

Shout!: The Beatles in Their Generation

By Philip Norman

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Updated to include Paul McCartney’s knighting and the deaths of John Lennon and George Harrison.

Philip Norman’s biography of the Beatles is the definitive work on the world's most influential band—a beautifully written account of their lives, their music, and their times. Now brought completely up to date, this epic tale charts the rise of four scruffy Liverpool lads from their wild, often comical early days to the astonishing heights of Beatlemania, from the chaos of Apple and the collapse of hippy idealism to the band's acrimonious split. It also describes their struggle to escape the smothering Beatles’ legacy and the tragic deaths of John Lennon and George Harrison. Witty, insightful, and moving, *Shout!* is essential reading not just for Beatles fans but for anyone with an interest in pop music.

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Editorial Review

Review
"The best, most detailed, and most serious biography of the Beatles and their time."
-- *Chicago Sun-Times*

"Nothing less than thrilling...the definitive biography."
-- *The New York Times*

About the Author
Philip Norman is a journalist and a novelist who in 1968 was assigned to cover the Beatles' own business utopia, Apple Corps, from the inside. He is the author of *Rave On: The Biography of Buddy Holly* and many other books.

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CHAPTER ONE: **"HE WAS THE ONE I'D WAITED FOR"**

John Lennon was born on October 9, 1940, during a brief respite in Nazi Germany's bombing of Liverpool. All summer, after tea, people would switch on their radios at low volume, listening, not to the muted dance music but to the sky outside their open back doors. When the music cut off, before the first siren went, you knew that the bombers were returning.

Liverpool paid a heavy price for its naval shipyards, and for the miles of docks where convoys stood making ready to brave the North Atlantic. The city was Britain's last loophole for overseas food supplies. Night after night, with geometric accuracy, explosions tore along the seaming of wharves and warehouses and black castle walls, and over the tramlines into streets of friendly red back-to-back houses, of pubs and missions and corner dairies with cowsheds behind. During the worst week so many ships lay sunk along the Mersey there was not a single berth free for incoming cargo. But on Lime Street the Empire theater carried on performances as usual. Sometimes the whole audience would crowd out into the foyer and look across the black acropolis of St. George's Hall to a sky flashing white, then dark again as more bombs pummeled the port and the river.

Mimi Stanley had always worried about her younger sister, Julia. She worried about her especially tonight with more Luftwaffe raids expected and Julia in labor in the Oxford Street maternity home. When news of the baby came by telephone Mimi set out on foot from the Stanley house on Newcastle Road. "I ran two miles. I couldn't stop thinking, 'It's a boy, it's a boy. He's the one I've waited for.' "

She held John in her arms twenty minutes after he was born. His second name, Julia said -- in honor of Britain's inspirational prime minister, Winston Churchill -- would be Winston. Just then a parachute-borne land mine fell directly outside the hospital. "But my sister stayed in bed," Mimi said, "and they put the baby under the bed. They wanted me to go into the basement, but I wouldn't. I ran all the way back to Newcastle Road to tell Father the news. 'Get under shelter,' the wardens were shouting. 'Oh, be quiet,' I told them. Father was there, and I said, 'It's a boy and he's beautiful, he's the best one of all.' Father looked up and said, 'Oh heck, he *would* be.' "

Mimi's and Julia's father was an official with the Glasgow and Liverpool Salvage Company. He was aboard the salvage tug that tried to raise the submarine *Thetis* from her deathbed in Liverpool Bay. He had five

daughters and brought them up strictly, though he was often away from home salvaging ships. "We loved Father," Mimi said, "but we liked it when he went away to sea and we girls could kick over the traces a bit. If ever there was a boy I had my eye on, I used to pray at night, 'Please God, let no one be hurt but let there be a wreck.' "

Mimi was slender, brisk, and dark, with fine cheekbones like a Cherokee. Julia was slim, auburn-haired, more conventionally pretty. Both loved laughter, but Mimi insisted there should be sense in it. "Oh, Julia," she would endlessly plead, "be *serious."* Julia could never be serious about anything.

Her marriage to Freddy Lennon in 1938 had been the least serious act of her life. She met Freddy one day in Sefton Park, and commented on the silly hat he wore. To please her, Freddy sent it skimming into the lake. She started bringing him home, to her whole family's great dismay. He was only a ship's waiter, erratically employed; he preferred, in the nautical term for malingering, to "swallow the anchor." Julia married him on an impulse at Mount Pleasant Register Office, putting down her occupation as "cinema usherette" because she knew how it would annoy her father. "I'll never forget that day," Mimi said. "Julia came home, threw a piece of paper on the table and said, 'There, that's it. I've married him.' "

Within little more than a year, World War II had broken out, sending Freddy to sea on a succession of merchant ships and condemning Julia to a life of alternating grim boredom and terror in the Liverpool Blitz. Freddie was doing war work requiring as much courage and self-sacrifice as any other. But he also loved shipboard life, where he was always the star turn in amateur concerts, "blacking up" like Al Jolson or singing torrid ballads like "Begin the Beguine."

After John was born, in 1940, Freddie's spells of shore leave became increasingly more erratic. His longest absence was a bizarre eighteen-month odyssey that saw him variously arrested for deserting his ship in New York and stranded in Bône, North Africa, while, back home in Liverpool, his family presumed him dead and payment of his wages to Julia was suspended. When eventually he arrived home, it was to find Julia pregnant by another man, a Welsh soldier stationed in Liverpool. The baby, a girl, baptized Victoria Elizabeth, was born in 1945, a few weeks after the war's end. Freddie was willing to forgive Julia, adopt Victoria, and bring her up alongside John. But Julia's family, fearing a public disgrace, insisted that the baby must be put out for adoption.

Though his marriage was clearly on the rocks, Freddie was unwilling to relinquish John. In April 1946, hearing that Julia had acquired a new man friend, he abducted John and fled with him to the seaside resort of Blackpool, planning vaguely for the two of them to emigrate to New Zealand. Before he could take the scheme further, however, Julia turned up in Blackpool and announced she was taking John home to Liverpool. The six-year-old was then faced with an agonizing choice: "Do you want to go with Mummy or Daddy?" He chose Julia. A crushed Freddie made no move to keep them from going off together.

All Julia's sisters lent a hand in caring for John. But one sister cared specially -- the one who, having no babies of her own, ran through the air raid to hold him. From the moment John could talk, he would say, "Where's Mimi? Where's Mimi's house?"

"Julia had met someone else, with whom she had a chance of happiness," Mimi said. "And no man wants another man's child. That's when I said I wanted to bring John to Menlove Avenue to live with George and me. I wouldn't even let him risk being hurt or feeling he was in the way. I made up my mind that I'd be the one to give him what every child has the right to -- a safe and happy home life."

The fires ceased falling on Liverpool. The city, though cratered like a Roman ruin, returned to its old,

majestically confident commercial life. St. George's Hall, badly scarred, still stood within its columns, between equestrian statues of Victoria and Albert. Along the docks, the overhead railway remained intact, passing above the funnels and warehouses and branching masts, the horse-drawn wagons and clanking, shuffling "Green Goddess" Liverpool trams. Business resumed in the streets lined by statues and colonnades and Moorish arches and huge public clocks. At the Pier Head, that broad riverfront, congregations of trams drew up between the Mersey and its three gray waterside temples: the Cunard Company, the Docks and Harbour Board, and the Royal Liver Insurance Company. The "Liver building" was still there, its twin belfries soaring higher than the seagulls and crowned with the skittish stone silhouettes of the "Liver birds."

Liverpool was still business and banking and insurance -- and ships. From the southern headland, under rings of tall cranes, came the rhythmic clout of Cammell Laird's yard where they built the *Alabama,* the *Mauretania,* the *Ark Royal,* the Thetis. Across from Birkenhead, brisk river ferries crossed the path of ocean liners, warships, merchantmen, and the smaller fry of what was still Europe's busiest shipping pool. Ever and again, from a slipway on the broad river bend, some fresh ungarnished hull would slide backward, and ride there, free of drag chains, while tug whoops mingled with cheers from the bank.

Liverpool was docks and ships and as such indistinguishable in Britain's northern industrial fogs but for one additional, intermittent product: Liverpool was where music-hall comedians, such as Tommy Handley, Arthur Askey, and Robb Wilton, came from. Some elixir in a population mixed from Welsh and Irish, and also lascar and Chinese, and uttered in the strange glottal dialect that simultaneously seems to raise derisive eyebrows, had always possessed the power to make the rest of the country laugh.

Liverpool "comics" were always preferred by the London theatrical agents. But there was a proviso. It was better for them to lose their Liverpool accents, and omit all references to the city of their origin. No one in London cared about a place so far to the northwest, so gray and sooty and old-fashioned, and above all, so utterly without glamour as Liverpool.

Woolton, where John grew up, is a suburb six miles to the southeast, but further in spirit, from the Liverpool of docks and Chinatown and pub signs pasted round every street corner. From Lime Street you drive uphill, past the grand old Adelphi Hotel, past the smaller backstreet hotels with no pretense at grandeur, past the Baptist temples and Irish meeting halls and grassed-over bomb sites turned into eternal temporary parking lots, lapping against some isolated little waterworks or church. Eventually you come to a traffic circle known by the name of its smallest tributary, Penny Lane. Woolton lies beyond, in wide dual carriageways with grass verges and mock Tudor villas whose gardens adjoin parks, country clubs, and golf courses.

Woolton, in fact, is such a respectable, desirable, and featureless suburb as grows up close to any British industrial city. Until 1963, it had only one claim on history. A lord of the same name was Britain's wartime minister of food and inventor of the "Woolton Pie," which boasted total, if unappetizing, nourishment for only one old shilling a portion.

The country village that Woolton used to be is still distinguishable in narrow lanes winding up to its red sandstone parish church, St. Peter's. In the early 1940s, it was still more villagelike. It even had its own small dairy farm, to which people would go for fresh milk ladled straight from the churn. The farm and dairy belonged to George Smith, the quiet kindhearted man whom high-spirited Mimi Stanley had married.

George and Mimi lived at "Mendips," a semidetached house on Menlove Avenue, round the corner from the dairy, almost opposite Allerton golf course. Built in 1933, it was a semidetached villa designed for the aspirational lower middle class, with mock Tudor half-timbering, windows inset with Art Nouveau stained glass, and the tiny living room beside the kitchen grandly described as a "morning room." In the years before

Mimi and George brought their little nephew, John Lennon, to live here, the house had even had live-in domestics. The untold million future acolytes of the self-styled "working-class hero" never dreamed he actually grew up in a house with a morning room, Spode and Royal Worcester plates displayed on ledges around its quasi-baronial front hall, and servants' bells in its kitchen.

Julia had settled only a short bus journey away, at Springwood. Her man friend, John Dykins, was headwaiter at the splendiferous Adelphi Hotel. Every afternoon, she came across to her sister's to see John. He called her "Mummy"; his aunt he called plain "Mimi." "John said to me once when he was little, 'Why don't I call you Mummy?' I said, 'Well -- you couldn't very well have two Mummies, could you?' He accepted that."

From the moment Julia gave him to her, Mimi devoted her life to John. "Never a day passed when I wasn't with him -- just that one time a year when he went up to Scotland to stay with his cousins. And at night, for ten years, I never crossed the threshold of that house. As I came downstairs I'd always leave the light on on the landing outside his room. This little voice would come after me, "Mimi! Don't waste light."

"I brought him up strictly. No sweets -- just one barley sugar at night -- and no sitting around in picturedomes. He never wanted it. He'd play for hours in the garden in summer, in his little swimming shorts. I'd go to the butcher's for pheasants' feathers and I'd make him up like an Indian with gravy browning, and put lipstick for war paint on his cheeks. And when he said his friends *were* dead, they were dead.

"He never had a day's illness. Only chicken pox. 'Chicken pots,' he called it. And he loved his uncle George. I felt quite left out of that. They'd go off together, just leaving me a bar of chocolate and a note saying: 'Have a happy day.' "

Mimi, for all her briskness, liked nothing better than laughter. Julia had always known how to get her going so that she threw her head back and guffawed, slapping her knee. "I was very slim in those days. Julia would come in in the afternoon and dance up to me, singing, 'O dem bones, dem bones -- ' She'd only got to lift her eyebrow and I'd be off.

"John was the same. I'd be battling with him. I'd send him out of the room, then I'd flop down exhausted in the big armchair next to the morning-room window. He'd crawl round on the path and pull faces at me through the window. He'd come at me like a monster, going, 'Woooo!' He could get me off just the same way Julia could."

When Mimi took charge of John she sent him to Dovedale Primary School, near Penny Lane. She took him there each morning, and each afternoon met him at the bus stop, near the Penny Lane traffic circle. In his class at Dovedale Primary was a boy named Peter Harrison whose younger brother George sometimes came with their mother to meet the three-thirty outpouring from school.

John did well at Dovedale, learning to read and write with precocious speed. He liked sport, especially running and swimming, but was inept at soccer. The discovery was made that he had chronically poor eyesight. His teachers thought that must be what made his English compositions so unusual. He changed almost every word into another one like it. Instead of "funds," he would write "funs." He loved reading, especially Richmal Crompton's Just William stories about a lawless eleven-year-old. He loved writing and drawing and crayoning. He could amuse himself for hours with books or pencils in the tiny bedroom above the front door that had little space for anything but its red-quilted single bed, undersized wardrobe, and one-bar electric heater. Each Christmas, when Mimi took him to the pantomime at the Liverpool Empire, he would endlessly retell the experience in stories, poems, and drawings. At the age of seven he began writing

books of his own. One of them was called *Sport and Speed Illustrated;* it had cartoons and drawings and a serial story ending: "If you liked this, come again next week. It'll be even better."

One day, while playing in a nearby field, John encountered another seven-year-old with a pale pink-and-white face and fuzzy blond hair. The boy's name was Peter Shotton; his mother kept a small needlewoman's and grocery shop in Woolton village. The encounter quickly turned into combat. "I'd found out his name was Winston," Shotton says. "I was calling out to him, 'Winnie, Winnie...' He got me down on the ground with his knees on my shoulders. I said: 'OK, go ahead and hit me. Get it over with.' But he couldn't. He said: 'OK, I'll let you off. Just don't call me that name again.' I walked away, then I turned round and shouted, 'Winnie, Winnie.' He was so angry, he couldn't speak. Then I saw his face break into a smile."

Pete Shotton and John Lennon became inseparable friends. Pete lived on Vale Road, just round the corner from Menlove Avenue. The addition of another Vale Road boy, a mutual acquaintance, named Nigel Walley, added a new dimension. Three of them made enough for a gang.

Nigel went to school with Pete Shotton in Mosspits Lane. He also sang in the choir with John at St. Peter's, Woolton. He had often sat in the choirstalls in his white surplice, wriggling with laughter at things which the white-surpliced John dared to do. "He'd steal the Harvest Festival fruit. And every time the Rector, Old Pricey, climbed into the pulpit, John used to say, 'He's getting on his drums now.' "

The gang grew to four with the arrival of another Dovedale boy, Ivan Vaughan. Thus constituted, it embarked on its career as the terror of Woolton. One of the earliest games was to climb a tree over the busy main road and dangle a leg down in front of an approaching double-decker bus, then yank it back to safety in the nick of time. If your foot scraped the bus roof, that counted as extra points.

"John was always the leader," Nigel Walley says. "He was always the one to dare you. He never cared what he said or did. He'd think nothing of putting a brick through the glass in a street lamp. He'd dare us to go with him and play on the Allerton golf course, trying to hit golf balls across Menlove Avenue. Once, the police came and chased us off. We'd pick up these great clods of earth to chuck at the trains when they went into the tunnel at Garston. Something else was putting stuff on the tram rails to try to derail the trams.

"Shoplifting was another thing. We'd go into a sweet shop run by this little old lady. John'd point to things he said he wanted on the top shelf and, all the time, he'd be filling his pockets from the counter. He did the same at a shop that sold Dinky cars, in Woolton -- opposite the Baths. He'd put a tractor or a little car in his pocket while the bloke was looking the other way. We went back to that same shop later on, but this time John hadn't got his glasses on. He couldn't understand why his fingers couldn't get at the Dinky cars. He couldn't see that the bloke had covered them over with a sheet of glass.

"We'd go to all the garden fetes in the summer, get under tents, and pinch stuff. People would come in looking for their trays of cakes and buns that we'd eaten. We went to one fete organized by the nuns, and somehow John got hold of this robe and dressed himself up as a monk. He was sitting with some other monks on a bench, talking in all these funny words while we were rolling about under the tent, in tucks.

"Pete was a bit of a bully, always picking on me, so John used to look after me. Whatever he told me to do, I'd do it. 'Walloggs,' he used to call me."

Aunt Mimi approved of Nigel Walley. His father was a senior police officer. Mimi thought him a wholesome influence.

At the age of twelve, John left Dovedale Primary and started at Quarry Bank High [i.e., grammar] School, on Harthill Road, a mile or so from Menlove Avenue. Mimi, distrusting the school outfitter, got his uncle George's tailor to make his new black blazer with its red-and-gold stag's head badge and motto, *Ex Hoc Metallo Virtutem* (From This Rough Metal We Forge Virtue). On his Raleigh "Lenton" bicycle he would toil up the long hill to school, past old sandstone quarries, long emptied and overgrown. Woolton sandstone built the Anglican cathedral, as well as the many mock Elizabethan mansions in which Liverpool merchants indulged themselves at the height of their Victorian prosperity.

It was in a local timber baron's mock-gothic "folly" that Quarry Bank High School was founded in 1922. Despite its newness it was, by the time John arrived in 1952, as steeped in academic lore as any of Liverpool's ancient grammar schools. There was a house system; there were masters in gowns; there were prefects and canings. In later years, after it had produced two Labour cabinet ministers -- William Rodgers and Peter Shore -- Quarry Bank came to be nicknamed "The Eton of the Labour Party."

John's Dovedale friend, Ivan Vaughan, had gone on to Liverpool Institute High School. Nigel Walley was now at the Bluecoat School near Penny Lane. Pete Shotton was the only one of the Woolton gang who accompanied him to Quarry Bank. "We went through it together like Siamese twins," Pete says. "We started in our first year at the top and gradually sank together into the subbasement.

"I remember the first time we both went to be caned. I was really terrified. John wasn't -- or if he was, he didn't show it. We were both waiting outside the headmaster's study. John started telling me the cane would be kept in a special case, with a velvet lining and jewels all round it. I was in tucks, even though I was so scared.

"John went in first for the cane. I could hear it -- swipe, swipe. Then he came out. What I didn't realize was that there was a little vestibule you had to go through before you got into the head's study. John came out through this little vestibule -- though I didn't know it -- crawling on all fours and groaning. I was laughing so much when I went in that I got it even worse than he had."

In 1955 Mimi's husband, Uncle George, died suddenly after a hemorrhage. It was a shock to the whole family to lose the quiet, hardworking dairy farmer who got up every morning without complaint to do the milking and whose only unusual demand of Mimi was his two breakfasts a day. Uncle George had been John's ally when he was in disgrace, smuggling buns upstairs to him behind Mimi's back. Uncle George had bought him the mouth organ John carried in his blazer pocket and tinkered on for hours when he ought to have been doing homework.

Mimi was left alone to cope with a boy whose will was now almost the equal of hers and who seemed to glory in idleness and lawlessness and wasting the opportunities he had been given. From his first moderately virtuous year at Quarry Bank, he gravitated, in Pete Shotton's company, to the bottom of the C stream, and made no attempt to rise again thereafter. The two were perpetually in detention or being sent to the headmaster's study for a caning. Frequently, their exploits were serious enough to be reported to their homes. "I used to dread the phone going at ten in the morning," Mimi said. "A voice would come on, 'Hello, Mrs. Smith. This is the secretary at Quarry Bank...' 'Oh Lord,' I'd think. 'What's he done now?' "

"It was mostly skiving," Pete Shotton says. "Not doing the things the others did. We were like wanted men. We were always on the run."

Rod Davis, a studious boy in the A stream, had watched John and Pete's double act since they were seven-year-olds sitting in a ring at St. Peter's Sunday school and John had managed to put a piece of chewing gum

into the teacher's hand so that all her fingers stuck together. "I'd always known him and Pete as the school thugs, dragging on a cigarette they'd got behind their backs, or running into Marks & Spencers and shouting 'Woolworths!' "

"John used to turn Religious Knowledge into chaos," Pete Shotton says. "One day he cut out all the shiny white cardboard bits from a lot of Weetabix packets and made dog collars for the whole class. When the teacher, McDermott, came in, he was so angry, he couldn't speak. Then he had to start laughing. He made us wear them for the rest of the class."

The school punishment book records for what diversity of crime J. Lennon and P. Shotton were beaten: "failing to report to school office"; "insolence"; "throwing blackboard duster out of window"; "cutting class and going awol"; "gambling on school field during house match."

"We were in detention once, clearing up the sports field," Pete Shotton says. "I found this big envelope full of dinner tickets. You used to pay a shilling a day for a ticket to have your school dinner. These were the used ones that somebody had accidentally dropped. When John and I counted them, we found we'd got the whole school's dinner tickets -- about fifteen hundred of them. And they were worth a shilling each. We sold them off for sixpence each. We were rich. We even gave up shoplifting while that was going on."

Even John's talent for writing and drawing failed to earn him any good marks or exam distinctions. Only in the last forty minutes of every day, in the unsupervised prep period, would he show what ability he was relentlessly wasting. He would fill old exercise books and scraps of paper with his cartoons and word play and verse. His nonsense sagas, "The Land of the Lunapots," and "Tales of Hermit Fred," were passed to Pete Shotton first, then enjoyed wide under-the-desk circulation. "He'd do all these caricatures of the masters," Pete says. "We'd stick them on bits of cereal packets and make a stall at the school fete where people could throw darts at them. We handed in more money than any other stall -- and we still had five times as much in our pockets."

Often they would cut school altogether. They would go on the bus to see Julia, John's mother -- now living with the nervous waiter the boys called "Twitchy," by whom she had two small daughters. "Julia didn't mind if we'd sagged off school," Pete Shotton says. "She used to wear these old woollen knickers on her head while she did the housework. She'd open the door to us with the knicker legs hanging down her back. She didn't care. She was just like John."

John, as he grew older, grew more and more fascinated by this pretty auburn-haired woman, so much more like an elder sister than a mother. For Julia did not echo the dire warnings given by Aunt Mimi and Quarry Bank. Julia encouraged him to live for the present, as she did, and for laughter and practical jokes. "She'd do these tricks just to make us laugh," Pete says. "She'd put on a pair of glasses with no glass in the frames. She'd stand talking to a neighbor and suddenly stick her finger through where the lens ought to have been, and rub her eye."

Julia thought as John and Pete did, and said the things they wanted to hear. She told them not to worry about school or homework or what their lives might have in store.

Jim McCartney was no stranger to female admiration. During the 1920s he led the Jim Mac Jazz Band, dapperly outfitted in dinner jackets, paper shirt fronts, and detachable cuffs that could be bought then for a penny per dozen. A photograph taken at the time shows a group of girls in silver shoes and stockings, their hair pertly fringed and bobbed, reclining with formal abandon on a dance floor around the Jim Mac drum set. Among them sits the bandleader with his formal wing collar and close-cropped hair, and his so familiar

looking big brown eyes.

Jim was a cotton salesman working for Hannay's of Chapel Street, Liverpool, an old established firm of cotton brokers and purveyors to the Manchester mills. His position, for a working-class boy, was a good one; he had risen to it by neatness, diligence, and a genuine flair for selling, though he lacked the ruthlessness that might have taken him higher. He had taught himself to play the piano by ear, as any young man did who wished for social grace. The Jim Mac Jazz Band performed at socials and works dances, occasionally even in cinemas. Their biggest engagement was providing incidental music for a silent Hollywood epic, *The Queen of Sheba.* When a chariot race began on the screen Jim Mac and the boys played "Thanks for the Buggy Ride." During the Queen of Sheba's death scene they played "Horsy, Keep Your Tail Up."

Perhaps there were too many of those girls in silver shoes and stockings around the drum set. At all events, Jim McCartney went through his thirties as a bachelor, working at the Cotton Exchange, playing his spare-time dance music, content for his family to be the hospitable reflection of his married sisters, Millie and Jin.

At the very point where he seemed resigned to bachelorhood, and the impending war seemed to confirm it, Jim McCartney proposed marriage to Mary Mohin. She, like Jim, was of the Liverpool's medical services, a slender and gently spoken woman employed by Liverpool Corporation as a district health visitor. Herself in her early thirties, Mary could override the faint objection that Jim did not share her membership in the Catholic Church. They were married in 1941, shortly before Jim's fortieth birthday.

Exempted from military service by partial deafness, he had been transferred from Hannay's to munitions work with Napier's, the firm that produced the Sabre aircraft engine. On June 18, 1942, while Jim was fire watching, Mary gave birth to a son in Walton General Hospital. She had worked there once as nursing sister in charge of the maternity ward, and so received the luxury of a private room. The baby was perfect, with a placid, impish smile and big eyes just like his father's. Such was Mary's love for Jim that the more famous saint's name did not receive precedence. The baby was christened James Paul.

His first home was furnished rooms in Anfield, not far from the mass graves where the dead from the dockland blitz had been buried. Jim, no longer needed for munitions work, had left Napier's and become an inspector in the local authority's cleansing department. His job was to follow the garbagemen, seeing that they did not skimp their round. The work was badly paid, and to supplement Jim's earnings, Mary returned to her former job as a health visitor. After her second son, Michael, was born in 1944, she took up full-time midwifery.

The process had already begun that was to gouge out the old, shabby, vibrant heart of Liverpool, flattening its bombed streets and scattering their inhabitants wide across an arid suburban plain. Communities that Hitler could not displace were now induced, by the hundreds of thousand, to migrate to new housing projects, dumped down amid transplanted industry and isolated by walls of dingy open air.

Mary McCartney became a domiciliary midwife on one of the several projects built around Speke's new industrial parks. The rent-free public housing on Western Avenue helped to reduce the strain on Jim's small wage. The disadvantage was that Mary had to be available twenty-four hours a day. Her kindness and patience became a legend among people already suspecting they may have been forgotten by the authorities. Little gifts of plaster ornaments or somebody's sugar ration were always being brought to the McCartneys' back door, or left shyly outside on the step.

Her own children, despite the constant pressure, received immaculate care. Jim, who had been somewhat unprepared for fatherhood -- and somewhat dismayed by Paul's redness as a newborn baby -- could only

marvel at the ingenuity with which Mary found time, and money enough, to dress the boys beautifully and feed them with imaginative good sense. Her special concern was that they should speak well, not in broad Liverpudlian like other children in the housing project.

Paul came to consciousness in an atmosphere of worship. His aunts and the neighbors loved him for his chubbiness, his large eyes and amiable, undespotic disposition. The arrival of a little brother, and potential rival, showed him the importance of maintaining popularity. He soon discovered that he possessed charm, and learned early how to put it to use. Though the boys did things together, and were together in normal boyish scrapes, it would invariably be Michael, the more impetuous and turbulent one, who received punishment. Jim McCartney, for all his mildness, was of the generation that believed in hitting children. Michael remembers being chastised by Jim while Paul, who had escaped, stood by, shouting, "Tell him you didn't do it and he'll stop." Where Michael would shout and cry, Paul, if his father hit him, showed no emotion. Later he would go into his parents' bedroom and tear their lace curtains imperceptibly at the bottom.

Though Mary was a Catholic, she preferred to entrust the boys' education to Protestant schools. Paul started in Speke, at Stockton Road Primary. Michael joined him there, and when the classes became overcrowded, both were transferred to Joseph Williams Primary, Gateacre. Here the same contrast was revealed between them. Paul was quiet and law abiding, and Michael, hotly argumentative. Where Michael found it difficult to absorb learning, Paul came out on top in almost every lesson with ease. He was especially good at English composition and art. His handwriting received praise for its clear regularity.

Money remained a difficulty, though the boys never knew it. Jim McCartney had left his job with the Cleansing department and gone back to selling cotton. This, however, was not the secure trade it had been in prewar days with Hannay's. After a hard week's traveling Jim would be lucky to find six pounds in his wage packet. Mary took a second domiciliary job on the Speke estate, necessitating a move from Western Avenue to another council house, on Ardwick Road. Her husband, worried at the long hours she worked, was relieved when she decided to give up midwifery and return to regular nursing. She became a school nurse, making rounds with school doctors in the Walton and Allerton district.

Bella Johnson met Mary at the central clinic from which both of them worked. A round, little, jolly woman, Bella too was finding it difficult to make ends meet. She had been widowed at the age of thirty-six, with two small daughters to educate. This she had done so spectacularly well that one of them, Olive, now worked for the Law Society in Liverpool. The Law Society's offices were only a street away from the Cotton Exchange. On her way to work, Olive used to pass the time of day with Jim McCartney, not knowing that his wife and her mother were colleagues and friends.

Mrs. Johnson and Olive got to know the McCartneys well. Bella remembered a family contented and normal, suffused by Mary's gentleness and strength. "She was a beautiful person: it came from something deep inside her," Olive says. "Jim adored her. I remember how he'd sometimes tell us a story he'd picked up from the businessmen at the Cotton Exchange. If it was a bit off-color, Mary used to look at him and say, *'Husband!'* "

Olive had a small car in which they would all go on weekend trips into the Cheshire countryside. She became a big sister to Paul and Michael, joining in their games, rowing them in a skiff across the lake at Wilmslow. "Mary always made us a special treat at tea time," Mrs. Johnson said. "I'll never forget them. Apple sandwiches with sugar."

On Coronation Day 1953, the Johnsons and McCartneys celebrated together at Ardwick Road. The boys had received their commemorative mugs and spoons, and Paul, in addition, had won a book as a coronation essay

prize. They watched, as people did all over Britain in one another's front parlors, the ceremonial flickering over a tiny, bluish television screen.

Michael McCartney sat at his mother's feet, as ever. "He was the one you always felt you wanted to love and protect," Olive says. "With Paul, you loved him, but you knew you'd never have to protect him."

. . .

Paul passed the eleven plus examination without difficulty, and with sufficient distinction to receive a place at Liverpool Institute, the city's oldest grammar school. The honor entailed a long bus journey each day from Speke into Liverpool and up behind the Anglican Cathedral to Mount Street, where the institute's square portico jutted out into steeply plunging pavement. Founded in the 1830s as a Mechanics Institute for deserving artisans, the building had been later divided to form the grammar school and the college of art. Behind the heavy wrought-iron gates was an interior unchanged since Victorian times, save that the gas lamps over each classroom door were no longer lit on winter afternoons. *Non nobis solum,* the school motto runs, *sed toti mundo nati:* "Not for ourselves only but for the good of all the world."

Among hundreds of boys, swarming through the green-distempered school thoroughfares, Paul McCartney was not conspicuous, nor wished to be. His black blazer was neat and his hair slicked flat with Brylcreem; he belonged to that cooperative species from which are recruited the collectors of exercise books and operators of window poles; he was, more or less permanently, head boy in his grade. With his classmates he was popular, if a little reserved. They called him not by his surname or a nickname -- just Paul. His close friend Ivan Vaughan was an exception to this attitude of noticeable deference.

He had been put into the A stream, tending as he moved higher to specialize in history and languages. He found most lessons easy, and could get high marks even in Latin if he bothered to apply his mind. He was nonchalant about homework, an embarrassing obligation in a housing project where other boys could do what they pleased at night. On the morning bus into Liverpool, he could churn out an essay still impressive enough to receive commendation from his English master, "Dusty" Durband. Mr. Durband, even so, was aware of the extent to which Paul relied on facility and bluff to see him through. It sometimes failed him, as when he had been given the task of preparing a talk about the Bodley Head edition of Stephen Leacock's works. Paul delivered an impromptu stream of nonsense about the Bodley Head's Elizabethan logo.

He knew what he wanted and even then would be satisfied with nothing less. When the institute put on Shaw's *St. Joan* as its end-of-term play, Paul auditioned keenly for the part of Warwick. He did not get it, and had to be content with the minor role of an inquisitor in the trial scene. The disappointment made him unusually fractious: Mr. Durband, the play's producer, remembers shouting in exasperation at the medievally hooded figure that persisted in disrupting rehearsals.

In 1955, when Paul was thirteen, the McCartneys left Speke and its pallid factory smog. Jim had managed to get a council house in Allerton, one of Liverpool's nearer and better suburbs. It was a definite step up for the family to move into 20 Forthlin Road, a double row of semidetached houses small and neat enough to pass for privately owned villas. Mimi Smith's home in Woolton was only a mile or so away, if you cut across the golf course.

For some time, Mary had been troubled by a slight pain in her breast. She did not like to trouble the doctor for fear he would dismiss it as nurse's hypochondria. As she was now in her mid-forties, she and Jim philosophically concluded that "the change" must be to blame for the small lump that had appeared. The pain was not great but would not seem to go away.

Paul and Michael were camping with the Boy Scouts that summer. The weather was very wet and cold, and Mary told Bella Johnson, her friend at the school clinic, that she was worried about the boys sleeping under canvas. So one afternoon, Olive took Mary and Jim in her car to visit them. On the way home Mary was in such pain that she had to lie down on the back seat.

"When she got home, she went straight to bed," Olive says. "I went up later and found her crying. 'Oh, Olive,' she said to me, 'I don't want to leave the boys *just* yet.' "

After a few days' rest she felt so much better that she began to think that, after all, the trouble was simply overwork. Then the pain returned so severely that, at last, she consulted a specialist. He sent her at once into hospital -- not Walton General but the old city Northern, so that he could keep a close eye on her. Breast cancer was diagnosed. She went into surgery for a mastectomy, which was not carried out: The cancer had already spread too far. A few hours later Bella and Olive Johnson received the news that Mary had died.

Jim McCartney's predicament was one calculated to crush a younger as well as wealthier man. At the age of fifty-three he found himself bereft of a loving, capable wife and faced with the task of caring for two adolescent boys, all on a wage that still had need of the extra Mary had earned. That, indeed, was the first thing fourteen-year-old Paul blurted out in the shock of his mother's loss: "What are we going to do without her money?"

Mary was buried as a Catholic -- the wish she had expressed to Jim on her deathbed. Paul and Michael were taken to stay with their auntie Jin at Huyton to spare them the funeral and the sight of their father's devastation. Mrs. Johnson and Olive moved in to Forthlin Road to be with Jim and to prepare him for the boys' return. Their task, at first, seemed hopeless. All he wanted, he kept saying, was to be with Mary.

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