

Feedback

Once a Swinbrook Boy

I recently received a copy of the June/July edition of *The Wychwood*, sent by my cousin, Paul Marsh who lives with his wife and family in Shipton. I was interested to see the article “Thanks for the Memory” by Eileen Wynne-Jones

and her reference to my novel,

“*Wychwood*” first published in 1992. Eileen mentions my other 15 novels; in fact there are now 28 of them!

“*Wychwood*” was a “one-off”, although many of the others follow the fortunes of particular families and many are set in Cornwall where I have lived for some years.

Early Life

I know the area in which I set “*Wychwood*” very well, having spent a very happy childhood in Swinbrook arriving early in the last war after the family home in London was destroyed in the Blitz. I went to school first in Swinbrook School (teacher Mrs. Downton), then to Burford Council School before moving on to the Grammar School. As a “Burfordian” I have been back since, both to give a talk at the school and to attend a couple of school reunions where I enjoyed meeting a number of my contemporaries, including John Rawlins of Milton, and talking of the old days when Shipton had its own somewhat eccentric cinema to which we

used to cycle from Swinbrook.

At the age of 15 I left school to join the Royal Navy and my family moved away from Swinbrook. After almost 10 years in the RN I became something of a rolling stone. Then, after having some 200 short stories published or broadcast,

I decided to return to England – to Cornwall – to embark upon a writing career.

A Writer's Life

A year later I was sweeping floors in a China Clay works to keep the wolf from the door. There followed a stint as Chief of Security at a West End hotel and a couple of years as a civil servant in Plymouth dockyard.

During my service in the dockyard I was living on Cornwall's Bodmin Moor and still writing. Dotted around the moor were the ruins of 19th century mine buildings and these gave me the inspiration for my first book “*Chase the Wind*”. The book won an award as “Best Historical Novel of the Year” and began a career which has taken me and my books to a great many parts of the world. However, I still enjoy returning to Swinbrook and the Wychwood area whenever the opportunity presents itself and my memories of those days are all good ones. I would like to send my very best wishes to anyone who might remember the London boy from Swinbrook.

E.V. (Ernest) Thompson

