

## The Pipe



Old Jo walked from his home, he had been born there many years ago when his father was 'Old Jo' himself. Every day he would walk the same route along the track and across to the sea, his favourite place to be. As a small child he had run free through the fields, while his father toiled on the land, down to the rocks and sandy beach and in hot weather to bathe in the sea.

Those carefree times were long gone and his son, Young Jo, was working the land himself and making a good job of it too. Jo thought of the old times when he could run like the wind but his lumbago had slowed his tread but time didn't matter now, he had all the day to fill.

Reaching the sea the tide was low, exposing the rock and long tracks of sand, the wind blew from the west, nearly taking his hat away with it. His eye followed the curve of the bay towards Reculver Towers and the Isle of Sheppey just a blue blur in the distance. Turning he made his way along the beach, watching the gulls catch the wind and soar into the blue. He stood for a while to catch his breath.

He rejoined the track towards home, Old Bay Cottage, near where the creek had once been, in the distance. His heart swelled with the love of the place and his family. He soon reached his usual resting place, time to take in the view and smoke his pipe. Looking over to the fields he could see his son nearly finished for the day,. He lit his pipe taking a long satisfying draw, what a perfect end to the day. He got up to make his way back home but stumbled and his pipe hit the hard ground and broke, he cursed under his breath, it was his favourite. Clay pipes always went that way, not lasting long. Still he had another at home and set off for his supper.

Many years later I was digging in my garden and found the end of a clay pipe and wondered how it came to be there. I can see Old Bay Cottage from my kitchen window and have always loved the old house and garden. Maybe this was the story of the pipe.