

Introduction, pictorial and editorial arrangement
© 1979 by Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd.
The Old Piano Factory, 43 Gloucester Crescent, London NW1
All rights reserved

First published in USA 1979 by
Duckworth
4951 Top Line Drive, Dallas, Texas 75247
ISBN 0 7156 1356 1
LCCC 79-63413

Acknowledgments

Associated Press: pp. 9, 10; Camera Press Ltd: p. 20 top;
Express Newspapers: p. 8; Hans Hitler: p. 137, 167; Inerfoto
Friedrich Rauch: pp. 57, 143, 160; Irish Press, Dublin: p. 15;
Keystone Press Agency: pp. 42, 125; Liverpool Corporation: p.
33; Liverpool Daily Post & Echo Ltd: pp. 20 bottom, 30;
National Gallery of Ireland: p. 19; National Library of Ireland:
p. 18; courtesy of National Railway Museum, York: p. 23; New
York Public Library: p. 7; New York Times: p. 11; Planet News
Ltd: p. 65 left; Popperfoto: p. 25 top left; Press Pictures Ltd: p.
53; Radio Times Hulton Picture Library: pp. 32, 49 bottom, 56,
131, 147; Süddeutscher Verlag Bilderdienst: pp. 25 top right
and bottom, 49 top left, 65 right, 72 bottom, 73 top and bottom,
81, 95, 101, 103, 115, 123, 151, 171; Toland Collection: p. 39;
Ullstein Bilderdienst: pp. 49 top right, 61, 72 top, 77, 90, 91, 109,
111, 142, 146, 152, 179; Gordon Whiting: p. 22. Picture
research: Alphabet & Image.

The picture on pp. 2-3: Süddeutscher Verlag Bilderdienst.

Films set by Specialised Offset Services Limited, Liverpool, and
printed in Great Britain by Redwood Burn Ltd,
Trowbridge and Esher.

4 Jan
12-04-98

Introduction

by Michael Unger

DD
247
H6
A3

These unfinished memoirs were written by an Irish woman who, through the accident of marriage, became related to one of the most notorious men of our time. Bridget Elizabeth Dowling was seventeen when she met, immediately fell in love with and married Alois, the volatile elder half-brother of Adolf Hitler, Führer of the Thousand-Year Reich.

The existence of Bridget's memoirs has been generally known since the early 1970s, when the historian Robert Payne, gathering material for his book *The Life and Death of Adolf Hitler*, read them in the manuscript division of the New York Public Library. Payne's discovery, and the account in the memoirs of Hitler's alleged visit to Liverpool in 1912, led in the spring of 1973 to a lengthy series of articles in the *Liverpool Daily Post*. Since then a number of historians have referred to the memoirs, the most serious analyst being Professor Robert Waite in his study of Hitler, *The Psychopathic God*. This is the first time, however, that the memoirs have been published in full.

Bridget wrote the memoirs in America during World War II and the unevenness of style suggests that she must have had some sort of professional guidance. The typewritten document, entitled 'My Brother-in-Law Adolf', is 225 pages long; it is undated and unfinished — ending on a comma halfway through a sentence. There is no hand-writing on the document, save the occasional word crossed out and another penned above it.

The typescript came into the hands of the NY Public Library as part of a collection of papers belonging to the late Dr Edmund Pauker. Pauker was a European-born theatrical agent, a play-broker and literary agent for playwrights, particularly Hungarian and German playwrights, the most notable of whom was Ferenc Molnar. How Pauker came into

5
C 6118

possession of the memoirs is not known. His son John told me in 1973, when I was preparing the articles for the *Liverpool Daily Post*: 'My father like any theatrical agent, received literally thousands of manuscripts. I don't have the faintest idea how he came by that one, and I don't recall seeing it when I went through his papers after his death. Believe me, I would have kept it myself if I had come across it.'

Why were the memoirs never published at the time? Perhaps they were incomplete, or Pauker decided that the market was already glutted with recollections of Hitler. Maybe he thought he was sitting on a gold mine and was merely waiting for Bridget to finish what she had begun. Perhaps he never even knew he had them.

The reason why Bridget's manuscript ends so abruptly is equally open to conjecture. Perhaps she did finish the document but the final pages were lost. Or was it that her 'ghost-writer' lost interest and Bridget simply couldn't continue the work on her own? In any event the New York library collated the available pages and thought them of sufficient importance to be bound in hard covers and preserved in the Manuscript Room.

The memoirs began by describing in detail how Bridget met and fell in love with Alois. Her family disapproved of her choice and she eloped with him to London. On 12 March 1911 – nine months and nine days after their London wedding – their only child, William Patrick, was born in the couple's flat in the Toxteth district of Liverpool. Bridget tells how she and Alois immediately had their constant differences of opinion, this time on what to call the child. Alois favoured 'Willie', while Bridget insisted on 'Pat'.

In 1973 Albert Whitehead, a retired electricity installation inspector, gave the following account of William Patrick as a boy to the *Liverpool Daily Post*:

I first got to know Willie in the early 1920s when we both went to St Margaret's Church of England School, Princess Road, Princes Park. He lived in the same street as I did. We became friends and he joined our scout troop, the 222nd Liverpool, which later became the 11th Toxteth. He was in my patrol, the Curlews, of which I was the leader.

Willie and his mother eventually left the neighbourhood to live in London. I know Willie went to Germany to meet Uncle Adolf, and I can remember the Parthé News showing Willie Hitler sailing to America.

Willie was a quiet, pale boy. He was a Roman Catholic although he

The original of The Memoirs of Bridget Hitler as they are today in the Manuscript Room of the New York Public Library. On the binding is the title: My Brother Adolf.

went to our school and often went to the Anglican Cathedral with me.

The Hitler family's former home in Upper Stanhope Street was not hit by a bomb, as is widely believed, but it was badly damaged by a bomb which destroyed my own former home at 115. Of our houses, 113, 115, 117 and 119 were all destroyed by a stick of bombs but no one was killed. I believe it was the last stick of bombs to fall on Liverpool.

Arthur Bryan of Crosby near Liverpool was also at school with William Patrick. He remembered being in Dieppe at the beginning of World War II. 'I ran into an old school-mate,' he recalled in the *Post*, 'and he said to me, "Remember Willie Hitler?" That's when I realised that Willie had always talked about this uncle of his who, he said, was a General in Germany.'

It would appear, both from newspaper cuttings and articles about William Patrick and Bridget, that as soon as the son was old enough to realise the value of his relationship to his uncle, he was actively encouraged by his mother to capitalise on it. Indeed, Bridget, in her memoirs, unwittingly substantiates this impression. It is this very fact that lends credibility to her often incredible narrative. She is at all times naively anxious to present herself as the good mother, the pretty deserted wife, the innocent bystander. It should not be forgotten that when her son first made contact with Hitler, Bridget states that she had no idea that Alois was still alive. She believed herself to be a widow. But Alois was alive and had apparently contracted a bigamous marriage; it is not surprising therefore that Adolf Hitler was less than delighted at the arrival of his Liverpool nephew. Then, as now, scandal could mean the end of a political career.

VISITING HIS MOTHER

By CONSTANCE FORBES

AS William Patrick Hitler said to me "I am the only legal descendant of the Hitler family," he crossed his arms in characteristic Fuhrer fashion and added, "That resture must be in the blood. I find myself doing it more and more."

The twenty-six-year-old son of Alois Miller, the Father's Day magazine brother, is in England for a short holiday after nearly five years in Germany. He talked to me in the little back sitting-room of a modest six-roomed house where his

Part of an article about William Patrick from the Daily Express of 22 November 1937

"I was born in England," he continued for a while.

"And is a devoted English subject," said the speaker, "but, after a long stay in the United States, you have returned to your native country. It is my active interest."

Occasionally there is a trace of German accent. William Elder bears a strong resemblance to the uncle, who is his idol. The monomaniac is copied almost to a fault, the same porting lines in West Hall which is left not nearly. He has the same bright and sunny

At times, William Patrick's attitude to Adolf is ambivalent. There is evidence that during visits to Germany in the 1930s he was treated with scorn by Hitler and his subordinates; yet he was still able to tell the London *Daily Express* on 22 November 1937: 'In Germany I am a private individual and in England I am a private individual. I have no authority to make any political statements and I would not want to say anything to embarrass my uncle. My mother is Irish and a good Catholic and I find it very difficult to convert her to National Socialism. There are many things she feels very bitter about'.

Apart from annoyance at Adolf's lack of interest in her son, Bridget was also becoming bitter about her nationality. On her marriage to Alois she had become an Austrian citizen, and when Austria was annexed by Germany she became a German. This caused her no problems until the late 1930s, when relations between Germany and Britain became strained. Then she suddenly realised how much she wanted to become British. In the same 1937 interview in the *Daily Express* William Patrick said: 'Recently the Austrian consulate refused to renew her papers, so that now she has no country.' A year later they were living in a small semi-detached house in

The following caption appeared in the London Evening Standard on 20 January 1939: Mrs Hitler answers a Rate Summons. Mrs Bridget Hitler, Irish-born sister-in-law of the German Führer, pictured today at Htingale police court where she appeared to answer a summons for nonpayment of rates amounting to £9 13s 10d. Mrs Hitler offered to pay the money in six weeks and this was accepted. The picture caption states that Bridget had just been offered a job as a hostess in a New York night club.



Hornsey, in north London, and Bridget was still trying, without success, to become a British subject. She is quoted again in the *Daily Express*, as follows:

I want to get back my British nationality. I've seen the Home Office and they want to help me, but unless my marriage can be dissolved I must remain an alien.

Just to think that I, Bridget Dowling that was, am now a German subject since Hitler took Austria.

As a Catholic I don't believe in divorce. My husband and I are separated, but that isn't good enough for the Home Office.

Nowadays it's a bit embarrassing to be Mrs Hitler, but the people who know me don't mind, and the others don't matter. At heart, I'm still Bridget Dowling, but oh! it's my British nationality I want.

A year later she and her son had moved to 27 Priory Gardens, Highgate, north London, and had begun to take in lodgers. In fact, on 20 January 1939, Bridget Hitler appeared at Highgate Police Court, where she had been summonsed for failing to pay £9 13s 10d due in rates. After the hearing, at which she was given six weeks to pay, she said: 'I was expecting some money from Germany, but I can't say anything about it.'



When William Patrick Hitler, aged 33, was sworn into the U.S. Navy in April 1944, the event was deemed worthy of a photograph. The picture night was taken by an Associated Press photographer.

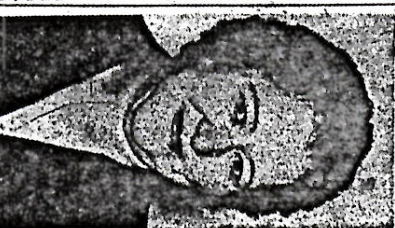
Later that year the couple decided to emigrate to America. Despite problems over papers, they managed to get visitors' visas. On arrival in New York on 30 March, William Patrick told waiting reporters, 'In the event of war I'll join up immediately.' He was, however, unable or unwilling to shake off his obsession with Hitler. He supported his mother and himself by undertaking a lecture tour. His subject was, naturally enough, life in contemporary Germany and 'My Uncle Adolf'. No doubt his lectures were similar in content to two articles he wrote at the time: one, *Why I Hate my Uncle*, published in *Look* magazine in January 1939 and the other *Mon Oncle Adolphe*, published in *Paris-Soir* the following August. For some time, William Patrick earned his living in this way and who can blame him? He would hardly have been asked to lecture on the subject of Hitler, or indeed on any other subject if he had not been a relative. When war came, despite his patriotic feelings, he was not allowed to join up immediately. The Americans were highly suspicious of him. Eventually they relented and in April 1944, William Patrick Hitler, then aged 33 was sworn into the U.S. Navy at a recruiting centre in New York. The following month, on 12

Hitler Relative Here Volunteers British Aide

The sister-in-law of Adolf Hitler has been working yesterday as a volunteer at headquarters of the British War Relief Society, 130 Fifth Avenue. She is Mrs. Bridget Elizabeth Hitler, Irish-born wife of Hitler's half-brother, Alois, reported to have bigamously remarried and to be operating a restaurant now in Berlin.

In a rich Dublin brogue she acknowledged it was "a bit ridiculous" but my name is Hitler and I'm not ashamed of it. "I have nobody not understanding," she said, she walked in to offer her services. Then she heartily explained that she hopes to obtain an annulment of her marriage with in this country and would "dearly love" to become an American citizen. "I'm coming to this country because she is here only on a visitor's visa."

Harboring Mrs. Hitler declared, "I would be good for her brother-in-law Adolf."



Mrs. Bridget Hitler

May, he joined up at Algiers, Louisiana. His recruiting officer was one Gale K. Hess, an interesting name in the circumstances.

After serving in the Navy, William Patrick was honourably discharged. Subsequently he worked for a time in the urology department of an American hospital. He then decided to go into total obscurity and changed his name. According to the historian John Toland, he is still alive (aged 67) but refuses to discuss his past and wishes to have absolutely nothing to do with his late uncle.

Bridget Hitler seems to have chosen to fight the Nazis at about the same time as her son; the *New York Times* of 25 June 1941 stated that she had started work at the headquarters of the British War Relief Society at 730 Fifth Avenue (opposite Tiffany's).

The article which accompanied Bridget's photograph in the *New York Times* is reproduced above.

Her husband's activities are rather better documented than her own. During most of the 1930s Alois kept a small inn in a Berlin suburb, but in 1937 he branched out in a big way by opening a new café-restaurant in Berlin's fashionable West

End. In this restaurant he played a canny game of appearing to keep out of politics on the one hand while at the same time trading on his brother's name. The animosity that once existed between the two seems by now to have vanished, because, in a 1938 will, Adolf left Alois 60,000 Marks. The will was not discovered until 1953.

Alois seems to have been something of an embarrassment to the German authorities, though he managed to keep his restaurant open throughout the war. In 1945 he tried to slip through the occupation forces by changing his name to Eberle, but he was arrested for being in possession of false identification papers and was handed over to the British. A few weeks later, in August, he was released. A statement by the military authorities ran: 'It is clear to us that he has led a perfectly blameless existence, being absolutely scared stiff of being associated in any way with the former Führer's activities.' Soon after, and now suffering from rheumatism, he and his common-law wife moved to Hamburg, where they lived with friends while waiting to return to the American sector of Berlin to reclaim his restaurant. He had now legally changed his name from Hitler – not to Eberle, but to Hiller – because 'I had never found the name Hitler any help and it is now a positive disadvantage'.

Eventually, in the early 1950s, he took up politics for the first time, being associated with an extreme right-wing nationalistic movement, of which, according to reports, he soon became leader. This political party seems to have foundered before it really got started, and by 1953 he was known to have been selling portraits of his brother Adolf to tourists, having signed them himself. He was quoted in that year as saying: 'Adolf seemed ashamed of having a brother running a wine shop.' The last record of him appears in the Hamburg newspaper *Bild Zeitung*, which states that he was seen in Austria in 1968.

Bridget's memoirs make remarkable reading. She claims that from November 1912 to April 1913, Adolf Hitler was an unwelcome guest in the flat in Upper Stanhope Street, Liverpool. She says that Hitler, in a fit of incestuous passion, killed his own niece, Geli; and that as a young man he had been a draft-dodger who had lived on charity in an old people's home rather than find work or serve in the army.

Among those most critical of the suggestion that Hitler ever visited Liverpool is Professor Robert Waite. As Waite rightly points out, Bridget would have been aware that the early biographies of Hitler spoke of a 'lost year' during the Vienna period in which virtually nothing was known about him. Therefore, says Waite, she would have felt safe in filling the gap by having Adolf go to England to visit her family for the entire period. Waite gives a number of reasons for believing that Bridget invented parts of her diary. Some are trivial – such as that she mistakes the colour of Geli's hair. Some are mere matters of opinion or point of view – 'I found him weak and spineless,' says Bridget: 'Spineless he was not,' says Waite. However, Waite deduces two weighty arguments from silence: *a* the Viennese authorities imply that Hitler was in Vienna during the time that Bridget claims he was in Liverpool, while the British immigration authorities have no record of his entry, and *b* Hitler never spoke of a trip to Liverpool to anyone.

Taking Waite's first point, it should be noted that it is just as easy to claim that Hitler was *not* in Vienna as it is to claim that he *was*, and the honest answer must be that we simply do not know one way or the other – even though one man, Karl Honisch, did claim to have been in Vienna with Hitler at the time. Since it was an offence to leave the country without express permission – not to mention the offences of avoiding conscription and travelling under a false name – Adolf is unlikely to have broadcast his intention to leave by using his own name. As for alien regulations in Britain, before 1914, these did not exist. In 1905 an Act covered the control of steerage passengers, the infirm and the sick, but this regulation was extremely lax, and Home Office officials say that it could have been contravened easily. Home Office officials also comment that even if the authorities did keep some sort of records, it would be impossible to check them now.

Waite's second argument is perhaps stronger. There is no mention of a visit to England in any of Hitler's speeches, books, or lengthy 'Table Talk'; nor is there mention of it in any authentic memoir written by others who knew him. Heinz Linke, his valet of ten years' service, says flatly that with the exception of brief trips to Italy and Paris, the Führer had

'visited no other country', Lloyd George, the Duke of Windsor, Unity Mitford and many other British personalities conducted long, intimate conversations with Hitler about every topic under the sun, and he never mentioned such a visit to any of them. It is arguable that he may have wished to keep the visit quiet, either because he was ashamed of it or because he felt it might prejudice the myth of his resolute progress to power, but this is hardly a compelling explanation. It is certainly more likely, on the face of it, that Bridget invented this part of her memoirs in order to place Hitler under some obligation and thus get money for her and her child. On the other hand, it has to be admitted by the sceptics that as a whole, Bridget's memoirs are not over-written. Apart from the few melodramatic touches here and there, she writes simply and sensibly, and her description of Hitler's arrival in Liverpool is circumstantial and convincing in itself. The question must remain open.*

The main doubt about the memoirs concerns Hitler's alleged murder of his niece, Geli. It is known that Hitler was briefly away from Munich when Geli died, and that he raced home to find her dead. He could not therefore have shot Geli himself, as Bridget states. Nor could Leo, Geli's brother, have taken the revenge she describes: Hitler would have had him removed. Far from removing him, when Leo was captured on the Russian front Hitler intervened to have him exchanged. Moreover a different version by Bridget of this event is recorded in Ernst Hanfstaengl's book *The Missing Years*. Hanfstaengl says:

It was not until the autumn of 1937, when I was in exile in London, that I was given another leading clue which might explain the change in Hitler's attitude between the time he wrote that letter and the morning row on the day Geli Raubal died. I was visited by Mrs Bridget Hitler, an Irish woman, who had met Hitler's half-brother Alois, the full brother of Angela Raubal, in Dublin in 1909. She maintains that the immediate family knew very well that the cause of Geli's suicide was the fact that she was pregnant by a young Jewish art teacher in Linz, whom she had met in 1938 and wanted to marry at the time of her death.

The pregnancy is consistent with the memoirs, but here is

*An imaginative reconstruction of the young Hitler's visit to Liverpool, based on the memoirs, is given by Beryl Bainbridge in her recent novel *Young Adolf*, published by Duckworth in U.K. and Braziller in U.S.



Mrs Bridget Hitler

Bridget apparently telling Hanfstaengl that Geli killed herself, a statement contradicted by the memoirs.

Not all that Bridget writes, however, is historically doubtful. As is clear from the memoirs, from his own writings, and from the interviews he gave over a period of time, William Patrick, encouraged by his mother, played on the uncle/nephew connexion, hoping for considerable financial gain, particularly from his visits to Germany. The miserable sum of money he was given annoyed them both, and it is clear that Bridget tried to force Adolf's hand by selling their story to the American Hearst group. The memoirs state that she did this innocently at the request of Alois. When, in 1930, Adolf found out about the story, he flew into a rage, ordering William Patrick to visit him. He even told a German magistrate that his nephew had tried to blackmail him. During the subsequent interview, as the memoirs state, Adolf laid into William Patrick with a vengeance. Luckily for Bridget and her account, there was a witness to the interview. The witness was Hans Frank, later head of the General Government of Poland and formerly Hitler's lawyer, who was subsequently hanged at Nuremberg. While waiting to be executed for his war crimes, Frank wrote his own memoirs, *Im Schatten des Galgens (In the Shadow of the Gallows)*, in which he described the Führer's rage at his nephew's demands for money, and now, fearing that William Patrick's persistence would rake up the past and reveal that Hitler's father was illegitimate and possibly born of a Jewish girl, Frank was commissioned to investigate the family's ancestry.

There is probably no reason to doubt the overall authenticity of these memoirs, despite the fact that some details are certainly inaccurate. We must remember that Bridget was neither a politician nor a historian, but a simple Irish girl. Now that her memoirs are available in full – the only memoirs by any relation of Hitler – their merits can be properly debated and will no doubt be debated for years to come.

M.U.

1

It was at the annual Dublin Horse Show. Everyone had come to see and buy the fine Irish horses – English and Irish sportsmen, the nobility, tourists from all over the world.

I always enjoyed going anywhere with my father, and I must confess that I was not unaware of the honour of being escorted by 'the best-looking fellow in the countryside', as he was generally described. Many eyes turned towards us: the tall Irishman and the girl in a white muslin dress with flounces and a blue sash. My white hat was ornamental with ostrich plumes, and I carried a parasol. This was the year 1909.

Father was discussing the horses with Mr Tynan, a neighbour, and presently they were talking with a handsome stranger dressed in a brown suit, a homburg hat and immaculate spats. To my interested eyes he represented the height of elegance according to the vogue at the start of the century.

A white ivory walking stick with a gold handle was hooked over his arm with inimitable dash. In his tie was a pearl pin, and two rings on his left little finger, one a diamond and one a ruby, added just the right note of lavishment. Across his cream-coloured waistcoat a heavy gold chain stretched from one pocket to the other and his moustaches were waxed and curled up right 'à la Kaiser'. He introduced himself as Alois Hitler from Austria.

I cannot deny that this stranger with his fine foreign manners and his debonair Viennese ways made a great impression on me. His conversation was quite different from that of the commonplace, hardworking farmers and their wives

1910 Marriage solemnized at the Registrar Office in the District of St. Marylebone in the County of London								
No.	Name of Bride	Name and Surname of Bridegroom	Age	Rank or Profession	Rank or Profession of Bridegroom	Rank or Profession of Bride	Rank or Profession of Bridegroom	Rank or Profession of Bride
100	Theresa Jane	Alois Hitler	27 years	Bachelor	Hotel Waiter	27 Blomford Square St. Marylebone	Alois Hitler deceased	Quartermaster
101	Elizabeth Dowling	William Dowling	18 years	Spinster	4 Percy Street St. Pancras	William Dowling	Companion	

Maiden in the Registrar Office solemnized by the Registrar General of the District of St. Marylebone in the County of London

This Marriage was solemnized at the Registrar Office in the District of St. Marylebone in the County of London

By License

High Altar Deputy Registrar

Henry J. Dudson

Bridget's certificate of marriage to Alois

Our marriage turned out very differently from the life Alois had pictured for me in such glowing terms, and it was very different too from life in my devout, industrious family.

Alois had a volatile, Bohemian nature and was always just about to make a fortune. He changed his way of earning a living four times during our first two years of married life. From London we moved to Liverpool, where he opened a small restaurant in Dale Street; selling this, he bought a boarding house on Parliament Street, then a hotel on Mount Pleasant; then he went bankrupt and lost the hotel. There were times I didn't have enough money to buy milk for my baby.

One day Alois appeared, gay, and smiling. 'Cece, we are rich' (he always called me 'Cece' after a portrait of St Cecilia which he particularly admired). Flinging a big roll of bills on to the table, he said he had won in the Grand National at Aintree. He scarcely gave me time to pack. Two hours later we

Anno 1911 die 12 mensis Martii natus, et anno 1911 die 30 mensis Aprilis baptizatus est Gilbertus Victorius Hitler filius Alois et Brigittae Elizabethae Hitler (olim Dowling) conjugum a matre Nicolae Becker, Mrs. Conrad Patrinus fuit Anton Kohler Matrinx fuit Maria Elizabetha Pherkland	
--	--

William Patrick's certificate of baptism