

Small Beginnings

The newsletter of the former pupils of the old Barling School is aimed at all ex-pupils, staff and friends of the school

Special Interest Articles:

- Reunion Lunches
- News of the big reunion
- Mick Prior's memories part 2
- Memories

Reunion Lunches

A group of us meet for lunch every few months to catch up on news, socialise, and plan the main reunion events.

We meet at the Castle Inn, Little Wakering from 12.15 to 3.00 pm

Remaining Dates for 2013-2014

July 13th 2013
October 12th 2013
Jan 11th 2014
April 12th 2014
July 12th 2014
October 11th 2104

All friends and partners are welcome.

At the October 2012 lunch everyone wrote a short paragraph relating to their memories of Little Wakering and Barling. Some were published in the Christmas edition and the remainder are in this one.

Barling School Reunion

A reunion will be held on October 5th 2013 at the Community Centre, Great Wakering (the old school)

Catch up with your old schoolfriends

There will be refreshments, photographs, displays and plenty of time for chatting!

Mick Prior's Memories Part 2

Due to popular demand, I thought I would jot down some more childhood memories. Perhaps some of this will stir some grey matter in others.

Like so many of us, my early childhood experiences were dominated by WW2.

When I was about 2 years old in 1940, my Dad joined the Essex Regiment at Warley Barracks. After training at Kidderminster his Battalion was deployed to Lyme Regis to take over beach defence duties, as the threat of an invasion was strong.

I remember my Mum took me to see him one weekend and we spent some time on Lyme beach. Dad eventually left for an overseas posting from Liverpool in January 1942. They docked at Durban on 13th February 1942 – the next port of call being Bombay on March 6th.

The rumour was that they should have gone to Singapore but that had fallen to the Japanese on February 15th.

He then spent time in the Middle East, joining the 5th Essex for training and helping build defensive positions to guard the oil fields from German attack. In September his Battalion sailed from Alexandria to become part of the 8th Indian Division to take part in the Italian Campaign.

As we had room at home we had Sadie Morgan and then Nora Brown boarding with us. This companionship must have been a comfort for Mum, especially when, in January 1944, she received an Army Form stating that Dad was seriously ill having been wounded in action in "the Central Mediterranean Theatre of War".

In fact Dad had been injured in the battle for Ville Grande on 26th December 1943 when his anti-tank gun position was hit by German artillery.

During the time he was away, I remember Mum wrapping me up in a carpet and putting me under the dining table whenever the air raid siren sounded. I couldn't always wait for the "all clear" – I needed to go to the toilet or breathe.

Janet Collicut's Granddad lived opposite us – some evenings he used to lean on his front gate smoking his pipe, even during air raid warnings. We could see the glow as he puffed away. A policeman told him off one evening for being a "beacon" for enemy bombers. His solution was to turn his pipe upside down.

Another thing I can still remember clearly is the sight of a Doodlebug heading eastwards. Mum and I had been to the Civic Cinema and were walking home with others from the bus stop on a bright moonlit night. These machines had a very distinctive sound and everybody stopped to watch it hoping that the motor didn't cut out. If this happened while it was overhead, the advice was to "RUN" as the machine had the glide characteristics of a house brick. Nobody could understand why it was going the wrong way. I found out long after the war that our fighter pilots had developed a technique to fly alongside these V1's and use a wing tip to flip them over.

Its gyroscopic control system righted the machine and it usually headed system righted the machine and it usually headed back from whence it came.

The next time we saw Dad was at Bromsgrove Hospital in 1944 when he was evacuated from Italy. He had spent many months in Hospital in Italy and boasted about coming home on King Farouk's yacht that had been commandeered as a Hospital Ship. He was eventually discharged and came home but he needed to wear a calliper to support his injured leg. His brother, Cyril, came home about the same time as Dad. He had lost both his legs at Tobruk.

Most Sundays, Dad, wearing his calliper, would push Cyril in his wheelchair to visit their mother in Shoeburyness. I went with them sometimes.

Dad's calliper used to squeak as he walked and Cyril always accused him of making impolite noises.

Dad always insisted it was his "leg iron". I'm not sure, especially on the trip home, because Nan always used to pour them a bottle of Brown Ale each.

When I look back to those times – two brothers and the damage done to them.

After months of treatment, both recovered sufficiently to live into their early 80's.

Both earned a living for their families - Dad back to his trade as a plasterer and Cyril retrained as a watch and clock repairer.

And they were the lucky ones - thousands didn't get the chance.


It makes you think what good are these Wars. I suppose it's just human nature - my way is better than your way - my God is better than your God – and so on.

Oh well!

Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition!

Cheers

Mick Prior



I remember the vicar's wife Mrs Freemont showed me how to brew a pot of tea and pour it correctly!! My mother was quite annoyed when I wanted to show her as she thought she'd already taught me

Rob Richardson

Past Times of Great Wakering Rover FC

For several years I was able to go down memory lane by looking at past photographs of GWRFC on the website

These seem to have disappeared from the website since the death of Nobby Clark. I was also wondering if our Barling School's website could merge these missing files onto our own website to ensure these memories are not lost forever

Anon

I remember the time that Mr Learmond gave me the stick. Early that day he had told all of us in his class that he was fed up with people leaving the taps running in the basins in the cloakroom. Anyone who did that in future would get the cane. At break time that morning Denis Keen and I put the plugs in all the basins and turned the taps on. Of course the water rose and flooded over onto the floor. We were caught. Once we were back in class Denis and I were called out to the front. Mr Learmond took the long bamboo cane out of his desk. Our hands were shoved out. Denis and I received one stroke each. Mr Learmond had tears in his eyes.

Peter Griffiths

Sad News

Cynthia Keen passed away on January 29th. Cynthia started at Barling School in September 1941 and left, to go to Great Wakering School in July 1948. Her siblings Brenda, Dennis, Daphne and Veronica also attended Barling School

I married William Swivell in Little Wakering Church on January 8th 1955. I have happy memories of my twin girls, Christine and Janet, and going to see a circus at Wembley on our first anniversary. On another anniversary Bill and I went to a horse jumping show. Years later we went to Austria for a holiday. During the war I lived in Little Wakering with my mum, and sister Betty. We slept under the table when we heard the German planes coming over to bomb London.

Vi Swivell

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The village website

contains copies of past newsletters, and photos from various reunions.

There are also many photographs of people and events in Little Wakering, Great Wakering and Barling villages, and Barling School.

It is easy to navigate around and is well worth a look.

Terry Mumford works very hard to maintain and add to this excellent website which can be found at <http://www.barlingwakeringvillages.co.uk/index.html>

(if you are online, click on the address to go to the website)