

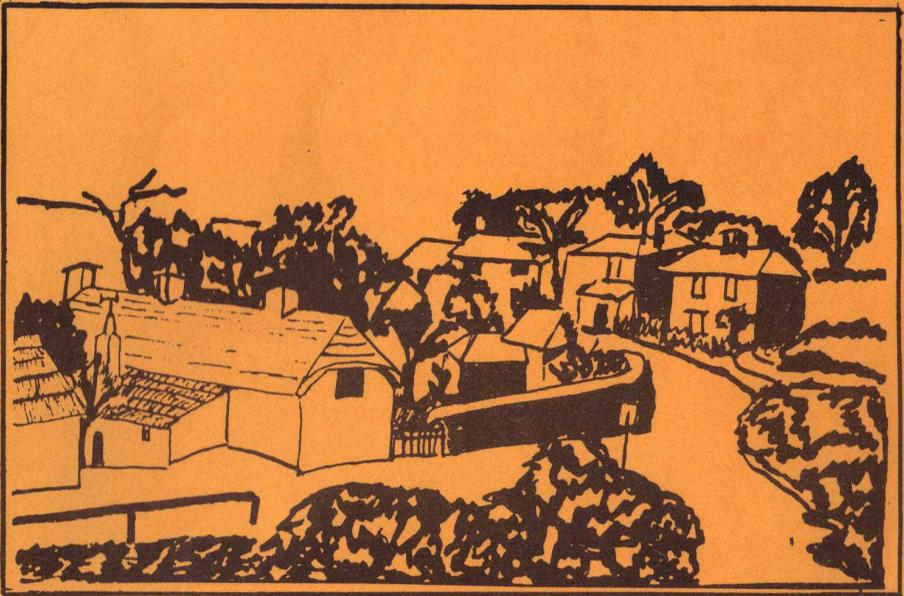
# MY STORY

MEMORIES OF BOURNEMOUTH AND DISTRICT

IN THE LATE 19th AND EARLY 20th CENTURIES

BY

PASCOE MARSHALL



# **MY STORY**

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To the men who wrought and builded  
better than they knew -

including the Local Authority with  
their consistent policy.

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**Pascoe Marshall 1886 - 1958**

(Photograph taken in 1950)

## FOREWORD

Newspapers and Council Minutes are the fabric from which most information about local history during the last hundred years is derived but it is being increasingly realised that accounts written by ordinary people during these years, and often including information passed on by parents and grand-parents, can provide detailed information of a kind quite unobtainable from official accounts. The pity is that few men or women commit their memories to paper although there must be countless families where the cry "Why didn't Mum or Dad write down their story for the younger members of the family to read?" is heard. Pascoe Marshall was one who did set down what he remembered about his grand-parents, his parents, his brothers and sisters and other members of his family. He was born in the hamlet of Redhill in 1886 and when just two days from his 66th birthday he began to write his "Story". He had suffered a stroke some few months earlier and realised that his active business days were over but, to the benefit of posterity, he chose to give himself over to sharing with others his memories of the earliest days of which he had heard from relatives and then telling, at first hand, the story of his own life set against the growing town of Bournemouth which offered to him and to his contemporaries a chance to build up a business and to establish themselves as men of position and substance in the locality. Many changes have taken place in Bournemouth since he wrote his "Story" but it has seemed best to preserve his text without alteration.

Pascoe Marshall was able to bring his account up to the early years after the end of the First World War but, sadly, he then suffered another stroke and, though he did not die until 1958, he was never able to resume the writing of his memoirs. This published account therefore ends with seeming abruptness in the 1920's. Despite this, the Bournemouth Local Studies Group is certain that many people will read it with the greatest interest and, with Pascoe Marshall's eyes to help them, will be able, in some measure at least, to reconstruct the Bournemouth of the period about which he writes and be able to people it with some of the characters who contributed so much to the making of the modern town.

As the story stops so abruptly, Mr. Marshall's daughters were asked to write a brief epilogue setting out the main features of their father's life from the 1920's until 1952, when he was taken ill. Two of those daughters are members of the Local Studies Group and, knowing the value of first-hand accounts, kindly offered their father's manuscript for publication. The Local Studies Group was very happy indeed to

undertake this and expresses its thanks to the Misses Doris, Nancy and Peggy Marshall for making this gesture. Thanks are also recorded to Mr. W. Cotton who undertook the task of editing the script for publication and to the members responsible for the actual production of this booklet

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*Front cover - Redhill from Sandy Lane (c.1900)  
(Drawing by Eileen Wassell, based on an old postcard)*

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## Chapter 1

Having read scores of autobiographies by all sorts and conditions of men and women, in all sorts of styles, and in my opinion all differently pleasant, readable and of interest, it has occurred to me that my own effort may be worthwhile. In spite of Henry Ford's dictum that "all history is bunk" I believe that history, international, national and local, has lessons for the present and the future - what man has done man can do again, and do better. I shall set out to relate (a) what I have been told (b) what I have read and (c) what I have experienced.

The stretch of country I want to cover is what is now known as the County Borough of Bournemouth, enclosed by the sea on the south, the River Stour on the north and east, and the County boundary of Dorset on the west, with a population today of 140,000. My survey will cover roughly 150 years.

Anyone wishing to get an idea of the general appearance of this area in 1800 need only take a look at, say, Hengistbury Head, Holt Wood and Ashley Heath; the greater part was then barren heatherland with some fir plantations and no roads or habitations at all except for river valley areas. The road from Wick to Iford and Castle Lane from Iford to Redhill Cross (now Castle Lane Junction) and that part of Wimborne Road leading through Redhill, Ensbury, Kinson and Cudnell to Bear Cross were all established but very narrow, as well as the roads leading off Castle Lane on the north side serving Holdenhurst, Throop, Muccleshell, Muscliff and Great Dean. The roads to the south side were tracks, that from Wick to the sea called Blackberry Lane even as late as 1920. Even so there were 'road' fatalities; cases are on record of drivers falling off their carts and being run over by their own wheels. Other lanes ran from Tuckton to the sea, one that is now Pokesdown Hill, a track from Great Dean up Tip Hill (Holdenhurst Road) and Charminster Road from Castle Lane existed only as a rough, sandy lane up to Court Road till about 1920.

In the early days of the nineteenth century small-pox broke out in the villages and up a track at a spot about where Fiveways Hotel now stands was built a wattle-and-daub hut as a primitive isolation hospital; once taken there the patients more or less looked after themselves. The structure was called Indian Hut and the name was still in use among us natives until the Fiveways Hotel was built. What a chance was missed to preserve a name with a history! Wimborne Road ran from Redhill Cross to Vlaward's Hill (Lawford's Hill), to Moordown, Winton and the sea, and there were a few other tracks in the same direction leading to Wallisdown, East, West and High Howe.

The population at this time consisted of a very few fairly large farms, some small-holdings with farm-workers and a few building workers. The larger farms were at Wick, Iford, Holdenhurst, Throop and Muscliff. The small-holdings were more or less where they are today, between Holdenhurst and Throop. Wick people had a ferry which gave them access to Christchurch for shopping and church and, in some cases, employment. Christchurch was a busy town though small. There were builders and some coast-wise shipping even to the beginning of this century; and the local industry of chain-making for the old 'turnip' watches. Some of my aunts did this work. Iford also had connections with Christchurch but over the old bridge. Holdenhurst was farm country with its own church. Throop was agricultural with its own water-mill and a ford to Hurn called 'Pig Shute', a malt-house and a little later a Congregational Church and a British School (1828). Throop and Muccleshell have been in my time all one village. Muscliff was a quiet spot by the river; it had a small tannery and a meeting—house where some of the folk attended via the ford from Parley. It was connected with its neighbours, not only by a road, but by a footpath from Throop over Bury Hill (an old British Camp) and then by the copse to Redhill, my own village which shall have its place in the story later on.

Apart from these village communities there were a few houses at Charminster, Moordown, Winton, Wallisdown, Kinson, Ensbury and Howe. Scattered about in quiet, sequestered places could be found odd holdings each with its mud-walled cottage and outbuildings fenced in with an earth bank. This fence served a double purpose because it was a simple matter each year to trim a foot or more off the inside and throw it over on to the outside, thus preserving the width of the bank but gradually enlarging the area of the plot. I have seen this trick done many times. The inhabitants were employed either on farms or in such small local industries as existed, or else they went further afield to work in brick fields and other works at Parkstone, Poole, Ringwood and Christchurch, which were considered within walking distance. Many were independent characters who could always get a living (day or night)! Smuggling must not be overlooked. The actual smugglers might be a very select crowd, not always local, who would require the services of people on the spot to help in the movement of goods; horses, too, were needed. The farmers would perhaps be above going openly into 'the trade' but could and did leave stable-doors unlocked; and if they found in the morning that their teams appeared to have been at work during the night no questions were asked, especially if something valuable turned up in the corn-bin or under the hay.

The few regular revenue officers were quite unable to control what was happening in the vast open spaces where every hand was against them, either openly or in secret. Eventually troops were moved into the district to help and Christchurch Barracks were built to accommodate them.

## Chapter 2

The houses for the most part were built of mud-wall, that is clay, gravel, sand and heather mixed with water and 'puddled' into a mix which was then filled into wooden frames, much as we build concrete structures today. The floors were of flag-stone or brick, and the roofs of thatch with wide eaves to provide protection for sun-dried walls. Some of these houses are still occupied today, many have been allowed to decay, and others have been re-roofed with corrugated iron. One of these, demolished about 1926, had a history and I will deal with it later. Some buildings were of brick, brick-making being a very old local industry.

Water was supplied from wells or rainfall - cattle depended upon ponds and the river - and as all road traffic was drawn by horse or donkey frequent roadside drinking-places were essential. Apart from coal brought by sea into Poole, fuel had to be produced locally. Fuel meant wood, either as logs or faggots or furze, or turf, this being old heather roots cut in the summer and dried and stored either in ricks or in a turf-house. One of these turf-houses, last used by Mother's uncle, James Lawford, was converted into a cottage and was pulled down only in recent years. Amongst Dad's old tools was, I remember, a turf-cutter, a blacksmith-made, heart-shaped blade with a very long, shaped, wooden handle. A tool of the same shape, made lighter and all steel, is used today for cutting turf for lawns and called a turfing-iron.

To have to walk many miles to and from work was not thought unusual. There was, of course, no other way except for those with horses or donkeys as many of the 'independents' had. Medical attention, such as there was, was supplied by a doctor from Christchurch. Later there was Dr. Montgomery at Kinson.

Local Government was not very highly developed. Christchurch R.D.C. exercised such control as there was up to the Dorset boundary and, on the Dorset side, there was Poole R.D.C. Holdenhurst Parish covered the whole of the Hampshire part of the area and Kinson Parish the Dorset part. Until Throop British School was built in 1828 and Holdenhurst National School

probably about the same time, there was no educational provision, but a few children went to Christchurch daily as my father had done from Holdenhurst.

### Chapter 3

In order to get some idea of the state of the country in these times I quote from "The Past Presented" by Prof. A.M. Low:

#### 1760 - 1820

George III was King. For the last 10 years of his reign he was insane and his son ruled as Regent. During the French Wars all able-bodied men who could not give a satisfactory account of themselves were pressed into service. Beacons were set up along the coast. Money was scarce. Food was short and there were bread riots. The population in 1760 was said to be 7½ millions; by 1801 it had doubled. In 1756 a negro boy of fourteen was offered for sale in London for twenty-five shillings. Postage for letters was 4d. for fifteen miles. The slave trade was abolished in 1807. The Regency period was called "The Age of Elegance" but there was little elegance for the worker.

#### 1820 - 1830

George IV. At this period there were still 200 crimes punishable by death; even for stealing bread or cutting a tree for firewood. Things were later improved by Peel who started a police force. Following the Napoleonic Wars conditions were bad and unemployment severe. Matters improved from 1825 with the rapid development of railways. During the early years of the nineteenth century there was a very real threat of an invasion of the south coast by the French. What the man in the street - in this case the man in the country, I suppose - thought about this I don't know. His emotions would have been mixed, I expect, because any such catastrophe would interfere with his "free trade" activities.

Anyhow there was set up some sort of coastguard or look-out system and as part of that look-out cliffs were patrolled by a troop of mounted men, probably Dorset Yeomanry. On one such trip their officer was a gentleman named Tregonwell from Cranborne, and when he first saw the stream even then called the Bourne, with gravel slopes on either side, rough and natural as it was, he appears to have fallen in love with the spot and kept it in mind. Eventually this "unrestricted solitude", till then

a veritable 'no man's land', came under the Christchurch Enclosure Act. Almost overnight this waste and hitherto valueless piece of country was parcelled out among men like Cooper Dean, Lord Malmesbury, the predecessors of Sir George Meyrick and a few others. It was after this that someone had the foresight to plant some pine trees - and when the medical profession praised the value of the pine odour the town was given a start as the 'Paradise of Pines' and 'Temple of Hygiene'. The idea of seaside resorts such as Weymouth was now coming into fashion and Mudeford set itself up in a small way to cater for this trade

The Battle of Trafalgar had been fought and won, the menace of invasion passed away and so came the end of the first decade of the nineteenth century.

#### **Chapter 4**

Bournemouth was still unthought of, its cliffs knowing only the flight of seagulls, its wastes silent except for rabbits and, at night, pixies, hobgoblins or the quiet tread of a solitary man. Mrs. Tregonwell had lost her baby and needed a change so why not try this new idea of a seaside holiday? So the family came to stay at Mudeford. One day her husband suggested an outing. He wanted to find the spot he had seen years before. The carriage was turned out, picnic baskets packed and they set out on what was to be a full day's adventure into the wild. I don't know their route but it would probably have been over Iford Bridge, along Castle Lane and by what is now known as Wimborne Road through Moordown and Winton towards the sea.

One of the scattered houses I have mentioned was situated just about where the rear of the G.P.O. is. This house, or one built there later, was in part existing in my time. Whether it was a beer-house in 1810 I don't know but it goes down in history as the Tregonwell Arms. Anyway, it was to this house Mr. Tregonwell went and left his horses for the day whilst he and his wife strolled down beside the brook and had their picnic. So much did she enjoy the outing and so much did she appreciate the spot that she asked her husband to try and buy some land here and build a house. This he did in due course, buying the land on the west of the brook from the sea to the Square, as it now is, the area of the Winter Gardens, Orchard Lane, Orchard Street, etc., and at once built a house where the Exeter Hotel stands. To illustrate the scant population at this time it has been said it could all have been accommodated in Noah's Ark, animals and all.

So 1810 is the official birthday of the town of Bournemouth

or Bourne as it was first called, and Bourne was the name even in my boyhood especially among the older folk. It would be interesting to know who was the builder of this first house, Tregonwell House; probably he came from Cranborne. From this quiet beginning the town very gradually developed. The Meyrick estate laid out Westover Road and built Westover Villas and these were not pulled down until around 1920 when the development of Westover Road as it is today took place.

Following this quite early scheme other roads radiating from the Square were made and houses built and it was now the doctors who stepped in and boosted the district as a good place for invalids - so came Invalids' Walk and bath-chairs. Residents from less salubrious climes came here to die but instead took on a new lease of life. But to be realistic, how was this early activity carried out? Who controlled the lay-out, who did the planning and who the building? Above all, who hewed the wood and drew the water, bearing in mind that it was a wild, un-inhabited stretch of open moor with no roads whatever. It was all done by private enterprise. Would it have been done better or more for the general good if Whitehall had exercised some central control? Who knows?

In any case it would not have worked in those times because of the complete lack of communications. Why, even local government which should or could have been administered by Christchurch was not feasible. So the lay-out and such planning as there was was done by the land-owners who even had built the first houses, for sale or to let. Then plots were sold to speculators on a lease of 99 years and in came the builders; initially, no doubt from towns outside, but they would pick up such local labour as there was to be had and train them as artisans. In due course and before long these same local lads became the town's first builders. The earliest name I've heard of was Peter Tuck who, as no doubt others did also, first built his own brickyard. Timber, slates, etc., would come from Poole. So, for over forty years, the development went on, the Meyrick Estate taking on the duties of a local authority. But times were changing. Newcomers began to be restive; they wanted more say, better roads, water supply and more amenities generally.

## Chapter 5

By this time the Bath Hotel, the Belle Vue Hotel and the Assembly Rooms had been opened. A public meeting talked about a pier. A bridge had been built across the stream in

what is now the Square. 1856 saw the opening of the London Hotel (now 50/- Tailors) and in 1855 the first pier or jetty was built. But greater things loomed. In response to local agitation there was passed an Act of Parliament called the Improvement Act of 1856 which authorised the appointment of a Board of Commissioners to run the town's affairs. Although their powers were limited they began to establish some sort of order and started to lay out the Pleasure Gardens. .

At this time we were still a village and a one-sided village at that. There were no houses for working people who lived outside at Winton, Moordown, etc., and there were no shops. Supplies came in from outside -from Poole, Ringwood, Christchurch and Wimborne across moorland tracks. A policeman from Ringwood called from time to time. The village boundary was established by the Act as a radius of one mile from the Belle Vue Hotel and the Assembly Rooms served as the Town Hall and general place of business - they were used for meetings and were later replaced by the Pavilion. Links with the outside world were maintained by a sort of stage-coach over atrocious roads, either to the station at Hamworthy (now a siding in Carter's Tile works) or to Holmsley Station.

The effect on the inhabitants of all this building development must have been great - the population had now grown to some 800 souls, mostly well-to-do people and their dependants. These had to be fed, clothed and generally waited on - their horses too. As there were no shops this gave a rare chance for people nearby to open up in business. The farmers had a better market for milk, butter, eggs, pork and beef as well as hay, straw and corn. Cottagers produced extra vegetables, eggs, etc., and worked up a round. Laundry-work began as a cottage industry - the daughters of the house would help mother fetch and carry the laundry - all laundry-work was done by cottagers in my time. There was a demand for coachmen, gardeners and domestic help of all kinds; local families supplied the need. As time went on workers moved in from Dorset, Wilts and Hampshire, and so grew up the suburbs housing all grades of workers. The first workers' dwellings in the town were built in the Terrace Road area and still exist, but they are doomed to be wiped out soon.

So far, my information is based on hearsay or deduction but from about 1856 onwards my tale will cover either my own or my parents' time. Surely not many towns in an old country such as ours can have grown from scratch to its present size in only two generations, especially as the only industries were building and allied trades, farming and shop-keeping. Not many people will realise that this town, born officially

in 1810, only really began to take off in 1856, so it is not yet 100 years old. The following dates record the boundary extensions:

- 1876 Boscombe
- 1884 Malmesbury Park
- 1885 Westbourne
- 1890 The first corporation, the first Municipal Election.  
For the whole of her life my mother would always refer to Corporation employees as 'Commissioners' Men'

## Chapter 6

In 1900 the town is made a County Borough, its area has doubled and includes Pokesdown, Winton, Southbourne and Redhill Park. The 1931 extension to today's boundary which took in a part of Dorset was quite an event.

Population	Greater Bournemouth
1811	491
1821	580
1831	755
1841	905
	Bournemouth Proper
1851	695
1861	1707
1871	5896
1881	16589
1901	69340

Anyone who has had to pull about and alter some of the older houses in the town may be inclined to sneer at the words of my dedication. Yet they should remember that many of those early builders and builders' men were pioneers in every sense and self-taught. They could have had little chance of technical education and very little opportunity of comparison, although among them were many real old craftsmen.

It will be easier to realise the state of society just before 1810 when we read that in 1803 on Parley Common was erected a gibbet on which were hanged two men for murder, the bodies being left there to rot. Later the posts were removed, one was made into a roller by Farmer Elliott of West Parley, the other put up in West Parley Churchyard to carry a sundial.

I restored the church roof in 1925 and repaired the old relic - it is still there.

I don't know of any business or trade still in existence in the town, carried on continually by the same family and started before 1840. Almost the oldest building firm is Jenkins and Sons; the founder, Henry Jenkins, came over from Christchurch where he was a painter and glazier.

Thick's, the boot shop in Christchurch Road, is pretty old and started in Orchard Street; the original Thick was a bootmaker and worked in the first place in Ringwood. He used to hitch-hike to Bourne delivering and collecting his wares. As far as I can make out he, or one of his family, married Love Lawford, my mother's aunt, after whom Mother was named. Landers of Tuckton is a descendant of Landers of Burton who did lots of local work around 1800.

## Chapter 7

And so we come to the family story, simple and not particularly striking or eventful but part of the pattern of the times. Holdenhurst village, a very quiet backwater then and now, was the home of my paternal grandparents whom I never knew. Stephen, my grandfather, was a right-hand man of Farmer Witcher and a wheelwright. He died in 1873, aged 67. Charlotte, my grandmother, was latterly an invalid and died in 1877, aged 77. They had three sons, Stephen, James and Charles, my father, and four daughters, Charlotte, Mary, Elizabeth and Jane.

Aunt Mary, Mrs. John King, lived and worked at Holdenhurst until they retired. I remember visiting her with Father on her death-bed at Pokesdown when I was quite small. Elizabeth, Mrs. Jesse Lockyer, kept a general store and the Post Office at Throop. Jane, Mrs. Sam Coul, lived at Moordown. Uncle Stephen married Ellen Head. He joined the Berkshire Police and I never knew him till he retired and came to live at Moordown where he used his spare time working for Father. James, whom I never knew, was in the London Police and became a police commissioner.

My maternal grandparents lived at Moordown in a cottage with a large garden. Grandfather planted holly trees by the gate and called the place 'The Hollies' - although the cottage has long since vanished the name survives in the modern building 'The Hollies Public House'. I'm not sure grandfather would have approved for he was, I believe, a very strait-laced and stern sort of man. Mother said he once knocked her down with a bucket because she picked some forbidden fruit; just a case of 'other days, other manners' I suppose

John Lawford was a bootmaker - not, as I have been told, just a cobbler but a real craftsman who could and did make what was then first-class assorted footwear. Mother used to tell proudly of the various materials he used besides leather, and it seemed to me one of them was something called 'Prunella', a strong, woollen stuff; the tops of elastic-sided boots, I think. At one time he was the village constable; this, I believe, was an annual service required of all able-bodied men in rotation.

Grandmother's name was Anne Marshall. During her widow-hood she lived next door to our old house and died when I was three. Among my earliest recollections are taking in her dinner and certain incidents at the funeral. I clearly remember neighbours acting as bearers; one of them was Harry Chalke and his outspoken remarks when the coffin stuck on the narrow stairs were not meant for my young ears. Probably it was usual in those days for neighbours to carry the coffin. I remember at a later date attending a funeral where professional bearers were employed and I, as a boy, thought this very strange.

Mother and her brother, Lot, went to school in Orchard Lane, off Poole Hill, and on Sundays to school and services. These were at the original meeting-house from which sprang the present Richmond Hill Congregational Church. Lot eventually started work in the town for a builder named Holloway and in time was promoted to 'improver bricklayer'. He was, I suppose, a bit big for his shoes and thought it quicker to lay bricks without using a line; this happened on a house on Richmond Hill where the Devonshire Hotel now stands. Before he married he built himself a house on family property at Redhill, right up against his Uncle Jim's turf-house, next door to which was a cottage, formerly a beer-house called "The Hole in the Wall".

Lot's house, later called Riverside, was of a type then common, two up and two down with 9" brick walls, the bricks laid crossways. He told me that the bricks he used he had collected a few at a time on his way home from work. All deliveries of bricks then, and for many years after, were by two-wheeled horse-cart and, owing to the rough state of the roads, some would always be falling off. The timber was second-hand scaffold-poles cut down by hand in the saw-pit on the site of Valley View. This pit and the saw were still in existence in 1910. This is the house in which ten of our eleven were born and, although we used to think the house had had its day when I was young, it was later added to and is still going strong as the Kingfisher Guest House.

Lot married Susan Benjafield whose father farmed Heath Farm, somewhere about where Bennett Road now is. Richmond Park Road when I first knew it was called Heath Farm Road and it was full of ruts in winter and over boot-tops in mud; so much so that people on foot went over the hedge and through the field or waste land. After leaving Redhill, Lot took a dairy which he rented from a farmer, John Abbot, who farmed round about the Royal Oak and lived at Holt Lodge. This business of renting a dairy is not now in use. In those days the farmer was chiefly interested in corn growing and kept cows for making manure - attending to cows was beneath a farmer's dignity. The arrangement was that a dairyman paid the farmer so much a head per year for the cows and the farmer provided the accommodation and feed; the dairyman found the labour and sold the milk. With the new town growing there was a growing demand. Later he was able to take a farm of his own and moved to Iwerne near Shaftesbury. From there he moved to a larger place, Park Farm, Church Oakley, Basingstoke, rented from Sir Wyndham Portal of Malhanger Park, chairman of the old South-Western Railway, with some other land from the Hicks Beech estate at Oakley Hall. This N. Hampshire country was all chalk subsoil, with no streams or brooks - a farmer's headache in a dry summer. Water for house and farm was from deep wells by hand-pump. There were one or two slimy ponds which the cattle seemed to enjoy - I suppose it gave a certain flavour to the milk! As a boy I used to spend holidays there and amongst other amusements I turned the butter churn. Butter for house use in winter was salted down in crooks and this certainly got itself a flavour in time. Lot died on this farm in 1903, aged 63, and Dad, as his executor, ran the farm until the sale. Before his end, and in readiness for a well-earned retirement, Lot came to Redhill and bought up a number of houses and plots of land, all of which had for him a certain sentimental appeal. I will go further into some of these deals later on.

## **Chapter 8**

Mother's name was Love Lawford. She was born at Moordown about 1843 and died at Riverside, Redhill, in 1921. Soon after leaving school she went into domestic service at Blacklock's, the chemist in the Square, or, as it was then called, the Bridge. Originally this was a simple plank but in 1849 the road was shaped and a real bridge built, all for £100! The bridge was widened twenty years later. The stream at that time ran open across the road, vehicles drove through it and pedestrians walked over the bridge.

Next door to Blacklock's was Bell's, the tailor. Mrs. Bell was also postmistress. The first P.O. at the Tregonwell Arms was opened in 1839, the second, at a house nearby, opened in 1848 and the third, Mrs. Bell's, in 1854. Mr. and Mrs. Bell also delivered the mail, one on the west of the stream and the other on the east.

After a while here, Mother and her friend went together into the household of, I think, a Mr. Bannister Fletcher, an architect away in Camden Town, London. To get there meant taking a trip by pony cart to Christchurch to join the stage coach to Holmsley, the nearest railway station. The friend later married George Troke and they had a bakery and grocery business and P.O. at the corner of Castle and Vimborne Roads. This has been in existence ever since and is now carried on by her grand-daughter, Mrs. Millicent Turtle, who is my niece, Mrs. Troke's son, Alan, having married my sister Flo.

How long Mother was away from home I don't know, but she came back and married Father and they set up house at what is now the junction of The Grove and Park Lane, Moordown. Their paddock and out-buildings were on the north side of the house on what is now part of Redhill Common. The position of these out-buildings was still visible as banks in the furze. The site of the buildings was on 'squatted' land which, for some reason, later reverted. Here, my eldest brother Ralph was born in 1866.

As a young woman Mother was strikingly handsome as is evident from a photograph taken when she was eighteen - one of those early photos printed on glass. My father, Charles Marshall, born in 1843 at Holdenhurst, died at Riverside in 1908 aged 65. He was, I think, a very remarkable man, and considering his lack of opportunity became a real force for good in the neighbourhood. He was upright in body and in character, a non-smoker and an abstainer, puritanical perhaps, a staunch Congregationalist, or as he preferred the old name Independent, and in politics a Gladstonian Radical. Fearless and outspoken, he was always ready and able to talk and explain current policy to any who would listen. To him politics were not next to Godliness but a real part of his daily religion and this description of him, feeble though it is, dates from his very young days.

After leaving school, probably aged twelve, he went to work on the farm and must have got a good grip of the whole process because the land and all it implied was always uppermost in his mind, after politics. By his eighteenth birthday he was, despite some affliction in the left leg, in charge of horses and ranked as an under-carter - all for two shillings a week! At this period he was getting hold of reading matter and newspapers, probably secondhand. Bournemouth was on the move, a few houses

were going up and labour was in demand. For a boy who had walked daily from Holdenhurst to Christchurch to school it was only natural that, in his spare time, he should go across the commons to see for himself what was happening at Bourne. We know that was what took place because it is related that he called at Blacklock's courting, and Mother was horrified to see him smoking. In her imperious way she at once laid down the law. "Charles", she said, "the lips that touch tobacco shall never touch mine; take your choice, it's the tobacco or me, and I don't care which". There seems to have been no compromise and as Charles wanted Love, the tobacco had to go and that for good.

Ambition stirred and one day, this young man who had quailed before his lady's wrath, having no fear of anything else, bearded his austere boss and asked for a rise in wages. It was it seems, so unusual for a young man to raise such a question, that when he asked for 3/6d. a week the farmer almost had a fit. He was said to have told a neighbour about it and said - "Whatever dost think - that boy, Charlie Marshall, had the cheek to ask for a rise - three sixpences all at once!" As the rise was not forthcoming he left the farm and sought work in town. As lots of young men were doing he took up building work. He must soon have got hold of the trowel and mastered the art of bricklaying because, by the time he married, if not before, he was established as a piece-work man, that is, he took on jobs to build at a set price and employed his own men. This meant a little capital was required and of this he had none - but here comes the story.

Soon after Ralph's birth Lot moved out of Riverside and Charles Marshall moved in. Granny Lawford, now a widow, came to live next door in a cottage which had been her Uncle James's bakehouse. There she lived to her end and was a ready help to Mother with her family which soon began to grow. Granny had £100 left her by her Uncle William: she was one of ten who each had £100 from his estate. This Uncle William Marshall, no relation of Charles, was a small farmer and lived in a house, still standing, at Throop, opposite what was the P.O.(Lockyer's). How could he have amassed £1000 from that little place in those hard times? Well, of course, corn was fetching a good price during the Napoleonic Wars but it has been said there was another source of income open to men of goodwill with horses. I referred earlier to the stable door being left unlocked! Anyhow, Granny lent Father the £100 for which he paid her half a crown a week and with that amount he enlarged his activities, but the concern was not without risks and setbacks, debts, and so on.

What the extent of his building was I never knew but he used to tell me about the first house he ever built in Branksome Park, I think about the third along Poole Road, under contract for Dr. Blake. This was ready for occupation in the autumn of 1878 but as it was not required by the owner for some time our family moved in as caretakers for a time, and Nellie was born there in 1879. That winter was severe with lots of snow. Father and the boys went home to Redhill one day probably to go duck shooting. The gun had been left loaded on some pegs in the living room. Either something had occurred to cause it to go off or else the trigger caught in the pegs when it was taken down for there was an explosion which blew off some of the lobby framework, but no further damage as far as I remember.

After Ralph came Hugh, Leigh, Harold, Phoebe, Flo, Ada, Sophie, Nellie, Millicent (died at the age of two) and to cap all No. 11, myself, all in twenty years. What a crowd, and what a to do when we were all together. How we ever managed to sit round one table I don't know but it often happened even after my time. Sung Grace before meals was usual and when the clan assembled in force it was always sung to the tune of 'Beulah Land'. Although our house was set back some distance from the road, the sound of the singing would travel and certain neighbours who knew what was likely to happen at one o'clock would stand in the road and listen, for a treat. That, I need hardly say, was before I was old enough to join in.

## **Chapter 9**

In spite of Father's keenness for politics and lifelong work for Liberalism and the Liberal Party he had his eye on the future. During the 1906 General Election campaign he did what was unusual for him - he got up and made a speech (his forte was organising) and, of course, he was heckled. His reply to some remark made was "Although I have worked all my life for the Liberal Party it is really the cause of Liberalism I am fighting for and I care not what may be the fate of the Liberal Party now or in the future so long as Liberalism lives, and it will". I was too inexperienced then to understand what he meant but I can see it today.

About 1875 Dad took on political work and became the organising secretary of the Christchurch and Bournemouth Liberal and Radical Association. Just when this became a full-time job I don't know but it happened soon after and he was so employed until 1895. His salary was a nominal £100 a

year for which he found his own office-staff, the office being our kitchen table and the staff being the children. In order to meet expenses and pay himself a salary he was not only secretary but collector of subscriptions as well. His organising ability, although quite untrained, must have been outstanding. The voters' lists in those days were printed alphabetically and not in streets or districts which he often complained was not a bit of use for his purpose. So he made his own street lists which were kept up-to-date in what would be, I suppose, a very natural way. In each locality he had a local committee of workers and the men he particularly liked to get hold of were postmen, milkmen and others whose business took them from door to door.

As a very small boy I used to accompany him to these little gatherings, usually in somebody's front room or a small hall. Everybody was very keen and enthusiastic and in the dim lights of those days and with clouds of tobacco smoke hanging around, much to his annoyance, they would sit and work. The job was to see that these home-made lists were in order and that every name was entered. But that wasn't all. There were various columns for all sorts of information, chief of which were L - Liberal, T - Tory and D - Doubtful. Somebody in the meeting would always be able to express an opinion as to what colour was applicable to whom, but not always without argument. "Now then", Father would say, "what about Bill Snooks?" Someone would say, "Liberal, of course". Someone else would chip in "Not he! Why, only yesterday I was talking to him and he said --". Another would pipe up "Of course he would talk to you like that. Leave that one to me, Mr. Marshall, if he don't vote Liberal I'll eat my hat - why, he's as sound as a bell, but you would be surprised if you knew what he said in my shop". "All right", says Dad, "L it is - and you are responsible, mind!", Another name is mentioned and he is marked D, but the general opinion in this case is if we can win over his wife he will be all right. But most important information was if a certain man was not on the official list and was a known Liberal. When did he take possession here? Where did he come from? Where was he last 15th July? All were important details required when the time came for claiming votes or if the man's "colour went wrong" objecting to any claim put forward by the other side. Elections were then won or lost by very small margins and an election was often almost won, not at the poll, but in the Claims Court when the new lists were being prepared.

All journeys at these times were on foot, or in our case by pony-trap. My job was to see to the pony and to see that the post-meeting gossip was cut short. Although Father gave up

building he was always involved with bricks and mortar.

## Chapter 10

When very young Father developed some trouble with his left leg and was laid up for some time. It was supposed to have been the result of a chill and was treated as rheumatism.. It troubled him all his life. Somewhere about 1875 it became worse and the knee joint stiffened - he also had a permanent discharge from his thigh. When I was nine, in 1895, Mother called me early one Sunday morning to say Dad wanted me. I found him in bed getting ready to die. I did not quite realise what that meant but within a few hours all our family had gathered. Leigh had rushed off with the pony to fetch Harold from Bournemouth; Ralph had come from Winton and Mr. Herbert Ellinson, one of Dad's old friends, arrived with his pony and brought another friend, Dr. Nunn. By this time things were looking very bad. For me the atmosphere was awful. Dad was quite cheerful and sitting up with everybody round singing his favourite hymns, several of which I still have in mind and cannot bear to hear even now. The world I had known, the father I had been very fond of was coming to an end and for me the outlook was desolate indeed.

Dr. Nunn, however, was not to be depressed and insisted that something could be done. I suppose there had been consultations before this time and some arrangements had been made. However, it was there and then settled that an amputation was to be performed. Ralph had made a carrying chair and in this Father was brought down our very narrow stairs. The boys had brought a wheeled ambulance from somewhere in the town, Dad was placed in this and was taken off to Boscombe Hospital. He was still cheerful and very brave but in the last stages of exhaustion. At that time the hospital was only a very small place with two wards. To get to it from Redhill over roads which were unbelievably loose and rough with a man-powered ambulance was an adventure in itself. The best route was via Castle Lane and Holdenhurst Road. Dr. Hosker was the surgeon and took off the limb the same day but, in trying to leave as long a stump as possible, he did not take off enough of the diseased bone and later had to have another go and take off some more. Poor old Father had a very rough time indeed as medical science was not then very advanced. He was in hospital for three months and all through that dreadful winter Mother visited him almost daily, usually on foot. The nearest way by footpath and track was over Redhill Common, through

Moordown, across what is now Richmond Park Road, then Heath Farm Road, which was nothing but ruts. She often arrived home with the bottom of her long dress covered in frozen mud.

My own remembrance of those difficult days is dim but one day on my arrival home from school I found, to my intense joy and surprise, Father was home. For some reason, I suppose to support his stump, he was sitting up on the high chair used for the organ, busy writing. For some time he could get about only on crutches but in due course he was fitted with an artificial limb, life-like and jointed but his little stump was too short to use it without a stick to walk with and the new limb always just swung. This put an end to his official job as a political organiser but not to his activities generally. He soon got to work with hired help, he developed a large garden and made a business of fruit and vegetables and grew strawberries. We also had three ponies and several odd fields in which he grew carrots, hay and green fodder. Clover and rye were another side line, greenstuff for horses was supplied to gentry and vegetables and fruit to their houses. Most of his customers he had met in his previous activities - they were not all Liberals for he was admired and respected by people of all shades of political belief. He was a very jolly man, he could converse on a wide range of subjects - an accomplishment far more common in those days than today.

His perambulations about the town with his pony, usually accompanied by Mother or myself, were well-known for he recognised nearly everybody and either passed the time of day with a wave of the whip or, quite often, stopped to discuss the latest doings of those radicals in Parliament. These discussions would often continue with whomsoever it was walking alongside for our pony never went fast. In fact, on at least two occasions it either went to sleep or crossed its front legs - anyhow it fell and both parents were thrown out. After the second occasion the trap was rarely used. There was a four-wheeled van for business use and a wonderful old chariot for Sundays, just called "the four-wheel". It was a sort of basket-work contraption made of metal and slung very low with room for two facing and two with backs to the animal.

Another source of income came from about twenty very small cottages, all mortgaged and all in constant need of repair and, in many cases, developing bad debts. I suppose the difference between costs and their weekly rents must have been enough to make them worthwhile! This very active life was very trying for a man with one leg, but that wasn't all. He kept up his political work voluntarily whenever he could, not only in the Christchurch/Bournemouth area but also in the New Forest

division and in East Dorset where we lived. He was a very active member of Winton Parish Council, later the Winton Urban District, a member of the Kinson Parish Council, secretary and senior deacon of Throop Congregational Church and correspondent and manager of Throop British School. And to cap all, after Uncle Lot's death in 1903, executor of his estate which entailed a good deal of work and trouble; for about a year he ran the farm and finally wound up the estate.

Have I made too much of my hero? I don't think so. Was he made of firmer stuff than we? I think so. Fortunately it takes all sorts to make a world. What were his recreations? At all spare moments, he read newspapers, magazines and all kinds of books. Whenever possible he entertained his large family and friends. Our house was small but there was always room for one more. He loved singing and music. All the girls played a little, Nellie a good deal on a rather fine organ, a present to Mother from Hugh in return for a boyhood prank when he took her gold watch to pieces and ruined it. After 1903 there were other side-lines but more of that later.

## **Chapter 11**

My brother Ralph was born in 1866 and married Annie Sargent about 1887. She was the daughter of James who ran a bakery at Redhill, occupying two cottages, now Moorside, with a pair of fuel ovens on the lower ground floor. They had one daughter, Lily. Ralph was apprenticed carpenter to 'Judd and Foot', Norwich Lane, with whom he remained until 1914. He joined the 4th Hants Rifle Volunteers at a very tender age and finally retired about 1912 with the rank of Quartermaster Major. When he retired from the Territorials he was too old for the Reserve but, on the outbreak of war in 1914, at the age of 48, he reported back to the Drill Hall and took up volunteer work there with Capt. Druitt who, single-handed, was dealing with the rush of recruits and forming the 2/7th Battalion. For three weeks he worked and slept there unofficially; he was only a working man so Druitt shared his pay with him. Later, he was re-engaged and taken on the strength in his former rank and went to India in 1915 with the 2/7th. He served there till the end of the war. He was on demobilisation duties on returning home and finally he set up with his son-in-law, Harold Barnes, as a builder.

Hugh was born in 1867. He was for some time a member of

the Fire Brigade and worked for a spell as a solicitor's clerk. Like Ralph he was apprenticed and joined the Volunteers and became a very successful shot when quite young. At nineteen he became very friendly with a family named Pettitt whose sons had gone to Nyasaland as coffee planters; when they came home on leave he accepted their offer to go back with them. This he did in May 1887. One of his reasons was that I had now arrived and "turned him out". His reading of Boy's Own Paper adventure stories and the like also had some effect, I think.

After a time with the Pettitts at Blantyre he set up as an elephant hunter and made a living out of ivory. His marksmanship earned him his native name Tambalika, "the man who provides the meat", a very important item when scores of native carriers needed feeding. When in about 1890 the country came under British rule he was one of the first to be appointed to office and became successively District Officer, Postmaster, Magistrate, etc. Hugh's first job after leaving school was in Guillaume's Solicitor's Office. This early insight into the law, his training in the building trade and rifle-shooting were able to come in useful in his active, pioneering life later. Finally he was acting Administrator for Northern Rhodesia with Headquarters in Livingstone. In 1903 he married Beatrice Sykes of Yorkshire and later realised an old dream when he built himself a house called 'The Bluff' on part of what, as a boy, he knew as Roscalls Wood. He retired in 1921 and was created C.M.G.

His was a romantic and adventurous life and had he but written his life story it would have been a real page of history. His visits home were always of interest to a very wide circle. He once brought home a lion cub, young enough to need a bottle when they left Africa. It was housed in our stable and caused much local excitement but when it became a bit too loving it was packed off to Bristol Zoo. A previous trip in 1899, just before the outbreak of the Boer War, was most notable. Hugh set off on foot from Abercorn with the usual string of native carriers, accompanied by two small boys, Kasma and Baruta. They were orphans whom he had recently rescued from a band of Arab slave-traders; they were quite primitive, perhaps ten or twelve years of age, they were ignorant of the white man's ways but they refused to be left behind. When railhead was reached they saw wheels for the first time, they were delighted and made up their minds to go on with the Boss. He, in his off-hand way, allowed this to happen and arranged to hand them over at some station on the way to a friend who would look after them until he could pick them up on his return.

Fate intervened. A wire came from Cecil Rhodes asking him to call on him from wherever he was at the time to confer about the progress being made with the construction of the telegraph line then being erected through Northern Rhodesia as part of the projected Cape to Cairo line. He kept the appointment with Rhodes and had dinner with him but it meant breaking the appointment with his friend who was to take the boys. So, on to Cape Town and England they went! At Cape Town they were fitted out with their first European clothes. On arrival at Southampton Hugh called unexpectedly on Harold who was living there at the time, but there was no one at home. All the luggage was dumped in the hall and on the luggage sat the two very black boys, very smart in their blue suits and red fezzes.

Hugh went out to meet Harold. On the way he probably met Harold's wife, Min, but as he had never seen her before he passed her by. She duly arrived home to find her house littered with an endless number of exotic parcels containing native spears, horns and tusks and also two unlettered black boys; she nearly died of fright which was not much relieved when the bronzed figure of her unknown brother-in-law turned up! However the whole outfit eventually arrived at Redhill and I recall that our pony van was piled high with stuff and the whole village was convulsed to see the boys on top. To bring the boys home cost Hugh £250; this, he said, was the cost to him of his dinner with Cecil Rhodes. What to do for accommodation? Next door to us was the old thatched cottage, Bournemouth's first bakery, and it was vacant. This was soon furnished sufficiently to make a home for these two forlorn little people. They had been journeying for about three months and had travelled from what was then called "Darkest Africa" and very primitive conditions, right through railways, hotels, steamships and all the trimmings of civilisation into Dorset 1899. What experiences they had undergone! They had picked up a smattering of English and took it all pretty much as a matter of course.

They were no more than a nine days' wonder to everybody round about, just as much or more so than we all were to them. As time went on they made many friends and soon each acquired an old solid-tired bicycle and a watch and other items of great joy to them. They would tear about the countryside, get up to all sorts of pranks and sometimes squabble with louts who seemed to be even less civilised than themselves. They could take a joke all right but resented rude remarks about their colour and showed they could take care of themselves. The few police they met were their pals in no time. They visited and quickly made friends with the children and mistress at Throop day school and for several months attended there as regular

scholars. By the time they left us they were able to send home to Mother quite readable notes of thanks.

One of the most amusing games they played one day at home was to set up all their belongings, boots and so on and pretend to open a shop with ticket-labels on the various items more or less as they had seen in the shop windows. One I remember was "Olivers' Venerable Boots". Olivers was a well-known boot-shop on Poole Hill but where they got the 'venerable' from no one knew.

When Hugh left home in 1887 he "left behind him" a girl named Annie Bull who, I am told, taught me my first phrase, to say "the cow with the crumpled horn". But there were no after-effects of this attachment. On the 1899 visit he found another charmer, quite by chance, I believe, and a match was arranged. He went back to his job in Rhodesia where he was magistrate and all sorts of other things, holding the post of Viceroy in a country as big as England with HQ at Abercorn at the southern tip of lake Tanganyika. The next time he came on leave with the intention of marrying the girl of '99 fate intervened on board ship. He met and fell in love with Beatrice Sykes (Billy). The fact that she too was on her way home to marry someone else seems to have made no difference. She, by the way, had gone out following the Boer War on a government appointment to work among Boer families in the concentration camps. The double involvement was adjusted and the marriage was duly solemnised at St. Margaret's, Westminster. They spent their leave in Bournemouth and Yorkshire, her home county, and then returned to Abercorn where she became a sound help to him and a much esteemed lady. Eventually he retired and Billy died after a painful illness at The Bluff in 1928. Ruth, her sister, had left her job in Greece to come home and help - she looked after Hugh and later became his very successful second wife. He latterly led a quiet, retired life but was always ready to tell stories of his adventures. After a short illness he died in January 1950.

Leigh came next. After learning his trade as a bricklayer and plasterer with one of Bournemouth's early builders, George Lawson (later Lawson and Donkin, Architects) he worked on a good deal of the town's early development and finally extended his activities as a builder but always kept one foot on the land. About 1910 there arrived here on a visit two brothers named Billett, whose father used to be the miller at Throop. They were friends of the family and the boys were chums of Leigh. For years this family had been farming on the Canadian Prairies and had just found themselves in a position to build a brick house so Leigh, with brother-in-law Meaden Troke as a helper, went out in 1911 and spent the whole summer

near Regina where he built the Billetts' brick house. Quite an adventure, of course, and Leigh's stories of Canada were family talk for years.

On leaving school Harold also went for a time to Guillaume's office. This was in Yelverton Road and stood there till the present Echo office was built. When it was demolished Guillaumes moved to Walton House at the corner of St. Stephen's Road, which house I remodelled for them under Seal and Hardy. Harold moved to Jenkins and Son in Holdenhurst Road. He married his first cousin, Min, daughter of Uncle Stephen. Their first house was a cottage, now a fish shop, in Malvern Road, Moordown. I don't remember the wedding but I do recall visiting them there. Their next move was to a large four-storey house in Cotlands Road, belonging to the firm, where Min set up a boarding-house for young men. One of them, Charles Marriott, I came across in 1946 and built for him a new house to replace the one demolished by a bomb in Gerald Road. Harold soon became the right-hand man for Nelson Jenkins, one of the sons of the original Henry (Putty) Jenkins. Nelson was a tall, dark, "John Blunt" sort of character, a great pusher and a very noticeable sort of person. I remember him first as the Municipal Candidate at the town's first election in 1890. Father was helping at the Committee Rooms and I, though not much more than a baby, was somewhere about.

In 1896, when Harold was 26, the firm opened a branch in Southampton, which town was booming because of the enlargement of the docks and the transfer of the Atlantic shipping from Liverpool. With some help from his wife he did most of the office work and lived over the offices at Portland Place. By his drive and social contacts, Nelson soon worked up a very big business but these same social contacts eventually caused Nelson's downfall and, after a time, he retired to a quieter life in Bournemouth. This left Harold in charge and he went through a worrying period of hard work which caused him to become quite bald. This was, he said, to his advantage as, by taking off his hat, he was able to appear older than he was. The office later moved to Above Bar in the High Street. The Bournemouth office at this time was run by the then head of the firm, Walter Jenkins. When he died the firm was turned into a limited company with Mr. George Martin, head of staff, as Managing Director. Either then or later, Harold became a director and in due course joint managing director. As the branch office grew, Harold moved to a new house at Highfield and worked up a large country business.

Harold and Min both developed health problems and paid periodic visits to Bristol for the baths. As Min became less

able they moved from their house to a flat in Ordnance Place. Some time in the early years of the century he had a breakdown and took a trip on a tramp-steamer as far as Odessa. In 1911 he took a real holiday eastwards via Suez Canal to East Africa and across country to Abercorn where he spent some time with Hugh and joined him on his trip home. They arrived together at Redhill just after Christmas 1911. Leigh and Meaden Troke came back from Canada at about the same time, having built the Billetts' house at Regina. It was an exciting time for the family, a kind of Empire Conference, and as you can imagine, it would have been much more so if Dad had lived to join in and question everybody as he so well could.

Queen Victoria had died, Edward VII had come and passed on and the times began to change in many ways. George V was on the throne and, although we could not know it, greater changes were not far away. Harold began to think it time he had a rest and contemplated semi-retirement. He wasn't very certain what he wanted to do or where he wanted to live. He had lived a pretty strenuous life, office at night and travelling around all day, long distances by cycle, pony-trap and train. Pony-trap days were, however, coming to an end. He bought his first car, a Rover, about 1904, but never got much use out of that early model. One day he suddenly suggested to me that we set off on the Saturday to look for a building-site where he could set up a chicken farm. When the day came, off we went by cycle and, for some reason, made for Canford Cliffs, Sandbanks, Parkstone, Poole, and then via Broadstone to Canford Estate Office. There we had an interview with Maby, the estate agent for Lord Wimborne whose estates were being sold off in small lots and asked what was going. Maby pointed to a map on the wall. "There you are", he said, "4000 acres coloured yellow is the estate, put your finger on what you fancy and we'll quote terms". Harold had a look and would you believe it, after all our wanderings that day put his finger on a piece of Land just where we'd started out that morning! Redhill Common, near Redhill Park, was a piece of heath-covered country high up above Wimborne Road and covering perhaps 100 acres, divided into two by the County boundary. It had been the playground of the village for centuries and the drying-ground in later years for numerous hand-laundries. This, apart from various pieces which had been enclosed and built on, on the quiet I expect, we had always looked upon as Poors Common and the cottagers had made full use of it for rough grazing for their animals and for cutting turf for their fires. It was a shock to us natives to discover that what we called 'our common' was in fact privately owned. It appears that at some time there had been a deal between the Estate and the

authorities and the Dorset part of the common became part of the Canford Estate. The Hampshire part came under Sir George Meyrick then but has long since been transferred to the County Borough of Bournemouth as an open space.

So Harold put a ring round what he wanted and bought it. He later added some odd holdings which he bought separately and found himself the proud owner of his old boyhood playground. At about this time the Bournemouth Land Society bought the remainder as well as some fields southwards and made Redhill Drive, and from Harold bought part of his lot and continued Redhill Drive northwards to join the Wimborne Road at Redhill. This cut his lot in two so he sold the eastern part to Harold Barnes who, with his father-in-law, Ralph, developed it and built himself a bungalow called Hiropi. Harold built himself the house he called Restmore and set up his chicken farm. Before that I took over a small piece from him and built Furzedene - but more about that later.

Harold's hobby was boats. His first boat I remember very well; it was a twelve-foot river punt built from a design in the Boy's Own Paper while he was still single and living with Ralph in a cottage at the corner of Wimborne Road and Pine Road. It was built in the parlour and I fancy the window had to be removed to get the finished boat out. On a well remembered day the two brothers brought it down through Redhill on a pair of hand-carts. I was perhaps five or six years old, I was very excited and knowing about what time the great event was due, posted myself, not in our house, but in the window of a neighbour, Frenches, who lived in what was always called, from its former use, "the smithy". A boy of about my age whose christian name I forget, one of the Frenches, was lying in bed ill and that is why I was there so that we could watch together the boat come down the road and down the lane to the river at Riddlesford. The Frenches had a garden on the riverside belonging to their cottage and a boat of sorts which they used as an unofficial ferry. I have no recollection of the launching but I remember going out with Harold on the winter floods and sailing, yes, he had a sprit sail, on what in the summer was meadows.

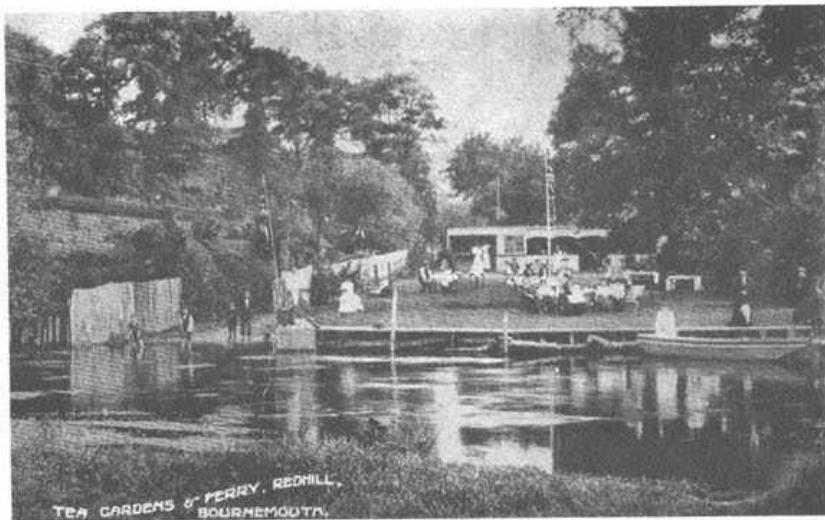
Later he became more ambitious and owned a very smart yacht called the 'Winsome' with sleeping accommodation for three and a permanent skipper who had accommodation for'ard. My only trip in her was two days with Hugh and Billy from Southampton to Yarmouth and back. Later this boat was sold foreign and then Harold had built at Poole a smaller boat of the Poole fishing type. When he was without a boat of his own he took on a charter. The last of these charters was during the week before August Bank Holiday 1914. Anyone living now old enough to remember that date will pause here and reflect for a moment

because, though we did not realise it at the time, a new era was beginning.

Harold was a born soldier and for years his nickname had been "the Colonel". He had served his time and was on the reserve of officers of the Territorial Army. The Territorials were in camp on Salisbury Plain and he was in close touch with them and with current events generally; so swift was the development of events, however, that when he put to sea for his holiday he soon found the Solent closed to sea traffic and a general sense of catastrophe. He and his companion left the boat at Lymington and came home to Restmore where he awaited orders. On the Monday he was off to join the Regiment, 7th Battn. Hampshire (T), then having, as they thought, their annual Summer Camp on the Plain near the 'Bustards'. But instead of breaking camp at the end of the week they had to soldier on for the duration. All the Territorials, in spite of their lack of real hard training, were anxious to get to France, especially after what soon happened at home, but Fate ordained otherwise. Regular soldiers from India and other territories overseas were brought back to France and their places were taken by the Territorials. They held the front in India alone, often one company of 'Terriers' in place of a battalion of Regulars.

Harold stayed in India for a year but wanted action. He was able to get home leave for business reasons, so he said, but it was France and action he wanted. During his leave he was called to give a talk to some recruits at the Bournemouth Drill Hall and whilst he was there a telegram arrived asking the officer in command for a one-man draft, a captain. This was his chance and he took it - off he went to France to join the 15th London R.Y. The details of his service I never got but later he was awarded the M.C. and promoted Major and sent home on a course. Later, whilst acting—C.O. of his battalion he was mentioned in despatches and offered either a D.S.O. or promotion. He chose the latter and became Lt. Col. 4th R.W.F. I never saw him from August 1914 to March 1918. He was home on leave then and I saw him in London for an hour on his way back to the Front. when he got back to France he was rushed straight into the thick of the great German break-through - for 72 hours he had no let-up at all and got several doses of gas. He carried on until one day the General said he looked ready for a break and ordered him home on sick-leave.

He arrived home very tired, but not ill. He took to his bed to rest, developed a liver attack, a common experience for him, became worse, lapsed into a coma and after a few days passed on to his great reward. Although he died in his bed he met a soldier's end. So we lost a brilliant man, a



Postcard of 1907



**Marshall's Tea and Strawberry Gardens, Redhill, Bournemouth.**  
Parties Catered for. 1s A few minutes from Moordown Tram Terminus

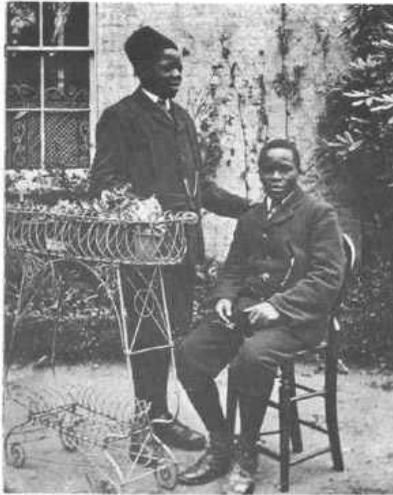
Postcard of 1904



The Marshall Family in 1888  
(Pascoe is the small boy in the front)



The inhabitants of Redhill in front of the triumphal arch built to welcome the Prince of Wales when he drove through the hamlet in 1890. The future King Edward VII was known within his family as 'Bertie' - hence the use of his name of Albert rather than that of Edward



Kasma and Baruta, rescued by Hugh Marshall from a band of Arab slave-traders in 1899 and brought back from Africa to Bournemouth



The cottage used as a bakery and serving the whole area at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century

brother I shall never forget - as real to me today as ever he was. He was laid to rest at Throop and was buried with full military honours according to his rank. The troops and band were New Zealanders, both brown and white, from Christchurch Barracks. It was a hot, sunny day in August 1918, the Maoris were men of medium height and very broadly built. I can still see the bandsmen, with perspiration pouring down their faces, playing a piece then new to me - Handel's "Largo".

Min sold Restmore to Mr. Aldridge and bought a house in Talbot Road. She was not in a poor state of health but she soon deteriorated and after many years more or less bed-ridden she died in the house.

## Chapter 12

Phoebe, my eldest sister, went into domestic service in Bournemouth and Yorkshire and was at one time with Uncle Lot looking after his mother-in-law who became mentally afflicted. This experience did Phoebe no good. She married Meaden Troke, a farmer son of Andrew Troke, who was one of Dad's schoolmates and lived at Throop. The Trokes farmed at Burton and later at Becton and on Andrew's death Meaden took over the farm. They had one boy, Rodney (after Rodney Smith, the gypsy evangelist), Sylvester (after Sylvester Horne, the great preacher) Lloyd (after Lloyd George, the great Prime Minister), but all these fine names were too much for him. Flo was a needlewoman and, after Granny's death, became Mother's helper. She had her hands full for 'make-do and mend' was all the go, even then. She married Alan Troke in 1900. He was a son of George (Young) Troke, baker, grocer and postmaster of Castle Road. Mrs. George Troke was a kindly soul as I shall tell later. She was the one who went with Mother in service in London. Alan was a well-known figure in old Winton, one of the first messenger-boys and later a postman. He died in January 1932 at the age of 58. Their daughters are Millicent, who married Charles Turtle and carries on the Castle Road post office for the third generation, and Ella, who married Arthur Mallett, the Westbourne furnisher.

After her schooldays Sophie continued at Throop as a pupil teacher, took some correspondence courses and attended such part-time training as was then available at Bournemouth Technical College. When I was about ten years old I remember driving with her to a Saturday morning session in Drummond Road, after which we went on to Southbourne beach to see the dead

whale that had come in there and where I saw for the first time Southbourne pier, or rather its ruins. Sophie married Will White, baker, of Kinson. He came to a tragic end - knocked down by a car when passing behind his van. Sophie carried on and brought up her large and interesting family. She was very proud of her children; Doreen, the teacher of young children, a Guider and Sunday School teacher; Philip, carpenter-apprentice to me, later manager of the original White's Bakery, then soldier in the Tank Corps in World War II and now Motor Engineer; Ruth, a trained office worker, WREN for years, Guider, who found herself a husband from the navy, Harald Olsen, a 'writer'; Denis, grocer, manager of White's after Philip and a special constable; Miriam, for some years at Margaret McMillan's Nursery School, married Reg Brown, solicitor's clerk, at Swanage. Sophie died in 1947.

By her age Ada should have come in before Sophie. In her young days she served as a parlour-maid in Bournemouth and Brighton, later she helped at home and had many terms of ill-health which became more frequent in later life. She married Will Hunt who ran a successful milk business at Redhill and later a farm at Hinton Admiral. Their only child was Nellie who married Kenneth Sykes. Ada was a very kindly, understanding woman and I have many pleasant recollections of her dealings with myself as a child.

Nellie, although several years older than I, was the nearest to me in age and, of course, we quarrelled and fought quite a lot. When I grew big enough to be able to run she had a good deal of teasing to put up with. She did a little pupil-teaching, took lessons at chapel from Samuel Eldridge, learned to play and became the organist. Later she took a job as a waitress at Frodsham's in Gervis Place and was afterwards manageress. When the tea-gardens opened at Redhill she was its mainstay. In 1915 she married Owen Stroud who took her back to Lusaka in Rhodesia. When he retired in 1921 they came home with their young family, Love and Susan, and bought the old home, Riverside, where they settled.

After Nellie came Millicent whom I never knew as she died in infancy. She was the only child we lost and though little was ever said about it I know my parents felt the loss keenly.

### **Chapter 13**

My own advent, to make up five a side, came, I think, as a shock to all, even my mother, who ought to have known the signs by this time. She was, she said, so much taken by surprise

that there was literally no provision made for my reception, not even a shirt. It so happened that Mrs. Levi Hammerton, next door, had a boy who had just grown out of his first issue so she was able to fit me out.

Doctors were few and far between in those days. Ours was Dr. Montgomery of Kinson, who covered all Kinson, Wallisdown, Howe, Redhill and Moordown, and on this occasion he seems to have been the right man in the right place at the right time. In any case I understand he saved my life for I had made no sound and had not begun to breathe by the time I should have; he, it seems, was quick to notice this and set me off on my journey with a few sound whacks with the towel end.

Not long afterwards I was again in trouble. On Saturday nights all the clean linen was in the drawers ready for the household Sunday change, with none of the drawers quite closed. It was winter-time and a lamp was kept burning all night for warmth. I was tucked in between my parents; during the night the lamp started to smoke as all lamps do at times, and kept on smoking until, when my parents woke up - what a sight! The whole room was thick with greasy lamp-black, all the clean clothes were black, the bed was covered and I was almost finished - my eyes and nose were choked with the filthy stuff - and I can imagine there was a to-do. A smoky lamp was always a dread thought in our home after that.

I feel I must break off my own saga to tell about our village. Redhill has no claim to fame. As far as I know no old houses, no ancient church, and up to now no world-famous men or women - but at the same time it had and has a unique design, though like a good many other small places it has been overwhelmed by progress and has already lost its identity. No newcomer knows of its existence, even the name has been taken over in Redhill Drive, Redhill Heights and Redhill Park. The place is unique in that it is in two counties, has a river for its northern boundary and is in two parishes - Kinson, Dorset, and Holdenhurst, Hampshire. By standing on the county boundary on the bank of the River Stour one can throw a stone across the river into West Parley parish, Dorset, and another into Hurn Parish, Hampshire. The river, some 100 feet wide, swift, crooked and treacherous, from the county boundary up-stream belongs to the riparian owners, that is owners of riverside land owned the river half-way across. Our family owned about half a mile at one time. This ownership of the river will crop up again later. From the county boundary downstream as far as Iford (Sheepwash), the river rights are in the possession of Lord Malmesbury, regardless of the ownership of the land on its banks. His title is said to date from

the time of Henry VIII who took the rights from the monks of Christchurch Priory and sold them for £500 to Malmesbury's predecessors. Below Sheepwash the river is now under the control of West Hants Water Company. Because of these river rights there has never been any sort of proper use made of the stream for any but privileged people. ,

Although there was no definite boundary we always considered the village to start at Drove Corner (Sandy Way) in the west and to continue on each side of what is now Wimborne Road only as far as Redhill Cross (Castle Lane Junction) in the east. There were tracks going off south by the Horse and Jockey, up what is now Park Lane, and on the north was a lane down to the river where was the ford, 'Riddlesford', leading to West Parley. This ford was in regular use by certain people up to the opening of the new road and bridge in 1911, since when it has become too deep for use; now the track itself is, I suppose, lost to public use for ever. At the ford there had been for generations a ferry but it was only a sort of private 'obligement' and never recognised as a legal ferry.

I am not sure if I was an abnormal child but I well remember how I dreaded change of any sort - if anyone went away or changed his address it struck me as dreadful. When I was called upon to give up the freedom of our garden and go to school I thought it terrible and when, after about a year, I was promoted from the infants' room to the big school I was very put out and only because I was promised it was but a temporary move did I finally consent to move. Again, when I was nine and was told that my father was at the point of death, it seemed to me that here was the end of all things.

The difference between our village as I knew it over sixty years ago and now is first, I suppose, the fact that the type of resident and his way of life is so changed, and that what was a distinct village unit, more or less self-contained, is now quite submerged and lost in the general growth of the district. Other changes are the new buildings, mostly on the Hampshire side, and the loss of old houses on the Dorset side, and the road through - from a width of perhaps twenty feet without footpaths it is now widened with footpaths and a modern surface. The old road surface was terrible! In the spring the worst parts would have a dressing of coarse natural gravel laid down for perhaps fifty yards, then about fifty yards would be left, then another patch would be laid. This was left for general traffic to cope with and grind in as best it could; the unmade patches were left as a relief to horses. When this new gravel had been worn into ruts, old Bill Scott, the roadman, would come along, rake the stones in from the side of the ruts to fill them and then perhaps gravel the remainder

of the road; only so many loads were allowed in the year. In consequence the roads were always mud, loose stones or dust.

We complain today of noise on the roads but we nowadays never see what was a fairly common sight in those days. When anyone was very ill and the noise of iron horse-shoes and iron-shod wheels on the hard, gravelly road became unbearable, the road outside the house would be kept covered with straw, partly to deaden the sound of the traffic and partly to warn passers-by that silence was desired. There was, of course, no motor traffic at all, but fairly often a traction engine would come along with threshing gear, ploughing tackle, roundabouts or a load of bricks - such traffic would grind down the stones for a time. Later a steamroller would come by but, as the newly-made road never had a camber its middle soon became water-logged. The dust from these old roads in summer time was penetrating, and the smell of it is with me now, even worse than today's petrol fumes, I believe!

The general traffic through the village was fairly regular so that we knew to whom most of the vehicles belonged, where they came from and where they were going. On the spot there were four baker's vans, about six ponies and a donkey or two and several cows. The most regular vehicle was a two-horse milk van belonging to Petty's Dairy. This, driven by a man named Stanton, started from Hampreston, picked up churns on the way and delivered its load in the town twice a day. On the second journey he passed our house at 12.45 (12.30 on Sundays) and so regular was he that Mother would set her clock by him. He was called "Mr. Quarter to One".

There being no public transport at all it was a common sight to see several passengers up with the milk. It was supposed that Stanton earned a bonus for delivering to time and that he got a trifle from his passengers - on his retirement he built himself a house at Hampreston, supposedly paid for from his bonus and tips. If the milk-cart which was to meet him at Kinson was late he never waited, so Jack Cullen had to chase after him; but he would stop only at his usual place, the top of Lawfords Hill.

Market carts to the number of perhaps twenty came through on Wednesdays and Saturdays between 9.0 and 10.0. They were smallholders from Holt, Verwood and that district with all kinds of vegetables and fruit which they delivered direct to private houses and shops. One of these, a man named Hopgood, had a piebald horse; he was always last and, as time went on, he used to come later and later. I've known him to go through into town as late as 5 p.m. He was always held up to us boys as an awful example of a pub-crawler.

Then there was Burden's van from Poole on Saturdays. It delivered wholesale groceries to small shops. We always looked out for it because the village shop often ran short and it always brought something we were waiting for. Cluett's van came regularly with paraffin, brushes and tin-ware. Bulgin's from Ferndown called with home-made sweets and peppermint rock.

Daily throughout the summer, soon after breakfast, there would go through several sets of four horses to Wimborne, and at about 3 p.m. would come the coaches, Royal Blue, Tantivy, Tally Ho and others. These were real four-in-hand coaches with a horn-blower at the rear, taking sight-seers from the Square to Wimborne for the Minster and tea. The spare horses which went through in the morning were to bring the coaches home to the Square at 6 p.m. The fare, I think, was ten shillings. Then there were other less romantic-looking coaches with only two horses, Shamrock, Rambler, Excelsior, etc., lighter vehicles. All these later turned to motors.

After market at Wimborne and Ringwood on Tuesdays and Wednesdays there would come through droves of cattle and sometimes sheep, going either to a slaughterhouse or some farm, in charge of a professional drover. Nowadays, of course, the animals are moved in special transporters.

## **Chapter 14**

My earlier reference to the County boundary relates, of course, to the time before Bournemouth took in Kinson ward and so swallowed a piece of Dorset, some twenty-one years ago. In my early days the inhabitants were, to the east - Sam Amy who, with four sons, ran a landscape gardener's business with pigs as a side-line; Sargent's bakery employed four men and three horses with Mrs. Sargent (second wife) running a grocery and meal store. They had two fuel ovens heated with wood, fir faggots; these would be put into the oven itself and fired long enough to get up the surrounding brickwork to a certain heat when the ashes would be drawn, the oven swabbed out and the bread, all cottage-loaves then, put in on long-handled wooden spades called peals. If the cleaning out was not done properly or if the oven floor had become worn some ashes would be left behind and these came out later as part of the crust. The baking would be done by about eleven o'clock and then off would go the vans and it would take them until late at night to deliver over a wide district. This firm owned and occupied two cottages and the ovens were on the lower ground floor.

In Sargent's garden was a well only about six feet deep with perhaps four feet of water. It was approached from the road by a flight of steps. This was the only source of water for the whole village save for those who had a rainwater tank. We had one which held perhaps a thousand gallons, and we used this water as long as it lasted for all purposes. Whenever it became empty it was cleaned out, not otherwise, and what a mess! When the rainwater was finished all our water had to be fetched in buckets by hand from the well. My method was to use an iron hoop which, laid on the buckets against the handles, enabled one to walk in the middle and kept the buckets free of the legs. Piped water did not arrive until about 1908.

In later years I re-converted Sargent's two cottages into one and my first home as a married man was here at Moorside. Next door was the old smithy, occupied at this time by Harry French. With this cottage was a small plot used as a garden on the riverside (now tea-gardens). French kept a boat and, as had his predecessors, 'obliged' people from over the water by ferrying them across. There was a vacant plot next on which was a pit and a few logs, for this was, before my time, the village saw-pit where imported timber and local tree-trunks were converted into planks by manpower, top-sawyer and bottom-sawyer. The log to be sawn was secured to cross beams over the pit; the top sawyer stood on top of the log and the bottom sawyer in the pit. With a long-handled saw worked vertically they thus produced building timber. The saw they used was still in our workshop, I remember; the last time the pit was used was to produce timber for building work at Riverside from old scaffold poles. Valley View, Ada's house, was later built on this pit and the pit became the dairy.

Immediately next was a short road leading into our stable-yard and cart-sheds. Off this was a drive along the front of three houses starting with a lean-to, our stable and workshop. Next door was Kentells, a house which at some former time had been a beer-house called 'The Hole in the Wall'. Old William Kentell had a donkey with such tender ears that it was quite a pantomime to see him being harnessed, before which he had to be taken out and allowed to roll in the dust. This animal seems to have lived chiefly on furze-tops. The old man would cut them with a special home-made champer and mince them up in a tub. He had a wife and daughter and their livelihood came from hand laundrywork and the produce of a large riverside garden. The old man fetched all their water from the well on yokes, and if we boys had been first and stirred up the bottom, thus making the water cloudy, there was no end of a row.

This the only cottage I've known where, at the end of the week, all the ground floors were sanded to a pattern. I don't know why but I remember the old man talking to me one summer evening about the great fire of Chicago in 1870 (he pronounced it 'Chigarico') and of his fear in the early nineties of a 'Eu-rop-e-ian' war as he called it. He was one of a liberal deputation from Bournemouth to London years before, taking part in some large demonstration; there were many banners carried on poles with guide ropes. One of these ropes got adrift and was a nuisance to the old man, flapping round his head, so he got out his large pocket-knife and cut the rope as far as possible above his head. But the crowds were so dense that he could not lower his arm again so he marched along knife aloft looking, I expect, most desperate and, no doubt, giving a sinister appearance to a perfectly peaceful demonstration.

They had two sons, navvies, who were both old soldiers and spent most of their time away from home on public works. Jim was a very tall, upright man with a high pointed hat and long Melton-cloth jacket with enormous pockets inside and out, mole-skin trousers cut short at the bottom and with yorks. Yorks are straps which go round the legs just below the knees, like garters, to give the knees freedom when using pick and shovel. When we boys asked what they were for we were always told they were to keep the dust out of the wearer's eyes. The dress described above, together with a sleeved waistcoat with four pockets, each with a flap, and a neckerchief was traditional wear for a navvy. This might be varied for Sundays with pheasant-eye corduroy trousers with four rows of stitching round the bottoms and, of course, a silver watch-chain decorated with silver shields or coins and a huge silver watch and, often, earrings. Anything for which no accommodation could be found in the pockets would be carried in a red and white dotted handkerchief slung over the shoulder on a stick.

Jim was very reserved but Harry was more talkative. He was, like his mother, very deaf but he got his deafness working in compressed air in one of London's first tubes. He was at home one summer getting over this and worked in our garden for a time. One evening, whilst very much in his cups, he kept me enthralled with his tales (although he stuttered and was deaf) and taught me to say 'The House that Jack built'. That's the only time I remember being taught a nursery rhyme.

Next was a cottage converted from Jim Lawford's turf-house. The tenant was Harry Chalk, a bricklayer, who I remember as chief bearer at Grandma's funeral. He had a large family with one girl about my age. She and I, at the age of four, went through a very serious form of marriage. So do children play, and what odd things we do remember!

Our house, Riverside, originally adjoined Uncle Lot's home built two up and two down. Later it was enlarged with a 'back-house', and about 1897 was added a much more imposing 'west wing' with a large room and larder on the ground floor and two bedrooms over. This was to provide accommodation for Hugh on his second leave.

## **Chapter 15**

Behind the sawpit and this row of houses were the gardens, mostly belonging to Riverside, perhaps two acres, partly on a high level and running down to the river bank. Here the bank was a sheer, red gravel face of some fifty feet in which, every year, a kingfisher nested. (The kingfisher is still there!) At the foot of the cliff was a narrow plot covered with wild cherry. In this garden was every kind of fruit and vegetable as well as grass for the pony. At a lower level was Wheatplot, later a strawberry field. Between the two levels was a succession of terraces made by father, planted with walnuts and filberts and grass-covered.

After Riverside came a pair of mud-walled, thatched cottages in the first of which lived and died Grandmother Lawford. In front of these houses was an orchard which, at that time, belonged to Levi Hammerton who also owned the second mud-walled cottage. This was historical, for here was a bakery run by Mother's Uncle James who supplied bread to the whole of early Bournemouth by means of a donkey-cart, delivering three times a week. He covered the district from Wick to Westbourne!

Hammerton's shop, built before my time, was, for those days, quite imposing. It was a general store including drapery and at the rear were two fuel ovens. It was Mr. Hammerton who provided my first shirt. Hammerton Bros. and Vine were a firm of builders in quite a big way and Mrs. Hammerton ran the shop and bakery. They went out of business just before my time and Dad took over the property including a pair of houses next door. It was to one of these cottages that I returned after the first World War. Opposite the shop was Hammerton's workshop and builders yard, a Mission Hall and cottage and two other cottages, all long gone to permit road-widening. The rest of the land is now part of Restmore.

That is the whole of Redhill in Dorset as I remember it first, except for the common. From the south side of the road rose up an irregular bank some fifty feet high to a flat, open

piece of country covered with heath and gorse and extending over several acres. This was our playground and it was here the home-laundry people had their drying ground. It was quite a climb with baskets of damp clothes, but a fine drying-place where one could see away to Salisbury Plain. On this tract was an enclosure of perhaps two acres where lived Charlie Burt, the plasterer. He brought up a large family having been married three times.

Redhill in Hampshire had no houses on the north side but a letter-box at Redhill Cross. On the south side going east was a row of cottages, since demolished; next a cottage, still in use and occupied by Job Wiseman. He had a pony and van and his chief occupation was to fetch coal from Poole and hawk it from door to door. He is the man who complained of Poole Iron Foundry's cast iron; he said it was not up to quality these days because they put more sand in the mixture.

Hammerton's cottages on the hill still stand, so do the 'Horse and Jockey' hotel, re-built in the nineties, and the three cottages at the cross then belonging to Muscliffe Farm. The main road then ran up Lawford's Hill. The cut across the fields from the Jockey to the top of the hill was not made till later. All the land from the Jockey to Redhill Cross and from there southwards up to and including what is now Cowper Road was farmed, most of it being part of Muscliffe Farm. .

The path at Redhill now called Park Lane is very old and was known to us as 'over stiles'. This was our short cut to Moordown and beyond and led over the common, across the fields and over two stiles. Off this lane was, and is, another track and several mud-walled cottages, still in use. In one of these was Thomas Osborne, a small-holder, one of a large family of such, and in another Ned Steele, the keeper. Ned was always dressed in a three-quarter velveteen coat with large pockets (supposed to be full of nets, ferrets or dead rabbits) and a flat, round black hat with elastic under the chin - of course he had a gun and a dog behind.

In later years I have read a lot about pioneers in America, men of rough and ready habits, living off the land with the aid of a gun, fiercely independent and individualistic, dating from mid-eighteenth century onwards and, reading those tales, their life seems far away and remote. But looking back to my boy-hood I now see that the men I knew were not far ahead of those. Most of these men were more at home on the land than working in the town. They could turn their hands to anything. Every house had a shot-gun or two and men dearly loved a sharp winter to bring in the wildfowl. Poaching was second nature to them; fishing was not indulged in much but to go out all night and

'clod' for eels was considered to be a great game. An 'eel clod' was made in this way - first, collect a supply of long, fat worms. One way was to go out with a lantern after dark following a shower and pick them up as they travelled about the garden. Next, take a ball of worsted and a long, thin needle. Thread the worms on to the worsted for several yards, then loop the whole mess up to make a 'clod' or bundle. Attach this to a line and the line to a pole and there you are! The next thing was to borrow or steal a punt and set off up the river after dark, usually on Saturday night, tie up at a likely spot, drop the clod over and if the weather was right the eels would bite, be hauled up and dropped into the boat; sometimes a big haul, at others nothing.

Another method was to spear the eels. An eel spear was made of thin steel, split into fingers a little apart and fixed to a long, thin pole. This was a daylight job and, by working upstream in shallow water where there was a growth of weeds, from the boat it was possible to make a plunge and often bring up a fish entwined in the fingers of the spear. We boys had our own method; that was to get a basket, fairly wide and with a flat side and hold this on the river bottom in the weeds whilst another boy would walk quickly downstream, tread the weeds, and drive the fish into the basket. I've caught many a meal that way.

Having caught your eel you then had to skin it, a quite impossible job until you knew the trick, for they are full of movement and too slippery to hold. Have two steel forks and a sharp pen-knife. With a fork in each hand pin down the fish through the tail; pin down the head, throat up, with the other fork; then cut the head half off. Slit the stomach open and with the thumb-nail remove the innards. Now take out the forks, turn back the head and the skin can be removed like taking off your stockings. Next cut the eel into lengths and wash it. Then fry or boil it. If all this is done within a few hours of catching the eel I have known the pieces to jump out of the pan! But what a feast!

## **Chapter 16**

My days at Redhill were very much concerned with the river. We always had a boat and riverside property which at one time reached from the county boundary westwards upstream to the fence of what is now the sewage works and included an island which was opposite that point. The island was divided into two

by a ditch - the lower half was ours and the upper half belonged to West Parley farm. Sometime between the wars this land was taken away by the Catchment Board, so our island was no more.

All my spare time was spent on or in the river and, what with eels, fish, moorhens' eggs, mushrooms, watercress, etc., there were always things to do. Across the river was a ford called Riddlesford and this was the only way to East and West Parley other than the Longham bridge upstream and Pig Shoot ford at Throop or Iford Bridge. It was in regular use by certain people, especially the West Parley Farm milk-cart, until the New Road Bridge was built by Lady Wimborne about 1910. When the river was rising in the autumn the crossing was unsafe as the current was swift and the bed shelved downstream. One morning the milk-cart came down from Parley as usual and, although the water was up, the driver took a chance; half-way across the horse stumbled, lost his footing and was carried away downstream in deep water. Both horse and driver were drowned. On my way home from school that day, taking the riverside path from Muscliffe and not having heard of the mishap, I saw what I thought was a head of hair in the weeds. I mentioned this when I got home and it was later found to be the horse's tail.

The boys from the village as well as from Moordown and Winton used the river quite a lot and in holiday-time there would be scores on the bank stark naked all day. Everybody learned to swim in the shallows on bundles of reeds before we ever saw such things as water-wings. After we had learnt to swim we used to venture into deeper water and the best swimmers would swim from the island to Parley and back. There never was a recognised ferry at Redhill but on the plot (now the tea-gardens) belonging to the old smithy was always a boat and whoever was owner of the land would oblige passengers either way.

## **Chapter 17**

Uncle Lot, the farmer, became very interested in the work of the Salvation Army in their early days and, although he was never a member of the Army, he helped them a great deal in a quiet way and became very attached to some of their leaders, including the old General Booth. He was one of a body of men who worked at the idea of sending suitable cases overseas but I think he was perhaps more practical than some of them and foresaw certain difficulties. Anyhow, at his own expense, he joined a committee of investigators who went across to Canada to see what could be done to establish a farm colony.

This was, I think, about 1896. His wife, Aunt Susan, ran the farm whilst he was away. I don't exactly know the outcome of it all but it seems he thought there was plenty of land to 'colonise' here at home first. His kit contained a lot of Burberry garments, some of which I wore years later. Burberry cloths were invented by a Basingstoke outfitter named Burberry who was a friend of Lot and a fellow Guardian. His garments were some of the first ever made and the secret was proofing the yarn, as distinct from Mackintosh material which was proofed after weaving. Later, Hugh became friendly with the Burberry family and used a lot of their stuff in Africa. It was light, warm and untearable.

Just after the turn of the century Lot toyed with the idea of retiring from his farm and coming back to live among the scenes of his boyhood. In preparation for this he began to buy, with Dad's help, properties which had a sentimental, and perhaps future, value for him. These included about two acres of land between the Jockey and Redhill Cross, about three acres of field at West Way, about two acres of field behind that and an old cottage and garden off Nursery Road, all of which Dad cultivated for a time and later sold to J.J. Norton who developed it with his Redhill Park estate. There was also a meadow across the river at Redhill on the Hampshire side of the county boundary and called Home Meadow, a pair of mud-walled cottages and gardens at Kinson, later sold to Thomas White who built a pair of cottages for Will and Gus in Manor Farm Lane. He took over from Dad 'The Pines', now 'Vernalls', which he intended to live in and later, when he died, left for his widow's use. At Redhill he bought Sargent's bakery premises and the old cottage adjoining called 'The Smithy', with its riverside plot and the island. Adjoining this plot was a meadow which Dad had rented for years from Henry Austin at Ensbury Manor. This was now bought and later on the adjoining moor was acquired by Harold and Hugh.

Earlier on I referred to my having arrived in this world without a shirt - this state of affairs was soon adjusted for, according to the evidence of various photos, I seem to have been rigged out in a variety of more or less conventional outfits. At the age of six I was called upon to give up my wild life and start school. What I wore on that historic occasion I don't know but I do remember being chased down the garden as it was time to get ready and all I had on then was a shirt! I have been told that that was not an isolated instance either.'

Father was one of the school managers; in fact he was the correspondent or secretary. He drove me to Throop in the pony cart and took me in, very much against my will.

We were late of course, and it was quite an ordeal to pass through the one big room full of gaping children to the teacher's desk. What happened then I don't know but I was soon hustled into the smaller room, infants' class, and handed over to Olive Hunt, the mistress in charge there. This room had a gallery, that is rows of fixed seats rising one above the other and occupying about half the floor space. My year in the infants must have been to my liking because, when I was told the time had come to move up into the big school I was terrified and only agreed to go after I had been basely informed the move was only temporary.

Throop School was built in 1828 and run by the Congregational Church as a British School. The head teacher was a woman; often there were two sisters and a house was provided. All my sisters had a spell as pupil-teachers and Sophie intended to become a regular teacher. She took correspondence courses and had local training at the technical school but she never became fully certificated. There were about 120 children; boys and girls, from Moordown and Redhill in my time as well as children from Throop and Holdenhurst. The Minister, Rev. Samuel Eldridge, was a very well-educated little man who took a great interest in singing and playing and was also a keen amateur photographer. Many of the girls took lessons from him on the organ. He also went to great trouble to organise school concerts and give magic-lantern lectures. At one of these concerts I distinguished myself in the star part of "Who Killed Cock Robin?". I remember the inspector coming round about twice a year and taking classes. Head teachers would be very scared of these visits and warn each other from school to school when these gentlemen were about.

## Chapter 18

At the age of twelve I and several others decided on a move. We made up our minds that we ought to go to a larger school and, as far as I can remember, it was all arranged without much reference to our parents. At the end of the summer term we all shook hands and bade farewell to Throop and agreed to meet at the end of the holidays at Winton British School. This worked out as arranged for all the others but I was talked out of such a move by my parents. "If you want another school you shall have one, but not Winton - oh no! All your brothers went to Lansdowne British under Mr. Woodhouse and that is the place for you". And so it came to pass.

But what a move, what a step in the dark! Not a soul there I knew and not a boy there who knew me or even knew where

I came from. None of them had ever heard of Redhill, let alone been there - the place where the natives eat the missionaries - I really did come from the backwoods! Bournemouth was then quite another world to us, a place we visited on special days only and then only for a day on the sands. However, it had to be. It was three or four miles to go and no transport other than an old, solid—tyred bicycle, and if that broke down it meant walking in all weathers - whilst the roads, until one reached the town boundary at Cemetery Junction, were just mud and ruts in winter and stones and dust in summer.

The type of education given was, I think, very good indeed 'The Old Man' was great on General Knowledge and was very impatient with any of us he thought not sufficiently observant. He had been there over twenty years and had by that time old boys scattered all over the world, Empire-building he fondly hoped, and he was very delighted when he could read out to the class any letters or news from them. I was able to help him in this with news and letters from Hugh. Items of news from the daily press were frequently the subject of our lessons and I remember illustrations from newspapers being put up, sketches I suppose, because this was before newspapers ran a photo service. One such item I remember was the charge of the 21st Lancers at Omdurman, November 1898.

It was a mixed school and our places in class depended entirely on our ability in answering questions and periodic examinations. We thought a good deal more about which girl we could sit next to than we did about scholastic achievement! It was certainly not the fault of the school that I did not shine. 1900 came and in March I was fourteen and able to leave. About this time Bournemouth School was being built and I was most anxious to leave school and not have to go on there. School was never my strong point and I was determined to leave. To do what? Nobody seemed to have any very strong ideas on the matter, not even myself, but as I always enjoyed using a hammer and nails, and as building was very much in the family tradition, building it was to be. So I became apprenticed to Judd and Foot; the shop was in Norwich Lane at the back of St. Michael's Church. The firm had been quite a thriving concern in days gone by, and both Ralph and Hugh had been apprenticed there. .

By my time Foot had died and Judd only worked short days on the bench as a joiner. He was a very fast worker and was the best man I have ever met at sharpening edged tools. Ralph was still there and another carpenter, Charlie Ware. I stayed only about three years during which time we did a few new jobs, letting off other trades, but mostly it was a jobbing business.

I picked up a lot of general knowledge of the trade which came in useful later. Our timber came in un-planed planks and had to be reduced to the required size by hand. A good deal of my time was spent on this sort of hard, uninteresting work.

Judd was a kindly little man on the point of retiring. When he did so he went to live in a house he had built in Hankinson Road. He was a sidesman at Richmond Hill Church - when he talked in a whisper he emitted a whistling noise which was most noticeable when he tried to whisper in church. Sometimes he came to work after lunch in his better clothes with a gold watch-chain with a golden guinea hanging down - this was a sign that he was leaving early for some meeting and Charlie used to remark: "Hullo, he's wearing his ding-donger, he'll be away soon". He died during the 1914-18 war and Ralph had his affairs to clear up after the war.

In 1903 work was scarce and as there was a lot to do at home I left to work for father. He had just bought Hammertons shop and property. My first job was to convert it into two houses, leaving the shop and one room which Mother and Nellie ran as a general store and tea-room. We also now made a second way out from Riverside and the front garden in front of our house now became ours. Sargent, the baker, had just died and his business closed so the village was without a baker after having had one or more for over one hundred years. Uncle Lot bought Sargent's place and I converted it into two cottages, one of which we later called Moorside and which became my first married home in 1908. Lot also bought the next property, the old smithy with its riverside plot and the island. Here was another big job for me because he gradually worked up the idea of a tea-garden, after getting Dad and Mother and Nellie to agree to run it.

I built a tea-room, kitchen and shelter and a wharf. We had one boat which Ralph and I had built, an eighteen foot flat-bottomed craft for the ferry which Aunt Susan, with much ceremony, duly christened 'Victory'. We bought several other craft to let out for rowing parties. The river at the tea-garden was at times quite swift and to use the ferry-boat with a punt pole was quite a work of art especially as we were supposed to land at one certain spot on the opposite bank. The tea-garden became very popular indeed. The trams had just come to Moordown and folk came out for a ride and walked down to Redhill for tea. Home-produced eggs and strawberries and cream in season were our specialities.

It was a most difficult business to run, first because Mother was no business woman and tried to boss the whole show

from her own home. This meant she used to look after the shop and was forever going backwards and forwards to it. Nellie was at the tea-gardens. Ada was married and had her own home at Valley View but she turned in whenever she was wanted. All supplies for the tea-gardens, including water, had to be carried down from home, quite a long journey with many steps. As Mother would never accept a hired helper was needed, it meant any member of the family who could would come along and give a hand on busy days. All the water for tea and washing-up was heated by coal or wood in two ten gallon coppers. We had two or three men employed in the garden and with the animals on various plots of farm land. They used to do the heavy work, putting out and taking in the tables and chairs and, between whiles, running the ferry which was now in regular use for residents at all hours and for visitors to go across the fields to look at West Parley church. Another job for the men was cutting and delivering green fodder to the town in the spring for horses.

Everybody who could had horses then and they either came out to the farm to collect green stuff or had it delivered. We always delivered. It was a curious trade, quite dead now, I suppose. The earliest cut was rye, followed by clover, trifolium or vetches and it was sold by the rod. Yes, the old rod, pole or perch! A rod was what grew on a piece of land  $5\frac{1}{2}$  yards square and was sold for 1/- or  $\frac{1}{6}$  ready cut on the field, or  $\frac{3}{6}$  or  $\frac{4}{6}$  delivered. It depended on the crop whether one got much or little. Father soon found out that a rod was not always the same amount of feed so he had a system of his own and always loaded the stuff himself. He could gauge a heap or pook and so many pooks for him became a rod and everybody was satisfied. Owners who could would turn out their horses in the spring; those who could not do this relied on loose green feed for the animals' spring tonic. Many of the customers I still remember - doctors and cabmen as well as business-houses.

## **Chapter 19**

To make the ferry more convenient, so that anyone could work it we now adopted a very simple idea. A stout pole on either side of the river with a 100 ft. rope tied across, the painter of the boat attached to this on a sliding ring so that, with a little care, as many as twelve to twenty people could be got across with ease. However there was a snag. One day there came down through the field opposite a very quiet but, as

it turned out, a most formidable assembly none of whom I recognised in the distance. I went across with the boat quite innocently expecting to ferry them over but as soon as I got there I knew there were to be no passengers for me but only trouble - trouble which lasted for a long time. The leader of the group turned out to be a Mr. Coade, agent of the landowner, Prideaux Brune of St. Austell, Cornwall. Next was the farmer, Hayter, whose horse I mentioned earlier as having been drowned at the ford, several of his men and, behind the lot, John Sargent, the village carpenter with the biggest axe he could find across his shoulder. His mission was to demolish our posts and landing-stage. The days of 'every man for himself' were, of course, long since gone and anyhow I had no gun and was only a lad of seventeen, very much outnumbered and with a slight feeling of guilt. I had to listen to a lecture on the law of trespass, to promise to get Dad to call on the agent in the morning, but the post was not cut down. Instead Brune applied to the High Court for an injunction to forbid the landing of passengers on the river bank and, further, to prevent us from making up the road which ran through a broad ditch giving access to the meadow called Horn. Here was a pretty kettle of fish, no money in the kitty to fight and Dad and the boys all as mad as hatters.

Our case was that our post and landing-stage were erected in the river outside an existing fence post which we claimed to be the extent of their boundary and as for making up the road to Horn, well, if that was the way in surely we could repair it. But it was not so simple. Dad had plans made. Ralph made a scale model of the disputed area and all sorts of evidence was collected. Solicitors were consulted and finally Dad went up to Bedford Row with all his evidence and got Counsel's opinion on the problem - the ford was an undoubted right of way, the ferry had no legal status and the river bed belonged to the riparian owners. This meant that we could, without let or hindrance, use our ferry-boat, pick up passengers from our land and carry them across but they must be landed at the ford only and we must not, in any way, contact the river bed on their half of the river. As regards the right of way to Horn meadow this was a legal right of way but carried no right to repair same. So that was that and we had to bow to the Court's injunction or else ....

The case was settled out of court, Brune bought Horn meadow, it was useless to us anyhow. The ferry was quite useless under the above conditions so with much bitterness Dad finally agreed to pay a rent of, I think, about five shillings a year, to continue the ferry as we had been doing. The next trouble was that the farmer complained that our visitors did

not keep to the path, they trampled his crops and spoilt his hedges. We said that if this was so it was because the lane by the church was so muddy as to be impassable. They said "All right, you pay five pounds a year rent and we will repair the lane but you must warn your passengers to keep to the path". Nothing was ever done to the road and the rent was again raised. That was a bitter pill, but the crowning indignity came when the parish council put on a rate. Then we knew we had at last got civilisation! Oh, I forgot, this ruling re the river ownership stopped the letting of boats for hire as, although we had all the land on our side of the river up to the island, it meant keeping to our half of the river when on the water. Strangers could not be expected to do this of course but we, as a family, did and I suppose we visited the island more than ever. The trade at the tea-gardens grew and in time we added tennis courts, but shadows were coming on the scene. Lot died soon after the opening in 1903, and Dad died in 1908.

## **Chapter 20**

Then came August Bank Holiday 1914. That Saturday was the busiest day I had ever known. In separate teapots I made tea for 300 people. By standing at the hot-water tap for three hours I developed knee trouble which later turned to synovitis. This bothered me for a long time but it probably stopped me getting into worse trouble as it made me unfit for soldiering. That evening we had news which, whilst it was uncertain, looked and was ominous. Ralph had been with us at the tea-gardens all the afternoon and was, I expect, even more tired than I. As I had a motor-bike he asked me to go to the drill hall that night to see if there was any news or orders for him.

I found a reserve officer, Captain Druitt, in charge and he was very busy dealing with recruits reporting in. All he could say was the situation was tense, that the 1/7 Battalion then in camp on Salisbury Plain was not coming home and would Ralph come to the drill hall to help him. This news I took back to Ralph; he packed up, went down and didn't return home for three weeks although he was not officially taken back on the strength until later when the 2/7 Battalion was formed. Then he got back his old rank of Major-Quartermaster. He had retired a while before after doing over twenty five years, and being then over forty-five was ineligible for the reserve. Harold was on holiday at sea. He called in at Lymington on the Sunday, came home and turned out his uniform and wired to camp for orders. He was to report on the Monday.

bought all the petrol I could and stored it in cans under bushes on the common. On Monday, of course, the balloon went up and the country was at war. No one born since that day can have any idea of the change that has come about since.

To go back to 1903, my odd jobs about the village had come to an end. Throop Church had a new minister and with his wife and family there came a young lady companion who was taken under the wing of my sister Nellie. She was at our house a good deal and Nellie used to cycle home to Throop with her at night. When the dark evenings arrived this was not always convenient so I was told off as escort. I was seventeen at the time and, although I had had my youthful calf-love adventures, was just then unattached. I thought I was in love with another friend of Nellie, the manageress of a dairy shop in the town. She was years older than I and had no idea of my feelings.

Came August, Regatta night, and I was again told off to go with Nellie and the young lady from Throop. Not too pleased, I went along and we cycled to town and parked our bikes. I gave them the slip and went to call on Miss Parr. I reached her shop just as she had locked the door and drawn the blinds. I could just peep through to see her walk through the shop. As her boss was there I slunk off and went back to the gardens where I joined the party to watch the fireworks and finally escorted Miss Bryant home. The moonlight rides down Throop Lane undertaken as a duty soon developed into something else. Ada and I began to understand each other and if on occasions her cycle was not rideable I soon discovered how enjoyable a long walk could be. Still, our friendship might not have developed, save for one thing.

My mother was a very jealous woman and no girl was ever good enough for any of her boys. When she saw what was in the wind she turned nasty, but that only made me stubborn. I proposed to Ada and she accepted me in February 1904. Affairs at home, however, remained uncomfortable. Harold quietly took a hand at this stage and suggested that a change of air might be a good idea. So on Easter Tuesday 1905 I left home and went to work for Jenkins & Sons as an improver-carpenter. My first job was on the re-building of the Queen's Hotel at Farnborough. It wasn't very lush country, fir trees and acres of bare common land, used mostly as military training ground, a big change from my home surroundings. In lodgings, I felt like a fish out of water.

At Whitsun I was home for the week-end and have very clear recollections of the change which had come over the countryside. I had left home when everything was bare and now all was fresh and full of new life. Mother and I got on better too and Ada,

who had never changed, came to the reunion. Back to Farnborough for another seven weeks and then home again for the week-end. Jenkins & Sons' Southampton branch, under Harold, was branching out and a number of their jobs were under a firm of Scottish architects named Fryer and Partners, several of whose clients were members of the Coates cotton firm. One of these was Kenneth Clark who owned Sudbourne Hall in Suffolk. This old building was to be reconstructed ready for the shooting season and Jenkins took on part of the work. There were at least six other firms on the job and the architects were in residence in the stables. It was to this job I was now sent as time-keeper.

Jim Wheeler was the general foreman and took with him about thirty five men - he took on about seventy more locals. We all got lodgings in the small town of Orford nearby. Harold was on the job a good deal of the time. We worked from 6 a.m. to 8.30 p.m. and to 4 p.m. on Saturdays, and although my improver's rate was only sixpence an hour I soon became quite well off. Jim was a very clever foreman and I owe him a lot. My job was to keep the men's time, prepare the wages book, book in all materials and render an account of same to head office weekly. Wages were put up on the job each week by Wheeler and myself; they came through to the village by money order. It was a race every Saturday between me and the other firms' pay clerks to get our money orders cashed first and then to tour the few shops and pubs to get enough change. It was about two miles from the village to the job and nine miles from the nearest station, Wickham Market.

We were transported by horse and the only way to get anywhere or anything not available in the village was to arrange with the carrier who went every other day to Woodbridge. The only motor I saw was a shooting-brake on the estate. My other job was to run the mess for we all fed together on the job. The only allowance the men got for living away from home was rail-fare periodically according to distance and about 3/6 a week for lodging and the privilege of working long hours. Our only recreation was after 4 p.m. on Saturdays and all day on Sundays. I spent my time on the river or the beach.

The village of Orford had, I suppose, only a few hundred souls, a post-office, three shops, three pubs, an hotel, a church, a Methodist chapel and a ruined castle. Until a few years earlier it had been a borough and an old one at that. There was an east-west road leading to the river and north-south road with the church at the crossroads. The river coming down from Aldeburgh ran for some miles close to and parallel with the sea, entering the North Sea at Shingle Stunt.

The beach between the river and the sea was all shingle and opposite the town was Orford Ness lighthouse. The land inland was low and swampy. My landlady was a kindly widow who always served up a good Sunday dinner of roast beef and Yorkshire pudding and, for tea, hot fruit pies.

We finished up the job and came home early in October and my last meal at my lodging was the season's first longshore herring - she was quite upset that I could not eat at least a dozen! The only break I had all through that summer was August Bank holiday when we all hired a waggonette to the station to have a day in Great Yarmouth. Details of that outing are not very clear but I know we felt like children let out of school. The train at night was packed and we nearly all had someone on our knee. I finally arrived home, after four months, with a nest egg of £20 - not bad saving out of a weekly wage of about 35/- for which I worked seventy hours. .

## **Chapter 21**

The first day home I took Ada out, bought her a dressing case and other presents and myself a mackintosh. Then she took me to Bridport for the first time to meet her mother. Bridport was then a country town and not, as today, a pleasure resort. Visitors were a novelty and any stranger was noted and sized up. There were no seaside bungalows and the West cliff was a golf course. No motor cars but one horse waggonettes from the town to West Bay sometimes.

My next move was to Jenkins' Joinery Works at Pokesdown, 56½ hours a week, still as an improver and living at home - now that we were together again our courting could resume and we began to make plans for the future. Ada left Throop and got a better job at Boscombe from where she visited home on her days off. The trams were running out to Moordown by this time but not on Sundays. I had the use of one of our ponies and a choice of vehicles. Ada's old lady-employer, Mrs. Gilbert, was very interested in our affairs and helped a lot. She always inquired "Which trap did we have today?" I think I saw Ada twice a week. During this time I built myself a workshop and had it on the plot where Valley View now stands. In it I made a bedroom suite, kitchen table, dresser and other items for future use. One foggy night I was at work here on the table when Charles Corbin called in to say he was going down to the ferry to put

two girls across. I told him to tell the girls to be careful of the fog. This he did and warned them not to follow the river but to strike off away from the river towards East Parley where they lived. They were two Miss Greens, daughters of the schoolmistress. They never reached home. Apparently they were muffled up in scarves against the fog, tried to follow the river edge and slipped in; their footprints were clearly seen next day and their bodies recovered later.

After two years at Pokesdown I left and joined one of the building gangs under Bill Witt, building houses at Rush Corner. Bill was an old hand and had been a carpenter-foreman for years, but he was a past master at making mistakes and a very clever man at getting out of them. It was whilst I was working here that our wedding day was at long last fixed. Moorside, Redhill became vacant and I took it sometime in March 1908, did it up and built out a kitchen on the ground floor as the kitchen proper was a storey below. We had two bedrooms, a parlour and living room with stairs leading off and two rooms on the lower ground floor opening on to the garden - no bath or indoor sanitation, a pump water supply, and no gas. On April 11th I went to be measured for my wedding suit and on returning to Moorside found the back bedroom window open and snow a foot deep on the floor!

Came the day - June 6th, 1908, at Bridport Congregational Church. My sister, Ada, came down to help the bride; my brother Harold came to look after me and it was a boiling hot Whit Saturday. We had no honeymoon then but went back to Redhill where Dad made fun of my bowler hat. I never wore it again. Leigh received us with a discharge of firearms, the usual salute in those days. That evening we surveyed our circumstances. We had a little cottage for which we paid 4/9 a week: enough furniture for our use and a spare room for one guest. We counted our cash and, after setting aside enough to pay our bills, there was 7/6 to carry us on. Beyond this all we had was a stock of food, a garden full of produce, some hens, and a plot of land which I had so far failed to sell for £20.

Yet we had no concern for the future. We were both strong and healthy, very much in love and determined to raise a family. Ada bought all her odds and ends for the kitchen from the old 6½d. bazaar, pre-Woolworths, for about £2. Wages for some years had remained stable at 8d. an hour for a 56½ hour working week: no paid holidays and no payment for wet time.

## Chapter 22

Soon after our marriage I got a promotion to foreman. This meant some responsibility but only an extra 2/6 a week. My first job was Lord Malmesbury's lodge at Holdenhurst, followed by jobs all over the district, often away from home for months. Ada came away with me sometimes. At Boldre we went into furnished rooms, at Bishopstone near Swindon we took an empty thatched cottage for 1/9 a week. Here we brought some furniture from home, borrowed some from the owner, the village storekeeper, and made some out of sugar boxes. This was in 1911. We had no children, much to my wife's regret, but our landlady said the cottage had a good reputation for family life and she thought her lardy-cake and the local watercress might help. Either that was so or else it was the change of air. Anyhow, 30th March, 1912, was our lucky day. I was working then at the Woodman Hotel at Branksome and on the way to work one morning I called on the nurse and she moved in. Doris arrived on the 30th March. Next morning early I went down to the river and picked some wild cherry blossoms, so it must have been an early spring.

Another job was at Shillingstone, the New Ox Inn, and the family came too. In 1913 I was sent to Lake, Hamworthy, to build what was supposed to be a weekend cottage for Lady Wimborne. She had seen a small place she liked at Lymington and at once called on the architect, Mr. Benjamin. The final job, after much altering of the plan, was a real country house which cost then, I think, £7500. The year was one of upheaval by the suffragettes and it was thought they might set fire to the heather and trees around the house so a night-watchman was installed and our men forbidden to roam at meal-times in case they caused a fire. I suggested to the Lady that it was hard on them as they wanted to go to the beach for a swim. She at once ordered a wide path to be cut from the sea to the house for their benefit. When the job was complete I and others were given mementoes and every man who had worked on the job in any capacity was invited to a lunch and show. I think 250 sat down to an enjoyable evening. The Clerk of Works, myself and some others slept on the job, and we had a canteen, quite a nice little building. Ada and Doris came over for a night or two. From Lake House I moved to Court House, Canford, for reconstruction work on Canford Manor itself.

It was now 1914 and war broke out whilst this job was in progress. There were difficulties about ready money for wages as all gold coins were called in and, pending the issue of £1 notes, we used stamps and postal orders. There was at first

no general call for recruits. Before long, however, Kitchener took over and promised a three years war at least. He called for one hundred thousand men. The authorities were snowed under and were unable to provide at once officers, training facilities, uniforms or arms. As winter came on the men had to move into billets in towns. I had never been attracted to the forces and had not joined the territorials but now I wished I had, then the decision I had to make would not have been mine. I was at the time medically unfit; my second daughter, Nancy, was on the way; Jenkins were getting short of key men, so I was persuaded to carry on.

1915 came, a general call was put out and recruiting meetings were held. I attended one at Poole addressed by our late M.P., Col. Harry Guest. After the meeting I had a chat with him, explained my position and pointed out that I thought I could do some job better fitted to my abilities than footslogging. He agreed and said I should apply to the War Office. This I did and within a short time was appointed to Chatham as temporary civilian Clerk of Works. Although the duties I was to take over were not beyond me it took a little while to get used to army ways. I was to relieve a Staff-Sergeant R.E., posted overseas. My first interview was with the D.O.1., my immediate superior who was himself newly joined as a lieutenant. He had come from South America to serve. He was a queer bird and, although he purported to be an engineer, was unfamiliar with building work and quite unused to English ways. He had no military training but he was a good sort and very loyal to his staff. After a quiet talk over work to be done and a few questions about my experience, he shook hands and said: "Well, if I suit you, you suit me, so let's go and see the C.R.E."

C.R.E. - that is Commander Royal Engineers - was Colonel Jefferies, a very shrewd but kindly gentleman who was soon satisfied and I agreed to start in a week. Where I stayed that night I don't remember but next day I was taken round the district by car and shown the work in progress. R.E. Services was responsible for all building repairs and new constructions in the area. My area covered 112 square miles, all the country between Thames and Medway east of a line from Meopham and Gravesend and the country east of Gillingham down to Faversham north of Watling Street but not including Isle of Sheppey. There were only one or two permanent establishments in my area but a large number of temporary hutments, searchlight and gun-station guard huts, hutted camps and summer camps. I had several foremen and a gang of civilian employees, some low grade works companies and some contractors to look after. We built some of the huts but mostly we used ready-made sectional huts which came by rail to the various stations in the area.

All road transport we needed we had to get from the Army Service Corps who either gave us military G.S. wagons or hired traction engines. There were no motor lorries in our district at that time. Towards the end of the war, when the R.F.C. had developed enormously, airfields were needed all over the country and they became top priority. By this time our hutments had become vacant so they were mostly taken down and sent to the new airfields.

### Chapter 23

The only airfield near us was on the Isle of Sheppey and to this I was to send our largest hut, 300 ft. by 25 ft. To make sure that the move was properly organised the General arranged that I should go ahead of the first consignment and talk with the people who were to erect it. As Sheppey was a prohibited area my local pass was not valid so I had to visit the Provost's Office to get a special one. Quite innocently I cycled through the barrack gates and, in due course, got my interview with the officer concerned, but getting out again wasn't so easy. Apparently I should have been stopped by the sentry and been escorted in. Anyhow an officious N.C.O. was most obnoxious and it looked at one time as though I was to be put under arrest - in due course they condescended to phone my chief and I was released, feeling very sore indeed!

My first six weeks in Kent I spent in rooms. After that the family joined me, and our furniture was put into an empty house which we rented for nine shillings a week. My work was very trying and involved a lot more office work than I had been used to, so I took to glasses. After a time I left Head Office and had one of my own at Chatham Barracks; this suited me far better, I was on the job and on my own. We civilian employees were at first not liable for call-up but later could only be reserved if of a low medical category. By some date in 1917 all persons between certain ages were called upon to join up under the Derby scheme; so I took the King's shilling and became a soldier. Men were then called up in age groups and, if medically passed, had to go. My turn came and I had to go to Maidstone for my medical. Before I went the C.R.E. said he hoped I was medically fit but he wanted me there; as, for this, I must be B2 or lower, it looked as though I was due for a move. However, after a thorough examination I passed B2. I wanted to know what they meant by it and what they had found but I got little satisfaction. My own doctor told me - "Don't worry, your trouble is the result of overwork and ten successive attacks of 'flu. Go on as you are now and probably

you'll never feel any worse.' Join the army and you won't last six months". So I carried on with my job until the end of the war.

The cost of living had gone up and wages never quite caught up so our financial position was none too good. Peggy was born in January 1917 but she was overdue and the nurse had to live with us for three weeks beforehand.

## **Chapter 24**

To return to 1913. I wanted a house of my own but, having no money and no land, this is what I did. Uncle Lot had left me the Tea Gardens and Island but I could not have possession until after Mother's death. Harold had now bought the land on which he built Restmore. By arrangement he conveyed to me a plot on which I built Furzedene; in return I conveyed to him my interest in the Tea Gardens. Jenkins built the house and I paid them with a Building Society mortgage of £250 which cost me ten shillings a week plus rates. We moved in and Nancy was born there in December 1914.

When I took the family to Strood, near Rochester, in 1915, we let Furzedene but I soon found I was not able to keep it going so tried all ways to sell it but no one was buying houses. Finally I sold it to the tenant at cost price. Later, on the tenant's death, it fetched £1000. Early in 1919 I was released from my army job and returned to Jenkins. We had no home so we lived with Mother for a time. Later when one of her cottages next to the shop became vacant I took it over; it was in a dreadful state and full of fleas.

Then came the problem of the girls' education. We lived in Dorset so could not send them to school in Bournemouth. That left the old day school at Kinson which was out of the question and private schools were beyond our means. The only way was to become a Bournemouth ratepayer! At last we found a house for sale, in Wimborne Road, Moordown, and the price was only £450. To raise this we borrowed from Jim Bryant, Ada's brother, £100, got the balance from a Building Society and moved in. We built a large workshop at the bottom of the garden. It was only a 25 ft. plot with no room for a garage so we got hold of a 9 ft. strip alongside for only £3 a foot. It was a pity we didn't take more because in a short time the land was £15 a foot.

From here the girls were able to go to Winton and Moordown School in Coronation Avenue and there did very well.



Wimborne Rd, Redhill c.1900



River Stour and adjacent meadows c.1900

Doris got a scholarship to B.S.G. Nancy, after going to a little private school (The Laurels, Cowper Road) for a time, we paid for; and Peggy, having won scholarships for both schools, chose to go to Bournemouth High School in Norwich Avenue, later Talbot Heath.

My first job at Jenkins after the war was to build a home for Waifs and Strays at Southbourne. It was quite a big job, there was a lot of trouble with shortage of materials and labour, especially labour, as men were returning only very slowly from the forces. The firm promised me men so I went to the site to peg out. After a time one man turned up, an elderly labourer who normally sold newspapers and was quite unused to building work. Anyhow he was willing though rather talkative and promised to bring along a few labourers next day. So he did; he brought with him several "Echo" boys and that for a time was my team.

In due course we built up a team and got the job done. Then I was given other jobs with a motor-bike to ride. This was a huge 7 h.p. 'Red Indian' with a side-car, and as both kick-starter and self-starter were useless it was hard work to push off. After a time I ordered a new 2½ h.p. 'Douglas' for £50, a beautiful machine which had gone up to £70 by the time I got it. The jobs I had were scattered over a large area from Poole to Lyndhurst. Perhaps the most interesting one for me, and the one which proved to be the turning point in my life, was for Bobby & Co. when they took over White & Co., the old furniture firm, where Harvey Nicholls now is. Bobby's later moved to the Square.

The job was to gut the premises on two floors and substitute a number of large brick piers, with steel supports, two storeys high in the front. The old building was on several levels and had no right angle to it. My first job was to make an accurate survey of the whole place and order the steelwork. The idea was to assemble all the materials required on site before work commenced for we were to have only six weeks to do the job. We got to work on the survey, made working plans, went on to a vacant site at Moordown and set out the job full-size with boards to get working sizes.

When all material was ready we started work and for six weeks worked two gangs, day and night, and completed on time. After it was done I collapsed. Old man Bobby visited us on completion and expressed his pleasure by giving me £2. Such a tip was considered good then. My firm, however, was much more appreciative.

## EPILOGUE

At this point my father became too ill to continue his story, so I will tell the rest of it in brief.

The result of the job at Bobby's was a near nervous breakdown from which he suffered for a number of years. In the search for a cure he built a cabin cruiser which he moored in Poole Harbour and we used at weekends for a time. In 1926 he went to Canada for three months, travelling coast to coast by train, a wonderful experience.

In 1922 he started in business with a partner, Harold Bower; this partnership was later dissolved and the firm became Pascoe Marshall Limited. He built a house, office and workshops in Elmes Road, Moordown. In the late twenties and early thirties, in spite of the recession, a lot of building took place in the area. He did a lot of work for Richmond Hill Congregational Church and for them built churches at Sutton Road (where he was church treasurer for a number of years), Priory View Road and Iford. Also St. John's Moordown Parish Hall; Baptist Church, Wootton Mount; Winton Baptist, Cardigan Road; Ensbury Park Methodist; and he did the restoration work at West Parley Church. Other buildings of interest were some of the Eventide Homes, Castle lane; the Disabled Workshops on Peters Hill; the Guide Camp House at Dudsbury and the Rooper Memorial Blind Home in Victoria Park Road.

We built a house on an acre of fruit farm at Dudsbury in 1928 and a happy period of country life followed with kitchen garden, ducks and hens and a tennis court and much entertaining of friends and relations, until 1937 when we moved again, this time to Quomps, Christchurch. This was the realisation of a dream, a house built exactly as he wanted it, close to the river at Wick Ferry where he could again have a boat and he expected to stay there for the rest of his life. However, this was not to be because when the war started in 1939 he felt he must move back to Elmes Road to be near the business and to conserve petrol.

He joined the Home Guard whose post was at Restmore, Redhill Drive, the house where his brother, Harold, died in 1918 and now owned by Erkinwald Mooring Aldridge. Later he became Area Fire Guard Captain and turned our office into a Fire Watchers' Post. Most building work during the war was either Coast Defences, pill boxes, etc., or war damage repairs.

After the war we moved to Vernalls, Kinson, and his last move was to Pinevale Crescent, Redhill Drive. He died in 1958, almost within sight of Riverside, the house where he was born.

D.M.