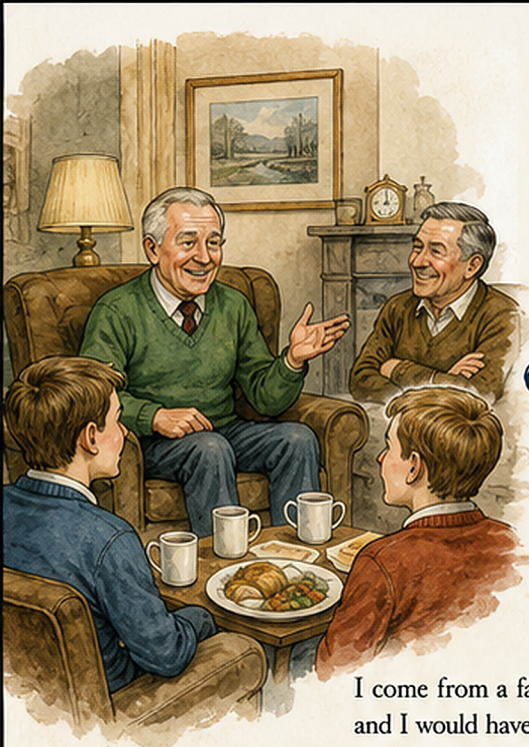




A collection of *Smith* family stories

INTRODUCTION

I come from a family of story tellers for years as boys my brothers John and Peter and I would have Sundays with my father and his brother uncle George. Mum would cook a Sunday dinner and we would spend the afternoon listening to their stories. When the family gets together we still share stories. Over the year I have attempted to put some of these stories down. I tried to put them in order but as with our story telling Sundays they wander, jumping about like the proverbial grasshopper. Every time I attempt to get things in order I give up but I have been left with a collection of short stories, loosely based on my version of a truth so what I am presenting here is a selection of stories from the Smiths archive, I even tried to get my brothers to contribute, Peter my younger brother replied and I incorporate his reply as well as the account that my father (Dick) wrote about the day he was blown up in Normandy, during as he put it his first and last action as an infantry man. I have jumped about to add some of my own experiences which will no doubt enter the family annual of yarns. When Aunt Joan died the last witness to the earlier stories was gone and our best source of background information was gone. She left us with the usual clutter of old photos, letters post cards etc. some of which I have incorporated in this account.

I took early retirement from teaching in 1997 and after a period working part time as a school premises manager I got a job as an assistant manager at the Lea Valley Cycle Circuit. This was a dream job to fill in my retirement years it fulfilled my life time passion for cycling. It meant I could work and ride my bike much to the annoyance of my manager when he found me riding on the circuit when I should have been in the office. What started as a fill in job turned out to be as rewarding as my years as a teacher. When the Cycle Circuit became part of the Olympic Park I was left in charge of the transfer to the replacement circuit. This meant that what I thought was going to be an easy time filler of a job became a second career. I have included some of the stories from this period. The stories from the gap between the 1970's and 2000's I have written and no doubt they will find their way into another collection of stories at a later date.

