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WOMAN
A LIFE
LADY HALE

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A LIFE

BRENDA HALE

The Rt Hon the Baroness Hale of Richmond

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For
Julia, Patrick and Amelia
The Future

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Omnia feminae aequisssimae

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Forethoughts

We all have our imposter moments. I defy any woman to say that she doesn't. Here are four of mine.

Imposter moment no. 1
It is September 1955. I am ten years old. I am standing all alone in the playing field at Richmond High School for Girls, in North Yorkshire. I am wearing a navy-blue gymslip with a square neck and a pale blue blouse also with a square neck. It looks absurd – why on earth are we not allowed to wear shirts with a collar and tie until the sixth form? But I am glad to be wearing it because it means that I am at the High School and not at the dreaded Secondary Modern School on Catterick Camp where rumour has it that everyone gets the cane in their first term, even goody-goodies like me. I look like a goody-goody. Long hair in pigtails. Round National Health Service spectacles. A speccy swot. Short. Rather overweight. The youngest girl in the school because they entered me for the 11-plus a year early and unbelievably I passed. My older sister Jill is the oldest girl in the school and head girl. Impossibly godlike and no company for her baby sister. Alone because I am the only girl from Bolton-on-Swale Church of England primary school to have passed the 11-plus that year. All the other girls in the class seem to have at least one friend from the same primary school as them. Am I an imposter? Should I be here yet? Can I cope?

Imposter moment no. 2
It is October 1963. I am eighteen years old. Still a speccy swot. Rather more attractive spectacles. Pigtails gone and a short bob. Not thin but not noticeably overweight. Still short. I am walking along King's Parade

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in Cambridge. On my left is King's College. Intricately carved stone tracery separates its grounds from the street. The east end of its magnificent chapel faces the street: one of the most glorious church buildings in the country. Ahead of me is the Senate House, an elegant eighteenth-century stone building, where one day I may kneel before the vice chancellor to receive my degree. To my right is Great St Mary's, the university church. Tucked away between King's College Chapel and the Senate House are the Old Schools, more eighteenth-century elegance, where the Law Faculty is based, and the Squire Law Library. That is where I am headed. Unbelievably, Girton College, the first women's college in either Oxford or Cambridge, has awarded me an exhibition to read law. The first girl from Richmond High School to go to Cambridge and the first to read law. I pinch myself. Am I really here? Am I an imposter? Can I cope?

Imposter moment no. 3
It is May 1984. I am thirty-nine years old. Rather more stylish spectacles. Still with a short bob. Still not fat but not thin. Still short. I am sitting at my desk in my office in Conquest House, at the corner of Theobalds Road and John Street, just north of Gray's Inn. A long way from home. Unbelievably, I am the first woman and the youngest ever Law Commissioner. I am ploughing through an immensely detailed and learned discussion of what should be done with the law of blasphemy: abolish, modernise or replace it? That is the sort of thing the Law Commission does. The other commissioners are some of the cleverest men I have ever known. Am I an imposter? Can I cope?

Imposter moment no. 4
It is 13 January 2020. I am seventy-four years old. Smart spectacles by Elle. Still with a short bob, rather smarter than the earlier cut (though Anne Robinson had said I ought to get a proper haircut when I announced the Supreme Court's decision in the great prorogation case), and more grey than dark brown. Not thin but not noticeably overweight. I am walking through St James's Park in London. To my left is the lake with its pelicans and wildfowl and a distant view of Buckingham Palace (last visited for the banquet for President Trump), also the pretty little fake cottage with its traditional cottage garden.

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To my right are the Treasury, with the Churchill War Rooms beneath, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the other end of Downing Street, the back of Dover House (where the Scottish Office lives), and Horse Guards Parade. Where am I coming from? Earlier in the morning I had been in Courtroom No. 1 in the Supreme Court of the United Kingdom applauding as my successor was sworn in as president of the Supreme Court. After that I was in the House of Lords, being welcomed back by the Clerk of the Parliaments after ten years' absence as a Justice of the Supreme Court, presenting my writ of summons in the Chamber and taking the oath, necessary if I want to take part in parliamentary business. Swearing the oath of allegiance to Her Majesty, her heirs and successors according to law, I slightly emphasised the word 'law' and was surprised when many of Their Lordships said 'Hear, hear.' Where am I going to? Up the Duke of York steps, along Waterloo Place, and into the Athenaeum club to have lunch at the club table, before checking the arrangements for a dinner I am giving for my fellow justices that evening. Unbelievably, I was one of the first group of women to become members eighteen years ago. If I was an imposter, I must have learned to love her.

This is the story of how that little girl from a little school in a little village in North Yorkshire became the most senior judge in the United Kingdom. How she found that she could cope. And how all those other people who feel they are imposters can learn to cope too. Some of them may even be men.

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1 Village Life

> My Lords, town and village greens are not just picturesque reminders of a bygone age. They are a very present amenity to the communities they serve. The village green in Scorton, in the North Riding of Yorkshire, is a perfect example. Most of it is contained within a three-foot-high stone wall and raised to the level of the top of that wall, thus giving it a character all of its own. It is surrounded by the old village houses, including the former vicarage, the two remaining pubs, the shop, the village institute, and the eighteenth-century building which was until recently the old grammar school. It was and is the centre of the community. Both villagers and grammar school boys played cricket there in the summer; archery contests were held there; a bonfire was built for Guy Fawkes day; the fair and other events of Scorton feast were held there every August; and all the villagers could walk and play games upon it.[1]

This idyllic place was the village where I grew up, five miles down the road from the medieval town of Richmond in Yorkshire, the first Richmond, from which all the other Richmonds in the world are named. Scorton is the largest village in the parish of Bolton-on-Swale. Apart from its village green, its main claim to fame is the archery competition for 'The Antient Silver Arrow' or 'Scorton Arrow'. Founded in 1673, this is said to be the oldest recorded sporting event and is still going strong, though hardly ever in Scorton, for whoever wins the competition hosts the next one. Even so, the village is proud of the archery tradition. But it is neither the sort of place where you would expect a top judge to grow up nor the sort of place for people like us. My family are not country people. What were we doing there?

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In 1721, a local gentleman called Leonard Robinson left all his land and buildings in Scorton to establish 'a free school for all persons after being qualified to enter upon learning the Latin tongue'. That meant it was to be a grammar school. The schoolmaster had not only to be 'qualified in learning the Latin and Greek tongues but also [lead an] exemplary life'. He had to take the boys to church in Bolton-on-Swale every Sunday. He was to have Mr Robinson's house to live and teach in, but the trustees might also build a schoolhouse if they thought it more proper. They soon built a fine red-brick Georgian schoolhouse, standing next to Mr Robinson's much older home. The village green was built on top of a rubbish dump, for use as a school playing field. This was no brutal Dotheboys Hall, although Dickens' models were not many miles away. Its fortunes fluctuated over the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but it flourished between the two world wars. Then came the Second World War. Airfields were built in North Yorkshire, to defend the industrial towns in Teesside and later to fly bombing missions to Germany, one of them in Scorton. In 1941, the school was closed and its buildings taken over by the RAF. After the war, the trustees, led by the vicar, decided to reopen the school as an independent grammar school catering for boarding and day boys. They appointed my father, Cecil Hale, the headmaster. My mother was to run the boarding house.

So it was that we arrived in Leonard Robinson's old home in autumn 1948 to prepare for the school's reopening in January 1949. I was three years old and my little sister Frances was two. We looked quite alike and our mother dressed us alike, so the schoolboys thought that we were twins. We found it a scary house. The headmaster's quarters were at the front, overlooking the green. Behind them on the ground floor were the boys' dining hall and a long stone-flagged corridor leading down to the school kitchen. Meals were cooked on a huge coke-fired Aga which took up almost the whole of one wall. Going down there at night was not advised: turning the light on provoked a scuttling of cockroaches for cover. Beyond that was the scullery, housing among other vital pieces of school equipment, a large potato-peeling machine. On the other side of the corridor were the larders where the food was kept, the rationed goods under lock and key, and great earthenware jars full of eggs pickled in isinglass.

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Upstairs were four dormitories for the boys, named after Elizabethan explorers, Drake, Raleigh, Grenville and Frobisher. There were also bedrooms for two or three unmarried schoolmasters and the sick bay, presided over by matron. There were odd spaces between the internal walls which could not be accounted for – what mysteries lurked there? The ancient radiators gurgled and clanked. The ill-fitting windows whistled in the wind. The old floorboards creaked. The ghost of Leonard Robinson was said to haunt the top floor. No wonder we found it scary.

When the school reopened in January 1949, there were just seventeen boarders and thirty-two day boys and two schoolmasters as well as our father. From these small beginnings, it grew to around 150 boys, roughly a third of them boarders. Despite its frightening features, the school was a lovely place for young children to live. Frances and I could play anywhere in the grounds. There was a kitchen garden where we could have our own little plot, two tennis courts where we were allowed to learn to play tennis, and a large playing field surrounded by hedgerows where we could make dens. But there was more to village life than that.

So much was coloured by the fervent desire of everyone who had lived through the Second World War that nothing like it should ever happen again. The relics of war were all around us. The airfield had closed but the runway was still there. There was still a working RAF base three miles away at Catterick village. There was a whole estate of Nissen huts and other temporary dwellings. Some of the people living there had been bombed out of their homes in the industrial towns of Teesside. There was another large site on the edge of the village where the air-force personnel had also been housed in huts, but only the large gymnasium (used by the grammar school) remained. There was a smaller site down the road on the edge of Bolton-on-Swale which Mr Pigg the farmer later took over for his pig farm (yes, really). And there was an army engineers' site a mile or two out of the village which was still in use.

Just a few miles away, over the river Swale, lay Catterick Camp. This was and remains a large army garrison, then housing both regular soldiers and national servicemen, for compulsory military service did not finally end until 1963. Catterick Camp was a bleak

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place on the edge of the moors between Swaledale and Wensleydale, surrounded by military training grounds and roads built for tanks. There were some permanent houses for the officers and barracks for the men, but there were also acres of Nissen huts surrounded by barbed wire. There were very few shops and places of entertainment – the soldiers went into Richmond for their rest and recreation. The place was a constant reminder, not only of the Second World War, but also of the UK's extensive military commitments all over the world.

The struggle to feed the nation a balanced diet was still going on. We children were urged to collect the rose hips which were plentiful in the hedgerows so that they could be sold (for a song) to make rose-hip syrup, rich in vitamin C. Food rationing lasted into the early 1950s. We went to the village shop with our coupons each week to buy our small allowance of sweets or chocolate (I always chose Fry's Chocolate Cream). Somehow our mother managed to feed the growing numbers of hungry teenage schoolboys on what was available but it cannot have been easy. We ate the same food that they did. Some of it was pretty hard to take – sausages with impenetrably thick skins and more gristle than meat, a mincemeat loaf in pastry known as rissole, Yorkshire pudding with a burnt base and uncooked batter. There were also puddings, steamed in little basins in a great vat on the top of the Aga, rich in carbohydrate – jam sponge, spotted dick, roly-poly. With custard of course. No wonder I got plump. There was much excitement when the last vestiges of rationing were gone and the food began to improve. But English food was never very exciting in the 1950s and boarding-school food even less so. The end of rationing, the phasing out of national service, the demolition of the Nissen huts, and a gradually increasing sense of prosperity – in 1957, Prime Minister Harold Macmillan told us that 'most of our people have never had it so good' – all these brought home, even to a child, the benefits of peace and an international rule-based community, not only in Europe, but also in the rest of the world.

Then there was the persistence and strength of the great British class system. One day in the late 1950s, our headmistress accused us of holding the mistaken belief that Britain was now a classless society. I indignantly denied it. It was difficult to hold that belief

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living in a village like Scorton. The hierarchy of rural society was plain for all to see.

At the top there was – and still is – something called 'the county': minor aristocrats and major landowners who socialised and intermarried with one another and with their like in neighbouring counties. The Lord Lieutenant and the High Sheriffs came from 'the county' and by and large they still do. (The Lord Lieutenant is the Queen's representative in the county; the High Sheriff used to be the Crown's enforcer but now spends a year doing good works in support of the justice system in the county.) So too did the Members of Parliament then. Sir Thomas Dugdale, of Crathorne Hall, near Yarm, was MP for Richmond from 1929 until 1959. In 1954 he became famous for the 'Crichel Down affair'. Crichel Down in Dorset had been bought for military use during the war. The previous owners thought that they had been promised the right to buy it back when it was no longer needed by the military, but the Ministry of Agriculture refused them. There was a tremendous fuss. Sir Thomas resigned as Minister of Agriculture. I knew nothing of this at the time, but in the late 1960s, when I was teaching constitutional law in the University of Manchester, Sir Thomas was widely regarded as the best – nay the only – example of a minister responsible to Parliament doing the honourable thing and resigning when his civil servants had got things wrong. His successor as MP for Richmond was Sir Timothy Kitson, another local landowner and farmer, who served until 1983. But they were the last 'county' MPs. Their successors were even more prominent in national politics but very different: Leon Brittan from 1983 to 1988, William Hague from 1989 to 2015, and Rishi Sunak since then. The Richmondshire constituency can attract star candidates because it is one of the safest Conservative seats in the country: it taught me that the rural working classes still vote Conservative.

Top of the social tree in Scorton, grander even than the 'county', was undoubtedly Miss Bridget Talbot. Miss Talbot was the owner of Kiplin Hall, built in the 1620s. It is a pleasingly symmetrical square red-brick building with a square, domed tower jutting out from the middle of each of the walls. A library wing was added early in the nineteenth century and a service wing later on, but these do not spoil

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the elegant shape of the main house. Miss Talbot was a truly remarkable woman. Among her many achievements was the invention of a waterproof torch for merchant seamen, provided to the navy and RAF during the Second World War and saving many lives. She was a well-known figure driving around the village in a battered old car. My sister Jill, eight years older than I, remembers going for tea at the hall. But even Miss Talbot could not find a way to save the hall from apparently terminal decay.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the Kiplin estate had grown to cover most of the land in the parish. However, this was sold off in the early twentieth century, leaving only the hall and its grounds. There was scarcely any money to spend on maintaining the building, which steadily became more and more dilapidated. This was not helped by its being requisitioned by the army in the Second World War (two rooms have been left in the state in which the army left them, to make the point). Miss Talbot battled for forty years to save Kiplin but nothing worked. In 1958, the National Trust having refused to take it on, the hall was to be demolished. But Miss Talbot was knocked down on a pedestrian crossing and broke her leg, so she did not telephone the demolition firm. In 1968, she set up a private charitable trust to take over the hall and left the contents to the trustees when she died in 1971. The trust has found ways to raise the money to restore the building, not least by quarrying the sand and gravel on what remains of the estate. The house and gardens are now a charming and slightly quirky visitor attraction – definitely not the National Trust. I do hope that Miss Talbot would be pleased rather than horrified by what they have done.

Also in the upper ranks of Scorton society were Miss Hillyard, who lived at Bolton Old Hall, an attractive eighteenth-century house next to the church, attached to an ancient pele tower, and Colonel Hall and his wife. Doesn't every village have a retired colonel, who is also a churchwarden and an independent member of the county council? The colonel both looked and sounded the part – tall, thin, moustached and ram-rod straight. He was also the heir to a baronetcy but he kept very quiet about that.

Next came the large local farmers. Several substantial farmhouses surround the village, their similar design indicating that they were

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built by the Kiplin estate. There was Tancred, where much of the land near to the river Swale was given over to extracting sand and gravel. There was Bolton Grange, whose owner became our landlord when we moved out of the grammar school. And there was Cross Hills, where lived Miss Wilson and Miss Matty Wilson, one of the three pairs of genteel unmarried sisters who were such a feature of village life. Miss Jones and Miss Annie Jones lived in the Manor House in the village. Despite its name, this is not a very large house, but it too had a Kiplin connection, as their father had been the agent for the Kiplin estate. Miss Rogers and Miss Lucy Rogers lived in a much smaller cottage on the village green. Miss Lucy had been a senior civil servant but returned to live with her older sister when she retired. They were all stalwarts of the church and great friends of my mother. I don't remember any of them cycling to church (as so fondly pictured by John Major in his vision of how England would still be fifty years on from his speech to the Conservative Group for Europe in 1993) but they might well have done had not one of each pair been rather lame.

After the farmers were the various tradesmen who served the village. When I was a child, there were three pubs in Scorton – the Royal, the Farmers Arms and the White Heifer – and another – St Cuthbert's Inn – half a mile down the road next to the railway station. There was a garage which had once been a blacksmith's. There were two general stores, one of which sold the local Wensleydale cheese in slices cut from a massive whole cheese. There was also a post office. There was a butcher, who traded from a van which he took around the village and its surroundings, before getting a shop. There was a milkman, who supplied milk from his own cows. The stores sold some rudimentary vegetables – potatoes, onions, carrots and perhaps tomatoes. But many people grew their own and others would make a weekly trip into Richmond to buy vegetables and fruit at the Saturday market there. There was also a police station, with a resident sergeant, and a magistrates' court above the police station.

Then there were the majority of the village people, who worked on the land or in the building trade or in Catterick Camp, the rural working classes. There was even, for a time, one incoming 'problem' family.

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So where did our family fit into all of this? We were undeniably middle class (we called the sitting room the 'drawing room' and had staff), and teachers then had a respected status, but we were not well off or propertied. We were not – and never would be – 'county', not local farmers, not local business or tradesmen, not local workers. We were incomers and outsiders: one of a small group of professional families whose work had brought us to the village. Another was the doctor, who had his surgery and a dispensary in his substantial house on the village green. And another was the vicar, the Revd F. F. le Brun Crankshaw, chairman of the governors of Scorton Grammar School and also of Bolton-on-Swale Church of England primary school, and my father's closest friend. There were a few others, who worked outside the village, but it was not then a commuter village. Later, of course, there would be many more such incomers – people who worked in Richmond, Darlington, and further afield but liked the idea of village life.

Village life was very different then. It was very cold: heating was mostly by coal fires and immersion water heaters. Life was lived where the fire was and baths were once a week. Most people did not have cars. The primary school children walked from the large village of Scorton to school in the much smaller village of Bolton-on-Swale, half a mile away. Most of them had school dinners but not, I'm sorry to say, Frances and I. Our mother sent the handyman, Joe, to collect us from school in our modest Morris car and bring us back to the grammar school for lunch. I have no idea why. It cannot have been the quality of the food – the school dinners in Bolton were a good deal tastier than the school dinners in the grammar school. It could have been economy – we were provided with our meals free of charge by the grammar school while school dinners had to be paid for. It could have been snobbery – but why object to our eating with the village children if there was no objection to our learning with them? It was another thing that set us apart from the other children in the school, another sign (along with our academic prowess) that we were outsiders.

The secondary school children took the bus, either to Richmond, where the boys' grammar school and the girls' high school were, or to Catterick Camp, where the dreaded secondary modern school was. They took the train home if they had to stay late. Even those parents

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with cars did not ferry their children about. School friends visiting us from other villages stayed overnight rather than be driven back home. Joining the Girl Guides in Richmond (as I really wanted to do because my father was a keen Scout) was out of the question. Despite these little frustrations, we were very happy with our village life. But all three of us were anxious to leave it for the greater educational and career opportunities offered by the big wide world when the time came. In the 1970s, the church's marriage register showed that only the Hale sisters had married someone coming from more than thirty miles away.

Dinner was at lunchtime. After school, we had high tea. My elder sister Jill had hers with the grammar school boys in the school dining hall. Our father was adamant that his children would not be treated differently from the boys (but Frances and I were too young to join them). It was awkward for them all at first, but gradually they got used to one another, grew up together and became firm friends. How many people eat high tea these days? There was a savoury course, such as bacon and egg, followed by bread and butter, with jam, malt loaf and cake. In that order. Washed down with tea for the grown-ups and water or squash for the children. After tea, and some play time with his children, our father would retire to his study for a rest. He had a traffic light system outside his study door: red meant 'your headmaster is enjoying a well-earned rest and cannot see you now'. There was no need: his snores reverberated around the house. But when he woke up, he would work until the early hours – a habit which still runs in the family.

What did the adults do for recreation? There was the radio and eventually a television set. Grandma Hale, our father's mother, bought one for the Queen's coronation in 1953, as so many people did. It was housed in a handsome mahogany cabinet but had a tiny screen. We all travelled down to her home in Sheffield to watch it with her, curtains drawn, as in a cinema. The set came with her when she came to live with us during her final illness. Of course, we children were only allowed to watch *Children's Hour*. I have no idea whether or what the adults watched after we had gone to bed.

Outside the home, there were the village pubs, but I don't think that my father, let alone my mother, spent much if any time there.

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Each of them had its own distinct clientele, mostly men. Our parents did a little socialising at home, but not much: they would invite a few people in for sherry after church on Sundays and there was the occasional 'at home'. I remember once asking why Mrs X was not invited: our mother said that she would not feel comfortable, but the real explanation was the great British class system. It showed itself in so many ways, not just in social life but also in schooling and in life chances. The village children were not expected to pass the 11-plus and go to the high school or grammar school. I well remember my mother's delight when, as head teacher of Bolton-on-Swale school, she saw one of her village boys pass the 11-plus and go to the grammar school.

Church played quite a prominent part in village life. There was the Anglican church in Bolton-on-Swale. There was a Methodist chapel in Scorton, which was the main rival to the Church of England. Unusually, there was also a Roman Catholic church. This was next door to the other Scorton institution, the St John of God hospital, established in the late nineteenth century to cater for 'unwanted people', 'cripples and incurables'. It developed into a more general hospital in the 1950s, but some of the original residents remained and were often seen around the village, being taken for walks and down the road to church at Bolton-on-Swale in a variety of wheelchairs. The St John of God Brothers also began to develop links with Africa. Extraordinary as it may seem today, the very first black people I remember seeing were two African doctors who were visiting the hospital. We were delighted: rural Yorkshire was not the most diverse of places. It still is not.

Frances and I went to Sunday school until we were deemed old enough to go to church. Morning service was at 10.45 a.m., mattins except on the third Sunday of the month when it was Holy Communion. We learned to love the Book of Common Prayer. The grammar school boarders went every Sunday, as Leonard Robinson had commanded, which made the congregation look a respectable size. The vicar's sermons were commendably short. Our father was a lay reader. He used to take the services in other parishes when their vicar was away or on holiday – he had a bank of a hundred sermons and a card index which told him when and where he had preached each one, so that he would not repeat himself. One of the churches

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he used to visit was in Arkengarthdale, more than twenty miles away. In those days, it was unthinkable that he would drive there and back for the morning service and then there and back again for evensong. The local pub, the CB Inn (still going strong), gave him a private room. Jill used to go with him sometimes to keep him company (she had a lot more fun than we did, but that's only natural given the age difference).

Our mother ran the local branch of the Mothers' Union, founded in 1876 by Mary Sumner, who wanted to create 'an organisation for women that brought together rich and poor to build a network that would support mothers of all kinds as they brought up their children in Christian faith'. These days, the Mothers' Union is 'an international Christian membership movement that aims to demonstrate Christian faith by action'. But to us it was always the women's movement of the Church of England, at a time when women were not allowed to become priests. For one week each year, envelopes were delivered round the parish in an attempt to raise money for something called 'moral welfare': an Anglican charity which ran homes for unmarried mothers and their babies. Not everyone approved. Morality was more censorious and less tolerant, even illogical, then. One of the Mothers' Union stalwarts was not allowed to take Communion in church because she was the innocent party to a divorce. Village life did teach us something about hypocrisy and injustice. But I have reason to be grateful to the Mothers' Union. When I was sitting my Bar Final examinations in September 1967, I stayed in a little room at the top of Mary Sumner House, its headquarters in Westminster. It was perfect for a country girl who knew nothing of London: quiet and conveniently situated with no distractions. Perhaps that's why I did so well.

The other activity for women in the village was the Women's Institute, famous for jam and 'Jerusalem'. Our mother was a member but not, I think, a very keen one. Even so, the members gave a stirring rendition of 'Jerusalem' at her funeral in August 1981. They met in the Village Institute, where all sorts of other events took place. There was an amateur dramatic society, run by the vicar, which produced a play every year. Overacting was encouraged. There was barn dancing. In my teens, the wife of the head teacher of Bolton-on-Swale school

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put on country dancing lessons. These were great fun – and gave me my first and only schoolgirl romance with a carpenter's apprentice from a nearby village. We used to go off to barn dances in the local villages to put what we had learned into practice.

There were other highlights of the village year: the vicarage garden party, with the usual flower and produce competitions; the three-day Scorton Feast, with a fair on the village green, sporting events including a gymkhana, and evening entertainments; the harvest festival, when the church was full for the only time in the year; and bonfire night, with a huge bonfire on the village green, built over several weeks, and do-it-yourself fireworks which would now be banned.

Scorton still looks much the same as it did then, but a good deal has changed. There is still the garage, but only two pubs and one shop. The police station and the magistrates' court have gone. The hospital, the Roman Catholic church, and the grammar school are no more. There are small housing estates where the Nissen huts used to be and many other new houses. The primary school has moved from Bolton to Scorton and thrives. There are many, many more cars. Its society has changed too. There are many more people who live in the village and work elsewhere. It is a 'popular' commuter village. We would not be seen as outsiders now.

The grammar school closed in 1991, as did many similar small independent schools. Pupil numbers had declined and it was no longer financially viable. The advent of comprehensive education meant that failing the 11-plus did not condemn a child to a second-class education, so middle-class parents saw less need to 'go private'. The school had had to borrow to build a new sports hall after the Ministry of Defence had sold the gymnasium. It was a sad day for the Hale sisters. Our parents had poured so much effort and their own money into building it up. As late as 1985, we had seen the opening of the Hale building. This, along with all the other school buildings, has now been converted into houses and flats. Leonard Robinson's old home has become three houses. My elder sister Jill and her family own one of them. This just goes to show what a lovely and loveable old place it is.

Looking back, I learned three big lessons from growing up in Scorton. First was a love of place – of the beauty of the North

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Yorkshire countryside and buildings, and especially of the ancient town of Richmond. As a child, I thought that everywhere had a ruined but still magnificent medieval castle, a ruined abbey down the road, a cobbled marketplace with eighteenth-century shopfronts covering even older buildings, in a splendid setting above the fast-running river Swale. Second was a love of peace – or a fear of war – which led eventually to an interest in international organisations, international treaties and the international legal order. And third was a love of social justice – that so-called morality should not be cruel; that people should not be pigeonholed into social classes, their futures determined by who their parents were and where they went to school; that education was the way out and up for all of us, not just a favoured few.

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