

A LIFE WELL LIVED

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY

By **Margaret Gay Brooks**

Margaret Brooks – always known as Gay – has led a life rooted in the countryside, but across two continents, experiencing widely different cultures but with a focus on family, animals and community.

Born in 1937, she ascribes her restless spirit to growing up in Britain in the war years. Her father uprooted his family from a prosperous Midlands' dairy farm to the quiet of a hill farm on Exmoor in 1942, a part of the world that has captivated her ever since. Sent away to boarding school at the age of six, Gay reflects that whilst these years were not particularly happy, she would not have led the life she has without them: "one situation rolling into the next, never questioning just doing, following an unforeseen path that, with many twists and turns, rolled out before me."

That path led her to working with horses, emigrating to Canada, marrying a Canadian, raising two daughters and establishing the first branch of the Pony Club on Vancouver Island. She remained in Canada for twenty-one years but eventually her marriage broke down and she returned to England with her youngest daughter. Within a couple of years, she had met a Devon farmer, Norman Brooks and, despite a significant age difference, they married and settled on her beloved Exmoor. Kept busy with horses, hens and sheep, Labrador Rescue, teaching at Riding for the Disabled, lecturing for the WI, being a church warden, and initially making frequent trips to Canada to visit family and friends but latterly entertaining them at home in the UK, Gay Brooks' life has been one full of activity, quiet achievement and truly has been well lived.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Now in her late eighties, Margaret Gay Brooks has led an active life as a genuine countrywoman. In recent years she has added writing to her many other skills and has published articles in the Exmoor Magazine and now this autobiography.

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