



# Small Beginnings



*Spring 2020 - Edition 40*

*The Newsletter of Friends of Old Barling School*



*Special VE Day Edition*

*A Collection of Reminiscences*

## *VICTORY in EUROPE Day*

VICTORY in EUROPE Day commemorates 8th May 1945, following 6 years of war. After 30th April 1945 when Hitler committed suicide during the Battle of Berlin, World War II Allies formally accepted the unconditional surrender of the armed forces of Nazi Germany by General Jodl.

The war in Europe was over and within minutes of the announcement, many thousands of people gathered on the streets of Great Britain to celebrate the event. Bonfires were lit, street parties took place, and in London over 50,000 people filled the streets between Trafalgar Square and Big Ben as three Lancaster bombers flew overhead, dropping red and green flares.

The Royal Family together with Winston Churchill came out onto the balcony at Buckingham Palace to be greeted and cheered by the waiting crowds. That evening, two searchlights made a giant 'V' above St Paul's Cathedral as the celebrations continued well into the night. The act of military surrender was signed on 7th May in Reims, France, and ratified on 8th May in Berlin, Germany. The 8th May 1945 was declared VE Day.

*Richard Kirton [Editor]*

*VE Day Artwork Courtesy Of Kevin Walsh*

*<http://www.kevinwalshoriginals.com/>*

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## ***Introduction by Peter Griffiths***

*[Friends of Old Barling School]*

*May 8<sup>th</sup> 1945. VE Day.*

Of all the days in that year, that is the one of which I still retain a memory. At least, I think I do. Memory is such an unreliable business that I hesitate to say that this is certain.

I am looking out of the upstairs front window of our house, Ben-Hur, (now No. 218) on Little Wakering Road. Below, in the middle of the road, a bonfire is ablaze. Around it, my mum and our neighbours are talking and drinking and dancing. They are celebrating the end of the conflict in the European theatre of that most terrible of wars, the Second World War.

At that time my dad was in Germany. He did not return home until the Autumn of 1945, having spent six months in Schleswig-Holstein, at the foot of the Jutland peninsula, trying to stop Nazi Party members and German soldiers from fleeing into Denmark. A long war for him. It had been six years since he was called up and five since, on 31 May 1940, as a soldier with the British Expeditionary Force, he had left a beach near Dunkirk to board a boat back to England.

Meanwhile, some of our predecessors at Barling School were fated not to return from the War. They included: Eric Garrad, Leslie Garrad, William Holmstead, Eric Seymour, William Collins, and Stanley Taylor.

All those years ago - and yet the War still resonates so strongly with people of our generation. Of course, our memories are sustained by a succession of books, films, TV programmes, articles and reminiscences. I hope that the pieces included in this edition of our newsletter, specially edited for us by Richard Kirton, will add to your own recollections and to our collective determination to ensure that such worldwide horrors will not occur again.

### ***Extracts from the Wartime Diary of Leslie Hinchley Griffiths (Ken) (28.2.11-25.6.98)***

*Transcribed, with original punctuation, by Peter Griffiths*

Ken was called back to the Grenadier Guards in 1939, but was later transferred to the Military Police, as the Army had less than a quarter of the MPs it needed. He used a motor-bike when delivering despatches. From 24 May 1940 Ken's Company had been billeted at Fretin, near Lille, in northern France - 'in the loft of some farm buildings'.

**26.5.40 SUN.**



On sentry in this billet from 12 - 3am, troubled by some person sniping at us from some woods at the rear of the billet. Good job he can't see us clearly or his shots would probably get too close. Sent to Divisional HQ with a message at 1.30pm, about five miles away, however arrived quite safe and sound. On the way back was shot at from a private car from quite short range, very pleased to say that it missed though rather too close to be comfortable.

Since dawn there have been continuous Air Raids in this district, the German bombers having the whole sky to themselves dive bombing and releasing in salvos then coming low to machine gun anyone in the vicinity. We were very lucky five

bombs being released at once and dropping only a few yards away again lucky for us the bombs failed to explode.

The Coy left this billet in \*\*\*\* (PG - twos?) at good intervals. I left at about 9pm to a new billet very near Div. HQ 4K from Lille.

#### **27.5.40 MON.**

Awakened at 5.30am to go on a reconnaissance with 5 others. Covered about 25 miles roads seem quite good and for a change we did not have to aim for the ditch to escape from bombs and bullets. Back about 8.30am, having had a very good look round Lille, which I should imagine is a fine place in peace time and even now does not show much sign of damage. In the High St. there was a group of about 100 people waiting to be served with food.

Moved off in the late evening forward to Neuve Eglise which we entered in the early hours of the morning in teeming rain no billets have been fixed so we slept for about 2 hours where we could.

#### **28.5.40 TUES.**

This afternoon there is talk that we have run into a trap and that the Germans have practically surrounded the place. Sergt Corrie & Sergt Mills & three others are sent out on a reconnaissance to report on which of two roads are occupied by Gerry and to be back in 1 hour.

It is now an hour & a half since the party went out and still they are not back, so it has been decided that the Div. will move.

Started the journey towards the coast about 6pm with a rush. After about 2 miles my motor-cycle conked out for the first time since I have had it. There is not time to stay and fix it so I damaged it beyond repair and came on in a truck. The roads are simply packed with English & French Army vehicles which slows up the traffic considerably, we are now being continually shelled bombed & machine gunned by planes. Oh where is the wonderful Air Force. The sky is simply black with enemy planes. Thank God it is now getting dark.

#### **29.5.40 WED.**

On and on towards the coast along this small corridor of land which still has to be taken by the enemy. No sign of Corrie's party. I am afraid they have gone west, when they set off there seemed a quiet look in Corrie's eyes as if he knew it was his last piece of work for us. Let us hope that he has only been taken prisoner for his wife sake and they seemed so devoted to one another. But I am afraid there is not a chance. From all reports received they shoot all prisoners on sight rather than be hampered with them.

The bombers have just been over again. I seem to be fortunate still not injured. This road is absolutely packed with traffic, there seems to be dead men and horses all over the place, horrible sight.

At last I have arrived at our billet, after travelling until late afternoon with continuous waves of German bombers attacking us. This billet is again a farm about 6 miles from the coast and company seems to be gradually whittled down.

This evening scores of Gerry bombers went over and could be plainly seen attacking Dunkirk for about 2 hours. I do know that the town is packed with Allied troops the casualties must be terrific.

We are not even going to stay the night at this place the advance of the enemy being too fast, we are just waiting for instructions from Div. HQ.

Have just got away with two & three men on each motor-cycle and a lorry which had been abandoned, the Germans are only about 1/2 mile away with a mechanised unit when we went. Going to sleep in a barn which is Div. HQ for tonight.

As I lie down to sleep in the straw with Crocker sticking as close as an oyster to me. The lad seems to think that if he keeps near me he stands a better chance of getting away but from what I can see we have not an even chance of getting away, the boats cannot take all these thousands away under three days at least.

#### **30.5.40 THUR.**

Off again early morning. Cpl. Hayton and 5 men have gone back to try and round up stragglers. I have a feeling I shall not see them again. Good luck to them and let's hope they get a chance to break for the coast.

At last we are on the beach about 50 yards from the water edge. We are not now being picked up at Dunkirk, it being practically a shambles from enemy bombing and shelling, it is a small place about 5 miles away, though the progress is slow all men having to be rowed in small boats to the destroyer and other vessels standing out at sea.

One of the most terrible events happened this morning. A large hospital ship painted snow white with large Red Crosses painted all over her was just about to sail for England loaded with English wounded when a Gerry bomber came over ignoring the troop carrying vessels then at once started dive bombing at this hospital ship scoring direct hit after hit. Wounded men some very seriously such as one who had had his legs blown off crawled out of his bed to the deck and dragged himself overboard into the sea to get away.

There were scores of wounded men in the water trying to make the shore when down came the planes and machine gunned them in the water. This is civilisation.

This evening G (PG - ie German) artillery found the range of this place and commenced to shell it very regularly every hour. There were quite a few casualties amongst men waiting in the different groups to board ships for England.

#### **31.5.40 FRI.**

In the early hours of the morning we are told to catch a boat and boarded one after pushing small boats off the shore until we were waist deep in water, a few chaps were left on the shore. I wonder if they caught a later boat.

Our boat left this place at 6am and as we moved off the German bombers came over to say farewell. I have heard since that the boat due out behind us has sunk loaded with troops.

Thinking that the boat would probably sail to a south coast port I looked at the harbour we approached at 3.38pm with interest, and could hardly believe my own eyes as I gradually recognised Harwich & Dovercourt. After something to eat on the quayside on the train naturally thinking of London, but finished up in a barracks just outside Leicester of all places. I wish I could let Vera know I am OK. I dare say the poor kid is worried stiff as to whether her hubby has been shot.

As we came out of the station the streets were lined with people three four & five deep, shouting and waving as if we were heroes or something. The only heroes I can think of are the Navy for getting us out of that hell hole.

**Note:** Ken Griffiths was born Leslie Hinchley Griffiths in Nottingham on 28th February 1911. It is not known how he came by the nickname of 'Ken'.

# Nine WISEMAN Brothers Have Served This Country

Article by Richard Kirton



I met up with Gordon Wiseman on Sunday 15 March 2020 and he shared a few of his wartime memories with me. I find it incredible that Gordon and his eight brothers all served this country and returned home.

Gordon was born in 1933 and is the only surviving child of eleven children who were born in Orsett and Wakering Wick Cottages, New Road, Great Wakering. All nine of the Wiseman brothers served this country between the start of World War Two and the 1950's:

1. Arthur Wiseman, father to our Carol Osborne (née Wiseman), was the oldest of the children and worked in a reserved occupation (farm worker) but was also a wartime fire fighter.
2. Alexander Wiseman served on trawlers in Scapa Flow involved with the Arctic convoys.
3. Charles Wiseman was badly wounded at El Alamein and spent the rest of the war in Italian prisoner of war hospitals.
4. John Wiseman was also in the Royal Navy, posted to the Russian convoys. His ship was torpedoed, and he was rescued but the ship sunk.
5. Kenneth Wiseman was another Naval lad and served on tugs in the far east.
6. Norman Wiseman was a sailor on a tank landing craft at the D-day landings and served the rest of the war in Europe.

The three younger brothers were too young to serve in World War Two, but they signed up as their turn came, when the Cold War was at its height, as the West and Russia battled for control and influence in Europe and other strategic places worldwide.

7. Alan Wiseman was first of the post-World War boys and he worked on submarines.
8. Eric Wiseman was involved in the Suez conflict on tank recovery operations.
9. Gordon Wiseman, the youngest of the Wiseman boys, served for three years in Germany and a year in Korea during the Cold War.

Gordon shared three other wartime memories with me and they will be the subject of a future website article which will be posted on the [Barling & Wakering Villages Plus](#) website.

## Aircraft of World War II - The Supermarine Spitfire

The Supermarine Spitfire is a British single-seat fighter aircraft that was used by the Royal Air Force and other Allied countries before, during, and after World War II. Many variants of the Spitfire were built, using several wing configurations, and it was produced in greater numbers than any other British aircraft. The Spitfire was designed as a short-range, high-performance interceptor aircraft by R. J. Mitchell, chief designer at Supermarine Aviation Works, which operated as a subsidiary of Vickers-Armstrong from 1928. The photograph shows a Spitfire LF Mk IX, MH434 being flown by Ray Hanna in 2005: This aircraft shot down a Focke-Wulf Fw 190 in 1943 while serving with No. 222 Squadron RAF.

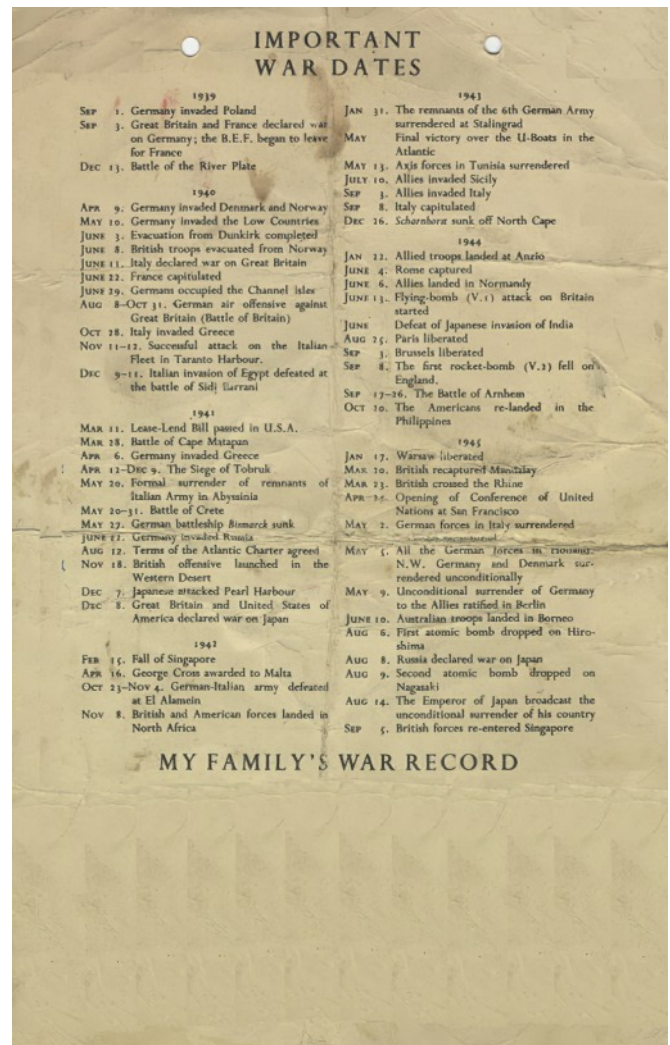
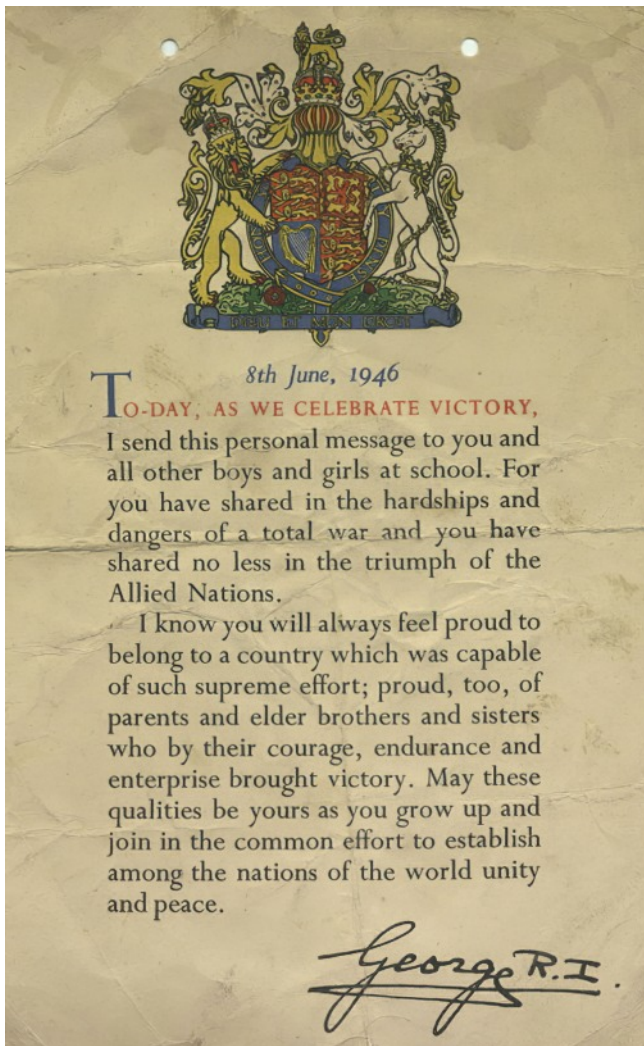


Courtesy of [Wikipedia](#) and [Encyclopaedia Britannica](#)

**Letter from King George VI**  
**To Britain's Schoolchildren, June 1946**  
**Small Beginnings Edition 39**  
*Original Letter supplied by John Pavelin*

In June 1946 all of the schoolchildren of Britain got their own "Thank you and well done" during the Victory Celebrations. This was a printed letter from King George VI, at the end of the Second World War, recognising the fact that the whole of the country, including children, played their part.

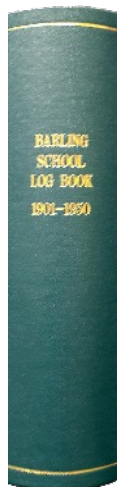
John Pavelin shares this original personal message on card, with us all, and it is copied below for all to see. I wonder how many people still have their original messages.



# ***Barling School Log Books Extracts (1901 -1950)***

## ***Some Wartime Accidents and Some Deliberate Damage***

*Article by Peter Griffiths*



1941 June 23<sup>rd</sup> Accident Leslie Attridge, practising High Jump (during dinner hour), fell and broke a bone in left wrist. Dr Charlotte first dressing at surgery. Later Southend Hospital.

1941 June 26<sup>th</sup> Accident Laurence Street. Climbing on iron fence, which was resting against another, pulled the railing over on top of him. Wound in left leg. Dr would not attend. Boy had to be taken to him. Later taken by ambulance to Southend Hospital. Compound Fracture. School accepts no responsibility as all children had been forbidden to play on or near the bridge.

March 8<sup>th</sup> 44 . . . Roy Richards, a boy in Standard IV, suffered a split lip as the result of being struck accidentally by a cricket bat during the afternoon break.

1943 August 14<sup>th</sup> Air Raid Damage At 2.35 A.M. on Tuesday August 14<sup>th</sup> an enemy plane dropped a high explosive of heavy calibre in the School playing fields, 20 yards from School House (South). A huge crater was formed 50 feet diameter - more than 20 feet deep. The Cookery Shed was demolished. One Air Raid shelter was badly cracked and had to be knocked down.

School House and School were extensively damaged, mainly roofs, ceilings, windows and window frames. Fortunately, the structure had a remarkable escape. Detailed list of damage was submitted. Messrs Adcock & Son, builders, are sparing no effort to get the school in condition for reopening on September 7<sup>th</sup>.

(PG: It was lucky that this bomb was dropped during the Summer holiday. If it had been during the day in term-time, who knows what horror it would have wrought on adults and children there?)

On Friday 16 June 2017, Peter Griffiths, Dawn (Mumford) Bailey, David Bailey, Brenda (Keen) Cornwell, Veronica (Keen) Jones and Richard Kirton met Sue Clarke, the acting Head Teacher of Barling Magna Primary Academy. The purpose of the visit was to present her academy with a freshly bound School Log Book from the old Barling School, covering the years 1901 to 1950.

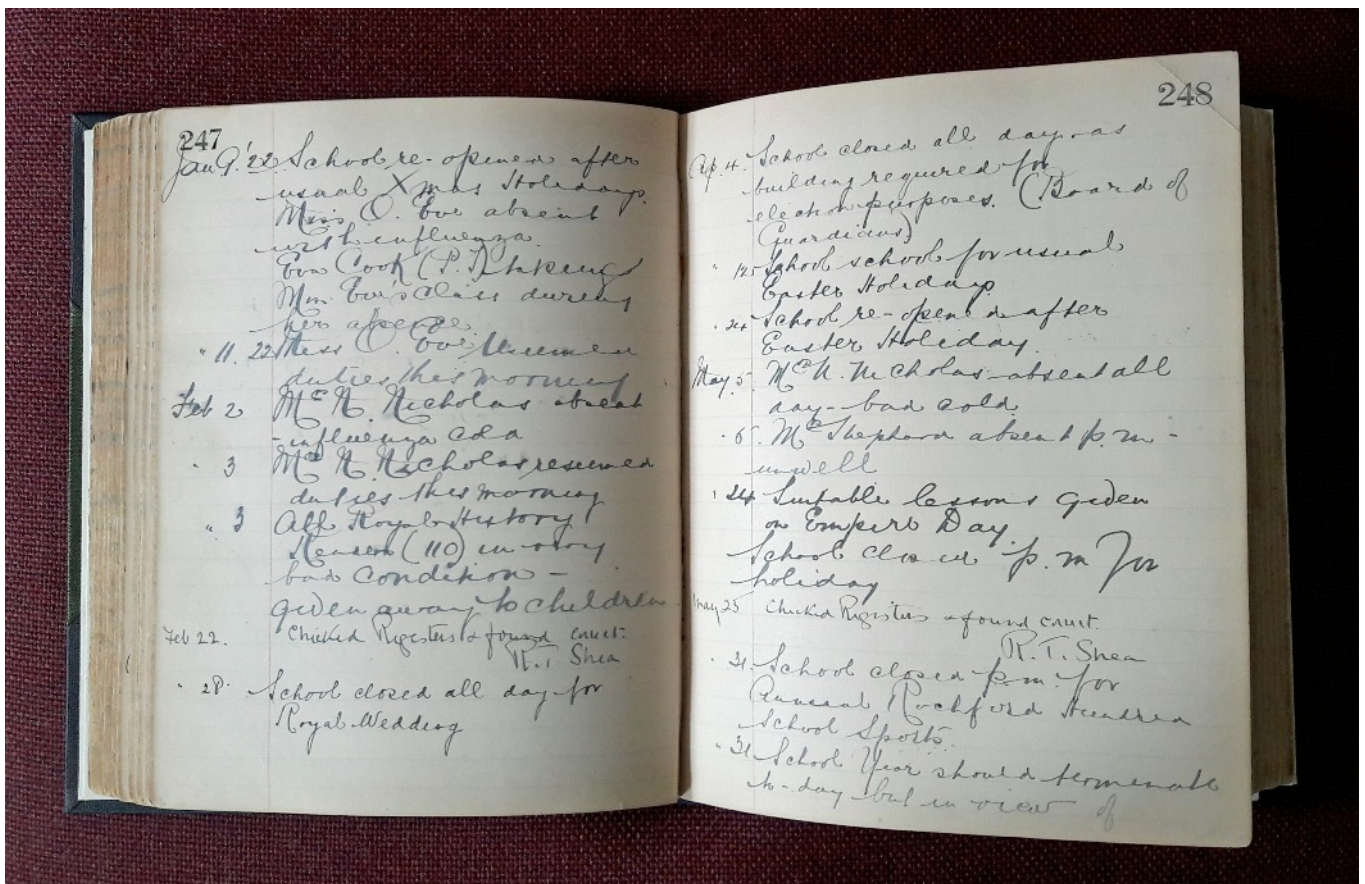
Sue escorted us to the main assembly room and we sat at the front, facing the teachers and the school children. Peter, who managed this project, then addressed the teachers and school children and explained the purpose of our visit with a very brief history of the old school. The original Log Book was falling apart and Peter showed them the handsome newly bound Log Book along with its old and well worn cover.

Peter explained to the audience that in the early days of the last century, there were many reasons why Barling School children did not go to school.



Taking turns, we each read out some examples of these reasons from the first pages of the Log Book of 1901:

- July 11th School closed this afternoon on account of Little Waking Church Sunday School Treat.
- July 12th The heat overcame three children this morning - two of them were unable to attend the afternoon session.
- July 19th Attendance dropped this afternoon to 114 pupils. Fruit picking accounts for a number of children being absent.
- July 24th Attendance decreased to 114 pupils this morning. Still further decreased to 108 in the afternoon owing to rain during dinner time.
- July 25th A very heavy shower coming on at three o'clock, the children were kept back in school until 4.35.
- September 2nd In the first class only 22 were present out of 36 children. Several children were potato picking.
- September 25th Attendance was very low this afternoon on account of a Circus in Southend.



## Ann Mott's Memoirs [Extracts]



A memorial stone stands in the churchyard of Saint Nicholas Parish Church, Great Wakering, bearing 3 names from the Mott family.

Ann Mott's mother, Minnie Caroline Mott died on 16 August 1990 aged 89 years and is buried there along with her husband Ralph Mott who died on 25 November 1982 aged 87 years and her son Bryan Ralph Mott who tragically died on 1 April 1942 aged just 10 years old.

The following extract from an official WW2 incident report mentions the death of 2 boys, Burgess and Mott. The boy Mott mentioned in the extract was Bryan Ralph Mott, brother of Ann Mott and son of Minnie Caroline Mott.

4/42 Gt Wakering	2 small yellow bombs. 1 unexploded and 1 exploded while being interefered with, causing 3 casualties, 2 serious and 1 slight, 200 yds west of D.F. Wireless Station. 2 boys, Burgess and Mott were conveyed to Rochford Hospital where they died the same day from injuries received.
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Ann was just 5 years old at the time of her brother Bryan's death and she vividly remembers the sad incident to this day. There is an excellent article titled 'Parachute Bombs fell all over Wakering' on the [Rochford District Community Archive](#) website which highlights a British wartime experiment that went badly wrong and was partly to blame for the accident.

Minnie Caroline Mott shared many undocumented memoirs with her daughter Ann who now shares them with us all, using her own words, as follows:

My grandmother was a skilled needlewoman who could make any clothes, for men or women. There were no bought patterns, of course, and all parts were constructed by blocking. She made mum a set of clothes for her little doll and I treasure the only surviving piece, a tight waisted corset, machine made, bound around the edges, lined and boned, with eyelets down the back for cords. "Gran" lived into an energetic old age and on washdays would trot up and down with her full basket to the line at the end of the garden, until a scold caused a poisoned foot and her death at the age of 85 in 1928. She worked hard indoors, too, wiping dirty crockery and cutlery with paper to get off the worst before using the precious clean water which had to be collected from the stand-pipe half-way along the road. They did have a big tank in the ground which collected the rainwater from the roof, and there was a hand pump to draw this up (mains water arrived in their house in the 1920s). Grates had to be "blackened", a horrible job. Mum's mother's wedding dress had a swansdown trimming and her mother had a little private school where she lived before marrying.

In the second World War mum played for a choir, which I believe had some connection with the Air Raid Precaution members. They had a harmonium on a lorry when they went carol-singing. She went back to teaching when the war began, as so many men had been called up and there was a great shortage of teachers. She expected to stay for about two years but carried on for twenty, although she switched to Southend Schools in 1945.

The Ayletts, who had a shop in the High Street on the east side of North Street, were mum's cousins. When one of them was on leave during the first World War was wondering along one day and

watched a horse grazing contentedly, "I wish that I were that old horse" he said. He went back to the war and did not return.

After the war Grandpa's meadow was converted into two tennis courts, mum, her brother and sister had many happy hours with dad and his large family and Wakering friends, including Mr. Hamm the headmaster, Mrs. Hamm, his wife who also taught and made beautiful iced cakes, and two other teachers Mr. Tommy Davies and Mr. Scott.

I enjoyed visiting Mr. Arthur Cooper, known as "Lefty" who was a neighbour in St. Johns Road, usually called the "New Town". He was born about 1881 and had been a Knacker. His stables were about halfway up the road on the east side. He had been bought up in one of the huts which were the brickies homes near Millhead, and sometimes crewed on the barges when they were short of men. It could be difficult getting in and out of the creeks if the wind wasn't co-operative, as the tide was low for so long. The barges were hard to manoeuvre, and it was the most skilful and daring crews who could get out. It was quite a race and competition of skill. There were plenty of rats down by the sea wall. In his younger days he had a dog which was a good ratter, so he would block up most of the holes then the dog would drive all the rats to one place. As the rats jammed in the hole he would pull them out by their tails and toss them for the dog to kill.

Some of the brickies prided themselves as being rough- "the rough" is a name which Wakering people still used recently - Mr. Cooper saw many fights, mostly in or near the Anchor which was the brickies favourite pub. The wives would go screaming to the police station, asking for their men to be separated, but one policeman used to say "I'll come in half an hour, one of them will be pleased to see me then."

Mr. Cooper loved horses and would sometimes sleep with them after an evening out, if he feared that his wife considered that he had drunk too heartily! He must have been one of the first people in the district to have a humane killer, for he was asked to demonstrate it, at the police stables in Alexandra Street, in Southend, when they had a horse to put down. He was very nervous, afraid that something would go wrong, but he would say "I put the gun to his head and down he went just like that," and he would slap a fist hard into the palm of his other hand, gazing at the floor for a moment as if seeing a corpse.

When talking about a horse being in fine condition he would say enthusiastically, "He was a horse a fine stepping horse" and would pump the air in front of his chest with his forearms, fists pawing downwards, like a horse's front legs. At one time there was an Indian who used to sit fasting near the Kursaal, quite a tourist attraction. His name was Zacths. One day Mr. Cooper was called to put a horse down on Foulness.

It had been wasting away and was so thin it had been nicknamed Zaccho. Mr. Cooper peeped into its mouth, found what he had expected and offered to take the horse away alive. On returning home he set to work on dentistry, removing useless bad teeth and trimming others. Back came Zaccho's ability to eat and soon, "Ooh, he became a fine stepping horse, a fine stepping horse," and Mr. Cooper would chuckle gleefully, pummelling the air.

Mr. Cooper remembered the building of the new Congregational Church and told me how all the important people in the village went there, rolling up in their pony and traps, including Major Wedd, he told me something about which I believe was connected to the church, and which he liked to follow sometimes all the way to Southend. During his youth there was a vicar at the church who worked hard to bring the brickies and their families into Christian Worship. Quite a few men and women settled down together without marrying, but he "rounded them up" and persuaded several couples to marry. Mr. Cooper's own mother was a sweet contented person, always singing songs like Pretty Little Polly Perkins from Paddington Green and often hymns. People would come across her sometimes and ask "All

alone Mrs. Cooper?" "No I'm never alone," she would reply quietly. One day when he was about sixteen another youngster came running behind him, jumped on his back and said "Guess what - your mothers had twins." "Look, I nearly fell down with surprise!" he'd laugh. He had no inkling of the pregnancy. He remembered the high infant mortality, of course and especially a typhoid and cholera outbreak. The source of which was believed to be the ditch along the south side of the common.

He would enjoy himself at Christmas, singing and acting in a play with the carol singers. Little Waking Hall was one of their favourite stopping places. He would struggle to remember details of the play and its characters, but only recall a few, including St. George and the Dragon and Tom the Sweep. The only words still in his memory were part of a couplet, "I'm Tom the Sweep, and all the money I Get I Keep." I said "you must have been mummers (actors)," he had never heard the word.

Before leaving school mum became a pupil-teacher, learning and practising teaching while still receiving lessons. Throughout her life she considered this to be the best way of discovering whether a youngster had the aptitude to become a good teacher, before wasting time at college. She had a struggle to get to college, as subjects like Algebra and French weren't on Waking School's curriculum and she needed a smattering of them, but she was accepted at the City of Leeds Teacher Training College. One of her wedding photos shows her standing outside her home, wearing a school mistress's reproving look. All the children in "New Town" came to gaze at the happy couple in all their finery! In 1926 Dad had entered in a partnership with Mr. Leonard Tickett who did vehicle repairs in an old barn in the Little Waking Road.

They had a garage built in the High Street, where the sheltered flats stand now nearly opposite the Exhibition, and called themselves Waking Engineering Co. After they retired and I had become a motorist my battery supplier told me, "They weren't just repairers they were engineers! If they could not buy what they needed they made it!" They retired in 1956.

### **Aircraft of World War II - The German V-1 Flying Bomb**



The V-1 was the first of the so-called "Vengeance weapons" series deployed for the terror bombing of London. It was developed at Peenemünde Army Research Center in 1939 by the Nazi German Luftwaffe at the beginning of the Second World War, and during initial development was known by the codename "Cherry Stone". Because of limited range, thousands of V-1 missiles launched into England were fired from launch facilities along the French (Pas-de-Calais) and Dutch coasts. The Wehrmacht first launched the V-1 to target London on 13 June 1944, one week after (and prompted by) the successful Allied landings in Europe. At peak, more than one hundred V-1s a day were fired at south-east England, 9,521 in total, decreasing in number as sites were overrun until October 1944, when the last V-1 site in range of Britain was overrun by Allied forces.

*Courtesy of [Wikipedia](#) - The Free Encyclopaedia.*

## 1945 Firemen's Children's Party

*Carol Osborne (née Wiseman)*

During the war my Dad and Mum (Arthur and Eva Wiseman) frequently arranged dances in Great Wakering village hall, I presume on a Saturday night. Frankie Howard would often turn up and entertain the dancers with his latest jokes etc., especially as this was very close to Shoebury where he was stationed during the war and he became a frequent visitor.



The above photo was taken at a Firemen's children's party. I think this could have been the Christmas after the war ended in 1945. I am standing on a chair at the end of the table. Can anyone else recognise themselves?

Going back to the dances, tea was served during the interval, the milk being supplied by Mr Bentall the farmer. I was also told by my Dad that one Christmas Mr Bentall turned up with a crate of oranges (no questions asked) but he was very specific that they were for the children only!! Dad also told me that he treated the floor of the hall with some candle wax to make it easier for dancing.

### Aircraft of World War II - The Avro Lancaster Bomber



The Avro Lancaster is a British Second World War, four-engined strategic heavy bomber. It had a crew of seven, which included: a pilot, flight engineer, navigator, bomb aimer, wireless operator, mid-upper and rear gunners. Many crew members from Lancasters were awarded the Victoria Cross for their heroic actions in battle, a notable example being the two awarded after a daring daytime raid on Augsburg, Germany. Lancaster delivered the famous 'bouncing bombs' designed by British inventor

Barnes Wallis, a payload that would lead the Lancaster to remain famed long after 1945.

*Courtesy of Wikipedia*

# ***Rochford Airport was a Hurricane Station***

## *Laurie Street*

As we rejoice in the success of the Battle of Britain 75 years ago and remember with extreme sadness the pilots who were little more than boys who failed to return home I have resurrected my boyhood memories. At the height of the battle the youngsters of Bakers Grave seemed to have no fear of the war raging all round us. We gathered in groups at our front gates to Victory Cottages and watched in amazement at the battles in the air above us.

**Max Bygraves** was stationed at Rochford where he sang his emotional songs like, "Deck of Cards". We had a photo of him sheltering from the blazing sun by sitting under the wing of a Hurricane at Rochford. Rochford was a Hurricane station and although the Spitfire was undoubtedly the more glamorous the hurricane was the workhorse.

We watched the droves of enemy bombers with their escort fighters head for London and the Hurricanes come to intercept them. The Hurricanes soared high above the clouds and screamed down on the enemy with guns blazing. Sometimes it was a Gerry that hit the water in flames, alas sometimes it was one of our boys.

When the hurricanes returned home they swooped low over Victory Cottages and other groups of houses and the pilot boys waved to the girls and gave a 'Thumbs Up' to the adults who also gathered. We waved back ecstatically. If the mission had been successful they dipped their wings from side to side in salute to a job well done.

At times the hurricanes limped home hardly clearing the house rooftops with terrible damage to the aircraft but still the one and only Rolls Royce engines purred on and still the boy pilots waved in thanksgiving that they lived to fight another day. At times the inevitable happened and although we knew little of it, Hurricanes failed to return home and those same boy pilots waved no more.

This aerial photograph of Southend Airport adorns one of the business pages titled 'London Southend Airport To Debut New FBO' of the website '**AINonline**'. The link to the page follows: <https://www.ainonline.com/aviation-news/business-aviation/2017-10-15/london-southend-airport-debut-new-fbo>.



# *Hornchurch was a major Battle of Britain Station*

## *Laurie Street*

When I joined the RAF I was in fact stationed at RAF Hornchurch, although after the war. Of course Hornchurch along with Biggin Hill and others was one of the major Battle of Britain stations.

Hornchurch was steeped in memorabilia of the battle. The local School was named The Mitchell School after R J Mitchell the designer of the beautiful spitfire with the different Houses being named after battle ACES like Douglas Bader. The only spitfire that flew in the battle and is still flying flew from Hornchurch and crashed at least once only to be repaired and put back into the air.

But Hornchurch is another story including the story of "Binder" the station dog who was adopted by one of the pilots and the story goes that Binder always flew in the spitfire with his master but one day Binder was missing when the clarion bell sounded. That mission the spitfire failed to return home and the pilot was killed. Binder reappeared but eventually died and was buried just inside the camp gates.

All you dog lovers out there might be interested in the story of Binder who was just a scruff really but was taken in by one of the pilots. He lived a long life and seemed to have an uncanny sixth sense. Did he know that a spitfire would be shot down that day or was it just coincidence?

After the war Hornchurch became an aircrew selection centre where potential air crew came to be assessed. Recruits had to be the right size to fit the aircraft, too tall, too short, too fat and you were out. Recruits were cheaper than aircraft. Somehow Binder knew when an intake would be arriving and waited at the camp gate to escort the arrivals to the centre.

I have just found my book called "Hornchurch Offensive" a history covering many years. In fact there were three dogs involved, Crash, Scruff and Binder but only Binder had his own memorial on his grave. All this really shows is I haven't spent all my life in Barling but have crossed the boundaries to elsewhere.

The following photograph is displayed on the [Hornchurch Aerodrome Historical Trust](#) website. On the 1st August 1939, 250 cadets of the Office Training Corps Air Section arrived to look around the aerodrome. When they were given the opportunity to view the new Spitfires of 54 squadron, pre-war coded DL, they all showed a very keen interest in the new machines [Photo source, Keystone].



## **Frankie Howerd in Great Wakering**

*Richard Kirton*

Laurie's WWII memories have started the ball rolling again with this comment from Robin Nicholls about Frankie Howerd "Frankie Howerd could be seen on Wakering High Street with a mobile anti-aircraft gun and up Alexandra Road at the old army camp there. He mentioned that he was at Shoeburyness on a TV programme (which I have on VHS somewhere) !" Rather than hoping for a showbiz tour of military hotspots, Frankie had to settle for life in the Royal Artillery. As Gunner Howerd of B Battery, Frankie found himself defending the coast of Essex from the Luftwaffe but not to be deterred by his posting to Shoeburyness Barracks, he soon saw himself organising and starring in weekly concert parties.

## **Frankie Howerd at The Exhibition**

*Peter Griffiths*

I knew that Frankie Howerd sometimes drank at The Exhibition in the 1950s, but not that he'd been local during the War. Another interesting piece of information about Frankie Howerd: Les Gilkes has written to say that the great entertainer lodged with the Bennewith family, i.e. opposite where Les and I lived, in Little Wakering. Bert Bennewith was the village undertaker and coffin-maker. He was a short man and so, when I was about eleven, I was able to borrow his suits to wear in plays and shows at the Parochial Hall and Women's Institute. Here is a very poignant website about Little Wakering people who died in the two World Wars: <http://www.roll-of-honour.com/Essex/LittleWakering.html>. Amongst many other things, it indicates that one of the Bennewiths died during the First World War and that he had lived at The Castle.

## **Frankie Howerd was stationed at Shoeburyness**

*Janet (Collicutt) Claydon*

Frankie Howard was stationed at Shoeburyness for a while and stayed with Mrs Staples, next door but one to me, when we lived in the bungalow. He used to play the piano on occasion. Winny Staples married Jimmy Kiss, whose son lives on Run Corner and he was in a Japanese camp for years. I can remember him coming home and I can remember my dad coming home from being in the desert, when I was in Barling School. June Smith came down to the school on her bike to tell me my dad was home.

## **Frankie Howerd in Little Wakering**

*Laurie Street*

I think Norman Bennewith was also an undertaker and he is buried in Little Wakering churchyard. I remember Janet lived in the last bungalow before Victory Cottages I thought the Staples lived in the first council house. The Groves family lived in the next house I thought but might be wrong. June Smith lived next door to us at 17 Victory cottages. June lives now near Little Wakering Corner. She and her family went to Wakering School. Of course the Groves family have strong connections with the East Coast floods, Nellie the daughter of Nellie married and went to live at the camp on the common and were seriously flooded. Nellie had a daughter Anne who was rescued at 2 years of age, her brother aged 4 lost his life as did her mother Nellie. Father survived but don't start me off about the floods. Frankie Howerd was well known round here, his pianist was Madam Vera Roper who lived in Royston Avenue, Southend and performed many concerts. Vera's husband Alf was a sergeant in the then Southend Force. The police had a concert party and performed to elderly people, etc. Vera played the piano and Frankie often joined in.

# *Barling and Wakering at War*

## *Boyhood Memories by Laurie Street*

*October 2014*



I was born in 1935 at Victory Cottages by Bakers Grave, Little Wakering.

When WWII was declared in 1939 I was 4 years old and had no idea what war and fighting, apart from the odd scrap with other tearaways was about but I was to find out pretty quickly.

I had four brothers and three sisters. My two elder step brothers were called up for military service and served in different parts of the world. My oldest brother, Michael joined the Royal Air Force and was posted to India. My other brother, Philip joined the Army and was posted to Italy.



I served two years as a RAF Police dog handler and worked with Air Dog 4308 Rover, a big bold beautiful but fierce grey sable Alsatian. I was not old enough at that time but when I reached 18 I was conscripted to the Royal Air Force for National Service.

Back to earlier days, my first encounter was when gas masks were issued. I was petrified. My parents put them on and looked like monsters but after many trials and tribulations accepted them. Very young children had one with a Mickey Mouse mask while babies had one like a gas proof suit of clothing. Everyone had to carry them at all times.

Everywhere was BLACKED OUT. No one was allowed to show a light at night in case it was seen from the air by the enemy. Military vehicles had just a lighted slit in the headlight, I believe had no rear lights but there was a white painted area underneath which was illuminated by a small light to be seen from behind only. This was called a convoy light.

All sign posts were removed so as to confuse the enemy if we were invaded. My father was a countryman, like most countrymen he owned a shotgun which stood just inside the back door. He dug a trench across our front garden which faced east and stockpiled cartridges. His theory was if we were invaded the invading forces would come from the direction of the beaches at Shoebury. He intended to stand in his trench and shoot the enemy until he himself fell. By great fortune we were not invaded and this theory was never put into practice.

Apart from very essential users there was no petrol available. Every drop produced was needed for the war effort. No cars were made. All car factories changed to building military vehicles and of course aircraft. As little petrol was available there were very few cars driven on the road.

I mentioned gas masks. There a number of gasses which could have been dropped on us but my recollection was mustard gas was one of the most feared due to its burning properties. To combat this if I have got it right coloured boards were erected which would change colour if gas was present. Coupled with these water tanks were built at strategic locations. If gas was detected the drill was to wash in the tanks.

These could also be used to extinguish fires by the Auxiliary fire service or by bucket chain. Air raid shelters were built on street corners and in school playgrounds. My father built an air raid shelter in our back garden by digging a large hole and sinking a garden shed into the hole and then covering with soil. Next door had a female greyhound named Jip who we noticed one morning had taken up occupation of the shelter with a litter of pups.

A new Fire Station was built at Great Wakering and housed a fire tender which used to tow a water pump. Upstairs was accommodation. The firemen were part of the Auxiliary Fire Service. They carried on with ordinary jobs but took turns to be fireman which meant sleeping at the fire station sometimes and turning out if required.



In peace time villages had a village Policeman who lived and worked in the village. Many of the young, fit policemen were called up for military service which left a shortage of policemen. A new type of policeman was introduced called a "Police War reserve". They weren't like a real policeman who wore a helmet but instead wore a peaked cap. We had one here named Layzell. He was seen as a tyrant. At night he used to knock on doors ordering people to put lights out.

Early in the war and during the Battle of Britain we used to stand by the gate and watch droves of enemy bombers fly overhead on route to bomb London.

They sounded heavy and laden with bombs and made a droning noise. On the other hand the sweet sound of the Rolls Royce Merlin engine which powered the iconic SPITFIRE fighters could be heard taking off from Rochford aerodrome to engage the enemy in combat.

The Spitfire was arguably the finest aircraft ever built. Designed by R J Mitchell it was fast, manoeuvrable, elegant and beautiful but above all a deadly fighting machine. At night in the blackout we could see the bullets streaking from the guns. If there was a hit the enemy spiraled to the ground in flames.

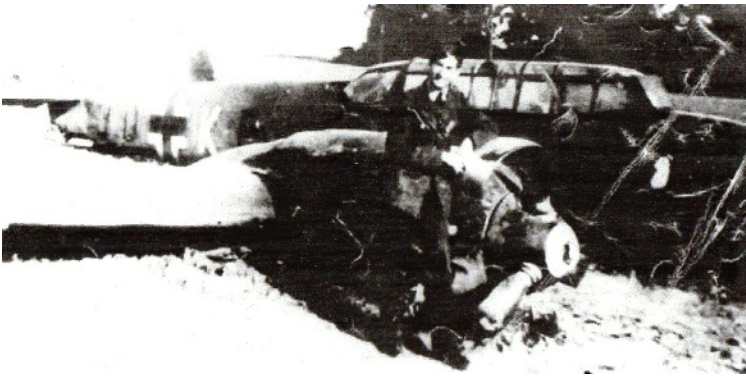
Reports suggest most of the pilots were little more than boys. This is borne out by the recorded age of some who paid the supreme sacrifice and failed to return to base. It was also reported some were so exhausted physically and mentally they had to be lifted from the cockpit.

Then came the V-1 doodlebug and later the V-2 Rocket. These were pilot less machines intended to bomb London and were set a course for this. Being rocket propelled they were given enough fuel for the journey before cutting out and exploding over London. Some stopped short and could explode anywhere.

The piloted bombers generally flew at night and followed the reflected silvery light from the moon on the river Thames to reach London before dropping their bombs.

At the other end of Alexandra Road and at Shopland were fixed gun and searchlight emplacements. We used to sit in our dark bedrooms at night and watch the searchlights sweeping the skies searching for enemy bombers. Lurking high in the night skies were the spitfires and hurricanes waiting to pick out the bombers in the searchlights and then screaming down on them all guns blazing but the allied planes weren't always successful.

These were exciting times for young boys but even we felt the sadness when we heard one or more of those brave young pilots had crashed and been killed. Often I saw my mother in tears at such news. She had tremendous worries with four sons overseas, became widowed in 1941. My eldest sister Olive was pretty clever and attended Southend High School for girls. When war broke out she was evacuated to Nottinghamshire. About the same time children from London Schools were evacuated to Southend.



The identity of the person in the foreground leaning on the Messerschmitt is unknown. A number of enemy aircraft were shot down, I remember one at Star Lane when soldiers with rifles came and guarded it. One story is how a local baker named Les Cripps captured a German pilot at Landwick with the help of his shotgun.

There were no houses opposite Victory Cottages. From upstairs we could see to

Foulness. It was thought if we were invaded it would be from that direction.

We expected perhaps gliders would be used. To combat this the RAF arrived on the other side of the road with a convoy of lorries and towing trailers loaded with large red gas cylinders which we were told contained Hydrogen. Some lorries had big winches on them. Barrage balloons were unfolded, blown up and let up into the sky on wire cables. They had many wires dangling from them to get caught up in the gliders if they came and cause them to crash. I remember a serious accident when a cylinder exploded and we were told an airman lost an arm.

The RAF erected big tents where they used to sleep and live.

We had servicemen everywhere. The army erected tents at Oldbury Farm and installed big guns which they used to shoot at enemy aircraft.

At Barling Hall Farm the army built wooden huts where soldiers used to live. I never quite new what they did but believe they patrolled the sea walls in case of enemy invasion from this area. The rivers had submarine booms. The sea walls had concrete Pill boxes for soldiers to fire guns from if enemy invaders tried to get up the rivers and creeks. We seemed well protected.

On top of all this, everything was in short supply, in particular food. Everything was rationed, we all had ration books which was another worry for mother. We were perhaps lucky if there was any luck. We had a fairly large garden and could grow food. Others were less lucky. Every bit of spare ground turned into allotments. The phrase "Dig for Victory" was coined. There was however, some luck. One day my mother sent me shopping and particularly asked me to get bananas which were in very short supply. I went into Freda's greengrocers and asked. Freda shook her head and said "can't get any". I left the shop very disappointed. As I left Freda called after me, "You're the boy Street aren't you?" I replied, "Yes". Freda handed over four bananas, a rare treat.

In 1940 I was five and started school at the tiny Barling School which had four classrooms and the same number of teachers. I remember the corridor had war time posters displayed, Dig for Victory. Coughs and sneezes spread diseases-use your handkerchief. Your country needs you. Walls have ears. The hoe is mightier than the hose.

In 1941 I had a major disaster at school. At the beginning of the war all iron railings were removed. Barling had plenty. They were stacked up ready to be taken away to make bombs and bullets. One day when I was crossing the bridge to the field I decided to climb the stack of railings, when I reached the top leaned backwards and fell back pulling a section of railing with me. This resulted in a compound fracture of my left leg. Then there were no National Health Service, no paramedics whizzing about to come to your aid. You were on your own. My mother had no money for Doctors. The school patched me up a bit and sent me home on the 4B bus in the charge of my big sister. What a terrible situation. My mother did have to call the local doctor who charged for attending me. He made splints from boxwood and left saying you had better get him to hospital but how.

At times of crisis every community needs a guardian angel. We had ours in the form of Mrs Mercer from little Wakering Hall. She was always there when needed. Mrs Mercer got me to hospital, constantly attended me and my mother whilst there and at the end of it all being an educated lady arranged payment of all bills from charitable organisations, an angel indeed.

All building work stopped. Hubbard's were building Victory (WWI, I believe) Parade at Bakers Grave, a parade of four shops with accommodation and a vehicular arch through the centre which led to Hubbard's yard. This was boarded up and not finished until after the war, Ironically the first shop to be occupied was by Cyril Prior who had been disabled during the war.

The war continued in many countries with highs and lows. More often they were deep lows. Mrs Mercer was always there. Little Wakering Hall seemed like an open house. We had marvellous fetes on the big lawn. All sorts of games were played. Things like "Tilt the bucket", climbing a greasy pole and others. Ladies like Mrs Merchant sang patriotic songs to the music of a wind up gramophone. Sometimes in the middle of a song the gramophone just ground to silence but no one cared. Ernie Adcock, a local builder and renowned athlete used to be given boxes of apples and other fruit from the Mercer Orchards. Ernie shouted, "Scramble-Scramble", and threw handfuls of fruits into the crowds of kids for us to fight over.

Mrs Watson who lived in Kimberley Road used to teach us to plait the Maypole. We used any odd piece of ground. I remember practicing at the end of the creek at Kimberley Road. Mrs Watson had bad legs and used a stick. She used to get quite angry when we did it wrong, banged her stick on the ground and shouted, "No. No. No. Over and under, over and under, you must go over and under." We did learn and plaited the Maypole on the big lawn and other places.

It took me a year to get over my broken leg. Against all odds how I managed to end up with two legs the same length I shall never know. What I do know is the skill of the surgeons and the care of Mrs Mercer could not be surpassed.

My family were really up against it and really poor. People were very kind. Jack Smith from next door use to go rabbiting and often came round with rabbits to eat. We kept rabbits ourselves and chickens. We went gleaning and wooding anything to help.

Life went on, many activities were organised. The Women's Institute Hall at Barling was their focal point and the Village Hall at Wakering.

Many people helped us. We met a lady who we grew to call, "Auntie Salmons" who lived in a farm cottage at Barling Hall with her husband and family. I think she knew my family from when we lived round the back road. She just used to come to our house to see if we were OK. Sometimes she just took us all back with her for tea. I spent long hours at Barling Hall farm. Mr Salmons worked there.

It was a real farm then. In winter the cattle yard was full of bullocks. There were massive farm horses. There was a big pond and more than once went too deep and had to be hauled out again. Auntie Salmons just smiled, dried me off and didn't tell my mum. Mr Salmons made us toys from odd pieces of wood. My prized possession was a caterpillar tractor. Of course the soldiers were of great interest and were pretty friendly.



This photograph taken from the back of the Old Barling School shows two workmen on the apex of the roof. The horrors of war continued in far off places but the scars were seen here with many buildings being bombed and many casualties. The crystal clear voice of people like Vera Lynn and others were heard entertaining the troops and bringing sentimental messages to us all.

After many years the tide started to turn, we started to drive back the enemy and finally Victory in Europe was declared. The surrender was signed in the presence of Field Marshall

Montgomery, one of the great architects of achieving peace.

Spontaneous celebrations broke in every town, city and village. At Bakers Grave a huge fire was lit in the road and everyone danced in the light of the fire. Traffic! Who cared about traffic. The war was over. We were at peace at last.

The last hurdle was yet to be cleared. There was still fighting in Japan. Victory wasn't achieved here until later. Only then was the war really over.

### *Laurie Street*

#### **Aircraft of World War II - The Hawker Hurricane**

The Hawker Hurricane is a British single-seat fighter aircraft of the 1930s-40s that was designed and predominantly built by Hawker Aircraft Ltd. for service with the Royal Air Force (RAF). It was overshadowed in the public consciousness by the Supermarine Spitfire's role during Battle of Britain in 1940, but the Hurricane inflicted 60 percent of the losses sustained by the Luftwaffe in the engagement, and fought in all the major theatres of the Second World War.



In June 1936, the Hurricane went into production for the Air Ministry and entered squadron service on 25 December 1937. Its manufacture and maintenance was eased by using conventional construction methods so that squadrons could perform many major repairs without external support. The Hurricane was developed through several versions, into bomber-interceptors, fighter-bombers, and ground support aircraft as well as fighters. Versions designed for the Royal Navy known as the Sea Hurricane had modifications enabling operation from ships. Some were converted as catapult launched convoy escorts. By the end of production in July 1944, 14,487 Hurricanes had been completed in Britain, Canada, Belgium and Yugoslavia.

*Photograph and Facts Courtesy of [Wikipedia](#).*

# *Lest We Forget, We Must Never Forget*

## *How Great Wakering Primary School Honoured the Fallen and Remembered the Sacrifices of the Survivors from 1914 to 2014.*

*Article by Laurie Street*

*December 2014*



The year 2014 is a time when the anniversary of the outbreak of World War One is remembered and the ending of World War Two 70 years ago was celebrated.

The staff and pupils of the school decided they should do something very special to commemorate this very special period in the life of this very special village.

Not something to glorify war with bombs and bullets but to show the progress of the area achieved under exceptionally difficult times, to reflect the outstanding courage and fortitude of every man, woman, boy and girl as they made their way through life.

It was decided to create a mosaic showing all these facets to adorn the outer wall of the school near the entrance. Funding was obtained from the Heritage Lottery Fund and professional help obtained.

Work started and in the meantime research started into the life and times of local people who lived and worked through the years. This is how I came to be involved. My wonderful friend Hilary who really works more than tirelessly for the betterment of young lives in this area asked my help.

Like most I have no personal recollection of WW1 but remember vividly the happenings of WW2. I was 4 years of age at the outbreak of this horrific war and lived and grew up in Little Wakering Road. I have lived and worked here ever since. I was able to provide the school with an account of boyhood memories of Barling and Wakering at this time.

How there were few cars, everything was rationed and everyone had ration books, there were no street lights or road name plates, no lights were allowed to be seen at night. How we watched enemy bombers, doodlebugs and V-2 rockets pass overhead going to bomb London and other cities only to be intercepted by iconic Spitfire and Hurricane fighter planes from Rochford, Hornchurch and Biggin Hill attack and destroy many who hurtled to earth in flames.

Hilary and others put this information together and asked three other ladies and myself to call into the school one morning to answer questions from children. I had had no briefing and didn't know what to expect.

I have been to the school before on occasions and always held the school in high esteem but this morning I was simply blown away by the wonderful behaviour and demeanour of the children of Wakering. Their questions were so well thought out and put together, so well presented and recorded on microphones that I was totally overwhelmed and when I recall that morning it all comes back. A display was made in the school foyer which I am pleased I was able to help towards, with a few war time relics (apart from me).



The photograph on the left is of a Stirrup Hand-pump. This was used to extinguish incendiary bombs which were capable of burning for up to ten minutes. The bombs consisted of a hollow body made from aluminium - magnesium alloy with a cast iron / steel nose and filled with thermite incendiary pellets.

I was able to demonstrate to the children how Fire Guards would have used them at a safe distance of up to 30 feet away. It was the duty of a Fire Guard to take turns in watching for the fall of incendiary bombs and to help promptly control them and thus to prevent small fires from becoming big fires.

The photograph on the right shows an actual hand grenade from WW2. The safety pin and ring to pull it out can be clearly seen on the disarmed grenade with its distinctive pineapple skin which would have been packed with TNT.

On a beautiful autumn morning, unveiling day came and I was honoured to be invited. We were treated to cakes and coffee from the school kitchen. A good crowd gathered with some invited guests.

The Mosaic looked resplendent in the autumn sunshine, is very large about 25 feet long and 6 or 8 feet high. Unveiling was by one boy and one girl, again they stole my heart. They were so confident, so well poised and spoke with faultless clarity. They were a tribute to the school.

The mayor of Southend had been invited and gave a moving and poignant address based on a theme, "We must never forget". Other speeches followed.



# ***Gordon Wiseman's Reminiscences***

*Interview Sunday 15 March 2020*

## ***Tragic Consequence of a Young Boy Playing with Mines***



Bernard Wendon was a strange boy who lived next door but one to me (left), but his father doted on him. Bernard was returning from Havengore Creek with two other young lads, Doug Midwinter and Denis Stubbs. They walked along an unmade road at Oxenham Farm where a mine field had just recently been laid and Bernard decided that he wanted to see what a mine looked like when it went off. He then picked up a boulder and threw it over the fence around the mine, but he missed hitting it. Meanwhile, the two other young lads ran across the road and hid behind a big farm roller in the field.

Bernard picked up another boulder, and he hit the mine this time. There was a crowd of us down there including my brother John, since we used to go down there swimming regularly. John, who was much older than I was, went down with the farmer, Frank Threadgold, to check on Bernard. John sent me home on my own, but I had to go past John and the farmer to get home. Bernard had this big fence stake sticking out of the side of him and that traumatic incident stayed with me all my life. I was only seven or eight years old.

## ***An Incendiary Bomb is Thrown out of the Bedroom Window***

Gordon's older brother, Ken, brought home an incendiary bomb that he had found on Foulness Island. The brothers spent some time throwing it against the kerb to set it off. Later that day, Ken decided to throw the bomb out of the bedroom window. It worked this time, and flames shot up as high as the house roof. Their father leapt over the garden fence to grab the buckets of water and sand stored there for just such an emergency. Having leapt back again, still holding the buckets, their father quickly put out the fire. Ken got the hiding of his life for the escapade. Later in the war Ken ended up on a tug in the far east but had no further bad wartime experiences.

## ***War Broke out with Germany***

The year that World War Two broke and at just seven years old, I remember vividly swinging on our front gate. Our neighbour, Mrs. Campion shouted out to me "We are at war with Germany". I ran straight in to my mum and repeated "We are at war with Germany".

## ***Remember When***

I shall never forget August 29, 1940, aged seven, my brother Norman and I were standing on the roof of the home-made air raid shelter in our garden watching a dogfight between RAF Spitfires and German bombers.

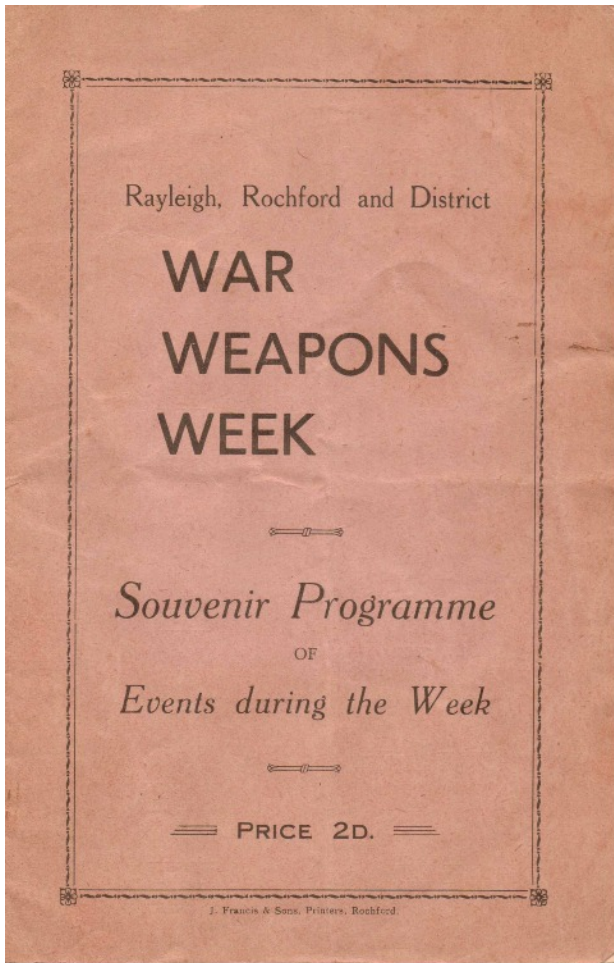
Suddenly, a bomber plunged towards the ground, eventually crashing in a potato field 100 yards from us. A squad of soldiers from the Essex Regiment was posted to guard the plane from souvenir hunters and my mother took on the task of preparing their meals. So, one day when they were in our house eating, I went and sat in the pilot's seat playing with the knobs and buttons. There was a loud hissing noise and I leapt out of the plane and ran off like a scalded cat. I thought I had set a bomb off, but I must have opened a valve or something.

# War Weapons Week 1941

Article by Dave Lee

Programme courtesy of Rita Stow

3rd January 2017



Before the United States of America entered the World War Two conflict and still with the threat of invasion, the WAR WEAPONS WEEK was a Government initiative across the British Isles. The aim was to help raise money for munitions by organising a programme of local fund-raising events. It also encouraged people to save in War Bonds and similar Government schemes to help re-arm.

To help advertise such events, 'Souvenir Programmes' were published which were mainly sponsored by local businesses. One such Programme has been made available by Rita Stow and can be viewed and downloaded in PDF format by 'left clicking' on the cover page to the left.

Women's Institutes across the land also played their part and in May 1940 they started a National Savings Group which continued throughout the war, raising a total of £4,250.

They also supported village efforts towards the various other initiatives such as War Ships Week and Salute the Soldier Week.

At their monthly meetings they tried to carry on as usual and provide some cheerful normality.

The programme included talks on 'war time cookery', 'make do and mend' hints and practical demonstration such as 'how to re-foot a lisle stocking'.

What I find interesting about this Programme is how involved Barling and Wakering village people were in arranging such events, including the schools.

The contents of the Souvenir Programme can be seen online at the following website address:

[http://www.barlingwakeringvillages.co.uk/plus/war\\_weapons\\_week\\_1941.pdf](http://www.barlingwakeringvillages.co.uk/plus/war_weapons_week_1941.pdf).

Alternatively if you are viewing the digital version of this newsletter just left click [here](#) or on the above website address.

# ***Mock-up Atlantic Wall from World War Two***

## ***On Foulness Island***

*Article by Richard Kirton*

*Sunday 23 December 2018*



### ***A section of the Mock-up Atlantic Wall on Foulness Island***

The real Atlantic Wall was a coastal defensive structure built on Hitler's orders that stretched from Norway, along the Belgium and French coastline to the Spanish border. The wall covered a distance of 1,670 miles and was built between 1942 and 1944 with the purpose of fending off an attack on Nazi-occupied Europe by the UK. The wall formed the main part of Hitler's 'Fortress Europe' and was one of the most impressive engineering feats of the day.

Hitler issued the order to build this wall on March 23, 1942 in his now famous 'Directive 40'. The plan called for the construction of 15,000 separate concrete emplacements to be manned by 300,000 soldiers. The wall absorbed a huge amount of German resources and more than 260,000 workers were used to build it, using over 17 million cubic metres of concrete and 1.2 million tons of steel.

However, British, American and Canadian troops breached the seemingly impregnable Nazi defences along an 80-mile stretch of the French coastline at Normandy in a single day, the 6th June 1944. This would not have been possible without the co-operation of the French Resistance. British Military Intelligence had asked them to secure valuable information including aerial photographs and documents about the German Atlantic Wall, which showed its size, structure and materials that it was made of.

In order to achieve a successful seaborne invasion into occupied France, the Allied Forces knew that they would have to break through these German defences. A great deal of effort was therefore put into developing the technology to achieve this, including specialised tanks - known as "Hobart's Funnies" which were developed by Major-General Percy Hobart. This enabled accurate mock-ups of the Atlantic Wall to be built in various locations in the UK. These were used for military training and testing prior to D-Day in June 1944.



### **The Mock-up Atlantic Wall on Foulness Island**

Not many people that I have spoken to were aware of the existence of this local mock-up wall which is approximately 1210 feet in length, but Phillip Mobbs, a young man from Bristol is in the process of researching all five of the UK locations. He found National Archive documents showing that such a site was constructed on Foulness island and Roger Burroughs confirmed that this particular mock-up Atlantic Wall actually flanks a small section of his farmland on the east coast, south of Fisherman's Head. Phil made a four-hour trip from Bristol to meet up with Roger and myself to confirm legitimacy of the wall's existence. The wall can clearly be seen approaching Fisherman's Head from the public footpath along the Riverbank which runs adjacent to 'The Broomway'.

After the war, the French felt embarrassed by the abandoned defences and decided to start demolishing them as soon as possible, but this was taking a long time. However, many years later, the public began to preserve sections of the Atlantic Wall and some of the fortifications still stand today, drawing thousands of tourists annually. In Holland and Denmark also, the remains of the 'Atlantic Wall' defences are being used to lure tourists.

Phillip Mobbs' own website is a 'work in progress' and well worth investigating further:

### **Normandy War Guide**

<https://www.normandywarguide.com/>

He has created a dedicated page for those who wish to visit Normandy called:

### **Planning your trip to Normandy**

<https://www.normandywarguide.com/plan>

Other excellent websites worth visiting include:

### **The Atlantic Wall in Normandy**

<http://www.atlantikwall.org.uk/PDF/AW%20Part%201.pdf>

### **The Atlantic Wall [The History Learning Site]**

<https://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/world-war-two/world-war-two-in-western-europe/france-during-world-war-two/the-atlantic-wall/>

### **The Atlantic Wall [Pillbox Study Group]**

<http://www.pillbox-study-group.org.uk/war-walks/atlantic-wall/>

### **Military History Now [11 Amazing Facts About the Nazi Defences at Normandy]**

<https://militaryhistorynow.com/2014/06/04/the-atlantic-wall-11-amazing-facts-about-the-nazi-defences-at-normandy/>

# ***Adventures of the Rocket Men***

***[John & Bill Pavelin]***



**Bill and John Pavelin in their World War II Research Facility**

John Pavelin was born at Baldwins Farm and moved to Redcroft Farm when he was 3 years old and Bill was born at Redcroft Farm. On 03 September 1939, John Pavelin was 8 years old when World War II was officially declared on Germany. John has owned a diversity of light aircraft and still, at the age of 88, he is not only a light aircraft pilot but also a farmer, engineer, mechanic and historian and I have actually had the privilege of flying with John in 2012. He owns a Private Airstrip within the boundary of the demolished Baldwins Farm and adjacent to Little Wakering Creek.

Baldwins Farm was a very remote and lonely place for two young boys but quite unique, sitting to the east of the village hall and duck pond in Barling

village. One of John's many memories from the age of three, is riding on a pig as if it was a horse.

For as long as Bill can remember, he has been interested in astronomy and space exploration. When he was quite young he borrowed an old wooden telescope from Eric Jefferies (member of the 'Spotters' local Observer Corps). He lived in a little wooden cottage near Barling church - long since demolished. My brother John and I observed the rings of Saturn and an ice cap on Mars. Little was known of the real nature of Mars at this time. Most serious astronomers speculated that Mars might support vegetation or other forms of life. As soon as the performance of the V-2 became common knowledge, it was apparent that rockets capable of reaching outer space, were at last feasible. It was a new, exciting time. It had become possible to touch something that had been into space.



**A V-2 Rocket dominates the grounds of Peenemünde Historical Technical Museum**

There is nowhere else like Peenemünde on earth and for many people the rocket museum is the main reason to go. The V-1 and V-2 rockets were evil devices from a demented and malevolent regime, but they were a significant step on man's journey to the stars.

Between 1936 and 1945, the research stations in Peenemünde formed the largest armaments centre in Europe. Over an area of 25 km<sup>2</sup>, up to 12,000 people worked simultaneously on guided weapons, most famously the world's first cruise missiles and the first ever functioning large-scale rockets. The small town of Peenemünde is situated three hours north of Berlin. Peenemünde has a special, if sinister, place in the history of technology. It was where many of the V-1 and V-2 missiles were built, and where the V-2 was developed. These were the wonder weapons that Hitler hoped would win the war for Germany.

The V-1 was the world's first cruise missile and the V-2 was the first ballistic missile, developed at Peenemünde by legendary German rocket scientist Wernher von Braun. Both weapons were designed as a weapon of terror against the civil population. The 'V' stood for Vergeltungswaffe or 'vengeance weapon'. The Allies called the V-1 the 'Doodlebug'. Some people call it the buzz bomb, after the noise it made. It was powered by a primitive jet engine called a pulse jet which blew gasoline into a tube, ignited by a conventional automobile spark plug every second or so. The pulsations gave it its distinctive insect-like sound. Almost 10,000 V-1's were launched from northern France and the Low Countries against England in the second half of 1944, killing thousands. At their peak over a hundred were launched each day. After the launch sites were overrun by the invading allies another 2500 were launched from Germany against Belgium, mostly aimed at the port of Antwerp, in 1945. The V-1 could not be properly aimed. Each missile was sent in the general direction of its target guided by primitive gyroscopic direction-finding system and a wind-driven odometer, which sent it into a dive when it reached the general vicinity of its target. It would detonate nearly a ton of high explosive when it hit the ground. You could hear a V-1 coming. They didn't fly very fast - around 350 mph. Allied pilots worked out that the best way to bring them down was to fly alongside them and clip their wings to send them off course.

The V-2 was bigger, more advanced and much more fearsome. It had a sophisticated guidance system using a gyroscope and an early analogue computer. Some models used radio beams. It travelled through the edge of space at a height of more than 60 miles, which meant it could not be intercepted. Its supersonic speed meant there was no warning of its arrival, just a sudden massive explosion. Over three thousand were sent against England and Allied forces in Europe after D-Day, a remarkable number given Germany's constrained resources at the time. Peenemünde was not a Battle Launchsite. Nothing was in range. Most V-2s were launched from Holland or France. The testing had been moved to Blizne in Poland, beyond the reach of Allied Bombers. They carried a bigger explosive payload than the V-1. The photograph shows John and Bill Pavelin standing behind their exhibit at Peenemünde Museum.



Amongst many other artefacts from World War II, John and Bill have in their collection several 20 mm Cartridges, one of them being quite unique in having a cork bung and sacking needle. Another is the remains of an exploded cartridge.

### **The Explosion and crash of the V2 at Baldwins Farm, Barling, 13<sup>th</sup> October 1944**

At 7.25 am on the morning of 13th October 1944 there was a loud explosion that rocked the village of Barling Magna. A V-2 rocket first exploded in the air, on its descent back into the atmosphere - probably due to unused fuel being ignited in its tanks. The engineering parts were scattered over a

wide area, from Wakering Common, across Little Wakering Creek, with all the main parts and the warhead exploding at Baldwins Farm. Grandfather's house was about 400 yards from the impact crater. When their father and grandfather reached the scene, steam was still issuing from a large, rugby ball shaped tank laying near the site of impact. Pigs housed in a World War I Nissen hut and several rabbits were the only casualties of the blast. Had the feed delivery not been delayed due to other wartime activities that night, Father and Grandfather would have been stock feeding on that very spot. Some parts of the rocket were still red hot and other parts were covered by a thick, hoar frost (one of the fuels was liquid oxygen - minus 182°C).

John and Bill made their way to grandfather's house and the site as fast as we could get away from school. Parts were strewn around the site and in the creek - some so fresh, you could smell the oxidized metal. The fuel pump and turbine unit were embedded in the seawall. A tank full of a dark red liquid had been leaking onto the ground for many hours. This turned out to be nothing more harmful than potassium permanganate - a catalyst for the steam system which drove the turbine.

The V-2 was the world's first, large, liquid fuelled rocket. It was powered by liquid oxygen and alcohol and just to power the fuel pumps required more than 500 hp provided by a steam turbine. At take-off it weighed approximately 14 tons, stood 46 feet high, produced a thrust of 25 tons, and travelled at 3600 mph.

John and Bill picked up many of the engineering parts. Some of these we kept for 59 years. Bill had always dreamt of going to the place where the rocket had been developed at Peenemünde, Northern Germany. Peenemünde was not a battle-launch site, but inevitably intended for full scale production when the V-weapons were perfected. In fact, it never progressed beyond an experimental development centre, more or less abandoned after the RAF bombing raid of 17th / 18th August 1943. The research and testing were moved to Blizne in Poland (out of reach of Allied bombing) and production was moved to the notorious tunnels at Nordhausen.

Chatting to a German friend, Bill learned that since German reunification, a museum had been established at Peenemünde. Bill was keen to visit and John was equally enthusiastic. They loaded Bill's Vauxhall with a small mountain tent and some food and the inevitable kettle for tea.

Staff at the Peenemünde museum were amazed, when unannounced, John and Bill arrived from England to support them. As soon as they realised that our interest was technical and related to the V-2 and its connection to space research, they welcomed us unreservedly. Fellow enthusiasts, including people who had actually worked on the V-2, stayed with us at the farm in 2004 and John flew them over the crash site. So began enduring friendships, back and forth between Germany and the UK and leads which took us to Poland, the Czech Republic and throughout Germany. And - very close to the Nazi Gold Train - if it exists!! We camped in the tent beside the legendary 'Fly Trap' and visited the European Space Agency. We dined with Werner von Braun's secretary and people who had actually worked on the V-2 in Peenemünde. In 2012, at 75 and 80 we upgraded to John's camper van and continue our exploits.

Bill took one of the four steering vanes back for exhibition at the museum. The vanes were of particular significance - required once the V-2 reached an altitude where there was insufficient density of air to operate normal rudders. The rocket was steered by the vanes deflecting the exhaust flames. The guidance vane had moving parts that still turned and John's pieces were in particularly good condition, having been kept under cover for all those years. A gas regulator valve still worked.

This research made a huge contribution to the human presence in Space. It changed the perception of rockets from fiction and fantasy, to global reliance on satellites for navigation, weather forecasts

and viewing the ecosystems at this troubled time in the history of our own planet. And, of course, a new era of exploration beyond planet Earth!



This picture shows Bill & John Pavelin with the late **Reinhard Kruger** (centre) and his team who worked on the V-2 Rocket. Reinhard and three other members of the Peenemunde V-2 Rocket Team were invited back to England by Bill and they stayed with him at Suttons Farm.

Significantly, Reinhard brought his own bread in a brown paper bag and he would not eat another person's bread until he had eaten his own bread.

V-2 Rockets were launched from Holland and had a range of 200 miles and travelled in a parabolic

curve. They were the forerunner of liquid filled rockets, designed by Wernher von Braun who was the leading figure in the development of rocket technology in Germany and a pioneer of rocket and space technology in the United States. Above 65 miles high they could steer in a vacuum.

### **V-1 Exploded in the Creek**

During the war, John and Bill were returning to Redcroft Farm where they lived, because the air raid siren went off. A few V-1 Doodlebugs were overhead and close to them and they could hear the Anti-aircraft guns firing at the doodlebugs. They jumped in to a ditch with a goat that they were taking back to the farm and saw one of the doodlebugs coming straight towards them. John said that the engine had stopped, and the doodlebug went right over them and exploded in the creek. They got back out of the ditch and went home for tea.

John & Bill found a large part of a V-2 rocket which was 2ft 6 inches long, cylindrical and with a pointed cone. They were dismantling it in the drive at Redcroft Farm and the baker turned up delivering bread. Once he realised what they were doing he immediately did an exit stage right and disappeared.

### **Barrage Balloon Parachute**

A barrage balloon was a large tethered kite balloon used to defend ground targets against aircraft attack, by raising aloft steel cables which posed a severe collision risk to aircraft, making the attacker's approach more difficult. The purpose of the parachute was to render a Barrage Balloon safe if it broke free accidentally. The heavy mooring cable would separate at the balloon and fall to the ground under a parachute; at the same time a panel would be ripped away from the balloon causing it to deflate and fall independently to the ground. It was found on the saltings at Baldwins Farm.



## Barling Sewage Works

The Germans mistook the Barling Sewage Works as Barling Iron Works. The Airport, Radar Station and Iron Works were the main focus of attention for the Germans, in this area.

## Parachute Mines

Two landed at the same time at Ropers Farm. One on land just south of the sea wall and exploded scattering fragments and parachute material over a large area. The second landed in the River Roach, near Ropers Quay and failed to explode. It was later detonated by a Bomb Disposal Team.

## Lancaster III Bomber DV202



The bombing of Peenemünde in World War II was carried out on several occasions as part of the overall Operation Crossbow to disrupt German secret weapon development. The first raid on Peenemünde was Operation Hydra of the night of 17/18 August 1943, involving 596 heavy bombers of the Royal Air Force.

The Lancaster III Bomber DV 202 "KM-Z)" 44 SQN was shot down on 18 August 1943 and crashed in the Kölpinsee where it lies in shallow water to this day. All seven crew members were killed:

Pilot Officer R. C. Harding R.C.A.F.  
Sergeant T. N. Weston  
Flight Sergeant L. Prendergast  
Sergeant L. F. McDermott  
Sergeant W. H. Quance  
Flight Sergeant P. Pynisky R.C.A.F.  
Flight Sergeant S. Shaw

## Aircraft of World War II - The German Dornier

At one of the regular meetings at The Castle Inn, 2 years ago, Bill was casually talking to Olive Cooper (nee Bradbury) about the low aircraft incident that they both experienced during World War Two. Olive happened to be walking north and Bill had just stepped out of his house at Redcroft Farm and walking south. Suddenly two low flying aircraft flew so close in between the two of them that they could both see the pilot's faces.

Bill immediately mistook the aircraft for American Lockheed Lightnings since they were seen active in the area the day before. He can remember seeing the yellow headgear that one of the pilots was wearing.

John, who was following immediately behind Bill shouted "they are German Dorniers". The Dornier, sometimes referred to as the "flying pencil", was a light German bomber of World War II. The aircraft was designed as a fast and light bomber which would be so fast that, in theory, it could outrun defending fighter aircraft.



## John & Bill Pavelin's Artefact Gallery One



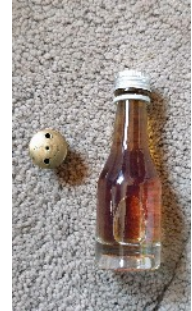
Various finds  
including Shrapnel &  
nose cones



V-2 Oxygen Injector



JU 88 Spark Plug  
and Fuel Injector



V-2 Rocket Fuel,  
made from potatoes



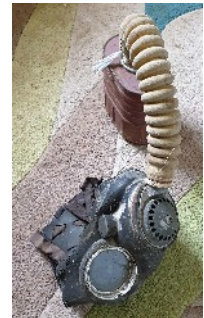
Nose Cone  
Anti-aircraft Missile



Anti-aircraft Missile



Harness Buckle From  
Crashed Junkers 88  
on River Roach



Home Guard Gas  
Mask



Incendiary Bombs - picked up in a field near Barling School

All of these empty cases have been checked for safety and previously exhibited at Southend Museum by Ken Crowe, when he was the Curator.

## John & Bill Pavelin's Artefact Gallery Two



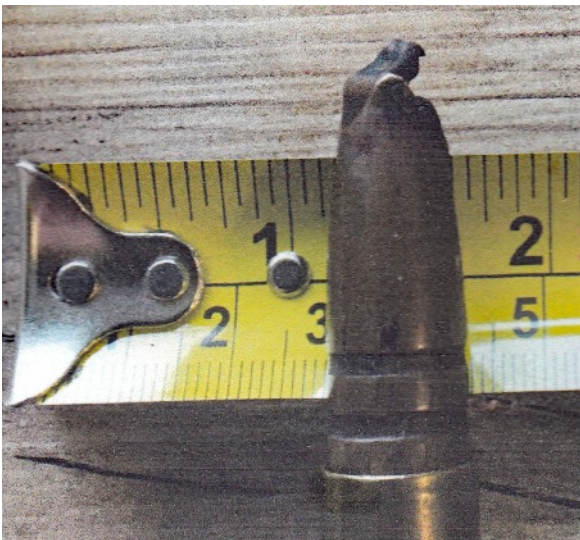
### 20mm Canon Cases

Dug up while ditch cleaning 1990  
Believed to be one of the shells fired at  
the Junkers 88 which crashed at  
Butlers Farm, Shopland

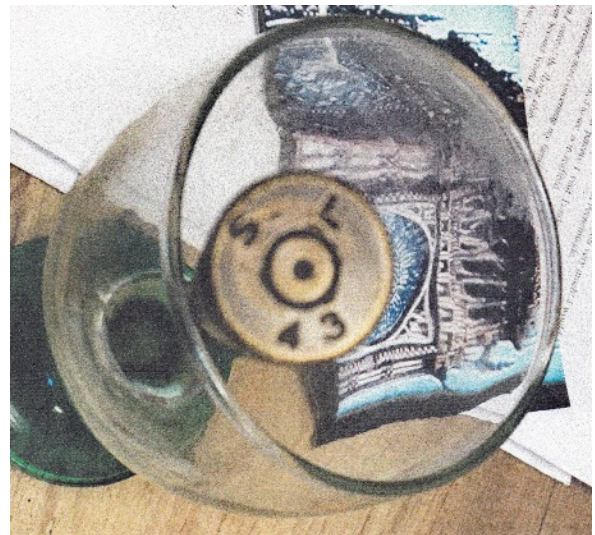


### 20mm Canon Cases and

Part of crashed Junkers 88



American 50 Calibre Incendiary found at Baldwins Farm by C.J. Pavelin  
This is a safe empty case checked by J. D. W.



## ***Peter Robinson - Distinguished Conduct Medal***



Peter Robinson was born on 27 May 1915 and started at Barling School on 4 September 1922. He was the son of another Peter Robinson, a fisherman from Southend, and Annie, nee Smith. After working on local farms he joined the Grenadier Guards. During the Second World War, Sergeant Peter Robinson, serving in the Second Battalion, Grenadier Guards, was involved in the heroic capture of the bridge over the River Waal at Nijmegen in Holland. On 20 September 1944, he stormed the bridge in his Sherman tank, thereby preventing it from being blown up by German soldiers. The film 'A Bridge Too

Far' gives an Americanised version of these events. For his bravery, Peter was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal and a grateful city granted him the Freedom of Nijmegen. After the War, he and his family lived in Coronation Close, Great Wakering. His daughter Irene, now Irene Wright, still does. His son, also Peter, lives in Little Wakering Road.

We are indebted to Irene Wright, nee Robinson, for the photos and information about her father and his family. This is the citation that was published in connection with Peter being awarded the D.C.M:

### ***Distinguished Conduct Medal***

***2613912 Sergeant Peter Thomas ROBINSON***

### ***Grenadier Guards***

Sergeant Robinson was in command of a troop of No 1 Squadron, 2<sup>nd</sup> Armoured Battalion, Grenadier Guards, which at about 1600 hours on Wednesday 20th September 1944 was ordered to assault and cross the bridge at Nijmegen. The bridge is approximately 700 yards long and has an embankment of equal length on the far side which makes it impossible for tracked vehicles to get off the road even when across. The bridge was known to be prepared for demolition and, as the far side was in the hands of the Germans, it could be blown at any time.

Sergeant Robinson started to lead his troop across the bridge and had just reached it when ant-tank guns opened up from the far bank. Showing great coolness, he quickly withdrew his troop to Hull Down positions and engaged the enemy. At this stage it was reported to him that it was thought that the road across the bridge was mined. As the light was failing, he was ordered to make a dash across the bridge at all costs with his Troop Sergeant leading. This was successfully done under heavy fire from 88 mm anti-tank guns and firing from the other bank and from a self-propelled gun firing down the bridge. Enemy small arms fire from the bridge itself in the girders of the bridge, as well as bazooka fire directed at the Commander, made this extremely hazardous.

On reaching the far side of the bridge Sergeant Robinson took the lead on his own initiative and knocked out the self-propelled gun which was firing down the road. He then continued down the road for 1500 yards under very heavy anti-tank and bazooka fire until contact was made with the American Troops. This Sergeant showed outstanding bravery and initiative in crossing such a formidable obstacle against such defence and there is no doubt that but for his courageous action the bridge might not have been captured intact.

*London Gazette 1st April 1945*



**21 June 1944. Irish Guards cross the bridge at Nijmegen more easily than Peter Robinson had done the day before in his (similar) Sherman tank.**



**Peter Robinson and an unknown Dutch woman in Nijmegen when he was awarded the Freedom of the City.**



**Peter Robinson working on a farm, probably in Barling, in the late 1920s or early '30s.**



**Peter Robinson (front row, centre) and other Grenadiers during World War Two.**



**Peter Robinson, Grenadier Guard.**



**May Robinson, Peter's sister, with his mother, Annie Robinson, nee Smith. May married a Pilcher and was the mother of John Pilcher, who also attended Barling School.**

# **Victory Magazine**

## **Produced by Great Wakering School**

*Article by Richard Kirton*

*Original Magazine made available by Rita Stow*

*Magazine scanned by Dave Lee*

*01 November 2016*



The Victory Magazine commemorated the Peace Celebrations of June 1946 following the Allied Victory which concluded World War II which lasted nearly six years.

The original magazine is now 70 years old and is in a frail condition. It was produced by the staff of Great Wakering School by merely replicating the interesting essays and sketches which were written and created by children as young as 9 years of age.

The magazine belonged to the late John Stow who was a pupil of the school in 1946, and his wife Rita has now kindly made it available for all to read and asked if the document could be stored in a suitable archive.

The magazine's editor, Mr F. J. Scott, was Dave Lee's former teacher and Mr Chandler was his head master.

With this in mind, Dave made contact with Heather White, Office

Manager of the school, asking if she could and would be willing to provide suitable archive storage space for the original magazine (approx. size 6" x 8").

If you are viewing a digital version of this document, the individual pages of the magazine can be seen by 'left clicking' the following link:

[http://www.barlingwakeringvillages.co.uk/plus/victory\\_magazine.html](http://www.barlingwakeringvillages.co.uk/plus/victory_magazine.html)

There are 18 pages to the magazine and each can be downloaded by 'left clicking' the respective image. A PDF copy of the entire magazine can be downloaded by 'left clicking' the top image on the web page.

If, on the other hand, you are reading a printed version of this document, you can type the above link address in to your Internet browser.

## ***Mick Prior's Memories [Part One]***

### ***Small Beginnings Edition 19***

As one of the generation which has been bombed, single-parented for years (some permanently), vaccinated, immunised, pasteurised, National Serviced, televised, metricated, decimalised, privatised, transistorised, digitised and computerised, I thought I would try to write some "copy" for "Small Beginnings".

My first dealings with Barling School matters occurred when Sadie Morgan was lodged with us in the early 1940's. My Dad was in the Army like so many other fathers, so we had spare living accommodation.

Being a toddler at that time, I knew her as "Teach" and her friend as "Uncle Reg". He was a bomber pilot in the RAF flying Wellingtons among other aircraft. Sadie tells me that he had a distinguished career and was awarded the DFC (Distinguished Flying Cross).

I still have the Bible she gave me in 1943 and, since her return visit to this area as a remarkably mobile and aware lady of 90+ years, I have tried to keep in touch with her. Sadie returned to Wales before I started school so she never had the task of teaching me.

She was followed by another Barling School teacher, Nora Brown. She also had a friend, Gene, an American over here serving in the USAAF (United States Army Air Force).

I believe he was a radio operator. He made me a Morse key and buzzer rig and taught me the Morse code. He also taught me an impolite way to eat Swiss roll which, when I demonstrated this to my Mum and Nan in Upton's Tea Rooms, earned me a clip round the ears.

After her time at Barling School, Nora moved to Burnham where she taught in the local school and lived with her husband, John, and her family until her death a few years ago.

Her colleague, Daphne Seager, was lodged opposite my parents' bungalow with the Tillbrooks. She was my teacher when I started school.

My mother had made me a pair of long trousers out of some of my Dad's clothes. She was not a tailor and the trousers had one vital flaw - the fly was too small. Daphne had the unenviable task of having to come to my rescue when I needed to visit the school toilet. Luckily she was careful with the scissors! For years afterwards both Daphne and Nora reminded me of my predicament.

We were lucky with the teachers we had at Barling - Miss Riley for her patience and discipline and Mr Learmond for his total commitment to our education.

In spite of the expression on my face in the website photo of Mr Learmond's 1949 Class (squashed between Ray Mott and Peter Griffiths) I did enjoy my time at "Barling University"

Unfortunately, not all of the pupils in that photo are around anymore but they live on in our thoughts and minds.

## ***Mick Prior's Memories [Part Two]***

### ***Small Beginnings Edition 24***

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 World War Two.

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 V1s and use a wing tip to flip them over.

Its gyroscopic control 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!

## **PC John Marshall**

### **Small Beginnings Edition 24**

These are Kay Marshall's memoirs, edited by Richard Kirton. Kay's late husband John Marshall, was born near Bishop Auckland in Durham in 1922. He started his working life as a trainee carpenter and after a short while he joined the Royal Air Force and was trained in Canada. He was sent to Rochford Aerodrome where he met his future wife Kay. During World War II, having previously trained on Spitfires, he served as a Fighter Pilot flying rocket-firing Typhoons. The rocket-firing Typhoon fighter played a pivotal role in the Allies' success in the air and on the ground in World War II, from the Normandy beachhead to the Battle of the Bulge and the final struggle for Germany.



He supported the American lead campaign in the 'Battle of the Bulge' and on one occasion he was forced down through bad weather and had to bail out by parachute. On Christmas day in 1944, John was shot down but managed to bail out by parachute yet again. Luckily he came down behind American lines and was in time to be treated to a Christmas Day dinner. John had built up in excess of 1000 flying hours by the time he was demobbed in 1945. He became a member of the 'Caterpillar Club', an informal association of people who had saved

their lives having successfully used a parachute to bail out of a disabled aircraft.

### **His Journal after WW2**

- 1946 - After the war, John was adamant that he did not wish to return to his old carpentry and joinery trade. He applied to Southend Borough Police but did not qualify because he was a half inch too short, the minimum height being 5ft 10 inches. He then applied for the Metropolitan Police whose minimum height requirement was only 5ft 8 inches.
- 1947 - Joined the Metropolitan Police and trained at Hendon. At the end of John's training, Kay was living at Rochford and there were no police houses available. After about a year John transferred to Essex Police and was posted to Brentwood in Essex. They were housed in an old mansion which was used as police quarters. The mansion was called 'La Plata' (Spanish for 'The Silver House') which had approximately 40 bedrooms. It was empty at the time and quite a lonely, daunting place to live.
- 1949 - John did not enjoy working at Brentwood and did not get on at all with the Superintendent. The situation got so bad that John was transferred out to the remotest of locations in Great Wakering. Unbeknown to the Superintendent this suited them down to the ground since Kay came from Rochford.

- 1951 - John & Kay moved into a brand new semidetached police house, 290 High Street, Great Wakering. Next door at Number 288 lived PC Ken Griffiths who had already moved in and had been the policeman for Great Wakering for several years whilst living in Little Wakering at the time. His only form of transport in Great Wakering was his bicycle. At the time, the level of pay as a serving police officer was so low that John started to do casual carpentry jobs in the village to supplement his income, despite this being frowned upon by the police authority. The photograph shows John posing with two willing stooge prisoners.



- 1955 - John enjoyed his job in the police at Great Wakering but with two young children could not afford to stay so he decided to resign and get back into the carpentry trade. On leaving the force they had to give up their brand new home so they rented an old house in Little Wakering Road. Giving up their nice new home saddened Kay but she realised that there was no option; the house came with the job. Initially John found it was quite a struggle to get enough work to earn a decent wage but eventually some lucrative work started to pick up at Coryton. Several years later, John was able to start his own business initially building exhibition stands for Olympia. Kay had opened a small shop in Little Wakering Road to supplement the household income but by 1980 business had declined. They eventually bought a house in Southend and Kay took on more permanent employment including working as a clerk/typist for the Southend Courts for five years.
- 1984 - John died suddenly of a brain haemorrhage.
- 1985 - A year after John's death some Belgians excavated the area where John was shot down and came across his plane. Kay was fortunate to get to see parts of the wreckage and to this day she exchanges Christmas cards with one of the Belgians involved in the excavation.

### **Memorable Incidents**

1. The Floods of 1953 - John Marshall and Ken Griffiths both went over to Foulness Island in rowing boats to help get people off the island since it was so badly flooded. Kay, and Ken's wife Vera, manned the telephones at the Police Station. Kay remembers distinctly a local farmer ringing through in distress to say that their cattle were drowning and dying.
2. The Police station occasionally housed stray and injured animals and Kay clearly remembers somebody bringing in a Barn Owl. Night-time had arrived and they were still waiting for the RSPCA to call but they happened to open the door and the owl flew away.
3. Kay remembers John's colleague, Ken Griffiths who one night was coasting along on his bike and he could sense something white over his shoulder. He looked around and saw a white owl flying alongside and close to him for quite some distance.

## ***Sadie Morgan's Reminiscences***

### ***Teacher at Barling School 1937-1942***

#### ***Small Beginnings Edition 12***

Here's a story from Little Wakering and Barling. Early in the Second World War, there was much talk and fear of a German invasion. So, a meeting was held in the Parochial Hall. People became very worked up about the threat. One man came up with a surprising suggestion. He said that any German soldiers who came into the village should be treated politely and invited in to have a cup of tea and a piece of cake. What? Then he explained: he had more than enough arsenic to put in all the cakes that were offered.

This was told to me recently by Sadie Morgan, now Sadie Jones, who recently celebrated her ninetieth birthday. Sadie taught at the Old Barling School from September 1937 to 1942.

There were four teachers on the Staff when she started: Mr Shepherd (Head), Mrs Shepherd, Miss Eva Riley and Sadie. At 21 years of age, she was in charge of the whole of the Infant School: one long room with children from five to seven-plus. She divided them into three sections: Baby, Middle and Top. She loved the playing-field as "Delightful! Beautiful!" - as the town school in Aberdare, where she came from, just had a yard for the children to play in.

She found Barling very different from where she had come from, having been used to Welsh choirs and a lot of concerts. She said: "It was completely different. I did wonder if I would stick at it, but I was able to adapt and did quite well, I think."

Until the War got under way, she would sometimes go and stay with Miss Riley on Foulness Island at the weekends. Foulness seemed like an outpost of the British Empire to her.

Three or four other teachers came for a few months during the War, accompanying some boys and girls who were evacuated from Dagenham to the Old School. She recalls that the evacuees were "very lively".

Around this time Sadie witnessed a massive air-raid on Shoeburyness, where there was a substantial military establishment. It took place on a Sunday, while she was enjoying her birthday party. So, her mum and dad's idea that bombs were falling all around her in Essex wasn't far wrong.

"I remember that it came on the radio that Hitler was on his way over. Well, the school was emptied in five minutes. Parents came running and arrived in trucks and cars to fetch their children. Boys on bikes reckoned that they could see German soldiers coming down on parachutes. But it was all a false alarm."

"I thought the air-raid shelters in the playground were ridiculous. They wouldn't have withstood much. Yet the school was a very strong building."

The school's governing body had a dilemma while Sadie was there. A. Wear was one of the governors and, with a colleague, he proposed that it become a church school. Fortunately, as far as Sadie is concerned, the proposal was resisted by the governors and others in the villages and no such change took place.

She remembers the Barling Post Office in the house next to the school playing-field. Sadie knew well the Snow family who lived there, including Mrs Snow, who ran the post office, and her sons Reg, a twice-decorated bomber pilot, and Les.

At first Sadie had lodgings at Dunrovin, the house of the Ladbroke family. Living there were elderly Mrs Ladbroke, her son-in-law Malcolm Mumford and his wife Edith (Edie), who was Mrs Ladbroke's daughter, and their daughter, Yvonne. Sadie also stayed for a while with the Prior family (Mr and Mrs Prior and their infant son, Mick) in their bungalow up towards Little Waking Corner.

Halfway through the War, she returned to her hometown of Aberdare in south Wales, 23 miles north of Cardiff. Her early life had been spent in this town in a valley. On one side you could see the lights of the buses and cars winding up the hill at night. Over the opposite hill was Aberfan, scene of the dreadful disaster of 1966. She had been educated at a local primary school and then Aberdare Grammar School. At eighteen, she went to a teacher-training college in Barry, where she obtained her Teacher's Certificate.

Then, as her first job, she was appointed as a teacher at Barling School. When she returned to Aberdare in 1942, Sadie started up three nursery schools and then taught at a primary school, where she eventually became Deputy Head. She retired from teaching in 1977. She spoke of meeting her

husband, also a teacher: "I was travelling to work for a time and we met on the bus - very romantic' They were to have a son, Rhidian, who is a musician.

In July 2006 Sadie returned to Barling for the first time in 64 years. She visited the Old School and the New School, where, among others, she met Yvonne (Bradbury) Bridge, one of her pupils from the 1930s. Yvonne, who lived with her parents and sisters opposite Mrs Ladbroke's house, said: "I wouldn't have recognised her.

In those days she was dark-haired with a round face and wore glasses. We lived opposite Mrs Ladbroke's and so saw a lot of Sadie. She was a very nice teacher, who, as well as being the Infants teacher, took music lessons and played the piano and sang well. We had a big air-raid shelter dug in our garden and Sadie would often come over with the others at Ladbroke's to stay in there during air-raids.

Finally, an amazing coincidence. Sadie (Morgan) Jones now lives with her husband in Maidenhead, next door to her son, whose partner's daughter is the School Development Adviser of the 'new' Barling Magna Community Primary School.

After all these years Sadie is connected once more to the villages and the school in rural south-east Essex.

## ***June Claydon's Reminiscences***

### ***Small Beginnings Edition 8***

June attended Barling School 1933- 1942. She was the daughter of Vic Claydon who owned Claydon's store on the corner of Kimberley Road.

In 1943 after leaving Barling School at the age of 14½, I went on a short course at Clark's College. My first job was in the City working for a firm of insurance brokers. This was while the war was still on and flying bombs were still about. I then worked locally in the export department of EK Cole (EKCO) where I joined the drama group. My last job was in the City, where I worked for an export firm until I was expecting my first baby.

In 1950 I had married someone from outside the villages and we initially lived in Southchurch. During 1979 a job opportunity arose for my husband in the southwest and since that time have lived in that area. I have four children and eight grandchildren.

During my time at Barling School I lived at the Domestic Stores, a shop that sold groceries and domestic goods. It was part of the first property on the left-hand side of Kimberley Road when entering the road from Little Wakering Road. Kimberley Road was unmade, full of ruts and potholes. I lived with my parents and sister, Beryl, and brother, Brian both of whom attended Barling School. We always walked to and from school even in snowy weather, when playing snowball fights was fun.

One of the several memories of my time at the school is during WW2 when there were evacuees billeted in the village. The normal practice as I remember, was that ordinary pupils attended school in the mornings, while the evacuees went in the afternoon, sometimes the other way round. So, the village children did not have much contact with the evacuees. The first time I heard "I Vow to thee my Country" the evacuees sang it. Coincidentally there were Italian prisoners of war temporarily housed at Dam Farm, on the other side of Kimberley Road. I don't remember them being at Dam Farm but can remember them walking through the village.

Another school memory is having to visit the toilets during the winter. They were outside by the rear playground and exposed to all weathers. Having to brave the cold, the icy cold water and the carbolic soap was an experience. On a happier note there was a shed in the playing field, next to the school in

which we had cookery lessons, during which I learned quite a lot and even managed to bake a few cakes - they tasted awful.

Like Geoff Bell (Spring 2002 edition) I can also remember swimming in the creek at the end of Kimberley Road during the long summer holidays, playing near the creek occupied most days and some evenings, not unlike Lynne Marshall many years later (Summer 2003 edition).

Sadly, we heard that June Rice (nee Claydon) passed away in Christchurch Hospital on April 19, 2004.

## ***Betty Deadman's Reminiscences***

### ***Attended Barling School 1938 - 1946***

#### ***Small Beginnings Edition 6***

Betty was born in Southchurch during 1932 although within a few months had moved to 'Vera' cottage Little Wakering. Vera Cottage (although these days carries a house number) is located in Little Wakering Road about 150 metres (that is, 162 yards approximately) from the Castle Inn towards the Run corner. She started school at Barling in January 1938 and remained there until 1946 when she was 14 years of age.

Throughout this time, Betty continued to live at Vera Cottage until 1955 when she married. From an early age Betty has been connected with church activities, irrespective of the denomination, ranging from the established Church of England, Scripture Union, and Methodist Churches. Even after Betty left Barling School she remained friends with Miss Riley until she died (just a few years ago) and was instrumental in getting both Miss Brown (another teacher) and Miss Riley to attend the first Reunion that was held in 1996. Indeed, Betty has always been a strong supporter (and sometimes an organiser) of Barling School Reunions. Currently, Betty lives in Great Wakering.

The Second World War took place during the largest part of my childhood and my memories and experiences of that time are dominated by this sad event. Initially, at home my father made us an air raid shelter in the back garden out of bales of straw. Many nights were spent in this shelter with my brother and I lying on makeshift beds, grandmother in a chair and dad watching the planes come and go. As a little girl, unlike most of the boys of my age, I knew next to nothing about those airplanes except the deafening noise that they made. (Even today if an an aeroplane flies overhead at a low altitude I say "it's alright, it's one of ours!").

Anyway back to the dark days of the late nineteen thirties and early forties, it wasn't long before we were the proud owners of a Morrison shelter that was designed to be erected inside the house on the ground floor, the advantage of being situated inside saved us having to go outside during the cold and wet weather. On Saturday 19th April 1941 when I was just 8 years old and while staying with my other grandmother in Great Wakering the war touched me personally. During an air raid I had been brought downstairs (from bed) to sit on a little seat next to the big open top black lead fireplace when at 10 o'clock there were two huge explosions making the entire house shudder which caused the windows to shatter. While, at the same time, clouds of soot shot out from the mouth of the fireplace near to where I was sitting and covered me and my yellow flannelette nightie from head to toe !!!!!

Apparently two land mines had been dropped in the nearby field and we counted ourselves extremely lucky that they missed the houses. I also remember the times that two bombs were dropped in the field at the back of us and also bombs that were dropped near the School. However, irrespective of the war going on around us, life still went on as usual with, for example, having a May Queen and dancing around the maypole. (Indeed, I can't remember dancing round the maypole and ever getting it right!).

There were village concerts and socials to raise money for the 'welcome home fund' for those who had gone off to fight in the war. In fact, my dad used to play in the local band called 'The Jolly Millers' which raised money for the same cause. We were often reminded of the continuing war by the presence of Italian prisoners of war who worked at the, now demolished, Dam Farm, who seemed a friendly and happy bunch of men but, however, we weren't supposed to talk to them.

Immediately after the war, for just one term only, us Barling 'top' girls travelled (via two buses) to the Congregational Hall in Chapel Lane (Great Woking) for cookery lessons. Obviously, these classes were limited by the fact that most foodstuffs and ingredients were not available owing to continued rationing and, anyway, being in short supply. However, the subject of cooking was the only one in which I ever came top of the class. While in the top class, I used to help the school dinner ladies to layout and dish-up the cooked food that was delivered to the School from Great Woking. Coincidentally, some years later I myself ended up as a school cook for about fifteen years. Anyway, it's not all true what they used to say about school meals - honest!!

## ***Geoff Bell's Reminiscences***

### ***Attended Barling School from 1939 until 1946 (approx)***

#### ***Small Beginnings Edition 4***

Throughout this period Geoff lived in Kimberley Road, Little Woking.

One of the more vivid memories from my Barling School days was when the school suffered bomb damage (during the Second World War), out of which I expected to get an extra holiday. At that time the School was on the long summer shut down but the damage to the School was repaired before the start of the new term, so that killed off the idea of additional holidays. Another memory was the fun during the summer months when on the way home from school.

This sometimes meant swimming in the creek that was at the bottom of Kimberley Road. As a general rule, most of us that went swimming did not have towels and afterwards had to run around to get dry, as our parents did not know or approve of these water activities. Perhaps the most enduring memory of those days is of the friendships made and the fun that I shared with friends after school hours.

In 1967, Geoff and his wife Yvonne left the UK and emigrated to South Africa, where they both still live.

## ***Peter Carey's Reminiscences***

### ***Attended Barling School between 1939 and 1947 (approx)***

#### ***Small Beginnings Edition 4***

One night there was an air raid over Barling and the anti-aircraft guns at Shopland and Alexandra Road (in Great Woking) were blasting away. During this raid two bombs landed near Barling School.

The first bomb exploded on the School Playing Field near the main road and threw large lumps of earth and clay around the immediate area. The blast damaged the end of the nearby houses (Falklands), wrecked the telephone kiosk and damaged the air-raid shelter. One particular large lump of clay landed on top of the head teacher's (Mr Stone) car and compressed its roof down to the floor while body and mudguards were pressed on to the wheels - a total write-off.

The second bomb landed nearby with an equally dramatic effect. The bomb exploded leaving a large crater in the corner of the School Playing Field that was furthest from the main road on the side nearest to the lane that leads to Baldwin's farm. In other words, the explosion was near to the

cottage (Myrtle) that is located at the rear of the School. This cottage was occupied by a Mr Harry Street who, at the time, was in bed. Apparently, the bomb blast weakened the floor beneath the bed in which Mr Street slept making the bed (minus mattress and occupant) fall through to the ground floor.

Curiously, Myrtle Cottage suffered less overall damage from the second bomb than Falklands Cottages suffered from the first explosion.

Peter has lived in Portugal for a number of years after spending much of his working life on the rivers and coastal waters of Eastern and Southern England.

## ***Tony Alps' Reminiscences***

### ***Small Beginnings Edition 3***

These memories of Barling schooldays are by Tony Alps who, at the time, lived with his parents in Mucking Hall Road.

I started going to school at Barling during late 1944 while the war was still on. We walked to school in small groups with one of the older children in charge. We were told to do exactly as we were told, not to pick up anything and if the siren sounded we were to jump into the nearest ditch. I still recall the sound of the siren and the sound of the doodlebugs. There was an air-raid shelter in the school grounds and I know that on several occasions we continued our lessons there after sirens had sounded. This also was a feature of life at home and my very first memory of anything is being dragged out of bed in the middle of a freezing cold night and huddling in a ditch with sandbags over it which was our air-raid shelter. I also have a vivid memory of my grandfather showing me a plane that was overhead and on fire, while at the same time, my mother was trying to drag us both back into the shelter. Much of this was fairly routine in my early life but I cannot ever remember being afraid. I think I must have been too young to comprehend the danger.

The bomber and fighter formations used to pass over the countryside in huge numbers so low that in many cases the aircrew were visible. We would all stop whatever we were doing and wave and cheer frantically. Occasionally one of the fighters would acknowledge with a couple of wing tilts and wave back which would see us go into frenzy. It was amazing how many aircraft types we all knew and recognised, but however, it often led to arguments if everyone couldn't agree on the type.

The countryside around the school in those days was vastly different to that which exists today. There were hedgerows everywhere, interspersed with large trees. Houses were few and far between and, of course, there was no traffic. In fact cars were so scarce we used to sit by the side of the road and collect number plate numbers!

Farming dominated our lives in those days and the seasons determined what we were doing for play at any point in time spent many hours pea-picking with my mother, gleaning for potatoes, wheat, barley or whatever was in season. I also spent a lot of time with my Uncle Arthur (Bailey) who was a farm worker who mainly worked with horses and I spend many hours sitting on a plough or a walking with him holding the reins.

Horses in those days were the principle means of power delivery. Tractors were few and far between and most machines were horse driven. Steamrollers were common and did most of the work on the roads. Many towed a little caravan behind them. As I remember it, the driver would live in this little van camped beside whichever road he happened to be repairing. Us kids thought it absolutely wonderful to be able to get a ride on a steam engine. We would run along side begging for the opportunity to get on and throw a piece of coke into the firebox.

I do remember one of the main hobbies boys indulged in was collecting bird's eggs. We never took more than one per nest and there always seemed to be an abundance of birds and their nests. In fact where we lived in Mucking Hall Road, seemed like a giant aviary. Birds were everywhere and I reckon most of us would have been able to identify dozens of different species. Wildlife featured prominently in our lives in those days. In many ways it was an idyllic existence. We were always outside when the weather permitted and when the light began to fade all the mothers would be caught on the doorsteps yelling out for their kids to come home. No one ever wanted to go home. After all, when you got home you got scrubbed up and then put to bed. Much more fun in fishing for newts, playing cricket in the road, or playing conkers, among other things.

Tony attended Barling School between 1944 and 1950 before he and his brother and parents emigrated to Australia in November 1951. Currently, Tony lives in Queensland after spending many years in Tasmania.

## ***Under the Flight Path***

An extract from the book "Under the Flight Path" by Mark & Rosemary Roberts highlights a Spitfire and a Heinkel bomber seen at Paglesham: **Duck!** *"Charlie Pye, Hod Carter, Tom Seaman & others were having a drink in the Punch Bowl, Paglesham, when they heard a noise like a dozen circular saws. Someone looked out of the front and saw a Spitfire screaming towards them, and they dived under the tables. Then on the other side a Heinkel bomber was seen crashing in the fields to the north of the pub. Afterwards someone asked Charlie, in his 80's, what he had done. 'I drunk up right quick', he replied, showing where his priorities were!"*

## ***Dive for Cover***

*By Peter Smith*

Another dive for cover came when, after watching German planes going over at high level, the planes dived to attack Rochford Aerodrome, and then retreated at full speed, at tree top height, right over Paglesham. In March 1943, children were warned not to touch anything found in the fields, as they could be anti-personnel mines.

## ***Sergeant W.A. Collins - Barling Airman Missing***



William (Bill) Collins was a wireless operator and rear gunner on a Lancaster bomber the night he went missing on 10 April 1942, as a result of night operations over enemy territory. His parents, Mr. and Mrs. W. Collins of Peartree, Barling did not hear official news of him until the end of the war. Before volunteering in September 1939, Sergeant Collins was employed by Westcliff Motor Services Ltd.

The following is an extract from an Air Ministry letter, dated 17 November 1945: "I am to assure you of how deeply the Department sympathises with you and appreciates the

*additional distress which the lack of definite news has caused you over such a long period, and to say with regret that no further news can now be expected".*

## Great Waking Special Policemen 1939 - 1945



### Back Row

1 Sc H W Bennewith 2 Sc R V Tomson 3 Sc W G Alp 4 Sc W Dick 5 Sc F R Figg

### Middle Row

1 Sc S J Ling 2 Sc A C Smith 3 Sc J R Smith 4 Sc T J Smith 5 Sc A Cooper 6 Sc W J Outten

### Front Row

1 Sc R F Jennings 2 Ss J B D Greatorrex 3 S/Insp G W Seal 4 Insp C W Sangster 5 Ps W C Simpson 6 Pc P E Hutton  
Sc=Special Constable, Ss=Special Sergeant, S/Insp=Special Inspector, Insp=Inspector, Ps=Police Sergeant, Pc=Police Constable.

## Great Waking Wardens Key Post No 16 Sep 1941



### Standing

1 K F Mead 2 C T Cripps 3 E Milbourn 4 T B Cripps 5 G Groves 6 E French 7 G Scrivener 8 F A Bailey 9 S Alp 10 C Verney Harris 11 J Church 12 E C Clark 13 G Self 14 F J Grigg 15 B Perry

### Seated

1 O P Oliver 2 Mrs E Segust 3 A J Cable 4 Miss Maundrell 5 A C Wiggins

## ***'D' Company Home Guard 1939 - 1945***

### ***Barling, Wakering, Sutton and Shopland Platoon***



#### **Back Row**

1 Dick Cranfield 2 Percy Little 3 Joe Claydon 4 ?Bill Salmons 5 Edward Brown 6 Bob Stammers 7 Ron Bransden 8 Harry Rippingale  
9 Norman Riley 10 ?

#### **3rd Row**

1 Wally Kedge 2 Chris Outten 3 Reg Appleton 4 Jim Salmons 5 Jack Stammers 6 Edward Mumford 7 Fred Outten 8 Joe Wiffen  
9 George Mott 10 Tom Childs

#### **2nd Row**

1 George Emberson 2 Harold Hayward 3 Eric Smith 4 Frank Carey 5 Ray Matthews 6 John Carey 7 Will Holmstead 8 Jack White  
9 Charlie Outten 10 ?

#### **Front Row**

1 George Freeman 2 John King 3 Fred Bradbury 4 Jim Cranfield

## ***Great Wakering Wartime Forces Canteen Helpers***

### ***Outside St Nicholas Church Hall about 1943***



#### **Back row**

1 Clarence Maundril 2 Joan Wiggins 3 Gwen Wiggins 4 Phyllis Alp 5 Pauline Jeffries 6 Ruth Adcock 7 Mary Gregory

#### **Front Row**

1 Eva Outten 2 Gwen 'Queenie' Rose 3 Freda Griggs 4 Joan Maundril 5 Eva Bright 6 Claire Cripps 7 Barbara Maundril

# Great Wakering New Town Street Party 1945

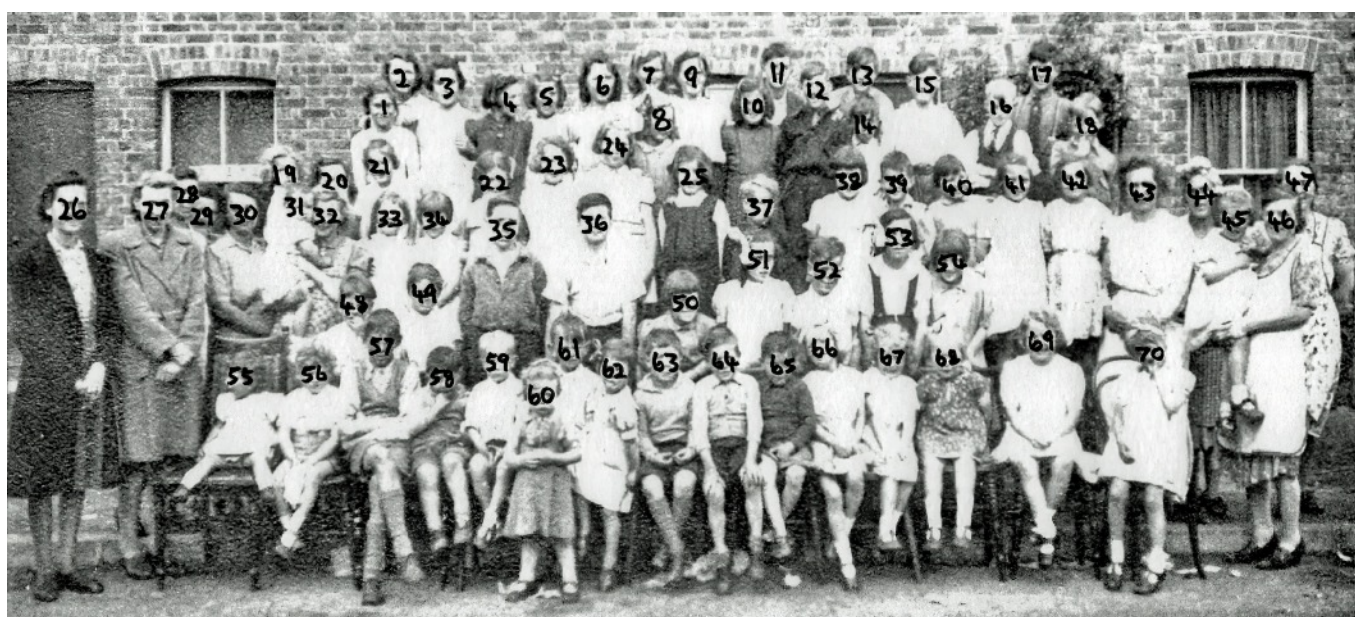
Photograph supplied by Lesley Marshall and lent to her by her neighbour Yvonne Ruler

Initial names supplied by Beryl (Martin) Haggar, who is number 1 on the photograph.

Clifford Jones supplied us with the majority of the names for the photograph.



- [1] Beryl Martin [2] Rosa Walker [3] Linda Hart [4] Maureen Thorpe [5] Betty Carlick [6] Anita Barnes  
 [7] Doreen Martin [8] Pauline Stow [9] Beni Thorpe [10] Violet Webber [11] Derek Marshall [12] Clifford Jones  
 [13] Ray Belton [14] Bobby Belton [15] ? [16] Dicky Jarrott [17] Max Everard [18] Micky Walton  
 [19] Celia Ebbs [20] Mrs Ebbs [21] Ann Ebbs [22] ? [23] Betty Marsh [24] Ann Everett [25] Shirley Jones  
 [26] Mrs Milbourn [27] Mrs Mortimer [28] Mrs (Jacky) Davy [29] ? Bright [30] ? Bright [31] ?  
 [32] Doreen Stow [33] Rosemary Broomfield [34] Sheila Davy [35] Sonny Thorpe [36] Don Gooch  
 [37] Kenny Jones [38] Margaret Webber [39] Maurice Cooper [40] Margaret Garbutt [41] Beryl Marshall  
 [42] Barbara Davy [43] Mrs Stow or Rose Butler [44] Mrs Emmy Garbutt [45] Maureen Siddons  
 [46] Mrs Siddons [47] Mrs Barnes [48] Terry Marshall [49] Walter Long [50] Maureen Garbutt  
 [51] Margaret Siddons [52] David Webber [53] Eileen Goose [54] Eileen Long [55] ? [56] John Mortimer  
 [57] Peter Arnold [58] Peter Goose [59] Tony Thorpe [60] ? Goose [61] Brian Milbourn [62] June Garbutt  
 [63] Barry Goose [64] Fred Garbutt [65] Kenny Garbutt [66] Gillian Walton [67] Pam Walton  
 [68] Pat Bolderson [69] Margaret Bailey [70] Maureen Long



# ROLLS OF HONOUR

*In Honoured Memory Of The Men of These Parishes  
Who Fell in The Second World War [1939-45]*

## *Barling Roll of Honour*



William A. COLLINS  
Lawrence KINSELLA  
Leslie E. PLEDGER  
Stanley W. J. TAYLOR



## *Great Wakering Roll of Honour*



Arthur C. B. BURGESS  
Arthur G. DEEKS  
Percy H. EVE  
William A. FARTHING  
Alfred K. HALLUMS  
Philip JEFFRIES  
Norman MATHEWS  
Leslie N. PERRY  
Percy QUY  
Leonard H. RAYNER  
Frank W. SIMPSON  
Fred STAPLES  
Jack R. STERRY  
Albert J. STOWE  
Frederick K.G. TEARRELL  
Cyril R. TODD  
Edward WALKER  
Francis James WHITE  
Edward G. MAYHEW  
Albert E. ELLIS



## *Little Wakering Roll of Honour*



Eric GARRAD  
Lionel GARRAD  
William James HOLMSTEAD  
Eric Victor SEYMOUR



# VE-DAY

8TH MAY  
1945

## *Dedication to Arthur Kirton [My Father]*

On 25 June 1937, prior to the start of World War II and at the age of 17 years, Arthur enlisted with the 2nd Battalion of The Essex Regiment, and was posted to Warley Barracks.

His first military posting on 22 November 1938 at the age of just 18 years, was to Ismailia and then Haifa in Egypt. He sailed there on HMS Somersetshire to serve in the 1st Battalion of The Essex Regiment in Iraq, Damascus and El Alamein. In 1941, he was posted to Tobruk with the Royal Tank Regiment of the 7th Armoured Division. In 1942, he served with the 8th Army and travelled through Libya and Tripolitana in the Middle East, Tunisia in North Africa and then to Italy. On 28 May 1946, Arthur received a Military Discharge. His total Military Service spanned 8 years and 339 days including Active Service of 5 years and 4 months.

Arthur was a member of the "Rats of Tobruk Association" and as a boy, I would occasionally accompany and walk alongside him at the yearly "Rats of Tobruk Parade" at Warley in Essex. As a boy and even in my early adult life, I did not fully appreciate the commitment that my own father had made. He always regarded himself as lucky, unlike some of his friends but he would never talk about some of the sights that he had witnessed during the war until a few years before he passed away at the age of 82 years. Thank you so much Dad for coming back, marrying mum and having me and my wonderful late sister, Sylvia or as we knew her, "Tilly".

### **Campaign Medals**

"Africa Star" & 8th Army Clasp  
"Siege of Tobruk" [Australian]  
"Italy Star"  
"1939 to 1945 Star"

### **Service Medals**

"War Medal"  
"Defence Medal"



(b.1920 d.2002)

