

Authentic English for Reading 3

Brian Abbs, Vivian Cook and Mary Underwood



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Introduction

Authentic English for Reading 3 is the third in a series of three books designed to provide authentic reading materials for the young adult or adult intermediate student of English.

It provides reading practice either for class work or private study which is both stimulating and relevant, which comes from varied sources and which covers a wide range of register and topics.

There are ten units, each of which has a central theme and contains three passages accompanied by a variety of exercises.

The exercises are set in three columns. The first column is to be used *before* students read the text. It contains an introduction to the text and two types of focus question. The first type, headed 'At a glance ...' orients students to the text. The second type, headed 'Before you read ...' helps students to relate the content to their own experience and so motivates them to read further.

The exercises in the other two columns are not simply tests of comprehension, but help the student to process the text and to expand and develop his or her linguistic repertoire and experience.

The passages have been chosen around central themes: controversy, community, people's lives, the creative arts, conservation, technology, country matters, travel, social issues, celebration.

These are the themes used in *Realistic English Dialogues 3* but this book has been written to be used independently of the *Realistic English* materials. As the themes have a general and universal appeal and as the texts can be used in any order, *Authentic English for Reading* will link appropriately with many course programmes for intermediate students.

Many of the passages are complete units of discourse with a specific purpose—a poem, a book review, for example. However, passages from longer discourse units have been included—extracts from novels, newspapers, reference books and biographies—to give the student experience of a wide range of text type and, more importantly, to provide a choice of text according to personal interests. Notes are included to help the student follow the text more easily. They do not include words which can be found by referring to a dictionary such as A.S. Hornby's *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*.

The exercises have the broad aim of enabling the student to process and absorb authentic texts with confidence and enjoyment while at the same time developing an overall linguistic ability in reading and writing skills. They include pre-reading orientation work, practice in identifying selected discourse features and a variety of types of question.

Comprehension skills are developed by means of matching exercises, questions of fact, deduction, inference, evaluation and interpretation, as well as by written extension work. Reading comprehension is checked by, for example, yes/no, true/false, multiple-choice and extraction exercises and by the transfer of information.

In short, the texts and exercises in *Authentic English for Reading 3* will encourage the student to read English more widely by proving that it is possible to read and enjoy genuine English texts at this level, and by providing a wide range of attractive extracts to be followed up for pleasure as well as for practice.

Blowing hot and cold on British windmills

The recent CEBG decision to spend money on windpower is ambitious enough. But unless the Government puts more money into research then once again foreign competition is likely to take the wind from a British industry's sails, argues Norman Lipman

LAST YEAR the Department of Energy and the Science Research Council together spent less than £1 million in research into wind energy, although £100 million each year goes into nuclear research and development. In sharp contrast the USA has been spending some 60 million dollars each year on wind energy and now plans a 1,000 million dollar demonstration and "commercialisation" programme.

In Germany, Denmark, and Sweden large programmes are under way and a number of megawatt size windmills have been or are being built. In the USA, competitive electricity prices are already envisaged when the present models of machines can be produced in large numbers (bringing down costs). The British Wind Energy Association brings together scientists, engineers, and entrepreneurs from industry, universities, and various Government bodies. With some 120 members, it now presents a respected view on the subject of wind energy.

But the activity has remained small, and in my view seriously under-funded compared with many of the other developed countries of the world. The UK is still without a single really large windmill (in the megawatt range) and this means that we are failing to build up the practical experience which is essential if any serious progress is to be made.

We in the UK are doing some very nice work on many of the associated problems of wind energy. But none of these

"generic studies" can replace real life experience with one or two very big windmills.

It is in the light of this background that we must examine the CEBG decision to press ahead with a rather complete and ambitious programme.

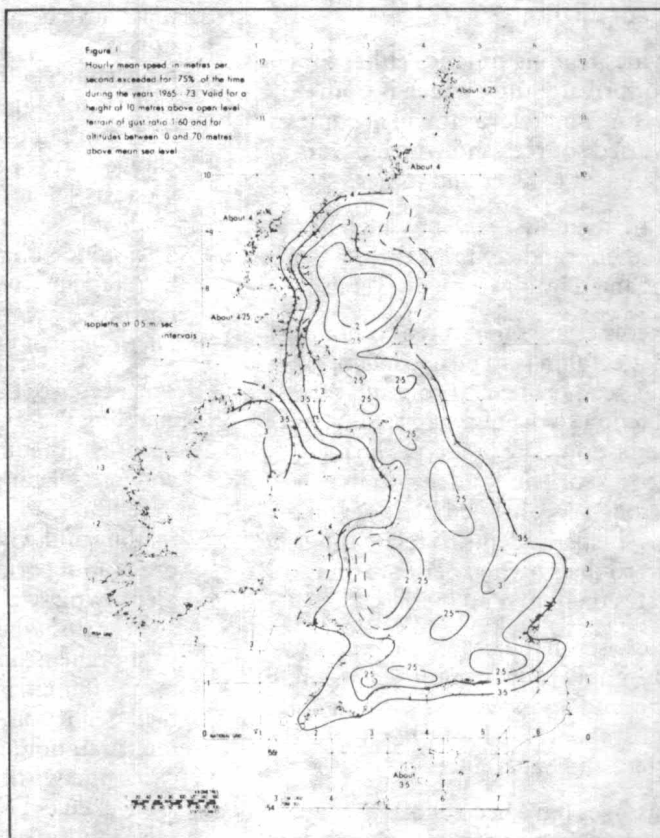
1. An island site is to be sought and a megawatt size windmill is to be purchased and erected by 1985.

2. A smaller (100kW) windmill is to be bought and set up, as soon as possible, so that an early experience may be built up in the CEBG of windmill operation and integration into the grid.

3. International collaboration will be sought for research on offshore windmills.

It is my guess that the CEBG might well wish to build its first windmill group or "cluster" in the period 1985-1990. This first cluster might have 10 machines in it. In the long term we are thinking, of course, of clusters of 400-1,000 machines (each of about 4MW). Such a cluster would provide an output similar in magnitude to a modern coal fired or nuclear powered station.

The importance of this CEBG decision is that the United Kingdom is at last moving forward towards the building of its first multi-megawatt windmill station. This is a milestone for those who believe that the so called "renewable" energy sources (wind, wave and sun) have an important part to play in our energy future. Even more important from the point of view of UK industry is the fact that it is the potentially largest UK



customer (the CEBG) who is taking the initiative.

Meanwhile, why has the CEBG opted for a lowland windmill? Good lowland sites offer average wind speeds of about six metres per second, whereas hilltop and offshore sites can offer average wind speeds in excess of eight metres/second. This ratio of 1.33 in windspeed actually represents a factor of 1.33 cubed (i.e. about 2.5) in available energy, for a given size of windmill.

Three or four years ago UK interest centred on hilltop and coastal sites. Developments since 1977 have greatly changed the picture. Dr Peter Musgrove pioneered in the UK the idea of putting windmills in the shallow waters of the North Sea. He pointed out that there are vast areas of shallow waters (less than

30 metres deep) off the east coast of the UK. He showed that a number of windmill clusters in these shallow waters could meet up to 30 per cent of UK annual electricity needs.

To their credit the Department of Energy took up these ideas and funded a detailed study. No insuperable technical difficulties were found and the estimated building and running costs would indicate a price for electricity which could become competitive in the near future with nuclear or coal-generated electricity.

The CEBG has given the production costs for electricity for stations currently being built. Nuclear power from Dungeness B is put at 2.62p/kWh; coal at Drax B is 3.59p/kWh; oil at Littlebrook D is 6.63p/kWh.

The Taylor Woodrow led study came up with a number of different figures for the cost of North Sea electricity depending on the assumptions made. Let me pick out the figure of 4.20p/kWh which was based on the windmills having a diameter of 100 metres (which is the largest size presently being built in the world). The figure taken for average wind speed is 9.5m/s.

Thus North Sea-generated electricity looks like being close to competitive on present fuel costs. This figure of 4.2p/kWh could come down dramatically if we find that we are able to build much larger diameter windmills than the present 100 metres. This is because foundation and lower costs were dominating the picture. Larger windmills would mean fewer windmills and hence lower overall foundation and tower expenditure.

The CEBG has chosen, in the meantime, to go for the on-land option for their initial programme. This is an eminently sensible decision. A number of windmill designs have been developed in the USA and elsewhere for machines to operate in moderate wind regions. The 6 metres/second average wind speeds that we get in many lowland areas of the UK are considered to be satisfactory speeds for wind turbine operation in the USA. Given a lower wind speed you simply design a larger diameter wind turbine.

What now remains to be seen is not so much whether you can build large windmills or whether they will be economically viable, but whether they will be environmentally and socially acceptable, placed for example in the windy lowlands of Lincolnshire and East Anglia. The CEBG search for its first site should bring out some interesting attitudes.

I have seen the 200 ft. Mod 1 Windmill which is on a hilltop near the small town of Boone in North Carolina. Even from a distance of only two miles it is far from obtrusive. In fact I found it a most attractive sight - but perhaps I am biased. The locals nonetheless are very proud of it!

Professor N. H. Lipman of the Department of Engineering at Reading University, is a member of the Reading Energy Group.

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Answers

Controversy

1.1 Windmills

This passage comes from an article from a daily newspaper about the use of windmills.

At a glance ...

Is it from a serious newspaper?
Who wrote it?
What does the map show?

Before you read ...

Do you think we should start using windmills again?

Do you think windmills are effective sources of energy?

Are they more or less beautiful than power stations?

Notes

megawatt—a million watts *345*

CEGB—Central Electricity Generating Board, the body responsible for providing electricity in Britain

kW—kilowatt, i.e. a thousand watts

grid—here, a network for distributing electricity

offshore—i.e. in the sea close to land

locals—the local inhabitants

Exercise 1

Answer these questions with information from the passage.

- 1 How much more money was spent on nuclear research than wind research in Britain?
- 2 How many windmills in the megawatt range does Britain have now?
- 3 Where will one be built in 1985?
- 4 How will they get experience before building a big windmill?
- 5 Do hills or lowlands have more useful wind?
- 6 What was Peter Musgrove's idea?
- 7 What kind of power station is there now at Dungeness?
- 8 How much more expensive is oil than wind at the moment?
- 9 How do you compensate for less wind in a particular area?
- 10 Where is a successful modern windmill already working?

Exercise 2

Complete the diagram below. It summarizes the facts given about windmills.

Background

worldwide UK

activities contribution
such as until now

1

2

New CEGB Programme

type of comparative advantages of
site costs CEGB decision

1 ... 1

2 ... 2

Department of Energy Programme

1

2

3

4

5

Exercise 3

Write down the characteristics of different windmills as shown below.

	Advantages	Disadvantages
Lowland

Hilltop

Offshore

Exercise 4

In what kind of place would you build each of the following? Give your reasons.

- 1 a university
- 2 a clothes factory
- 3 an army barracks
- 4 a windmill
- 5 an airport
- 6 a nuclear power station
- 7 a football stadium
- 8 an important government office

Exercise 5

Match the adjective and the noun as in the passage.

coal generated	attitudes
detailed	experience
practical	study
interesting	programme
ambitious	sites
attractive	electricity
coastal	decision
sensible	sight

1.2 The Case for Astrology

This passage comes from a popular paperback on astrology. The authors argue that there is a scientific basis to the study of the stars' and planets' influence on people's lives.

At a glance ...

From which part of the book does it come?
How heavily does it rely on quotation from other people?

Before you read ...

Do you believe that astrology has some influence on people's characters?
Do you think astrologers can predict the future accurately?
Do you ever read astrology columns in magazines and newspapers?
Do many people in your country take an interest in astrology?

Notes

rudely—here, suddenly

Flat Earth Society—a group of people who argue that the earth is flat rather than round

wish-fulfilment—a belief that something is true because you want it to be true

supernovae—a type of star

Reith Lectures—an annual series of radio lectures given at the invitation of the BBC by an eminent thinker on an issue of current interest

Exercise 1

Answer these questions according to the opinions given in the passage.

- 1 Is astrology getting more or less popular?
- 2 What is Freud's explanation for astrology?
- 3 What is Jung's opinion of astrology?
- 4 Name one piece of scientific evidence that the stars affect our lives.
- 5 What influence does the moon have on life on earth?
- 6 Why do we need an inquiry into astrology?
- 7 How much would the inquiry cost?
- 8 What are the aims of the book?
- 9 Do the authors approve of newspaper astrology?
- 10 How do they try to distinguish between two types of astrology?

Exercise 2

The authors use different arguments in the passage to show that astrology is true. Do you think that the following arguments are valid?

- 1 Because many people are interested in astrology we should investigate it scientifically. (Is this similar to the argument used in advertisements for soap powder: 'five million housewives can't be wrong'?)
- 2 A statement by a chief research engineer in infra-red devices that supernovae cause epidemics and affect evolution is a genuine piece of evidence. (Is he qualified to make these claims?)
- 3 The statement by the Astronomer Royal, Sir Bernard Lovell, that the moon affects some physical phenomena on earth represents a change of opinion over his earlier contempt of astrology. (Is he talking about the same thing?)
- 4 It is up to critics of astrology to prove it has no scientific validity, rather than to astrologers to prove it has.
- 5 The fact that many famous people are interested in a subject shows that it must be taken seriously.

Exercise 3

The style of the passage uses some words that are more formal or literary than their ordinary, everyday equivalents. Match the word from the passage on the left with its nearest everyday equivalent on the right, as in the example.

- | | | |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 vilified | <input type="checkbox"/> | laughed at |
| 2 derided | <input type="checkbox"/> | dug up |
| 3 lunacy | <input type="checkbox"/> | increasing growth |
| 4 celestial | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | said rude things about |
| 5 erroneousness | <input type="checkbox"/> | being too ready to believe |
| 6 exhume | <input type="checkbox"/> | madness |
| 7 credulous | <input type="checkbox"/> | heavenly |
| 8 resurgence | <input type="checkbox"/> | wrongness |

Exercise 4

Here are some events, some of which actually happened, some of which are imaginary. Note down which of them are definitely caused by the influence of the stars and planets, which of them might be caused in that way, and which of them are definitely not caused in that way. Add some more of your own.

Arsenal won the Football Association Cup in 1979.

There is a high tide in most seaside towns in England every 24 hours.

Paul Newman, who was born on 28 January 1925, became a famous film star.

My lettuces were very good this year because I planted them at full moon.

Prince Charles married Lady Diana Spencer.

Margaret Thatcher became Prime Minister in 1979.

The milk I bought yesterday went bad in two hours.

Albert Einstein and Otto Hahn, both of whom won the Nobel Prize, were born on 14 March 1879.

Radio reception is sometimes difficult when there are sunspots.

How the Tories broke a pledge to the disabled

30x12.00

Next Monday the Prime Minister will host a reception at 10 Downing Street for disabled people. One of Mrs Thatcher's guests, PETER TOWNSEND, will attempt to explain to her that she has little to be proud of.

DISABLED PEOPLE in Britain have always fared badly. But over the past decade there have been fitful improvements. Successive governments followed piecemeal policies to develop the range of cash benefits and social services; indeed it was, ironically, Sir Keith Joseph who, as Secretary of State for Social Services in the early 1970s, presided over a growth rate of 12 per cent a year in expenditure on personal social services.



The unlikely spender

However, major defects remained. Britain's three million disabled people, including 1¼ million with 'appreciable, severe or very severe handicaps' (those are official estimates: the true figures are undoubtedly higher) consist of many varied groups. And the anomalies grew to be considerable. Some disabled people receiving war or industrial injury disablement pensions had a fairly substantial income. But other people who were equally severely disabled, such as those who were disabled from birth or injured in accidents at home or on the roads – especially if they were disabled housewives – had few or no rights to any income.

The Conservatives promised to put those defects right. Its 1979 manifesto stated:

Our aim is to provide a coherent system of cash benefits to meet the costs of disability, so that more disabled people can support themselves and live normal lives.

As late as the 1979 Conservative Party conference Sir Keith Joseph admitted that Britain spends less on disabled people than do other countries, and less than a country should spend to deserve being called civilised. But instead of fulfilling their pledge, the Conservatives have actually made things worse.

*As a result of two new Social Security Acts, 650,000 invalidity pensioners under retirement age now receive considerably less than they would have done under previous legislation. Since last November, a single person has been £2.50 a week worse off, a married couple £4.05 worse off, and a couple with two children (where the man had been disabled early in adult life) £7.30 worse off. The Government has deliberately raised benefits rates by less than the rate of inflation.

*The Government is proposing to abandon entitlement to sickness benefit for the first eight weeks of sickness and oblige employers themselves to pay a low rate of sickness payment instead. That will also involve the abolition of the higher rate of industrial injury benefit for the same period. Disabled people with low earnings and families with children are among those who will lose most by the change.

*The Government is also proposing to abandon the higher rate of industrial injury benefit for the remainder of the first 26 weeks of injury – which will mean a loss of £2.75 a week for approximately 600,000 people who benefit under the industrial injury scheme for some period during the year.

*The Manpower Services Commission plans to close employment re-

habilitation centres to save money. Twenty-seven centres attended by 7,500 disabled people are affected. And only last month Mrs Thatcher announced that the number of the Department of Employment's Disablement Advisory Committees is to be cut from 220 to 68.

*Invalidity, Industrial Injury and War Disablement Pensions, the Attendance Allowance, Non-contributory Pensions and the Invalid Care Allowance will no longer be permitted to rise annually in relation to earnings, if earnings rise faster than prices. While the Government has declared that it will consider the situation each year, the removal of the automatic right to a share in rising prosperity could make a very big difference to the living standards of disabled people. For example, during the late 1970s pensions were increased by a total of £5 more per week more than they would have been increased had they merely been tied to prices.

*Supplementary benefits have been re-organised and people with disabilities are prominent among those likely to lose most as a consequence. The Government has admitted that about 1¼ million claimants will lose in the process of change, many of whom are disabled. Exceptional needs payments in particular will be subject to new restrictions. Before the end of November 1980 disabled people benefited disproportionately from such payments.

*Changes in the rules qualifying people for entitlement to invalidity benefit have been made and these will reduce the numbers so entitled.

*Home help charges imposed on many disabled people by local authorities will no longer be met under the revised supplementary benefits scheme.

*The Government's public expenditure plans envisage sharper cuts in the personal social services than in any other social service. The proposed level of cuts for 1980–81 for local authorities was 7 per cent, but when the effect of the cash limit and of the rapid rise in the proportion of the population who are over 75 or otherwise dependent are taken into account, that represents a real cut in level of service of more than 12 per cent. In practice local authorities have been unable so far to fulfil these plans; even so the Disability Alliance, the Association of Directors of Social Services and the Personal Social Services Council have accumulated evidence of councils reducing provisions of home helps, meals, day centres, workshops and other services and facilities.

Government spokesmen have declared that in making the cuts local councils should observe the needs of people with disabilities, but, despite requests, they have given no detailed advice on how this might be done.



1.3 The Disabled

This passage is taken from a weekly magazine and is by a famous professor of sociology, Peter Townsend.

At a glance ...

Who do you think is shown in the photograph?
Is this taken from a popular magazine or a serious one?

Before you read ...

Do you know any disabled people?
What do you think a disabled person needs from society?
How much money should be spent on disabled people by central government in a time of economic recession?

Notes

Tories—here, a Conservative Government

invalidity pensioners—people who have retired because of ill-health and so are entitled to a pension

Attendance Allowance—money paid to people who need someone to be with them all the time

tied to prices—raised at the rate of rises in prices (as opposed to rises in earnings)

claimant—person who is receiving social benefits

supplementary benefits—money paid by central government to those whose income falls below subsistence level

home helps—people who go to the homes of the sick or elderly to do the housework

Exercise 1

There is a lot of statistical information in the passage. Answer these questions with the figures provided.

- 1 How much did personal social services grow in the early 1970s?
- 2 Approximately how many disabled people are there in Great Britain?
- 3 Approximately how many are there with severe handicaps according to official figures?
- 4 How many invalidity pensioners are there?
- 5 How much less money per week does a disabled man with a wife and two children get at the time of writing the article than he got the year before?
- 6 How many centres operated by the Manpower Services Commission are going to close?
- 7 What was the increase in pensions during the early 1970s when they were tied to earnings?
- 8 What was the level of cuts for local authorities in 1980–81?
- 9 What is the real cut in services to the disabled?

Exercise 2

Professor Townsend quotes the Conservative Party Manifesto in 1979. The aim stated was that 'more disabled people can support themselves and live normal lives'. He then describes nine ways in which this has not been the case. Complete the summary of the nine points below.

- 1 Invalidity pensioners are worse off because
- 2 Families with children will lose because
- 3 Abandoning the rate for industrial injury means
- 4 Closing centres means
- 5 Tying pensions to prices rather than earnings means
- 6 1,750,000 people will lose because
- 7 Changes in the rules mean
- 8 Home helps will no longer be paid for by

- 9 Cuts in money to local authorities mean

Exercise 3

Match the word or phrase on the left with the one on the right that is closest in meaning, as in the example.

- | | | |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------|----------------|
| 1 cash | <input type="checkbox"/> | getting rid of |
| 2 income | <input type="checkbox"/> | promise |
| 3 abolition | <input type="checkbox"/> | problem |
| 4 cut | <input type="checkbox"/> | about |
| 5 defect | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | money |
| 6 approximately | <input type="checkbox"/> | suggested |
| 7 proposed | <input type="checkbox"/> | earnings |
| 8 pledge | <input type="checkbox"/> | reduction |

Exercise 4

How does the United Kingdom live up to the United Nations Declaration?

- 1 Use information from the passage to decide whether disabled people in the United Kingdom at the time the passage was written have, as the UN suggest they should, the right to:
 - medical treatment
 - psychological treatment
 - financial security
 - social security
 - a proper standard of living
 - secure employment
 - a remunerative occupation
 - a trade union to represent them
 - their needs catered for in governmental plans
- 2 To what extent does the United Kingdom live up to the United Nations Declaration according to Peter Townsend?

1 Introduction

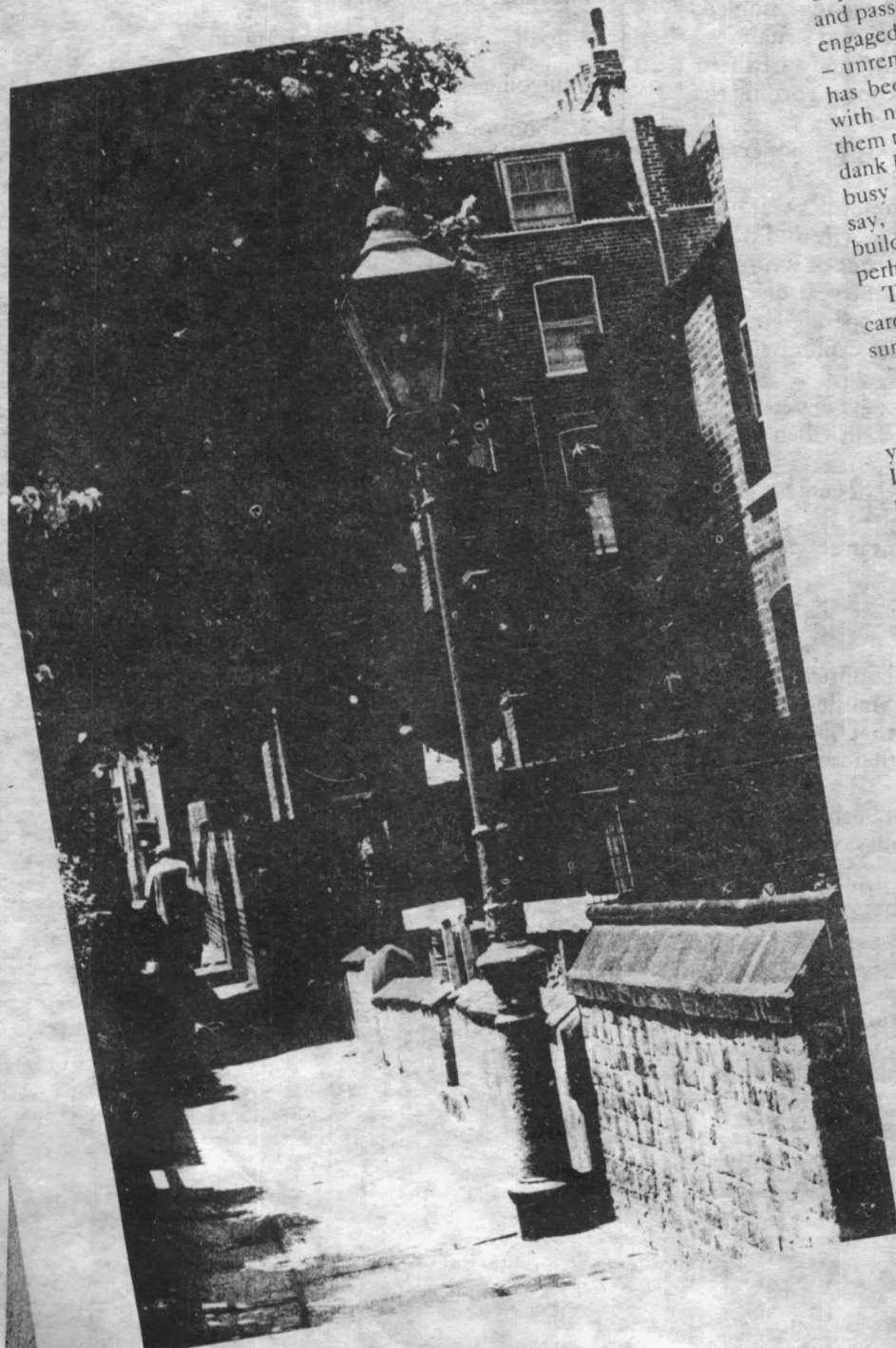
One day in the early 1970s I was roaming through a particularly disjointed and run-down area of Kentish Town, London NW5, and passed a row of houses which were then occupied by squatters and engaged in a cold war with Camden Council. They were – and are – unremarkable houses: a mid-Victorian terrace of the type that has been demolished all over London in the past two decades, with none of the Georgian cottage appeal that might commend them to preservationist forces. In stock brick, three storeys, with a dank basement area below and a parapet wall on top, they faced a busy road; the most quintessentially ordinary houses, you would say, though of a uniquely English kind, built by speculative builders for Philistines, unloved now for decades, doomed soon, perhaps, to extinction.

Then I saw that over the lintel of one of them someone had carefully carved an inscription: the letters, cut through the sooty surface into the fresh yellow brick below, stood out clearly –

'The Fields Lie Sleeping Underneath.'

It is deeply satisfying to come unexpectedly face to face with your own private vision in this way. For years, walking round London, I had been aware of the actual land, lying concealed but not entirely changed or destroyed, beneath the surface of the nineteenth- and twentieth-century city. It has been said that 'God made the country and made man the town', but this is not true: the town is simply disguised countryside. Main roads, some older than history itself, still bend to avoid long-dried marshes, or veer off at an angle where the wall of a manor house once stood. Hills and valleys still remain; rivers, even though entombed in sewer pipes, still cause trouble in the foundations of neighbouring buildings and become a local focus for winter mists. Garden walls follow the line of hedgerows; the very street-patterns have been determined by the holdings of individual farmers and landlords, parcels of land some of which can be traced back to the Norman Conquest. The situation of specific buildings – pubs, churches, institutions – often dates from long distance decisions and actions on the part of men whose names have vanished from any record. The more you know about the past of one district, the easier it becomes to perceive the past of any district through the confusing veil of the present.

From this, it is only a short step of the imagination to envisage the onetime fields being themselves still there, with their grass and buttercups and even the footprints of cows, merely hidden beneath modern concrete and asphalt – as if you had simply to lift up a paving stone in order to reveal it. And while this is not literally true, what is true is that once you get outside the inner areas of old cities (whose ground has usually been so heavily disturbed by building and rebuilding through the centuries that the present houses rest on packed rubble) you do not have to go far down to find real earth, the kind cows walked on and crops sprang from, lying there fallow beneath the weight of stone.



Community

2.1 The Fields Lie Sleeping Underneath

This passage is taken from a book on local history by Gillian Tindall called *The Fields Beneath*. It describes the history of one small part of London called Kentish Town by looking at how the streets and rivers have changed over the past four or five centuries.

At a glance ...

Is this a serious or a popular book?
What part of the book does it come from?

Is it written in the third person ('he/she') or the first person ('I')?

Before you read ...

Do you know the history of the area you live in?

Do you think local history is important?

Would you prefer to live in a town or a village?

Notes

disjointed—unconnected, disorganized
NW5—the code for the London postal district, North West 5

squatters—people who cannot find anywhere to live and so break into empty houses and occupy them, often against the owners' wishes

mid-Victorian—here, built in the middle of the reign of Queen Victoria (1837–1901)

Georgian—here, built in the characteristic style of the reigns of George I–IV (1714–1830)

speculative builders—builders who built houses and then sold them for profit

Philistines—here, uncultured people

Norman Conquest—England was invaded by William the Conqueror in 1066

Exercise 1

Answer these questions on the passage.

- 1 Why was she going through Kentish Town?
- 2 What sort of houses did she notice?
- 3 Who did they belong to?
- 4 How many floors did they have?
- 5 Where did she see the sign 'The Fields Lie Sleeping Underneath'?
- 6 What signs might you see if your house was near a hidden river?
- 7 What are the factors that decided the routes of main roads?
- 8 What does she feel you might find under a paving stone?
- 9 What is the difference between the inner city and the outer?
- 10 Why is the earth described as 'fallow'?

Exercise 2

Deduce what you can about Kentish Town today. Answer the following questions and add any further details you can find.

- 1 Is it a place where rich people live?
- 2 Is it an important place?
- 3 How old is it?
- 4 Do the houses look very nice?
- 5 Is it quiet?
- 6 Is it near the centre of London?
- 7 What was it before it became a suburb of London?

Exercise 3

- 1 Suppose that Camden Council want to pull some old houses down so that they can build a new block of flats. Organize the notes below under two headings, *For* and *Against*. Then add to each list any further arguments you can think of.
old houses in bad repair
flats harm community life
houses better for children
flats better for old people
houses pleasant-looking
most modern flats ugly
old houses have poor electric wiring
modern flats are expensive and often badly built

- 2 Below is a conversation between Mrs Goodwin, an old lady in one of the houses threatened with demolition, and Jim Goodwin, her grandson, who is trying to persuade her to move house. Complete the conversation.

Mrs Goodwin: I don't see why I should move.

Jim Goodwin: ...

Mrs Goodwin: I've lived here for fifty-five years.

Jim Goodwin: ...

Mrs Goodwin: Well, I think it's comfortable.

Jim Goodwin: ...

Mrs Goodwin: I don't care if they bring their dogs and their security guards! They wouldn't dare hurt me.

Jim Goodwin: ...

Mrs Goodwin: But I don't like modern flats.

Jim Goodwin: ...

Mrs Goodwin: Why do I need a bathroom at my age? I've managed without one all my life.

Jim Goodwin: ...

Mrs Goodwin: It's always the same. They don't look after us old people any more.

Jim Goodwin: ...

Exercise 4

What buildings or facilities in your area are worth preserving for future generations? List four or five and say why they should not be allowed to disappear.

Life and death of a village

Some hobbies are very popular. Others cater for the minority. Mine is one of the latter. In fact, as time goes by, it seems that progressively fewer of us are prepared to spend our well-earned leisure time in setting down local happenings. In fact, being a parish chronicler.

My interest was kindled as a lad and in my late teens I became local correspondent for a group of South Yorkshire weekly newspapers. The particular 'patch' I covered was the village of Wadsley, a couple of miles from Sheffield. Straggling along a hillside, it was the home of several hundred people who, for the most part, lived either in rows of brick, back-to-back cottages or in the hundred-year-old stone cottages which nudged the narrow, winding roads whose very names smacked of the countryside – Rural Lane, Crabtree Lane, School Green, Church Lane.

I began collecting tales – both factual and fictional – of village life, past and present. Accounts of current events were dispatched to the local paper (and woebetide you later if you had got it wrong) while the local history items were carefully written up and stored away in exercise books, for eventual use in the parish magazine. In any year I committed to paper endless names of mourners at umpteen funerals, described many a bride's and bridesmaids' dresses, pored over the exhibits at several horticultural shows, toured the stalls at a couple of galas, visited a lady on her hundredth birthday, and endeavoured to paint, in words, a picture of both the colour and the childlike innocence of an infant Sunday school queen crowning ceremony.

And so the routine progresses, year in, year out. A chronicler can almost fill in his diary twelve months in advance. Country life is like that. Then, without warning, there comes a slowing-down of all these activities. The whole picture begins to alter, because there just has to be change... progress some call it. Others not.

So it was with Wadsley. Farms became fewer as owners died, but while the numbers decreased, the sizes of those remaining doubled and trebled. Horse gave way to tractor and gradually mechanisation took over until the number of farm workers needed became small indeed. Ganister, that once precious grey mineral found just below the surface and won by the drift mining method, became obsolete

Joe Castle

A residents' campaign failed to save this row of nineteenth-century cottages and the barber's shop which were demolished under a clearance order.



when newer and more efficient minerals took its place as material for furnace lining and firebricks. Gradually the small mines and works closed down and there are few ex-miners still to be found who can recollect working for a pittance down those dark tunnels, by the light of tallow candles, often bending down for hours on end or even lying in several inches of water to pick the rock out. Their working lives in the mines ended mostly before they were fifty.

These, then, were the menfolk who lived, worked and 'played' in my village: hardy creatures who enjoyed a few pints of best bitter, went poaching and sometimes went to church – though they always made sure that their children went to Sunday school once or twice each Sabbath.

In many ways the womenfolk were just as tough as the men. Big of stature and equally able to devour a pint, some even smoked churchwardens' clay pipes. A fair proportion were associated with either church or chapel organisations – Mothers' Union, Ladies' Sewing Party – and one or two did nursing (learned by years of experience and not from text books). It goes without saying that the village had a lady who at any time of the day or night would carry out the functions of 'laying out' the dead.

In such a small community everyone knew everyone else; sometimes too well! Yet in times of real hardship or when tragedy struck, the villagers banded together as one and helped all they could. Characters abounded; now they, like the industries, have all gone.

A few years ago when housing regulations were rigorously enforced – damp courses required, no outside closets, back-to-back houses unsafe, back doors required for fire escape – then, as it were 'at the stroke of a pen', almost our entire village was condemned to die. There was just no defence against such strict rulings: our cottages contravened the lot.

So, Wadsley disappeared as a village. Little is left now to show its rural existence save one or two cottages and, by a strange quirk of fate, all the five pubs. All are now part of a residential suburb. Gone, too, obviously, are the days of my perambulations around the parish, but I have my countless notes and my many precious memories.

2.2 Life – and Death – of a Village

This passage is taken from a booklet about the English countryside.

At a glance ...

What kind of reader is this booklet designed for?

Who wrote this article?

What is it about?

Before you read ...

Would you choose to live in a city, town or village?

Do you think village life used to be happy or unhappy?

How do you think the good aspects of village life can be preserved?

Notes

kindled—here, awakened

'patch'—here, area

back-to-back—a way of building houses in which not only are houses built in terraces, sharing side walls, but also back to back, sharing back walls

Sunday school—religious education for young children organized every Sunday by the local vicar

best bitter—high-quality English beer not available in bottles, and served from a barrel or large container

church or chapel—here, organized by the local Church of England, or by another local protestant group such as the Methodists or Baptists

character—here, a person known for his colourful or eccentric personality

damp course—the line of non-porous material built in to the walls of buildings to stop damp rising into them from the ground

perambulations—long walks

Exercise 1

Choose the best answers.

- 1 Wadsley used to be
 - a in the depths of the country
 - b a large town
 - c near a large town
- 2 The author thinks that country life
 - a has an annual rhythm
 - b is boring and routine
 - c is slow
- 3 Farms in Wadsley
 - a have died out
 - b have become much bigger
 - c have been replaced by mining
- 4 Miners used to stop working
 - a very young
 - b when middle-aged
 - c when they were very old
- 5 The women
 - a had some of the men's habits
 - b were very different from the men
 - c used to go mining and farming as well as the men
- 6 The reason for pulling down the houses was that
 - a the villagers were being persecuted
 - b the houses were unhealthy and unsafe
 - c all the inhabitants were moving away
- 7 Wadsley is now
 - a a town
 - b part of a town
 - c a parish

Exercise 2

Which of these statements were true of old Wadsley? Which were false?

- 1 The houses were large and well-built.
- 2 It was chiefly a farming and mining community.
- 3 It was a poor community.
- 4 Everybody knew each other.
- 5 There weren't many social activities.
- 6 Religion was not important in their lives.
- 7 They had many modern facilities.
- 8 They did not like change.
- 9 There was equality between the sexes.
- 10 People were truly individuals.

Exercise 3

- 1 Look at the passage and draw up a list of advantages and a list of disadvantages about village life in Wadsley. Then add as many other advantages and disadvantages about life in those times as you can think of.
- 2 Decide whether you would have enjoyed living in Wadsley when it was a village. Write a paragraph justifying your decision.

Exercise 4

- 1 Answer each of the questions below for a house in Wadsley and for the house where you are living now.

Does it have a bath?
Does it have an inside lavatory?
Does it have running water?
Does it have hot water?
Does it have electric lighting?
Does it have a phone?
Does it have damp course?
Is the roof insulated?
Does it have a garden?
Does it have more than one outside wall?
Does it have a back door?

- 2 Write a short report on a house in Wadsley saying either why it should be pulled down or why it should be preserved.

Exercise 5

Invent a conversation between *one* of the following pairs of people about local housing conditions.

- 1 two old ladies of Wadsley
- 2 the author of the passage and a local housing official
- 3 the author and an old lady who is celebrating her hundredth birthday
- 4 two farm workers who are married with young children

CRANFORD

CHAPTER I

OUR SOCIETY

IN the first place, Cranford is in possession of the Amazons; all the holders of houses, above a certain rent, are women. If a married couple come to settle in the town, somehow the gentleman disappears; he is either fairly frightened to death by being the only man in the Cranford evening parties, or he is accounted for by being with his regiment, his ship, or closely engaged in business all the week in the great neighbouring commercial town of Drumble, distant only twenty miles on a railroad. In short, whatever does become of the gentlemen, they are not at Cranford. What could they do if they were there? The surgeon has his round of thirty miles, and sleeps at Cranford; but every man cannot be a surgeon. For keeping the trim gardens full of choice flowers without a weed to speak them; for frightening away little boys who look wistfully at the said flowers through the railings; for rushing out at the geese that occasionally venture into the gardens if the gates are left open; for deciding all questions of literature and politics without troubling themselves with unnecessary reasons or arguments; for obtaining clear and correct knowledge of everybody's affairs in the parish; for keeping their near maidservants in admirable order; for kindness (somewhat dictatorial) to the poor, and real tender good offices to each other whenever they are in distress, the ladies of Cranford are quite sufficient. 'A man,' as one of them observed to me once, 'is so in the way in the house!' Although the ladies of Cranford know all each other's proceedings, they are proceedingly indifferent to each other's opinions. Indeed, as each has her own individuality, not to say eccentricity, pretty strongly developed, nothing is so easy as verbal retaliation; but somehow good-will reigns among them to a considerable degree. The Cranford ladies have only an occasional little quarrel, spirted out in a few peppery words and angry jerks of the head;

OUR SOCIETY

just enough to prevent the even tenor of their lives from becoming too flat. Their dress is very independent of fashion; as they observe, 'What does it signify how we dress here at Cranford, where everybody knows us?' And if they go from home, their reason is equally cogent: 'What does it signify how we dress here, where nobody knows us?' The materials of their clothes are, in general, good and plain, and most of them are nearly as scrupulous as Miss Tyler, of cleanly memory; but I will answer for it, the last gigot, the last tight and scanty petticoat in wear in England, was seen in Cranford—and seen without a smile.

I can testify to a magnificent family red silk umbrella, under which a gentle little spinster, left alone of many brothers and sisters, used to patter to church on rainy days. Have you any red silk umbrellas in London? We had a tradition of the first that had ever been seen in Cranford; and the little boys mobbed it, and called it 'a stick in petticoats.' It might have been the very red silk one I have described, held by a strong father over a troop of little ones; the poor little lady—the survivor of all—could scarcely carry it.

Then there were rules and regulations for visiting and calls; and they were announced to any young people, who might be staying in the town, with all the solemnity with which the old Manx laws were read once a year on the Tinwald Mount.

'Our friends have sent to inquire how you are after your journey to-night, my dear,' (fifteen miles, in a gentleman's carriage); 'they will give you some rest to-morrow, but the next day, I have no doubt, they will call; so be at liberty after twelve;—from twelve to three are our calling-hours.'

Then, after they had called, 'It is the third day; I dare say your mamma has told you, my dear, never to let more than three days elapse between receiving a call and returning it; and also, that you are never to stay longer than a quarter of an hour.'

'But am I to look at my watch? How am I to find out when a quarter of an hour has passed?' 'You must keep thinking about the time, my dear, and not allow yourself to forget it in conversation.'

As everybody had this rule in their minds, whether they received or paid a call, of course no absorbing subject was ever spoken about. We kept ourselves to short sentences of small talk, and were punctual to our time.

2.3 Cranford

This passage is taken from a Victorian novel, *Cranford* by Mrs E. Gaskell, first published in 1853 and popular ever since. Like many Victorian novels, it was first published as a serial in a magazine. Mrs Gaskell usually wrote more serious novels.

At a glance ...

What do you think Chapter 1 is about?
Is *Cranford* light or heavy reading?
Is this the original or a modern edition?

Before you read ...

Do you think there are dangers in having social groups that are chiefly made up of women or of men?
What is the traditional role of the woman in families in your country?
Are there any past or present social customs in your society which you laugh at or find annoying?

Notes

Amazons—here, dominating women who have considerable influence in society;
historically, a tribe of female warriors
fairly—here, completely (old-fashioned usage)
railroad—railway (old fashioned English, contemporary American)
surgeon—here, a local doctor
speck—here, spoil or make untidy
indifferent to—unimpressed by
spirited out—expressed in a sudden burst (usually spelt 'spurred')
even tenor—peaceful pace, a proverbial expression based on a quotation from Gray's *Elegy* written in a Country Churchyard 'They kept the noiseless tenor of their way'
signify—here, matter
gigot—a style of sleeve resembling the shape of a leg of mutton
calls—brief visits to someone's house
Manx—from the Isle of Man, off the north-west coast of England
at liberty—here, available

Exercise 1

Answer these questions.

- 1 What is Cranford?
- 2 Who lives there?
- 3 What big town is it near?
- 4 Are most of the people living in Cranford men or women?
- 5 What are the men living in Cranford like?
- 6 Are the people of Cranford friendly?
- 7 Do they dress well?
- 8 Are they kind to each other?
- 9 What strange social customs do they have?

Exercise 2

Some of the expressions in the passage would not be used in modern English. Suggest modern words or phrases that mean the same as the expressions below.

- 1 is in possession of
- 2 holders of houses
- 3 the gentleman
- 4 closely engaged in business
- 5 clear and correct knowledge
- 6 in admirable order
- 7 independent of fashion
- 8 punctual to our time

Exercise 3

- 1 Note down which of the adjectives below describe the women of Cranford.
eccentric quarrelsome
respectable fashionable
religious rich
clever hardworking
sophisticated polite
kind genteel
- 2 Write a brief description of a typical Cranford lady.

Exercise 4

- 1 How do you imagine the following have changed in Cranford? Make two lists headed *Then* and *Now*, and write notes on each topic under each heading.
transport work
manners customs
money clothes
houses
- 2 Now consider changes in your country. Make two more lists, headed *Then* and *Now* and comment on each topic in a similar way.

Exercise 5

- 1 Explain briefly in writing why there are so few men in Cranford.
- 2 Write a description of the activities that Cranford women find they can do for themselves.
- 3 Write a short dialogue between two Cranford women meeting in the street.
- 4 Make a short list of the rules for 'visiting' in Cranford.

Exercise 6

Mrs Gaskell is describing in *Cranford* the life of middle-class, 'respectable' people; in other books such as *Mary Barton* she is more concerned with the lives of the poor in Victorian days. Imagine you are Tom, a working-class boy who cleans chimneys in Cranford. Write two or three paragraphs outlining how you feel about the society you live in, your job, and the people whose chimneys you clean.