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The White Cottage sample
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THE WHITE COTTAGE

Level 3 - A2/B1 Intermediate (1) Graded Reader from I Talk You Talk Press

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The White Cottage
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ISBN: 978-4-910971-22-3
Publisher: I Talk You Talk Press

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Acknowledgment

With thanks to Colin Dixon for sharing his story.
He is the original Old Jack.

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Introduction

Hello my friends! I'm Old Jack. I live in the northwest of England, in a town near Liverpool. I'm retired now. I spend my time watching my hometown's rugby league club and writing ghost stories. I've written books of ghost stories from England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland, and Japan. I've also written a book about my memories of a rugby match, from when I was a young boy.

People often ask me why I'm interested in ghost stories. I just smile and tell them reading and writing about ghost stories is my hobby. But the story you are going to read now will give you the real answer. I hope you enjoy it.

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1. The invitation

Our story begins a few years after the end of the Second World War. I was fourteen, and lived with my mother and father in a small industrial town in the northwest of England. Our house was old and small, but it was warm and comfortable. My father worked in a local glass factory, but during the war, he was a soldier in the British Army. When he was in the army, he met another soldier called Owen Jones. Before the war, Owen lived in North Wales on his family's sheep farm. My father and Owen became best friends. When the war finished, they went back to their old lives, but they often wrote letters to each other.

One day in spring, a letter arrived from my father's old friend Owen Jones. When my mother and father read the letter, they were very excited. In the letter, there was an invitation. Owen invited our family to spend a few weeks during the summer holidays with him and his wife Beth on their sheep farm in North Wales. Their farm was called 'Hillcrest'. From the day the letter arrived to the day we left our town to go to Owen's farm, I was very excited. I was looking forward to our holiday. At school, I didn't listen to the teacher. I looked out of the window and thought about the holiday.

One sunny day in July, my family got on a train in Liverpool, and went to a town called Wrexham, which is on the border of Wales and England. As the train travelled south, I looked out of the window and watched the grey industrial towns of northwest England change to green fields and beautiful farmland. There were farm buildings and there seemed to be animals everywhere! There were sheep and cows in the fields. Then, I thought, *I am fourteen years of age, and this is the farthest I have ever been from my hometown. Because of the war and the dark years that followed, this is also the first time my family has been on holiday.*

I had never seen the countryside. All my life, I had only seen factories, old houses and grey landscapes. Looking out of the train window at the beautiful greenery, I felt like I was in another world.

-----END OF SAMPLE-----