

Nielia Heath née Harrison



Nielia aged about twelve [author's collection]

By Pamela Lee

Summary

Nielia lived in Worthing with her family of two brothers and three sisters. Following the deaths of her father and both brothers, she enlisted in the Women's Land Army in the early summer of 1918 at the young age of sixteen. She chose to train in "mixed farming" and was sent to Horsham where she joined eight other girls to learn milking, harvesting and rick farming which she loved. She worked on several farms in the Worthing area. After the War she trained in cake making. She married John Edward Heath (known as Jack) in 1928 and had three children, Cyril, Pam and David. Childbirth left her with a badly swollen right leg which she suffered with courage and fortitude. The family moved to Bournemouth in 1939 and lived there throughout the Second World War experiencing bombs, machine gunning on Swanage beach and a landmine. Jack died on 21 December 1969 and as Nielia's arthritis worsened, she moved to a Nursing Home in Southwick, Sussex to be near Pam for the last seven years of her life. She died aged ninety-seven on 17 December 1998.

Introduction

Nielia was my mother and I am delighted that her life, and especially her time as a Land Girl in the First World War, can be recorded and linked with the Case Studies I have already written about her two brothers, Cyril and Victor Harrison. I remember her as a woman of great courage and imagination who would not be bound by convention or circumstances. She loved to nurture all creatures great and small, especially if they were sick. She was wonderful with babies, her own and many others in her wider family. At the age of ninety-five Nielia was encouraged to write about her life which she called "Memories of Nielia" and much of this Case Study is in her own words.

Background

Nielia was the youngest of the eight children of Annie and William Harrison. Their father was a JP, a stockbroker and an import/export merchant in Madras. In about May 1918 The family was living in Worthing, Sussex and Nielia was at the Worthing High School for Girls. Her father had died in a traffic accident in December 1916 and her two brothers had enlisted at the outbreak of War. In August 1917 her brother Victor had been invalided out of the Royal Flying Corps and subsequently drowned in a boating accident on the Norfolk Broads. In September 1917 her brother Cyril was killed at Passchendaele. Nielia left school and joined the Women's Land Army.

Detail

Nielia was born on 9 December 1901. She was the youngest of the eight children of Annie and William Harrison. Two of her siblings died shortly after birth and she had two brothers, Victor and Cyril and three sisters,

Cicely, Eileen and Gwyneth. Nielia writes about her own arrival after her sister Gwyneth:

'She was closely followed at thirteen months by the last wee scrap named only Nielia, who was quite tiny and difficult to feed. The unusual name of Nielia was chosen by her Godmother, the spinster stepsister of Annie, who also undertook to educate Nielia.'



Gwyneth, Cyril, Nielia and Victor [from author's collection]

Nielia's childhood was quite difficult as her parents separated, and she and Gwyneth were taken to stay with their uncle, Arthur Harrison, and their cousins Lulu, Boy Harrison and Coral. After a few months they were reunited with their mother. As her sisters grew up the two eldest became engaged. Nielia writes of this time:

'These young men and their friends all converged on the Harrison home and played jokes on Gwyneth and Nielia. They nicknamed Nielia "Fairy" and pretended to sit on her in an armchair, asking "Where is Fairy?" She loved this and often ran to the chair when she heard them arrive.'

Nielia writes of the First World War, the death of her father and brothers and her decision to join the Women's Land Army:

'In August 1914 the First World War broke out. Germany was the aggressor and Britain's men were obliged to fight for King and

country. King George V was on the throne. Placards were everywhere with a picture of Lord Kitchener in his uniform pointing a large finger with the words "Enlist Now. Your King and country need you." Victor was nineteen and joined the Royal Flying Corps, but Cyril was only seventeen and was told to go outside (the recruiting office) and come in again and say he was eighteen, which he did. Shortly afterwards, he was posted as a Second Lieutenant to Egypt for two years.

'On the eve of Nielia's fifteenth birthday (8 December 1916), late at night, a policeman knocked at the door and told Annie that William had been run over by a taxi when getting off a bus. He said that there was a thick fog at the time, and could she go to the hospital because he was asking for her. She and Cicely went by train and arrived at William's bedside just before he died. According to Cicely she held his hand and kissed him goodbye.

'Shortly after this tragedy, Cyril came home from Egypt for a short leave before going to France with his regiment. In the thick of trench warfare, with all its mud and death, he was blown to bits when standing on top of a trench urging his men to take a German gun emplacement that the Germans had taken by force some days before.

'The telegram came to Annie's house shortly afterwards, with the dreaded words that Lieutenant C H Harrison was missing, believed killed. Nielia took the telegram in and, having read it, stood rooted to the doormat in horror. She recollected her last time with him, when he asked her to go to the cinema at Worthing before leaving the next day. It was against the school rules but she didn't care and went with him to the Dome. How glad she was that she had done so! She then had the awful job of taking the telegram to Annie, who cried and could not be consoled by Nielia. Letters came from the War Office and one from the King and Queen expressing their sorrow and enclosing a small medal for bravery. Even Victor, Cyril's brother, broke down, although he and Cyril were never very close.

'Soon afterwards, Victor had a flying accident and crashed in his biplane. It affected his nerves so he was grounded and sent to Norwich, to the Thetford School of Flying to teach new pilots.

'When she was sixteen, Nielia decided to join the Women's Land Army instead of staying on at school and taking her exams. Gwyneth had already joined but did not stay in for long because she disliked the hard farm work. Nielia's kit bag arrived with her breeches, smock, leggings and felt hat, and her orders to go to Horsham, which she did. She was met at the station by a farmer who was training nine girls at a time to prepare them for other farms in need.



Nielia in Land Army uniform [image from author's collection]

'Nielia had chosen "mixed farming" which encompassed milking, harvesting and "rick" farming. She was the youngest girl there and was nicknamed "Joe". As her heart was in this form of work she got on very well and was soon milking the cows expertly by hand (there were no milking machines in those days). Harvesting was rather heavy work for young girls as they had to toss the piled-up stalks onto a horse-drawn wagon in order for a man and a trainee girl to place them correctly. This wagon was moved to near the farmhouse, where they made a rick under the tuition of the farm hand, who was exempt from the army, plus two other male farm hands.

'Nielia and one of the other girls used to borrow cycles and ride into Horsham in their spare time. There they were sometimes pursued by young army lieutenants, who were also on cycles and in high spirits during their free time from the local army garrison. It was all very innocent and light-hearted, just a natural get-together of the young people doing their war-time "bit" as it was called.

'Being so much younger than the others, Nielia had no idea what to say when the young men invited them to a pub and asked "What will you have?". Luckily they first asked her friend who was twenty-three and quite "with it", and Nielia asked for the same thing. However, although she drank it she did so very slowly and refused a second one because she had never tasted wine before.

'The two young lieutenants escorted them back to the farm and chatted up the farmer, asking if he could supply them with some shooting. Sadly, these two young men had their marching orders to go to France, where heavy fighting was taking place. Lilian's friend went first, then one evening when all farm hands were employed gathering up the stalks of corn and tossing them together on the slowly moving wagon, Nielia's young lieutenant appeared on the side of the field. When the farmer went to asked him what he wanted he said he would like to speak to Nielia, or "Joe", as she was nicknamed. The lieutenant asked her if she would go out to dinner with him, and when she explained that she was working he said he had to go to fight in two days time and wanted to be engaged to her before he left! She was startled, but too young to appreciate that his request was just for her. She suggested that Lilian would be free, which made him quite angry, saying "I don't want her, it's you I love!" This did not touch Nielia at all, the work of the harvest called her much more, and the crestfallen young lieutenant left the field. In later years, as she matured, Nielia realized how insensitive she had been to a young man on the brink of fighting for King and country and her.

'After a period of training, Nielia and Lilian were moved to a girls' hostel in Chichester to await orders. It was very spartan, with prayers before breakfast, but they were allowed out at certain times to walk around "Chichi" as it was called in the war years. Otherwise, they had to work in the hostel's office.

'After a short time, Nielia and Lilian were billeted in Steyning, in a terraced cottage on the main street, and had to cycle to an agricultural farm to do potato lifting from 8am to 5pm. This was very hard work for girls who were not bred to it. They had to follow the uplifted furrows of potatoes, gather them into large "trugs" and throw them into the moving cart. They had a short break from noon to 1pm to eat their sandwiches and rest. Then on again until 5pm when they cycled back to the cottage and threw themselves on their beds absolutely tired out with all the bending and heavy lifting. However, they had a super landlady who was like a mother to them, prepared nice meals and did their washing.

'After about three to four weeks of this, Nielia and Lilian were each sent to different places to work according to requests for land girls. Nielia went to a doctor's large house and grounds where she had to milk the one the cow they kept, help in the vegetable garden, and see to the doctor's horse and trap. Knowing nothing much about the art of vegetable gardening, when she was asked by the cook to bring in certain vegetables, including sprouts, she dug up the whole root and carted it round to the kitchen door. Bursts of laughter greeted her. Thank goodness the cook and kitchen maid thought it hilarious!

'Another time, having harnessed the horse to the doctor's trap, Nielia led it round from the stables to the front door to await the

doctor's arrival from his surgery to go on his rounds and she failed to negotiate the wall of the house. Unbeknown to her, she dented a side lamp on the trap, which of course the rather testy doctor noticed. Nielia stood there trembling at his reaction but he calmed down and said "Oh, never mind". The rather woebegone face of his land girl softened his heart. They were, however, pleased with the increased milk supply and the deft handling of their cow.

'Unfortunately, Nielia's landlady in a little cottage nearby had a sailor son home on leave and he had 'flu. Nielia caught it and was very ill, so much so that they contacted her mother, who came over from Worthing to see her with her brother Cyril who was on leave. While there Nielia's mother "spilled the beans" about Nielia's age and school situation to the doctor and his wife, who advised her to apply to get out of the Land Army and go back to school.

'When she was well again Nielia would not do this. She was granted some sick leave, went home to get strong again, and from there went to a farm in Sompting with a very large dairy herd where they needed help for the "cowman", as he was called. The owners were a brother and sister called Arthur and Mary Lee, and the sister was an old school friend of Nielia's eldest sister Cicely. So Nielia was treated as one of the family by Arthur and Mary.



Nielia feeding a goat [image from author's collection]

'Arthur was exempt from the Army in order to run the much-needed farms in those war years. Nielia was introduced to the cowman, who was also exempt but scathing at the idea of a *girl* being of any use to him with twenty-eight cows to milk! However, as this was a job that Nielia could do well his opinion of her soon changed and he kindly rattled a tin on a long pole under her window at 4am in case she ignored her alarm clock. When she appeared in the cowshed he allocated certain cows for her to milk, and sometimes handed her a piece of cake that his wife had made. This went down well, as the early morning milking was done on an empty stomach. Breakfast was about 8am, after Nielia had separated the milk through several pieces of muslin before putting it in the churns, and the churns had to be picked up to go to Lancing station.

'By that time Nielia was very hungry but almost too tired to eat. However, after resting and making her bed she took the herd out of the farm gate and across to another gate leading to the pasture where they grazed, and then cleaned out the cow stalls. Then she had to clean the dairy room and scald the muslins, by which time it was midday and time to go to the house for lunch.

'After lunch, the herd then had to be recalled to the gate by making a special noise "carrup! carrup!" known only by the cowman. Finally, the slow process with the cows was accomplished and they were got into their stalls. Each cow had a name and they all knew their own stalls. Once this was done the round of milking was again done and the milk was collected for the station as before. Then more cleaning out, but this time the herd was not put back into the fields but given cut up swedes, which the farmer loaded into separate containers from a stockpile. Nielia carried the containers on her shoulders into the cow house and placed the swedes in troughs in front of each cow.

'This of course was time consuming and heavy work and it soon got to 5pm, at which time the cow man let her "knock off" and go into the house, where she had a wash and rest in her room until supper time. Immediately after that it was bed for her, and sleep as soon as her head touched the pillow. Before long, the whole process started again with the dreaded noise of a tin rattling on a pole outside her window.

'Once, on a half day and night's leave, she cycled into Worthing to be with her mother and elder brother, who was then on leave. Being wintertime, it got dark early, and as she could not leave half-way through the milking it was 3pm before she was on the Sompting Road and making for Upper Beeding. She took a wrong turning so by the time she got to Shoreham bridge it was quite dark and her oil lamp had given out.

'Undaunted, she dismounted, showed her pass to the attendant at the bridge, and started to walk the distance to Worthing, to the

house on the Esplanade where her mother lived. Half way along a group of Tommies, as the ranks in the Army were called, loomed out of the darkness towards her, but they were all kind and friendly to her. One offered to walk to her house with her. She agreed and he behaved quite well but begged her to come out of the house once she had seen her mother. When she got in, her brother, being an officer, in the Royal Flying Corps, went out and sent the Tommie off with a flea in his ear.

'Nielia was exhausted and hungry. After a warm-up and a meal, she let her mother tuck her up in bed and fell asleep. The next morning her brother had to return to his flying school, but first he arranged for her to return on the train by putting her bicycle in the guard's van so that all she had to do was cycle from Lancing station. She never saw her brother again.

'After he returned to the flying school, Victor and three young men from the school were sailing on the Norfolk Broads when their boat capsized. The others swam to the shore but Victor was carried by the current and his legs caught in the weeds and he drowned. Poor Annie and Cicely went to Norwich but it was five days before his body was found. He was buried in a churchyard in Norwich with a military funeral.

'When the Armistice was signed, everyone, including inhabitants, soldiers and land girls danced in the streets, shouting, laughing, singing and holding hands, sometimes even crying for joy that the awful fighting and carnage were over.'

Nielia left the Land Army and it was arranged that she should train in cake-making. She writes:

'Nielia left the Lee's farm and at seventeen and a half went to Canterbury to train in cake-making and tea room work in an old-world place within a few steps of Canterbury Cathedral, in Mercery Lane. Here again, she was under age by six months, all the other girls being several years older. However, she got on very well and adapted to the training, making all sorts of lovely cakes and waiting in the old-world tea room. Nielia did well in both spheres and her cakes were displayed on the ground floor of the tea room, which had a Dickensian bay window and a glass counter in the shop with a lady to serve.

'Nielia still had her long plait of auburn hair pinned up to belie her age, but one day she followed the fashion that was prevalent, went into the hairdresser next door and had it "bobbed", as it was called. When serving coffee in the tea room where, from 10am to midday, all the crowd of gentlemen farmers and some army officers gathered, she was hailed with "Oohs" and "Ahs" of approval of her new hair style.

'She learned to ice and decorate cakes and make orders for customers' Christenings and birthdays, but curiously never a wedding cake. Probably so many young men had been killed in action that there were not many weddings during her six months training.'

After her training Nielia went home and fell in love with a young man who was living as a paying guest in the house of her aunt. He was called Leslie Hamilton and he owned a large nursery in Cheshunt. The day after they became engaged he was killed in a motor bike accident and the aunt was notified by the police. Nielia writes:

'She in turn let Nielia's mother know late that night when Nielia was in bed asleep. In the morning she gently broke the news to Nielia, who could not believe it. She went to the hospital and asked to see his body. She was taken to the mortuary and saw him on the cold slab. In tears she kissed his forehead and stumbled out of the hospital and so home. All this following on the war deaths was hard to bear.

'However, after some time Nielia bounced back up again. She joined the Worthing Rowing Club at Splash Point, Worthing, and two dance clubs and enjoyed life again.'

Nielia met her future husband, Jack Heath, when she went into the Westminster Bank in Chapel Road, Worthing where he was a cashier. They fell in love and married on 28 January 1928. She writes:

'In those days, bank clerks were not allowed to marry until they received a certain salary – about £4-£5 a week. And once married, their wives were not permitted to work at their own jobs. Consequently, there were no more Boat Club and Dance Club activities for Nielia.'

Jack and Nielia rented a bungalow on the Arundel Road at Durrington called "Ferndale" and she had a little terrier called "Binkie" that she loved very much and walked on the Downs. They played tennis with friends and Nielia was much in demand to make cakes for her local Church dances.



Nielia and Binkie on Jack's motorbike [author's collection]

In due course Nielia became pregnant and writes of her first baby:

'Nielia duly had a son in the nursing home in East Worthing at about midnight on 14 April, 1931. A beautiful little angelic baby whom they named Cyril after Nielia's beloved brother, and Edward (Jack's middle name). He was later christened at St Andrew's in Worthing, where Nielia and Jack had been married, with just the Godmother, Ursula Hampden-Pye, Ursula's mother and Nielia's mother.'

Nielia writes about the birth of her daughter on 24 October 1933 two and a half years later:

'A tiny baby girl was born weighing only five pounds. She was quite difficult to rear, but rear her Nielia did, against all odds. She was christened Pamela Mary and her little brother adored her, let her pull his hair, and comforted her if she cried.'

I was actually christened at home because I was not expected to live long enough to get to church. Nielia's love and determination were boundless!

After another two and a half years Nielia, Jack and the children were living in a house called "Mollycot" in West End Way, Lancing. There they had another son, Geoffrey David, always known as David. He was born early on 9 April 1936 because Pam had suffered an accident and Nielia went into labour. Dr Gusterson, who had delivered both Cyril and me, could not get there in time, so Jack had to deliver his second baby son. Dr Gusterson was Nielia's GP and he and his wife were lifelong friends of Jack and Nielia. Later he founded St Barnabas Hospice in Worthing.



Nielia and Jack 1936 [author's collection]



Cyril, Pam and David 1938 at 'Mollycot'
 [author's collection]

Nielia's mother Annie caught a chill one cold night when she was babysitting the three children. This developed into pneumonia and pleurisy and she died on 19 December 1937. Nielia was devastated.

In 1939 Jack was sent to the Westminster Bank in Winton, Bournemouth and of course Nielia and the children went too. There we lived in St Luke's Road and Nielia made friends with Margery Pinch who had two children at that time. In the early days of the Second World War we used to spend our holidays at Mill Farm in Witchampton.



Nielia milking at Mill Farm 1940 [author's collection]

Nielia writes about the outbreak of war:

'Hitler was causing a lot of trouble in Europe, and finally Britain declared war on Germany after Hitler's army invaded Poland. Nielia was thirty-eight and Margery was thirty. They both had to register for war work, and then for exemption because they both had young families to care for. Jack was exempted from joining up because one or two people were needed to continue running the bank, so he joined the Home Guard and became a Gas Sergeant.

'Jack spent most nights guarding the cliff-tops in a concrete "pill box" and still had to do a full day's work the next day. He spent other evenings lecturing the recruits about gas masks and the types of war gasses that were used.'

Much to Nielia's dismay, Jack also put us three children into his gas chamber and let off tear gas. I imagine he was trying to make us confident in the safety of our gas masks. Jack also did fire watching at night, I don't know when he ever slept. One night a land mine, a one thousand pound bomb dropped by parachute, floated down the road. Nielia writes:

'Nielia and her family moved their beds downstairs to one of their two sitting rooms and slept there to be on-hand in case of air attacks. In the middle of one night, Nielia was awakened by a loud slow engine noise that she guessed was a German plane. She awoke Jack and he immediately put the children on the floor and pulled the mattresses over them and a pillow over his own head. Nielia reached to the double bed to get a pillow when there was a terrific explosion and the sky was vivid with all colours of the rainbow. She gazed at it in wonder before taking cover herself. It was a landmine, and it had completely demolished the nearby council school. Jack and the children felt sick and shivery the next morning and the children could not go to school, but Nielia felt all right. Sometime later Nielia was suddenly very sick but quickly recovered because she had a young family to look after.'

I remember that all our ceilings had come down and all our windows had blown out. Cyril was excited and ran about in the broken glass in his bare feet to see all the damage, and got thoroughly told off.

After this, Nielia writes:

'This incident caused Jack to buy an Anderson shelter, which was a large reinforced steel shelter in the form of an upturned "U". It contained three bunks for the children and a mattress on the floor for Jack and Nielia when necessary. They removed all the furniture from a downstairs room that had been used as a bedroom to make space for the shelter and the whole shelter was reinforced on the outside with sandbags. The shelter gave the family comparative peace of mind during many more awful air raids, which they previously endured crouched under the staircase for protection. One night when the air raids were very bad, the children were very frightened and Jack was naturally also frightened for his wife and family. Nielia started saying the Lord's Prayer and praying for His help in their plight. The children joined in the prayers, and the night raiders passed over to bomb some unfortunate houses and districts further away.'

For six weeks in the summer of 1942 Nielia and Margery took us children and rented a wooden bungalow, it was actually an old army spider hut, on the Downs above Swanage. It was lovely. Jack came over at the weekends. Bournemouth beach was closed and mined, but Swanage beach was open for the children to play. On 17 August Nielia went into the Westminster Bank earlier than usual to get her housekeeping because it was such a beautiful day. She joined Margery and the children on the

beach and what happened next will never be forgotten by the people of Swanage. Nielia writes about it vividly:

'The children were in and out of the water and playing at making sand castles when there was a distant noise of engines. Cyril was very mature and knowledgeable for his age. He looked across to the big hill at one end of Swanage Bay, called Ballard Down, and said urgently to his mother "Those are Messerschmitts, Mummy." Jack had trained the children to throw themselves flat on their faces if they were caught out during an air raid, and this they all did. Margery's daughter Valerie did the same, but the frightened little Geoffrey ran under the heavy railings below the parade that were put there to stop a sea attack, and he was screaming. Margery ran after him and managed to grab him and throw him flat, but in doing so she hurt herself badly on the railings.

'At that point, the Messerschmitts bore down on the parade and beach, firing at everyone, and then each dropped its single bomb. One bomb completely demolished the bank that Nielia had just been in earlier that morning, and another one fell in the sea. Nielia, Margery and their children were all right, but many of those who were on the parade were killed or injured. The Messerschmitts had mistaken a long, low building jutting into the sea for a submarine base, and that is why they bombed Swanage.

'Badly shaken, Nielia, Margery and their children made their way up the hill to the bungalow. As they passed a little post office and store near the bungalow the owner came rushing out and said that Nielia's husband Jack was on the telephone because the news had reached him in Bournemouth. Nielia told him that we were all right and Cyril went in to tell his father all the details with great pride. Imagine Jack's feelings.'

Immediately after the war Nielia went to Harley Street and the Middlesex Hospital for several months. She underwent surgery to have the lymph glands removed from the calf of her swollen leg and covered with skin grafts. She was always pleased with the results, but the leg was still a heavy burden to her. We had a large wooden single storey building in the back garden which we used as a playroom, and Nielia's sense of fun and zest for life soon reasserted itself. She writes about this time in her life:

'However, she made the best of it and made life more jolly for the children by letting them give big parties in the playroom. The catering was not easy because of food rationing, but Nielia bartered their tea ration in exchange for other things with friends. These parties were made more successful with Jack's help. He played records while the children danced up and down.

'Later, Nielia gave a "grown ups" party in the playroom with competitions and dancing. Her refreshments were very much appreciated by her friends, and by a couple of Army Officers who

were invited as friends of her hairdresser. They were divine dancers, so once again Nielia enjoyed herself'

Nielia always encouraged her children to follow their dreams. When we grew up Cyril married very young and stayed in Bournemouth, David married and went to live in the south of France, and I travelled the world and lived in Hong Kong and Baghdad before settling down and getting married. Between us we gave her seven grandsons and several great grandchildren. Once again she was in her element helping out with babies.

Sadly, Jack had to slow down as he suffered a coronary in his middle fifties, but he lived a full life until he died of a stroke on 21 December 1969. Nielia cared for him wonderfully for his last few months and seemed fulfilled in this new role, although she never got over his death during the thirty years that she was a widow.

In the last of Nielia's "Memories" that she wrote, she recalls her worsening arthritis and the friendships she still enjoyed:

'Alas, she got worse, and finally after walking with sticks, had to use a high elbow zimmer to move about the flat. Sometimes the super young churchwardens, John and Martin Slade, drove her across the road to the church, or wheeled her across in a chair. Finally, the vicar, a super man named Anthony Lane, and his wife Margery, brought her Holy Communion once a month and had a little chat. Beryl, the mother of John and Martin, came up every Sunday after church and brought cakes and coffee and had a chat. One morning, when she got up, she could not put her legs to the ground, but managed to hobble to her electric chair.'

In 1992 Nielia gave up her flat, and her independence, and moved to St Ives Nursing Home in Southwick where Philip and I were living. Six years later she moved to Drumconner Nursing Home in Lancing, no more than a quarter of a mile from "Mollycot", the house in West End Way where she lived with Jack and the children before moving to Bournemouth in 1939. She died in Lancing just after her ninety-seventh birthday on 17 December 1998. She is very much missed.

Conclusion

Despite what my mother says in her "Memories of Nielia" about the celebrations at the end of the First World War, all my life I have remembered her saying how difficult it had been for her and her mother and sisters to celebrate with everyone else at the time of the Armistice. Today, I welcome this opportunity to celebrate the life of Nielia who served her country as surely as her brothers Cyril and Victor Harrison, and deserves to be remembered.

With thanks to my brother David Heath who painstakingly typed up and edited "Memories of Nielia", and my brother Cyril Heath who provided some of the photos.