

# SIBLING'S HAVEN SAFE IN WARTIME DEVON

Angela Stead and Hugh MacBride

*Sibling's Haven* is an unusual, frank and touching memoir – as brother and sister Hugh MacBride and Angela Stead tell the story of their early years from their individual perspectives.

Their parents were both prominent journalists. As the Second World War loomed, their father drove Angela (then twelve) and Hugh (three-and-a-half) away from the potential dangers of London to the relative safety of Devon, depositing them at a boy's school on the fringes of Dartmoor run by a malevolent aunt. They subsequently saw little of their mother and nothing of their father for the duration.

Instead, they variously lived with a succession of families and at a selection of boarding schools in the West Country, the agreed fees for which their father invariably failed to pay. Whilst Hugh and Angela enjoyed or endured the delights and terrors of such an existence – including Angela's charismatic Headmistress who took both staff and senior girls to bed (although not the determinedly heterosexual Angela) – their mother's war work culminated in joining the ATS and enrolling blood donors for D-day.

Meanwhile, their father became a diplomat in Canberra and after the war in 1946 his family set sail for Australia to join him. Freed from the drab restrictions of post-war Britain, Hugh and Angela enjoyed both the lengthy voyage and ultimately the sharp light and occasionally cloying social excitements of the capital – "more of an idea than a city." In due course Angela studied medicine at Sydney University. But after only eighteen months, their father was posted back to London. Hugh and his mother followed by sea. Angela, making a difficult decision either to go home at once or pay her own passage, ended her studies and a relationship, and sadly followed too.

*Sibling's Haven* is a unique and compelling portrait of fascinating characters – both the authors and those around them – who coped valiantly with the challenges of everyday life, in often extraordinary circumstances, in this most tumultuous of times.

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Born in Richmond, Surrey, in 1927, Angela's parents were journalists Kitty MacBride and L.M. MacBride son of Phyllis Davy, probably descended from Sir Humphry's uncle.

After the war in Devon and two years in Australia she worked as a medical technician, later a medical artist. She married a scientist by whom she had four children.

Qualifying as a teacher, she taught Art at a large London Comprehensive. Remarried, she went to live and teach in Zambia and Botswana. She is now an artist and potter in Cornwall. She loves horses, her cat Lucky and her great grandchildren.

Hugh was born in Twickenham and went to St. Paul's School, winning an Open Scholarship to Lincoln College, Oxford, to read Chemistry, after National Service as Armament Officer in the RAF; he continued to D. Phil.

Hugh shot for St Paul's, Oxford and the RAF.

He met his wife Roslyn, with whom he had two daughters and a son, working on 'The Pill', then on fluorine at Durham University.

After eighteen years teaching at Sunderland Polytechnic with limited research opportunity he finished with thirteen years of short research contracts back at Durham.

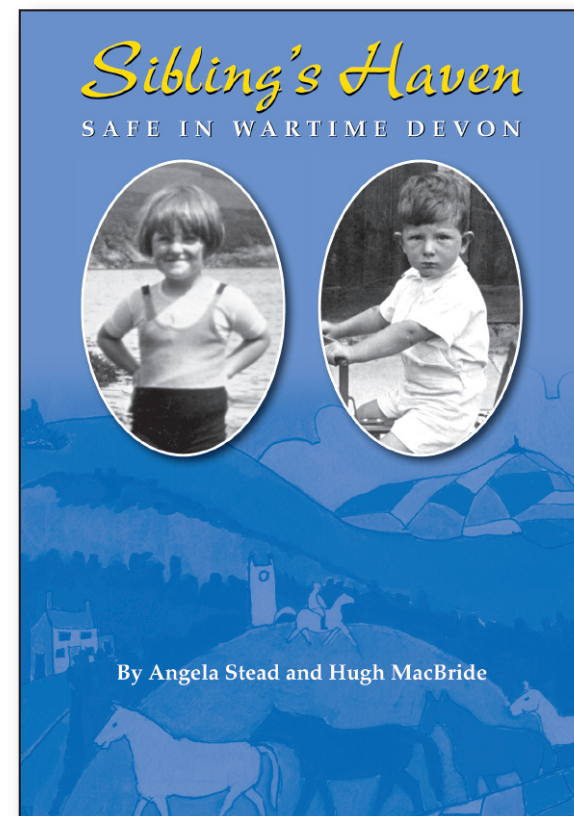
Gardening and writing, he lives with his wife near Tiverton.

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Above: Hugh and Angela in 1949.

Left: Hugh with companions at Lifton Park.



Example of a double-page spread.

*Sibling's Haven*

child's got water on the brain." Luckily it dispersed, but my head and jaw are asymmetrical to this day and my nose was all over my cheek until about fifty years later when I got around to having it straightened. Shortly after my birth it became apparent that I had started my intra-uterine life as a twin. My mother breastfed me lavishly for nine months. Then one day she tied up her breasts, as was not uncommon then; and went back to work, which was.

My mother and father were both journalists and met in Fleet Street. My father had been in America for the *Daily Express* and he had returned to find that my mother, newly appointed, had annexed his desk filling it with all the rubbish you'd expect from a working girl who cared about her looks. My father tipped all this into the wastepaper basket, with imprecations. That was before he saw my mother; they were engaged three days later. Lionel Murray MacBride was born in 1902. His mother, Phyllis Davy, had run away to join a repertory company. Here she met an Irish charmer whom I know only as Mr Roberts-Carter. They married and a short while later my father was on the way. Roberts-Carter disappeared never to be heard of again. Phyllis was obliged to return to her family whom she recalled bending over her while she was in labour pointing out

*Angela's Story*

that her pains were her punishment. It was a successful deterrent, as she never had any more children. About three years later Phyllis married Tom MacBride, a Civil Servant in Ceylon (as it was then). Phyllis had a glamorous time in Ceylon and didn't return until Tom died about fifteen years later. Meanwhile my father's name was changed by deed poll to MacBride and he was raised in Richmond by his grandmother Mrs Florence Davy, whose husband, Dr Davy, was descended from Sir Humphry Davy's family, and his

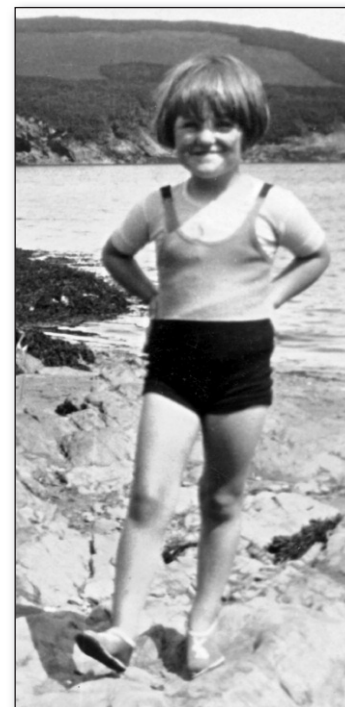
*Phyllis and Tom MacBride in Ceylon.*

*Phyllis' and Tom's home in Ceylon (from her personal notebook).*





Granny Phyllis' miniature photo-frame shows my father as a boy, but underneath his picture we found what we assume to be the only existing one of his father, William Thomas Roberts Carter, her first husband - my grandfather.



Above: 1943, Joan Hilsden with her horse Carry On at Ardock West elevation of the building in the background.

Left: Angela at Manaccan.

Below: Hugh with Charles' chemical shelf.

