

3rd August 1998

Dear Mrs Cairns,

It was such a pleasure to talk with you in the Slade recently. I have delayed writing in order to have copies made of two photographs in my possession. Doubtless you will have heard of George William Hawley - a legend in his own time. He made wooden bowls from elm trunks in his shed near Morton's chapel on Turner's Green, using very primitive tools, I often watched him at work and my father took the photograph of him, probably in the early 30s. I believe that Queen Mary (consort of George V) once visited him - she was much interested in craft work.

I am also enclosing three of my "exercise" pieces for Creative Writing classes in case the substance is of interest. The piece I wrote which mentions the Victoria plum tree (which grew beside the cart-shed and the place where pig and poultry food was stored) is, I discover, largely fiction. It is interesting how, over the years, Bucklebury experiences have provided

a wealth of material for my writing. In thinking about my letter to you I realised I should be writing a book. As I think I said to you, the 11 weeks a year we four children spent in the Glade were a source of joy and interest into old age and while my two brothers and sister were alive we talked of them often. Travelling and living on other continents have never diminished those memories.

I checked up on the family history wherein lies my link with Janet Allum and Jo Paulin. John Morton (of the Turner's Green Chapel) was my great-great-great grandfather and their great-great grandfather. He is well documented in Cecilia Milson's book and also appears in a small booklet written by Girardolen F. Jebb. His daughter Mercy married a John Sellwood. They had a son John who married Ellen and they came to live at Ferndale. This John was brother to my great-grandmother, Lydia, who lived in Newbury. She died when I was 14. Janet Allum's parents came to live at Ferndale when Ellen Sellwood died. Before that the family lived at the cottage next door to Mr and Mrs Briggs.

I knew the Glade well from 1925 to 1941 - I was at College by then but my mother and youngest brother were at Ferndale full time during the War until our house in London was bombed and the family set up home in Kent. Mother set up a tiny "school" for my brother, for Hazel (Janet's sister) and another small boy evacuee. The people I remember living in the Glade were

Charlie Morley and his wife, his son Stanley and daughter in law, Janey. They ran the farm at the top of the Green - my elder brother spent most of his time there and I used to go up on Fridays to see the butter made. Stanley delivered the bottles of milk (unpasteurised and tasting wonderful!) in a wheelbarrow. Living on the Green where the Sellwood's meadows end was a family called Pull who belonged to some quite strict religious sect. Tyler's Lane, at that time, was entered through a wooden 5 barred gate. To the right across a meadow was a thatched cottage inhabited by the Mulsom family. There were two children Gordon and Myrtle. To the right of them was the farmhouse where the Goodenoughs lived -

their daughter was slightly retarded, I think, but the aggressiveness of their geese is what stays in my mind. At that time the now over-grown duck-pond was readily accessible and a great source of mud and tidblers! In a small, square house, coming up the Slade lived a Mr and Mrs Wallers. She was a nurse and they came from Wales. Sadly they were regarded as foreigners and were not made welcome but my mother, a person of independent mind, struck up a warm rapport with them. Hazel and Janet, as I have said, lived next to Mrs Briggs and then came the two cottages which are, I believe now said, joined to make one. At that time the one next to Wayside was called Snowdrop and, for some years, belonged to my grandmother. The one next to it was lived in by a lovely couple and their grown up daughter who were Plymouth brothers. They, too, were non persona grata with Slade families (It is somewhat surprising how readily we were accepted but I suppose that, however distant, we were of the blood! Grandmother, long before it was common, was a Luddover with

a 'cottage in the country'. She had been born and baptised in Newbury and went to London to contract an under age marriage. A fact which I only discovered when my Aunt died and I got my hands on birth and marriage certificates.)

Walking up the Glade past "Auntie Dolly" and "Grandma Sellwood" we reach you. I can still see Mr and Mrs Green in black clothes and Mrs Green wore an immaculate white apron. We entered their house very rarely but they worked very hard and kept the Baptist Chapel immaculate. Sunday School took place in the afternoon and there was an evening service for which everyone wore ~~the~~ their Sunday best - the men in white shirts, city suit, hat and highly polished footwear. In those days Janet's mother kept her cottage absolutely spotless and her father polished every square inch of the baby pram every Sunday morning. Above the chapel lived a lovely lady called Edith Markon. I think she was probably Charles's ^{Sister} ~~daughter~~ and they must have had some connection with the famous John. Beyond the City path (which, for some reason, we

thought it was rather daring (to walk along) there
was the Dennis home where Sheila and Molly lived.
Then father, Ron, sold me my first bike - a
renovated 'sit up and beg' model, price £1!!
The occupants of the house in which Jo Paulin lives
were called Ballard.

One could write a book about the freedom and
interest of the life we led as "country children" for
eleven weeks every year and my mother (a teacher)
ensured that we learnt as much as possible about
wild flowers, birds and animals as well as about
the way of life that existed in the Slade at
that time. We joined in everything and ranged far
and wide on foot or bicycle in complete safety.

~~I hope some of what I have written is interesting~~
to you.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Starnes

P.S. I decided against making a Sellwood family tree
in case Janet might feel it was not my
information to give away