

**Reference code:** GB165-0364

**Title:** Violet Dickson Collection

**Name of creator:** Dickson, Dame Violet Penelope (1896-1991)

**Dates of creation of material:** 1935-1981; 1992; 2004

**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 history written by H.Y.W.S.D. Mar 1992 11 sheets

**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 each album written by H.Y.W.S.D. 2 Mar 2004 2 sheets

**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.

28/5 to Boston Spa to see Pat and baby Simon. Back to Kuwait. Harold to Hospital in April and dies on 14/6/59. Togo flies in to see him. Dec '59 Vi goes by tanker to Little Aden and on to Somaliland for Xmas with Pat and Togo. Back to Ahmadi by tanker in June '60. Spring scenes in desert. Vi to Zermatt Aug '60. On to stay with Zahra in U.K. Pat and Togo arrive on leave 4/8/60, and on to Boston Spa. Vi joins them 20/8. Then back to Kuwait. Views of desert after rains in March '61.

### **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 Bangers. 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 Septemer. 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 Vesey Fitzgerald in the Serengeti National Park. They visit the Ngorongora National Park and Lake Mahyaro. 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 Shaha's Visit to Kuwait 17.11.68

Buraimi

Lebanon Sept 68

Muscat visit 25.2.69

Dhahran 15.3.69 – 28<sup>th</sup>

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 Zahra, 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

Estad 1971. Spiez. Zermatt Aug 1971. P & Zahra

Nairobi Airport. Jahali Fort

Iris beds – Fuga. L.T. & Jessie Jordan

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

This album contains many old miscellaneous photos: of Kuwait in 1935 and '52. Views of Persepolis and Iran, Jubail and Qatif. In camp with Anne and David Steel in 1964. Desert scenes, harbour scenes. Views of Buraimi, Abu Dhabi, Bahrain and Hofuf in 1950s. Photos of Jordan Mrs Barger and Mr Simpson, Sheikh Jubir Abdulla and wife. Old Kuwait scenes. Visit of U.S. Vice President Spiros Agnew in July '71. Dickson family photos of Malawi. Zahra and Penny in Rome 1971. In July '71 Vi goes to Switzerland, Gstaad, Spiez, Oberhofen and Zermatt, to meet Zahra and Penny.

**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

Some old Kuwait photos of 1970 and '72 and view of Harold's grave in Ahmadi, Jubrin Oasis in '73. Visit to U.K. to stay with Zahra in summer '73. Winter in Kuwait. Visit to Gulf States in '74. On to Zermatt. To Cairo in Nov '74 to stay with Hugh Leach. In Dec Tom Hickenbotham visits Kuwait. Feb '75 Tea Party in Vi's house for Lord Mayor of London, with Archie Lamb. March visit to Gulf States. July '75. To U.K. to stay with Togo and family in Meshaw, Devon. Vi goes on to Switzerland. Back to Kuwait Embassy reception Nov '75. In March '76 Vi goes to Bahrain and on to Yemen in May. To U.K. in autumn for her OBE investiture in Oct '76.



**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.

**2/13 'Album 15' 1979-1981**

Label on Album

Misc. Photos of Vi's 1977-1982

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

Pupils of New English School visit Vi's house on 12-6-79. The Queen on Royal Yacht visits Kuwait 13/2/79. Vi dressed to go on board for dinner. View of Yacht leaving Kuwait. Photo of Vi signing her book. July 1980 Vi off to Switzerland again to meet Zahra. Visits Spieles. Feb '81 lunch with Mrs Scudder in Kuwait. April '81. Vi visits Al Salem Air Force Base.