

## Forward

Dear Reader

I have great pleasure in presenting the text of my grandfather's account of "The Great War". 105 years on from when it was written in Puna, India, in 1917. The book was not published until 1935, by which time the storm clouds were gathering for a second war with Germany, and the predicted economic consequences of the reparations, costs of the war, and the collapse of the autocratic regimes of Prussia and Russia and replacement with something worse, had come to pass. Much is made of the WW1 war poets, but this work is of equal value as a first hand account of the War and its context, by a young man trying to make sense of it and predict its consequences, on the shaping of a new world order. It is often quoted by people researching this period, but is not in print and hard to obtain – so here it is!

Since January, when I completed scanning and editing the text, and starting this forward, we have seen the start of President Putin's War in Ukraine. We have an autocrat, trying to strengthen his position by fighting a 20<sup>th</sup> Century style war against his smaller democratic neighbour, to re-establish empires and fields of influence of the past – behaviour that we thought was left in the past- this is throwing the world order of trade, commodity prices and the freedom of independent democratic states into chaos. Who will prevail? what will happen – is this the last throws of 20<sup>th</sup> Century despotism and nationalism? or is it a return to the Geopolitics of the mid 20<sup>th</sup> C with the waning of democracy and resurgence of China and Russian style strong man politics, nationalism and isolationism of the 1930's? – were 2 world wars fought in vain? surely we can't let that happen 'on our watch' turning back the clock on the legacy of 2 world wars, the cold war and 30 years of spreading peace in Europe, democracy and global trade - time will tell.

The book is a highly autobiographical account with the central character, Tony Jackson, as himself, Albert Stanley Henry Hinchliffe, 10<sup>th</sup> May 1893-April 1980, known as Henry/Harry. The work follows on from another family book 'Barthomley' which is a series of letters written by Edward Hinchliffe, to his son Edmund Hinchliffe, 3 generations earlier. Both men were Rectors of Mucklestone, Staffs. This earlier book covers family and local history and has recently been re-published in the USA as a perfect snapshot of a middle English life in typical country village. North Staffordshire, was at the epicentre of the industrial revolution in the mid-late 1700's, that set the pattern for the modern world that we know around us today. To better understand this world changing phenomenon, I recommend the book 'The Lunar Men - 5 friends that changed the world' by Jenny Uglow. explaining how the enlightenment movement and the interchange of ideas between a group of local thinkers and industrialists including Joseph Priestly, Erasmus Darwin, Josiah Wedgewood, James Watt and Matthew Bolton changed the world forever. Britain's protestant liberal democracy meant groups such as 'The Lunar Men' were free to question and investigate the world around them, in the sciences, politics and religion and utilise these in forging new ways of doing trade and business, helping to unlock the sciences of botany, evolution, physics, chemistry and geology, to name just a few, in ways that would not have been possible under the autocratic, dogmatic, highly regulated regimes of Catholic continental Europe. The group pressed for the abolition of slavery, improved living standards at home, and initially supported the French revolution, until they saw that one tyranny was merely replaced by another. This free thought was made possible by the liberal, protestant/Anglican tradition.

The Hinchliffe's were 'Saxons' – the term for protestant emigre's fleeing the Catholic areas of Germany (as with Huguenots from France , or protestant Flemish 'Weavers' from Flanders). Edward Hinchliffe 1772 -1819 married Ann Bover 1768-1830, the daughter of Captain Bover (de Bouvoir) a Huguenot émigré from Normandy , with family on Guernsey. Edward Hinchliffe's father was Bishop John Hinchliffe (1731-1794 ) who was Dean of Durham Cathedral , Master of Trinity College Cambridge and Bishop of Peterborough. He spoke out in the House of Lords , against the folly of Britain's conduct in the American War of Independence, driving away our American colonists. He lost his post at Trinity Cambridge , a royal appointment, but remained Bishop. He married the sister, Elizabeth, of the first Lord, John, Crewe 1742-1829, with whom he had travelled around Europe on his Grand tour, as tutor and mentor. Their son Edward , grandson Edward and great grandson Edmund had the successive role that my father referred to as a 'Squire/son' - part squire , part parson , in Barthomley and then Mucklestone villages . In the protestant tradition their role was as the educated leader of the village , to explain and interpret the scriptures, advising and leading by example in matters both temporal and spiritual as 'Minister' -i.e. teacher, rather than just officiating as a Priest or intermediary. This role is beautifully illustrated in an illuminated letter presented to Rev. Edmund H. Hinchliffe 1939-1925 on his eightieth birthday on the 19<sup>th</sup> September 1919 by 250 of his parishioner's which reads as follows

“ Reverend and Dear Sir, We Parishioners and Friends desire to offer you our warmest congratulations on this your 80<sup>th</sup> birthday. We wish also to express our appreciation of your valuable work in the parish over a period of 42 years in succession to 28 years of service by your late respected father. Your ready sympathy and kindly help in everything that concerned the happiness and welfare of your parishioners have won the esteem of all : and your ministration in the Church, in the School and in the sick-room have been a comfort to many. We have valued and are grateful for, the wise counsel and advice, the timely word of cheer or warning ,and the willing devotion to our interests , which you have freely given at all times when needed as well as the many uplifting and inspiring lessons you have taught us during your long and faithful ministry. In asking you to accept this token of our regard and affection , together with the accompanying case of notes. We pray that God will comfort and bless you with continued health and happiness for the remaining years which he in his providence may grant to you.”

This is the context , in which this book was written. It is a young man's (aged 23) attempt to come to terms with the dreadful trauma of the horrors of the western front , but also trying to make sense of social revolutions under way at the time and his place within them – it is written in a clear naïve style , recalling home and childhood events with himself as the central character, Tony Jackson. It was written in India in 1917 and looks at Britain's and her Empire's place in the world. My grandfather's life starts with his home life, his education at Cheltenham Men's College , then Keble college Oxford (not Wadham !) studying Theology in readiness to follow in his grandfather's footsteps as Rector of Mucklestone. However he left early to enlist, and as we see, got swept along by events, never to return to the 'old' sleepy 19<sup>th</sup> C. way of life. There are delightful references to his parents , who lived as farmers at Willoughbridge Lodge , and to fishing on the River Tern that ran through the nearby Meadows. Other passages refer to Mucklestone Old Rectory , a mile away, which he and his parents moved into with his grandfather, in his declining years as a widower, - the distant

hills , the Queen Anne stables and thick Rhododendrons . His mother hated the book , presumably as it was far too revealing of her son's inner most feelings and opinions .

Tales of unscrupulous war profiteering are said to be based on a local engineering family. The Rectory was sold by the Crewe estate, when his grandfather died and he bought it back in 1932- when my mother was 4. He was then churchwarden of Mucklestone Church for the rest of his life. As the youngest grandson , living ½ a mile away , I sang in the church choir every Sunday up to the age of eight and every Sunday, and from then when I returned for the school holidays. We called in for drinks afterwards, and, as boys did then, I probed about his war time experiences, as my own father had not been fit enough to serve in WWII. I believe he told me things he had locked away, and not revealed to anyone for 60 years, since the writing of this book. He told me of how he was equipped with experimental Mills bombs , due to his prowess as a bowler . He was a fine rifle shot and would cut the barbed wire a hundred yards out. He was wounded in the leg in an attack and then lay out in no mans land in shell hole for 2 days before making it back and had to shoot a German with his revolver who had come to finish him off – broadly as in the book. His time in a field hospital was his only hospital treatment until his 80's . He walked with a limp and was very heavy on the accelerator when moving off.

The title of the book -Bar Sinister – is the heraldic device for illegitimacy. Implying that Jimmy Briscoe was the illegitimate child of a good family , who rose through merit without any family or financial advancement . It has taken me until re-reading the book for this project to understand that the second character 'Jimmy Briscoe' is in fact my grandfather's *alter ego* .- his other self – all the things he aspires to be, or would be , without his privileged upbringing and education, and his social conscience – self deprecating, self made, driven, multi lingual, self taught, unprivileged, socialist, war hero, etc. . In other words Jimmy Briscoe is a literary device , by which the two characters can can throw ideas back and forth – around issues of class , privilege , social prejudice , advancement through merit, and the dawning social and political revolutions of the time .

The third main character is his female cousin Joan , who loses her fiancée Bunny Bremner and seeks consolation with those who knew him . I believe this is based on my grandmother , Vera (*nee*) Steel , as she lost her fiancée and always let it be known that my grandfather was her second choice, and kept a locket with a picture of her first fiancée's cavalry horse ,as a treasured possession for the rest of her life.

I have wanted to complete this project for many years , in particular in time for its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary – but failed to do so, but have done so now . There are many recent books and novels on WW1 , but this is a fresh eye witness account and should hold its place , amongst the war poets and literature of the time as a valuable record of how it was for the young men who lived through it , and for those that did not. I owe it to my dear grandfather , Sir Henry Hinchliffe , from whom I inherited Church Farm , from where I am writing this now , to ensure his important story is available for posterity .

I am conscious that my own son George is of the same age now as when this book was first written. He also chose to study Theology (at Durham) and is of a similar conscientious , introspective disposition and is similarly gifted in making firm and loyal friends and getting along with and making time for, people of all possible backgrounds. My grandfather put his

success in business down to his deep Christian faith and values, which gave him the ability to 'read' people , see things from their prospective , and so be able to compromise and put together deals that worked equally for both sides. He had the Oxford trained ability to research , analyse and appraise the facts, albeit lacking specialist scientific or technical knowledge and ability.

He successfully took over and ran his fathers-in-law cotton broking business, was knighted for services to industry in WWII , was a director of LNER (friend of Sir. Nigel Gresley, the train designer, who named one of his 'Mallard' class trains the 'Harry Hinchliffe' after him.). He was a director of Barclays bank and 'father of the Barclaycard', a governor of Manchester Grammar school and undertook the 'Hinchliffe Report' on the establishment of Independent Television . 'Jimmy Briscoe' would have been proud of his friend !

We should be thankful that our generation has been spared such a global conflict for 70 years and enjoyed such peace and prosperity, but it is tragic that this is under threat once again - we all have a duty to remember the lessons of the past and guard against any return to such 'Madness' as our grandparents endured.in two world wars and world depression.

William Friend , Church Farm , Mucklestone, May 2022 .