

Part I  
Archaeology and Travel  
1888-1914

As a boy T.E. Always thought he was going to do great things, both 'active and reflective' - 'I hadn't learnt you can't do both' - and determined to achieve both.

*Note by Liddell Hart on a conversation  
with Lawrence, 1 August 1933*

-----

*Thomas Edward Lawrence, known to his family as 'Ned', was born in the early hours of 16th August 1888 at a house rented by his parents on the outskirts of Tremadoc in Caernarvonshire. He would remember nothing of this Welsh birthplace since the family moved north to Kirkcudbright in Scotland when he was only thirteen months old. A brother, Montagu Robert ('Bob'), was three years older than Ned. Another boy, William George, was born soon after the family had settled in Scotland.*

*Before Ned was three years old the house in Kirkcudbright was put up for sale by its owners and the Lawrences had to move again. After a brief stay in the Isle of Man they travelled to Jersey and set about finding a new home on the nearby coast of Brittany. In December 1891 they rented a secluded house called the Chalet du Vallon in Dinard. It was here that T. E. Lawrence first began to explore the world outside his home.*

Ch. 1  
p. 20

CHAPTER 1  
Childhood

December 1891 – October 1907

DURING the closing decades of the nineteenth century Dinard grew from a small fishing village to a substantial town. The 1894 *Baedeker* described it as 'a modern village, picturesquely situated on a rocky promontory on the left bank of the estuary of the Rance, opposite St. Malo and St. Servan. It has two beaches, with sea-baths, the chief of which, with the Casino, is on the small bay nearest the sea . . . The neighbouring heights, sprinkled with villas, command a pleasing view of the bay of St. Malo, with its islets and reefs . . . Dinard is a more agreeable residence than St. Malo, as it offers various sheltered promenades.'<sup>1</sup>

At that time British travellers found the cost of living in France very low, and many English people settled in Brittany where they could live comfortably on a modest income. By the 1890s there were several large British communities near St Malo, for example at Dinan ten miles up the Rance and at St Servan. The school in Dinan had accepted English pupils since 1820 and published an English-language prospectus.

Dinard, however, had grown primarily as a fashionable resort, popular with wealthy visitors who spent the summer in its villas and first-class hotels. Only a few British families lived there all the year round, but those who did had no need to learn French, since English was generally understood by the local tradespeople.

The Chalet du Vallon was a comfortable house built in 1885. Although near to the town centre, it stood in a secluded garden approached by a long walled path. There were few immediate neighbours, but a school, the Ecole Sainte-Marie, was conveniently close. The Lawrence family seemed to prefer this seclusion to the social life of Dinard. Although the mother, Sarah Lawrence, rarely left the house, neighbours found her a pleasant acquaintance. The father, Thomas Lawrence, was more often to be seen. He was a quiet, reserved man who enjoyed walking and cycling, and probably sailing too, since Lawrence later recalled that 'my father had yachts and used to take me with him from my fourth year'.<sup>2</sup> Children of English and French families in Dinard mixed freely together and were welcomed in each others' homes. The daughter of a neighbouring English family, the Herberts, often played with the Lawrence brothers. The Lawrences met one French family, their landlords the Chaignons, very frequently. Here a lasting friendship gradually developed, which would later prove valuable to the English boys. p.22

Ned and Bob Lawrence had an English governess who gave them elementary schooling, which was taken very seriously in the household. These lessons were supplemented when Lawrence was five by an hour's schooling each morning at the Ecole Sainte-Marie. Physical education was also considered important, and Lawrence with three other English boys took the steam ferry twice a week across the Rance to St Malo where they attended a private gymnastics class.

At the end of the nineteenth century St Malo was still an ancient

fortified town (much of it had to be rebuilt after the Second World War). Ch. 1  
Lawrence can scarcely have forgotten the view from Dinard of its imposing ramparts – defences which had successfully resisted an assault by Marlborough's army. Its narrow streets and ancient buildings had changed little since the time when it had been a flourishing port, the home of Jacques Cartier and of the famous *corsaire* Surcouf. Memories of this fairy-tale stronghold may well have kindled his later interest in history and military architecture.

When Mrs Lawrence was expecting a fourth child, in 1893, the family travelled to Jersey for the birth. There was concern that a son born in Dinard might eventually be called up for French military service. The child was a boy and was christened Frank Helier, the second name marking his birthplace.

In the spring of 1894, when Bob was eight and Ned nearly six, the family moved to England. Their new home, Langley Lodge, was set in a private estate near the edge of the New Forest, just over a mile south-east of the main Totton to Lyndhurst road. The surroundings were no less beautiful than at Dinard, and the house was even more isolated. To the north and west lay forest, Southampton Water was a short distance away to the east, and to the south there was sparsely populated countryside as far as the Solent shore nine miles away. The Lawrences were very remote from the mainstream of English life. Southampton, the closest large town, was more than an hour's journey distant.<sup>3</sup>

While the children were now to grow up in English surroundings, Lawrence's years in France would have a great influence upon his attitude towards foreign travel. It was in France that he had begun to form ideas about the world beyond his family. His experience had not been that of a tourist, screened from the French in English-speaking hotels; nor had he been like the children of diplomats and colonial administrators, generally proud of their isolation in a British compound. He had lived in France on equal terms with a foreign people; he had spoken their language and had sensed no barrier. Before he was old enough to become mistrustful, he knew that he was welcomed by both French and English families. As a result he never felt the apprehension about living in foreign countries that was so common among the British. In the late Victorian era the English overseas were generally insular, class-conscious and nationalist. Lawrence himself would later write that they reinforced their national character 'by memories of the life they have left. In reaction against their foreign surroundings they take refuge in the England that was theirs. They assert their aloofness, their immunity, the more vividly for their loneliness and weakness. They impress the peoples among whom they live by reaction, by giving them an ensample of the complete Englishman, the foreigner intact.'<sup>4</sup> p. 23

Integration while overseas was rare, and those who sought the company of foreigners rather than their British peers risked denunciation for 'going native'. Lawrence was to become one of those Englishmen who, in his own words, 'feel deeply the influence of the native people, and try to adjust themselves to its atmosphere and spirit. To fit themselves modestly into the picture they suppress all in them that would be discordant with local habits and colours. They imitate the native as far as possible, and so avoid friction in their daily life . . . They are like the people but not of the people'.<sup>5</sup>

It was in this latter spirit that Lawrence would return during his student years to visit French families, and would tour on his bicycle in France as confidently as in England. The series of journeys which thus began would eventually take him to Palestine and Syria; yet the style of his travelling would remain the same. Before going to the Middle East he would learn Arabic, and he would accept enthusiastically the village hospitality offered to Arab travellers. As a result he was to gain a better knowledge of Arab ways than most British visitors. This in turn would help him to share the life of the bedouin tribesmen while working as a British liaison officer with the Arab forces during the First World War.

Ch. 1

The move from Dinard to the New Forest was a happy one for the Lawrence children. Encouraged by their father, they spent three summers in open-air pursuits. From the shore of Southampton Water they could look across at the commercial shipping in Southampton and the many passenger liners which linked this great port to every part of the globe. Sometimes the boys were taken to Lepe where they could see the yachts racing off Cowes. As in France, they made friends with local children, notably the Lauries, whose father was agent of a neighbouring estate.

p. 24

A governess was again employed to give lessons to the boys, but by the autumn of 1896 when Bob was nearly eleven, there was a need for more conventional schooling. The family could not afford boarding-school fees for four sons, and there were no good schools within easy reach so, in the summer of 1896, the Lawrences moved to Oxford where the boys could receive an excellent education at little cost.

Ned Lawrence was just eight when he left the New Forest. By then he had developed a liking for the countryside and outdoor activities. As an adult he would often say that his favourite place was London, yet many years later when he bought a house of his own it was to be almost as isolated as Langley Lodge.

The Lawrences' new home in Oxford, 2 Polstead Road, was a large semi-detached red-brick house built about six years previously. Unlike Langley Lodge it was surrounded by streets of suburban houses, all dating from the great expansion of north Oxford during the last years of the nineteenth century. Bob and Ned Lawrence were enrolled at the City of Oxford High School for Boys in the autumn of 1896. The school had been founded fifteen years earlier by the City Corporation and the University, with the 'hope that the best education may be provided . . . both for those who will leave for business or the English Civil Service, at about the age of fifteen, and those who will stay on till it is time and enter the University.'<sup>6</sup> Although the Oxford Corporation had originally proposed to offer fifty scholarships, few were awarded. As a result, the great majority of the 150 pupils at the school in Lawrence's time were fee-paying and came from middle-class families.<sup>7</sup> The headmaster, A. W. Cave, had built up a considerable academic reputation for the school, and of the fourteen boys in Lawrence's year, seven would go on to the University.

Despite its success the school suffered from constant financial difficulties. As a result science teaching was seriously weakened by a lack of facilities, and there was no formal science specialisation in the upper forms. The school's great strength was in classics, taught on traditional lines. A Board of Education report in 1906 stated that 'in languages they might be described as old fashioned . . . The grammar, which is

systematically taught from text-books, is regarded as of more importance in itself than is consistent with the ideas of modern educational theorists.<sup>8</sup>

Recollections of Lawrence during this period must be treated with caution. All were written at least thirty years later when he had become famous. One impression, however, by the teacher who had been his form master in the Upper IVth in 1901, reads so like a school report that it may even have been based on contemporary notes:

'I found him quiet, very able at Form work, but lacking the enthusiasm which one generally associates with clever boys. The ordinary Form work was no trouble to him. The work of the Form in my day was mapped out for the special behoof of the under-dog. Lawrence did not come into this category and escaped any special direction or correction that might have been required.

'His mind was not always on Form work, although he gave no trouble. He was evidently forming resolutions as to the conduct of life, for he had already begun to criticise his elders, an awkward and hindering habit in any youth . . . He detested "side" and was severe in his looks on any boy who gave way to "swank".

'He had a strong sense of humour, which must have saved him many times in troublesome boyish days. He knew no fear and we all wondered why he did not play games . . . When the free-wheel bicycle came into use, he was the first boy in the School to have one and to have the first three-speed gear. He was anxious too, so I have been informed, to see whether a combination of a two-speed arrangement in the gear-wheel was possible if there could be at the same time a three-speed in the hub. It shews his interest in mechanical things . . .

'He was an enthusiast on physical excellence in human beings, although his own build was not as handsome as that of his brother Will, or as upright, tall and straight as that of his elder brother M.R.

'He was unlike the boys of his age and time, for even in his schooldays he had a strong leaning towards the Stoics, an apparent indifference towards pleasure or pain.<sup>9</sup>

Lawrence disliked organised games. He later wrote: 'You know, I've never, since I was able to think, played any game through to the end. At school they used to stick me into football or cricket teams, and always I would trickle away from the field before the match ended.'<sup>10</sup> Many years afterwards, when Robert Graves wrote in the draft of his biography of Lawrence that organised games were 'too tame for him', Lawrence emended the passage to read: 'He took no interest in organised games because they were organised, because they had rules, because they had results. He will never compete – in anything.'<sup>11</sup> It is clear that the objection was to competition rather than to physical exertion; Lawrence was good at gymnastics and an accomplished cyclist. His fitness showed when he was made to take part in school athletics. In 1904 he was third (of fifteen) in the two-mile cycle race.<sup>12</sup> His attitude towards games is shown in articles which appeared in the school magazine in the spring of 1904. The first, signed 'Goalpost', is titled 'Playground Football' (it is almost certainly by Lawrence since a very similar article called 'Playground Cricket' in the next issue is signed by him): 'we do not score by goals. As a matter of fact there seems to be only one goal in the place where we play the game, so that it would be rather difficult to know whose goal it was. The chief way to score is to kick the ball against a window; this scores the price of the

window. It is rather expensive to be a good player. The method of play is entirely different from ordinary football, although that may seem a trivial matter to some. It is not necessary to kick the ball; you can kick any one else; it will do just as well, unless they are bigger than you, but there you have to take your chance.<sup>13</sup> Ch. 1

The second article, 'Playground Cricket', is more moderate: 'The stumps deserve mention. A wooden wall was improvised for wicket-keeper, and three stumps were chalked upon it, in white and blue. These having slightly faded a second pair in white was applied to the first, coinciding in width but not in height; consequently six inches of blue overtop the white bails. The profound wisdom which dictated this may not appear at first sight, but the fact is that when big boys are bowling the blue is counted as the top; when big boys are batting the stumps do not extend beyond the white. That shows our wisdom. Unfortunately some facetious individual (we would duck him if we could find him) has added four more white stumps, and four more bails, which slightly disconcert the batsmen, but greatly improve the chances of the bowler.'<sup>14</sup>

Evidently he was well-liked, and despite his eccentric attitude to games no one could regard him as a weakling. A classmate later wrote: 'How often a group of us, absorbed in some discussion of cricket or football, would gradually become conscious of a silent addition to our number, contemplating us with that provocative smile of his, till one of us would seize him and close in friendly wrestling, to feel even then the strength of those iron wrists.'<sup>15</sup>

In addition to their academic education, the Lawrence boys received a strongly religious upbringing. Both parents were convinced Christians, though their faith had a different emphasis. Lawrence's youngest brother (Arnold Walter, a fifth son who was born in 1900) has written: 'My mother . . . held religious convictions profoundly. She totally accepted the tenets of her brand of Christianity and had no doubt they constituted a complete code of binding rules for conduct; but she could only in small part share in my father's emotional, almost mystical, religious feeling'.<sup>16</sup> She was 'religious by upbringing (a fundamentalist) not by temperament. She went to church only at 11 a.m. on Sundays, with the rest of the family, after "morning prayers" by my father, who was more religious-minded.'<sup>17</sup> p. 27

Since moving to Oxford the family had worshipped at St Aldate's, opposite Christ Church, even though several other churches were closer to their home in Polstead Road. The rector of St Aldate's, Canon A. M. W. Christopher, was a prominent evangelical, whereas many other Oxford priests supported the High Church movement.

Most children received a religious upbringing at that time, but Lawrence was an unusually receptive pupil. Religious instruction gave him ethical values and a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures. He also began during childhood to study the geography and history of the Bible lands.

In the summer of 1904, at the end of his sixteenth year, he sat the Junior Oxford Local Examinations. The mark-sheets survive, providing an interesting record of Lawrence's ability (the first of the two marks given below shows his performance; the second is the mark awarded to the top candidate in that subject). He gained a distinction in Religious Knowledge (162:188), and passed in Arithmetic (77:100), History (112: 156), English language and literature (210:269), Geography (93:140), Latin (204:341),

Greek (186:353), French (205:293), and Mathematics, i.e. algebra and geometry, (122:321). His overall total was excellent, and he was placed in the First Class. Of the 6,720 candidates that year, only seventy-nine obtained a higher total.<sup>18</sup> Ch. 1

Despite this achievement, his contemporaries did not see him as a committed intellectual. According to 'Scroggs' Beeson, his closest schoolfriend, Lawrence 'left no impression of unusual erudition. A happy faculty of perceiving and ingenuously acclaiming new features in the already familiar made him appear rather as novice than mentor.'<sup>19</sup>

It was probably in the autumn of 1904 that Lawrence hurt his leg in a playground scuffle. At first he did not think the injury serious and continued the day's lessons despite considerable pain. His brothers wheeled him home on a bicycle and when the doctor was called, the leg was found to be broken just above the ankle. It took a long time to mend and as a result he missed the rest of term. p. 28

During his convalescence he amused himself by extensive reading, and also by copying medieval designs in poker work (then a popular technique: patterns were burned on wood using specially shaped 'points' heated by a 'poker machine'). The works he read were probably on history and archaeology. According to his mother he had bought two second-hand books on Layard's excavations at Nineveh, and knew them almost by heart. It may have been these which first attracted him to archaeology, although he had begun to collect rubbings from medieval church brasses a year or two earlier. By the age of fifteen he was 'best known, almost to notoriety, for his archaeological rummagings (with C. F. C. Beeson) in and about Oxford.'<sup>20</sup> Beeson records that their friendship centred on a shared interest in archaeological research, 'undertaken by Lawrence with a passionate absorption beside which my urge was more akin to the curiosity of a magpie in a Baghdad bazaar.'<sup>21</sup> During their later years at school the two friends cycled over a wide area in search of brass rubbings.

This interest in medieval artefacts took them to Oxford's Ashmolean Museum, where they met the Assistant Keeper, C. F. Bell. He saw them as an inseparable pair, devoting themselves to the kind of antiquarian pursuits recorded in the Annual Report of the Museum for 1906: 'During the past year the considerable disturbance of the ground for the foundations of new buildings in the city, at Hertford College, Jesus College, St. John's College, in High Street and in the Cornmarket on the sites of the Civet Cat and Leopold Arms, has produced many remains of pottery and glass of the 16th and 17th centuries. Owing to the generosity of Mr. E. Lawrence and also C. F. C. Beeson, who have by incessant watchfulness secured everything of antiquarian value which has been found, the most interesting finds have been added to the local antiquities in the Museum.'<sup>22</sup> It is not unusual for teenagers to take up archaeology with a passionate interest; many people who later become professional archaeologists are first drawn to the subject when fifteen or sixteen. Mindful of this, museum staff welcome young enthusiasts, who are often willing to approach the dullest task with dedication. Given sympathetic guidance, their contributions to museum work can be extremely helpful. This was certainly true in Lawrence's case.

During Lawrence's later years at school other factors began to shape his personality. The first was physical: unlike his four brothers he stopped p. 29

growing when he reached 5ft 5ins. This shortness in stature was probably inherited from his mother, although she liked to claim that it had been caused in some way when he broke his leg. Short stature can have an influence on personality, and it is true that Lawrence was apt to behave in an unconventional fashion, perhaps in order to be noticed. This characteristic would persist in one form or another throughout his life. He also developed an almost obsessive will-power, and while still at school began to experiment with self-imposed tests of physical endurance, going for long walks and cycle rides, and spending periods without food and sleep. These activities set him apart from other boys.

There was another factor which now led him to distance himself from his contemporaries. During early childhood he had become aware that there was something irregular about the circumstances of his birth. It has been suggested that his suspicions were first roused when he overheard part of a conversation between his father and a solicitor.<sup>23</sup> He probably added gradually to this knowledge over several years, and by his own account he had concluded, before he was ten, that he must be illegitimate. At that age, however, he could not possibly have understood the full implications.<sup>24</sup>

Lawrence was the only one of the brothers who discovered this secret, and as he passed through adolescence he must have become increasingly aware of the social rejection that would follow if the truth were revealed. He was surrounded by the high-minded morality of Victorian Oxford, where bastardy would have been an unthinkable disgrace. His knowledge made him a party to his parents' deception, yet he said nothing to them or to his brothers about what he suspected.

All Lawrence's written statements about his illegitimacy were made much later, after he had heard his mother's version of the facts.\* There is therefore nothing to justify the common assumption that since childhood he had known the full story. On the contrary, such evidence as there is suggests that he did not. Notes written by C. F. Bell indicate that while Lawrence knew before the First World War that he was illegitimate, he had completely misconstrued his parents' situation.

Bell's notes are in general accurate apart from some trivial errors in dates, yet they contain an account of Lawrence's family background, apparently derived from Lawrence himself, that is wholly incorrect. Bell wrote: 'the details . . . imparted by T. E. Lawrence to Hogarth [Keeper of the Ashmolean 1908-27] and repeated by him to me . . . amounted to this: that the "father", Mr. Lawrence, who was known in Oxford, was *not* the boys' father at all, but that Mrs. Lawrence, whom we all knew . . . *was* their mother . . . Mrs. Lawrence had been governess in the house of a man of some position who was the father of the boys – or at least of the elder ones. Mr. Lawrence married her later and adopted the children.'<sup>25</sup>

p. 30

Since Lawrence's parents had told him nothing directly, and behaved as a normal married couple, this might have seemed the most obvious explanation of the scattered allusions he had heard. Indeed the true facts, which his mother told him in 1919, would have seemed far less probable given the *mores* of the time.

Whatever the extent of his knowledge, it is clear that during ado-

---

\* Following his father's death in 1919. As it is uncertain how much Lawrence discovered about his ancestry during his childhood, the essential facts are set out in Appendix I.

lence he knew that he was illegitimate. This deprived him of the sense of status and security which most children of his social class would have drawn from their family background and ancestry. As a result he would have to build up his own identity and self-esteem through personal achievement and moral integrity. When considering other ways in which knowledge of his illegitimacy may have influenced his development, it is important to bear in mind that he might not have believed, before 1919, that Mr Lawrence was actually his father. This could help to explain why Lawrence's remarks about his parents suggest that he had felt much stronger emotional ties with his mother than with his father. Ch. 1

The detachment shown in references to his father is all the more surprising since Mr Lawrence lived on private means and was therefore usually at home. While the boys' mother was busy running a large household, their father spent a good deal of time with them and was responsible for many of the interests they developed. In Arnold Lawrence's words: 'his influence can scarcely be overestimated. He was a skilled photographer – his camera is in the Oxford Museum of the History of Science; a handyman – and taught his children carpentry; he regularly bought the best bicycle of next year's model and liked riding 100 miles a day. He knew French grammatically, and in old age quoted Horace to express his own sentiments, and a line of Homer for its metrical felicity. He was interested in current affairs and church architecture; his best friend, H. T. Inman, was author of *Near Oxford* – an excellent guidebook to churches'.<sup>26</sup> From his father Lawrence gained skills and enthusiasms which were later to be very important in his life.

This parental influence extended much further. During his childhood Lawrence acquired certain attitudes towards life which belied the family's income of £300-£400 a year (then equivalent to a middle-rank professional salary). Mr Lawrence himself had been brought up in a wealthy landowning family where he had acquired an aristocratic disdain towards money and the necessity of working for a living. By practising a good deal of financial restraint, he was able to retain these attitudes in later life, and he passed them on, perhaps unconsciously, to his sons. Lawrence wrote home in 1911: 'I fear Father is right about us and our careers: but this idealist disregard for the good things of the world has its bright side. And to say that he had five sons, none making money, would be a glorious boast – from my point of view at least.'<sup>27</sup> p. 31

In the tradition of the leisured classes, Mr Lawrence had learned to fill his days with absorbing pastimes. This attitude affected his sons, and Lawrence would always retain an aristocratic habit of seeking fulfilment chiefly in his own pursuits. The lives of all five brothers show an indifference towards the kind of career ambition that would normally motivate men in their social and financial position. Although Lawrence said little about his father, the values he inherited from this tall, gentle, unobtrusive figure were to influence him greatly.<sup>28</sup>

The contrast between Lawrence's father and mother was considerable. Mrs Lawrence's sons knew little about her background, but Lawrence himself later found out that she too had been an illegitimate child. She had been brought up in Perthshire and on the Isle of Skye by her uncle, a gardener in the household of a minister of the Episcopal Church of Scotland.<sup>28A</sup> Able and intelligent, she had been taught to value education

highly. Despite her origins she acquired sufficient qualifications to seek Ch. 1  
work as a governess. This profession offered many openings to girls from  
Scotland, since the renowned qualities of the Scottish nanny were much  
appreciated by aristocratic families both in Britain and abroad. It was  
doubtless her constant encouragement which spurred her five sons to seek  
academic success.

She worked long hours to maintain the standards she felt proper for  
their household, and in his letters, Lawrence often showed concern for  
her, urging her to take more rest. The sacrifice she made for the needs of  
her family reflected an indomitable willpower, which she applied no less  
to herself than to those around her. This dominant personality brought her  
directly into conflict with Lawrence as he grew towards adulthood. He  
increasingly resented her intrusions into his private affairs, and, as he p. 32  
himself had a strong character, their relationship worsened. In 1927, when  
he had lived apart from her for many years, he wrote a letter which shows  
how deeply he was scarred by this adolescent conflict: 'Mother is rather  
wonderful: but very exciting. She is so set, so assured in mind. I think she  
"set" many years ago: perhaps before I was born. I have a terror of her  
knowing anything about my feelings, or convictions, or way of life. If she  
knew they would be damaged: violated: no longer mine. You see, she  
would not hesitate to understand them: and I do not understand them, and  
do not want to. Nor has she ever seen any of us growing: because I think  
she has not grown since we began . . . She has given me a terror of families  
and inquisitions. And yet you'll understand she is my mother, and an  
extraordinary person. Knowledge of her will prevent my ever making any  
woman a mother, and the cause of children . . . the inner conflict, which  
makes me a standing civil war, is the inevitable issue of the discordant  
natures of herself and my father, and the inflammation of strength and  
weakness which followed the uprooting of their lives and principles. They  
should not have borne children.'<sup>29</sup> The bitterness expressed in this letter  
can only reflect the feelings of his youth, since afterwards he had lived  
away from home.

At one point, probably in the autumn of 1905, tension reached such a  
pitch that Lawrence ran away. On at least two occasions he stated that this  
was 'because of trouble at home'.<sup>30</sup> The incident undoubtedly marked the  
end of his childhood dependence on his mother. Once, writing to a friend,  
he remarked that seventeen was 'the age at which I suddenly found myself.  
You may have begun a little earlier, since the being torn out of home is an  
education in itself.'<sup>31</sup>

When he ran away there were no relatives to stay with and enlistment  
was one of the few courses open to him. A local recruiting office placed  
him in the Royal Garrison Artillery (part of the Royal Artillery) as a boy  
soldier and he was posted to the Falmouth Garrison. He served for a time  
in the small sub-section which manned the fort situated on the opposite  
side of the River Fal between St Just-in-Roseland and St Mawes. At  
that date boy soldiers between fourteen and eighteen were specifically  
recruited by the Royal Artillery to serve as trumpeters. They were taught  
both trumpet and bugle and when proficient, blew the various bugle calls  
that regulated military life.

Lawrence was shocked by the brutality of the men in the RGA: 'every  
incident ended in dispute and every dispute either in the ordeal of fists (a  
forgotten art, today) or in a barrack-court-martial whose sentences were p. 33

too often mass-bullying of anyone unlike the mass . . . I cannot remember a parade during three months without a discoloured eye. Usually five or six men bore fighting damages.<sup>132</sup>

This experience must have seemed considerably worse than the problems he had run away from: 'the other fellows fought all Friday and Saturday nights and frightened me with their roughness.'<sup>133</sup> It seems that he appealed to his father for help and as a result was bought out.<sup>34</sup>

Many children rebel against their parents and run away from home in their teens; but the incident is testimony to Lawrence's self-confidence, and to the conflict of strong personalities which blocked an easier solution to this adolescent tension between mother and son. Knowledge of his illegitimacy may also have played a part in his decision to run away. He later wrote: 'My mind was not so peaceful then, for I had not tried everything, and made a final choice of the least ill.'<sup>135</sup>

After he had become famous, his mother liked to stress the harmony of their family life during his childhood; she and her eldest son therefore denied that Lawrence had ever run away from home. Lawrence himself evidently knew that it had hurt her, for he regretted mentioning it to one of his biographers, to whom he wrote: 'This is hush-hush. I should not have told you . . . I'd rather keep this out of print, please: the whole episode.'<sup>136</sup>

It was at about this time that the emphasis of Lawrence's schooling changed. In the Junior Locals two years before, he had gained barely a third of the marks of the top candidate in mathematics. As the marks were not disclosed, his school did not know this and had decided to put him up for a mathematics scholarship at the University. However when he was nearly eighteen he abruptly switched from mathematics to history. Later references in his letters show that this change was his own decision, and the matter may have been contentious. His comments about mathematics suggest that he had no liking for the subject: 'the average intelligence in a month could learn all the arithmetic that he or she will ever need thereafter, till dying day. About one person in a thousand wants to know more. I should isolate these repulsive cases and protect all other children from their contact. Mathematics are well enough for a mathematician, but for me addition, subtraction, and division, with multiplication are enough. Since I dropped maths I've never needed a log. or done an equation, or used a trig. formula'.<sup>37</sup> This dislike of mathematics may have been partly due to missing a school term when his leg was broken. The gap in his knowledge caused by such a long absence would have been a continuing handicap, since the study of maths is cumulative. But the change also reflected something in Lawrence's intellectual make-up. He would never be attracted to pure theory, whether in mathematics, philosophy, economics or politics. In the same way, though he would learn to read and speak a foreign language, he felt no need to acquire a deep knowledge of its grammar.

p. 34

Another motive for the change in subject must have been the interest in medieval history which had developed through his enthusiasm for brass-rubbing and archaeology. During his last year at school he read history books borrowed for him by his father from the library of the Oxford Union, and took private coaching from L. C. Jane, a historian whose slightly unconventional approach suited Lawrence well.

In the summer of 1906 he sat the Senior Oxford Local Examinations, a necessary step towards university entrance. While waiting for the results he set out on a bicycle tour of Brittany to visit castles and historic churches. This was the first time he had left England on his own, but he had few anxieties since his base would be the Chaignons' house in Dinard. His elder brother Bob had visited them as a paying guest two summers previously, and Lawrence was to stay with them on the same basis. He intended to spend two weeks travelling with his schoolfriend Beeson, returning to England in mid-August. In the event, however, his visit was to be extended, and he stayed on for nearly a fortnight after Beeson left.

During this holiday he wrote to his family at regular intervals, and the dozen letters which survive total more than twenty thousand words. These contemporary documents provide a much more reliable picture of Lawrence at the close of his eighteenth year than the later reminiscences of family and friends. There are remarks which bear on his relationship with members of his family; there are comments which illustrate different facets of his developing personality; and there is a good deal of material that displays his various abilities, interests and opinions.

At first sight, the letters seem curiously impersonal, and this itself must be a reflection of Lawrence's relationship with his family. He told his mother: 'you want more details of myself; I really have none to give',<sup>38</sup> and again, 'there will be no private or family messages in [this letter], although there have not been anything of the sort in any letters of mine up to the present.'<sup>39</sup> When addressing a letter to his father he wrote: 'it does not make the least difference in style, since all my letters are equally bare of personal information. The buildings I try to describe will last longer than we will, so it is only fitting that they should have the greater space.'<sup>40</sup> p. 35

Despite this reserve he shows a good deal of filial affection and much concern for his mother's health: 'Give my love to Florence [Messham, who had been his nanny and was now accompanying his mother on a holiday], and tell her to keep you strictly idle and quiet: no work. I am glad to hear that you are feeling better: by all means become quite well before you return: this trip is intended to set you up.'<sup>41</sup>

There are also messages for his parents from people they had known when they lived in Dinard twelve years before: 'Everyone over here wants you to come back. Mr. Fécélier was speaking so nicely of you yesterday: you were "*capable*", "*aimable*", etc.'<sup>42</sup> 'Frère Fabel . . . asked dozens of questions about all of you . . . he also said that you were the best neighbour he ever had. He would be quite intoxicated with joy if he could see you again';<sup>43</sup> Mr. Lewis . . . enquired after you, and your bicycle, with great affection.<sup>44</sup>

Other passages in these letters reflect Lawrence's upbringing. His parents were staunchly Protestant so not surprisingly he found the Bretons 'ignorant and priest-ridden'.<sup>45</sup> His mother's influence is clear in other ways. Years later he wrote that she had been 'brought up as a child of sin in the Island of Skye by a bible-thinking Presbyterian . . . she remodelled my father, making him a teetotaller, a domestic man, a careful spender of pence.'<sup>46</sup> The young Lawrence therefore disapproved of alcohol, remarking, for instance, on the drunkenness in Dinard: 'Everyone mixes raw brandy with their cider, and they get fearfully mad with drink.'<sup>47</sup> His expenditure is frequently and carefully accounted for: 'I fear I will be sixpence short in England; I had forgotten the sum charged for bringing

the luggage to the Docks Station, when I kept some English money unchanged . . . I am one half-penny short deducting bicycle fare. I shall have to change that sovereign for the half-penny, unless I carry my own luggage to the station, which might perhaps be the easier course.<sup>148</sup> Ch. 1

Lawrence's father had encouraged his sons to take an interest in current affairs, and several comments reveal the family's Tory opinions, for example: 'The Whites were interested in the Unemployed so I gave them a history of the movement, for it is undoubtedly engineered. Mr. White has no sympathy with them.'<sup>149</sup> References to his elder brother in the letters are less than respectful: 'The people here say that I am much thinner than Bob, but stronger, and have a better accent. Still Bob's fatness is much better than my muscle in their eyes'.<sup>150</sup> Bob had embraced his mother's form of religion and hoped to become a medical missionary. He was at that time an undergraduate at St John's College, Oxford, struggling through the pre-clinical syllabus for a medical degree. He was probably the least academic of the brothers: 'he's queer company', Lawrence later wrote, 'you will not persuade him of anything . . . He is illuminated from inside, not from out. His face, very often, shines like a lamp.'<sup>151</sup> Bob was therefore an easy target. When visiting a castle which had well-preserved latrines, Lawrence teased: 'By the way, did not Bob . . . go and see this castle? What could he have been thinking about not to mention these most attractive domestic conveniences?'<sup>152</sup> p. 36

The third brother, Will, was only sixteen months younger than Lawrence and the two were very close. While on holiday that summer, Will came across a mound which appeared to be a barrow, and wrote to Lawrence asking how to excavate it. The reply was helpful though filled with bantering admonitions. It ended encouragingly: 'Let me know how the matter progresses . . . keep an accurate account . . . and mark on a plan where each important article is found. You have my best wishes for success . . . Don't give up at once, if you do not find anything. Digging is an excellent exercise.'<sup>153</sup> Frank, the fourth brother, was now thirteen, and the five-year age gap seems to have prevented the development of a close relationship. Arnold, however, was still a small child, and Lawrence's almost fatherly affection towards him is often reflected in these letters.

Lawrence clearly also revelled in gossip, some of which seems to have been reported home for his mother's benefit: 'The servant question is very acute over here: they take percentages of everything bought and this raises the prices. Mrs. Purvis says that if she buys a franc's worth of vegetables from a woman at the door, on going she will slip a *sou* into the hand of the cook. If she orders anything in the shops the servant goes on her next opportunity and demands her commission which is always given.'<sup>154</sup> This willingness to listen to local chatter seems to have been a feature of Lawrence's personality; it would continue throughout his life and it was to help him in a curious way when he began to travel further afield. Any outsider who wants to be accepted in a foreign community must enter into the spirit of its gossip. A few years later, while overseeing Arab workmen, his knowledge of their family scandals would help to make him popular,<sup>155</sup> and during the First World War he would advise British officers serving with the Arab armies to learn 'all you can about your Ashraf and Bedu. Get to know their families, clans, and tribes, friends and enemies, wells, hills, and roads. Do all this by listening and by indirect enquiry. Do not ask questions. Get to speak their dialect of Arabic, not yours. Until you can p. 37

understand their allusions avoid getting deep into conversation, or you will drop bricks.<sup>156</sup> Ch. 1

The 1906 letters also show that he already enjoyed making provocative remarks about people. This would be another lifelong trait. He liked resounding statements and he also liked to shock (when he meant to be malicious the tone was much quieter). He wrote home on August 24th that one Toby Purvis had told him that 'a cousin wrote Lady Brassey's books. General Buller he says drinks terribly: it was the cause of his Colenso failure. General Baden-Powell he regards as possessed of little ability: he seems rather of the Winston Churchill type. Toby heard from an officer that the King was very annoyed when Baden-Powell placed his own head on the Mafeking stamps: he does not think that we will hear much more of him. He said that when the uncles Moulton died, Dardie would have nearly £7,000 a year: her eldest boy is four, and the youngest eighteen months. The "Adonis" of Dinard still lives here, but he is Adonis no longer: he has got very fat and drunken looking, and seldom appears in public.<sup>157</sup>

At this time, as later, Lawrence's letters contain some biting personal assessments: 'I forgot to mention that, owing to paralysis of his eye, [Toby Purvis] squints terribly. He is certainly very clever at making himself pleasant, and has good manners, joined to good powers of observation; but much of his pleasantness lies, I expect, on the surface, and is only shown to strangers. He will be entertaining enough for one drive I hope.<sup>158</sup> The style of these judgments in letters home displays a degree of youthful arrogance and may also reflect his upbringing. Yet Lawrence's ability to assess character quickly and accurately would later be crucial to his role in the Arab Revolt.

Though constantly aware of his short stature, he took pride in his strength and was pleased when this was admired: 'when he heard of my Fougères ride [Mr Lewis] declared I was very strong and that I had inherited Father's talent . . . I am beginning to be proud of myself.<sup>159</sup> Mme Chaignon 'got a shock when she saw my "biceps" while bathing. She thinks I'm Hercules<sup>160</sup>. Again: 'My leg muscles are like steel now. I expect I'll delight Mother when I return. I'm as brown as a berry.<sup>161</sup>

He was now beginning to find vegetarianism attractive: 'our *déjeuner* was an innocent one; nothing had to be killed to feed us. Milk, bread, butter, was our total. Price 4d.<sup>162</sup> This attitude was not however encouraged by his hosts: 'The Chaignons declare I will kill myself if I don't eat more meat; they say all vegetarians fill an early grave, although I'm not a veg. out here, no Frenchman has any opportunity to be.<sup>163</sup> During the next three years he adopted vegetarianism seriously; it formed one aspect of the idealism which began to mark much of his thinking. p. 38

His letters occasionally reveal a strongly romantic side to his nature. One of the set texts in the English Literature paper for the Senior Locals had been Tennyson's poetry. On August 26th he sent home a string of descriptive passages, mainly from Tennyson and Shelley, to illustrate the evening seascape at Dinard. The letter continued: 'You really must excuse this battery of quotations, but I have got into the habit of quoting any appropriate lines to myself, and this time I thought I would put them on record . . . The sea was of the wondrous blue met with sometimes here, and all was perfect; *there was no-one else there*. This last makes such an addition to one's enjoyment of nature and her prodigal loveliness;

all this scene was reserved for me alone: it is a wonderful surpassing thought on which to reflect, I can only wish my mind was more receptive and my emotions more deeply affected. Nature contains that spirit and power which we can witness but not weigh, inwardly conceive but not comprehend, love but not limit, imagine, but neither define nor describe. Nature is incomprehensible, fleeting, and yet immortal, and a love for it and its impressions are both ineradicable.<sup>164</sup> Such passages seem very strange when set alongside the arid descriptions of castles and churches which make up the bulk of the 1906 letters. At this time, however, Lawrence was reading Ruskin's *Stones of Venice*, and the content of his letters may be an unconscious imitation of this book (in which eloquence alternates with technical accounts of Venetian architecture).

Lawrence's enthusiasm for history was now leading him in new directions. His starting-point had been the intriguing medieval figures to be found on monumental brasses. From these he had passed quite naturally to details of costume, heraldry and armour, and to three-dimensional effigies on tombs. By 1906, however, he was interested in every trace of the medieval world. Through extensive reading he learned the relationships between churches, ceramic fragments, costume, and military architecture. As Beeson noted: 'Brasses and the bypaths they opened into mediæval history confirmed the gradual concentration of Lawrence's interest in the development of Gothic architecture and the design of military buildings in particular.'<sup>165</sup> His main preoccupation was now with 'the minds of the designers of these defensive works and the extent to which history had tested their intentions.'<sup>166</sup>

This was no casual interest. The 1906 letters show the discipline of his detailed observation and the knowledge that lay behind it. An example is his description of tombs in Lehon Abbey: 'The effigy [of Tiphaine du Guesclin] lay on the north side of the presbytery, and was most remarkable . . . She was dressed in a jupon, which buttoned down the front with twenty-two circular buttons; the button-holes were yet quite clear, slightly puckered round her waist, which was exceedingly small, and tightly drawn. The front of the jupon terminated in a tassel, with large bow. The jupon closed quite close round her neck, forming a low collar like the modern military tunic. The sleeves (no man's jupon ever had sleeves), were fairly full and descended to the wrist; underneath it was seen the edge of the vambrace. She wore genouillères, with square plates beneath them, jambs and sollerets, of three large and heavy laminated plates. She also had rowell spurs, and her feet rested on an eagle expanded bearing a shield (billets or) on the front, held in its beak . . . Her hands were bare, and finely shaped. Her head was resting on a cushion, with a corded tassel at each corner; her hair, confined by a narrow fillet alone, flowed in two curls one outside each ear, while the rest was cut short, and parted regularly down the centre. Her face was perfect, without any mutilation, and exhibited the calm repose and angelic purity which the mediæval sculptor knew so well to blend, with a certain martial simplicity and haughtiness. The figure . . . in its combination of female dress and armour, is so far as I know unique.'<sup>167</sup>

It is clear that Lawrence was combining two purposes in these letters home. The first was to give his parents regular news of his activities, the second to provide notes for his own future use; the following year, when sending home one such description, he wrote: 'This is not for you to read,

it is only a note to refresh my memory'.<sup>68</sup> These descriptions were Ch. 1  
intended to supplement the information given in guidebooks, so they were  
longest when he found the guides unhelpful. A curious result is that his  
letters say very little about some of the best-known monuments he visited.

Though Lawrence was now a competent photographer he had not  
taken a camera on this 1906 tour, thinking that it would be difficult to  
carry one on his bicycle with all his other baggage. As it turned out,  
he realised that other things were more dispensable and regretted that he  
had to rely on commercial picture postcards of places like Fougères:  
'I shall certainly return there next year for another examination, and I shall  
bring a camera with me: Father's one if possible: it is a paradise p. 40  
for a photographer.'<sup>69</sup>

As his schoolmaster had noted two years earlier, Lawrence had a  
technical interest in bicycles: 'Is Father going to have wood rims and  
constrictors on his new one? Fixed gear and fixed wheel, north road bar  
etc? It would be best.'<sup>70</sup> That summer he rode considerable distances on  
his own machine and felt fit enough to cycle a hundred miles each day (on  
one outing, from Dinard to Fougères and back, he covered 114 miles). But  
cycling was a means to an end, and he remarked that: 'A motor bicycle  
would be very useful for getting away to the antiquities round about.'<sup>71</sup>

He received his Senior Locals results while still at Dinard. The published  
lists showed that he had been placed in the First Class, as in the Junior  
Locals two years before. The marks gained were not disclosed at the time,  
but the mark-sheets survive and show that of 4,645 candidates, only  
twelve had achieved a higher total. In several subjects he had done well  
compared with the candidates who took first place (whose marks are also  
given here). In English Language and Literature he shared first place (439  
marks) and he had also gained a distinction with equal third place in  
Religious Knowledge (183:216). Other good results were Arithmetic  
(84:100), History (193:262), and French (214:278). In Political Economy  
(171:194) he was in fact second, but all the candidates did badly and no  
distinctions were awarded. His results in Latin (191:459) and Greek  
(193:430) probably reflect his attitude towards grammar. His total in  
mathematics (algebra and geometry) was very poor: (79:239).<sup>72</sup>

When Lawrence learned of his passes and distinctions he wrote home:  
'The result is on the whole not as good as I had hoped, although I am quite  
satisfied with the English. I wonder whether there is any profession in  
which a knowledge of one's tongue is of the slightest use . . . In the  
Divinity I had hoped for more. Polit. Econ. is not surprising; I expect we  
both made asses of ourselves [he was referring to Beeson, who scored 90  
in this paper] . . . in the English my essay on Physical Culture in 2000 A.D.  
evidently went down'.<sup>73</sup>

That autumn was mainly taken up with work for Oxford entrance,  
although he won a school essay prize on the subject of 'Our Colonies'. He  
tried for a scholarship at St John's College, but early in December he  
learned that he had not been successful. In January 1907 he sat the  
examination for Jesus College where, by virtue of his birth at Tremadoc,  
he would be eligible for a Welsh award. Lawrence was a strong candidate  
and showed in the interviews that he could speak with authority about p. 41  
medieval pottery and brass rubbings. He won a Meyricke Exhibition,  
worth £50 a year, in Modern History.

His result in Senior Locals had not been quite good enough to qualify Ch. 1  
him for exemption from Responsions, an examination normally taken  
before entering the University. In March, while still at school, he had to  
take papers on Xenophon's *Anabasis*, Caesar's *De Bello Gallico*, and in  
algebra. During the Easter holidays, perhaps mindful that he was going to  
a college with a large Welsh membership, he went on a cycling tour of the  
Welsh castles, visiting Dinas Bran (Crow Castle), Caernarvon, Harlech,  
Chepstow, Caerphilly, Tintern Abbey and Raglan. He wrote of the Welsh:  
'After ten days in Wales I ought to be able to sum up all the character,  
habits, peculiarities, virtues, vices, and other points of the Welsh people. I  
am sorry I cannot do this yet. They seem to me to be rather inquisitive,  
more dirty, and exceedingly ugly. I am at last discovering where I got my  
large mouth from, it's a national peculiarity. At the same time they appear  
honest; I have had no extortionate bills'.<sup>74</sup>

After taking his additional Responsions subject (a paper on de  
Tocqueville) during the summer term, Lawrence left the Oxford High  
School at the end of July 1907; he was nearly nineteen. Many years later  
he remarked that he had been educated there 'very little, very reluctantly,  
very badly',<sup>75</sup> and he told his biographer Liddell Hart that he had found  
school 'an irrelevant and time-wasting nuisance, which I hated and  
contemned'.<sup>76</sup> There seems to be a contradiction between these statements  
and his achievements, explained perhaps by another retrospective com-  
ment: 'They drag those "boy" years out too much. In my case they were  
miserable sweated years of unwilling work: and when after them I  
suddenly went to Oxford, the new freedom felt like Heaven. I don't think  
men ever work as hard as boys are made to work (unless they are working  
for themselves, when it isn't work at all) nor do I think the miseries of  
grown-up feelings are as bad as those of boys'.<sup>77</sup>

#### Notes for Chapter 1. Childhood

December 1891 – October 1907

1. *Baedeker's Northern France* (London, 1894) pp. 216-17.
2. T. E. Lawrence to R. White 10.6.1931 *DG* p. 721. According to M. J-M. Larès (*T. E. Lawrence, la France et les Français*, Paris, Imprimerie Nationale, 1980, p. 8 n. 9), contemporaries recalled only two large yachts at Dinard, neither of which belonged to Mr Lawrence. At that time, however, a 'yacht' was a sizeable vessel, and it is possible that Mr Lawrence had a smaller sailing boat of some kind.
3. Langley Lodge is about seven miles north-west of the village of Langley. The lease to Mr Lawrence survives, showing that on 1st May 1894 the Lawrence family took up a furnished tenancy of the house, 'with the kitchen garden and two Paddocks, coach house and Stabling' for two guineas a week. The lease, dated 27th April 1894, is signed T. Laurence [sic], showing that at that date Mr Lawrence was not fully accustomed to using this pseudonym. He also purchased game licences from the New Forest authorities for £20 per annum, at that date a large sum of money. (Information courtesy of Maggs Bros., rare book dealers, see Maggs Bros., *Catalogue 1091*, London, 1988, p. 49 #238.)

4. T. E. Lawrence, introduction to *Travels in Arabia Deserta* by C. M. Doughty (London, Jonathan Cape and the Medici Society, 1921) p. xxviii.
5. *Ibid.*
6. A. T. Pollard, first headmaster of the Oxford High School, quoted in *Reminiscences 1881-1981 – City of Oxford High School – Oxford High School* (in *Phoenix*, Oxford, No. 15, 1981, p. 22).
7. An analysis of parental occupations made in 1906 states that 108 pupils had fathers in categories given as ‘independent means’, professional, merchants, bankers, and retailers. Forty-six pupils had fathers who were clerks; just three fathers were artisans. See Board of Education: *Report of First Inspection, 15th-16th March 1906* in the Oxford City Library local history collection.
8. *Op. cit.* note 7 above.
9. H. R. Hall, ‘T. E. Lawrence’ in *Oxford High School Magazine* (Oxford) 1935, pp. 40-1.
10. T. E. Lawrence to C. F. Shaw 24.8.1926. BL Add. MS 45903.
11. T. E. Lawrence, amendments to the typescript of R. R. Graves, *Lawrence and the Arabs, 1927 B:RG* p. 61. Houghton fMS Eng 1252 (367).
12. *Oxford High School Magazine* (Oxford) Vol. II, No. 1, May 1904, p. 5.
13. *Ibid.* Vol. I, No. 5, March 1904, pp. 100-1.
14. *Ibid.* Vol. II, No. 2, July 1904, pp. 29-30.
15. E. F. Hall in *Friends* p. 46.
16. A. W. Lawrence to J. E. Mack 1.11.1968, quoted in Mack’s *A Prince of our Disorder* (Boston, Little, Brown, 1976) p. 474 n. 70.
17. A. W. Lawrence to J. M. Wilson 12.5.1985.
18. Oxford Local Examinations Board, *Division Lists for the Year 1904: Junior Candidates and Tables Supplementary to the Division Lists* [etc.] (Oxford, James Parker & Son, 1904). Also 1904 Junior candidates’ mark sheets, Oxford University Archives.
19. C. F. C. Beeson in *Friends* p. 52.
20. T. W. Chaundy in *Friends* p. 41.
21. C. F. C. Beeson in *Friends* p. 52.
22. ‘Report of the Keeper of the Ashmolean Museum to the Visitors’, in *Oxford University Gazette* (Oxford) Vol. xxxvii, No. 1203, 30.4.1907, pp. 552-6.
23. See J. E. Mack, *op. cit.* note 16 above, pp. 26-7: ‘Arnold Lawrence told me that Lawrence wrote either to his friend Lionel Curtis or his mentor David Hogarth that when he was four and a half he began to discover what the situation was from trying to understand a discussion his father was having with a solicitor about managing the estate in Ireland’ (source: Mack interview with A. W. Lawrence 15.7.1968). However, neither Mack nor I have found such a letter to Curtis or Hogarth.
24. T. E. Lawrence to C. F. Shaw 14.4.1927: ‘They thought always that they were living in sin, and that we would some day find out. Whereas I knew it before I was ten, and they never told me’. BL Add. MS 45903. See also Mack, *op. cit.* note 16 above, p. 27: ‘Arnold Lawrence is convinced his brother understood the fact of their illegitimacy by the time he was nine or ten years old’ (source: Mack

interviews with A. W. Lawrence 13.3.1965 and 15.7.1968).

25. C. F. Bell, notes on LH:TEL. BL Add. MS 63549.
26. A. W. Lawrence to J. M. Wilson 12.5.1985.
27. T. E. Lawrence to his family 19.5.1911 *HL* p. 160. Bodleian MS Res C13.
28. In 1933, when Lawrence had long known the truth about his parents' relationship, he wrote the following sketch of them for inclusion in Liddell Hart's biography: 'The father's self-appointed exile reduced his means to a craftsman's income, which the landowning pride of caste forbade him to increase by labour. As five sons came, one after the other, the family's very necessities of life were straitened. They existed only by the father's denying himself every amenity, and by the mother's serving her household like a drudge.

'Observers noted a difference in social attitude between the courtly but abrupt and large father, and the laborious mother. The father shot, fished, rode, sailed with the certainty of birthright experience. He never touched a book or wrote a cheque. The mother kept to herself, and kept her children jealously from meeting or knowing their neighbours. She was a Calvinist and ascetic, though a wonderful housewife, a woman of character and keen intelligence, with iron decision, and charming, when she wished' (*B:LH* p. 78).

In later life many people develop unreal views about their family circumstances as well as their parents' personalities and relationship with each other. These views, heavily coloured by the child's own relationship with its parents, can be very inaccurate indeed. This retrospective comment by Lawrence is clearly inconsistent with information contained in the Lawrence brothers' early letters home. Mr Lawrence's income was as great as that of middle-class professional families [see Appendix I] The parents took regular holidays both in Britain and abroad. A. W. Lawrence recalls that when still very young, 'I had to be lifted up to see "an extraordinary animal" in a glass case on a hotel mantelpiece, and said "it's only a duck-bill platypus"; that was not the first of a vast number of holidays, mostly in expensive hotels. There was never the least shortage of excellent food. My father denied himself no amenities (except drink, and that because he had become teetotal . . .). I accompanied one or both parents all over the south of England, Wales and (repeatedly) the Channel Islands.' He has also pointed out that the first paragraph in the statement to Liddell Hart is contradicted by the second, especially by its second sentence (A. W. Lawrence to J. M. Wilson 8.6.1987).

Even the statement 'he never touched a book or wrote a cheque' should not be taken literally. While Lawrence's father did not read a great deal for pleasure, Lawrence warmly commended Ruskin's architectural study *Stones of Venice* to him, in letters of 1906 (for details of Mr Lawrence's education see Appendix I). Lawrence's portrait of his mother is still more misleading. A. W. Lawrence has written: 'I emphatically deny that my mother served "like a drudge"; she kept two maids, a charwoman, a gardener; spent the mornings shopping (mainly for food) and seldom did any housework. She did not attempt to keep her children from the neighbours, and met them herself freely. She was neither a Calvinist nor ascetic.' (*Ibid.*)

- 28A. The text here has been amended, taking account of research on Sarah Lawrence's ancestry by Gillian L. Stevenson and Martin Robson Riley, see 'A Dash of Scandinavian': A Hypothesis on the maternal ancestry of T. E. Lawrence', *JTELS* X:1, Autumn 2000, pp. 7-12.
29. T. E. Lawrence to C. F. Shaw 14.4.1927. BL Add. MS 45903.
30. B. H. Liddell Hart's notes on a conversation with Lawrence, weekend of 12.5.1929 omitted from *B:LH* p. 24. See also Lawrence's written reply to Liddell Hart's 'Queries I', partially omitted from *B:LH* p. 51. Bodleian R (transcript).
31. T. E. Lawrence to D. Knowles 7.12.1927 *DG* p. 553.
32. T. E. Lawrence, *The Mint*, Part 2, ch. 11, p. 132.
33. T. E. Lawrence, written reply to B. H. Liddell Hart's 'Queries I' *B:LH* p. 51.
34. A painting by H. S. Tuke found among Lawrence's possessions at his death would appear to show the young Lawrence in RGA uniform sitting on a beach. It has been suggested that the painting, which is now at Clouds Hill, provides evidence for Lawrence's pre-war enlistment. However, Tuke kept a detailed register of his works, and both the Tuke paintings Lawrence is known to have possessed were entered in 1922 (see *The Registers of Henry Scott Tuke*, annotated by B. D. Price, Falmouth, Royal Cornwall Polytechnic Society, 2nd. ed. 1983). Lawrence's pictures have been identified as entries R987: 'Picture of Gray', and R988: 'Small bathing picture'. Both these paintings were purchased by R. F. C. Scott, but a marginal note by Tuke reads: 'When R. F. C. Scott died "Gray" bought these two at the sale of his effects for a fiver!' It is not known how the paintings came into Lawrence's possession, unless he is the person referred to by the pseudonym 'Gray'.

Lawrence probably knew of Tuke's work through C. F. Bell, a life-long friend of Tuke's who owned several of his paintings. It seems possible that Lawrence met Tuke in Cornwall after the war, during the period when he was making contact with artists who might illustrate *Seven Pillars*. He certainly visited Cornwall in June 1922 (see *B:RG* p. 20).

There is a cryptic reference in a letter from Lawrence to another artist, Elsie Falcon (who had asked Lawrence to sit for her) which may refer to this Tuke painting: 'if you are like the artist who said "Do sit: I really can't afford a proper model"... then by all means. He worked what was left of his study of me into a beach picture after, giving me a new head, several sizes smaller. Apparently I am shaped rather like a tadpole.' (undated, but 1928. Bodleian MS Eng. Lett. c. 213).

35. T. E. Lawrence to C. F. Shaw 26.12.1925. BL Add. MS 45903.
36. T. E. Lawrence, written reply to B. H. Liddell Hart's 'Queries I' *B:LH* p. 51 (where four words are omitted). Bodleian R (transcript).
37. T. E. Lawrence to Mrs Rieder 8.3.1914. Bodleian R (transcript).
38. T. E. Lawrence to his family 14.8.1906 omitted from *HL* p. 20 and from *MB* pp. 8-9. Bodleian MS Res C13.
39. T. E. Lawrence to his family 28.8.1906 *HL* p. 43. Bodleian MS Res C13.
40. T. E. Lawrence to his father 20.8.1906 *HL* p. 23. Bodleian MS Res C13.

41. T. E. Lawrence to his mother 17.8.1906 *HL* p. 21. Bodleian MS Res C13.
42. T. E. Lawrence to his mother 24.8.1906 *HL* p. 27. Bodleian MS Res C13.
43. T. E. Lawrence to his father 6.8.1906 *HL* p. 8. Bodleian MS Res C13.
44. *Ibid.* *HL* pp. 9-10.
45. T. E. Lawrence to his mother 24.8.1906 omitted from *HL* p. 32. Bodleian MS Res C13.
46. T. E. Lawrence to C. F. Shaw 14.4.1927. BL Add. MS 45903. Lawrence has confused the Episcopal Church of Scotland, which is in communion with the Church of England (though historically distinct from it), with the much larger Church of Scotland, a Presbyterian body.
47. T. E. Lawrence to his father 20.8.1906 omitted from *HL* p. 24. Bodleian MS Res C13.
48. T. E. Lawrence to his mother 24.8.1906 omitted from *HL* p. 30. Bodleian MS Res C13.
49. T. E. Lawrence to his father 6.8.1906 *HL* p. 9. Bodleian MS Res C13.
50. T. E. Lawrence to his mother 26.8.1906 omitted from *HL* p. 35. Bodleian MS Res C13.
51. T. E. Lawrence to C. F. Shaw 10.7.1928. BL Add. MS 45904.
52. T. E. Lawrence to his mother 14.8.1906 omitted from *HL* p. 20 and from *MB* pp. 8-9. Bodleian MS Res C13.
53. T. E. Lawrence to W. G. Lawrence 16.8.1906 *HL* pp. 22-3. Bodleian MS Res C13.
54. T. E. Lawrence to his father 20.8.1906 omitted from *HL* p. 24. Bodleian MS Res C13.
55. See for example C. L. Woolley in *Friends* p. 88.
56. T. E. Lawrence, 'Twenty-Seven Articles', in the *Arab Bulletin* (Cairo) No. 60, 20.8.1917, p. 348.
57. T. E. Lawrence to his mother 24.8.1906 omitted from *HL* p. 27. Bodleian MS Res C13. The opinions expressed on Baden-Powell and Churchill, though amusing in retrospect, were quite widely held at that time. Baden-Powell had enjoyed popular adulation as the hero of Mafeking, but high military circles had little regard for his talents and thought his reputation as a soldier unjustified. He did not launch the Boy Scout movement until 1908. Churchill had entered Parliament as a Unionist in 1900 but had crossed the floor to join the Liberal party in 1904; most Conservatives thought this unpardonable. He had been returned as a Liberal MP in the general election of January 1906.
58. T. E. Lawrence to his father 20.8.1906 omitted from *HL* p. 24. Bodleian MS Res C13.
59. T. E. Lawrence to his mother 24.8.1906 *HL* p. 30. Bodleian MS Res C13.
60. T. E. Lawrence to his mother 26.8.1906 *HL* p. 35. Bodleian MS Res C13.
61. T. E. Lawrence to his father 31.8.1906 *HL* p. 45. Bodleian MS Res C13.
62. T. E. Lawrence to his mother 14.8.1906 *HL* p. 19. Bodleian MS Res C13.
63. T. E. Lawrence to his mother 28.8.1906 *HL* p. 42. Bodleian MS Res C13.

64. T. E. Lawrence to his mother 26.8.1906 *HL* pp. 34-5. Bodleian MS Res C13.
65. C. F. C. Beeson in *Friends* p. 54.
66. *Ibid.*
67. T. E. Lawrence to his mother 9.8.1906 *HL* pp. 11-12. Bodleian MS Res C13.
68. T. E. Lawrence to his family April 1907 *HL* p. 50. Bodleian MS Res C13.
69. T. E. Lawrence to his mother 24.8.1906 *HL* p. 29. Bodleian MS Res C13.
70. T. E. Lawrence to his mother 14.8.1906 omitted from *HL* p. 20 and from *MB* pp. 8-9. Bodleian MS Res C13.
71. T. E. Lawrence to his father 31.8.1906 *HL* p. 45. Bodleian MS Res C13.
72. Oxford Local Examinations Board: *Division Lists for the Year 1906: Senior Candidates* and *Tables Supplementary to the Division Lists* [etc.] (Oxford, James Parker & Son, 1906). Also 1906 Senior candidates' mark sheets, Oxford University Archives.
73. T. E. Lawrence to his mother 24.8.1906 *HL* p. 31. Bodleian MS Res C13.
74. T. E. Lawrence to his mother 6.4.1907 partially omitted from *HL* p. 52. Bodleian MS Res C13.
75. T. E. Lawrence to D. G. Hogarth 14.1.1926 *DG* p. 491.
76. T. E. Lawrence, written reply to B. H. Liddell Hart's 'Queries I' *B:LH* p. 51.
77. T. E. Lawrence to D. Knowles 14.7.1927. Bodleian R (transcript).