



Fakenham Boy

Colkirk Boy took my father and Grandfather through the difficulties of two World Wars into a more settled period. This is where Fakenham Boy picks up the story.

CHAPTER 1

Early Years

It was the day of the summer solstice, the longest day of the year. The steel framed windows were open and the sweet smells of summer wafted in on the light breeze. A distant Skylark soared on the sultry air and announced his joy to the world. The pungent scent of honeysuckle drifted in and mingled with the strong smell of Carbolic and Milton. Bees buzzed around open flowers and Blackbirds serenaded the idyllic country setting. But the tranquility didn't last for very long, another patient had gone into labour.

He was born in mid-summer 1946 just after the longest day of a welcome period of peace, after that awful war had ended. His mother told him many years later if we hadn't won he wouldn't have been born at all.

She had lost her first son and almost lost her own life to a previously mis-managed birth by a local G.P. who had charged her three guineas for the privilege. So she wanted to avoid problems with this one and insisted on going into hospital.

At the maternity unit in Drayton the temporary wards were full, the service men who were lucky enough to return to a country long last at peace had seen to that.

Two hours and a caesarean section later he had joined the row of sleepers and screamers assembled in neat rows in their utilitarian cots.

It had been decided that he was to be called Urban, an unusual name but it ran in the family, it came from his father and before that his father's uncle. But then it was changed to Daniel Urban after his grandfather and his father. His mother always called him Daniel. His father called him Boy until the day he died. When he was a teenager he was Danny and when Fakenham boy became a man he was Dan.

Those early years were much of a blur but the first voice he could remember said;
"Come on boy you can do it."

He knew the room was a strange shape, he remembered that. There was something odd about the wall he was leaning against, not like most of the walls he was to become familiar with.

Dad was waiting for him with open arms but his first steps were not going very well.

"Come on boy you can do it, get those little legs moving."

Those first faltering steps were the beginning of a wander lust which lasted for most of his life. It wasn't until many years later he realised those unsteady steps were taken inside an ex-R.A.F Nissen hut and he also learnt from a friend that they were squatters in that little tin home.

The airfield at Little Snoring had been abandoned at the end of the war and several families had moved in, there was nowhere else to go. He had memories of Dad coming home with some cardboard. He

made a temporary wall between them and the next family. It sounds crude now, I suppose it was crude even then but a lot of people were homeless. The country had given everything to the war effort, both its money and its youth. That wasn't to be the last time that Daniel lived in a Nissen hut, but the next time he wasn't a squatter.