

DICK'S TAPE NO.1

How about my ancestors? Well, of course, that's all copyright 'cos I'm going to write a book one day, that is if ever I get time.

Mother was born at 100 Manor Road, Dovercourt, the second daughter of Mr and Mrs James Rice. Grandmother's mother's name was Griggs. On my father's side, my great-grandfather preached at the 'Rome' (Room) Stowmarket, which was up Violet Hill. He was a builder and, with my grandfather, built Finborough and Onehouse Schools and the brick houses that are around with the year inserted in white brick. Dad was born at Halfway House, Onehouse, went to the British School, Stowmarket, left at 13 on a Schedule III Board of Education 146/A/1 certificate that he had made 350 attendances in not more than two schools during each year for five preceding years. He worked for his father as a blacksmith at the Forge, Shelland, which is next door - and not used now, of course. Mother's family moved around, went to Little Finborough Hall and Star Farm, Onehouse - where I was born in the attic. A little brother came along later, but he died at 3 months after an 'imperforate anus operation' followed by '? internal sepas darfu failure'.

My first recollections are of what might be called an average tenant farm. Most of the land in the six villages belonged to the Petteward Estate at Finborough. Star Farm had four horses, Dapper, Boxer, Prince, Smartie, at least five cows; there were pigs and poultry all round the farm, a few turkeys and two or three guinea fowl. Of course there was the dog, cats and, across the field the other side of the orchard, a very low thatched shed where ferrets were kept to be used for catching rabbits. There were also ducks on the horse pond.

After a day's work the horses went down to the pond, walked into the water, had copious drinks. The cows were taken down to the river meadows down Star Lane and brought back for milking. There had been bees in the fluttery - nut shrubs which grew very fine filberts. Butter was taken even up to Ipswich and I have postcards 1902 of thanks for apples and butter received at Coventry, so the railways were being used in those days. The dairy windows had no glass, but open lathes. At first milk was placed in large flat pans and the cream skimmed off since one asked for "Two pennorth of skimmed milk". Later the separator came - a series of cone-shaped cups, milk poured into the top container and the handle turned, thus "Two pennorth of separated" was the term. My mother spent many hours turning the churn, a barrel which kept turning over and made the butter. In the cool dairy in cold weather it just would not make. Mother was thankful when the cowman, without telling anyone, used to use some hot water to help the process - something she dare not do because of reprisal.

Life was much of routine in those days and my great-grandmother, I am told, returning from Stowmarket in the pony and trap, was seen near where

the High School now is, and the reins of the horse were trailing along the road. The horse went to its usual unloading place on the farm and the family later discovered my great-grandmother dead, sitting in the cart.

My mother has told me that after the harvest they always had a horkey when the last load came in. There were circular stacks and oblong ones. The round ones were on specially dome-shaped iron pedestals to stop vermin from getting into the stack. When the old threshing machine came - and that wasn't half dusty, but it was great fun chasing mice and rats, wire netting placed around to preventing their escape. The other pastime for us lads was searching for hens' eggs as they chose odd spots rather than the nest boxes to lay in, despite that potched white egg that was placed there to encourage them. Occasionally a lox would pay a visit, leaving a trail of feathers. Since the Squire was keen on the Hunt the fox could not be destroyed, but quite often a shot could be heard very early in the day and there would be a disturbed patch of grass at the far end of the orchard. There was a wooden snow plough pulled by two or more horses, and Grandad would have fed the horses and be on the road by 6 in the morning, so we never had snow on the road for long.

We moved to this bungalow in 1911 next to the Forge where my father was the blacksmith. The bungalow was, during the Boer War, a soldiers' but at Felixstowe and mother always said it was a Church School run by the 'Rome' people who also, as I have said, had a room at Violet Hill and I know once my great-grandfather preached there. In 1911 the kitchen and pantry were added and later, in the twenties, another bedroom. The rafters in the shed were said to come from an old clay house which stood in the nearby orchard. Mr Scarff of Green Farm allowed me to ride the horses when the corn was being carted from field to farm and the machine which fascinated me was the 'sailor' used for cutting shorter barley (they had occasionally a binder in those days), fair sweeping ?great/break sails sweeping the cut corn off a platform into regular rows.

The next farm I went to was Haughley Bushes. I used to take what they called the Beaver into the field, also hot dinner in the pudding basin - this would be round about 1921 - and the tea in a bottle which was usually cold on arrival. When they were cutting the corn a gun would be used on the side where the rabbits would run out, but we had plenty of chases on the rest of the land. Sometimes a fox would be in the ever smaller piece of corn; the rabbits would come out much earlier and finally the fox. Of course, pheasants and partridges were allowed to fly off. The caught or shot rabbits would be laid out in lines and a form of auction took place - they were up to 6d. to 1s/6d. according to size - and after harvest the money shared out amongst the workers.

We also had a roadman too, who had a section of road to look after; heaps of gravel at intervals along the road and when there was a pothole he filled it, kept the gutters clean, and scythed the wayside verge. Of

course, at his job he saw everyone, said "Hello" to them, and he knew all the village scandals.

The choir supper was a great event with baked potatoes brought in a pail. During the wintertime services were held in the Church Room on a Sunday evening and Sankey & Moody hymns were sung: "Down in the valley with my Saviour I will go" and "Shall we gather at the river, the beautiful, the wonderful, the river" - one dear old lady with a very raucous voice singing above all the others, and I remember when she died almost all the children went to see her in her coffin.

I wore corduroy shorts for a time, but I cried and refused to wear the white, hard collar other boys wore. Children walked to school from Shelland Green, Haughley Bushes, Shepherds Farm, Wash Lane and Buxhall Vale. A sort of a crowd collected as we went along, but there were separate little groups. The numbers at the school I think varied from about 56 to 61. We had a teacher, a charming lady, Miss Catchpole, who only died I think it was last May [date of recording to be checked] and she turned on her bicycle whatever the weather. There were twelve plots in the school garden, one plot allocated to a boy and girl for cultivation. On Thursdays two elderly gentlemen - who we knew as Brown and Tebble - came by, as it was Market Day, from Woolpit in a donkey and trap, so we used to take carrots from the school and entice the donkey along. One would often see a prize stallion gaily braided mane and tail, walking to his task around the farms. During the lunch hour one day we saw an aeroplane descend the other side of Northfield Wood. Without permission we ran through the Wood and eventually came to Harleston Hall to discover it was a friend of Mr Terry's on a visit.

There was only a pump at the school, so we often - if we wanted any water - used to slip out of school', steal down 'ire road to 'get some water. CA course 'We used to take water to school in an old medicine bottle which there were plenty about in those days. I went to Onehouse Voluntary School at 5. At first there were three rooms in use and three teachers but this soon dropped to two rooms and two teachers. The other room was then called the Committee Room. The Infants Room was 5-7 years. in the examinations in March 1918, at the age of 7, I was in Age 7 Standard I - sums 10/10 (in all these Dick says: "Ten upon ten" and not "out of"); composition on The Favourite Flower 9/10:
Age 8 Standard II sums 10/10, My Tame Rabbit 9/10. I put 'see' I see" instead of "I saw'. Oh dear!
Age 9, Standard III sums 10/10; Letter to the Governors Describing My Home (and I ended by saying, as we usually did, "Your loving pupil").
Age 10, Standard IV sums 8-1/2/10 (strangely enough I took L15.0s.3d. away from L28,0s.0d. and made it L12.19s.9d. but a dash was put across the 2 for 12.19.9. and I also got in a terrible muddle for changing hundredweights into stones. I got really confused. A Letter to My Auntie ("Your loving nephew") 8/10. I put two l's in 'until' and I also put a 'd' on 'noticed' - and, of course, the old Suffolk way of saying

"noticed" is "nauticed". I am slipping back, and
Age 11, Standard V sums 7-1/2/10; A Settler's Life in Australia 9-1/2/10.

Age 12 Standard VI - 4 right and 4 wrong - oh dear! "I Would Rather Be a
Chauffeur Than an Engine Driver" 6/10.

Age 13 Standard VII 9-1/2/10; If I Were Presented with Woodwork Tools
9/10. The Winning of Canada 10/10. Geography - Australia 8-1/2/10..

My attendance in the Record Book was given as 'Excellent'. My conduct
'Very good'. Well, you see, my grandfather was on the Board of the School
and if I got the cane he would see it in the black book. I had the cane
once. When I went down to grandfather's to tea of course he told mother,
so, I had the cane, I had a lecture from my grandfather and when I got
home I got a lecture from mother. I didn't get the cane very often after
that. My progress was said to be 'Satisfactory'. In the last year I was
on my own in the class. I did algebra and I also had the answer book, and
Mrs Ash used to look at the teacher, Mrs A L A Ash - her maiden name was
Evans and she married during the time I was at school once a week she
looked at the books to see how I had arrived at the answers. Now, the
poetry we learned was: The Three Fishes by Charles Kingsley, Work and
Win; Casa Bianca by Mrs Heeman; The Better Land by Mrs Heeman; Lucy Gray
or Solitude by William Wordsworth; The Wreck of the Hesperus by
Longfellow. I was first in the class in 1920, then I was mostly 4th in
the Class. My attendances ranged from 347 to 327. I realise - but as on
my father's leaving form - morning and afternoon attendances must have
been counted as two attendances.

I had several illnesses at school_ In fact I_ had diphtheria but, because
I was an only one, I was allowed to stay at the bungalow and there was a
moist sheet put over the door, and on one occasion my grandfather bought
me a gun with some arrows that stuck and I was allowed to shoot at him
through the window. Then, afterwards, someone came with a pot of sulphur
and stood me over it to fumigate me. (Dick laughs) I don't know what that
could have done, but still ...

The only time my mother left me was during the Great War when she cycled
to the Elmswell Bacon Factory to queue for lard - that was before things
were rationed. Of course she also worked on my grandfather's farm during
the War. There were searchlights and a gun in Combs Lane. I have a piece
of a shell and a piece of the airship which was found in the Star Farm
stackyard. Talking of war, my mother often said that the Boer War was
over six weeks before they knew of it. A young soldier, a relative, told
them when he came from a visit to Tilbury Fort which was one of the few
places that my mother did visit. German prisoners went across the Green
on a dray pulled by two horses. They sat with their legs dangling down
over the side. They were on their way to work from Rattlesden to farms
around. They were a jolly lot, often singing as they travelled. They
seemed large people and gave some of the boys cigarette cards. I have
several cigarette cards that my Dad sent to me from Greece. One of the
series is 'Nobilities' which were all the people concerned with the War.

I often wondered why my mother took me to Stowmarket on her bicycle on Armistice Day. There are photos of the crowds in the Market Place in Stowmarket and I realise now that they went there to make sure the rumours of the end of the War were true since they had no newspapers up here. I remember on Armistice Day soldiers going through, singing on an omnibus, and they wore the hats worn by the Anzacs. When the first bombs fell in the last War and the pheasants 'cocked up' it reminded me of the time in the Great War when the Zepps came over and the pheasants gave that same call. I cannot imitate it (but he tries - oh dear!). We had a kitchen range with a small boiler with a tap on one side; the oven was on the other and it was quite a tricky job pouring the water into the tank without spilling it on the hot stove top. There was a rack up above the stove for airing clothes. Every morning the fire had to be raked out, relit before the kettle could be boiled.

Squire Pettiward from Finborough Hall used to visit the School. In his later years he rode around wearing a cap on a very large grey horse, asked questions such as: "If you were travelling along and came to the crossroads and the sign was knocked down, how would you know which way to take ?" I will leave you to decide!

The first car I saw in the village was a Trojan which looked as though it had solid wheels. It was driven by Dr Hansfield, but in 1920 I went to Bury St Edmunds in, I think, a Ford T8. One of the great events in Stowmarket used to be Hospital Sunday when a parade took place. There were the Oddfellows, the Foresters, the Salvation Army and many other organisations. I remember when I was about 14 mother gave me £4 to buy my own suit. At that time clothing from Russia was in the shops. Very pleased with myself I bought two suits and had some change. Oh, my mother was dismayed! They were quite coarsely woven, but I managed to keep them and they wore extremely well. Samuel Pluck's was also the entrance to the Corn Hall. That was burned out. It was replaced by another Bank.

During unemployment the office, which was where Knights office has been, had a small space to talk through with a shutter that came down, and on one occasion a Mr Dadley (who was the clerk there for the office on the pay day, because of increasing numbers had run out of cash. Of course there were some angry remarks and then he just slammed down the hatch and that was that. The office later removed to the Catholic Church. One could leave their cycle with a lamp and pump on, and sign on. We had to sign on three times a week. It would not have been wise to leave your bicycle anywhere else in the town with one pump on. They once asked for pea pickers: "Please bring a pail". Well, so many turned up with pails there were too many to get on the lorry and it had to be restricted to farm workers only. Of course, during this period a lot of rabbits and game disappeared. Farmers put hens out for grain on the stubble. They lost birds. The method was to split up into three parties; one party with a dog to attract the farmer, leaving the others well under cover to take what was available. There was a rumour that I heard that one farmer

chained his dog to the fowl but in the field, but next morning the hens and the dog were missing! There were also Empire shopping weeks, finishing with a dance in the Drill Hall. Oh, that was great fun. I remember there was Bob Challis. He used to play the saxophone and walk down amongst the crowd. I thought that was wonderful!

The Silk Works gave employment on shift work, but it polluted the river. Animals were killed and poultry at Needham Market. The water was a dark brown all the way to Ipswich and the stench could be detected miles away. But, of course, those earning good money working there were quite prepared to suffer, but when the Government changed the tariff on artificial silk it just closed and the second part of the factory, where Munton & Fison now is, was never used to full capacity. Some of the machinery there was transported to Bombay.

I also remember when the bailiffs went to New Bells Farm, Haughley. There were shotguns there that morning going off all round. It was calling all farmers to go and help stop the bailiffs. This was because of the non-payment of tithes which was a great controversial subject in those days. A lot of men at that time were leaving for the Colonies and one of them was going to Australia. His friends walked with him to Haughley Station and then they took the train back to Stowmarket as he had never been on a train before-, and a 'young lad, next door, went to Canada, and when he returned he was whistling a song (here Dick whistles). Eighteen months later it became popular over here: "I'm singing in the rain, just singing in the rain"

I used to cycle from Hatfield where I eventually worked in the aircraft industry, and I was quite proud of the accomplishment until Mr Brett, next door, told me that in 1912, after a rail strike, he was sacked, sent his wife home by rail with goods, and walked back in three days. In 1924, just before I went to the Scout Jamboree at the Wembley Exhibition, I made my first crystal set. I saw it in a book and I got the parts from Brabham, I think it was, in London, but the address was "Next door to Dirty Dick's". Mother wouldn't have it in the house; it had to be in the shed as it was thought dangerous for the house. But, with headphones put in a pudding basin, two pals and myself heard the first broadcast football Cup Tie. In 1926. I made a two-valve set and then I found out I must have a licence. I should have had before !

There was a Casual Ward at Stow Lodge. Tickets had to be obtained in Bury Street, I think, before 6 but admission in summer was not until 8 and there would be quite a gathering outside the porter's lodge. I once saw two people (lads) busking in the Market Place with a guitar, singing: "We ain't got a barrel of money, maybe we're ragged and funny". Later I saw them outside the Lodge and I found out that they were really undergraduates. The conversation outside the Porter's Lodge was most intelligent and interesting. Most seemed to know the Continent well. Perhaps some of them were old soldiers. There was also local characters.

There was one I remember, old Alie Sloper. He would accost you on the road and say: "If only I had a shilling, boy, I wouldn't have to spend my night in that old spike". The shilling you handed over to him, of course, usually went on the drink! On one of the postcards for 1902 there's an apology to my mother for "not seeing you on Sunday but will see you on Wednesday." Cor, the post was good then, wasn't it ? At Wembley I saw the Prince of Wales sitting on a horse made in butter. It fascinated me very much. Of course, being in the Scouts was a great thing. This was one of my first big outings and Scouting was very good for me.

Frances: A week has now passed and once again I am sitting in the old armchair that has been standing here for 74 years. The snow has now thawed and there are clusters of aconites in the garden.

Dick: Do you know, when I plugged that gadget of yours in the electric I must have switched off the heating. You must have been 'fraun to cold, gel'.

Frances: You were going to tell me about your Dad.

Dick: Yes. Dad worked here for thirteen years at the Forge. They used to shoe wheels as well as the horses. Dad made the iron band to form the tyre, my uncle the wooden hub, spokes and wooden rim. It was laid on an iron plate about an inch thick with a hole for the hub. The edge of the rim rested on the plate. The rim would be heated separately, a circular guard put round and shavings and wood put in to make a real good fire. When it was heated all the way round it was lifted with tongs onto the wheel and then fitted over the wood rim. Immediately it had to have water poured on to prevent the wood catching light. Oh, that was great fun, with getting the can and pouring the water on, making it splash and sizzle. I don't expect children would be allowed to do this kind of thing nowadays. As the rim cooled it contracted and held tight to the wooden wheel. Dad worked with a great character, dark, bearded Mr Birch. He had a reputation of poaching and I think this concerned mother. I was once pointed out to him in later years when he had moved away to Bacton and I was pleased when he said: "Oh, you're Jack's boy are ye ? Oh, you're a real chip off the old block, arn't ye ?" Birch, of course, was a great practical joker. When Dad first started he sent them out to do a job at Haughley Bushes and he said: "Oh, you'd better take those big hammers (I believe one weighed 14-lbs.) When Dad got there a tack hammer would have done! I really only remember Dad sitting in the chair you are in. He was in uniform and he brought home a toy clockwork mouse for me. In a copybook of Dad's wonderful handwriting there is a letter to the Commander, Army Ordinance Corps. "Sir, in answer to your advertisement in Reynolds, Sunday, would you please send particulars for enlistment as a blacksmith. I am now engaged at a County blacksmith's shop and would like to be doing something for the country on home service." Poor Dad ! Home service ! Of course he was getting 17 shillings a week and in the Forces it meant 27 shillings. It is quite apparent that my parents were having

quite a hard struggle to keep things going.

Dad died of pneumonia in Salonika after the Armistice. Many died from October 1918 onwards. Of the 1,963 buried in the Mikra Cemetery in Salonika, 292 of them died of pneumonia and many others died of other sicknesses. I made enquiries and I found out that Dad's hospital, a tent, was moved three times. You see, after the Armistice the theme was to rush and get them home for Christmas. In consequence many never returned. My mother received the news on Christmas Day. There are many nurses, too, buried in the cemetery. My mother always wanted to visit and in about 1926 a pilgrimage was advertised. Mother even bought sunglasses as advice given her. Things dragged, so I asked my Scoutmaster about it. He said: "Write to John Bull." It was a weekly magazine - a Mr Bottomly started it, I think. They knew nothing wrong about the organisation. I think it was a Reverend Molyneux. Any rate, later we had a refund and apologies. They just couldn't get enough to fill the ship taking them over. I had been in most EEC countries, but never Greece, but it wasn't until mother died that I felt I had a duty to go.

Of course, I worked in the aircraft industry over 20 years and flew in the Moth Minor with John Cunningham - they called him 'Cat's Eyes' (- he was a night fighter). I enjoyed the open cockpit, but I refused the offer to fly in the Comet and I do not fly any more. My old designer used to say to me: "Have a look round the plane, will you ?" I used to reply: "It's all been inspected." He used to say: "Yes, I know, but you can have a look. I should feel happier." Nowadays I feel the same, so I went by train to Greece - two and a half days. Oh, it was grand, all the way down the Rhine, across the plains of Yugoslavia. The cemetery is beautifully kept; a great Cross at one end and a Memorial at the other. Trees and flowers. The impact of being at my father's grave made a great effect on me because I had a grandson who was the same age as he was when he died. It altered my outlook on life and every day is now a bonus. Dad was an energetic lad. Mother often told me of his escapades and I tried to emulate him to some extent.

When we moved from Halfway House to Sparrows Nest my great grandfather had installed a speaking tube from the scullery to the bedroom. Dad crept down at midnight and blew the whistle but Grandad wasn't pleased. There was a bath and a flush toilet upstairs. You had to take the hot water up to wash, but I think the toilet had a large tank and you pumped a supply of water from the scullery. It may also have collected rain water from the slated roof.

Maybe I should tell you more about the doubtful side of school life. Arthur, a strong lad, lived in Northfield Wood, where also lived "titfer old Francis" who made brushes and put your initials in a different colour hair in the brush to match the border. Arthur and Stanley - a podgy lad - had a fight. Now Stan didn't stand a chance so he grabbed Arthur's fingers and they were rubbing knuckles against the wall to see who could

take it the longest. Although we sat boy/girl, boy/girl around the classes, six to a desk, we shared our reading books. In winter you could sit close for warmth as there was only one fireplace covered by a guard and the teacher's desk immediately in front. But I can't remember that it was ever too cold, although the draught came from the doors and they were kept shut. One day Arthur should have had the cane, but he grabbed it and snapped it and broke it in half. The Governors called two boys to help her but, of course, they knew Arthur and so they didn't press forward very quickly and Arthur ran out. He then threw clods of earth through the window, rattled with a long stick on the window and generally disturbed everyone. He realised the teacher was not in the class at one point, so he opened the boys' porch door, looked round the door, saying to the class: "Where is she?" He did not know that the Rector, Holt-Newell had been alerted and was behind him. Reverend kneed Arthur up the backside, sent him sprawling into the room, but he quickly ran out of the girls' porch. He wasn't at school for some days, then he was brought to the school by three men, laid downwards across the teacher's desk, bottom bared and a good whacking or two - and Arthur behaved in future.

If we went in the Infants' Room for lunch we had to stay 30 minutes, so we older boys sat in the long open shed at the bottom of the playground on a long seat for our dinner. Then we could play more football. We did, at one time, have a meadow which is now Stearn Drive and we played football, but we had hockey posts because the Miss Thurlows played hockey there. So we had much smaller posts than the football ones. We played marbles, hopscotch, touch, and three or four bent down as for leapfrog but in a line, the first one with his head against the wall. Now the other side had to leap as far along the line as possible. When all were on the others' backs they would call out: "Olliwink, Olliwink, All over, All over", thus claiming a victory if no-one had touched the ground.

The playgrounds were separated by buildings and a wall with a door to get through the girls' playground to the gardens. When the boys went out to work on the plots they purposely left the door unlocked. Then at playtime there would be what we would call "an attack". A boy would be pushed into the girls' playground and they would pummel him. Other boys, looking through the keyhole, at the right moment would open the door and shout: "To the rescue". Sometimes a cheeky girl would get pushed into the boys' playground, but was soon released. On one occasion one of her boots were unbuttoned and tossed over the wall. It hit my young cousin on the head. The other cousin never joined in this horseplay and I thought she might report it, but all was well. We had a Miss Rivers, who wore specs and used a pointer to rap your knuckles. I won a shilling once for drawing a cup and saucer. It was a competition from Eglets: Brooke Bond Tea. At home I played draughts, holman, and of course in the garden I had bows and arrows. I was not allowed to leave the garden without permission if I wanted to play cricket or quoits or football. There were two quoit beds on Harleston Green and one at the church at Shelland.

Maybe I should mention some of the locality. The row of six houses - two sets of three. I remember one lot were thatched. They have been called Regency Row. Dividing the Greens, Harleston and Shetland, there used to be a gate which we called Shelland Gate, which was across the road. Shelland Church, the Church of St Charles the Martyr, was privately owned until 1936. One house has disappeared. It was adjoining what is called the glebe land, and so has the clay house not far from Shelland Church where a Captain Bogus used to sell sweets. We also had a dear old fellow we used to call 'Perk'. He was almost blind and he used to look after the cows on the Greens and see that they did not stray.

There are not many of the stones of the Marion Martyrs left on Rush Green. The farm building at Harleston Hall was struck by lightning one Sunday afternoon while people were sheltering. A lot of the stock was saved but the building was gutted. Then there was fox hunting. That was fairly frequent, not that the tenant farmers enjoyed having their crops trampled on. Mother told me there had been stag hunting. They released the stag from the box and chased it. One day one came across the fields, jumped the hedge not knowing of the large pond in our garden. They dragged it out with ropes as it was partly in the mud, the hounds round it all the time. My mother was very upset.

We always had Old Moore's Almanac. Oh, what an interesting book wasn't it ? Full of data, such as the gestation period of goats, etc. Then for books we had the Christian Herald, Suffolk Mercury and later on the News of the World and The People; and then we had large Almanacs mainly, I think, from the International, and of course they were such lovely pictures it was a pity to spoil them. So, all round in everybody's ?peddy was last year's Almanac and, just to keep up with the times, I have got a Queen's calendar of 1981 in mine. Mother also used to read the Home Notes, but I got music that had come from Horner's Penny Stories, and also Golden Hours, and in one of them there is a Christmas hymn written by the Czar of Russia.

The farm buildings of Haughley Bushes - which was a shed, cart shed with a granary over the top, a large barn with two double entrances and the stables, a horse yard, piggery and netters with the cattle shed, have now all been demolished. When Dad was with us we kept a sow and I have got a book and the cost of keeping in 1913 was given:

September 4th 4/-d.,

October 6th 5/9d.,

November 8th 7/6d.,

December 31st 7/6d.

Then there was chicken food. 21 chickens hatched April 15th 1930; 2 boxes of oats 1/-d., a half a stone of Growchick 6d.; half a stone of Fowl Rice 1/-d.; 1-1/2 stone 2/3d.

Account for the first quarter cost of keeping L1.18.11d. Money for eggs L2.7.0d. 670 eggs laid.

We were taught to bud and graft at school by someone from Notcutts of Woodbridge, who were Seed Merchants. When I left school at 14 I was given a leaflet: "Boy JE171" and "173" and a card "JE179" to visit the Juvenile Employment Bureau at the Senior Sea School, Stowmarket, 1 p.m. - 4 p.m. and 9 a.m. to 12 noon Fridays. The 171 says: "As your son is leaving soon could you attend ". Then there is a blank because it was never filled in though the bottom was signed by the teacher. It stresses three points: (1) Occupation, (2) Importance of continued education, and (3) The use of the Juvenile Employment Bureau. JE173: "To a boy about to leave School - Think what you want to be. Do not think about your wages at the start. Go to the Bureau. When you have a job do your best to keep it. It is very important that you should keep up with your education. Always do your work to the best of your ability. Up to 18 go to the Bureau." The only job I was ever offered was that of a "backers boy" (back house boy) and it was November before I found work.

Frances: Two weeks have now passed. Dick, you mentioned before about Scouting and how it had affected your life. Perhaps you could tell us some more.

Dick: Yes. Despite the fact that from 1920 onwards mother bought me a copy of The Scout each week, I actually loved the characters in the stories. Why, I even had my own Bungalow Troop and I even made some colours for them. It was not until 1923 I was allowed to join Finborough Scouts. One of the unusual things we did was to swing Indian clubs. Oh, it was great fun. Our Headquarters was in the stables of Finborough Hall, in the harness room and the carriage room, and when we first started there was an odd carriage still there. My Scouter left for Australia so I then joined the Stowmarket Troop and was soon in their Concert Party, and later on I became their Troop Leader. Mr Roy Cook started the Troop again at Finborough so I went back to assist and stayed until I had to go to work away. I took a Wolf Cub Pack to Salbouse Broad when the Chief Scout, Baden Powell, was there. It was a great day. I took part in many County Shield camps and was initiated as a Rover Scout. I also cycled up to Arrows Park Jamboree in 1929. I am afraid I never won many badges. I was always too busy camping and doing other things. One was the 'Laundryman'. I patched, washed, ironed a shirt, and then took it to the teacher at school to pass. Unfortunately she showed it to the girls and praised the needle-work. I was promptly called a sissy ! The 'Rescuers' badge too. I held my Scoutmaster under the water too long, but I had been told that that was the treatment for a person who insisted on struggling. Of course, the more he struggled the further down I pushed him. I did not get the badge ! I also walked to Bulmer for a 'Hiking' badge. Every Empire Day at school we had the ceremony of raising the Union Jack at the flagpole that was by the entrance to the school.

Stowmarket - mother only visited once a week on her bicycle as there were deliveries of bread, meat, ironmongery, paraffin, oil, soap, brushes, carpets, etc. Palmers of Haughley had a bread round till fairly recently. The grocery was delivered by the International Stores or the Co-op

Stores, so not much of what was happening in Stowmarket was really known in the country. The men fetched the water from the pump or well in the evening, after they had finished their work and had their meal, and they more or less timed it so that they arrived together for a chat and a smoke, and I think that was then that the news - or gossip if you like - of the village and locality went around.

Now, I thought I would like to work in engineering, so I went to the Bull Motors in Milton Road, which is now the Scout Hall and the Constitutional Club. I went to the Church end of Milton Road and asked for the Manager, and was gradually sent along the row of whirling machines and lathes

(Tape turned over. Frances: I am at the home of Mr Dick Pollard, which is The Bungalow, Shetland, Stowmarket. You were telling us about looking for a job in Stowmarket.)

and I finally came to the Manager. After my query he asked: "Where did you say you lived?" The Works was closing that week and most of the men had been sacked, and the rest of the men were shifted, I think it was up to Ipswich.

Ted Edwards, one of my Onehouse Voluntary School friends, came along one day. He said that two painters were wanted at the Suffolk Iron Foundry. Well, I was still a bit choosy and I wasn't too keen on splashing paint about for the rest of my life, but he said: "Come with me. You can always turn it down afterwards." So I went. I told a Mr Lewin that we were looking for work. After several questions and a little wait two foremen, Mr Bob Turner and Mr Bert Girling, were called. After a few more questions Bert said: "I'll take him," pointing to Ted, so that left me for Bob. Well, of course, at Works in those days you clocked in and out and we had a big Hayday clock. It had about 250 numbers and a little hole alongside, and you moved the pointer round, poked in the hole, a little bell rang and your time was registered at the back. What always fascinated me was when the men were leaving how regular that little bell went. Talk about unison. Ting, ting, ting, ting, ting; that meant that every time it tinged one man had passed by.

Ted went into the Fitting Shop, but he had to brush sand off castings that had come out of the foundry and then, when he found out the first week that two days' pay would be retained to allow for checking weekly wages, he soon gave up the job. I went on painting, household wringers, mangles, lawn markers, and clock golf sets. I also had to stick lead letters onto the brass plate, giving the names of the ironmongers who were buying the mangles. It was on the bridge on the mangle - they always had their name so I got to know nearly every ironmonger in the country. Also I had to go into the Pattern Shop, sweep up the shavings, tidy up the wood, varnish and paint patterns and core boxes different colours for identification. I soon was in the Pattern Shop all the while and I was given the opportunity to learn the trade of pattern making. I took on a correspondence course with. International Correspondence Schools. I think

it took about five years to complete: I was rather dilatory towards the end but eventually I got my Diploma. My wages at 14 were 9/3d., 15 10/9d., 16 12/9d. Of course then we had to pay a shilling or more for the National Health Insurance. We also had a fund for the Ipswich Hospital. I think it started at 2d. but went up to 3d. The full pattern maker's wage when I left was L2.14s.6d.

As lads we turned tennis posts. Some were just round ones, but others had a square top where the cage was and tapered off. "Goliath sets" they called them. They were very interesting to turn. We turned mangle rolls of sycamore and rock maple, and on one occasion I returned two rolls of lignum vitae - quite a job, that ! I also made some long rolls, 6 feet long 3 inches in diameter, tapering off with a little bobbin end, for the Silk Works when they first opened. They were made from poplar, but the timbers were so wet that, standing on the shavings all day, I got an awful cold and had to have a fortnight off. Hardly a recommendation for the timber. We also made boards for the household mangles, two boards and a tray for each mangle. The Foundry was at the edge of the town rubbish tip and people, during their lunch hour, would turn over the rubbish and look for cutlery or anything that had been thrown out by mistake, and in the Stores it was kept up by a Mr Ollie Parker. He was quite a character was Ollie. He could tell many a good story, but he had this box with all these oddments in, clocks, knives, forks and things, and really it would have been a treasure trove today.

Black sand was used for moulding in the Foundry, and the foreman - Mr Moreton - in the morning, walking along Prentice Road, would spot a fresh load of horse dung from the horses stabled there for the Malting and the Coal Yard. This had excellent binding properties for black sand, and on arrival he would shout out for the boy: "Hurry up with the barrer, fetch that lot in." There were two copelers, a small and a large one, working daily. We did a lot of work for Cromptons of Chelmsford; they later became Crompton Parkerson. There was one long strike in 1926 and then, of course, that followed with a lock-out. At this time there was only the boys and two carpenters in the shop. We heard a lot, too, of the troubles in Moscow. Metropolitan Vickers, I think, were doing the Underground and a lot of engineering work there, and British engineers were arrested and I think some were imprisoned and accused of spying, which was very unfortunate I thought. We were allowed to play bowls on the Green in the lunch hour until one boisterous lad bowled one into the river. When the "Queen Mary" - the ship - was stopped it in some way affected a lot of trade and we were at times very, very slack. We had several slack times and one of the latter ones Fortes of Sheffield were demolishing the Silk Works. Now some of the heads were lodging with our Charge Hand and so for a short time I worked with them. We build a crate of railway sleepers and lowered what I think was called a 9-ton cooling radiator onto it, onto a railway bogey so that it could travel right away.

The other day Radio Norfolk was talking about 'midget golf'. No-one

apparently could remember it. Well, as boys that was the only overtime we ever had. We made these and they were more like a bagatelle table, 3' x 6' and then hinged on was another 3' x 6', lined with green baize. They made six hazards for them and, of course, you had your putter and the ball, and we used to have some good fun with them and we used to practice a lot during the lunch time. Well, they opened up in Ipswich in - I think it was called Jolly Joytown - a kind of Amusement Arcade, and we lads used to hop on our bicycles on a Saturday afternoon and go up there and show just how good we were.

Then came the 'down'. I had more or less three years off and on. I did a lot of work on the farms. I built chicken huts and all that kind of thing, but at that time yo-yos came out. Well, I had a small lathe to turn wood on and I made quite a lot of these yo-yos and I gave them round as advertisements more or less. Then I bought a lot of string, some more paint, and was really going to start on production and make a fortune. Unfortunately, Woolworths brought a yo-yo out for 6d. Now yo-yos had been 2/6d. before that I was charging a shilling and 1/6d. but, you see, when Woolworths brought out the 6d. one, well, I never made my fortune - but we had a lot of string about for years !

Just before I had to go through the Means Test - I did eventually go through it and I was allocated 7/6d. per week to live on, and I was told - well, I didn't like that at all - that I should ask my grandfather for a job. Well, my grandfather was retired at that time. The only job he could have given me was a job in the garden and, quite honestly, I was very offended by this. Well, before I went for the Means Test I saw an alto saxophone in Sneezums in Ipswich. Well, of course, you didn't have to have any money when you went on the Means Test, so I took all the money I had, which was £14.0.0., and I bought the saxophone. Now I had already a fifty-shilling 'G' banjo - I had taken the 'G' string off and turned it into a tenor banjo - and four of us lads, Ron Airey on the piano, Percy Steward on violin, Charlie Jacobs from Elmswell on drums, me on the sax and banjo, formed a dance band. After a fortnight's debate - or, you might even call it, an argument - under pressure from Ron we called the band the 'White Blackbirds'. We had a black pennant with a white blackbird in full song on. And years after I saw of a Court case where, because the name was in some way copyrighted, there was a terrific fine. It was a good job we never became famous! We played as far out as Thornham and Brettenham. This was during the Henry Hall period on the radio. One day I went to Clacton - I cycled down - to a Dance Band contest. It was won by Claud Bampton's Bandits. Now I believe Claud Bampton went to Italy as their Henry Hall, but when the War came - I don't know. I never heard anything more, anyway.

Before the event, on the beach I saw a chap who worked at the Foundry. He said: "Why don't you come and work down here, they're rebuilding the Blue Lagoon Ballroom?" - where Teddy Dodds and his Band played. Well, I went along and I started work down there, and then afterwards I helped to

build a small Zoo on the pier, and then later on I was in charge of it. From another cage - not one I built - the monkeys escaped and I spent quite a fortnight making cages to catch them with bananas. This was all done under the pier. I had a fair success but unfortunately, of course, due to exposure some of the little creatures died.

Through this contact with Mr Billy Butlin and his uncle, Bernard Hill - who was a great character too, I went to help lay out Skegness Holiday Camp. As you see, I am telling you this because I never did get a job with a straight-forward application. In fact, later in life after months of preliminary interviews I waited for the final decision for two months, having been told the job was good as mine. The firm then had some financial difficulty and cancelled the project, so maybe I was lucky after all. I was on my way to Mamby, where an aerodrome was being built for the RAF, when I had a letter from De Havillands of Hatfield saying if I could start on Monday I could have a job. Well, fortunately I had left my other job so I travelled down to Hatfield on Sunday, reported 8 a.m. on Monday. At first I couldn't get past the Police box; then no-one seemed to know anything about me or what I was supposed to do. At 10 o'clock I got an interview. At 11.30 I reached my destination which was the Experimental Department. So strange was everything that I was sure I wouldn't be there long, so I asked my friend at Skegness to let the people know at Mamby that I had been delayed so at least I should still have a job. To my surprise I was asked to work on the Saturday afternoon and my career in aircraft had started. Well, I was so pleased about this I cycled home to Suffolk that weekend. I called on my pal at Sudbury and told him all the story. I arrived home at 3 o'clock on Sunday morning. Of course I had to leave at 3 in the afternoon to get back to Hatfield - that was a turn round of 150 miles, but I thought it was worth it. Well, the War came along and of course I was in a reserve occupation. Building small aircraft was great fun. I spent a long time on the Moth Minor and you built it from scratch more or less and it was just wonderful, but after the War jobs became more tedious and, of course, aircraft were made of metal and I felt the soul had gone out of aircraft. One way and another I worked on the Comet aircraft for nearly ten years. I felt that the best of aircraft days were over, so I went back to pattern making.

Now, starting work. The change from school to work was a terrific one. At school we were always so much alike. We all went to Sunday School. Most of us went to Church and we were nearly all Church of England. Of course there were a few exceptions that didn't go to Church and they were a little bit aloof from the others, but we were all in the same villages more or less and, well, there wasn't much difference. Work was predominantly a male - well you can't really say 'sanctuary' - sanctum and of course it was all ages. Hearing married men telling of their family life and then continually teasing the young men about their marriage, and, of course, at times there was some very hard swearing. As the years went by I found that the tougher type of men who did the really hard work were really the most sincere, and they gave you hell if they

approved of you. It was the more subtly educated types who put on a face who then told tales about you behind your back.

Of course the toilet facilities were quite shocking and very primitive. A long 12 inch pipe, 5 apartments (?compartments), 5 circular holes in the pipe, two blocks of wood on the side of the hole. It was flushed in one flush about every 15 or 20 minutes. The old stagers who smoked -well, of course, there was plenty of newspaper about - would light the newspaper just as the flush commenced. I, soon learned to discipline myself. Of course at this time, even in Ipswich, you had to hand in a tally every time you went to the toilet, and even when I went to de Havilland in Hatfield in 1936 - although they were wonderful toilets, they were only built in 1935 - you had to give your name to the attendant on entry and on exit. Of course, this all disappeared during the War.

There were no such things as pin-ups or anything like that allowed, other than general notices, but occasionally a picture from Paris Life or some magazine would be shown around. I remember one very striking one of Betty Balfour in her cabaret suit. Now, of course, I took my lunch with me every day, and one night mother opened my bag to pack my lunch for tomorrow and found Betty's picture with numerous writings on it. Explanations ? Well, I couldn't honestly say it was the first time I had seen it, could I ? But the crowd at work thought it was the greatest joke of all.

Thursday, market day, we quickly ate our sandwiches, went up to the market, round the cattle pen, then the stalls, saw the rock-making - chaps slinging the sticky mass onto a large hook at the end of the stall and mixing it with all the colours. Oh yes, rock was wonderful. Then there was a chap in a straight jacket, chained up and padlocked, put into a large sack and, after a bit of wriggling and heaving, he releases himself and brings a cap round for the collection. A chap picks up a piece of board, breaks the foot off an eggcup, attaches a wire with a nail to the end of the board, strings it over their eggcup, winds the wire round a bent nail and then puts the nail in the other end of the board and then tightens the wire. He then proceeds to play all the latest tunes, even pieces from operas, even asks for requests, then sells the wonderful special music wire. A complete musical instrument for only one shilling It turned out to be ordinary piano wire - probably oddments from a piano manufacturer. We always bought rock and, in fact, we had a swear box in the shop and each week it was emptied to pay for the rock. There was a young man who had been to University, but he was not quite tall enough or quite old enough to go into the Metropolitan Police which was his desire, so he was working as a shop labourer. Every wile and trick was used to get him to swear and he nearly always paid for the rock. Now, when you turn wood you can adjust your cutter or your gouge at different angles so that the shavings can either keep near or you can throw them yards away. Well, no sooner had he swept up than there was a stream of shavings spread all over the shop. He had to take the shavings

down to what was the town refuse heap and in the autumn when apples were about and the evenings dark a store of rotten apples would be made and as he came along with the barrow a stream of rotten apples thrown. We lads, of course, quickly turned back to the shop - so that we wouldn't be missed - along the river path and got into the shop and were working gaily when he came back. Unfortunately one evening he had had enough of rotten apples, so he set fire to the shavings in the barrow before reaching the danger area and the tipping area. Now this was very close to the pattern stores where there were many valuable patterns of wood. Alas, we had already seen the foundry foreman in the vicinity so we quickly made ourselves scarce, but the poor lad had to conjure up such a tale that someone had been throwing stones at him in the dark.

Frances: It is now about a fortnight later. The sun is shining through the window and in the garden lots of primroses and daffodils and snowdrops are growing all over the place. It looks lovely. Dick, did you say that Catherine Parr lived in Shelland ?

Dick: (in Suffolk dialect) Yeah, but that was afore moi toime. Jest fancy, if Oi'd a-played ring o' roses with Catherine the whole history of England might have been altered !"

I haven't been able to find just where she stayed in Shelland. In true Suffolk fashion Shelland Hall is in Rattlesden. Rockylls Hall is moated and I think it was once called a 'manor', and she stayed at "the manor'. Now New Farm is also moated, but, of course, that was New Farm in 1850 before my grandmother went to live there. The Devereuxs owned Shelland. He was made Earl of Essex by Queen Elizabeth and then later she beheaded him. OOH! I have just thought; you are not thinking of getting Roy Eldridge to behead me when I have finished this, are you ?

A clay house 200 yards to the west of the Church has now disappeared. In the 20's fowls were kept in it. I was told that a Captain Bogus lived there and that he sold sweets. (Dick laughs.) There doesn't seem to be much in the way of customers around there, but the thatched house opposite which has recently been very well renovated, the family of Armstrongs lived. The twins died at birth, but there were thirteen others in the family. When I asked one of them how his mother ever fed them all he said: "Well, we older ones used to dip the bread in the milk for the littl'uns" so breakfast in those days was cereal and milk as it is today. Mr Robert Armstrong played the barrel organ in Shetland Church for over fifty years and his son, Sidney, continued after that. Two of the sons went to Australia, became farmers and they actually died out there. In the 20's the Armstrongs farmed a small holding at Shelland, Haughley Bushes farm, the farm at Haughley New Street, Fen Farm at Buxhall, and a son took on adjoining farm, but today 'Armstrong' is a name you hardly hear in farming. Near New Farm is a piece of glebe land that was for allotments, and the small thatched cottage adjoining has now disappeared.

Church Lane was used by horse and cart , but a decision was made by the Council to leave Church Lane and tarmac Cutlers Lane, or, as we used to know it, Dasseks Lane. They run almost parallel, although some distance away from each other. Church Lane over the years became full of undergrowth, even trees, but recently the Manpower Services have cleared it. It is now a pleasant walk. At Haughley Corner on Harleston Green two houses which were within a yard of the road have disappeared. In the centre of the road junction was a triangle with a lime tree in the centre. The post box was put there, but now it has all been removed, as has the stable which was opposite, and the gardens now have six Council houses. I think they were built in '58. The barn and the tall willow tree have gone, and the circular ponds, surrounded by a very neatly cut hawthorn hedge and a little wicker gate, has all now been filled in. Cecil, a little bit of a lad in the district, used to go over there, open the gate and, with a stick, rile up the water. Well, of course, that riled George who had got to drink the water. He chased him across the Green, old as he was, eventually caught him and, although he had only got a few old teeth left, he picked him up, bit his bottom and shook him as a dog would a rat. Cecil didn't go to the pond again

The nearby once-thatched cottage - you could buy cherries when they were in season - now only has one front door. It used to have two doors, which would suggest that - although the house is small - two families once lived there. Shelland Green hasn't changed much in character. Of course trees have grown up, they have died and been cut down. Hedges have disappeared and a pond - which used to be used for drinking and had a kingfisher - hasn't much water now. Of course this applies to all of Suffolk really. All the gates have disappeared from around the fields. Every field had a hedge and a gate in those days. The 100-foot well nearby has now been covered over and I have an idea that some modern rubbish, such as TV sets, have been dropped down it. Best place for them ! Harleston Green is now regularly mowed so no longer does the bee orchid, the purple orchid, ling or the spiny rest harrow grow there. The guelder rose and the spindle in the hedge has been uprooted but, though aged, the limes planted by a friend of Squire Roger Petteward are still adding to the Green's beauty despite the Green's bye-laws notices standing alongside them. The quoit beds no longer exist, nor does one hear the call of the snipe or see the green woodpecker, although on a damp November day a kingfisher visits the pond for an hour or so. There are all the little hens' huts with the faggots around and wood for kindling -they have all been cleaned up. We do not get the odd goat trying to get through the hedge nowadays. We do not see a White Wyandot, a Leghorn, a Light Sussex, a Rhode Island Red or a lovely Buff Orpington cockerel nowadays. No longer do the horses and wagons make their way to the forge. For some years there were two blackbirds in the district with quite a number of white feathers - albinos, of course.

Finborough Park was the scene of many events in the past, and Buxhall

Vale once had swimming events at a fete. Three entered; Squire Petteward's son, Rector Copinger-Hill's son and I. We had a barrel race and diving. Oh, I did a beautiful flat smack and I showered everyone. Grandfather said: "Credit to you my boy", but my pals did not think so. Finborough had a Flower Show and Sports. Squire's son used to join in. There was also Horse Shows and a cart horse race which was a real sight. When they fully expressed themselves it was noisy too. I cannot recall what it was but I think it was in aid of the hospital when the Cavalry demonstrated and the Lancers, with their turbans, did tent pegging. A soldier with a mallet starts to knock a tent peg in the ground. The Lancer gallops up, picks the tent peg from between his legs - a dangerous looking procedure. The Artillery also dashed around with their gun carriages and guns. Of course, during the Great War Finborough Hall was a hospital. I remember the peaked caps and the blue uniforms of the soldiers.

Shelland Church, Charles the Martyr, was privately owned until 1936. There is a pond in a field nearby called Bastards, and as a youngster I was told a steam traction engine had backed into it while ploughing and was never recovered, but on looking at that muddy water now it is hard to believe. But there is something uncanny, a little bit eerie, about the pond. In fact, we used to swim regularly in one only a half a mile away but I never did see anyone swimming in this pond. There seemed to be more individual characters in those days. Take Ginka Ruddock who lived three doors away. Said he never had a clock, but he went by dead on time to work at the farm every morning. I always suspected a large pocket watch in those spacious corduroy pockets. In those days we relied on Stow Works' hooter or the Finborough stable clock for the correct time. Looking across in that direction was Clovers' Buxhall windmill. Mr Clover lent a lorry to take the Onehouse & Harleston Choir to Felixstowe. Benches were just placed in rows to sit on. We made Whitton Hill all right, but the men had to help push the lorry up Garrison Hill at Felixstowe. We had tea upstairs with the balcony at the then Empire Cafe. Later it was called the Galleon.

When Ginka's (Jinka's) daughter got wed before leaving for Canada we had our last rough band. The lads collected old tins, put stones in them or banged them - anything that would make a noise, then sang songs outside until being asked to have a drink and toast the bride. Ginka could always tell a good story. Take bindweed, for instance: "Yes", he would say, "I was at the bottom of a 120-foot well and the bindweed was thicker there than it was on the top." In the opposite direction, "Yes, I climbed to the top of a tree - it was a tall tree in Woolpit - and I could see the folk walking up the Cornhill in Ipswich."

Fred Wright worked for Mr Gooding, a plumber in Stowmarket - the building was where Newsteads' is now, just alongside the Reform Church. Mr Gooding had a transmitting wireless set and he also sold one or two odd parts for wireless, and Fred built an Anglo-American Six, to which was added a

six-valve amplifier. I should think that was about 1926. Of course, you had to stay up till the early hours in the morning to catch any USA broadcasting. Of course I had to be content with my crystal set with its 35 circuits.

My mother read the Bible before prayers and we had a Bible reading each day at School. Any chapters left out by our teacher we read at the first opportunity, such as Samuel Book II Chapter 13 (laughs) so we had a fair knowledge of the Bible.

We had a small library in the Church Room, but I was so often told: "The book you have chosen is not really suitable for you." I read "Robin Hood", "Black Beauty", "Scarlet Pimpernel", Zane Grey, and later Marie Corelli's books were of great interest, particularly "Barrabas" and "The Treasure of Heaven". A millionaire, towards the end of his life's end, realises he had never had a real friend. He goes out as a tramp and finds real friendship rather too late. I read "Pepys' Diary; Ernest Raymond's "Tell England" fascinated me at the time, but "His Family That Was" became my favourite. It posed the query of what the young man would do when he came back from the war. At 19 I bought a Belgian author - "Nature of Love" by Manuel Burl. God was love. Love was being bewitched. Love was sex. It approached love from every angle, but, apart from the natural love towards one's children, it is a problem I don't think I ever solved. I liked Maurice Walsh. His "Key above the Door" I thought was a wonderful story, and then there is "The Small Dark Man" and "While Rivers Run". A little poem from "While Rivers Run":

If I had a singing bird
And a hound that knew I was God,
And a rose bush and a berry bush
And shamrock in the green sod;
And a little small house
and a red apple tree
I would thank God Almighty
who was good to me.

Now, I don't keep a hound because I am not really fond of domestic pets, but I have got a Grieve Beeston tree, a Dr Hervey tree, I have got the berry bush, the shamrock and the small house, and God is good to me.

Tolstoy's "War and Peace" I read after many years. I read it when the BBC put it on in twelve parts. I read each part before the production. Shakespeare and Bernard Shaw - I have fully explored them. I saw "Othello" at Stratford-on-Avon and Shaw's "Joan of Arc" in 1936 by a local company at Welwyn Garden City. The story went round that Shaw - who only lived two miles away in nearby Ayot - was invited to attend by a very enterprising secretary. Back came the answer: "I have seen it many times and I could produce it myself if I particularly wanted to see it." I saw Shaw one day. He was sitting on the stile by the 'Waggoners' where

you cross the A1 to go to Ayot Green. Naturally I wanted to have a chat with the great man. "Good afternoon, Sir, wonderful afternoon, isn't it?" "Is it?" I didn't get very far, did I ? Every year at Shaw's Corner, after his death, on his birthday or very near it, one of his plays was produced and I saw several, sitting out there on the lawn with a little old circular but you could turn round where he wrote some of his last plays just over on the side of the garden.

At Colchester I saw Josie Collins in "The Maid of the Mountains" - 'What 'ere befall I still recall..' and also xylophonist Teddy Brown using his ten hammers and tremendous girth to great effect. The Wolsey Pageant June 23/28 1930 was a great event in Christchurch Park, and the Hippodrome gave us that lovely Devonian play "The Farmer's Wife", and I took Mother to see R C Sheriff's "Journey's End". It was a tale of the trenches during the War. "The Singing Fool" came to the Central Cinema - one of the earliest 'talkies' - and it brought tears to many, but, of course, I was singing "I don't mind the grey skies, you make them blue, Sonny Boy". At Stowmarket Picture House I saw "Ben Hur", and everyone seemed to go to see "The Ten Commandments". I also saw Bill Cody (Buffalo Bill with his long hair) at the Fair in the Duke's Meadow. Apart from all the wonderful shooting, daggers were thrown all round a young lady - gave us all nervous fits ! Flower Shows and Sports were held in lots of villages, also grass track cycle racing. I did quite a lot of this all round, and the Horne Brothers and the Marten Brothers, cyclists, came from as far as Cambridge to have a real tussle. The Cricket Meadow - now disappearing - held an annual meeting.

When living at Little Finborough Hall my mother told me of a family wedding at the church. The Parson had to come from Great Finborough. He didn't arrive, so the Best Man walked over to see what had happened. Parson had forgotten. He jumped on his horse and got to the church just in time as a wedding then was not legal after 3 p.m. The wedding was over when the poor Best Man got back.

Electricity came to us on the 19th August 1948. For wiring four one-way lighting points, 2 5-amp plugs and installing a cooker - £16.5.0. A Retemp Cooker - £23.27.3. That is the one in the corner. The water did not come along until January 1956. For a couple of taps or so and some polythene piping the Water Service (Mr Kerridge of Violet Hill, Stowmarket) charged us £7.14.0.

On Friday, December 16 1932 a concert was held at Great Finborough. The Chairman was the Rev. Copinger Hill of Buxhall, the Vice Chairman Captain Stephenson who lived almost opposite the "Chestnut' public house. It was in aid of the Finborough and Buxhall Unemployed Christmas Fund. It commenced with "Just a song at twilight, when the lights are low...", then the comedian sang "Nobody noticed me...". Displays by the Finborough Scouts (I was one of them) and then the Buxhall bell-ringers rang the changes. We had a few more sketches and songs and then, of course, "The

Green Eye of the Little Yellow God"!

In June 1929 Finborough Players presented "Midsummer Night's Dream" in a natural amphitheatre in the Park, very well-known people taking part - Miss Stella Petteward of Finborough Hall, the Rev. G V Vaughan Robinson of Onehouse. The Producer was Gwen Lalley.

When they were carting corn from a field a shock (or stook or sheath) was left in the field until it had been horse-raked. When the horse rakings had been removed they removed the shock or stook, and the folk could then start gleaning up the odd ears of grain. My mother once cleaned enough to give the chickens their evening meal throughout the winter. 1921 was the hottest summer of all despite its many thunderstorms, and Mr Stearn of Onehouse Hall, by working late into the last evening, completed his harvest in July. True the wagons may not have been unloaded until the day or two after, but the record was established, the fields were cleared. Oh, so different from some years when an odd crop had not even been harvested until October!

Christmas meant parties. Four family households plus Grandad's, each one trying to make the other's the best party. Oh, those wonderful feasts we had. Mother would be up till midnight two nights before the party, baking, then icing all the fancy cakes, making the trifles and jellies. How eight adults and nine children crowded into the small room today seems impossible. Grandad's party was a Sunday event so no games were played, but we had a very jovial evening. But at the others - the games we played ! Each one did their party piece, everyone trying to think up something different each year. At my Aunt Daisy's the adults, somewhere towards midnight, sat down to supper of cold rabbit and pork pie. Was there ever a more succulent dish, but how they managed it after all the other eats was amazing. My uncle, Bob Wilden, would sing: "The cat rushed up the chimney, the dog rushed up the spout, jumped into the cradle first but the baby slung it out. His wife she sought protection behind the carving knife, when the old man came home sober for the first time in his life." Oh, I only wish I could get the rest of that song; that's all I can remember. One year was: "When the moon comes over the mountain I'm alone with my mem'ries of you". If we sang that once we sang it a score times. There were years when I left the party on Christmas Day to do a turn with Mr Scotchmer's party at Stow Lodge. How different the scene and the setting. Dear, lovely old couples sitting holding hands and gazing at each other. It was a special concession to let the wife sit with her husband for this event. Mr Scotchmer would read a supposed love letter to Tommy Atkins, one of the bachelor residents, causing immense fun, before he rendered "Floral Dance" - big base drum, euphonium! At our last party in 1939 Meredith, my cousin, forecast it would be a long time before we would get together again. How true! We never have., The War

My mother wasn't really very fond of music, but occasionally she would sing a little piece of a song. In fact, somewhere back my Grandmother had

some connection - she was in service with a family somewhere in London and this family was a great friend of Sir Harry Lauder. She seemed as though she knew Harry Lauder very well. But now and again Mother would sing a little piece of a song. In fact, Tubby Welham (a singer in Stowmarket) and Albert Double - they used to go up to the Star Farm and they had a little sing-song, I think on the concertina. One of Mother's songs: "When the fields are white with daises and the roses bloom again return". Then, of course, there was "The Gypsy's Warning" - something about this, I think, one or two actors or singers or something - something happened to them in some way so it wasn't generally sung. It wasn't thought to be lucky to sing it. "Do not trust him, gentle lady, though his voice is soft and low, do not trust him gentle lady, hear the gypsy's warning too".

Your questionnaire asked about the fears I might have. I fear for my children and their children especially. Would that human beings could but see life as it really is and act accordingly in fellowship with one another. Nearing my 75th year, well death is inevitable. I do not fear it, but I am sure a lingering death would kill the very person that I am.

I can only think in terms of men - human beings, so resurrection is not compatible. My grandfather and I of the same age and my Dad through the folly of War a mere youth does not seem feasible. I fear men's greed, particularly monetary, will destroy even the civilisation that we have at present.

My grandmother, eating her bread and butter and cold potatoes and thoroughly enjoying them was far more discerning and happy person than the business woman or the modern housewife with all her washing machines and electrics. Soon I will be the part owner of a trident missile, but to give the unemployed the task of laying a sewer pipe outside my gate is far, far, too expensive! After all when the missile explodes why even the London sewers will be destroyed, so, I ask you, bor, yes boy, is it worth it? The A-bomb is far too small. It lacks real devastation. When we have one that with one swoop will really destroy all Europe - too late its significance will be realised. Plant life is back in Hiroshima. Though humanity may destroy itself the forces of nature will overcome just as long as in a million years the sun does not burn itself out

Dick Pollard
1975