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John would have been about 12 years old and Peter 8, and we were living at 33 Rutland Avenue, Thorpe Bay. Not far from our house were 'The Marshes', an area of low-lying marshy ground probably dating back to ancient times when the Thames estuary was bordered by miles of marshy land. The Marshes were a source of constant delight to John.. He could easily locate frogs, toads, slow worms and snakes and he often saw there animals and birds of many species.

My mother and father came to stay with us for a few days and on the last day of their stay we let John and Peter take my father to explore the Marshes. (My father was the eternal boy; he could not resist joining in games with his grandsons and would amuse them by apparently 'throwing his voice' and speaking to imaginary people.)

On this day the party of explorers departed with Dorothy's advice to Grandad not to let the boys fall in the smelly water. Although it was only a 10-minute walk to the Marshes no more than half an hour passed before the explorers returned. One of them had been a casualty. He had slipped into the water and sunk knee-deep. He was muddy; he stank. It was Grandad!

Dorothy and my mother were, astonishingly, not amused and Grandad was stripped, washed and sat by the fire wrapped in blankets before he and my mother could travel back home in the train.