

Second Lives - Jane Duncan, Edwin Morgan

Sarah Hepworth & Dr Sam Maddra
University of Glasgow Library



Jane Duncan (1910-1976)



Original photo: Mark Gerson

Edwin Morgan (1920-2010)

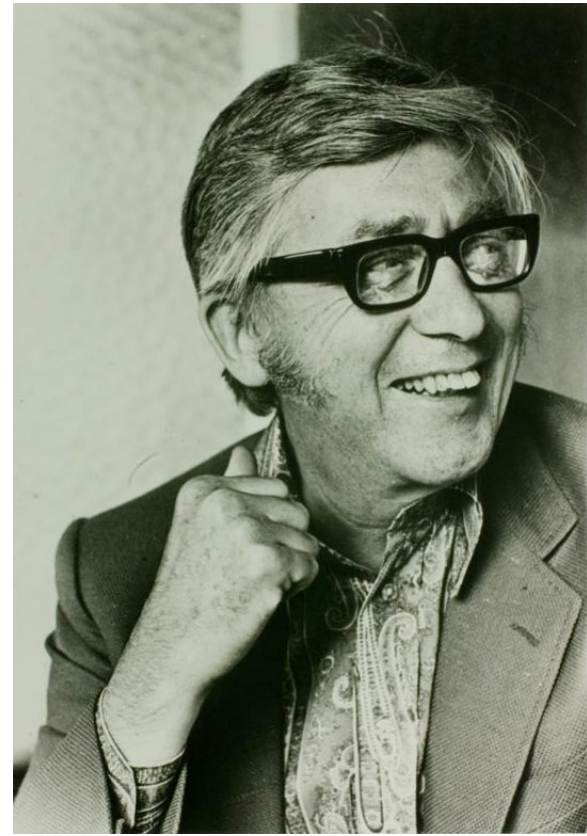
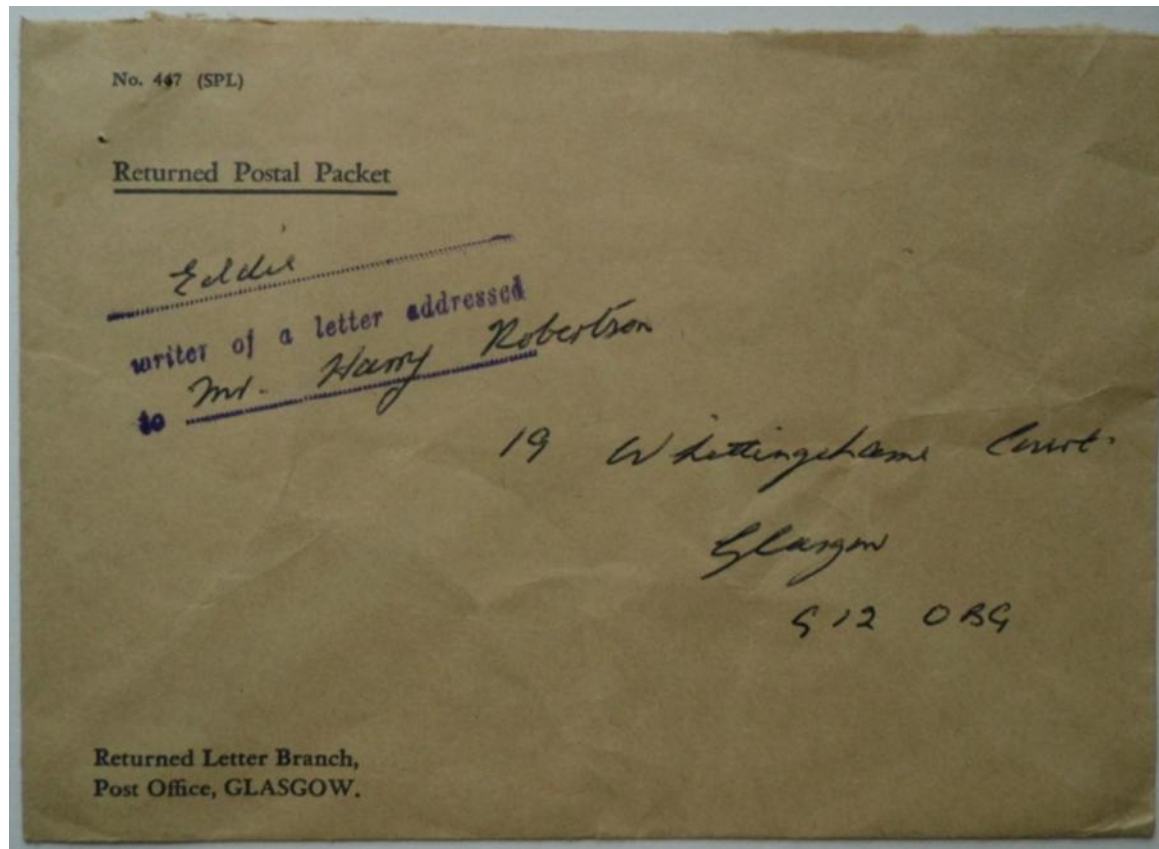


Photo: Carcanet



Is this empty envelope an insignificant survivor, ripe for disposal, or was it crucial inspiration for a poem: How can the records' creator influence the collection's arrangement and appraisal?

Sam Maddra, Archivist, University of Glasgow Special Collections

every so often he swears that he will begin a better life.
But when darkness comes with all its own persuasions,
Its compromises and its protestations,
When darkness comes

University of Glasgow.

ORDINARY CLASS
OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE.
FIRST CLASS CERTIFICATE.

I Certify that Mr Edwin G. Morgan
attended this Class with regularity, and performed the work
of the Class in a distinguished manner, gaining the 1st Prize.

Peter Alexander. Professor

THURSDAY, 17th OCT

The
HOLMES
for
BOOKS GENERAL W
BOOKS FICTION STATION
the largest stocks in Scotland
HOLMES (BOOK
NORTH STREET, GLASGOW

**DEFENCE
EXHIBITION**
EXHIBITIONS AND FILMS
NOROCK CENTRE

ence Exhibition and at Stratton Drive, Cork is well worth a run the interior is education, all shapes and sizes. On one table, for were insulated food cases, and on another shoes, not forgetting a scireless set with a water and receiver. was a model of a showing the type of both the rescue people type.

DISTINGUISHED LECTURE AT CLARKSTON

Mr. Edwin Morgan T. B. Clark
Literary and Debating

Friday 22 April (London)

10000 Seen off at Sorrento Yard by the B.P. boat
 (11 Nov) Konoherohole (11 Nov) Rona, and
 Big boat but not returned to Gussano
 unknown but they were
 sailing away from the
 south, clear but off white, white cloud
 near
 and brown, like brownish blue
 threatened delirium (11 Nov) Rona, and
 (12 Nov) Rona, and
 about 1000 (12 Nov) Rona, and
 about 1000 (12 Nov) Rona, and

EDWIN MORGAN

U.S.S.R. CULTURAL DELEGATION
APRIL - MAY 1955

my dear dear

we all too busy & overwork except postman i dont load him
not nearly enough

SILVA CALEDONIA

The darkness deepens & the woods are long.
We shall never see any stars. We thought
we heard a horse & a whole flock, faintly, far off,
through fells & forests, as messengers to a holy
you could hear a horse gallop for years
you were hunting, we sent out one

МЕЖДУНАРОДНО

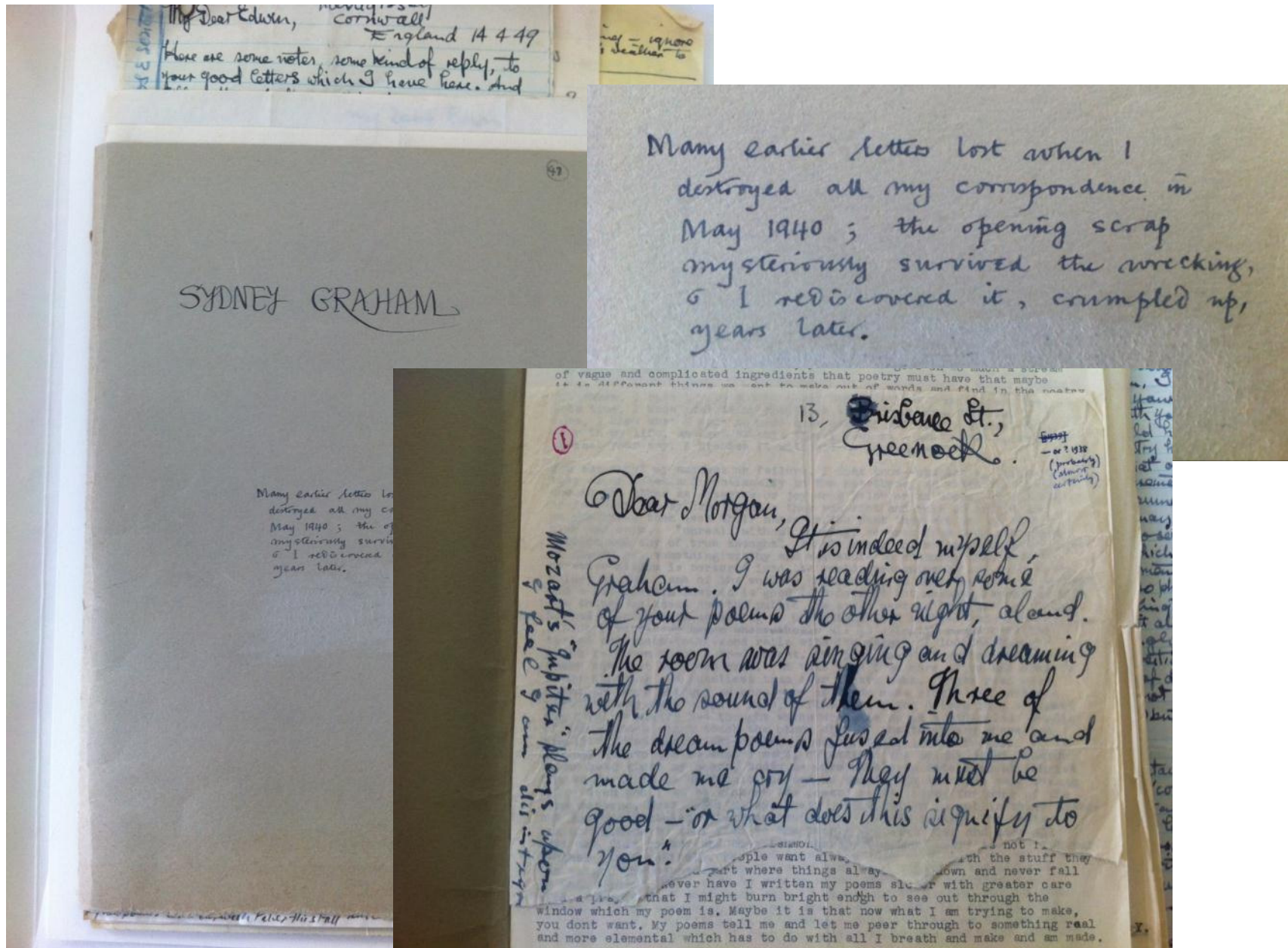


Великобритания
Шотландия

Mr. Edwin G. Morgan
English Department
The University of Glasgow
Glasgow, Scotland

М.Иванов
ул.К.Либкнехта 17, УОКС
Киев 21, УССР

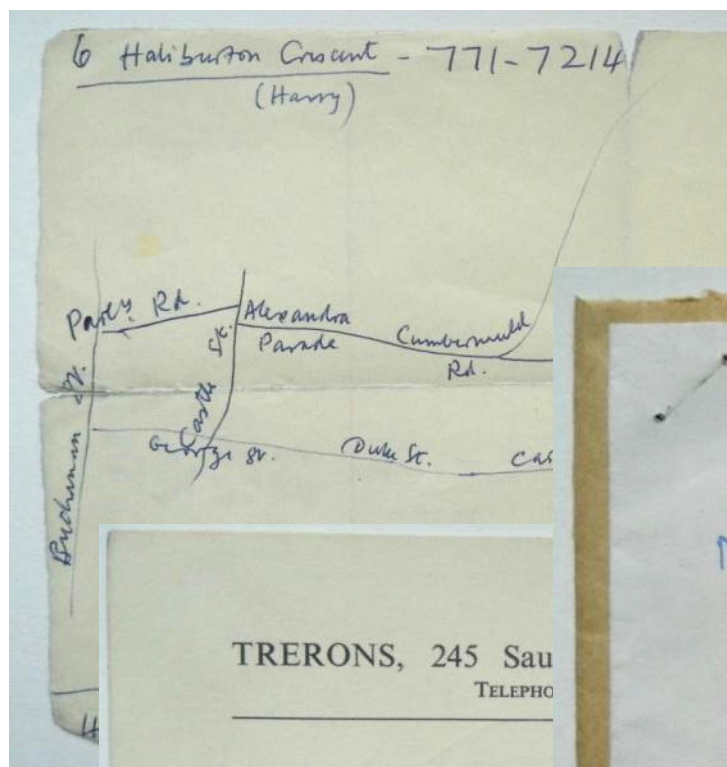
MS Morgan



MS Morgan DG/10: Sydney Graham



MS Morgan DR/5: Harry Robertson



TRERONS, 245 Sau
TELEPHO

Our van called today

will call again.....

Left parcel.....

Remarks.....



MS Morgan DR/5: Harry Robertson

Harry

- Tell us about Harry. – Harry the vanman? – The very man. Go ahead.
 - Where shall I begin? He delivered newspapers and the van was red.
 - That's not too interesting. – We used to play strip draughts before we went to bed.
- We lit out for the Blackpool Illuminations instead of trolling the Med.
I am sure there are many other things that might be said.
- So he's not a fixture.
- I get the picture.
- Do you? I don't think so. Wayward paths can be affectionately led.

Edwin Morgan *A Book of Lives* (Carcenet, 2007) p. 93

I am much flattered that you should consider my papers of interest for your new library but feel sure that you will understand that I would prefer to retain these in my own keeping for the present.

Jane Duncan, general correspondence, 1965

A.P. 4/1/59.

A Scot's 7 Books In 9 Months

Kensley House, W.C.1.

Thursday night.

SCOTTISH success stories. S we sometimes proudly claim to Shakespeare are so common that we take them for granted. However, every now and then there comes along one which unbalances such supercilious equanimity.

What do you think of this one?

About the middle of last year Miss Jane Duncan, born in Dunbartonshire, offered her first attempt at a novel.

It was immediately accepted and the author's way of saying "Thank you" was to present two more manuscripts which were also accepted.

Of she went abroad for a few months and returned with four more novels and the result is seven books accepted and awaiting publication.

In my experience this is a nine-month record—a record by a Scot.

In Cromarty

This morning I met Miss Duncan in the offices of her publishers in St Martin's Street. She hardly gives the impression of a woman capable of intensive output. She is tall, slim, unassuming and almost shy, until you start talking about the Highland scene.

Through her education was on Clydebank, at Dunbarton and Glasgow University, all the really impressionable time of her youth was spent on the farm of her grandparents in the district of Seminaville in the Black Isle.

When, after the Second World War, she first left the West Indies her thoughts flew to the Cromarty parish. It is not surprising that, in setting for the first of her series of novels, "My friends the Miss Boyds" which will be published in May, is set in Easter Ross.

Only Snag

Miss Duncan has now returned to Cromarty, to a cottage with a garden stretching down to the shore of the Forth, but she assured me this morning that the novels are not autobiographical.

Her stories are told in the first person, but the narrator is a character of her own invention.

And how, I asked, does the Black Isle feel after the West Indies? Miss Duncan finds the climate kind and, of course, she is among her own folk.

The only snag she could think of was that none in the house can see "The Press and Journal" until about midday when her Uncle James has finished with it.

ABERDEEN PRESS
and JOURNAL

6th March 1959.

LIFE IS A WHIRL FOR MISS DUNCAN

HOME beside her fireside in a Ross-shire cottage to-day 49-year-old Miss Jane Duncan will get out a pencil and paper and begin writing her latest novel.

Life has been a whirl for Miss Duncan since she first sent a manuscript to a London publisher 10 weeks ago. They accepted it and asked for more—so she sent them two more novels and then went to London with another four. They have all been accepted and the first will appear in May.

Each is a chapter in the life of one woman," Miss Duncan told me. The chief characters are entirely fictional.

Miss Duncan writes her novels in longhand at her fireside between her household chores. She began writing in the West Indies and from there she sent the first manuscript to the publishers.

"People always told me I should write a book after telling them the funny things that have happened to me," said Miss Duncan.

"Now I have done what they advised . . . and look what has happened."

"I've been interviewed and

GLASGOW RECORD.

9th March 1959.

And Then There Were Seven

A WEEK YESTERDAY WAS A BUSY AND EXCITING DAY in the "ordinary" life of middle-aged, modest Scots widow, Jane Duncan (that's not her real name), whose first novel, *My Friends the Miss Boyds*, Macmillans will publish in May. There is nothing strange in having a first novel accepted, but to accept is remarkable. Macmillans have agreed to publish two more, in the Autumn and next year.

Macmillans were setting up in type *My Friend Muriel* (her first venture) when *The Misses Boyd* and *Monica* arrived in their office, followed by Jane herself with four more in the series. Macmillans decided to launch *The Misses Boyd* first because they come first chronologically in the series about her friends in a remote Highland community and in a wider sphere. Jane has written all her books in the first person through the mouth of her narrator "Janet Sandison" and her first novel will tell of the imaginary Miss Boyds, silly, frivolous, giggling, highly-sexed old maids whose conduct and remarks at first offend the simple code of behaviour of the community among whom they come to dwell.

Though Jane, otherwise Janet, writes lovingly and humorously about a vanished world which she knows so well because she herself was reared in a Dunbartonshire village, she has seen much of the world. Educated in an unfashionable country academy and graduating from Glasgow University with an M.A. degree in English literature, she worked as a secretary in London before joining the W.A.A.F. as a cook, to be followed by map-clerking until she was commissioned in photographic intelligence. After the war, she worked for a Scottish engineering firm, married, and went to Jamaica in 1948.

Jane Duncan told the *Publishers' Circular* that she took up writing at the suggestion of her friends who were amused by her vivid private letters to them. She writes every word with a fountain pen between housekeeping for her uncle George who appears in the stories, though he has not recognised himself.

Seven times lucky

TALL, brown-haired Miss Jane Duncan, of Ross-shire, who has been living in Jamaica until recently, has started the literary world with a sevenfold literary success. Incredible as it may seem to would-be authors struggling to get their solitary opus accepted by the hard-hearted publishing world, 49-year-old Miss Duncan has had seven manuscripts of novels accepted practically in the one lot by Macmillans the publishers. And she had never submitted anything before for publication.

A Macmillans' spokesman told my London colleague how it happened. Miss Duncan's first manuscript was accepted straight away. She was asked if she had anything else and produced two more, then arrived in London the other day with four further manuscripts.

Village life

The first of these novels is to be published in May, and Macmillans are so impressed by its quality that they intend to give it a big publicity launching. All the novels, I'm told, deal with life in a Ross-shire village, and all are told in the first person.

Miss Duncan is the widow of a Scottish engineer who lived in Jamaica. She is staying in London at present but intends to return soon to her home in the Black Isle, Ross-shire, to start another novel.

GLASGOW EVENING TIMES.

9th March 1959.

← PUBLISHERS' CIRCULAR.

10th March 1959.

Press cuttings, 1958-1966

THE GIRL FROM THE CITY PUTS AN ODD CORNER OF SCOTLAND ON THE WORLD MAP

Just how real are Janet and Uncle George?

JEMIMAVILLE sounds like a hick town in the Mid-West corn belt. In fact, it is a lovely little village overlooking the Cromarty Firth in Ross-shire. But it is almost as remote as the U.S. prairies. No trains. No buses. You turn down a road-end and there it is.

Still so peaceful. But it is by no means unknown. If you know that Jemimaville is Acheraggan.

For in the last year or so Acheraggan has become known intimately to the thousands of people who read so avidly the "My Friend" books. And its fame has spread

BOOKS

by PETER DUNDAS

delicate, charming and beloved mother, George, her uncle, and Don, the "fatted calf," seem the annual harvest home up at the Big House—with their intimate glimpse of village

Jane Duncan told the *Publishers' Circular* that she took up writing at the suggestion of her friends who were amused by her vivid private letters to them. She writes every word with a fountain pen between housekeeping for her uncle George who appears in the stories, though he has not recognised himself.

An interesting point that came to light was that she had made Janet exactly the same age as herself, so that she could keep herself right with the fashions and slang of each period of her life.

Was Janet then a replica of herself?

"Not at all," she replied. "She has a distinct personality of her own. I don't always like her; she exasperates me and does things I don't always approve of. But she is a kind of 'familiar.' "

She wanted Janet to be a

I, formerly known as ELIZABETH JANE CAMERON CLAPPERTON,
do hereby declare that since 11th. January, 1959 I
have been known as JANE DUNCAN, my pseudonym as an
Author. Since the date given above, I have used
this name for all purposes and am publicly known by
no other.

.....

26th. October, 1972

Before I forget - please address your letters to me
as "Jane Duncan" which is my writing name, except that now
I use it for everything, even on my passport, simply to
avoid confusion. And I hope that you WILL write occasionally

Jane Duncan, letter 1975

After much deliberation, Macmillans decided to publish MY FRIENDS THE MISS BOYDS first as it is the first chronologically. It will be published in May this year, and MY FRIEND MURIEL will follow in the Autumn, with MY FRIEND MONICA coming out in 1960.

Macmillan press release 1959 (Press cuttings volume)

My Friend
Cousin Emmie

My Friend Cousin Emmie.

| | | | | |
|------------|----|-----|------|----------|
| Chapter 1. | 1 | — | 22 | 500 |
| " | 2. | 23 | 37. | 102 |
| " | 3. | 38 | 51. | 1000 |
| " | 4. | 52 | 71 | 5020 |
| " | 5. | 72 | 86 | 12 51200 |
| " | 6. | 87 | 100 | 4200 |
| " | 7 | 101 | 115. | 500 |
| " | 8 | 116 | 131 | 147 |
| " | 9 | 132 | 144 | 3000 |
| " | 10 | 145 | 161 | 2000 |
| " | 11 | 163 | | 500 |
| " | 12 | 173 | | 73500 |

First Draft 11 163 — 73,500 was as above. begun 21st May 1960,
ended 14th June 1960.

First Revision begun June 15th 1960, written in red.
Second Revision begun Oct. 10th 1960. Oct. 17th 1960.
I don't like this book.
Third Revision begun Oct. 11th 1961. — Improving, but too long.
Ended Nov. 14th 1961 — Book in shape but too long.

Fourth Revision begun 15th November 1961. Still too long, still too
ended 18th November 1961. Different to our
was.

My Friend Cousin Emmie (published 1964)

JANET REACHFAR AND THE STRANGER BOY

summer morning, Janet came down to breakfast and
t all the men of her family - her father, her gran
d her friends George and Tom - had gone away and
the women - her mother, grandmother and Aunt Kate
quiet and sad. Then Janet remembered that this
once before, when Kenneth the Shepherd had died.
away early in the morning to attend his funeral w
stayed at home, looking quiet and sad.

Typescript, unpublished Janet Reachfar book

“The files would supply one possible answer.”

James McGonigal, ‘Beyond the Last Dragon’ (2010) p 415