I was conceived in Tenby in Wales during a brief rapprochement in what was a turbulent marriage and forever after called the 'mistake'.

My parents separated before I was born, my father moving to photograph glamorous models in Amsterdam whilst my mother took photographs of babies in London.

I was not one of them.

The youngest of three, I was blessed with stunning siblings who photographed beautifully. I was so ugly that when friends called round to visit the new baby my mother would hide me under the bed and pretend I was sleeping.

My big break came when I was two and the baby model due to do a piece for Mother's Magazine went down with chickenpox. The client asked if they could use me instead. 'But she's hideous! Mother declared, 'and fat.' However, notwithstanding I was tyre-levered into the required frock and performed adequately enough to grace a spot on page 13.

My father remained an enigma through the first five years of my life, a tall, elegant man in tight green velvet trousers who would pass briefly through, leave a box of chocolate clogs and disappear to be forgotten as soon as the last lick of chocolate sweetness was gone from our fingers.

Despite residing in London we were never under any misapprehension of our roots and each summer the mini minor would be loaded up with us three children in the back and whichever au pair girl was current in the front beside my mother. Towing a trailer and chain-smoking the whole way mother would take us home to Scotland. Renting houses wasn't such a thing then and my mother's annual ad in the Oban Times yielded a hotch-potch of cottages on the West coast. We liked to be close to the sea and a boat was always hoped for. Invariably there would be no plumbing as such and always an outside chemical toilet, but we loved it. We kids all took turns to dig a hole to empty the 'poofies' and we ran wild for two months.

The weeks spent in Scotland were the happiest part of the year for all of us. My mother would drag us up mountains and make us walk for hours in the rain. She'd send us out to cut peat for the fire and collect raspberries for a pie. We would spend hours trying to get the ancient seagull outboard motor to start on a wooden boat that leaked abominably and catch mackerel for supper.

It was heaven.

When I was five my parents decided to try again, and we all decamped to Amsterdam.

My father had won the Dutch government contract for what turned out to be the longest running advertising campaign in Nederlands history; Snoep Verstandig eet'n appel and even I was bundled into a dress-up and given an apple to bite on. The client apparently loved the little boy in the cowboy outfit and I starred in every school, supermarket, office and civic building in Holland.

I loved living in Amsterdam but my mother and siblings hated it and three years later we were back in the UK on our own and poor.

My mother decided to train as a teacher and put herself through university reading world religions. My brother was packed off to nautical college whilst my sister and I were sent to the local school which had a Christian flavour to it and it's own church in the grounds.

My mother joined a cult; the school of Economic Science and we were subject to the strict rigours of the sect; no meat, no parsturised milk, no mixing outside the cult and all children had to be left on

Sundays at a grand house with enormous grounds where we cleaned, gardened and learned calligraphy.

My mother was not an accommodating sort and fell out with the cult within three years. We celebrated with sausages. However that wasn't the end of my mother's taste for the implausible and continued to dip her toe into other, more mainstream fantsasies. Buddhism and cabala coloured our lives , I sat cross legged in Sikh temples until she finally settled on High Anglican Christianity.

As we were still too young to fully rebel we were dragged into the orbit of the church and quickly baptisted and confirmed – weirdly by none other than the Bishap of Albany from WA who I can only surmise must have been visiting.

Even then I was an ardent atheist which didn't endear me to my new church or school surroundings. I tried attending bible class but my pariah status of being the only child in my class to have free school meals coupled with my over questioning of the vicar sent me packing.

I read a lot, argued with everyone and must have been insufferable. However, all that reading paid off as at eleven I won a scholarship to Haberdasher's. For four months I was on cloud nine until I started term one and the realisation that I wasn't the cleverest person in the world crushed me. I was surrounded by brilliance. Amazing girls who would all go on to become leaders in their field whilst I fought with logarithms and tangents.

I realise now that Haberdasher's gave me a freedom to argue, to stand up for both oneself and one's beliefs and I am forever grateful to have had such an amazing education.

My father meanwhile had moved into the world of film and moved back in with us. He was making commercials and once the glamour of being an extra wore off I saw the potential for making money and started making bacon rolls for the crew, acting as runner for the stars and getting exorbitant tips on top of my pay. It was my first step into entrepreneurship.

Upon leaving school, university beckoned, and I had been offered a place both at the London College of Printing for art and at Loughborough to study Geography and geology. Did I want to be an artist or go into the oil industry? I couldn't decide.

My father was disgusted that I was even considering a 'red brick' university as all my family for generations had read history at Oxford and he repealed any hoped for funding. I appealed to my grandmother who had been a rebel by even going to university but she too had studied at Oxford and was determined that all of us follow in the family tradition and so I travelled instead. I mooched around Europe, spent the winters on a kibbutz in Israel (where I received my first marriage proposal), I picked grapefruit, oranges, slept of beaches, rode camels, climbed pyramids and ran out of money in Greece where I took a job as a tour guide. I earned enough to get back to London and rent a room with a shared bathroom and took a job at de Beers sorting diamonds. It sounds glamorous but was the most boring job I've ever done. Still, it came with morning tea and a free lunch so wasn't all bad. It was at this time that I received my second marriage proposal.

I said yes, thinking it rude not to, plus I liked the ring.

De Beers was just too dull a job for me, and I itched to go home so I took a summer job in an hotel in Scotland. It was like a holiday, but I realised I needed to do something more with my life and took up a place in Glasgow studying jewellery making, I think the diamonds had persuaded me.

Once again my rebellious streak did me no favours and I resented being forced into a direction I didn't want my art to go and I was constantly at loggerheads with my tutor.

Despite receiving my third marriage proposal during this time (of course I said yes,) I once more jumped ship and landed a month later in Chile without a word of Spanish and just a suggested location on a scrap of paper. I made my way down south and eventually hooked up with a master jeweller who agreed to take me under his wing for three years.

Despite his unorthodox teaching style, which required him to have his hand on my thigh for most of the time, I absorbed all he had to teach me like a sponge. I made endless pieces for the tourist market; I learned to cut and polish stones, rolled silver, understood the properties of gold and became a jeweller. I met the Archbishop of Chile when my teacher was commissioned to make a crown for the Virgin Mary statue in the Cathedral, what an honour! We set the crown with four hundred stones and watched with pride as it was paraded through the streets of Santiago.

Towards the end of my time there I received my first commission. I was asked to make a piece that would be presented to the President. Unilever had built a new factory and President Pinochet would be opening it in some grand ceremony and a gift was called for. He arrived three hours late, asked to meet the jeweller and offered me the chance to have my picture taken with him.

I bid Chile a fond farewell and returned to Glasgow to finish my degree. I knew too much about jewellery making so was allowed to do silversmithing instead. I spent two wonderful years making large things in silver and took out the Deacon Convenors Prize and I haven't done silversmithing since. Unilever turned to me once again to make a piece for Princess Anne who was opening something or other and it set me on my path for the next nine years making jewellery and gifts foir the corporate market. I smile sometimes thinking of all those tie pins and cufflinks, occasional brooches and the odd lapel pin that no one would ever want to wear and which languish in drawers eventually ending up in op shops before being found by people like me who melt them down and turn them into something more glamorous.

I'd finally succumbed to my forth marriage proposal and sprogged out three babies but you'll have realised by now that I'm not good at relationships. I suck at it for a commendable time but once I saw the end in sight decided that the uncertain nature of the corporate gift market made for a poor choice of career for a single woman with three children and decided the sensible choice would be for me to teach. I trailed off to university in Stirling and read history, religion, and education, reluctant for some reason to teach art for which I was already qualified.

Each day as I drove down to Stirling I passed a building that sat beside the road in a position of prominence. It was run as a failing co-operative of assorted hand knit teddy bears, hideous sweaters and misshaped pottery and I remember thinking that such a great building was so wasted.

As the horror of actually having to teach was fast approaching I was musing on my offers of work. Private school where the pay was awful, the hours ridiculous but the staff and head fantastic or public school where the pay was fine, but the staff rooms a melting pot of dissatisfaction and viciousness. It was then that I saw the For Rent sign on my favourite building.

What could I do with it? I couldn't teach jewellery, but I remembered something I'd watched with the kids on a show called Blue Peter where the presenters had visited a pottery studio and painted mugs.

What a great idea!

Despite the fact that I knew precisely the square root of fuck all about pottery I dived in. I had no money, but I could talk up a good idea.

I wrangled grants, begged loans and I stole my children's trust fund. In March 2000 I opened the Ceramic Experience. It was a particularly cold month; the building had no insulation, and the heaters were barely strong enough to melt the ice off the windows, but we were open.

Build it they say, and they will come. And come they did… in droves. I had a nice café with cakes that I made at night, there was a soft play area for the kiddies and big, long tables where everyone sat together and painted.

It was a hit and within two years had won the Perthshire tourism award.

Other people wanted a ceramic experience and so I researched franchising and opened my first franchise in East Kilbride, Glasgow.

I married again – what was I thinking! And opened more franchises.

By 2010 I was bored. I had won enough awards, including business of the year and had opened 19 franchises. I was doing a lot of consultancy both paid and voluntary, having marvellous lunches with the Queen, with MP's, rubbing shoulders with the great and good and it was time for a change.

I did my usual thing and got divorced and set out to find something that could motivate me anew. I'd always played bridge and was reasonably good at it and decided to persue it more dilidgently.

I made the 20 man scottish squad and travelled the world playing in tournaments to raise the standard of my game. I created a group from the younger players and we started to change the style of bridge played in Scotland . My coach at the time was a truly odious dutchman called Eric who played with a chap with the unlikely name of Dee. Though much older than us we allowed them to join our group and weekends were spent arguing over play and style – it was great.

I eventually decided to marry Dee (why buck a trend that I had been on for decades) and we partnered up occassionally, planning our spare time around matches from Malibu to Morocco.

And then out of the blue daughter number one asked if we would come to Austaralia to help with her business. It was Dee she wanted rather than I for his software skills and what could we say but yes.

I gave my franchisees the automomy over their own businesses and arrived in Australia two months before Dee – he had chosen the week before our departure to step off a cliff with the expected results and was languishing in intensive care with a punctured lung and many broken ribs.

I opened an art studio and ached for home – hating everything about Australia. But I persevered and, once he had joined me, Dee loved it. I refused to make any friends and worked 14 hour days seven days a week to keep from jumping on the first plane home.

I made the Australian bridge team in 2018 and decided to devote my time to playing so sold up my business in November 2019 and started playing full time until the world ground to a halt and we were confined to quarters. Bridge became an online thing and international matches were off.

A disaster.

I turned to distilling gin in my copious spare time making exciting flavours such a liquorice allsort and rhubarb tart.

My liver shrank to the size of a raisin.

And then my youngest daughter, the I'll-never-have-children-and-nothering-will-make-me one accidentally became pregnant and needed her mother. I was bared from seeing her as she was beyond our 5 kilometre boundary and so we would have illicit and illegal meetings behind the bananas in Woolworths.

Something had to be done and so I became an Uber driver.

I loved it. I worked an average of 4 hours a week and was paid $750 a week by the government plus saw as much of my daughter as I wanted to.

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