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Happy Valley wedding group, standing (centre) Lady Idina Hay; Josslyn (in bow tie); and Alice de Janzé (in black hat)

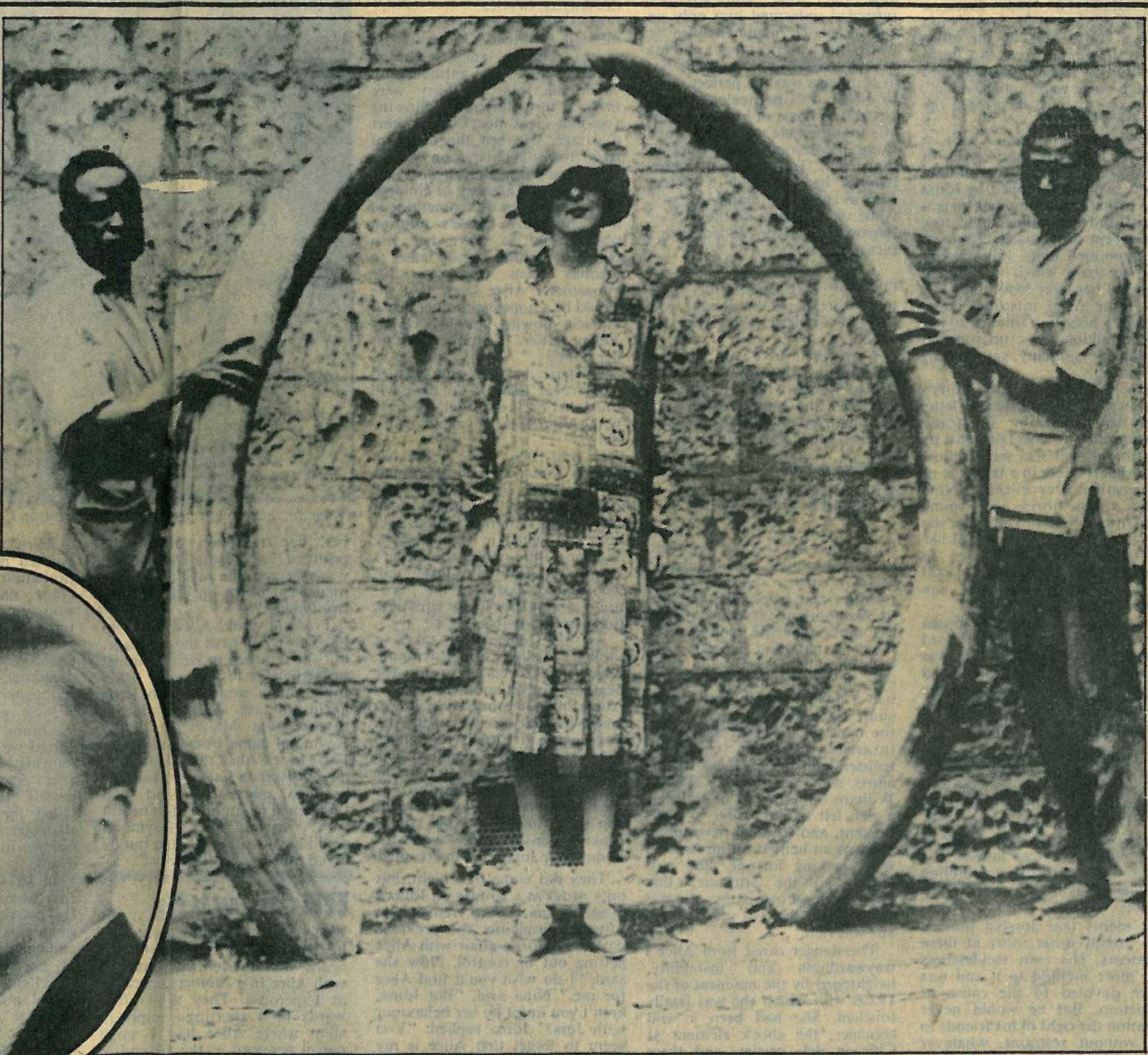
Early on January 24, 1941, the body of Josslyn Hay, Earl of Erroll, was discovered on the floor of his Buick at a road junction near Nairobi. Plenty of people in Kenya had a motive for shooting him. Aristocratically grand, possessing conspicuous good looks and charm, he was notorious for his exploits with married women. He had become the colony's military secretary, but it was only in the last five of his 39 years that he had devoted himself to anything more serious than pleasure.

Erroll's death was both a mystery and a scandal, a mystery, because no murderer was ever convicted, a scandal, because it exposed the frivolity and extravagance of some of Kenya's white community, just when war had brought Britain to its moment of greatest danger.

In the 1960s, the affair became an obsession of Cyril Connolly, the literary critic. Many of the men involved in it had been his contemporaries at Eton and had then been transplanted to a near feudal life-style - which stirred Connolly's envy - in the magnificent Kenyan landscape - which Connolly admired profoundly. With James Fox acting Watson to his Holmes, Connolly spent months investigating the murder for *The Sunday Times*, and since Connolly's death in 1974 Fox has continued the search, which has led him to unravel the mystery. In the first of three articles from his book *White Mischief*, Fox describes how Hay helped shape the style of the Happy Valley set, notorious for its addiction to the three A's - altitude, alcohol and adultery.



Left, Josslyn Hay, 23, the future Earl of Erroll and Hereditary High Constable of Scotland; right, Idina, with elephant tusks



ARISTOCRATS, ALCOHOL AND ADULTERY

JOSSLYN HAY was "asked to leave" Eton - where he was the object of intense schoolboy adoration - in 1918, aged 17. His family was of immense antiquity and grandeur. The Earls of Erroll, as Hereditary High Constables of Scotland since 1315 walked directly behind the Royals at Coronations. His father, Victor, Lord Kilmarnock, was godson to Queen Victoria and in 1919 went to Berlin as chargé d'affaires, the first diplomat to be sent to Germany after the Armistice. He took Josslyn with him as honorary attaché - his first job after leaving Eton - on the grounds that some practical experience might be useful before the boy took his foreign office exams.

On his return to London in

1922, Josslyn began to exploit his remarkable sexual attraction in London society, while the older generation began to describe him as "spoilt". He fell in love with Idina Sackville, the daughter of the eighth Earl De La Warr who divorced her second husband, Charles Gordon, that same year.

Idina was apparently irresistible. She was already *mal vue* in society for her "fast" reputation. She had had many boyfriends during her first two marriages, including Oswald Mosley, who had presented her with a pearl inlaid dressing table. "She could whistle a chap off a branch," says an old acquaintance. "She didn't pinch other people's men, but if they were left lying about, she'd pick them up." She had a perfect

LIFE IN HAPPY VALLEY

figure, slight and little-girlish, for which she was famous and much admired always wore the chicest clothes and walked barefoot whenever possible "to show off her size three feet." Her face might have been beautiful were it not for the shotaway chin and, it is said, she was highly intelligent, well read, enlivening company.

Josslyn's liaison with Idina became high scandal. Even after their marriage in September 1923, it was hinted that Joss and Idina would have been "unwelcome at Ascot" had they stayed in England. Idina had already lived for a year in Kenya with Charles Gordon, and now it seemed the obvious, indeed the only, place to go. The couple set up house at Slains, a fairly modest bungalow on the slopes of the Aberdares, named after the family seat in Aberdeenshire sold by Joss's grandfather.

Anywhere between the Aberdares and the town of Gilgil on the plain might have qualified for Happy Valley. But its real centre was beside the Wanjohi river which ran down from Kipipiri, the mountain that stood at its head. Kipipiri itself was joined to the Aberdare escarpment by a saddle-shaped cedar forest.

It was supremely beautiful landscape - the valley itself a wide grassy plain, the escarpment wooded and leafy with patches of rugged gorse. From the Wanjohi Valley you could look over the next mountain, the Kinankop, which was shaped like a long narrow headland, into the Rift Valley beyond.

In 1925, the couple moved from Slains to a house in the valley called Clouds, a large, low, thatched mansion with many sitting rooms and many guest bedrooms along wings at either end of the house facing onto a courtyard. Guests began to come out from England in large numbers, and it was often so wet on the escarpment, so difficult to negotiate by car, that it was hardly worth leaving for weeks on end. Idina would also make it very difficult for her guests to leave at all.

She was not to come to the height of her powers for another ten years, but she quickly dominated what there was of the social life of that remote part of the White Highlands and it was there, under her influence, that the Happy Valley legend began.

Both Idina and Joss, or Bwana Hay as his servants now called him, discovered that they shared a passion for marital infidelity. Idina was only happy, according to the survivors of her house parties - and it was held as truth

at Government House where she was on the blacklist - if all her guests had swapped partners, wives or husbands by nightfall, or certainly by the time the weekend or the invitation was over.

The bedrooms were locked and Idina had numbered keys with duplicates which were laid out on a table so that bedroom partners could be chosen by a game of chance, or what appeared to be so. "We always called Idina's bed 'the battleground'", said a survivor, "and we all used to end up in it at various times of the day or night".

Lady Altrincham, then Joan Grigg, wife of the governor Sir John Grigg (1925-30), put Idina on the blacklist. She remembers visiting Clouds and being shocked to find Idina's clothes and pearls scattered across the floor, the dogs unfed and the servants gone. It was considered that she carried on shamelessly in front of Africans and this - the setting of a bad example - was held inexcusable.

Idina's closest neighbours were Comte Frédéric de Janzé - author of *Vertical Land* - and his fascinating, if rather wild, young American bride, Alice, Frédéric, 26, elegant, laconic, aristocratic, had motor raced at Le Mans, fought in the Rif mountains and had known Proust, Anna de Noailles, and Raymond Barrès.

In *Vertical Land* de Janzé described Happy Valley as the "habitat of the wild and free". "In this decor live a restless crowd of humans, hardly colonists - wanderers, perhaps, indefatigable amusement seekers, weary or cast out from many climes, many countries. Misfits, neurasthenics, of great breeding and charm, who lacked the courage to grow old, the stamina to pull up and build anew in this land".

He described the principal cast of characters, among them Favian Wallace, a homosexual, and a close friend of Josslyn's, Michael Lafone, a fierce womaniser with an eyeglass, who was briefly and disastrously married in Kenya to Elizabeth Byng, daughter of the Earl of Strafford, and above all Raymond de Trafford, the epitome of the remittance man. Raymond came from a grand Irish family from County Limerick and

had been in the Coldstream Guards before coming to Kenya. He was devilishly attractive, quick witted, original, cultivated, hopelessly indiscreet, a heavy gambler and drinker. To women, he could be delightfully attentive, when he felt like it, and a great relief to talk to.

Evelyn Waugh called Raymond a "fine desperado", took strongly to him when he met him in Kenya in 1931, and kept up with him afterwards. "Something of a handful", he wrote, "v. nice but so BAD and he fights and fucks and gambles and gets D.D. (disgustingly drunk) all the time". They stayed together at the home of Lord Delamere, a Kenya pioneer. Waugh wrote, in *Remote People*, "He got very drunk and brought a slutty girl back to the house. He woke me up later to tell me he had just rogered her and her mama, too".

There was a music-hall jingle that went the rounds in Nairobi:

There was a young girl of the Mau
Who said she didn't know how.

She went for a cycle with
Raymond and Michael,
She knows all there is to know
now.

Along with the champagne, the drugs of the new age, cocaine and morphine, had found their way into Happy Valley. The chief dealer was Frank Greswolde Williams, who got his supplies from Port Said and who openly plied his trade in the exclusive Muthaiga Club in Nairobi. One of his best customers was the American Kiki Preston, a Whitney by birth, and a beauty who often stayed with Idina. She had had many lovers, including the two Valentinos, de Trafford and Lafone - and the late Duke of Kent. One close friend of Kiki remembers her extraordinary performance: "She was great fun and very witty and never made any bones about morphine. She always looked marvellous. She would be quite open about it, digging the needle into herself while we sat up drinking whisky. She never went to bed until 4am. Next morning we were always hung over and sleeping. But she was up at 8am, beautifully dressed and looking lovely", as if nothing had happened.

"I'm sorry to say", said Sir Derek Erskine (later one of the few Europeans to support Kenyatta before Independence), "that drugs played a very large part in that period. Cocaine was taken like snuff in Happy Valley and certainly didn't do anybody any good." At a Muthaiga dinner party for the Prince of Wales, who came on safari to Kenya in 1928,

Erskine saw Greswolde Williams suddenly being manhandled out of the room by a white hunter called Archie Richie. When Erskine asked what had happened, he was told: "Well, there is a limit, even in Kenya, and when someone offers cocaine to the heir to the throne, something has to be done about it, particularly when it is between courses at the dinner table."

Josslyn had a farm at Nakuru, but paid little attention to it. Horseracing and polo - which was seen as a painful but bracing hangover cure - occupied more of his time. Near Gilgil, on the plain below the Kinankop, four separate polo fields had been cut out and rolled, under the mountain, from the great orchard of green-black

cactus trees and scrub - the sombre landscape that you still cross, on a few miles of dirt track, to reach them now. Josslyn would turn up here wearing tightly fitting shorts with wide corduroy stripes and invariably, with a red-ochre Somali shawl flung over his shoulder.

Petal Allen, daughter of Sir Derek Erskine, remembers Josslyn Hay as the first really elegant man she ever saw. He sat on a shooting stick, at the racecourse, and sat Petal on his knee. He wore a white tussor silk suit, a polka dot bow tie and a panama hat. And in the Wanjohi he would often wear a kilt. His hair was oiled down and brushed into wings on either side and there was

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a transcendent perfection about his looks.

At Clouds, the parties that Joss and Idina gave were magnificent and famous for their excesses. Nina Drury, now 81, was then a young bride, and in the mid-1920s often went over to Clouds for dinner. "The dramas that used to take place were unbelievable", she says. "It must have been the climate, I think."

They would begin with a certain formality and style of preparation. The house was full of guests, willingly trapped by Idina who would summon her neighbours, and her young men, too, and accept no refusals. Then, at the appointed hour, Idina would take her bath which was in the centre of her large bathroom, and like some royal mistress, bathe and dress herself in front of all her guests, talking away, insisting on permanent company, summoning new arrivals.

The excitement of Idina's presence, of sharing her toilette, was heightened by a steady consumption of cocktails, and by the time dinner was served most of the guests were in a fair state of intoxication. One evening, Nina Drury remembers, a young woman said in loud voice that she had been making a list of all her lovers since she had been in Kenya. "Not very nice," said Josslyn, "when she was my mistress this afternoon."

A furious argument began between Raymond de Trafford and Frédéric de Janzé. Nina was very annoyed at being prevented by her husband from watching the drama. "But then", she said, "various people were led into my room, sobbing and crying and saying that there was going to be a duel and that they were going to kill each other." At the height of one of these evenings, Raymond de Trafford, maddened with drink, went outside and set fire to several of the African houses. His crime was settled like a gambling debt, and Raymond was forced to pay up.

It seems that Josslyn himself was usually quite sober at these moments. His own recklessness had more method to it and was more devoted to the cause of seduction. But he would never question the right of his friends to act without restraint, whatever the burden on the African staff. Servants, by nature, were there to be inconvenienced.

Paula Long, a famous beauty of the period, married to "Boy" Long, a cattle rancher, remembers Josslyn's unpleasantness towards them: "He was horrible to Africans, and swore at them in Swahili," she says. "He kept the

staff up all night and was quite unscrupulous.

This cynical, bullying side of Josslyn's personality could be seen elsewhere. The roaring jokes and the good company he provided redeemed him only up to a point. He made enemies by way of his scathing tongue and his sexual arrogance. The men's bar at Muthaiga was the perfect place to display this particular form of wit and to boast of his conquests. His innumerable women had one thing in common - they were all married. "To hell with husbands," he was fond of saying. And to cuckold a man carelessly, while slapping him on the back or borrowing a fiver, added to his pleasure.

ONE OF THE earliest marriages to be threatened by Josslyn was that of Frédéric and Alice de Janzé.

Alice fell in love with Joss the moment she saw him, on her first trip to Kenya with her husband, Frédéric. She was 25. They had been married only three years and had two small daughters.

Frail figure

She was probably the most dangerous of Joss's mistresses, perhaps the most fascinating and certainly, when she was in her twenties and before the excesses of Wanjohi got the better of her, the most exquisite looking. Her face was pale and delicate, with high cheekbones and wide, calm eyes of a deep violet colour. She had a lovely, slightly frail figure, short black hair bound tightly in the nape of her neck. She would invariably dress in corduroy trousers and bright, loose flannel shirts. Alice was the only child of William Silverthorne of Chicago, a rich felt manufacturer of Scots descent, and through her mother she was an heiress to the Armour meat-packing fortune. She possessed all the attributes that Josslyn found irresistible: she was mysterious, she was married and she was rich.

The danger came from Alice's waywardness and instability, heightened by the madness of the 1920s with which she was fatally touched. She had been a wild teenager, the shock element at Chicago deb parties, and there was a disorder somewhere in her psyche, a lasting melancholy. Her mother had died when Alice was five years old of consumption. (Alice herself had been consumptive from birth.) She was brought up by a German governess in large houses in New York. After a traumatic and unexplained incident involving her father, who

was a drunk, she was made a ward of her uncle. But her father had often taken her to Europe, dressing her in lace and taking her to nightclubs while she was in her early teens. Alice developed a liking for cocktails and a mania for animals and would be seen rather conspicuously walking her black panther - in its white collar - up and down the Promenade des Anglais in Nice.

She met the sensitive, literary-minded Comte de Janzé - who came from an ancient Breton family - in a Paris antique shop when she was 21. They were married in Chicago the following year and spent most of their short marriage, between the births of their two daughters, on a succession of safaris in Kenya.

The virtual absence of children in Happy Valley was something of a phenomenon. Alice's solution was simply to leave her two children behind, and later to dismiss them from her life altogether. "Alice knew that she would be a hopeless mother," said Patricia Bowles, another Happy Valley settler. "I admired her for her honesty."

Frédéric, her husband, warned in *Vertical Land*: "No man will touch her exclusive soul, shadowy with memories, unstable, suicidal."

In mid-1926, Alice began her stormy romance with Raymond de Trafford. Her intermittent affair with Joss, which continued despite her new infatuation, had been conducted in some secrecy and for a time without Frédéric's knowledge. But with Raymond, who always extracted the maximum drama from any situation, that was impossible.

At first, Alice had taken a violent dislike to Raymond, which made Frédéric suspect the beginning of yet another affair. As Alice told the story later, it was Joss who first discovered it. At a large party at Clouds he noticed that she and Raymond had slipped away. He crept into the adjoining bedroom, climbed up the wall partition, lay along the top of it, and heard the couple making plans to elope. "And what about poor Joss?", he interrupted.

They did elope that night, but only as far as a cottage on Idina's estate. Nina Drury remembers Idina's complaints the previous day about Joss's affair with Alice getting out of control. Now she said: "I do wish you'd find Alice for me." Nina said, "But Idina, aren't you upset by her behaviour with Joss?" Idina replied: "You seem to forget that Alice is my best friend."

There was a conference the following morning to decide how to get Alice back. Frédéric, the long-suffering husband, agreed to go and found them in the cottage. Raymond had occupied the bed and Alice was sleeping on a chair. That was thought typical of Raymond. "I shall always remem-



Alice de Janzé, with pet lion cub Samson in 1926

ber her reception when she returned," says Nina Drury. "She was received like royalty. All the men went down on one knee in front of her."

Frédéric took Alice back to Paris to try to save the marriage, but she returned to Kenya almost immediately to be with Raymond, then went back to Paris again to ask Frédéric for a divorce. On March 25, 1927, Raymond came from London to Paris to tell Alice that his family, devout Roman Catholics, forbade him to marry her and had threatened to cut him off if he did so. A friend said: "Raymond could have written a letter, but he loved trouble and difficulty."

Rhino whip

He got considerably more than he bargained for. Before he left again for London, he lunched with Alice in a *cabinet particulier* at Lapérouse. They went afterwards to a sporting equipment shop where Alice had a small parcel wrapped at the far end of the counter, while Raymond was looking at the rifles. At the Gare du Nord, Alice climbed into the carriage of the train to see him off. She knelt in front of him, kissed him, then pulled out the gun and shot him, then herself, wounding them both badly, Raymond near the heart, and herself in the stomach.

of Lake Naivasha, with crenellated walls and a minaret and lawns sloping down to the edge of the water. It was known as the Djinn Palace. Compared to the sub-Lutyens gloom of most settler architecture, it was a house of haunting beauty.

One day Ramsay-Hill found the couple in a tented camp at Narok. He had come with a rhino whip with which he laid about Erroll as best he could, chasing him through the bush; then he got into one of his Buicks and went home. In the divorce proceedings, Ramsay-Hill cited Erroll and won £3,000 damages to pay off the debts the couple had run up in his name, although Molly kept the Djinn Palace, and it was there Erroll and Molly moved when they married in 1930.

Morphine shot

Erroll was well suited to his new surroundings, beside the beautiful lake that has the look of a wild highland loch, surrounded by mountains and plains, its wide grassy shore bordering the water which, from the verandah of the Djinn Palace, was a clear blue on fine days. For decoration there were flamingoes, herons, black duck, chalk white egrets. There were hippos in the water, among the floating islands of papyrus. The bedrooms of the house faced a large inner courtyard with a tiled pool and a fountain in the centre. Thus entrances and exits were easily observed. There was a sunken marble bath in the main suite - to facilitate, so the story goes, the vomiting of over-indulgent guests. The Djinn Palace was a scene of wild parties and luxurious weekends. It was furnished with deep sofas and armchairs, loose-covered in flowered chintz. Once again, however, he was financially secure: Molly's own estate produced an income of £8,000 a year.

Before long, out of boredom and an acute sense of his own abilities, the feudal instinct in Erroll began to assert itself. In 1934 he became a paid-up member of the British Union of Fascists.

The following year Mussolini invaded Abyssinia, and Joss Erroll dropped his membership of the BUF. He was elected, instead as president of the Convention of Associations, the "settlers' parliament" - a separate and unofficial rival to the Legislative Council.

By now, however, Erroll had lost interest in his second countess, and her decline began. She wanted desperately to produce a child and an heir, and had many false pregnancies as a result. Realising that she was losing him, she began to drink heavily, and

finally to shoot morphine. Erroll's absences were prolonged: "He was very naughty with Molly", says Patricia Bowles. "He gobbled up all her money and had walk-outs all the time." "Bwana Hay told the servants", his own Somali servant recalls: "I don't mind if she dies." She got very drunk and had hidden the bottles. He said: "Give the woman as much as she wants to drink. If she wants to die, let her have it. If she wants a drink, let her have one." Then she died." The date was August 1939. Erroll was 38.

Dr Joseph Gregory, the GP to the Muthaiga Club set, remembers on his visits to Molly that the house smelled of champagne and vomit. Molly's body was covered with heroin abscesses. Gregory remembered their last conversation: "She had been ill and lonely for a long time and she said to me, 'you will promise to come to my funeral, even if you're the only one?' I said of course I would. She died that afternoon. After her death the flowers came pouring into the house, but while she was alive, not a daisy."

Molly's trustees now stopped the flow of money, and Erroll temporarily closed down the house, although she had left it to him in her will. He moved to a house in Muthaiga, near the entrance to the club. He was broke now, living on credit, down to his family pearls and his droit de seigneur, although his taste for politics had turned him into a hard and conscientious worker. He had become secretary to Sir Ferdinand Cavendish Bentinck at the Production and Settlement Board, and that same year, 1939, he was elected to the Legislative Council, as the member for Kiambu. By 1940, Erroll had become military secretary for the colony.

He was also in the middle of a serious love affair with a married woman from Happy Valley whom I shall call Nancy Wisewater. She was envied and unpopular with the other women in that social set, who were bemused by Erroll's infatuation with her. The lovers were forced to meet mostly in the lunch hour. Erroll would have a bottle of champagne put on ice each day in the billiard room of the Norfolk Hotel, where he was once caught by "Auntie", the proprietress, having his way with Mrs Wisewater on the billiard table.

It was now that Erroll met the greatest - and the last - love of his life, Diana Broughton, née Caldwell, who was 30 years younger than Sir Jock Delves Broughton, her husband of less than a month.

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Next Week: Death of an Earl