg took the children to Iceland and visited her friends and relations in Isafjord and Reykjavik. Her mother, Fridrikka, returned with her to London, and was to remain with them in Forest Hill until she died on the 5th. May 1943, surviving the Blitz in wartime London. In 1937 also, they moved to a larger house in Forest Hill, perched on a hilltop, with a splendid view over London.

This house was to become a favoured destination for many visiting Icelanders.

When war broke out in 1939 and the bombing of London began, the blitz as it was known, the children, Edda and James, were evacuated to Devon first, then Manchester staying with the people that Elinborg had stayed with during her Pitmans course and with whom she had stayed in touch with ever since, and then Liverpool. The bombing seemed to follow them around and in 1942

it was decided to bring the children back to London. At the start of the war Elinborg and her husband joined the ARP, the Air Raid Protection squad, which patrolled neighbourhoods at night to help in case of fire and damage from enemy bombing. They both served until the end of the war. In 1943 Frederick Charles was born on the 18th. October, which completed Elinborg's family.

During the war, through her contacts with the Icelandic Embassy, Elinborg was asked by the BBC Overseas Service to do information broadcasts to Iceland, which she was very happy to do. She was also a founding member of the Icelandic Society in London, which was formed to provide a network for Icelandic girls who had married British servicemen and come to live in England, and also for Icelandic businessmen and doctors who were resident in England. Elinborg later became President of the Icelandic Society, an honour she greatly appreciated.

At the end of the war, Elinborg established her own Export/Import and Manufacturers Agent business, G.E.Ferrier Ltd, first working from home and then moving to offices in Westminster. Business was mainly exporting goods to Iceland, Norway,, Denmark and Sweden and Iceland constituted the bulk of the business, although there was a notable success in supplying Italian clothing to the Magasin du Nord in Copenhagen in 1948. The business was very succesful until the 'Cod War' with Iceland began and Iceland banned the import of British goods. Elinborg then turned to retailing, which she had learned at Verzlunin Edinborg, and bought a retail business in Greenwich, SouthEast London, a Drapery, selling Ladies Hosiery, Underwear, Corsetry, Children's Clothes, Haberdashery, Dress Fabrics and specialising in Knitting Wools. The Export/Import business was relocated above the shop. A few years later, Elinborg purchased another shop in Orpington, Kent, Lloyds and it was there that she was to spend the rest of her working life, retiring in 1980. Elinborg was a keen member of the Orpington Chamber of Commerce and was Chairman for a period and then Vice President. Lloyds moved to larger premises in Orpington in 1972 and the Greenwich shop was sold in 1974, replaced by a Fabric Shop in Tunbridge Wells, in Kent, which was run by her son Frederick. In the Orpington shop, Elinborg was able to enjoy the company of three fellow countrywomen, who had come to London after the war as wives of British Sevicemen, Hulda Whitmore, Dua Mountain, and Betty Lilley, whose company and work was much appreciated.

Following the death of her husband, James, in 1965, Elinborg had sold her house in Forest Hill and purchased one in Orpington, more convenient for work. On retirement in 1980, following the sale of Lloyds, Elinborg moved in with her son, James Arthur, and daughter-in-law Gudrun Jonsdottir, at their house in Chelsfield Kent, and was able to enjoy three years of retirement before her untimely death, due to a heart-attack in June 1983. One of her proudest moments was the award of the Order of the Falcon for services to the Icelandic Society in London over many years, the award being presented by the Icelandic Ambassador in London on February 12th 1970.

Elinborg Ferrier - Guðbjörg Elinborg Thorsdóttir

born August 14th 1908 Isafjörður, Iceland

Mother Friðrika Engelbertsdóttir from Arnadalur

Father Þorður Þjarnason, Seafarer (Fisherman) from Akranes

Not married. Þorður had a family in Akranes.

Friðrika worked in Herring industry ^{in the summer} and cleaned houses to make enough money to survive.

Elinborg had a good friend, Maria Þedgadóttir whose father, Helgi was the Bank Manager in Isafjörður. Maria's family were very kind to Elinborg, providing her with clothing and other items to alleviate her poverty. Things were tough in these days, and Maria's friendship meant a lot to Elinborg.

In 1922 (I think) Friðrika and Elinborg moved to Reykjavík. After finishing school, Elinborg took a job at Verghelmin Edinborg, starting in the shop and also becoming a founder member of the Women's Union of Shopworkers.

She did well in the shop and progressed to the office of the owner, Asgeir Sigurðsson, who was also the British Consul. Asgeir sponsored Elinborg to go ~~to~~ to Manchester, England ~~and~~ to do a Pitmans Course in shorthand, 30/3/28.

Back in the office Elinborg acted as a translator for the British ~~women~~ ^{men} who were involved in the building and equipping of the Saenskiðslenska Freezing Plant, the first freezing plant in Iceland. Through her work at the consulate, she was to meet her future husband, James McDonald Ferrier who had come to Iceland to oversee the building and completion of

Mother to Manchester 1928 (South Family) April 17 to March - 1929 June

Wedding 1932. 16/7/32 Reykjavík. Öðungata 22 (mother's address)

1927 Mother's address Tjarnargata 49 17/3/28 Smiðjustíg 3

1926 Mother working Edinborg 1929 Smiðjustíg 6

1925 " Svalbarðseyri (62 ⁵² _{REF}) and 1924 - Near Þokureyri

1922 " Isafjörður - Tjarnargata 8

1921 " Öðungata 21, Rok.

1926 " Hverfisgata 69, Rok.