



There's terrible, terrible news

2000

MONDAY, MAY 15TH, 2000

It was nearly 3.00 p.m. I wanted to leave work early as my granddaughter, Rosie, had an orthodontist appointment at 4.30 in Bury St Edmunds. I was going to look after Rosie's little sister, Francesca, while my daughter, Anna, took Rosie to have a brace fitted on her teeth. My son, Matthew, was in Philadelphia and my older daughter, Sarah, was in Peru on a white-water rafting trip. Rosie and I were due to meet Sarah in Peru for a 10-day holiday later in the month.

I went into the next room to my colleague, Agnes, and said, "I'm leaving soon because of Rosie's orthodontist appointment." Agnes replied, "No you can't because Mick's on his way to meet you." My husband, Mick, had told me he had to go to Cambridge railway station that afternoon to meet an American visitor who was coming for a meeting with Mick and other publishing colleagues the following day. I said to Agnes, "No, Mick's not coming to see me, he's coming to Cambridge to meet an American guy at the station." Agnes said, "Well he phoned Eve." Eve was another colleague of ours. "What would he phone Eve for?" I said. Agnes would not say – she was being cagey, so I went to Eve's room and said, "Did Mick phone you?" "Yes." "Why?" A vague, noncommittal response came – "He's coming over, can't you wait for him?" I felt myself getting cross. I wanted to be home to look after Francesca and start the cooking. I phoned Mick's mobile number and was put through to the messaging service. I said, "Mick, I'm not waiting for you in Cambridge, I'll see you at home tonight." I locked up my room and went to leave but Agnes came out to stop me.

"Barbara, you can't go, there is a real problem and Mick is on his way to see you," said Agnes. "It's not Sarah and that bloody rafting?" I answered. She gave me a strange look – in retrospect I knew she was saying "Yes", but I didn't want to understand that so I said, "Maybe it's my cat, maybe my son-in-law has run over the cat." In my head I said, "Please let it be the cat, please let it be the cat." I love my cat Django but I knew I could live with his death. Never for a moment did I think, "Matthew (our son) has been shot in Philadelphia", even though 'Philly' is a dangerous city with lots of guns.

Another colleague, Tom, then came in and said, "Mick's on the phone – on my extension – and he sounds in a state." "Why doesn't Mick ring my extension?" I thought. I went into Tom's room and picked up the phone. Mick had heard my message and wanted to stop me leaving. He was crying and said, "Barbara, there's terrible, terrible news." I went cold and calm and said, "Is it Sarah?" "Yes," replied Mick. "Is she dead?" I asked. "We think so," said Mick, "she's missing and was last seen floating face down." "Well that's it," I replied. "I can't wait to see you," said Mick. I put the phone down and looked at Tom who said, "She's only missing." I was furious and said, "Tom, I'm not a fool." I went to Agnes and hugged her then paced up and down until Mick arrived.

I met Mick outside and we hugged each other crying together. He came in while I saw Agnes to tell her what parts of my schedule to cancel. I was quite calm and controlled then. There were meetings for the rest of the week and a talk I was giving for the Leonard Cheshire Homes up north on Friday. My secretary, Julia, was on leave that Monday but Agnes said she'd deal with everything. We left Mick's car in the car park and took my car home. On the way, Mick told me the story from his side.

He had been at work early that afternoon when his colleague, Denise, answered the phone. She said to Mick, "There's a Max Milligan for you." Mick's knees buckled. He knew there must be something wrong in Peru as there would be no other reason for Max Milligan to phone. Indeed we had only heard the name a few days earlier when Sarah had called from Cusco in Peru. She told us that she had met a guy called Max Milligan and had been on a mountain bike ride with him. Then this call. Mick took the phone and Max told him that there had been a terrible accident and Sarah was missing. He said he would give Mick a few minutes and would telephone again five minutes later. He did phone back and we learned that there were two rafts each with five people and a local guide. Sarah was on the first raft. The raft had been stuck in a 'hole', a hydraulic (I always see this in my mind as a whirlpool). The raft upended and all five fell out. The guide was able to remain on the raft. Four people were saved and Sarah was last seen floating face down. She had died on the Friday – May 12th – they had searched for two days but her body had not been found. At this stage we just heard the bare details. Mick telephoned our son in America and told him. He did not tell Anna as he thought she was at work and he did not have her number. He telephoned Eve to tell her to make sure I waited for him to arrive.

Sarah, Matthew and Anna were very close. There was less than three years in age between them and all of us kept in touch at least every two or three days. I had had an e-mail from Sarah on May 7th saying she would not be in touch for 12 days because she'd be in the wilds. I e-mailed her on the 7th saying "take care with the rafting", and again on the 11th to await her return. Matthew, thinking that Anna knew the awful news, telephoned her. She was really pleased to hear from him and then realised he was crying. She thought something had happened to him. When he told her about Sarah she kept saying, "Not my Sarah, not my Sarah", over and over. Matthew then wondered whether he had dreamt Mick's phone call.

On the way home from Cambridge we telephoned Anna and arranged for her and the two girls, Rosie and Francesca, to come to our house. We arrived home, shocked and weepy, although fewer tears flowed then than later. "Isn't it terrible?" I said to Anna. Anna was sobbing. Rosie, my granddaughter had always been close to Sarah, in fact Sarah had been present at Rosie's birth on Christmas Day, 1987, over 12 years earlier. That evening Rosie kept drawing pictures of Sarah and copying photographs of her. Francesca, who was four, was also attached to her auntie but she did not cry so much. She asked questions like – "We'll never see Sarah again will we?" We did not feel, however, that Francesca understood the finality of Sarah's death. None of us probably did at that stage.

My next job was to telephone my sister-in-law, Carol, who lives near Ipswich, about 25 minutes drive away. Carol is my best friend and one of the strengths of the family. Carol and her husband Peter were out but I left a message saying Sarah was missing, probably dead and to phone us.

Mick and I decided we had to get Matthew home as soon as possible. I telephoned Matt in Philadelphia and said I would try to get him a flight that night. By now it was about 6.00 p.m. in the UK and 1.00 p.m. in Philadelphia. I then called British Airways and said, "There has been an unexpected death in the family and I need to get my son home from Philadelphia to London this evening if possible." The British Airways staff member I spoke to was great. She said there was a seat available that evening for £106 (a very low price – was that because of the circumstances, I wonder? I will never know). She also said that Matthew would have to go to the ticket office in Philly and that she would tell the people in the office there what had happened so they would be kind to Matt. Such kindness from her and from the other good people at that time will not be forgotten. It meant so much to us then to know there were good people around. I phoned Matt to tell him what to do. He cried copiously. We were all crying frequently but I felt I had to sort things out as best I could, so I kept in control as much as possible.

Carol and Peter had, by now, heard the message and called to say they were on their way over. They arrived and Carol cooked something for us. I don't remember the details of the evening but we talked and talked and cried and cried. I remember feeling shocked at some point in the evening that I felt hungry. "How can you be hungry," I said to myself, "when your daughter has died?" But I was. I didn't eat much but I ate something.

Perhaps it was surprising that we did not hope that she would be found. At times I did – there were moments that day and the next when I thought that she might be washed up and found by some villagers. "Perhaps she'll be found with amnesia," I thought, "and they are trying to establish who she is." I always knew, though, that this was wishful thinking. The fact that she had been last seen face down, unconscious, and that the rafters had been searching for three days, told me that she was dead. Somehow we got through the evening. Anna, Rosie and Francesca went home, so did Carol and Peter, and eventually Mick and I went to bed.

We hardly slept. I managed an hour and Mick probably had the same. I felt so tired and wanted to sleep, but as soon as I came close, I jolted awake with the horror of it all. Eventually I slept but jolted awake again after an hour thinking, "Please let it not be true." Then the ghastly realisation that it was true. I said to Mick, "I need a cuddle." He obliged, we were both needing physical contact and held each other frequently in those early days.

One thing that made me feel particularly terrible was remembering the previous weekend. On Friday May 12th, the day Sarah died, I was giving a one-day workshop in Belgium. I came home that evening and got ready to go to Brighton the next day to attend a memorial service for Alan Parkin, a colleague who had died unexpectedly of a heart attack at the age of 49. I was, of course, totally unaware anything was amiss with Sarah. On Saturday May 13th, Mick and I drove down to Sussex University for the service. It was a beautiful sunny day and I was somewhat regretful that I could not sunbathe in the garden. During the afternoon I saw Alan Parkin's elderly mother crying. I said to another colleague, Narinder Kapur, "How terrible to outlive your children." Narinder said, "It's the worst thing." We stayed in Brighton that night and I went to a dinner with Alan's friends and colleagues. The next day we drove home after breakfast. During the drive I said to Mick, "Life is good at the moment. Work's going well. The kids are all sorted and we don't have to worry about money." Sarah was already dead and I had no idea! If there is any spiritual communication or life after death, or any of those things, then I would have known she was dead or would at least have had some sense of foreboding. She was my firstborn, most wanted, most treasured, most beloved daughter and I'd lost her. I always told her I couldn't live without her, she knew how much she was loved by her parents, her sister and her brother and she left us in such turmoil and despair.

TUESDAY, MAY 16TH, AND WEDNESDAY MAY 17TH, 2000

I was up before 3.00 a.m. and e-mailed my secretary, Julia, at 6.30 a.m. Julia was due back from leave that day. I wrote:

Dear Julia,

I don't know whether or not you have heard the terrible news but Sarah has drowned in a rafting accident in Peru. Five fell out of the raft and four managed to get to the safety lines. Sarah didn't. She seems to have lost consciousness in about 10 seconds. The others tried to get her but couldn't and she was last seen face down going down the river so we know there is no hope. This happened on Friday but we didn't know until yesterday afternoon. They are still searching for her body and will continue searching until tomorrow – it takes four days to get to the sea. The man at the Consulate thought that in accidents like this the bodies are hardly

ever found and she will be listed as a missing person so we won't even get a death certificate or anything. It is just too too painful for all of us.

Julia please don't phone just yet as I can't bear it. You can e-mail if you want and please can you let Anita Taub and Stephanie Moore know as they were so fond of Sarah. Everyone loved her, she was so good. Matthew has just landed in London and will be home in a couple of hours. We are all totally devastated.

Love, Barbara

(We must have been in touch with the Consulate the previous day although I don't remember that happening.)

Matt landed early that morning and his cousin Simon, Carol's son, met him at Heathrow. They turned up later than they should as they were so busy talking and crying they missed the right exit from the M25. We feared for everyone at that time – if people were out of sight we thought something terrible had happened. Carol and Peter were there by 7.30 a.m. Matt came in and hugged everyone, crying all the time. He said he collected his ticket the night before. The staff in the British Airways office in Philadelphia were kind to him and said they knew he had had bad news. The stewardess on the flight gave him a row of three seats to himself. She found him some alcohol that he had asked for and said, "If there is anything you want let me know. If you want me to come and talk to you, let me know." Again neither Matt nor his father nor I have forgotten that.

He met Simon in the arrivals hall. Everyone around them was greeting someone with smiles, but Simon and Matthew hugged each other crying. Simon could have had little or no sleep in order to get to the airport on time. He wanted to do something helpful though and this was the most practical thing he could do.

I e-mailed Agnes to check she had cancelled everything.

Dear Agnes,

Things are pretty terrible here – lots of calls but no hard facts although they don't expect to find the body and so she'll be listed as a missing person and God knows what happens then as we can't get a death certificate and so on and so on. I can't cope with the phone very well at present and there are lots of practical calls to make and receive. I can cope with e-mails though so that's how people should get in touch at the moment. Thanks for your support yesterday.

Love, Barbara

I don't normally sign off 'love from' in e-mails to colleagues but that was what I wanted to do then. The family talked over and over about Sarah, how lovely she

was, how stupid she was to go on such a trip. How angry we were with her for going on such a dangerous trip. By then we had been informed she had rafted on a grade 5 river, the most dangerous grade that it is possible to raft. Grade 1 is the easiest and grade 6 would be something like Niagara Falls. We knew she was rafting and that she had been rafting before in Bolivia the previous year, but we did not know she had chosen to go on this grade 5.

Anna, Rosie and Francesca came. Anna and I talked about the people we should telephone. We did not know the procedure. If someone dies in the United Kingdom, there is a procedure to follow and someone to tell you what to do. If you get a phone call from a foreign country, it is much more difficult. We had been in touch with the Consulate in Arequipa, the nearest city to the place where Sarah died and we had a call from the travel company that had organised Sarah's trip. This is a company run by two business partners and based in Peru. We were asked if we wanted them to arrange for a helicopter search for the body. I took the call and said, "Is it worth it?", thinking, "If they have been searching on the ground since Friday, how would a helicopter search help?" I was told it probably would be worth it and it would cost several thousand US dollars. We said to go ahead.

Another thing decided during these two days was that we all needed to go to Peru to see the people involved and the place where Sarah had died. Meanwhile Anna and I had other calls to make. Most of the Tuesday was taken up with calls. I telephoned the travel insurance firm. Sarah had taken out a special insurance for dangerous sports and I found a copy of the form. The woman I spoke to said, "It's probably a terrible mistake, people see someone in the water and think it's someone else." No doubt she thought she was being helpful but I was furious. She was no help whatsoever. Just as one remembers kindnesses with heightened awareness during grief, so one remembers crassness and stupidity in the same way. Because we were worried about the death certificate, I decided to telephone the Foreign Office. No one at all gave us any advice on how to proceed so I thought the Foreign Office would be a useful contact. I explained our daughter had died in Peru and was transferred to the South American section. The man there kept saying, "We cannot issue a death certificate without a body." I knew that! He'd told me several times. I wanted to know how long since the death we would have to wait until we were able to get a certificate of some sort. I did not succeed, however, in getting anything out of him except, "We cannot issue a death certificate without a body." We cried constantly even during the phone calls and it was so awful to come up against such incompetence. The next call was to the Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages in Bury St Edmunds. I explained the situation to the woman who answered the phone and, at least, she was kind enough. She said, "I've never been asked that question before. I'll try to find out." But time passed and nothing happened there.

We had been looking through Sarah's papers and came across the name of a firm of solicitors she had been dealing with. I telephoned them. Apparently they had only been involved in selling Sarah's flat a few months earlier. However, the woman I spoke to said she might be able to find out something about the

procedure to follow when there is no death certificate. She phoned back later to say that a colleague of hers had known someone who fell from a yacht at sea and was never found. She said that we might be able to get an 'order of presumed death'. The witnesses to the accident should sign a statement before the British Consul and we should take this to a British coroner. She told us that we should get the British Embassy to organise this. I said this was the first concrete advice I'd had and thanked her very gratefully.

We had telephoned the British Embassy in Lima earlier and had been put through to a woman called Nicola Standen. She was kind and sensitive and said we should always ask for her when we telephoned. Nicola became our main lifeline for the next few days. I telephoned Nicola again after the call from the solicitor whose name I did not know. She said she would set the wheels in motion with one of the co-owners of the travel company. Nicola told me during the first call that they knew about the accident and that Sarah had been rafting on a grade 5 river and that the company had appeared to have taken all the right precautions and put the right safety procedures in place.

I had to cancel the flights to Peru that Rosie and I had arranged for May 28th. I had decided to have a 10-day holiday over there with Sarah and it was to have been my birthday present to Sarah who would have been 37 years old on June 11th. I e-mailed KLM to explain. I had booked the flights with my Flying Dutchman (Frequent Flyer) award points. I said in the e-mail that my daughter had died and we would no longer be going. KLM e-mailed back the following day to say my award points would be refunded. I also had to cancel a hotel I had booked in Lima and another in Cusco. The rest of the trip that I was to have taken had been organised by the company that Sarah went with. The people there now knew of course that we would not be making the original trip but an entirely different one.

By now e-mails, cards, letters and flowers were beginning to arrive. The first flowers delivered were from Mark and Celia, two mountain biking friends of Sarah's. On the accompanying card they said, "She was the sunshine in our lives." Needless to say, this made us weep more than ever. So did every e-mail, card and letter to arrive. Some of the correspondence that arrived on May 16th and 17th is included here to help sum up the events of the first days following the dreadful news. The first is from the mother of my very dear Brazilian friend, Anita.

May 16th, 2000, 10.30 a.m. (*to Julia Darling, my secretary*)

Dear Mrs. Darling,

My name is Vera Bobrow and I am Anita Taub's mother.

This morning she sent me the awful news about the drowning of Sarah in Peru.

I have no words to express my feelings of sympathy for our dear Barbara in this moment of despair and loss. Please let her know that my heart aches for her pain and that I will be praying to God and asking Him to help dear Barbara stand this tragedy.

My family and I condole with Barbara and her family on her sweet daughter's death.

May God guide the family in this moment of distress.

Vera Bobrow

May 17th, 6.09 a.m. (*from me to Julia*)

Dear Julia,

It is still very bad here. Sarah hasn't been found. The helicopter search is over and there is one more day of the river search before they call it off. There is a woman at the British Embassy in Lima who has been very good. We heard the rafting was on a grade 5 river, the most dangerous so she should never have gone. The rest of the group were going to the Consulate in Arequipa yesterday to sign the statements. The guy in charge there is also supportive and of course everyone in the group is devastated too. We are all going out to Peru next week – probably Monday. We shall call in to the Embassy in Lima first, then go to Arequipa to collect the documents and visit the site to make our good-byes. After that we will go to Cusco to collect and decide on the fate of her belongings. Julia, it is so hard to live with this. People have phoned or e-mailed from all over the world. We shall have a big and splendid memorial service at some point in the summer. I can't make any decisions yet about our plans for the summer. I will go to the International Neuropsychology Society meeting in Brussels but I don't think I could do the two 2-day workshops in the USA. I know all the brochures have gone and it will be a mess but the thought of standing there for four days talking to strangers is awful. So can you let the people in Boston know and give them the reasons and my sincere apologies. Then can you get hold of Premier Travel who booked the flights with United Airlines and see if, in the circumstances, I can get a refund or at least a deferment until a later date. I was due to fly out on June 21st. I am sure Agnes is looking after the Dutch student. I know I have neglected her somewhat but I also know people will understand. Matthew, Anna and Rosie are all feeling terrible but so are people we never expected to feel so strongly. Why she felt the need for this high risk experience I don't

know. It is such a waste and she was truly a wonderful person who gave so much to her family and friends.

Barbara

May 17th, 2000, 8.09 a.m. (*from Anita Taub to Barbara*)

Dear Barbara,

I have no words to comfort you. We are completely shocked, and I can imagine how you are feeling. We were all the family together yesterday and thought a lot on you and Sarah and prayed for you.

I am sure you know the great affection I have for you, and I am all the time thinking of you. Camila, Martha, Flavia and Angela are sending love to you. Dear Barbara, I am here for everything you need, no matter what. So do ring my mother if you need something in Peru, she knows people there. I didn't e-mail or called you because I don't want to disturb you.

Please take care of you, your lovely family, Francesca, Rosy. Sarah is in all of them.

Love, Anita

May 17th, 2000, 8.42 a.m. (*from Julia to Barbara*)

Dear Barbara,

I'm so sorry the helicopter search didn't find Sarah. I feel so devastated by this and can't get her or you, Mick and the family out of my mind. I know she was a wonderful person, not only from the way you always talked about her with so much love, but when I met her, albeit probably on only a dozen or so occasions, or spoke to her on the telephone – she was always so warm and friendly. Any words of comfort that I can try to give you just seem totally inadequate.

I will deal with everything here, so don't worry about that. I'll ring the Travel Agent as soon as they open at 9 am and let you know what she says.

Love, Julia

May 17th, 2000, 11.01 a.m. (*from Jon to Barbara*)

Barbara,

I tried to call a couple of times, but you are obviously having to sort out so many things and so I thought I would not interrupt, but email instead. I just wanted to let you know that I contacted Mark who has been in touch with Celia. She is working in Bahrain at the moment, until a week on Friday. She is devastated by the news, and Mark is flying out to Bahrain to be with her on Friday. Mark has also rung round many of the mountain bike people that he knows who knew Sarah. I have explained that if you are unable to have a funeral, that you will have some form of memorial for Sarah and it goes without saying that they want to be there. I said I would let Mark know when you have made plans. Sarah was obviously a very special person to them all.

I gather from Julia that you are going out to Peru next week. I know there is nothing that any of us can do to take away your pain, but so many of us desperately wish we could do that for you. If there is anything, anything at all, I can do in the meantime or while you are away do please let me know.

Jon

May 17th, 2000, 10.48 a.m. (*from Barbara to Anita*)

Dear Anita,

I want to thank you and your mother for your kind words. If I thought there was anything you could do in Peru I would ask for help but, Anita, I don't think there is anything to be done. We are in touch with the British Embassy in Peru and the Consulate in Arequipa. There is a woman at the Embassy called Nicola who has been very good, kind and sensible. It is such a terrible tragedy. We paid for a helicopter search yesterday but they could not find the body. There has been a river search going on since Friday, but nothing to report. They said the body would reach the sea in four days (that was yesterday) and also that bodies are rarely found in this particular river with this kind of accident. The problem now is a death certificate. We can't get one without the body so the people on the trip with her went to the consulate in Arequipa yesterday to sign statements so that she can be presumed dead. We then have to take the statements and a copy of the police report to a British coroner to see if they will accept

this as evidence of death. Until then we can't get insurance or sort out her finances or her will. We cannot bury her without the body and I wanted to bury her in the churchyard opposite our house where my mother is buried. We will have a memorial service probably in September. She was so well known in the world of mountain biking that she has a huge number of friends. We will read some poems and play some of Sarah's favourite music and have a display of photographs and so forth. At the moment we are in great distress here as you can imagine. I cannot bear to think I will never see her again and never talk to her and laugh with her and take her to a restaurant. I loved her so much, so did her father, her sister, her brother and her niece Rosie. Francesca doesn't really understand although she knows we are all very unhappy.

We are going to Peru on Monday if I can arrange the flights. We will go first to the British Embassy in Lima and then to Arequipa to collect the signed statements and visit the site where she died. We will then go to Cusco to get her belongings. We will probably stay for a week – no longer. I know you care Anita and I am glad you got to know Sarah but at the moment nobody can help us with our grief. Please e-mail me if you want to. I can get my e-mails at home and check them regularly.

Love, Barbara

May 17th, 2000, 4.33 p.m. (*from Ian and Fiona*)

Dear Barbara,

I was just devastated to hear about Sarah. Fiona and my thoughts are with you, Mick, Anna and Matthew as you go through this nightmare. Words are useless, but I just want to say that we are with you in spirit. This is a most terrible thing to have to endure. I spoke briefly to Mick this morning, but I just wanted to say to you personally how heart-broken I am on your behalf. I am sure it must all seem so unreal to you at times.

Sarah was a special person – such a pure spirit in many ways. She was a credit to you and Mick. I hope you can take some small comfort in her specialness, and in the zest she showed for the rich life she had.

Our sincerest condolences, Barbara, to you, Mick, Anna and Matthew.

With love, Ian and Fiona

May 17th, 2000, 6.32 p.m. (*from Jill to Barbara*)

Dearest Barbara and Mick,

Words cannot express my horror and grief on learning the news of Sarah's loss. I am so grateful to Julia for writing and letting me know. I have been sitting here at my desk just absolutely stunned. I can just begin to imagine your feelings, and I do know that this loss changes your lives forever.

I have been thinking of South Africa and our trip to Robben Island. I am so glad that I had that recent time with Sarah. She was such a wonderful, strong young woman, and I will treasure those memories. She died as she lived, courageous and adventurous and loving nature.

Please know that I will be thinking of you all the time. If there is anything at all that I can do to be of help, please know that you can count on me – really, anything at all.

Know that around the world people will be holding you close and wishing you strength and courage as you begin coping with this most difficult of all losses.

I send you great love.

Jill

May 17th, 2000, 7.13 p.m. (*from Barbara to Ian Robertson*)

Thank you, Ian. Yes, we all know how special she was. We are all going to Peru on Monday to do all the various things we have to – and need to – do. There will probably be a memorial service in September. You and Fiona will be most welcome if you want to come.

Love to you all and treasure your three little ones.

Barbara

One thing I wanted to do on the Wednesday morning was go to the gym. Sarah had introduced me to the gym 15 months earlier when I wanted to get fit for a trip to Madagascar. Although I could not face work or telephone calls, I wanted the mindless, repetitive exercise, to try to exorcise some of the physical pain. The pain felt in the region of the heart was as if a horse had kicked me in the chest, it was a hard, solid, lump.

I went to the gym desperately hoping no one would speak to me. While on the exercise bike, the manager walked past and said, "All right?" My eyes filled with

tears, I shook my head and said, “No.” “What’s wrong?” she said. I answered, “It’s just too awful to speak about.”

I finished the workout and thought I must say something to her. She was in the office talking to another instructor, Maxine. Both of them knew Sarah who was a regular gym-goer. I went in and told them sobbing all the while. They both coped, especially Maxine who told me her brother had died as a young man and she knew how badly her mother had taken it.

I went down to the changing rooms, had a shower and started getting dressed. An acquaintance with whom I had worked years ago in Oxford, started to speak to me. I cried even more and said, “My daughter’s just drowned in Peru.” “What on earth are you doing here then?” she said. “Well I have to do something,” I answered. (In fact, over the next days, weeks and months I became obsessed with the gym.) Although I thought of Sarah non-stop while I was there, I could ‘see’ her in my mind’s eye with her colourful shorts and intense involvement, I wanted to go through this pounding, thumping routine. I went again on the Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday. I always cried and I do not know how many people noticed or saw me.