Reference code: GB165-0364
Title: Violet Dickson Collection
Name of creator: Dickson, Dame Violet Penelope (1896-1991)
Level of description: Fonds
Extent: 12 Albums; 13 sheets

Biographical history: Dickson, Dame Violet Penelope (1896-1991)
Born 3 September 1896 the second daughter of Neville Lucas Calcraft (1844-1909). Education by Swiss Governess, High School, Woodhall Spa and Pensionnat les Charmettes at Vevey. Returned to England in 1914. Worked in Smith’s Bank, Lincoln in 1915 then worked for the banking firm of Cox & Cox in Marseilles in 1918. Married Harold Dickson in 1920 at Bombay. Went to Hilla on the Euphrates in Iraq. Stayed a short time in Bahrain before going on leave to Switzerland where her son Hanmer was born in 1923. Harold and Violet Dickson then moved to India where Harold was posted to the 2/2 Punjab Regiment stationed at Quetta. Harold Dickson was then seconded to be Private Secretary to the Maharajah of Bikaner and tutor to his second son. In 1925 their daughter Zahra was born. In 1929 Violet Dickson moved to Bushire where Harold had been appointed as Secretary to the Political Resident, Persian Gulf. On 22 May 1929 they arrived in Kuwait upon Harold’s appointment as Political Agent there. Violet Dickson authored two books: The Wild flowers of Kuwait and Bahrain (London: Allen & Unwin, 1955) and Forty years in Kuwait, (London: Allen & Unwin, 1971). In 1942 Violet Dickson was awarded the M.B.E, in 1961 the Lawrence of Arabia medal from the Royal Central Asian Society, in 1965 the C.B.E. and in 1976 she was made a Dame of the British Empire for her lifelong work amongst the Arabs. Died 4 January 1991.

Scope and content: Photocopy of a TS account of Violet Dickson’s family history; MS description of each photograph album; 12 photograph albums, 1956-1981, mainly covering Kuwait but also including a small amount of photographs taken in Abu Dhabi, Bahrain, Dubai, Sharjah, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Iran, Iraq, Yemen as well as photographs of European countries and Africa.

System of arrangement: As received. Family history, description of photographs and numbered albums
Access conditions: Open
Language of material: English
Physical Condition: Some fading of colour photographs

Conditions governing reproduction: Copyright assigned to Middle East Centre Archive, St Antony’s College

Custodial history: In the possession of the Dickson family
Immediate source of acquisition: Received from H.Y.W.S.D. Dickson on 5 March 2004

Related Units of Description:
In MEC Archive
GB165-0085 H.R.P. Dickson Collection – husband of Violet Dickson

Finding aids: In Guide; Handlist
Publication note: Dickson, Violet The Wild flowers of Kuwait and Bahrain (London: Allen & Unwin, 1955); Dickson, Violet Forty years in Kuwait, (London: Allen & Unwin, 1971)

Archivist’s note: Fonds level description created by D. Usher April 2004. Album level description supplied by H.Y.W.S.D. Dickson. Biographical history compiled from the family history
FILE AND ITEM LEVEL DESCRIPTION OF THE VIOLET DICKSON COLLECTION

1 FAMILY HISTORY

1/1 Photocopy of a TS account of Violet Dickson’s family  Mar 1992  11 sheets
history written by H.Y.W.S.D.

2 PHOTOGRAPHS

The Violet Dickson photograph collection consists of 12 albums. The album numbers that were given in the MS description in 2/1 have been retained in this catalogue. However albums 1, 2, 3 and 12 are not in this collection as Violet Dickson gave them away prior to her death and their current location is unknown.

2/1 MS ‘Notes on Vi’s Photo Albums’ giving a description of  2 Mar 2004  2 sheets
each album written by H.Y.W.S.D.

2/2 ‘Album 4’ 1956-1960

Label on Album
Kuwait 1956-59 & 60
Togo & Pal’s Visit
Berbera Dec 1959 England 1960

Description as provided by H.Y.W.S.D. Dickson
Scenes of summer leave June ‘56, with Harold in wheelchair. To Beyrouth, Chtaura: on to Switzerland, Montreux and Gstaad. Visit to Walkers at Lenk. On to U.K. in August: to Eastbourne and Torquay, where Vi had her birthday. Visit to Buckfast Abbey. Back to Kuwait, more local scenes. Oil well on fire at time of Suez crisis. Spring ‘57 in desert Togo on visit Feb/March ’57. June ’57 Vi and Harold depart for summer leave to Beyrouth and Geneva. On to Montreaux for fete des Narcisses, and then to Gstaad for fete des Paysannes. 1/9/57 home to U.K. to see Zahra/Dick/Stephen and Penny. Down to Eastbourne to see friends. 8/9 Penny’s Christening at St. Mary the Virgin, Upper Wellington. Back to Kuwait. Colour photos over winter months. Nov ’58 Pat and Togo arrive in Kuwait. July ’58 Vi and Harold to Lebanon and on to Istanbul to visit the Barrows. Then to U.K. on 9/8/58 to stay with Zahra and family at 306 Woolwich Road.

2/3 ‘Album 5’ 1961-1963

Label on Album
Kuwait 1961
Raudhatain Floods Wo [label torn]
Zermatt 1962 No [label torn]
Aarhus & Stockholm 1962 Deser [label torn]
1963 Zerm [label torn]

Description as provided by H.Y.W.S.D. Dickson
More Kuwait scenes in spring. April ’61 visit to Saudi Arabia – Al Kharaj, Dakaha, Oquair, Thaj, with Nentz, Müller and Marsh. Back to Kuwait Feb ’62. To Thaj to see Bargers. On with them to Rub Al Khali by ‘plane and to Aramco camp. June ’62 to Zermatt, on to Copenhagen to see friends. July, on to Sweden and Stockholm to see more friends. Then to U.K. to stay with Zahra and family. Back to Kuwait. More desert scenes in March ’63. Views around town. Summer ’63 Vi goes to Zermatt, local scenes.

2/4 ‘Album 6’ 1960-1967

Album 6
Portugal ’63 Iran 1964 Ramsar
Zomba 1964 Switz. 1965
Zermati 1966
Kuwait 1967

Description as provided by H.Y.W.S.D. Dickson
July ’63 Vi takes Zahra and Penny to Lisbon and Estoril to meet Miriam and family. Then back to Kuwait. This album has earlier photos of Vi’s trip to Jordan and Jerusalem with M.D. Scott in December 1960. In may ’64 Vi goes to Iran to stay with the Whartons in
Teheran. She visits Isphahan and Ramsar on the Caspian sea. In Aug ’64 Vi goes to Malawi to visit Togo and family in Zomba and travels round the country with them. In Feb ’65 Vi again visits S. Arabia to stay with the Bargers. In March she flies to London for her C.B.E. investiture. In July to Chamonix with Zahra and children, and on to Geneva, Montreux and Zermatt. Then to Amsterdam and finally to Westcliffe on sea in U.K. Photos here of an earlier trip in April ’65 to stay with Luce in Bahrain, and on to Qatar and Abu Dhabi. In December ’65 Vi visits Iran again. Then back to Kuwait, local scenes over winter months. July ’66 Vi goes to Zermatt with Togo, Pat and their children. Then to Westcliffe on Sea in August. And finally back to Kuwait in September. More local scenes over winter months. In Feb ’67 she visits Qatif and Tarent Island.

2/5 ‘Album 7’ 1967-1968

Label on Album
1967 Switzerland, Tangania, Malawi 1968
Ireland, Bantry Bay
Kilarney with Chisholm
Zermatt Lisbon
Mayland Kiderley

Description as provided by H.Y.W.S.D. Dickson
July ’67 Vi flies to Geneva to meet up with Zahra and Penny, and takes them to Gstaad and Zermatt. In Aug ’67 Vi flies off to E. Africa to stay with Vesly Fitzgerald in the Serengeti National Park. They visit the Ngorongora National Park and Lake Manhyaro. Vi flies on to Malawi to stay with Pat, Togo and family in Zomba, and visits Lake Malawi with them. She then returns to Kuwait in October. In June ’68 she goes off to U.K. to stay with Zahra and family at Nayland Vicarage in June ’68 she goes back to Ireland to see Chisholms and Col. Kaulbeck. Then off to Lisbon in Aug ’68 to visit Graziela, Antonia and Gomes. And so back to Kuwait.

2/6 ‘Album 8’ 1968

Label on Album
Enlargements
Desert Camps. Nasser at Nariyeh 1968
2/7 ‘Album 8 A’ 1968
Label on Album
Dubai 15.3.68 Shahs Visit to Kuwait 17.11.68
Buraimi
Lebanon Sept 68
Muscat visit 25.2.69
Dhahran 15.3.69 – 28th

Description as provided by H.Y.W.S.D. Dickson
This album contains photos of other trips made by Vi in 1968. In March she goes to Dubai and Sharjah with the Moores; and on to Ras Al Khaimah and Buraimi. In September ’68 she visits Mary Eddy and Lady Cochrane in Beirut. In October ’68 Vi goes to Bahrain to stay with the Fanshawes. Then back to Kuwait. She visits Failaka Island with Tariq Negab and family. Photos of Shah’s visit to Kuwait on 17-11-68; and her visit to Jubail and Rub Al Khali in December ’68. Views around Ahmadi and of ID in Kuwait on 20-12-68. Also desert scenes, including many black and white enlargements.

2/8 ‘Album 9’ 1969
Label on Album
1969. 40 Years in Kuwait

Description as provided by H.Y.W.S.D. Dickson
This album celebrates Vi’s 40 years in Kuwait with many views of her house and yard, her staff, interior views and visitors. All in 1969. From 16/6 – 3/7/69. Pat and Togo, Caroline and John visit Kuwait. All go with her to Switzerland where they are joined by Simon and Vicky – in Geneva, Spiez and Zermatt. Togo goes to U.K. in September with his family. Vi stays on in Zermatt with Zahra and family, returns with them to U.K. and visits Betty and Mac at Juniper, Berbera and Adelaide Anotony and Christopher Gandy and his mother. Finally in Sept ’69 Vi sails for Cape Town with Togo, Pat and family.

2/9 ‘Album 10’ 1969-1971
Label on Album
1969 – Switzerland, Cape
Towa to Malawi on to Kenya. Jeddah
1970 – Tehran, Switzerland, Kuwait
1971 – Simon’s Visit

Description as provided by H.Y.W.S.D. Dickson

Their ship, the ‘Edinburgh Castle’ stops at Lar Palmas and arrives in Cape Town in Oct ’69. The family stays with the Fanshawes (he was the Naval commander in charge) at Cape Town; and then all drive up together with Ruth Coneybeare, through S. Africa and Rhodesia to Blantyre in Malawi. Later Vi flies on to Nairobi to stay with the Berridges. Visits Lake Naivasha and goes on to Addis Ababa with Mrs Holman. She returns to Kuwait via Jeddah. In March 1970 Zahar, Penny and Stephen visit Kuwait. In July Vi goes to Teheran to stay with British Ambassador. Then on to Zermatt in August where she is joined by Zahra, Dick and Penny. She also meets Bill and Teresa Riley. Then back to Kuwait. In early March ’71 Vi visits S. Arabia and Hafuf. Then back to Kuwait to meet Simon who arrives 28/3. Views around Kuwait with Simon.

2/10 ‘Album 11’ 1952-1971

Label on Album
Persepolis – Dhahran – Qalif
June 1953 C.J. Pelly & Self at Reception
Kuwait 1970 Zahra – Stephen & Penny
Bint Salein al Murri – Arar, sheep in wadi
Dr Mulrea – Sh. Abdullah Salim – HRPD
Zahra & Penny in Rome 1971 – John D. in Malawi & Group
David & Ann still in camp – Salein Shalil’s tent 1964
Baghalla - Būm – repairing in harbour
Return from Dhahran – 2 Nasers & Ali
Al & Doris Simpson – Rathy Barger
Buraimi & Abu Dhabi
R.N. Horne – Bahrain & Residency
Hufuf – Mercedes in Algarve
Buraimi Fort – Sh. Jabis, Huda & me
Old Views of Kuwait. Būm Launching
Nairobi Airport. Jahali Fort
Iris beds – Fuga. L.T. & Jessie Jordan

Description as provided by H.Y.W.S.D. Dickson

2/11 ‘Album 13’ 1965-1976

Label on Album
Kuwait 1972-73
Baghdad 74
Bahrain 1975
Kuwait 1975
Meshaw 1975
Yemen Kuwait London 1976

[Includes envelope with a photograph of ‘Mrs Violet Dickson Outside Buckingham Palace with Penelope after the investiture C.B.E.’ 23/3/65 London. Also includes a letter from John Patrick Walsh, American Ambassador to Mrs Dickson July 31, 1971]

Description as provided by H.Y.W.S.D. Dickson
2/12  ‘Album 14’ 1971-1975
Label on Album
Simon to Kuwait 1971
Aug ’72. Vi visits us in Scotland
Vi on to Switzerland with Zahra & P.
Simon to Kuwait April 1973
July 1973 Vi to Lyons, Zermatt, Colchester
Vi visits Gulf States
July 74 Vi to Switzerland. Egypt Nov.
Visit to Oman in 1975

Description as provided by H.Y.W.S.D. Dickson
Old photos of Simon’s Kuwait visit in March ’71; and Vi’s visit to Togo in Scotland in ’72, and of Simon’s next visit to Kuwait in April ’73. Photos of Vi’s house and desert scenes, of Zahra and Penny in Zermatt in Aug ’72 of Vi’s trip to Lyons in July ’73 and then on to Zermatt. To Colchester with Zahra in August ’73. Photos of Gulf States in March ’75. Back to Kuwait. Desert scenes. To Zermatt in July with Carol and Geoff. September ’75 Vi calls on Sir Gawain and Sylvia Bell. More Cairo photos of Nov ’74 and of Hickenbotham’s visit to Kuwait in Dec ’74. Also of Sir Murray Fox, Lord Mayor of London, in Kuwait Feb ’75; and of March visit to Gulf States with Jean Horan. Spring desert scenes in ’76. More Bahrain photos. Nothing for 1977 or ’78.

Label on Album
Misc. Photos of Vi’s 1977-1982

Description as provided by H.Y.W.S.D. Dickson