

I WAS SIX YEARS OLD WHEN OUR FAMILY MOVED INTO EAST CLANDON and thirteen when we left. We lived in Hatchlands Lodge, at the entrance to Hatchlands estate. My father, Bert Hallett, was employed to work in the gardens and greenhouses at Hatchlands, where he was second in charge, under the head gardener, Mr Tremlett. Hatchlands Lodge was a "tied" cottage; our occupancy was counted as part of Dad's wages and was dependent upon the satisfactory performance of his duties.

There was no mains electricity in Hatchlands Lodge at first, but it was connected within a few years. Another improvement was the conversion of the outside bucket lavatory and the two adjoining sheds into a modern bathroom and flush toilet with access from inside the house and cesspit drainage. The men who did much of the finishing work were Tim Solly and Frank Carpenter, two permanent employees of the Hatchlands estate, who wheeled their tools and bags of plaster and cement to and from their storage area at Tunmore Farm in a high, two-wheeled hand-cart.

My mother, Dorothy Ruth Hallett, had been born in East Clandon, so I had previous ties with the village. High Clandon Lodge, at the western end of Blake's Lane, had been built for my grandfather, Charlie Eggleton, by his employer, Mr Eastwood, in 1906. Charlie, his wife Elizabeth and the eldest of their three daughters, Norah Eggleton – that is to say, my grandparents and my aunt – were still living there some forty years later when we moved into the village. My mother, my two brothers and I had stayed at High Clandon Lodge for about a year during the latter part of the war, while my father was away. Mum had been born in High Clandon Lodge and, like Norah and her two other siblings, Alf and Marjorie, had attended the village school. The teacher in those days was Miss Bixby who, in my time, lived in retirement in a cottage called *The Rosary*, on the old Epsom Road. The infant teacher was Miss Mussell.

My parents were married in East Clandon parish church, the Church of St Thomas of Canterbury, in 1935. Their wedding reception was held in the village hall.

I was enrolled at East Clandon Church of England Primary School in the spring of 1947, soon after our arrival in the village. My elder brother Ted started at the same time. It was said that, if Ted and I had not moved into the village when we did, the school would have closed because of insufficient numbers. I believe we brought the total enrolment up to twelve. My younger brother, Geoff, started soon afterwards.

The school building was not large, although it appeared so to me. It consisted of one main room divided into two teaching areas by a folding glass-panelled screen. Each area had its own cloakroom and entrance and there was a third door, with a small foyer, at the School Road end of the building; this door was usually kept locked. All the rooms lay under a steeply-pitched, slate-tiled roof, which had two ridges meeting in a "T", so that the building seemed to have three ends and two sides. There were large, high windows in each of the ends and smaller windows in one of the two sides; the cloakrooms were built onto the other side. The walls of the building were thick and strong; like many buildings in the village, they were made of red brick and local flintstone.

Inside, the rooms seemed high and spacious and full of light; the windows were set high in the walls so that, if we looked up from our work, we could see the sky and the upper branches of the walnut trees in the recreation ground on the other side of School Lane.

There were two playgrounds, the smaller one for girls and infants and the bigger one for boys. Segregation was strict. The playgrounds were on opposite sides of the school, facing out onto School Lane. Each had its own lavatory, with wooden seats and metal buckets. The boys' lavatory was in a smelly brick and flint hut in the corner of the playground; the coal for the school stoves was kept there too. The school flagpole was nearby, at the far end of the playground.

Attached to the back of the main building, away from School Lane, was the schoolhouse. It had been built to accommodate the schoolteacher but, during our time in East Clandon, it seemed to be either vacant or tenanted by village people. In later years, the Reverend Poole lived there. The schoolhouse garden adjoined the boys' playground; the hollyhocks leaned through the fence and we liked to pick the buds and throw them at each other. Later in the year, the wheel-like seed-heads made good imitation racing-cars.

The girls' playground had the cemetery hedge on one side and the schoolhouse fence on the other. In the summer we were sometimes taken through a gate in the fence and out into the school garden-plot behind the cemetery. There we had to dig couch-grass out of the dry flower-beds with forks, or trim the edges with wooden-handled, scissors-type shears that were too large for our small hands or with one-piece metal shears that were too springy. The tools were kept in a wooden tool-shed beneath a walnut tree at the end of the garden. I enjoyed planting seeds, using a line to keep the row straight and a dibber to draw the furrow, and looked forward to seeing the results of our work – perhaps a few small carrots and a patch of straggling cornflowers or asters – but my over-all memory of school gardening is one of dry, hard-packed earth and a drowsy longing for the afternoon to come to an end.

P.T. and Games were a different matter; it was always pleasant to be moving around in the open air, doing exercises of the "bend down and touch your toes" variety, throwing and catching bean-bags or, most enjoyable of all, playing stoolball on the grass in the recreation ground. Stoolball was a game with ancient origins, played almost exclusively in the rural parts of Surrey and Sussex; it combined elements of cricket, rounders and baseball.

I worked hard at my lessons and did well. We used pencil or pen and ink for our written work. The teachers were strict but fair – and very competent. Our first teacher was Miss Lake, who parked her little box-like car in School Lane, next to the girls' lavatory. Miss Lake was elderly, neat and active, and wore her hair in a bun: sometimes she smelt of mothballs. Miss Lake had been at the school for many years and was highly regarded in the village. She was the only teacher at the school when we started and at that time had charge of children of all ages between five and eleven. I particularly admired her ability to draw and paint.

Miss Lake left in 1950 – to retire, I think – and her place was taken by Miss Skerrett. A junior teacher was appointed about the same time because enrolments had increased over the years. Miss Busby taught me in 1951 and Miss Dale in 1952; both teachers were fairly young.

I liked Handwork very much and enjoyed making toys with pieces of felt and raffia and learning how to sew, knit and embroider. We created pictures out of brightly-coloured gummed-paper shapes and cut our own shapes out of scraps of wallpaper. We worked in groups on wool rugs, pulling the lengths of wool through the net-like backing with special hooks. We made Christmas decorations, calendars, ornamental bowls and boxes, pen wipers and pincushions, eventually taking them home and giving them to Mum or Dad or Grandad as presents.

On one occasion, several of us constructed a model village in a tray of sand. I cannot remember now whether it was an Eskimo village or an African village, but I do recall being fascinated by the project at the time.

The school put on concerts now and then and, although I was never chosen for the more important roles, I always enjoyed dressing up, rehearsing and performing. One year we did a play about rainbows; it had elves and flower-fairies in it and at the end we had to hold up some wooden hoops decorated with coloured crepe paper. Another time we acted out one of the Brer Rabbit stories. Mum made our animal costumes for the play; we kept the head-pieces at home and used them in our dressing-up games for years afterwards. One of the items in the concert in my last year of school was a noisy rendition of *McNamara's Band*, with saucepans for drums, saucepan lids for cymbals and combs and tissue-paper for horns. Instead of the names traditionally used in the song we used our own names, so that *McNamara's Band* became *Douglas May's Band* and so on. I was one of the horn players.

The school celebrated May Day at least twice while I was there; it was quite an occasion, with Maypole-dancing, and folk-singing before an audience of parents and visitors. One year I had to crown Yvonne Solly as Queen of the May and confidently started off my presentation speech with "On this first day of April..." instead of "On this first day of May...", much to the amusement of the audience and my own embarrassment. The *Surrey Advertiser* photograph taken on this occasion is the one mentioned by David Rumbold in his memoirs.

Under Miss Lake, our formal studies included Arithmetic, History, Geography, Nature Study, Scripture, Drawing and six English subjects - Reading, Writing, Spelling, Composition, Recitation and English itself. We were also marked for Handwork and Physical Training. I recall having to copy a list of school subjects onto a blank report form at the end of the term; Miss Lake would fill in the marks and add appropriate comments, which, in my case, were favourable ones.

There was a piano in the school; I seem to remember that we started each day with a prayer and a hymn. We also found time to learn and sing various traditional songs like *Now is the Month of Maying*, *Early One Morning*, *The Mermaid*, *John Peel* and *Morning is Broken*. One song we boys did not like was *Bobby Shaftoe*; we thought that Bobby, with his silver buckles and yellow hair, must have been a sissy. One of my favourite songs was one about three dragons, who were dressed in red, green and white respectively. We read and memorized many poems, including *Hiawatha*, by Longfellow, *The Brook*, by Tennyson, and *Overheard on a Saltmarsh*, by Harold Monro.

In later years, probably in Miss Skerrett's time, we would listen to the B.B.C. school broadcasts. I recall an Ancient History series in which the stories of Pheidippides, Hector and Achilles were presented dramatically. We also enjoyed a radio programme called *Singing Together*; at the end of term we had to send in our votes for the most popular song; once it was *The Skye Boat Song* which won and on another occasion it was *The Song of the Western Men*. Somehow it seemed rather domestic and not at all school-like to be listening to the wireless in the classroom.

At morning break we drank our school milk ration, which was one third of a pint each, in individual bottles. The milk was supplied by the government free of charge and delivered by a "Cow and Gate" dairy van; we drank it through waxed paper straws. In very cold weather the milk froze and we had to put it in front of the stove to thaw out. By break-time, the milk would be warm and sickly, with an icy lump rattling in each bottle.

We boys devised several playground games of our own. One of them involved spinning round rapidly on the spot as soon as possible after drinking school milk. The idea of this game was to upset one's stomach and be sent home but I cannot remember anybody achieving this aim; all we ever did was make ourselves giddy.

Another game we invented was *All Pile On*, which started by one boy pick-a-backing another and the others climbing on top until he collapsed. Even more fun was *Laughing Hyenas*, in which we all joined hands to form a line and the boys at the ends threaded their way in and out under the other boys' arms. This soon resulted in a contorted knot of boys, with hands joined, which staggered to and fro across the playground until it collapsed in a giggling heap onto the ground.

School dinners were delivered about midday by a woman in a van; she had cropped hair and wore slacks. The dinner monitors had to unroll the oilskin tablecloths and set out the cutlery. I seem to remember that a lady helper – Mrs Illing, perhaps – served the food and did the washing-up. There was usually a hot meat dish followed by pudding and

custard. We all had our likes and dislikes; jam or lemon-curd tart was a favourite and nobody seemed to like semolina, although the rose-hip syrup that came with it was popular.

Mrs Illing was the school cleaner and caretaker. She would stand no nonsense from the schoolchildren and would report us if we misbehaved in the playground or interfered with the coal in the lavatory-shed, as we boys sometimes did. If it snowed in the winter and we made slides in the playground or in School Lane, Mrs Illing would scatter ashes on them to render them safe but useless.

The inspector and the nurse were regular visitors to the school. Both had an air of competence and authority and seemed to be quite satisfied with the results of their investigations. The inspector looked at our books and asked us questions. The nurse looked at our fingernails and hair; sometimes she or another nurse listened to our chests and backs through a stethoscope. We had to strip to the waist for this, which embarrassed us. We also had regular dental inspections and, all too often, the dentist found cavities which had to be attended to.

In July 1952, when I was eleven, I sat for the Common Entrance examination, or "Eleven Plus", as it was called. I believe it was held at East Clandon school. I remember having to go to the Grammar School in Guildford for an examination about this time, but it may well have been for a grammar school entrance examination, for prospective students only, rather than the Common Entrance examination, for which all eleven-year olds sat. On the other hand, the exam may have been in two parts. However, as a result of my efforts in one or both examinations I was awarded a scholarship to the Royal Grammar School, Guildford, to start in September 1952. My world was beginning to expand.

My sister Jenny started school at East Clandon in 1955, when she was five. Her teachers were Miss Mould and Miss Corner. Mrs Need was the school secretary and Mrs Ellis came each day to help with the dinners. We had moved from Hatchlands Lodge to Wix Hill, in West Horsley, by then and my mother took Jenny to and from school each day, either on the back of her bicycle or on the bus. Jenny's fare was a halfpenny at first, but it later rose to a penny-halfpenny. In time, Jenny was able to make the journey by herself, although sometimes one of the teachers gave her a lift in her car.

My mother belonged to two organizations in East Clandon: the *Mothers' Union* and the *Women's Institute*, or *W.I.* Both organizations had regular afternoon meetings and Mum had to hurry home afterwards to get tea ready by five o'clock.

The *Mothers' Union* was a Church of England organization, concerned with the sanctity of marriage and opposed to divorce; they had a blue and white banner which was kept in the Lady Chapel in the church and Mum was rostered to arrange the church flowers from time to time. There were branches of the *Mothers' Union* all over the country, wherever there was a parish church.

The *Women's Institute* was open to all women; for a village the size of East Clandon it had a large membership. In our family, my mother, my aunts and my grandmother were all members. Most rural communities had a *W.I.*, and there was a national federation to which the individual branches belonged. Mrs Grover was the president of the East Clandon *Women's Institute* for many years and both my aunt and my mother held office at various times.

*W.I.* meetings were held in the village hall, which was also known as the Institute. The meetings always began with the members standing to sing Blake's *Jerusalem*, accompanied on the piano. After the official business of the meeting there was usually a talk by a visiting speaker or a demonstration of cookery or handicrafts. There was a raffle, a competition of some kind – one which they held every year was for "something new made from something old" – and then afternoon tea. The *Women's Institute* played an important part in village life; for many housewives it was one of the few opportunities they had to socialize with other women and to acquire new interests and skills.

The *W.I.* organized coach outings and put on at least one concert each year. Mum loved to take part in these concerts and I always enjoyed attending them; they took place in the village hall and were directed by my aunt, Marjorie Eggleton. The concerts always attracted a good audience and we boys and the other village lads liked to sit in the back row so that, once the show had started, we could get up onto the window sill and see over other people's heads. The first item was always *Jerusalem*, and this was usually followed by two one-act comedies – the best ones were by Mabel Constanduros – and perhaps one or two comic recitations or songs: there was usually an interval between the two main items. Mrs Illing always played the slapstick roles and drew great applause from the audience, and there would always be enough funny lines, farcical situations and missed cues to keep the audience laughing and clapping throughout the evening.

Jumble sales and whist drives were held in the village hall at regular intervals. Socials and darts tournaments and an occasional wedding reception took place there too. The darts tournaments were arranged on a double "knockout" basis, which allowed for each competitor to have at least two games. The winners received prizes and there were usually several raffle prizes too.

Village hall socials attracted people of all ages and provided an evening of music, dancing and games. A small ensemble played for the dancing; the games usually involved people having to move round in a circle and sit on somebodies' lap when the music stopped, or men dressing in women's clothing and vice versa, or teams of people trying to pass an object to and from each other while blindfolded or handicapped in some way. A supper and a raffle were included in the entertainment and the villagers enjoyed themselves with much goodwill and laughter. My aunt often acted as M.C. for the *W.I.* socials.

The village Girl Guide troop, which operated for a time under the leadership of Alice Fitchett, from Langford

Cross Children's Home, also met in the village hall, and there were other organizations, such as the parish council, which held meetings there too. I attended several of the Girl Guide meetings and recall the girls singing *Waltzing Matilda* and another song called *Donkey Riding*, during which they removed their belts and accompanied the singing by tapping the two halves of the buckle together in time with the music.

I remember that alterations were made to certain parts of the village hall one year, particularly the backstage area. Other memories I have are of the peculiar decorations on the tiles of the fire-surround and of the packs of playing cards that became too worn and dirty for use at whist drives and were therefore passed on to us to play with. They were just what we needed for our favourite games of *Cheat* and *Pontoon*.

Alice Fitchett was a single lady of about Mum's age who lived and worked full-time at Langford Cross, where she was known as "Aunt Alice". She and her fellow worker, Kathleen Trussler, or "Nanny", looked after the twenty or so children at the home under the supervision of the matron, Esther Booth, or "Aunt Esther", as she was called. Some of the children, like Paul Lindsey and Brian Ford, seemed to be permanent residents at the home, but others only spent a short time there. Kathleen ran a Boy Scout Cub pack in the village for a while and, as leader, took on the name "Akela".

We boys had several playmates of about our own age. Our most constant friend was Graham Wright. Graham was an only child, older than me but younger than my brother Ted, and he lived in School Lane. He had more toys than us, including a large clockwork train-set, but he did not go away for summer holidays as we did. He seemed to know a lot and did well at school and was particularly good at cricket and Monopoly. Graham was always cheerful and could see the funny side of things more readily than we could. He was good company.

Dougie May was another of our childhood friends. When we first knew him he lived in an estate cottage near Fullers Farm. The cottage was not far from Hatchlands Lodge – Dad went past it on his way to work each day – and we liked to visit Dougie to look at his father's pig, which lived in a sty in the garden. Dougie was about my age and we generally got on well together, although there was sometimes rivalry between us, particularly at school. In time, Dougie and his family moved into one of the cottages in St Thomas's Drive, in the centre of the village, but he still remained one of our most frequent companions.

Dougie's sister, Margie May, who was about Ted's age, was also one of our playmates. She was a good sport and joined in all our boyish activities without any qualms. She climbed trees and went fishing with us and kept wicket for the village children's cricket team in our games against West Clandon.

Peter Shuell often played with us during our earlier years at Hatchlands. He was older than Ted and, like Graham Wright, found it easy to laugh.

Our wider circle of playmates – those who went to school and played cricket and soccer with us, those who were rivals as often as they were accomplices, and those who we only occasionally invited to birthday parties – varied over the years as people moved in and out of the village. The Hemmings boys, John and his younger brother Brian, were always there. John Hamblin – and when he was old enough, his brother, Bruce – often played with us too. Then there were Billy Benstead, Grant Burden, John Rolls, David Holt, Paul Lindsey and Brian Ford.

I remember David Rumbold and Brian Thompson well enough; they were older than me and closer to my brother Ted in age and lived at the other end of the village. Snelgate Cottages seemed to be a long way from us; they were located on the Epsom Road, which we were warned to keep away from because of the traffic. The people living there had their own bus-stops, one on either side of the road, but the buses would only stop if requested. The main East Clandon bus-stop, the one which we used, was at Langford Cross. I also remember Geoff Wallis; I believe his sister Jean was an assistant teacher at the school for a while.

The girls that we tolerated enough to talk to and sometimes have in our games included Yvonne Solly, Connie Stevenson, Pat Rolls, Lillian Benstead and Maureen and Pauline Shipp. We played with other children too, but I have forgotten their names.

There were plenty of pastimes available to us and what we actually chose to do depended upon the weather, the time of day and the number of children who came to play. We loved to explore Hatchlands park and the adjoining fields, woods and coppices. Our favourite place was the Sheepwash, the lake close to our cottage, and we spent many hours there fishing, sailing toy boats and pottering about or, in the winter, sliding or skating on the ice. The rectory grounds adjoined Hatchlands park and, in late summer and autumn, we made clandestine visits to the orchard to collect windfall plums, greengages, pears or apples. Sometimes we set off to explore one or other of the local chalk-pits, including the one near Snelgate Cottages and the one in Blakes Lane. They were used by local people as rubbish tips and there was no knowing what treasures we might find there.

We could usually count on having Dougie and Margie May, Graham Wright and one or two others with us. Some activities, like tree-climbing or birds-nesting, needed little organization and were simply an interaction with our surroundings; others, like fishing and bows-and-arrows, needed equipment and a reasonable amount of time. Then there were organized games, such as hide-and-seek, tracking, football or cricket, which we played according to rules.

A film crew arrived in Hatchlands park one day. They did not stay long – presumably they only had a few short sequences to shoot – but they aroused a great deal of interest while they were there. They set up their cameras beside the Sheepwash and filmed a woman falling or being pushed into the water and what appeared to be a sword-fight between two men in costume. Another scene centred on a coach and horses travelling along the drive and underneath the elm-trees.

There was a large open area of rough grassland on the North Downs above East Clandon which we knew as *Hog Trow*. Much of it was a steep-sided valley, dry and with smooth contours, and we liked to go there from time to time for walks and picnics. It was usually a place of light, fresh air and peace, but once or twice each summer for several years it was taken over by a motor-cycling club and used as a site for motor-cycle "scramble" racing. This meant that Blakes Lane was churned to dust by the traffic going to and from the racing and that the roar of motor-cycle engines could be heard from early morning until late afternoon. I remember watching the traffic from Grandad's garden and then walking up to *Hog Trow* to watch the racing, which was very spectacular and exciting, especially the side-car events. The Downs had been used by the military during the war and we commonly found spent bullet cases there. We sometimes discovered fossilised sea-urchins where the chalk bedrock had been disturbed by the digging of trenches.

Hatchlands party was a well-established tradition in East Clandon, dating back beyond Mum's childhood to Lord Rendel's time. Village children up to a certain age were invited and most of them attended; Mr Goodhart-Rendel and the Hatchlands estate bore the cost. It was always an exciting event, one that we looked forward to for weeks beforehand and talked about for weeks afterwards. The Hatchlands party followed more or less the same pattern each year. It took place after Christmas but before the end of the year.

The party began about half past three, as far as I recall. As the afternoon wore on, groups of children and adults from the village, warmly dressed and equipped with torches for the return journey, would start walking past the lodge on their way to Hatchlands house. We put on our coats and Wellingtons – we had snow one year, I remember – and set off to follow the others across the park.

We had to hang our outdoor clothes in a passage-way just inside the servants' entrance; there was a row of bells on springs high above our heads, one for each room so that the servants could be summoned where needed. From the passage-way we went into the servants' hall, which had been set with trestle-tables and benches and decorated with paper chains and greenery; the tables were loaded with plates of sandwiches, sausage-rolls, iced cakes and jugs of squash. Our mothers supervised the meal; when it was over, Mr Goodhart-Rendel, a tall, grey-haired figure, obviously enjoying the occasion, came in to distribute the Christmas crackers, the biggest and loudest we had ever seen, with tricks, games, riddles and paper hats inside and shiny paper "scraps" on the outside. We enjoyed the crackers for what they were made of as much as for their contents, examining every fragment for scraps worth saving and littering the tables and floor with pieces of brightly coloured crepe paper.

With tea over, it was time for the conjurer. We filed out of the servants' hall and into the music room, which was one of the rooms used by Mr Goodhart-Rendel himself, and seated ourselves in rows facing a small but elaborately decorated stage – all columns and plaster carvings and gold leaf – where the conjurer had set up his equipment. When everybody was assembled, with children in front and adults at the back, he began.

The conjurors who came to Hatchlands were marvellous. We seemed to get a different one each year – or, at least, they had different names; Uncle Bob, Uncle George, Uncle Henry and so on – but they were all equally wonderful. We loved them. They pulled eggs out of our ears and coins out of our noses, they made things vanish and reappear before our eyes, they told us to hold things and then turned them into something different and they made us scream with frustration, gasp with amazement and laugh until our insides hurt.

The conjuror would sometimes pick a member of the audience to assist him with a trick but he never chose me. The performance always ended with a display of ventriloquism, during which the conjuror was ridiculed so often by his dummy that he finally folded it up and stuffed it back into the suitcase in which he had found it, with the dummy continuing to protest long after the lid had been closed.

After the show we were ushered through a doorway at the rear of the music room and into the main hall, where an elaborate spiral staircase led to the rooms above. In the embracing curve of the staircase stood a magnificent Christmas tree, its branches shimmering with tinsel and candle-flame; it smelt of pine-resin and hot wax. The tree came from the estate and had to be erected, by means of ropes and ladders, by the gardeners. Dad stood on the stairs with a sponge on a stick, ready to snuff out any candles that flared. Mr Brewster, the butler, kept guard over a table of presents and Mr Goodhart-Rendel, a monocle in his eye, beamed at us from the background. He was accompanied by a small group of special guests including, usually, the rector and one or two local landholders and their wives. We children, quieter now, clustered near the tree – but not too close, because of the candles – and the women helpers crowded in behind.

Mr Brewster picked up the presents one at a time, called out the names that were written on them and passed them to Mr Goodhart-Rendel and he, with a smile, a slight inclination of his head, a handshake and a Christmas greeting, gave the presents to the children. The children thanked him – we had rehearsed the ceremony at school – and then returned to their places by the tree to see what they had got. When the excitement had subsided, Mr Goodhart-Rendel made a speech and one of us – chosen and coached beforehand – called for three cheers in return. Hatchlands party was over. We received a bag of sweets, an apple and an orange on the way out.

In 1950, Maurice Wiggin, a writer, and his wife, Kay, came to live at East Clandon. They rented an estate cottage in Ripley Road, on the opposite side to Miss Burling's shop and post office and a short distance below it. We had little to do with them directly, as they were of higher social standing than us, but we soon became accustomed to seeing them in the village. Mr Wiggin contributed a regular column to the *Sunday Times* and often wrote about people and events in East Clandon. As a family, we did not take the *Sunday Times*, but people told us about the column and sometimes lent us a

cutting to read. We were never mentioned in the column ourselves, but we knew many of the people who were. Mr Wiggin eventually published several books, one of which, *Faces at the Window*, contains an account of East Clandon as it was when we lived there and a fine pen-portrait of Mr Goodhart-Rendell. Another book which deals with East Clandon before, during and after our time there is *The End of Tradition*, by John Connell.

There were two coach outings from East Clandon each summer – the "tontine outing" and the "pie outing". These were all-day outings to either Bognor or Littlehampton, two seaside resorts on the Sussex coast which had sandy beaches and which catered for day-visitors. We did not go on the tontine outing, which was, I think, for people who had been contributing to some kind of co-operative insurance scheme during the year, but we did go on the pie outing, which must have been very similar. For some people in the village, these coach outings were the only time they went to the seaside.

Our family qualified to go on the pie outing because we had a regular order with a meat-pie retailer who delivered to the village every other week. Most families belonged to the scheme, which may well have been initiated by the government during the years of food shortage after the war, although I am not sure about this. On "pie-day", somebody from each family would go to the village Institute, which was a convenient central point in the village, and collect their pies in a shopping basket lined with a clean tea-cloth. As well as several types of meat-pie, there were also pasties and sausage-rolls available; they all had to be ordered in advance. There must have been a small surcharge in addition to the cost of the pies because, by the end of the summer, enough money had accumulated for all the customers to have a day at the sea.

The pie outing was a happy occasion; there was much teasing and merriment as we settled into our seats, especially if the day promised to be fine. At Littlehampton or Bognor – we seemed to alternate each year – everybody went their own way, the families with children onto the sands, the elderly people along the promenade and the younger ones into the amusement arcades and pubs. We used to spend the day on the beach and in the sea; we had a picnic lunch and, if we were lucky, an ice-cream in the afternoon. The coaches had to leave before a certain time in the evening; there was often some difficulty in finding ours among the dozens of coaches in the parking area.

On the return journey we sang *Ten Green Bottles*, *Daisy, Daisy, One Man Went to Mow* and other traditional or popular songs. Mrs Illing often led the singing. The coach usually stopped at a pub on the way home and, after that, the singing became louder. I was always pleased when we stopped because a walk in the evening air helped to ease my travel-sickness; we children usually sat outside the pub and had some lemonade and a packet of crisps.

The next big event of the year, the village flower-show, took place as summer was turning to autumn, when flowers were at their best and fruit and vegetables ready for harvest. The flower-show was held within sight of our front windows, in a large field adjoining Hatchlands park to the south. Some of the sideshows overflowed into the park itself. Dad was a member of the flower-show committee and, in time, took on the job of secretary. His predecessor was Mr Newman. The committee issued a schedule early in the year so that people could nominate the classes in which they wished to compete. There was a fee for each entry, which was redistributed later as prize money, although people mainly competed for the honour of winning rather than for the prizes.

On the morning of the show, competitors brought their entries to the flower-show marquee and arranged them to their best advantage. The judges set to work about midday and, by the time the marquee was re-opened to the public in the afternoon, the judging had been done and the prizewinning entries had been labelled with coloured tickets. There was much discussion and, occasionally, some controversy, as the villagers moved around inside the marquee and studied the awards.

There were classes for fruit, flowers and vegetables – as single specimens, a set number or in a collection. Some classes were open to cottage gardeners only and some to all comers, even those who were wealthy enough to have a large garden and employ a gardener. For housewives there were classes for home-made jam and chutney, bottled fruit, handicrafts and cakes. A well-known flour manufacturer sponsored one of the cake classes, supplying the recipe, the judge and the prize-money; it was a keenly contested class. The village children had their own class, which was a collection of wildflowers. We searched the hedgerows and fields for as many different flowers as we could find – buttercups, knapweed, campions, cow parsley, dog-roses, vetch and Canterbury bells – and arranged them laboriously in jars of water in the marquee, but I cannot remember ever winning a prize.

It was warm in the marquee, even on a cool day, and the smells of ripe fruit, flowers, leaves and freshly-baked cakes mingled with the odours of the villagers and their clothes and that of the canvas marquee itself. The marquee was the centrepiece of the flower-show. Clustered around it were various stalls and sideshows and the refreshment tent, where you could buy cakes, orange squash and cups of tea. There was always a treasure hunt; you paid for a small wooden stake, wrote your name on it and stuck it into the ground within the marked-off area where the treasure lay. At the end of the afternoon a committee member identified the spot where the treasure had been buried and the owner of the stake nearest to it won a prize of ten shillings.

The most popular sideshow, probably because it had the best prize, was *Bowling for the Pig*; it always attracted a large crowd of onlookers. Competitors had to roll a number of heavy wooden balls along a grass alley and through some archways cut in the side of a shallow box; the archways were only a little bigger than the balls so both skill and luck were required. Women and children bowled from a mark one pace in front of the men's line. A record was kept of each competitor's score and at the end of the day the highest scorer won a live piglet. Sometimes, if two or more people had the

same score, they had to play off to decide the winner. The pig was exhibited near the alley so that people could see what they were bowling for. One year the pig escaped while the men were putting it into a sack for the winner and it was only captured after a long and exciting chase, in which we boys took part.

From our point of view, the highlight of the flower-show was the children's fancy dress competition. We worried about it for weeks beforehand and ransacked our mother's and our aunts' ragbags and our own toy-cupboards in order to make our costumes as elaborate and colourful as possible. I was a clown one year, a bullfighter the next and Long John Silver on a third occasion. For Long John Silver, I bound one leg behind me to simulate a stump and hobbled about on an upturned broom; I wore an old coat of Mum's, an improvised set of breeches and stockings and a cocked hat that I had adapted from one I had bought at a jumble-sale. With a stuffed toy parrot on my shoulder, brass curtain-rings attached to my ears and metal buckles on my shoes I was sure that I would steal the show, but I did not win a prize at all.

After the fancy dress parade and the judging we hurried back home to change for the children's races. These were held on a rough but fairly level area of grass a short distance from the marquee. There were many different events, including running races, a sack race, a wheelbarrow race, a three-legged race, a potato race, an egg and spoon race and a slow bicycle race, and in some of them there were two divisions, one for the little children and one for the bigger ones. Mr White, the farmer from Fullers Farm, had the job of organizing the entrants; he lined them up, called them to order and started them, using his handkerchief as a starting flag.

The placegetters – usually first, second and third – received prizes of money in little brown envelopes. We boys usually managed to win a few prizes; I was not a good runner, but did well enough in the novelty races. It was a most satisfying feeling to complete the three-legged race in synchronization with one's partner rather than stumble and fall after a few clumsy paces like many couples did. The sacks that we used for the sack race smelt of potatoes, and the eggs for the egg and spoon race were the china ones that Mr White used on the farm to persuade the chickens to lay in the net-boxes rather than in a hidden corner of the barn. After the children's race there was a ladies' sprint race which, I seem to remember, was usually won by Mrs Hemmings. John Hemmings, her eldest son, was a good runner too.

The flower-show ended with a prize-giving ceremony, during which the names of the most successful exhibitors were announced by the show secretary and the trophies were presented by the president, Mr Goodhart-Rendel. Then the villagers collected their produce from the marquee and made their way home in the twilight, leaving the committee members and a few helpers to dismantle the stalls and tidy up.

I maintained my links with East Clandon after we had moved to Wix Hill. I liked to walk or cycle to church at East Clandon on Sundays, calling in at High Clandon Lodge on the way home. Mum continued to attend the *Mothers' Union* and *Women's Institute* meetings. We patronized village concerts, jumble-sales and darts-matches. I sometimes cycled to East Clandon after school for a game of knockabout cricket or football or to find somebody to talk to, although I did this less and less often as the years went by. In time, the children I had grown up with left school, started work and developed interests outside the village and I gradually found that I had less in common with them than I thought. Most of them had attended the Comprehensive School at Send; I was the only one of my particular age group to go to the Grammar School, although my two brothers, one older than me and one younger, went there too.

On the fifth and sixth of January 1962, long after we had moved away from the village – which was in the spring of 1954 – and shortly before I left the country to travel overseas, East Clandon's *Women's Institute* put on the most ambitious stage-show it had ever presented, a pantomime entitled *Dick Whittington*. The initiators of this project were Philip and Olivia Wilson-Dickson and their children, Andrew and Julia. Philip wrote the words and took one of the major parts, Andrew composed the music and played the piano for performances and Olivia, with my aunt's help, produced the show. It was a most successful endeavor, with a cast of over twenty villagers in brightly coloured home-made costumes – including my parents, my sister and myself, and Mrs Illing as the Fairy Godmother – some lively sound and dance numbers and plenty of witty dialogue.