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Mrs Beck and her daughter Miss Beck* were the teachers and they were very strict. If you did something wrong you'd always get into trouble – even on days off or in the holidays and they got to hear about it! I didn't like school very much because I was a get-up-and-go sort of rough fellow and I didn't like pen-pushing. I wasn't a very good speller, either. They used to have dictation every Friday morning and if you got seven mistakes you'd get the cane. Well, I used to hold my hand out for the cane before the dictation even started!

There were two big tortoise stoves in the school and one was always lit in the winter. If you got wet going to school she'd say, "Stand beside the stove and dry off!" and that's really what I liked doing best at school – standing beside the hot tortoise!†

* Miss Beck spent her whole career at the school. She was a cherished and popular pillar of the community who married a local farmer, Mr Piercy, and on retirement received an MBE for her work at the school and in the community. Mr Beck, her father, was the local rat-catcher, now called an Environmental Health Inspector.

† Countisbury School replaced the old school at Countisbury (where Ted now lives) and was built because the original was too small, and perhaps too windy for the children's safety! W.H. Thornton, the Curate, taught there in 1854: "The wind blows so hard at the top of Countisbury Hill that I have, before now, waited for the children to leave, formed them into a string, and personally conducted them under the hill before I parted with them, fearing lest I should see some scholar going away to the height of a thousand feet, head foremost, towards Wales" (*Reminiscences of an Old West-Country Clergyman*, page 108). Both of Ted's boys went to the new school, which itself closed in the early seventies. It later became a holiday let and Ben Halliday, the owner, remembers the band Deep Purple hiring it. He recalls seeing the band there, with their hair in pony tails and their guitars leaning up against the walls, and he apologised to them because the piano was out of tune, but they did not seem to mind. They were very polite and considerate, he says, and astounded him by calling him "Sir"! What they were working on is unknown. Ted remembers seeing them in the Staghunters.