

The Village and Beyond updated June 2007

By Jim Tanner

Preface

It was, and still is a pretty little village in Oxfordshire, nestling in a valley between Banbury and Stratford on Avon. Picture, if you can some houses, probably about fifty or so, many with thatched roofs, others of slate, a village post office, a small primary school, a church and a chapel, also two public houses, the Dun Cow and The Red Lion. Jim Tanner's one of the boys in the village, tells his story of life in the village of Hornton and what happened beyond, when he left. His story begins in the 1930's. he was born there on March 9th in 1930.

Everyone knew everyone , if a baby was born, all the villagers were aware of it, as news travelled quickly, if someone died, the church bell rang in a doleful way, the death knell, "Dong, dong, dong".

My Mum and Dad, Mary and Harry Tanner were known to everyone in the village, initially they lived in West end Road, where I was born, and then they moved to a little cottage in Pages Lane.

After Chapel on a Sunday evening, Mary and Harry (Mum and Dad) would take me my sister Joy and brother Fred for walks to pick and smell the flowers, violets and primroses. If we were lucky the Walls ice-cream bicycle would come along and we could have a half penny ice-cream or we could have a 2 penny chocolate one. My dad Harry would cut it into small slices with his pen knife, how delicious it tasted.

My parents insisted that we children attend Sunday school in the morning and that we attend Chapel either in the afternoon or evening, one or the other. It seemed to me that that hour in Chapel went on to eternity, the longest hour that I had ever endured. I was let off once and went for a walk and tore the back out of my best suit, climbing through a barbed wire fence, my Mum never let me off ever again

There were no electricity in the village, most villagers used a candle, to light the rooms during the evening, and many is the time that the candle blew out on the way to bed up the rickety stairs. And there was no water laid on, so the villagers would either use water from their well or walk down the village to the village tap, which protruded from the wall at the end of West End Road.

The water was very good and I used to walk down with my Dad, this was in the early thirty's, Dad used a "yoke" which went on to the shoulders, with a chain at each end, and a bucket on the end of each chain, it was quite a little walk to the "tap" but a recognised chore to be carried out daily.

There were no washing machines then, house wives used to boil the water in an old boiler, heated by wood, then use an old mangle to squeeze the water out. The iron was heated over the coal fire, the same as the kettle, this hung from a chain, so that the kettle was in the flames and an old cloth used to lift it off, to save burning the hands, It was all very primitive compared to now at the present time.

The small primary school that served the village had three teachers and Miss L. Thompson was the headmistress. No talking was allowed in class and a rap over the knuckles with the edge of a ruler by a teacher soon brought quick obedience. The ultimate was the cane, the worst part was waiting for it! I once recall being caned by Miss Thompson, I ran home down Pages Lane crying and told my Mother what had happened. She duly wrote a note to Miss Thompson, so I quickly ran back to school to give her the letter. My Mum had written on the letter "Give him another" so the teachers unlike many now, had the parents support.

Easter was an exciting time at school, someone in the village donated a chocolate Easter egg, the pupil who drew it the best, could have this chocolate egg. I wanted to win it and tried hard, but Nancy Jarvis (I worked for her Dad, several years later) always won the egg, much to my disappointment.

The boys cherished the evenings when they could play in the streets, with only one car in the village, the streets were safe, football on the village green, marbles, bow and arrows, catapults, (I was a good shot), sledging in the winter, sometimes during the evening with torches fixed to the front of the sledge, I hated being called in, whilst the other boys carried on, other games were played and enjoyed, too many to mention.

The villagers used to go mushrooming, and a clothes basket could be filled and sent to Banbury on Mr Sumner's bus, he would return with the money for the mushrooms, which helped to swell the meagre money in the household.

Most fires in the cottages were open and either burnt logs or coal, and slack, the coal lorry used to back down Pages Lane, and the coalman would shout "How many bags," one day my Dad called up the stairs to my Mum "do you know it was two and three pence, for a hundred weight, it will soon be half a crown" he said, 2/6 old pence,(12p) he was disgusted.

The girls and boys could play in the fields to their hearts content or go and help with the hay making and the harvesting. It was so exiting, come the summer holidays it was six whole weeks off school, with every day it seemed with sunshine and blue skies. The children came out of school on the last day of term to begin their summer holiday, screaming and whooping with delight, It just seemed like heaven.

Bonfire Night, November 5th was always fun, villagers made Guy Fawkes and built bonfires to burn them on. Jumping jacks, ha'penney demons, Catherine wheels all added to the fun. I used to hang back a bit, as I was a little scared, I didn't mind the sparklers that you could hold in your hand.

Some families kept a pig, which they used for meat, the pig killer came round and killed the pig by slitting its throat. The boys gathered round watching the poor animal bleed to death, then it was burnt to get the hairs off of the body. The family could enjoy pig meat for weeks, pork, which included pig's feet, chit lings, (the pigs intestines, cleaned!)

The families of the owner of the pig, would all receive pig meat, my granddad Fred Tanner (my brother was named after his Granddad,) used to say to me, "those pigs hams on the wall are better than pictures." The pig meat was very rich, and there was a saying in the village, "After the pig killer, comes the doctor", it was only a saying and not really true.

There were no television sets in the village as television had not been invented, everyone had a wooden homemade radio, this was run by a battery, usually in a glass container and it had to be charged up, so Mr Miles in the village who had a radio business would charge the "accumulator" up and then each family had a spare, which they would leave with him and take the charged one home. The children used to go along to Mr and Mrs Cleavers and listen to Sexton Blake and Tinker this was on a Monday night at eight. This was very exciting and the boys gathered on the pavement outside the Cleavers to hear the radio.

The seasons played their part in the life of the village, each of them bringing something of interest, even magic to the village.

Spring; with it came the flowers, birds, building their nests, the first cuckoo, the gardens and allotments to tend.

Then summer came, with it the hay making, long school holidays, already mentioned, harvesting, and picnics and there was nothing better than a cucumber or salmon sandwich with a nice tomato and lettuce. Home grown of course with a bottle of fizzy drink they all tasted better to young boys and girls.

The autumn with its colours, the gold of the leaves on the trees, cows in the fields, so much to see and how much to enjoy.

Winter brought with it snow, in 1946/7 the snow was six to seven feet deep. The village was cut off for a fortnight, teams of men and boys had to dig the village out. Then came Christmas, even the thought of hanging up the stocking at the end of the bed, was exiting or the Christmas tree in the morning. Father Christmas, had filled the stockings and put presents on the Christmas tree but no one had seen him during the night. The mince pies left out for him were gone, and the bucket of water for his reindeer was empty, laughter filled the air on Christmas morning, as the stocking was eagerly emptied and then there were cries of "just what I wanted" when the Christmas presents were hurriedly opened.

Also great fun, was building a snowman, every house with children living there, had one, coal for its eyes, and a piece of stick for its mouth, snowballing too was great fun, until you received one down your neck. Snowballing made your hands cold, so we wore mittens I used to go down to Jim England's in Bell Street on Boxing Day every year and spend all afternoon with Jim, Alec and their parents.

Another village activity was carol singing, children would visit all the houses and sing, often quite badly, and the carols that they knew and in return they were given money which they shared out at the end of the evening and then ran happily home.

This then was village life, but it all changed, come September 1939, when we heard on the radio that Germany was at war with us. We were terrified, were we all going to die! Gas masks were hurriedly issued, and had to be taken to school, in a box slung over each child's shoulder then hung on your own "peg at school.

A blackout was announced, and everyone had to have blackout curtains fixed over their windows, which were drawn at night so that enemy bombers could not see chinks of light from the air, Sign posts were taken down, and posters declared "Careless talk costs lives".

Then on the radio came the voice of Winston Churchill, a chill ran down ones spine, as we heard his famous speeches, "We shall fight them on the beaches, we shall fight them in the hills, and we shall never be defeated. An aerodrome opened up at nearby Sherington where Wellington bomber aircraft operated from. A Search light camp opened up near Hornton and an Army camp opened up at the other end of the village, about a mile a away.

The boys used to go and stare by day at the searchlights, which panned the sky at night, looking for German planes, and go up to the army camp to talk to the soldiers, they would take you into the cinema, free, if you were lucky.

The Piece, a field at the end of Pages Lane and next door to where I and my family lived was full of cows. It was uncanny the way they knew when they were due to be milked, they would suddenly all stand up and walk in a file to Mr Robbins milking dairy. Villagers bought their milk from Mr. Robbins, the system was that each family had two jugs, one for the milk picked up from the dairy each day and one empty jug left behind for the next day to be filled. The dairy had a lovely smell as you walked in to collect your jug of milk, I can still conjure up the smell, when I think about it.

The Home Guard was formed, my Dad, Harry joined, he came home one day with a pitchfork, "What's that for Dad?" I asked, "To stick up a German paratrooper if they try and land," then a week later my Dad came home with a .303 rifle, my jaw dropped, but to my dismay it only had one bullet. It stood in the bedroom and I used to gaze at it in wonderment. Then the Home Guard had an idea, if the German tanks came, they had to be stopped, so they put a telegraph pole on wheels at one end of the village, and a tree trunk at the other end of the village, I felt safe, as I was at the tree trunk end.

Transport in the village, apart from Mr Summer's bus, was bicycles, if you went anywhere, you went on your bike. Banbury was seven miles away, so we used to cycle the 14 miles round trip to get to the cinema, this used to be on Saturday or Sunday,(the pictures) the seat prices were one shilling and nine pence, two shillings and three pence, the dearest seats were two shillings and nine pence, and you could get an ice cream for about 2 pence.

Happy days, sometimes the cycle chain broke, if going up a steep hill, so fingers got black mending the chain, with spare links we carried with us. During the week, the boys would discuss what film was on at the cinema in Banbury, they would say, Gary Cooper is on, or Alan Ladd, (my favourite star.) William Holden, Gregory Peck, Stewart Granger, Kirk Douglas, Bob Mitchum and many others. It was worth peddling seven miles each way for. Then the weekend was over and we had another whole week to wait before the next visit could be made.

Looking back seventy years later, life in the village was so full of exiting things to do, no time to be bored, there was always time to do something. I kept a rabbit, and a ferret, I used to go out rabbiting with the ferret, the fact that he never caught anything didn't matter, it was the enjoyment of just trying.

Another past time was "black berrying" and bringing a basket home for Mum to make jam, or there were wild raspberries, the smell of these was intoxicating, with sugar on they were delicious. When the war was on sweets were rationed along with many other things, all we could get was half an orange each, now in 2007, a bowl of oranges can remain untouched for several days. Most things were rationed, but this made everything more appreciated.

I used to enjoy the harvest Festival, in the village Chapel each autumn, the smell of the fruit or the vegetables had to be experienced. Displayed at the front of the Chapel, were sheaves of wheat, apples, pears, grapes, and vegetables of every description and even honey. Everyone in the congregation seemed to enjoy the occasion, all the produce were sold the next night to raise money for the Chapel.

As the war continued, it was rumoured around the village that the evacuees were coming. The boys did not know what evacuees were! But they were coming and they arrived on the village green in 1940. They were pasty faced boys aged about ten and the Hornton boys did not think much to these boys. Charlie Evans, Bill Dodkin and George Osler to name but three, George Osler was billeted at my Granny and Granddads, in Miller's Lane.

In Hornton, if the village boys were eating an apple, the evacuee boys would say, "bags your core" (the apple core) and if it was discarded on the ground they would scabble for it. In the beginning, the local boys could not understand it but soon the evacuee boys learnt to go "scrumping" too, stealing the apples off the trees, no need to eat the core now.

With Shenington aerodrome now in full swing, Wellington bombers roared over the village on bombing runs towards Germany. It was an every night scene to see the red exhausts glowing as they left, flying low over the village on their way to give the Germans a taste of what they were giving London. I recall my Dad taking me by the hand to walk to the top of the hill to see the sky red with flames. I could see the city of Coventry on fire as a result of heavy German bombing, the city is about forty miles away. Sometimes a returning Wellington would not quite get back through shell-fire and crash nearby.

Then we heard that a German plane had been shot down by a Spitfire at the nearby village of Edgehill. The boys, me included, dashed off to see the downed plane, when we got to the site of the crash, the we saw four bodies of the crew laid out dead under a blanket, an English soldier with a rifle guarding them, "Keep back" he said. A German airman was hanging in his parachute entangled in a nearby tree, he too was dead, he had jumped out too low.

By this time during the war, lighting in the village had gone from candles lighting the tiny rooms and a new technology had taken over in the form of oil lamps. These were a huge improvement but if the wicks in the lamps were turned up to quickly on a frosty night, it cracked the glass of the oil lamp. This meant a replacement had to be quickly found. Bath night was Friday night, with a tin bath, in the kitchen, each brother using the same water which came from being boiled over a wood fire in an old copper boiler.

Hornton had a good football team, they used to play at the top of a field near Langway, every other Saturday everyone that liked football used to swarm up to this field. At the top and on the level was the pitch, everyone cheered Hornton on. In goal at one time was Jack Simms, My Dad Harry was also in goal for quite a while, a new player came along, Conrad Harvey, he was an excellent player, so was Vincent Sumner. The team used to go off by coach on the "away" weeks to Horley, Wroxton, Chipping Norton, Ayno, Hanwell and so on.

About 1946 as the boys began to save money, by now I was working at the nearby poultry farm, owned by the father of Nancy Jarvis, (the Easter Egg girl) I had started there in 1944 at age 14 at £1.6shillings a week. His name was Oliver Jarvis, he had a tremendous sense of humour, one day I said to Mr Jarvis, "It looks like rain, what shall we do?" he replied, "Get wet". There were other humorous comments but too many to enclose here, he played the Chapel organ on a Sunday for many years.

Parachutes dropped from the skies, during the day, it was a common sight in the village. They had a "flare" attached, used by planes to light up targets in Germany, our planes would drop them, during the day, to test them out for night time conditions over enemy territory. We used to see them coming down, out of the school window, and the minute bell went to leave school for the day, all the boys rushed out to try and get a parachute. They were eagerly sought, and everyone wanted one as it was made of a rare silk, I crawled under a hedge, whilst the other boys scrambled over the hedge, I grabbed my prize and took it home to my delighted Mum.

With money coming in the boys began to think about buying a motorcycle, I bought one on HP it seemed heaven to jump on it, give it a kick on the kick start and roar off to Banbury, no more cycling, how wonderful. My first motorbike was a silver Norton what an adventure. We rode for miles, if we went to a dance we could pick up a girl and take her home on the pillion seat.

I worked for a while at Edgehill pits, where my Dad was a stone mason but having no patience which is needed in this role, I left and went to work at Sun Rising House as a gardener, then later to Upton House for Lord and Lady Bearstead.

If they addressed me, which was rare, I would have to "touch my forelock," and say "Good Morning your Lordship/Ladyship, they called me "Tanner" which I did not like at all.

In 1952 still at Upton House, I by now was 22 years of age, I joined up for the Royal Air force. I wanted to be an RAF policeman, but flat feet let me down, and after my "square bashing" at Bridge North, which scared the living daylights out of me, I was posted to High Wycombe, "where is High Wycombe", I asked and was told "Its near London".

Off I set by train, pulling into High Wycombe railway station and passing over the bridge by Frogmoor, I was captivated at once by the hustle and bustle. Red buses going everywhere, the streets full of people. As I got off the train, carrying my kitbag, I saw a dreaded RAF policeman, "Airman, where are you going?" he greeted me. RAF Naphill I replied nervously, "here give me your kit bag, I will carry it for you".

I nearly fainted, I had just had six weeks at being shouted at by NCOs corporals, and now one was carrying my kit bag!

Now this is where the tile of this story, changes to "And Beyond".

I spent three years at the RAF camp in the M.T. Motor transport section, my job was varied, but mostly driving officers about. On demob, I decided not to go back to the village, but to stay in the nearby town of High Wycombe. I got lodgings at £1.00 a week with a Mrs Baldwin in Benjamin Road High Wycombe, I was very happy there, and got a job on the buses, (with the Thames Valley bus company), £12.00 a week, £16.00 with overtime.

It was while I was working on the buses that I noticed an attractive young lady get on my double-decker bus at Loudwater. She travelled quite regularly, and I found out after talking to her one day when she got off the bus that her name was Sylvia Pyle and that she lived at Loudwater and worked at John Hearne's shoe shop in Frogmoor.

We started going out together, she is now my wife of 47 years, to me there was something "different and special" about her, she was only 16 when we met I was 26. We married on March 26th 1960 and moved into a lovely bungalow that same year. Bus work, was not to my liking, my temperament was not suitable and in 1959 I got a job at Harrison and Sons, (the Printers to her majesty the Queen), now I was on good money at £19.00 a week, I was a driver there and drove into London, and back twice a day. During this time at Harrisons, our son Mark was born on May 2nd 1966, I remember being so exited, he has brought us nothing but pleasure since he was born. At the time of writing this he was 42 years of age.

I also drove other Lorries on other journeys. Harrison and sons was a highly organised trade union firm, and before long I was asked to be a union official, so I took it on, and I was so successful that I rose through the ranks and was a delegate from my Union SOGAT.

Before long, I was Secretary of the Trades Union Council from there we formed a Branch for the elderly in the town and in 1972 for we formed The High Wycombe and District Branch of Pensioners Voice.

At its peak membership was 1,600 and the Branch had a committee of fifteen members and we organised a special Christmas shopping evening in 1972 at Murray's store with every elderly person going in receiving 50p each, worth £5.00 at today's prices. 120 car owners arrived at the store, and it was a wonderful experience for all concerned. The Branch held a Grand Social at the High Wycombe Town Hall every year for 500 of the Branch members. This was all the Town Hall could hold and was paid for by the trade unions. A lovely meal was enjoyed by all, one year the famous trade union leader Jack Jones was guest of honour. Then every month a meeting was held at Desborough Hall in High Wycombe and usually there were over one hundred members attending, one of the Guests of honour at these meeting was Margaret Beckett M.P. (who went on to become Foreign secretary). The Branch organised several coach trip holidays, at one time three coach loads going away for a week. The Branch continued for thirty five years only coming to an end in 2006.

In 1981 I was asked to stand as a County councillor and I was successful in getting elected, I served on the Social Services committee, the Highways and Transportation committee and the Public Protection committee. After three or four years I was elected to serve on the Thames Valley Police Authority, and then from that, I was appointed to serve on the Police complaints Panel. In 1983 I was approached to serve as a District Councillor for Castlefield, I was duly elected and served on the Housing committee, the Leisure committee and the Planning committee also the Town committee. In 1981 I was appointed to serve on the Reading industrial Tribunals which I did for nineteen years.

In late 1981 I was contacted by Chris Fowler the Youth and Community worker for Castlefield he asked me what I felt was the most important thing that Castlefield needed, when I replied " A new Community Centre, he asked to meet me, and we both decided that a meeting needed to be called and a committee set up to start this new Project.

We gained all sorts of sponsors, a milkman did a Sponsored Run, a local hair-dresser held an "Hair-A-thon, donating the money raised to our fund, we even went round Carol Singing at Christmas but our biggest step was to organise a Carnival on The Green near Cross Road, our first one was on 7th August 1982. We were so delighted with its success that we held seven more, one each year, usually in August.

We invited Mayor's to open our Carnival, and later during this period Cllr Ted Collins joined us and became our Chairman and Cllr's Janet Riddington and Cllr Brian Stenner came on board, both Castlefield councillors. In 1989 when I was the Mayor, Jan Leeming of T.V fame "opened our Carnival, we had the Bucks Free Press open deck bus, and Jan, with a microphone did us proud. We asked the Bucks County Council and the Wycombe District Council to meet with our committee, by now since 1983 I had become a Wycombe District councillor, as well as mentioned earlier a Bucks County councillor, during our many talks the County council, thorough Shirley Stokes, agreed to donate the land, our dream began to look like a reality, WDC gave us a huge Grant, enough to enable the Centre to be built.

So this magnificent building was on the way, I had the privilege of officially opening this new Community Centre on Saturday 19th July 1997, seventeen years from when we first started the idea. Frances Alexander the then Mayor of High Wycombe cut the ribbon, and there was our new Community Centre we were all so proud. There was a huge crowd watching and clapping. Even Ray Whitney, our M.P was there, it took seven years of hard work.

I, as a councillor for Wycombe District Council, as the years progressed became involved with the Charter trustees, these trustees are closely connected with the Mayorality, and to my surprise in 1989 I was elected as the Mayor of High Wycombe. Each Mayor has a charity during their year to raise money for, so as my Dad, Harry had passed away of a stroke in 1979 we raised £37,000 for stroke equipment in High Wycombe Hospital.

By now I had left Harrisons, the printers and was now a full-time union official for SOGAT alongside Brenda Dean, the general secretary, During 1989/90 I and my wife Sylvia, (now Mayoress,) carried out 400 engagements, and we met Princess Diana when she opened The Reggie Goves Centre, in Paul's Row, in High Wycombe.

I was overwhelmed by Diana's beauty, and blushed as she spoke to me after I had welcomed her to High Wycombe. When my Mayoral year was over, I thought that would be the end of my political career then a fellow Councillor Ted Collins telephoned me at home, one evening in May, 1998 he said I have been asked to stand as Chairman of Wycombe District Council, would you be my Vice Chairman of the Council. I readily agreed, and the next thing I knew, is that I was sat in the Council chamber, facing 60 District Councillors, I used to think as I sat there, how did I get here?, was it all true, then I remembered the photograph of me shaking hands with Princess Diana! and I knew it was.

During the course of this story, I lost three more members of my family, my Mother Mary died in her early nineties, and she never got over the death of her husband Harry and yearned for him every day until she died. My sister Joy, died of Lung cancer, starting off as a beautiful women and ending up wearing a face mask, often gasping for breath. Her husband Ray is still well and healthy but my brother who became an RAF policeman and who was stationed at Christmas Island in the Pacific whilst the Atom Bomb tests were carried out. He returned to my RAF camp at Naphill but died many years later, the family think, as a result of the effects of radiation, his daughter Julie, died young of cancer.

Fred's wife Jill survives today, my other brothers, Bill, Gerald, and Jeffrey all live happily, Gerald lives in Wales, Bill and his wife Shelia live at Brackley, where they are very happy and proud of their sons and daughters achievements in life, which are many. Jeffrey and his wife Rose live at Milton Keynes and have a lovely son named Harry, after his Grandfather, all of the family are proud of him, carrying the name of their Dad on.

Because of my love for writing, I was invited to write a column in the local newspaper, and I did this for five and a half years, my column "Community News, covered many of the forthcoming events in the town, and was much appreciated by the public.

I also, as a member of the local Labour party since 1971, took over the running of the local Labour Party office as the Constituency secretary, I thoroughly enjoyed this, as a local councillor I was able to help many members who telephoned in for assistance

I carried out these duties unpaid for five and a half years. I have spoken on the local radio several times, and appeared on television once. I have attended many Conferences, and was invited to meet Gordon Brown once at Number 11 Downing Street, when New Deal was introduced. I have sat on a number of local committees, Age Concern, Central Aid, Dial-a- Ride and the Wycombe Citizens Advice Bureau.

Sometimes I am contacted to give a talk by local groups, on either my year as the Mayor of High Wycombe or on The Village and Beyond, I enjoy doing this and the people at the meetings seem to enjoy it also.

Another of my interests is gardening, I have a large vegetable garden, and greenhouse, in which I grow every vegetable possible, all carefully looked after. Neighbours benefit from tomatoes from my greenhouse, my garden and lawns have hedges surrounding them, and I keep these nicely trimmed, often it takes three days to cut and shape the privet hedges but I enjoy doing this. I say what can be better than digging up nice new potatoes, picking runner beans, broad beans, peas, carrots, and cabbage and Brussels sprouts, another delicacy is spring cauliflower , and sprouting broccoli. I have been President of the Wycombe and District Horticultural Society for 17 years, so I have to set high standards in my own garden.

I love reading , especially autobiographies, I have read prominent and politicians life stories, at school many years ago, my teacher asked the class a question, then she turned her back, and said to the class, "I know without looking, who has their hands up" It was Nancy Jarvis, Jim England and Jim Tanner. She, the teacher turned round and said, "There you are, I was right" she said, "all three of these pupils read a lot; this is the way to find out about things.

I am now 77 years of age, as I commit my thoughts to paper, and I think of the journey I have made through life, from my first day at Hornton school , when I was so nervous, that I wet my trousers, when I was four, this was in 1934 and when I went home, Mum seeing the blue die running down my legs, told me off. I have mentioned my sister Joy and Fred, Gerald Bill and Jeffrey they were also my brothers, and although they do not meet very often, there is a brotherly bond and love between us , like our Mum, she never spoke words of love to the boys or girl, as Gerald wrote, when she died and broke all the family's hearts, He said, we never received a word of love from her as children, but we all knew she loved us.

During my time as Mayor, I was approached by Gordon Summerfield, he suggested that the Mayor (myself) hold a Carnival, to raise money for local charities, which together we did, the first one was called, The Wycombe Charity Carnival which was organised every year for 14 years each year John Parnhan

included his Fair to help us, during this time Gordon's daughter, Janet Rolfe, took over her Dad's role as Co-ordinator as her Dad had passed away, when the Carnival ceased two years ago, in 2005, I was honoured at the last one, by being made an Honorary Burgess, by the Mayor Margaret Draper for my work in the town, in my many roles, and Janet was handed by the Mayor, Margaret Draper, the Mayors badge, as this story ends Janet Rolfe is the Mayoress of High Wycombe.

Other interests that have occupied my time have been education and crime prevention, a governor of six schools over many years, including being chairman of Governors of two schools Hatters Lane and Castlefield school at the same time. This has been a great privilege and interest to me, I was a school governor of the Wycombe Royal Grammar school for over ten years, and in the field of crime prevention, I have served on several committees or Panels, for example over ten years was spent on being a Chairman of the High Wycombe Police Consultative committee, all of which have served to educate me in these matters, I am still involved with The Neighbourhood Watch Association, as my life story comes to its conclusion.

I have had a remarkable life, I am blessed with a wonderful wife, Sylvia, whom I met in 1956, we were married in 1960 and have now been together for 47 years, as I have said earlier and have lived in the same bungalow in High Wycombe for all those years, we are blessed with a much loved son Mark, whom we are very proud of, who at present is 41. He is doing well in his profession, as a Design engineer, Mark has his own lovely bungalow at West Drayton in Middlesex. I think I am very lucky, I have had a remarkable journey through life, I and Sylvia have travelled on holiday to Italy, Cyprus, Austria, the USA (Texas) the Caribbean, Malaysia, the Bahamas Antigua, South Africa, China Florida, and have been on three cruises, including travelling down the Panama Canal, before I had never had an holiday in the village, only going to Fringford near Bicester, when I was at school. Over the years I have met so many interesting, and dedicated people, without many of whom, this story could not have been possible, or written. I have one regret that my Dad did not live long enough to see many of the things that happened to me in my life, since he passed away.

So much has been left out of this story and perhaps can be told at some other time

In a further edition of *The Village and Beyond*

This short story tells of the life of one boy, born in an idyllic village, how he grew up in the village before the Second World war, it tells how he joined the Royal Air Force in 1952, and on leaving it tells of his humble beginnings, in High Wycombe his work in the town leading up to being the Mayor of High Wycombe (population 165,000) and on to being The Mayor of High Wycombe and then on to his appointment as Honorary Burgess of High Wycombe by the Mayor and Charter Trustees

He once was surprised to receive a letter simply addressed to Jim Tanner High Wycombe, he can be found on the Internet at this same address. All this from a boy, whose parents that had nothing, who lived simply but raised a family of six children, who all were taught good manners and the values that matter in life. His

Mother told Jim, as a boy, "That it is better to give than receive, he has always lived by this value.

Summarising this book, the reader will have followed Jim Tanner through his thirty five years involvement with The High Wycombe and District Branch of Pensioners Voice. Seventeen years creating a dream of a new Community Centre at Castlefield, eleven years being involved with The Wycombe Charity Carnival on The Rye, and his nineteen years as a member of the Reading Industrial Tribunals.

You will have read how he has served on six Boards of school governors, and his service as a Bucks County council, with thirteen years as a Wycombe District councillor.

He has met Tony Blair, Gordon Brown, Margaret Beckett Baroness Barbara Castle and Jack Jones the Trade Union leader, a long journey for a country lad who came from a little village called Hornton in Oxfordshire.

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