

# THE MELBOURNE LETTERS

## PART ONE: CELEBRATION

LETTERS WRITTEN BY THE MELBOURNE COMMUNITY

POEMS CREATED BY REBECCA GOLDSMITH

All words taken from the original letters, in the original order,  
shaped through a process of redaction

Original letters, images and sound art at [www.melbournefestival.co.uk](http://www.melbournefestival.co.uk)

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## WHITSUNTIDE PARADES

Jean Grimley

*Adults marched with bands and banners  
Children travelled in the back of lorries*

*I remember a smocked dress  
made for me by my mother*

*The children had races  
A slap-up tea, I feel sure*

*I attended "the Congos" (the Congregational Chapel)  
The Elders – I was on their lorry*

*You ask what would be my dream celebration...*

*The David Bowie Tribute band  
would be performing in Melbourne again*

-----

## A RED LETTER DAY

Christine Lee

*George Alagiah agreed to perform*

*It was the most beautiful warm spring day  
Crowded around the shop  
Speaking passionately -  
The difference fair trade makes*

*A brilliant beginning  
to twelve years of The Fair Trading Place  
in Melbourne Market Place  
With many, many happy memories*

-----

# EVERY DAY AN EVENT

Ann Rafferty

## 1 - Whitsuntide Parades

*Bundled onto an open backed lorry  
whisked off to the shop in Wilson  
for ice lollies, a real treat*

*The parade would meet  
in Castle Square for a service  
Afterwards, tea and games*

*The Parish Church went  
to Crow Park, where  
a band would play*

*There were races for the children*

## 2 - Saturdays

*Matinee at the cinema  
Flash Gordon*

*It cost 2d in, I had  
1d to spend at Mildred Toon's*

*I returned home terrified –  
Have never really cared for sci-fi since*

*The cinema closed down  
Films were shown at the Public Hall*

*More like home movies*

## 3 – The Carnival

*1959, my cousin and I  
won first prize in the fancy dress  
as Adam & Eve at Kings Newton Hall.*

*It poured with rain.*

*As you might imagine,  
by the time we paraded  
to our destination*

*we resembled drowned rats.*

*In the 60s, the carnival was held  
in the Hall Gardens. A large marquee  
erected for a Midsummer Night 'Oot.*

*It was a great event.*

*Music and dancing  
the night away –  
until midnight that is*

*to protect the Sabbath.*

#### **4 – The Wakes**

*Obviously, the main event.*

*Dodgems, Noah's Ark  
(my favourite),*

*Chair o'planes, donkeys,  
Coconut shies.*

*Thursday night, all rides 1d  
Except the dodgems.*

*2/ would last me all night.*

#### **5 – The Pantomime**

*The annual pantomime at the URC –  
Looking back, they were wonderful!  
Adults and children took part*

*I would go every night.*

## 6 – Christmas Concerts

*At the Secondary School in 1960/61  
Mr Archer, helped by some of the boys,  
built a car on stage.*

## 7 – Growing up in Melbourne

*As a child in the 50/60s  
I could attend all the above  
without an adult.*

*Leave the house early  
to play with friends, return  
when dark or hungry.*

*Every day was an event!*

-----

## THE FESTIVAL HOST

Anon

*Cobwebs  
Fingerprints on doors  
Skirting boards – layers of dust.  
Clean windows? Yes, if sun is shining.*

*The occasion?  
I'm opening my house  
to host an artist for Melbourne Festival.  
Such a good idea it seemed at the time.*

*Was it worth it?  
Indeed it was. I made new friends.  
Was given an exquisite picture.  
Had the satisfaction of making a small contribution  
to an outstanding weekend.*

*Next year? Sign me up.  
I'll start the To Do list tomorrow.*

-----

# MEMORABLE MEMORIES

Colin Barker

*Where do we start?*

*Fond memories of the Annual Arts Festival  
'Open' houses and artistic creations  
A variety of materials and skills.*

*The 'walkabout' on Millennium night  
Celebrating the new century  
Culminating in songs.*

*Who could forget?*

*The vibrant WW1 centenary  
in Castle Square, from morning until late evening  
People brought their own food, drink, picnic chairs.*

*Watching and listening to a host of entertainers,  
the droves braved the elements  
to attend this wonderful event.*

*One lasting personal memory –*

*The 2005 Melbourne Fete and Carnival  
Family visited from Southend  
Our 1<sup>st</sup> granddaughter, only 4 months old.*

*On the Melbourne School field  
A warm, sunny, family day out  
Our photo taken for the Village Voice.*

*Our dream for the future –*

*Continuation and new ideas  
Dedicated people giving up their time  
to help, support and entertain.*

-----

# MELBOURNE ARTS, FROCKS AND FRIPPERY

Jenny Williams

*It is difficult to select just one memorable event.  
There have been so many since my girls were young.*

*The Melbourne community is like no other.  
Our village, now a town.*

## **1 – Melbourne Arts Festival**

*I've loved meeting artists during the festival.  
The hundreds of faithful visitors who attend.*

*The lovely artwork I've purchased.  
One year, the weather was inclement,  
but still the visitors weathered the storm.*

*The next celebration will be one we never forget.  
All hands to the deck to make it so.  
Never dreaming we would still be in lockdown today.*

## **2 – The Fashion Shows**

*Always a great success with ladies from the village.  
With a good deal of hard work and sleepless nights  
we pull together a successful evening  
with the help of friends and family.*

*It always seems so much work for just one evening,  
by which time the 'super models' have got over their stage fright  
and are keen to do it all over again –  
a few glasses of prosecco help to calm the nerves.*

*Apparently us ladies out-drink the gents hand down.  
The bar staff seemed surprised!  
The ladies take home stylish bargains,  
not to mention raising funds for charity.*

-----



# MEMORIES OF MELBOURNE

Dick Carlier

## 1 - A Football Match

*It was 1946/47*

*I was 9 or 10*

*A pupil at Breadsall School.*

*A new headmistress from Lancashire*

*(a scout for Bolton Wanderers)*

*and our first male teacher*

*(an ex soldier)*

*created football XI.*

*One day, the football team*

*had been sent to Melbourne for a match.*

*One of them was taken ill.*

*I was to run home, grab my football kit.*

*Mr Barry would pick me up*

*in a Morgan Aero three wheeler sports car.*

*Quite exotic.*

*I jumped in,*

*burning arm on hot exhaust pipe.*

*The engine roared,*

*The wind blew in my hair.*

*I remember little of the match*

*except -*

*No-one passed me the ball*

*and we lost 24-0.*

*Can anyone remember the game?*

## 2 - Melbourne Carnival

*- I -*

*Around the millennium*

*On the carnival committee*

*I asked the guy who ran several rides*

*to take on the running of the fairground  
and we settled on a minimum fee.*

*Assessing the final fee, I would say;  
Good turn out, George.  
Record number through the gate.  
A fine day.*

*George would take a deep hissed breath, shake his head;  
Too hot, the kids got tired.  
Too cold.  
Too many people. Couldn't get near the rides.  
Not enough people, no atmosphere.  
Too close to the football, people don't come when there is shouting.*

*Mumbling, he would draw out  
a wad of fifties.  
Peel off the agreed sum  
and that was it.*

*Until next year.*

*- II -*

*An Elvis impersonator  
joined the parade.*

*An elderly lady turned to her friend  
and asked "who's that in the car?"*

*Her friend shrugged.*

*A bystander called out "It's Elvis."  
The lady retorted;*

*"Elvis who? Do we know him?"*

### **3 - An Eightieth Birthday**

*Frank Dixon -  
A popular Melbourne character  
Raised large sums for Guide Dogs  
and as Santa, he excelled.*

*His eightieth birthday imminent,  
something special was required.  
We discovered a decently sized  
inflatable Santa, duly ordered.*

*30cm tall, inflated with helium  
Shiny black weighted boots  
A large envelope in his hand  
Edging to the door.*

*We placed Santa on the step,  
rang the bell, retreated.  
Frank chuntered his way to the door,  
spotted Santa, scowl replaced with grin.*

*We came out of hiding  
Neighbours appeared, the fun began.  
Frank took the card, began talking to Santa  
Directed a gentle kick at Santa's backside.*

*Santa rose in the air, floated back to earth.  
Kicking became a little more enthusiastic.  
Santa floated higher.  
Slipped out of his boots...*

*He drifted away, rising up and up  
Leaving his boots neatly in the drive.  
Santa, still rising  
Set his course for the airport.*

*We imagined startled passengers  
glimpsing Santa drifting past cabin windows.  
Would air traffic pick him up on radar?  
Would the RAF shoot him down?*

*We heard no more.*

*Santa must have made his way safely  
to the North Pole.*

*Frank was left in peace  
with a champagne breakfast.*

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# SWIMMERS IN THE STREET

Jo Carlier

*The carnival procession rolled  
The theme was "The Olympics"  
The centre piece – an inflated paddling pool  
Four W.I. members in swimming gear  
and impressive make-up*

*Mrs Travena in a tracksuit  
Flourishing a whistle  
Started the music, gave a blast  
The synchronised swimming display  
was underway!*

*In perfect harmony  
Four left arms were raised. And lowered.  
Followed by the right.  
Four ladies sank down  
until only their caps were visible.*

*A pause and a leg raised skywards.  
With precise timing, the swimmers  
raised their legs in turn.  
But something was wrong.  
Not the legs one might expect.*

*Too long too straight too elegant.  
- The secret was revealed -  
The legs had been  
begged borrowed scrounged  
from a fashion window display of nylons.*

*Definitely the star of the procession.  
The memory still makes me smile.*

-----

## LIVING ON THE MARKET PLACE

Eddie Morgan

*In the 80s, we came to Melbourne. I remember the winters were much colder then.*

*Singing camp songs around the scouts bonfire. Delicious treacle bonfire toffee.*

*Living on the Market Place enables me to enjoy the wonderful family spirit of Melbourne.*

*Everyone turning out to watch the carnival parades. The Guides and the WI floats. I was involved in painting signs.*

*The Melbourne Town band was always kept busy. The carnival, Remembrance Sunday, late night opening and events around Christmas. Accompanying the carol singing around the market place.*

*For me the most important event is the Festival. A wonderful weekend – meeting many art lovers, my old friends visit me.*

*Over the years I have made many Christmas cards for family and friends.*



Images: Eddie Morgan

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## A LONG-STANDING TRADITION

Ged Messer

*I think it was on a Sunday  
the caravans would appear  
on the green, at the bottom of the crescent*

*Cries on the Monday morning;*

***“They’re here, the Wakes are here”***

*Straight from school, down to Castle Square  
to watch the lorries and trailers  
loaded with rides*

*The most common question;*

***“Is Little John here?”***

*A large generator, parked in front of Mr Blunt’s  
I was fascinated  
Cables ran along the kerb*

*A magnificent showman’s caravan painted plum red  
A St Bernard dog we loved to see each year  
If we were lucky, tickets for a free ride*

*By Tuesday night  
Green, street and yard filled  
with “fair people”*

*By Thursday afternoon  
All stalls and rides in place –  
The official opening*

//

*‘Penny Night’ | A rifle range | Cork in the barrel | Targets knocked off | “The Tanks” | A ball bearing inside | Roll them into slots – you won a prize | Hot dogs | Burgers | Chips | Candy floss | Brandy snaps | Toffee apples | A Mexican bandit | A coconut shy | (Why do they call it a shy and not a stall? Answers on a postcard) | A stall filled with goldfish bowls | Throw a ping pong ball to win a fish | Saturday night – the big night | Packed with families | The atmosphere | The fun | A siren for the dodgem ride | Crowd rush to claim a car | Noah’s Ark | Wooden animals – round and up and down | Brave people allowed to stand up | Health and Safety Officials would have a heart attack | Crawl under, pick up money dropped through boards above | A toy stall | Swords | Zorro outfits | Fairy dolls | A coloured ball filled with sawdust attached to elastic | Lead a donkey with a child on down Castle Street and back | Pubs at closing time | Rides until midnight*

//

*The smell of those hot dogs stays with me*

*It was gone as quickly as it came  
Taken down, packed away  
Off to the next town*

*Wonderful memories.*

**Footnote:**

*Most people have a favourite song that reminds them of The Wakes.*

*For me:-*

*"Telstar" by The Tornados*

*"Let's Dance" by Chris Montez*

*Happy, happy days.*

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## MEMORIES OF MELBOURNE WAKES

John Blunt

*I was born at Castle Farm in December 1935*

*The Wakes before the Second World War*

*was quite a big affair, with the Helter Skelter,*

*Cake Walk and Roundabout as central features.*

*The Roundabout had animals to ride.*

*When war came, Hollands must have decided to dismantle it.*

*My brother and I played for years*

*on an elephant on rockers.*

*After the war, things came back very slowly.*

*The Cake Walk stopped, the prizes were pitiful.*

*One year, a stall had some quality tin models made before the war.*

*Brother Charles and I fell on them like gannets.*

*The Hollands parked their caravan in our yard,*

*tapped into our mains to power their TV.*

*We received vouchers for free rides.*

*When the Dodgems set up outside our house*

*we went to sleep with the loudspeaker droning*

*'One way round' ...*

*'One way round' ...*

-----

# CHRISTMAS EVE CAROL SINGING

Philip Heath

*Armed with torches, woolly hats, and carol booklets  
Creased and crumpled from long use in all weathers  
We go to houses by pre-arranged appointment, the odd impromptu visit.*

*When I started, it was completely a capella  
Just a note on the recorder:  
"Give us a C, Henry."  
And that was fine.*

*Thirty or so years ago  
I began taking a portable harmonium  
to hold the singing together. My cousin made a steel frame  
and a set of wheels, to make it easier to transport.*

*On good nights there will be effective four-part harmony.  
Sometimes, unintentionally, there are rather more parts,  
but given there is no prior practice  
I think we can let that pass.*

*Some in the group only see one another on that night –  
that's almost part of the ritual. Some nights  
the sound is better than others. I would swear  
the singing speeds up when it's wet or cold.*

*The itinerary has shortened in late years.  
We still start at 7, but no longer sing under windows  
of people who've gone to bed and may be fast asleep.  
And no longer after midnight, to sing*

*"Christians Awake, salute the happy morn"!  
...as if they would.*

*It always ends up feeling like Christmas by the end of the evening.  
It gives a lovely, reassuring window on Melbourne –  
Young families, extended family gatherings, busy restaurants.*

*The itinerary evolves from year to year  
as people come and go, but people have us back.  
Either we sound OK  
or they just like tradition!*

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## AT WHITSUNTIDE

Roger Timmins

*I remember when we were much younger  
in the 1950s/60s, a march through the town  
at Whitsuntide.*

*Girls in new summer dresses  
congregating in Castle Square  
C of E children driven on the back of a lorry  
to the shop at Wilson for ice creams*

*Gathering in Crow Park  
Looking over the Hall gardens  
We would have tea  
accompanied by a brass band*

*There were running, bean bag & egg & spoon races  
Trying to avoid the cow pats along the way!*

*An enjoyable day remembered with fondness.*

-----

## KING AND QUEEN OF THE CARNIVAL

Sheila Blood

*My grandparents  
were THE KING and Queen of the carnival  
more than once!  
In the late twenties or early thirties*

*They wore raincoats  
Both wore crowns  
They were attended by 2  
if not 4 attendants*

*There would be a brass band  
A long parade  
Fancy dress  
Plenty of wagons*

*It ended at       KINGS FIELD  
Near the pool  
Past the         "WEIR"*

*There was a tea tent  
Races for the children  
with prizes*

*The day ended with a   BALL (DANCE)  
At the                 PUBLIC HALL*

*The Market Gardeners organised it all  
The proceeds often went to the "WOMEN'S HOSPITAL" in Derby*

-----

*Sid & I led the fete & carnival in 2009  
We were driven along the streets in a Vintage car  
by the president of the Melbourne Photographic Society  
dressed as OZZIE OSBOURNE*

*At the school playing field  
we visited the stalls, had tea  
judged the final of the fancy dress  
Sid gave his speech and opened the fete & carnival*

*We loved it all, and later in the year  
were invited to the British Legion  
to present cheques to charities  
from the proceeds*

-----

# **FOUR GROUPS CAME TOGETHER**

Stephanie Hill

*On a balmy September evening in 2012  
to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee  
in a marquee on the lawns of Melbourne Hall*

**Melbourne Town Band  
The Operatic Society  
The Melbourne Male Voice Choir**

*and the hugely successful mixed voice choir  
**A Choir'd Taste***

*A diverse and original programme*

*Well-loved favourites:*

**Dambusters March  
Bring Him Home  
Londonderry Air**

*All four groups on stage  
for a rousing finale:*

**You Raise Me Up**

*Community singing:*

**Rule Britannia  
Jerusalem  
Land of Hope and Glory**

*The best of British and the best of Melbourne*

-----

# THE HARDWICK PLAYERS

Stephanie Hill

*It was in 1979, back in the mists of time  
Before the wondrous creation that is the Melbourne Festival*

*Part of that year's Derbyshire Festival was to be a play  
put on by a theatre group call the Hardwick Players*

*Set in the 1800s, performed in a marquee on the sweeping lawns of the Hall  
The weather was beautiful and the grounds looked stunning*

*The team erecting the marquee managed to drive a stake  
through an underground water pipe*

*The subsequent fountain  
adding extra drama to the proceedings*

*An afternoon tea at my home for the cast  
prior to the evening performance*

*The chief players were Sinead Cusack and Patrick Ryecart  
Charming and charismatic*

*Patrick gave me a signed photo of himself  
which I still have, forty odd years later*

*Along with delicate sandwiches, scones and cakes I made some mince pies  
I substituted sweet mincemeat for savoury curried mince beef*

*They were politely ignored by everyone, presumably the actors  
didn't want to be belching curry fumes over throughout their performance*

*The marquee was packed, and when it was over  
many of us stayed in the twilight by the lake*

*Patrick enfolded me in his arms  
and thanked me for looking after them*

*He didn't mention the curried mince pies  
and neither did I*

-----

## A THING OF THE PAST

Tim Winters

*How well I remember, as a 6 or 7 year old,  
running excitedly up to Blakemore House  
to peep through the gates.*

*Mr Ashfield, dressing his lorry with red, white and blue bunting.  
Polishing it within an inch of its life. Until it gleamed  
under the hot sun, which seemed to prevail on every Whit Monday.*

*Once again, there would be a procession through the streets.  
The different denominations of each church and chapel  
followed its banner, finishing up in Castle Square.*

*A united service was held, officiated by the clergy  
of each church. The lorries were used to transport  
the younger members of each Sunday School.*

*We were taken to the Public Hall  
for our annual Sunday School Tea.  
Potted meat sandwiches, cake and jelly – the order of the day.*

*I remember we all took dessert spoons, adorned  
with a scrap of coloured cotton or ribbon,  
so it could be returned to its owner after being washed!*

*Then it was down to Crow Park, to take part  
in the Sunday School sports - three legged, sack and egg and spoon races  
come readily to mind.*

*The strongest memory for me –  
being bitten by gnats, and being dabbed  
with lavender water by my aunts!*

*When the sports were over, the young adults adjourned  
to a “flannel dance” at the Public Hall.*

*Weary children went home, tired but happy.  
Storing the events of the day in our memory banks.*

*In the 70s, legislation fixed the Spring Bank Holiday,  
so the celebration of Whitsuntide, sadly,  
became a thing of the past.*

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## MELBOURNE TOWN BAND (MTB)

Susan Worrall

*Formed in November 1992 to revive an old tradition  
Eighteen folks; two knew how to play a brass instrument  
Three or four more could read music  
The rest were ready for a challenge!*

*MTB continued to develop –  
A 'Training Band' in the year 2000  
In 2016, a Beginners Band and the Melbourne Drum Corps  
All four bands established under the 'MTB Umbrella'  
with 70 playing members.*

*MTB became pro-active in organising local concerts  
to offset shortfall to band funds  
But also as a means of raising money  
for local and national charities.*

*'Blast of Brass' concerts –  
The usual uniforms replaced by 'posh frocks'  
and bow-tied evening wear  
A chilled-out 'picnic in the park' atmosphere  
A professional compere, massed band finale and fireworks  
'Firing the canon' two bars earlier than expected  
Our Euphonium player shot three foot into the air!*

*Concerts and events by other Melbourne organisations  
always made up a large part of the MTB calendar  
The band has played at many special occasions –  
The opening of the Lothian Gardens, Civic Services  
VE and VJ Celebrations, the 150th Anniversary  
of Melbourne Cricket Club, to name but a few.*

*The Queen's Diamond Jubilee Charity Concert  
in 2012, within Melbourne Hall grounds –  
Each local organisation performed their own set of music  
then, working together, were able to produce  
a memorable massed finale.*

*St George's Day Celebrations –  
Held every 23<sup>rd</sup> April in the Royal British Legion  
Decked out with flags and bunting*

*The Drum Corps, flag waving  
The MTB play the choice of the Musical Director in the first half  
after the interval the traditional 'sing song'.*

*A charity concert –  
In the grounds of the Dower House  
on a warm Sunday afternoon.*

*The Fete & Carnival Parade –  
On its two-mile route around Melbourne  
The whole community out in support.*

*A Festival of Remembrance in Melbourne Parish Church –  
A marching display, upbeat music, emotive music  
...poppies fell silently from the bell tower.*

*The Youth of Melbourne Concert –  
All played and sang to a very high standard  
The younger people of the town talented enough to execute a full concert  
without adult intervention.*

*Melbourne Arts Festival –  
The town heaving with folk from further afield  
MTB and Training band delighted to entertain, the atmosphere buzzing  
A well-established event on the Melbourne calendar.*

*Commemoration of the Centenary of the End of WW1 –  
The largest outdoor concert for many decades  
Twelve local musical groups, a professionally constructed stage  
A massed choir of one hundred voices  
A 'Drum Salute' in memory of Melbourne Veterans  
The playing of 'Sunset' with the peeling of the Parish Church Bells  
and the setting of the sun.*

*The Royal British Legion Remembrance Parade & Service in November –  
The most high profile and daunting event on the MTB calendar  
Reputed to be one of the largest in Derbyshire  
With over three hundred people on parade  
and one thousand plus at the memorial  
to show respect for the fallen, an honour to take part.*

*Melbourne Late Night Shopping held early December –  
Wrapped up warm to off-set the elements  
Three bands play to a throng of shoppers  
Santa arrives, lights the tree, and the scene is set for Christmas.*

*The Rotary Carols a few days before Christmas –  
A large audience sing for half an hour regardless of the weather.*

*Our annual MTB Patrons Concert was always held in December  
In 2019 it was decided to move to July –  
The weather is warmer and not such a hectic month!  
This special concert is free to all Patrons  
A huge 'thank you' for continued support.*

*MTB has almost made it to a thirty-year milestone  
and will continue to promote live music at every opportunity.*

-----

## **TERRY HARRISON'S TROUSERS**

Terry Harrison

*Living, as we do, on the Square in Castle St  
There is always much to see –  
the parade in November, the fairground in October  
and the floats for the Carnival in July.*

*The outstanding memory for me is the Street Party  
in 2012 for the Queen's Jubilee –  
I thought red, white and blue clothing would be the order of the day  
A search through the wardrobe found white and blue  
but no suitable red.*

*Off to M&S Derby for some red trousers  
There were none to be found.  
A compromise was made  
in the form of pink trousers.*

*Suitably attired, my wife and I joined the party  
During the course of events a huge aircraft appeared and hung in the sky  
seemingly disapproving of pink trousers  
among all the red, white and blue.*

*...but no – just the ANTONOV AIRCRAFT on its regular route  
to East Midlands Airport.*

*We see it all in Castle Square.*

-----



## CHILDHOOD MEMORIES

Tricia Ward (née Pat Hunt)

*For the first 20 years of my life I lived in King's Newton.  
My first memories are of air raid sirens  
and always having to carry my gas mask.*

*With my oldest sister and brother  
we organised games in our garden  
We ran a Post Office, Mum made stamps  
on her sewing machine.*

*We spent a lot of time at the Baptist Chapel.  
Celebrated Whit Monday, when each Sunday School  
paraded behind their banner  
and there was a brass band.*

*The ladies of the Chapel prepared a lovely tea  
Though I never liked the look of the beetroot sandwiches –  
the bread had turned pink!*

*In Autumn, the Harvest Festival Celebration  
There was always an abundance of vegetables and fruit  
I recall the sheaf of corn, glass of water  
and lump of coal.*

*To celebrate the end of the War, Sir Cecil and Lady Florence Paget  
invited the King's Newton residents to a party in their garden.  
We partook of a lovely tea – I don't recall beetroot sandwiches!*

*One of my childhood highlights was due to my friendship with Pauline Buckley  
whose father was butler to the Lothian family.  
I went with Pauline to children's parties at Melbourne Hall.*

*Three years ago I attended the funeral of my eldest brother, Richard.  
I suddenly felt I should return to my roots and family.  
I feel I have come full circle, living opposite the building  
that was the family factory.*

*I am sure ideas are being floated for an event  
to celebrate the end of this dreadful pandemic –  
but please no beetroot sandwiches.*

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