

## VILLAGE ECHOES

### Summer Memories

Last weekend we went to a School Summer Fete to see one of our grandchildren sing. We haven't been to such an occasion for years and the memories came flooding back. When our children were at school, we always volunteered for the Coconut Shy. Better the devil you know and although it was very tiring with all that running backwards and forwards, it was more restful than Hook a Duck, bending over small children with entwined fishing rods. Backache for us and tears from the infants ensued that year. I expect many of you had similar experiences too or perhaps you are still doing it. School fetes are a classic part of British life that we give little thought to after a soothing gin and tonic in the evening. Unless my descendants read this, they will have no idea that it happened. Have we got a duty to record personal history even though ours might not be life changing?



The Summer holidays are fast approaching for school children, and parents will be organising trips out or away. Looking back, we all agree that the six weeks break was endless and it never rained. These days six weeks pass in a flash, who would have thought it? Yet we heard the same cries from our parents and grandparents who certainly weren't lucky to have the distractions we did or even more so our grandchildren. My parents started work at age fourteen, I know this because they were at pains to tell me when I left school at sixteen. Another world.

The History Society was recently sent a copy of a book called 'After the War was Over'. It was written by a man called Peter Harding, who spent the late 1940s and early 1950s as a small child in Goudhurst. He has written many books about railways but suddenly felt the need to record a life he remembers fondly. He recounts some instances that you might call historical events such as the death of George VI but mostly he describes everyday life and the people who lived in the Village. When remembering the annual influx of the hop pickers, in his young eyes those weeks transformed Goudhurst 'into a mini-Hastings or Brighton with candy floss and toffee apple stalls and a daily visit from the fish and chip van, normally only once a week.' I have never read about that side of the event.

# After the war was over

Memories of an idyllic childhood  
**at Goudhurst in Kent**  
during the late 1940s and early 1950s



Peter A. Harding

Although his father ran a draper's shop on Clay Hill in what is now Edburton House, every Saturday morning Peter went for a ride in Weeks the baker delivery van. This wasn't as a baker's boy but just for the pleasure of travelling around the farms and cottages meeting people and enjoying the changing landscapes. There are many other anecdotes in this charming book of merely 32 pages. I especially enjoyed the description of the 'Man in the Tub', in Hastings. However, he says that above everything else those years in Goudhurst gave him a lifelong love of the country.

As someone who spent their first five years surrounded by bomb sites in London, I envy him. But perhaps we should all write a few lines to leave behind and whilst doing so memories will come flooding back about your own personal history.

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Copies of Peter's book can be bought for £5. Please contact the History Society for details if interested.

[www.goudhurstlocalhistorysociety.org](http://www.goudhurstlocalhistorysociety.org)