



## World Events :

			<u>Fen's age</u>
1938	Sept	Munich Agreement	6 mo
1939	Sept	Start of World War II	1½ yrs
1941	Dec	Pearl Harbor; US enters war	
1942	Feb	Singapore surrenders	4 yrs
1945	May/Aug	End of World War II	7 yrs

## So :

Date: 1941, Sept: Fenella's Age: 3½ yrs

With war clouds darkening in the Far East, TINA (the shortened form of Valentina has become her most used name) is sent to England through Sir Norris's diplomatic connections, on a slow but nondescript merchant vessel upon which the Chief Engineer is MacLEARY.

It is from MacLeary — and soon after from HARRY FIELDING — that the 3½ year old girl picks up the 'vibes', in her formative years, that will later become her interest in engineering and the sea.

1941 Dec . . . is the height of the blitz on London. Through the cooperation of near or remoter relatives, TINA comes to live at Plas Newydd, Ddol, Abergele, North Wales in the house of AMELIA MATHER FIELDING and her husband HARRY FIELDING, the latter born 1865 and a one-time ship's captain from the days of sail.

1942 Feb: Age 4 yrs: With Mather money, a resident governess is provided; Miss Heslop, called 'MISSUP'.

1942 to 1946: 4 to 8 yrs: Educated at home by governess MISSUP : a very sound basic education (which even included some German ! ) 'MIMI' — Amelia Mather Fielding — with an M.A. from Manchester, sees to it that Tina rease a great deal.

HARRY FIELDING spends most of his time boat building in his shed; but once he takes her to the Conway Yacht Club, where she meets Harry's friend MacLeary who seems very thirsty and falls down rather often.

1946 Summer: 8 yrs old. SIR NORRIS appears abruptly at Plas Newydd, to take his 'god-daughter' on an instant holiday . . . a tour of the Mediterranean starting from Southampton. They return just three days later. "She liked the Isle of Wight ferry more than the cruise liner."  
( And its engineer was MacLEARY ! )

At the age of 8, it is decided that TINA should go to boarding school . . . nearby her home, at the Kinmel Park Convent.

1946 Sept to 1954, July: Age  $8\frac{1}{2}$  -  $16\frac{1}{2}$  : At Kinmel Park Convent School ( Catholic, run by the Order of the B.V.M. ), TINA achieves 11 GCE O-levels, all straight A Grade.

1954 Sept.to 1956: age  $16\frac{1}{2}$  to  $18\frac{1}{2}$  : At Cheltenham Ladies College; TINA obtains 4 A-levels and a scholarship to Cambridge.

1956 Oct : enters Girton College, Cambridge. Studies:

Tripas Part I	Botany and Marine Biology, with Ecological Systems; special subject, undersea geology (she is awarded the Rutherford-Warren Prize for Metallurgy ).
Tripas Part II	Anthropology with Archaeology

1959, May 11th : Graduates with "Double-First."

1959, May 15th : Age  $21\frac{1}{4}$  Joins W,R.N.S. She gets her entrance in May because she is thinking ahead : half-yearly promotion lists are put out in June and December each year.

## FENELLA's ( TINA's ) W.R.N.S CAREER

1959 May Age 21½ Joins WRNS as Probationer Wren Farnsworth, FVR  
Nov After basic training, confirmed as Ordinary Wren

COURSES: MT/Engineering  
Advanced to Able Rating  
Diving (basic) @ HMS Vernon  
Communications @ HMS Mercury  
Advanced to Leading Wren

Leading Wren Farnsworth's special talents were soon noticed . . .

Diving : in the early 1960's an entirely  
voluntary activity. TINA takes  
upon herself the organisation of  
logistical support.  
Rifle Shooting : She establishes her status as a  
497/500 medal winner at Bisley.

1961 Feb: Age 23. Her promotion to THIRD OFFICER, accordingly,  
is unsurprising. ( Her Wardroom sponsors, though, got off on the wrong  
foot. "Tina is not an appropriate name for an officer. May we call you  
Fenella?" was met with "Only if you call me next pay-day." )

And while the crisp-and-clean RN and WRNS officers want to advance  
Third Officer Farnsworth in the Communications Branch, 3/O Farnsworth  
prefers

Courses : Logistics & Engineering  
Ordnance & Gunnery  
Diving, 'Advanced'

— and she also inveigles her way into

Fixed-Wing Aero Training.

1963 Feb: Age 25. Promoted to ( 2/O ) Second Officer

From here on, it is a question of out-smarting what her seniors want.

So she takes courses in:

F.A.A Flying Ops, Fixed Wing  
Communications, Advanced  
Mine Clearance, Surface and Underwater  
and Executive Officers' Course ( mandatory )

— before being 'promoted into management'. She spends a lot of time in the field with her diving and engineering mates, who called her, simply, "Boss".

1968 June Age 30:

Promoted to ( 1/O ) First Officer

— the equivalent of Commander R,N. or Lieutenant-Colonel (Army). With three rings on her sleeve ( not bad going for only 12 years' service ) TINA has to learn to sit in conference with 'brass hats', and to answer to the name Fenella when it's not First Officer Farnsworth.

Her special responsibility is Training — which she takes as including herself as well as her girls. So over the next five years she qualifies in:

HELO 1 Flying Ops, Helicopter  
INSIT Interservice Intelligence Analysis  
STAFF COMMAND and Planning,

She also manages to wangle a 6-month attachment to the US Navy Department, later extended to 12 months, to study the S.E.A.L. organisation. When she's back in the UK, her mind buzzing with what she's learned from 'SEAL', she concentrates on Logistical Support for Special Operations.

1978 June: Age 35:

It is now that her attention to detail pays off, via the half-yearly promotion lists. Someone is needed to head Special Supplies. Usually this is regarded as a prestigious (four rings) though deeply boring desk job. But it suits FENELLA perfectly. PROMOTED CHIEF OFFICER, and without ruffling the papers on her desk — because she's already using computer technology — she sets about organising her Special Supplies Department.

Superficially this looks like girls in boiler suits driving trucks, vehicle transporters and so forth. Only a few know its true purpose, which is to obtain for her . . . .

1977 Oct - 1979 Mar: Age 39½ to 41 . . . An 18-month attachment to NATO, Virginia, USA. An appointment classified as 'NATO Confidential' of which little is known.

FENELLA also keeps confidential her tragically-brief marriage to a US S.E.A.L. officer who was soon after killed in an air crash — ironically, not on duty but just during inter-state travel.

So FENELLA now has a married name, as the widow of Commander Harvey KASPROWICZ. Her marriage is almost a closed file in her memory bank ( although *in extremis* she prays to 'Kaspers'. )

. . . . .  
1979 Apr to July: Age 41 FENELLA returns to UK duty . . . in restless mood. ( None of her associates knows of her marriage and widowhood in the United States. ) She brings her S.S.D girls 'up to scratch' again.

Aug-Oct. Attached to Italian Navy in a NATO Liaison capacity. Based at La Spezia, she is a personal success, fêted as '*La Bella Fenella della Mare*' ( otherwise, '*Fen the Wren.*' )

Covertly, she uses her position to test her S.S.D. girls to the limit. At the height of a NATO exercise, they manage to 'sink' an Admiral's Barge with the C.I.A chief, the Minister of Marine, the French Ambassador, etc. Top brass is not amused. FEN is recalled to her desk in Whitehall.

1979 Dec: Age 41¾ onwards: PROMOTED TO SUPERINTENDENT  
( rank of Acting Commandant )

FEN presents a problem to the Ministry of Defence.

She is: — an academic high-flyer, but also  
— a qualified fixed-wing and helo flyer,  
— a marksman (Bisley prizewinner)  
— a diver, explosives expert, intelligence star, &c with her own all-girls SEAL team (although Service Chiefs don't know about that.)

Even with one broad ring on her sleeve instead of four narrow ones : *What rôle is there for her to challenge and fill?*

1982 May - June: Age 44: The Falklands War provides a temporary answer: all of FEN's logistical expertise is needed. And she gives it all, too. Her reward is:

PROMOTION TO COMMANDANT — with the award of Commander of the Order of The Bath, Military Division. [ C.B. ( Mil. ) ] Also. she becomes Deputy Director of the W.R.N.S.

( However, although she does actually, and often, deputise / stand in for the Director, there is still really no proper job for her. )

1982 Jun - 1984 Aug: Age 44: After the Falklands War, a lot of changes in the Services are proposed and, over the years, implemented. Especially, the role of the WRNS is questioned, scrutinised . . . ( and in the 1990s it becomes Women In The Royal Navy — with Rear Admiral the Princess Royal as its Chief Commandant; though this is some time away. )

1983 June Promoted to: Director of the WRNS at age 45

— FEN is actually just 'serving out her time', i.e. the 25 years since she joined the WRNS in 1959. This will give her a Commodore's pension. Also, she is being 'head-hunted' by many top bodies including some you would scarcely believe, such as:

Boston M.I.T  
the C.I.A  
the Shaftesbury Society For Fallen Women  
Christian Dior

etc, etc.

— of which she favours

### MISTRESS of GIRTON COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

Given to understand that the Palace would be pleased if HRH Princess Anne — whose professional horse-riding and marriage to Captain Phillips are both faltering somewhat — could obtain a role in the Services with a suitable uniform . . . FEN agrees to leave the WRNS in return for :-

- (i) Her Commodore's pension
- (ii) The DCB ( Dame Commander of the Bath )
- (iii) Chair of the WRNS Welfare organisation.

All three conditions are readily granted. Why she wants the Welfare post few can tell; of course, it keeps her SSD girls together, and funded !

1984 May, aged 46: Retirement from the WRNS Her retirement party is held at the May Ball of Trinity College, Cambridge, with her SSD girls in fireworks form, and enormously popular . . .

1984 Aug: Age 46 Takes up appointment, and is installed, as

### MISTRESS OF GIRTON COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

1984-88 To start a second career — in 'academia' and at the top — would satisfy most people. But of course FEN is not 'most people.' She gets on well with her Deputy, but not with the body of blue-stockings who seek to run Girton along the lines of its 1869 foundation. These females are aghast at the Mistress dining not at High Table but alongside her students, and are appalled at FEN's taking courses of study in order to ensure genuinely equal opportunities for women.

1988: Sharing common aims with top management of Lucy Cavendish College (founded 1965) and of Hughes Hall (collegiate status 1985), FENELLA prepares to start her own College, and does so before the Girton Anti-Fen Brigade can combine to have her expelled as Mistress.

### 1988 Feb. Aged 50: FOUNDER-PRESIDENT OF MADINGLEY HOUSE COLLEGIATE, CAMBRIDGE

1988 to date: Affectionately named "Mad-House", Dame Fen's creation has yet to be granted Collegiate Status, integral to Cambridge University as a whole. But for the last 17 years its intake has been

- (i) mainly but not exclusively, women; "Men are welcome," says FEN, "so that Dinners are social."
- (ii) mature and research students;
- (iii) affiliated students — who may or may not have formal entry qualifications, but who have proved their worth by experience ( so, some of them are of course 'her' SSD girls ! )

"Mad House" does not issue degrees inscribed on parchment. But the qualification **M.H.C (Cantab)** is gaining international recognition.



## FEN's FINANCES :

Aged 4, she was supported by a MATHER Trust Fund worth £2,000 a year in 1942 (and £200,000 p.a now):

1984 Retirement from the WRNS gave her half-pay pension for a Commodore;

1986 Death of her father Sir Norris Farnsworth bequeathed her c. £2 million;

1988 She has a further pension from Girton College;

1990 onwards : the lecture circuit, especially in the States, earns her around £150,000 p.a.

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## DAME FENELLA'S ACTIVITIES THESE DAYS ( 2005 ONWARD )

Running Madingley House in Cambridge ( 4½ months of the year )

Lecture tours

Various International Committees

[ For instance, "SCANDARCGO" : the Scandinavian Consortium for the Development of Lands With the Arctic Circle ]

Operational training with her S.S.D girls ( at least 6 weeks in the year )

Working in BEAKER'S Bureau, which often takes priority over anything else, and at the same time looking after HORATIO BEAKER at Bhanavie Castle — for instance, seeing that he eats properly.

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