

071 A Pitch Hill Childhood by Albert Carter, 47 minutes.

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Undated (late 1990s). There is also a set of 50 slides accompanying this talk.

My father, Edward Carter, was born on the twenty second of February 1895. He came from quite a large family, eight boys and two girls. They lived at Cocking near Midhurst, Sussex, in one of Lord Cowdray's estate houses where my grandparents, Edward and Ann Carter, farmed a smallholding growing crops and rearing pigs and chicken. One of the fields was always put down to growing strawberries and during the summer local labour would be employed to pick and take the fruit to market.

Granddad always had an old chain-driven Trojan van on the road as, during the winter, he was a bit of a tinker going from house to house, selling pots and pans, brooms and brushes. You could say he was the original Mr Kleeneze, but my father left home at an early age, finding work on farms and also working and travelling with fairground people. In 1915, during the First World War, he volunteered for the army and did his training in Northern Ireland with the Fifth Lancers at the time of the Dublin riots. After training, he was sent to France and transferred to the Middlesex Regiment, where he distinguished himself in battle and was mentioned in dispatches

At the end of the war he was demobbed and got a job with Longhurst and Son, timber merchant, of Epsom and Dorking. It was this job that found him cutting timber in Walking Bottom, Peaslake, where he met my mother, May Sherlock. Mother was born at The Crown, Ewhurst, on the twenty sixth of May 1901. She, too, came from a fairly large family, six in all, four boys and two girls. Being the eldest she had quite a hard life, always having her younger brothers and sisters to look after and, because my grandmother Sherlock was a frail woman, a large share of the running of the household also fell to her.

My grandfather, Harvey Sherlock, was a master builder. He always went to work in the mornings wearing a scrubbed white apron and carrying his tools of his trade in a homemade carpet bag. My mother told me it was her job in the evening to run to the Hurtwood Inn and go to the side door, called the Bottle and Jug, to get her father a penny worth of beer in a jug. She also recalled that when she was about nine or ten years old she accompanied her mother to work at a house in Peaslake where a Mrs Emily Pankhurst, leader of the Votes for Women movement was resting after her prison ordeal. Mrs Pankhurst had been involved in violence at the House of Commons, where she and others had chained themselves to the railings. Mother was introduced to the lady who said she would take her to London the next time they had a Suffragettes' march. After a few weeks, mother was duly taken to London for the day to take part in one of the Suffragette rallies. So we are proud to say, our mum was a Suffragette and one of the founders for Votes for Women in Parliament

When she left school, she was put into private service in Guildford as a housemaid. She was given one free half day per week and a few hours on Sunday to visit her mother. With no transport in those days, it meant her walking up Warren Road, down Guildford Lane into Albury, Albury Heath, Shere Heath and then on to Peaslake, allowing her just time for a cup of tea and ten minutes rest before returning to Guildford in time to serve the master and mistress their evening supper.

After a few months, she saved up enough to purchase a bicycle. With this, she could get home to be with her mother for two hours. Her bicycle rides were never dull. She told me that at one time

during the First World War, there were lots of troops camping in the fields in Guildford Lane. They would shout and whistle at her as she rode by and on her return she would stop and talk to them. This would sometimes make her a few minutes late back to her work, getting into trouble with her mistress, who threatened "You will not be let out next week if you cannot keep to time".

After about eighteen months, she got a job in private service in Peaslake village so that she could be at home and of more help to her mother.

When mother met father, he was, as I've already said, working in Walking Bottom, Peaslake, cutting timber. In those days, there were no going back to the depot at night. They would tow a wooden sleeping caravan behind the steam engine, which was parked on the site. Mother told me that while they were courting, she had always to be in before her father and on several moonlight nights when he was out drinking at the Windmill Inn, Pitch Hill, they would wait until they could hear the sound of his boots coming down the road. Then she would run home to be in before him. Nevertheless, he still inquired "Where have you been tonight, my girl". Eventually, she ran away from home, married my father, and they went to live in rooms at Epsom, where father's employers, Longhurst and Son had their head office.

Father then heard that there was a position going on the Summerfold Estate, Ewhurst. He applied and got the job as gardener handyman. After my parents and sister Doris moved from Epsom, they went to live at Middle Cottage, Pitch Hill, Ewhurst. The cottage was divided into two dwellings. They had the smaller end, just one bedroom up and the living room down. It was there that I was born on the eighteenth of April 1926.

The larger part of the cottage was lived in by Mrs Coleman. It had three bedrooms, a living room hall, scullery and pantry, et cetera. It wasn't until I was about eighteen months old, when Mrs Coleman died, that we were both able to enjoy the whole of the accommodation. There was also an attached cottage on the front elevation, Windmill Cottage, and Mr and Mrs Ashman lived there. Mr Ashman was the common ranger, a very smart military type of man with a wax moustache. He wore a uniform with a peaked cap and carried a swagger stick under his arm. But he had a gruff and surly manner which kept us children well away from him. Even father and mother had little to do with him.

Mr Clark had Summerfold built around 1912, but it wasn't completed until after the end of the First World War. The Duke of Sutherland purchased the house in 1924 from Lord Richard Osborne for around fifteen to sixteen thousand pounds. It was then a forty acre estate. At the time, the centre portion of the house had a third floor but the Duke had it removed and replaced with a flat roof so that he and his guests could walk out and enjoy the beautiful panoramic view. This was really a big mistake, as it was an everlasting job, from then on, to keep the weather out. Damp patches would appear and every winter workmen would be swarming over the flat roof, constantly trying to seal out the water. The entrance to Summerfold was from the Shere to Cranleigh road at the top of Horseblock Hollow. After passing through the main gate, the first building on the left was a lodge bungalow with a thatch roof.

Then the local sandstone drive continued up between avenues of rhododendrons to the second set of buildings on the left, a garage and stable block. The garage was a two story, three bedroom house with garage space for three large Rolls Royce cars underneath and an electric light engine and battery room on one side. The stable block was separate with three loose boxes and a feed and tack room.

The drive continued on up to Summerfold, sweeping round in a large circle to the back of the house. The extensive garden was lightly wooded and underplanted with crocuses and daffodils, the Duke of Sutherland's favourite rhododendrons and azaleas. The Duke's annual stay at the house always occurred when these spring flowers and shrubs were in bloom. One of the estate managers, Mr Graham or Mr Kerr, would come over from Sutton Place to establish when the garden would be at its best. Then a week of preparation for the big visit of the year would begin. Workmen from Sutton Place would come over to help father clean up the surrounding woods after winter, to sweep the long drive and clean the winter moss from the flagstones and drive edges.

Father would also be working like mad to get the kitchen garden dug and planted up with summer vegetables. In addition, the tennis courts would have new red dressings put on and rolled in, white lines and a clean nets put up. Mother would also be very busy in the house, sorting out all the blankets that were packed in the airing cupboard but the Duke's personal monogram blankets and sheets, bearing his crest and coat of arms, would come over from Sutton Place. The house would be scrupulously cleaned from top to bottom, Sutton Place sending over a list of materials for cleaning and cooking that mother would have to order from Manns of Cranleigh.

Father would also have a list of wines and spirits that he would have to order from Tylers of Cranleigh. Also, lots of provisions would arrive from the Army & Navy Stores in London. The silver, with the Duke's monogram and crest, would arrive in a big steel black box and would immediately be locked away in the strongroom. The shelves were all lined with a green baize material. Father would be in charge of this until the head butler arrived.

Beds also had to be made up in the lodge and garage, with soap and towels put out for the groom and chauffeurs. Getting towards the end of the week the horses would arrive, together with hay and feed. On the last day of the preparation an army of servants came by coach from the Duke's London House: head cook, pantry maids, house maids, scullery maids and last of all, the head butler.

On the day that the Duke arrived, my mother would remind my sister and I to go to Mill Cottage after school. The cottage went with my father's job, now caretaker gardener, with my mother as housekeeper, but when nobody was in residence at Summerfold we were required to live there. In the 1930s times were very hard for working people and there was a great deal of unemployment. So although father and mother worked seven days a week for poor pay, we children were always well dressed and had plenty of food and warmth.

With the Duke in residence, my father would be working late every evening, not leaving the house until the Duke retired for the night. The Duke insisted that all the house lights be very bright, and the only way that could happen was if the engine and dynamo were running with the battery backup. It was also necessary to run the water engine regularly to keep all the tanks, on top of the house, full.

But with luck, father would spend some of the evening in the butler's pantry having a few drinks and nice things to eat. Sometimes he would be given treats to bring home for us children. With no refrigeration in those days, a lot of food was wasted. Every morning, the sound of the pipes echoed through the woods as the Duke's personal Scottish piper walked backwards and forwards in the garden playing Reveille, to wake him from his night's sleep.

After a week or ten days, the Duke would decide to go somewhere else and it would take another week to run things down again, with us moving back into the house as caretakers once more. Occasionally horses and dogs would be left behind for a few days, adding considerably to father's workload. When that happened, I would go along with him to exercise Jordy, the Duke's favourite horse. He was a very quiet and docile animal, which suited me just fine as I wasn't a great lover of

horses as a child. The Duke always brought his pet dogs when he came to stay. They were all named after film stars: Garbo, Anna, Andy, Pluto and Laurel and Hardy. My mother was particularly good with the more nervous of them.

Apart from the Duke's annual stay in the spring, the house would sometimes be let for two or three months at a time and on these occasions, much the same chain of events took place. Provisions, cars, horses, maids, etcetera would arrive and we would have to pack up and go back to Mill Cottage.

At one time, a Mrs Parr, wife of the French ambassador, rented it. Having a son of the same age as myself, she asked my father to come into the drawing room to see her. "Carter, could your son come up and play with my son Timothy?" Next day I was scrubbed white and with my best plain clothes on I was taken up to Summerfold, then into the drawing room by the butler and introduced to Mrs Parr and Timothy. I was sat down with a big glass of lemonade and plans were made for Timothy and I to take a picnic and play on the heath for the afternoon. A little later, the butler came in to say that the car was at the front door. We children were put into the back by the chauffeur and the picnic hamper stowed behind by one of the maids.

Then we drove off down the drive in style, waving to Timothy's mother. We went for a nice long ride, then came back to park by the old windmill, at Four Winds. We ran around for a while, climbed a few trees and had a game of hide and seek. By the time we got back to the car, the chauffeur was laying out the white tablecloth for us to have a picnic. He sat in the car and read his paper while we ate, then repacked the hamper and drove us back to Summerfold in style again. Timothy was taken in for a bath, and I walked home to relate my experiences to my mother. I did go back once or twice more, but only to play around the house. Timothy could speak quite good English as he was being educated in this country in a boarding school, so when he went back to school, that was the end of my high society lifestyle.

There was another occasion, when I was only about four, that my sister and I were asked up to Summerfold again. We were both scrubbed clean and dressed in our best white clothes. We were introduced as the gardeners' children. Our photo was taken and we were each given a big red apple.

The Duke would, from time to time make a flying visit to Summerfold. He loved to bring people over to admire the magnificent view, especially if it was one of his new lady friends. This was fine from his point of view, but for my poor parents, it was one long rush. From the time the estate manager phoned, there would only be the time it took to drive over from Sutton Place, about thirty minutes, before the Duke would arrive. Father would have a quick wash and change from his working clothes into his best suit, while mother changed into a clean skirt and blouse. If we children were at home, we were told to keep out of sight and had a strict order "Do not look out of the windows", but we always had a peek through the lace curtains. Father would be standing up by the front door with a silver tray and a glass as a Rolls Royce came up the drive. A water purification unit was installed just inside the front door, as the Duke was a fanatical about pure water, and his first request on arrival would be "A glass of water, Carter". He would then walk through the drawing room and out on to the front of the house to look at the view, probably going for a short walk through the woods.

Another of his whims was to be weighed after a walk. A set of jockey scales stood in the cloakroom and this would be the last thing he would do before getting back into his car with a "Goodbye Carter". The whole visit could be over in a half an hour. Quite a few personalities stayed at Summerfold during my father's years as caretaker, the most notable being Edward Prince of Wales and Mrs Wallis Simpson in 1936. Barbara Cartland was a house guest after the birth of her daughter,

Raine, also Lord and Lady Rothschild, the Duke and Duchess of Westminster and one of the Duke's favourite film stars; Bette Davis.

Lady Tredegar also stayed. She was a recluse and required to live in complete isolation. The day she arrived, father had to go around and close all the shutters over the windows. He was also told not to walk around the house on the drive but to use the footpath through the woods. One day, when he was crossing the drive to get to the electric light engine, he was confronted by a lady dressed in black. She inquired who he was, and he apologized and said he was the gardener caretaker. She then asked about his work and where he lived and if he had any children. Then, completely out of the blue, she asked if he had a radio set. Ironically, our old set had just gone u/s, so father said "No". She told him to go down to Cranleigh and order one, booking the cost through our estate agent. Father duly complied with her request so we had our first dry battery and two volt accumulator radio, a Cossor, for eight pounds, quite a lot of money in those days. We never did find out what caused the lady's unhappiness.

Another of Summerfold's guests had father summonsed to give evidence at a London divorce court regarding the comings and goings of various people and cars at the house over a given period. He found being questioned by barristers and solicitors an unpleasant experience and was very glad to get back home again. When the house was not in use we had it to ourselves, but it still had to be manned seven days a week, so it was very seldom we could go out together as a family. But I do remember, as a special privilege, the estate agent at Sutton Place would arrange for a replacement caretaker to come over and look after the house for one week in the summer so that we could take our annual holiday together at Littlehampton or Worthing. It would usually be one of the gardeners or handymen. There apparently was never a shortage of volunteers. Although our father had little free time, he was a member of the local common fire brigade during the summer. Fires were numerous and often devastated large areas so father and other local men would be called out to fight them with ash besom beaters, under the supervision of the common ranger. For this service, the neighbouring estates would give a lorry load of logs per year. The gypsies were always blamed for starting the fires because there was a large gypsy encampment in the middle of Winterfold Common. They lived in a mixture of tin huts and benders, igloo shaped structures made of sticks and covered with sacking and heather. On the Farley Green to Winterfold road they had their own school, a long wooden building built up on brick stands. They also had their own water supply from a spring that flowed from the hill behind the school.

At the end of August 1939, Summerfold House was being painted on the outside and workmen were staying in the rooms of the garage. On Sunday morning, September the third, they came up to the house for a morning cup of tea and to listen to Neville Chamberlain's broadcast to the nation at 11:15AM, in which he announced that a state of war existed between the United Kingdom and Germany. Although the Second World War started it made little change to life at Summerfold.

Father joined the local defence volunteers, being one of the first to do so after the government's announcement that they were setting up a local force. It meant he was out quite a few nights each week on patrol duty around the roads of Peaslake. I was still at school and, like most boys of my age, became a keen collector of war mementos: exploded bullets and other debris from plane crashes, army badges from some of the many soldiers in the area. In fact, anything that could be proudly shown off at school. The war did upset our schooling. With so many teachers coming and going, sometimes they would only be with us for a few weeks. Then, in the summer of 1940, the first evacuees arrived in Ewhurst, largely from Fulham and Croydon. There were so many of them that the school couldn't accommodate us all together so the locals went in the morning and the evacuees in the afternoon. But, of course, it was disastrous for our education and for me, particularly, because

I hadn't started school until I was six years old, my mother thinking that it was such a long way from Summerfold down to Ewhurst for a small boy. But it meant that I never had time to make up for my late start. At the end of July 1940 I left school and on Thursday, August the first, I started to work at Watson's the Bakers in Ewhurst, as a trainee baker.

Most of the big houses were being taken over by troops in the area and one day officers and soldiers came up to look at Summerfold and the outbuildings. They said at first they were only going to take over the Lodge at the entrance to the drive. They set up a Bren gun in a pit surrounded by sandbags for anti-aircraft use at the old windmill, Four Winds. Summerfold gave us a grandstand view of aerial combat during the Battle of Britain. I can recall going up onto the flat roof to watch one such battle with my mother and sister. It was both frightening and exciting. My father ran up from the kitchen garden to tell mother, in no uncertain terms how foolish she was to allow us to be there.

Early in December, father's sister phoned to tell him that a bomb had landed in a duck pond by the side of their parents' house at Cocking, Midhurst. The roof of the house had been blown off, and my grandparents were sitting outside with all their furniture. Father immediately asked the estate manager if he could have a few days off to help his parents. But his request was refused on the grounds that, if Summerfold was going to be requisitioned by the army, the Duke had said that he would like to come over and see it for the last time. Father expressed his intention of cycling to Midhurst, in any case, was told that if he did so he would be sacked but they both knew that shortly there would be no job at Summerfold for father or anyone else. In fact, it was only days after that that the estate was taken over by the Army. So ended more than fourteen years of loyal service to the Duke of Sutherland. Both my father and mother were given excellent references.

Looking back, we were very isolated, living right on the top of the hill, surrounded with nothing but woods. There are other boys to play with, but they lived some distance away so I was often left on my own and would spend hours just wandering around the estate with their dog Rover. I used to know every track and path and even in the dark, find my way home. Still today the smell of crushed bracken and the wet leaves of birch trees brings back memories of happy days spent roaming all over Pitch Hill and Winterfold. It wasn't until about February 1941 that my parents were given a house to rent on the Duke of Northumberland's estate. Lipscombe Cottage, Farley Heath.

Then father and mother were directed into war work, father working at the Gomshall Tannery and mother at Cook's Place as a cook, preparing meals for the pupils of a school evacuated from London. I went to work at the Nelco factory, Shalford. After Summerfold was requisitioned by the British troops and later by the Canadians, during the next four years there was virtually no maintenance carried out on the house and by the end of the war it was in a very sorry state. A radio listening post is said to have been maintained in the attic right up until the 1960s.

Over the next few years, there were articles in The Surrey Advertiser regarding planning permission for building new houses on the derelict site of Summerfold. It was described in the paper as a haunted mansion. This was a complete fallacy. As far as we were concerned, we lived at Summerfold all those years without any nasty happenings, only very happy years. There was also a rumour of the house being hit by a flying bomb. This was untrue. I think the rumour came about by a flying bomb landing in the grounds of High Wethersell Woods near to Winterfold House. With the house in such a derelict state it soon became an adventure playground for local lads. The house and grounds were purchased in 1979 by Mr Colville and my wife and I were very kindly invited up to see Summerfold and walk around the grounds and look at the house that at one time was my childhood home. In the 1980s, a young architect and his wife took on the massive task of restoration. It took ten years to complete the work.

Although I have very briefly talked about my early school days, I would like to enlarge on this in more detail. After my sister left school, I had four more years of walking to Ewhurst School on my own. But I always met up with other boys whose parents were employed at some of the larger houses under Coneyhurst Hill. But more of them later.

Life at school brings back lots of happy memories for me. The old-type desks with ink wells, pointed nib pens and blotting paper, the smell of a newly sharpened pencil and the chalky blackboard cloth with which the previous day's lesson was rubbed out by the first child to get their hands up, a very popular task.

Then again, with a hand up the most frequent request "Please Miss, May I go to the toilet?" This meant to run outside to the antiquated toilet block, with rows of small doors at the back for taking out the buckets for emptying. Without my sister to look after me, I soon re-allocated the penny for milk, which my mother gave me each day. I would only have milk in the mornings, saving the other half penny to buy sweets at lunchtime. I never did tell my mother. We were allowed out of school at lunch times as a lot of the Ewhurst children went home for lunch, so there were no restrictions on those who had to remain at school. We would troop over the road to Miss Pam's sweet shop. She had a separate table set aside for children, covered with a cloth. I think it was to stop wandering hands. She would come over and remove the cloth. And for a half penny you could get four chocolate toffees or two farthing chews, a sherbet fountain, a roll of liquorice with an aniseed ball in the middle, or one big gobstopper, which lasted all lunchtime and into the afternoon. Then it would be "That boy at the back who is sucking a sweet. Come out here and spit it into the wastepaper basket."

As I have said, we could go to the sweet shop during the lunch break. But during playtimes it was strictly forbidden for children to cross the road. One day I was bullied by some older boys into going to the sweet shop for them while creeping past the infants' playground and teacher, a Miss Poker I think, saw me and immediately reported me to the headmistress, Miss Bookman. I was sent to the teacher's room and questioned "Did I go for myself or was I sent by some older boys?" I think she knew, but I would not give away my name so my punishment was two strokes of the cane on the hands and a sealed letter home to my mother. After this incident, I was a hero with the older boys. They would say "Oh, Cart's okay" and I would be one of them from then on. I visited the school open day in 1996 and looked through the punishment book, hoping to see my name around 1938/39, but apparently it was never recorded.

I'm sorry to say I was never really any good at sports, but I did make the school football team on lots of occasions and played outside right. We all had football kit, red tops, white collars and blue shorts. During school hours we went to the recreation ground for football matches and practice. The day our school football team was photographed we were not told until the morning, so only the boys who went home for lunch could collect and wear their kit for the afternoon photo session. Those of us who lived further afield had to wear our ordinary school togs. I think that's why I am looking a bit on the glum side in the photo.

Cricket was never my game, the balls always seemed too hard for me and I seemed to get my fingers and head in the way. I remember one morning we came to school early, well before school started, to have a knockabout with the cricket ball. It was a very rough pitch on the school playground, and when I was put into bat the first ball pitched up and smacked me in the eye. I was down to the doctor's surgery in Cranleigh Road with a bandage on my eye and home again before nine thirty.

But I was always good at singing and I seemed to find my way into the school choir each year. Looking back on it all now, I think we used to spend far too much time standing around the piano

with sheets of music instead of getting on with the three Rs. But it was the wish of the school principals to be the top school, coming first in competitions we would practice all the year, then on the big day, we would be off to the Dorking Halls for the Leith Hill Music Festival to compete against other schools in Surrey. We would sing our hearts out to bring back banners or certificates to stand in the classroom and have our school name on them; Ewhurst School 1935. Each school would sing individually to be judged in the morning, and in the afternoon the mass choirs, about five hundred children, would sing and give a concert for the public.

The rector when I was at school was a Reverend Dollar. As a Church of England school the rector would come across and take morning assembly and prayers and on lots of occasions we would have to all troop across the road in Indian file to attend morning prayers in the church. I think perhaps a little less time should have been spent in this way and more time given to a general education.

School gardening was always on the school curriculum for the boys. Each boy would be given a small plot to look after. The garden tools were hung up on racks in a small room between the girls' and boys' toilet blocks. Forks and spades would be issued on lesson day. Plants would be brought from home, supplied by dads. I remember that the end of each plot would be a small mound of soil. In this, you would plant your precious marrow plant and each day you will go to the garden to see whose plant was growing the best. Then there would be arguments with "Mine's the biggest one", or "Yours is not as big as mine". There was a lot of rivalry over this. Then, if you had a nice plant coming on, mysteriously one morning you would come to school and find your plant had drooped in the night by someone cutting the roots underground. This could never be proved and just had to be put down to slugs and big ones at that. Strangely, it never seemed to happen to the older boys living in Ewhurst.

There was always a squabble over forks and spades, as there was never enough to go around. One day I asked another boy if I could have his fork and asked him to throw it over. He literally did just that and harpooned my foot. So it was hobble the way home to Pitch Hill with a swollen foot up next morning. It meant a week off school unable to walk. There was no going to the doctor's for a tetanus injection and it just got better on its own. The same thing happened to me a few months later. My sister and I were arguing, 'who should use the border fork?', so my mother said "Let him have it" and my sister did just that, through my foot again.

At playtime all the children had to keep to their respective playgrounds but at lunchtime you could go anywhere. On the north side of the school there was a long hedge about twelve feet high and six feet thick. This was a lovely place to play as it was hollow in the middle through years of children playing there. If you were careful by stepping over branches, you could walk to the end and back again without being seen. Now at the bottom of the hedge there was a house with a nice, juicy apple tree in the middle of the lawn. So during the scrumping season we boys would work our way down through the hedge and then take it in turns to dash out and give the tree a good shaking, dashing back with as many apples as you could carry without being spotted. But this one day there was a shout from the house. We had been seen. That afternoon all the boys were lined up in rows outside the playground. The village Bobby was standing there with his bike, his cape neatly folded over the handlebars, leaning his bicycle against the wall and taking off his cycle clips. He started to walk up and down in front of us boys. Then with us all quaking in our shoes, he gave us a good telling off with orders never to do it again. I think we were all punished with no playtime for a week.

With the war starting in 1939, children started to be evacuated to the country. So we at Ewhurst had our share, most coming from Fulham and Croydon. Their arrival pleased us children, as there were too many of them for us to all go to school together so it was the local children in the mornings and

the evacuees in the afternoon. But this did not last for long. As soon as the Y. M. C. A. Hall, now the Village Club in Ockley Road, was fitted out as a school, we all had to go back to normal times.

According to the school history, the headmistress, Miss Hookman, died after a short illness in 1938 and Miss Ranacus came to the school as headmistress. In the same year, one unhappy incident sticks out in my mind regarding this headmistress. She always parked her Austin Seven car in the playground and in October or November a few boys had been punished for throwing fireworks. So on the Friday she was leaving for good, as she drove out of the playground and down the road towards Peaslake and Pitch Hill, she was pelted with fireworks and booed as she disappeared into the distance.

I always seem to remember quite an upheaval of teachers during 1939 and 40, with the succession of male teachers coming and going, some only staying a few weeks. Again, it was disastrous for our education, with teachers asking us what we would like to do today? As boys, we always wanted to be outside and would say "Gardening, please sir", and the girls would like to sit outside sewing or playing basketball.

One of my pals from Coneyhurst was John Crowley. His father was a chauffeur, and John was a little better off than most kids. He always had pockets full of sweets. He also had an advantage when it came to collecting cigarette cards, which we all did. His father had a cigarette dispensing machine in their home, for which he held the key. So John was always the first to complete a set of fifty cards: cricketers, motorcars, cycling, kings and queens of England and RAF badges. We would all have our piles of swap cards and go from one another looking through each other's cards, "I'll swap you this one for that one", but after everyone had obtained their sets and while waiting for the next set to come out the old cards would be relegated to flights for arrows. This was a big pastime in the evening for us boys, down into the hazel woods to look for nice straight sticks to make bows and arrows. We would spend hours cutting and shaving our arrows to perfection and with cards in the end and a good sharp point. They would stick into dead trees or by shooting them far up into the air they would then come sailing down to stick into the ground at your feet.

Opposite Mill Cottage there was a large car park and during the summer this would be packed with cars as Hurtwood and Pitch Hill was a great beauty spot and it is still today. The Walls' ice cream man and his tricycle, Stop Me And Buy One, would come and stand by the end of our garden all day. My sister and I would wait and watch for him to come, pushing his laden tricycle up from Ewhurst. He would be puffed out by the time he arrived. So he would put on the brake and asked us to look after the tricycle so he could walk back down the hill to the Windmill public house for a welcome pint or two before starting work. We would take it in turns to sit on the saddle, telling his customers that he would not be away for long. If no one was looking we would take a quick look in the top of the box at all the ice cream and watch the clouds of white mist as the dry ice evaporated into the air. He also asked us to look out for his boss with the motor van and tell him, if he arrived unexpectedly, that he would only be away for a short while to go to the toilet. When he got back, he would always give us a penny snow fruit for watching over his tricycle.

His boss would come with the van during the afternoon to restock him as on some very hot days you would soon run out. So one day he asked us if we were keep a big fibre box in our garden and put it out on weekends so his boss could stock it out with extra ice cream and dry ice. For this, he said, we could have a one and six block of ice cream. This was a lot for us children in those years of 1938/39. We would sit down to our Sunday tea with Mom and Dad and enjoy it on very hot days. The car park would soon fill up, and late arrivals would have to go right to the bottom of the park. Then, if there was a thunderstorm or it came on to rain heavily in the afternoon, the grass and sand would soon

turn to mud with all the cars trying to get out at the same time We children would be waiting with brushwood and fern to put under the wheels to stop them spinning while pushing hard from the back, trying to get them out. Sometimes after pushing them right to the top of the park, with their wheels still spinning and mud flying in all directions, we children would be covered from head to toe. Some grateful drivers would stop and thank us and give us a penny for our hard work and efforts. But others as soon as they got onto the road just would wave to us and drive off. But it was still good fun all the same... till we arrived home and mother saw our clothes and faces.

I cannot remember the date of the Ewhurst annual flower show, but the one I particularly recall my Auntie Alice and Uncle Joe were staying with us for the weekend. Father would enter all his vegetables from the kitchen garden with his specialty of growing very large five and six bloom sweet peas. Mother would enter flower arrangements and fruitcakes. For us, mother would help us to make miniature gardens and with a lot of her help we always seemed to get first prize. The other children would say "I bet your mother made that", but we would never let on. I think most parents helped their children with all entries. Dad would make us a box from the right size seed box. It would have a raised platform at the back and was painted dark green. We would always use miniature flowers, growing if possible, with the pagoda in front and a little gravel path running through it with a small dolls house dish with real water, never a mirror, for a fish pond. We would also try and enter for the most different varieties of grass and arranged them on a piece of card. But we could never compete with the children in Ewhurst. Living on Pitch Hill we had more heather than grasses.

The boys in the village would also win hands down with the most cabbage butterflies pinned to a piece of cardboard. They would finish up with hundreds, having spent hours running around at playtimes and evenings chasing butterflies all over the allotment at the back of the school. But that's what it was all about, to try and destroy the cabbage butterfly that was considered a pest. Stanley and Donn Parsons would always take the lead in this activity.

Schoolwork would also be entered. Handwriting, essays, painting, raffia work and needlework. It was a great day out, and I think nearly everyone in the village would go. In my day it was held in Downhurst Meadow, a large field down the Ockley road just past the Y. M. C. A. hall, on the left. There was always a steam fair with all the usual amusements, coconut shys, swing boats and roundabout with a real steam engine in the middle accompanied by all the fairground music.

But the biggest attraction was the exhibition marquee. Everyone queued outside till it opened at two o'clock, then crammed inside to see who had won the different entries. I would always remember this flower show day. I went down to the morning on my four wheeled pram truck with my feet up on the front tiller, steering with a piece of string. I coasted all the way down to the showground. While I was looking at the steam engines with my pals from school. It came on to rain there. Heavens really opened up and I didn't have a raincoat with me. There had been three smaller boys hanging around with me all morning, looking and playing with my truck. It was a good one, so when it started raining, I said I was going home. They asked if they could pull the truck. I said "Only if I sit on it" and they agreed and pulled me all the way home if I gave them sixpence. I readily agreed and one of them even put his Macintosh over my head and legs. Now it is nearly one and a half miles from Ewhurst to Mill Cottage, but they said yes, so who was I to argue. When we arrived, I paid up my sixpence and ran indoors. Mom and Dad and Auntie were amazed when I walked in as dry as a bone and couldn't understand the stupidity of the three boys who had pulled me all the way home. Mother gave me a good telling off for exploiting the three boys like that. But my Uncle Joe said I showed a lot of sense and gave me another sixpence, much to the disapproval of my mother.

But even in those lean times of the thirties, I always seem to have a penny or two given to me by moms and dads and aunts and uncles to spend if I was taken to Guildford or Cranleigh. Lots of children living in Ewhurst were a lot worse off than I was. But school days are soon over and Friday July the twenty sixth 1940 was my last day at school.

On the first of August, I started to work for Watson's bakers in Ewhurst as a trainee baker. My first day was greasing cake tins. Mother had sent me into work with a crisp white apron and in the evening I went home looking as black as the ace of spades. After working for a few weeks, I purchased my first bicycle from Whittington's in Cranleigh for seven pounds three and sixpence, and sold my old one for one pound, ten shillings. Over the next few months, I helped to mix cake mixtures, fry doughnuts and take hot bread out of the oven. One day I was asked to take hot loaves into the shop and stack them on the shelves. I did as I was told, but stacked them about six loaves high. You can imagine what they looked like when the baker came to view my handiwork. The bottom loaves were only about an inch thick, with the middle ones not much better, so I had a good telling off.

Another day I was taking jam tarts out of the oven on big trays, wearing yeast sacks on my hands to protect them from the heat. The trays were then laying outside on the ground to cool. An air raid warning had sounded but we all continued with our work when suddenly there was a loud shriek. A German bomber had let three bombs go. I turned and dropped the tray I was carrying and ran back over the other trays on the ground and made a dive under the wooden dough bins, jam tarts flying in all directions. The bombs dropped in Mead Road, Cranleigh, on October the third 1940. One of them was a time bomb, and it landed on the house of the baker I was working with. But of course, he only learnt about it when he arrived home and wasn't allowed near. It was about ten o'clock the same evening that the bomb exploded and demolished his home.

After a time, like a fool, I got tired of being inside all day and asked if I could go out on the delivery rounds. So my boss, Mr Watson, said yes as work in the confectionery was coming to an end because all the pre-war stocks of dried fruit and sugar had been used up and now such ingredients were being rationed. From then on, I was delivering bread to all the houses in Ewhurst village.

This lasted through the rest of 1940, going through the Battle of Britain and the winter bombing. There was never a dull moment to life, always something happening each day. Aircraft being shot down, bomb craters to look at, bomb splinters and cartridge cases to pick up from air battles overhead. Every day, soldiers in long convoys clogged up the roads, but that's another story.