

Part Three 1939 - 1945

Childhood and Families

Andrew Mills

"We used to get Christmas cards from them with bayonets on!"

I had two aunts, Trixie and Molly Laxton. I think Alan Brind's sister, was named after Trixie. Both aunts married Irish commandos, Sam Brodison and Mac Maginnis, respectively, and they lived in Bellfield. We used to get Christmas cards from them with bayonets on! They all got on well with my grandfather, who was a Calver.

My great grandfather was originally an American from Michigan who came over here and married my great grandmother and they lived in Woolston, Southampton. He was a very clever philosopher who worked for Vickers designing aircraft engines. He designed a silent aircraft engine and someone said to him that that would be great for the War, which was looming. Being an absolute pacifist, he destroyed the plans. The rest of the family thought he was very religious. In fact he was an atheist but, because of the way he talked, no one trusted him except my mother who was fascinated by him. He passed his challenging way of thinking onto her and she passed it on to me a bit. I was forever grateful to him for talking to my mother because she was a pretty bright sort of person. He left home and went back to America, but I later discovered that he died in Newton Abbot, Devon.

Bessie Traves

My son, Tony, was born at the Naval Maternity Home that had been evacuated from Southsea to Wickham. I came back to Posbrook with him just before Christmas. Coal was very short during the War, so I used to push Tony in his pram and pick up sticks from the hedges in Posbrook Lane and in Road Copse (off Posbrook Lane) in order to light the fire to warm the room and heat the water for his bath.



Tony Traves Carnival Cowboy

In February 1944 we moved to Common Lane. We shared the house with another family. It was August 1944 before my husband, Cyril, came home and met Tony for the first time. My daughter Margaret was born at home

Village Voices

in Common Lane in mid-1945. Cyril completed his service in the Navy in 1947 and worked as a postman in and around the Fareham area until his retirement.

Donald Upshall

I remember my mother sending me round to Titchfield, to Collihole's, a big draper shop in the Square where One Stop is now. Titchfield people used to buy their clothes there. I remember on the Friday, 1st September, my mother sent me round to buy black-out material to stick up across the windows for when you put the light on, in case the Nazi planes came along.

The other thing I remember was rationing; you went into shops and the shelves were bare, just a few things. But now you go into supermarkets and the choice! But the pubs, later on in the War even they ran out of beer. Sometimes they had to shut for two or three days as rationing was so severe.



Collihole putting up the sunshade

Freemantle was a butcher, Russell ran the mill and Mason was the chemist, and they all went out together in a car for a drink. (Not many people had a car then.)

In 1944, my father died suddenly, which was a shock. I was only 18 then. I had a week's leave. He died in May and D-Day was 6th June. It was difficult to get leave. I had been on a driving course and the officer said: "You had better have a 24 hour pass."

I got to Fareham by train on the 22nd May 1944. I walked along the road to Titchfield. There were no cars on the road until about seven o'clock when a car slowed down to give me a lift. It was my mother, and one of the chaps from the garage driving, coming back from the hospital. I had no idea dad had been so ill and that he had died. They had sent a



Donald Upshall

telegram to my squadron, which would have enabled me to have a few more days' leave, for the funeral, but where everything was so confusing I never got it. I was nearly home and somebody was giving me a lift and it was my mother, telling me that they had just got back from the hospital that afternoon. It was quite a shock. I'll always remember that and it took some getting over.

George Watts

The War bought great excitement to the boys of Titchfield. It was on the route for bombers as they came over to blitz Southampton, so the four Bofors guns that George remembers would blaze away at the German planes. He would crouch under a small porch at his grandparents' house in West Street, which was an inadequate shelter, and wait for the shrapnel and empty bullet cases to land in the street. With chaos all around he would rush into the road to snatch up the hot metal before another boy beat him to it!

If they heard the gunfire and another boy gave the shout "It's up at Segensworth!" the Titchfield boys would jump on their bikes and peddle as fast as they could to claim their prize, such was the urge to collect and gain status with exciting pieces of war trophies.

George had to be confined, with scarlet fever, to Fareham Isolation Hospital at the top of Gudge Heath Lane during the War. It cared for about 30 children, with girls' and boys' wards. It had an air raid shelter in the garden but if there was no time to take cover the children were told to hide under their beds.

One day the air raid warning sounded and the children took cover in the ward. However George was too interested in what was happening so he went to the window. From his vantage point he saw a two-engined bomber aiming for the strategically important railway line between Portsmouth and Southampton. It was flying at a very low height and he saw it shooting at the railway track and heard it shooting at Fareham station. He heard later that it had dropped a bomb nearby. Luckily he recovered from his illness, and went back to collecting 'trophies' with the other boys.

Gerald Read

We used to go down on the beach. You know where it was all barbed wired off. Well me and my friend were down there and the sirens went off. So we jumped on our bikes and peddled as fast as we could. But as we were going past Thatcher's Copse the gun battery there started up.

Village Voices

You know Thatcher's Copse, in the opposite field they made a decoy gun emplacement out of scaffold poles to fool the Germans. The guns made me deaf for days, but I couldn't tell mum, she'd belt me!

June Pellatt

My great aunt Lizzie Smith cleaned for the commander of HMS Daedalus at Lee-on-the-Solent. She caught a parachutist. She was the sort who would stand no nonsense and she used the pointy end of her umbrella and made him go to the police station. My great aunt Annie lived in the bakery on the corner of East Street and aunt Alice married Bob Chant and they lived next to the fire station at the bottom of Southampton Hill.



Titchfield Fire Station 1939

We never locked our doors or shut our windows if we went out and nobody got burgled. We used to hang a key on a piece of string behind the front door so when we wanted to get in we just pulled it out through the letterbox. There were a few rogues in the village but everyone knew who they were.

Kate Scott

My dad and my aunty Marlene were evacuated to Edinburgh but they were unhappy there and so they were sent to relations in Doncaster. Marlene was born in 1930 and now lives at the top of Coach Hill. We had Morrison air raid shelters that looked like tables. They had steel legs and mesh in case the house fell down. But on Locks Heath Road they had Anderson shelters in the gardens.



Sleeping in a Morrison Shelter

Margaret Groves

At the outset of the War I was living with my parents at The Old School House, 1 Place House Cottages, Mill Lane. My mother was Nurse Gardner, the local district nurse/midwife, and my father was too old to participate in the War effort apart from a little bit of ARP work. Living in the cottages next door were two families, Willard and Joyce. Charlie Joyce

had his own market garden in the Swanwick area. I do not remember any of them joining up.

Mum had a car because she was called out at night so often, sometimes having to go from one birth to another because the air raids would bring on contractions. She would often drive into the ditch as her car had hooded headlamps and she couldn't see where she was going. She was sometimes brought home by soldiers after an accident. I remember one night she had dragged herself home from Segensworth with a broken leg and was out of action for a while.



Nurse Gardner

Paul Cousins

Paul Cousins has lived in Titchfield ever since he was six months old. He was five when the Second World War broke out. Then, he lived with his mother, father and three brothers in the northeast corner of Titchfield Square, alongside the Congregational chapel. He now lives just next door.

Paula Weaver

Everyone seemed to have a nickname. In my family my aunts and uncles were:

Uncle Tickle

Uncle Bill

Uncle Arch

Bliss and Auntie Violet

Uncle Op

On Whit Monday we used to run across the field to the Meon Road to catch Jim Harris with his horse and cart, and get a lift gymkhana at Cams Alders at Fareham .



Land Army at work on the farm

During the War years my mum had two Land Army girls billeted with us.

Village Voices

If you had room in your house you had to have people billeted with you. I loved trying on their uniforms. After they left we had a WRAF from the Balloon Barrage, which was on the A27 where the old Plessey factory is now. We also had mum's brothers and their wives living with us when they got married. You just had to make room. There were no houses for them to move into.

Pamela Fullick

I was five years old when the War started. I was born, grew up and lived in Bellfield Road until I got married. We spent most nights in our air raid shelter in the garden, where dad would tell us stories about Titchfield and previous occupants and our relatives. We always found plenty to occupy us as children and even earned a few coppers sometimes. We did errands for elderly neighbours like going to the Brewery Tap pub, which was in Bridge Street, with a jug to get their milk stout. I don't know how we didn't upset it getting it from Bridge Street to Bellfield.

Rita Prior

My nanny suffered a stroke in 1940 when I was ten and passed away in July 1942. As I shared a bed with her I had to go to Aunt Elise's to sleep, and used to come home for all my meals and things; a strange situation. During this time we had the Battle of Britain and air raids. We spent many nights in the Anderson shelter. Strangely enough I can't remember being frightened.

I remember being very ill with jaundice at this time. It was an illness going round the troops. I had three weeks in bed and lost a lot of weight. Aunt Amy said she had nursed me through all sorts but never wanted to go through that again. Medicine had to be paid for then. We used to pay into the Foresters Club for this and I



Two Anderson shelters put to the test

well recall her telling our GP, Dr Windermere, that she could afford to pay for another bottle of medicine if necessary. In these days of National Health Service care it is something I often think of.

I can remember sitting outside the air raid shelter during the summer holidays in 1942, when the War was at its worst, and being told, "Don't move far from the shelters."

I called my auntie 'mum'. During wartime my next-door neighbour's children came up from Portsmouth. I was a bit jealous of them with my mum so started calling my auntie 'mum' and carried on calling her 'mum' until the day she died. I still called my own mum, 'mum' too and visited her every week until I got married.



Titchfield Home Guard

My real father died when I was ten. He was injured during WW1. He had half a thumb and two fingers missing. We never took any notice. We just grew up with it. Dad was also very deaf because of the artillery. I never heard him speak about WW1, ever. He was in the Home Guard during WW2 and used to meet down at the

Drill Hall (now the Community Centre). When the Home Guard disbanded they had a party there for the children. It was wonderful for us as we had things we hadn't had during the War.

We didn't have many toys. In 1942, when I was 12, we were in Gosport and we went into Woolworths. They had a consignment of dolls and I begged and begged, could I please have the dolly, and mum bought me one. It was the best thing she could have bought and I made clothes for the doll so that's how I got interested in sewing and knitting. I remember having a life-sized china doll. It was dressed in baby clothes and I had a cot for it. My sister, Sylvia, dropped and broke it.

During the War I used to play with the children next door and we used to play schools and make little books and do sums and things. We used to watch the troops going along the road, everywhere. There were tar barrels at the side of the road. We used to climb up and sit on them. I had a horrid blue wart on my finger and I accidentally cut it off on one of these barrels. Watching troops was our entertainment. The troops used to talk to us as they went by, mainly from the lorries and 'ducks' (DUKW's amphibious trucks).



D (designed in 1940), U (utility), K (all-wheel drive), and W (dual rear axles)

Village Voices

Sheila Hignell

My twin sister Mary and I were born in May 1941. It was a terrible night, bombs falling everywhere. When they rang the midwife, Nurse Gardner, she said she wouldn't come out. My dad had to leave my mum to fetch the midwife and then I was born first and then my sister. Mum had no idea she was having twins.

Nurse Gardner was the village midwife for 32 years. She delivered almost every baby in the village. Jonathan, my nephew, was one of the last babies she delivered. That was in 1963. She delivered all seven of us - my eldest sister is 77 years old. Gardner Road, which is off Coach Hill, was named after her when she retired. Her daughter, Margaret Groves, still lives in Place House cottages, opposite the Abbey.

We had to go to Hill Head near Titchfield with the horse and cart. Dad rented the land during the War and for few years afterwards. We used to take tea and jam sandwiches for everyone who was working overtime. My mother was always there. We had an air raid shelter at the end of the garden. My sister, who was born in 1944, and a cousin, used to be carried to the air raid shelter in a linen box. When we grew up we knew everyone and everyone knew us.

Victor Chase

When the War come, obviously the money wasn't so good, so dad went to AST in Hamble where I used to work. Then he got transferred up to Swindon. I was working at Boniface and Cousins garage and I had a message come through that said your father has had an accident. Mother's going up to the hospital at Swindon. But he died before she got there.

This pilot had his own plane and he asked my dad to start it by swinging the propeller. It cut his head. My father was invalided out of the Army after the WW1 because of a dodgy leg, and we wondered whether it had given out on him or something. Anyway the propellor cut his head and by the time they got him to hospital he was dead, that was 1941.



Swinging the propeller in 1950s

Before that, my father was an ARP warden and we had a telephone put in the house because of that. We kept after the War but it wasn't any use because nobody had them then. At the end of the War mother paid to carry it on.

Wally Pratt

"First Xmas I have had off for almost 15 years and no one can get home."

Wally was in the RAF stationed at RAF Ringway (now Manchester airport) and this is a transcript of letter sent by his mother in December 1940.

Sunday

Dear Wally,

Glad to hear you are coming down for the New Year, have heard from Sonny he cannot get down. Don't look forward to a peaceful leave as they are over here every night doing something or the other.

I never get the chance to undress of a night, in fact every night pretty well from 6 until 12 or 1 o'clock I spend in the air raid shelter. Sometimes the firing goes on nearly all night.

I hear they have been pretty busy up that part again, it must be getting in a heck of a mess up there. Trusting every thing is OK, looking forward to seeing you at the end of the week.




Love Mother,

PS - Len Barton gets married on 8th Jan.

Sent you on a small parcel just for Xmas, let me know if you get it safe. Also the radiogram has gone wrong, cannot get anything out of it, am trying to get it fixed up before you come home, but everything is so difficult these days.

First Xmas I have had off for almost 15 years and no one can get home.

What a world!

No.	Name	Bellfield Road Revisited (now Lower Bellfield)	No.	Name
18	Mr & Mrs S Price		19	Mr & Mrs Smith
17	Mr & Mrs Martin		20	Mr & Mrs Cox
16	Mr & Mrs Bennett		21	Mr & Mrs Matthews
15	Mr & Mrs F Gregory		22	Mr & Mrs Burgess
14	Mr & Mrs Gourlay		23	Mr & Mrs Watkins
13	Mr & Mrs S Porch		24	Mr & Mrs Rogers
12	Mrs & Miss Roberts		25	Mr & Mrs Gregory
11	Mr & Mrs Bowers		26	Mr & Mrs Roxburgh
10	Mr & Mrs Fay		27	Mr & Mrs Guy
9	Mr & Mrs Whitear		28	Mr & Mrs Stanton
8	Mr & Mrs Biddle		29	Mr & Mrs Page
7	Mr & Mrs Snelgrove (Snelgar)		30	Mr & Mrs Oakes
6	Mr & Mrs Gregory		31	Mr & Mrs Johnson
5	Mr & Mrs Roberts, Garage S'thampton Hill		32	Mr & Mrs Light
4	Mr & Mrs Shawyer & family		33	Mr & Mrs Fielder
3	Mr & Mrs Amy Downes Shop in shed	<div>Thanks to June Pellatt and Paula Weaver for remembering the families who lived along Bellfield Road at the beginning of WW2</div>	34	Mr & Mrs Watkins
2	Mr & Mrs Stovold		35	Mr & Mrs Cobb
1	Miss Sarr Headmistress		36	Mr & Mrs Tomkins
>>> Coach Hill >>>				

School

Douglas Elkins

When War began in September 1939 I was 10 years old and I had just moved into Mr Farthing's class. Two boys from Mr Farthing's class were assigned to each shelter. When an air raid warning siren sounded, these boys had to run to the shelter, nip up the ladder and pull the metal cover over to keep out any flying debris. If an air raid lasted longer than two hours two biscuits were given to each child. The shelter I was assigned to as 'escape hatch boy' was used by the very junior children.

On one occasion the raid was very noisy so the teacher diverted the young children by getting them to sing loudly. She also instructed us two senior boys to sing but we thought that singing the songs the younger children sang was beneath our dignity. It was no surprise that we were promptly reported to Mr Farthing for disobedience and we were hauled up before him and asked why we had refused to sing. Obviously, Mr Farthing's 'medicine' (the cane) hovered over us, as we endeavoured to put up a plausible case in our defence. I cannot remember now just what we each had to say but whatever it was we did escape the cane.

Gerald Read

At school the teachers had to march all the children down the footpath by the allotments to the air raid shelter when the siren went off. The teachers insisted on 'an orderly fashion'. We walked along - all us little 'uns with our gas mask boxes banging against our little legs. But we got out of lessons!

The boys at Sarisbury Secondary Modern school were very good at growing vegetables. They dug up half their school field and kept the school kitchens in vegetables all year.

John Williams

"We were machine-gunned when we went back to the main school"

Titchfield was quite an exciting place to grow up in during World War 2, but maybe not so for children whose fathers had to go off to War. When the War started I was nearly six, so I had been at Titchfield County Junior School for almost one year. The headmistress was Miss Sarr. If there was a siren sounded we went into the school air raid shelters. I think different classes went to different shelters. Once inside it was a bit frightening for young children, but there was some compensation in

Village Voices

that we had a tin of broken biscuits to eat. On one occasion we were machine-gunned when we went back to the main school. I believe what happened was that a Spitfire was chasing a German plane over the school at low level and firing at it.

At the bottom of the school playing field was a fence where small lizards sat in the sun. We used to try and catch them but usually they shed their tails and got away. The old school in West Street was occupied by Canadian troops during the War.



Spitfire chase

My sister went to Gosport Girls' Grammar School, which was evacuated to Eastleigh and she was billeted out. I was never sure why Eastleigh was chosen because it was quite a strategic target for the Germans as it had the main factory for building Spitfires nearby as well as being an important railway maintenance area. There was some talk of us younger children being evacuated to maybe Canada but I don't think my parents agreed and I don't recall any others going either.

Because of its position halfway between Portsmouth and Southampton, a lot of German bombers flew over the village so that a lot of stray bombs fell in the surrounding area. Some of the bombers mistook Mr Swatton's and Mr Lupton's greenhouses opposite our house in Southampton Road for factories. As a result there were many craters. On a couple of occasions due to explosions nearby, we had our front windows broken and the ceiling came down, plus the porch in the front was damaged.

We had a fairly deep ditch outside our house. During one raid, my father and the man next door, Mr Rich, thought they saw a parachutist coming down so they grabbed their rifles, as they were both in the Home Guard. Luckily they soon realised it was a land mine floating down so they quickly jumped in the ditch and the land mine went off over St. Margaret's Lane area.

I was quite keen on sport at Titchfield Junior School. We had only female teachers at the time and they were not too interested in football or cricket. I managed to persuade the caretaker to put up some goal posts and we organised some sort of kick-about, but the lady teachers had their own idea

of the offside rule! We didn't have proper football shirts, just coloured bands. You wore a red band if you played on the right and a green one if you played on the left. If a person wearing a red band strayed to the left side he was offside. I don't think this rule has been adopted! We used to jump on the bus and go to play against other schools such as Locks Heath, but I think we had to organise our own games.

June Pellatt

I went to Titchfield Primary School. When the sirens went off the caretaker and teachers took us to the shelter. We all marched ever so orderly and then we said our times tables in the shelter. We had broken biscuits for ha'penny (0.2p) and watery cocoa for penny (0.4p). We stayed there until the 'all clear' went.

Pamela Fullick

I went to the village school and was issued with a gas mask. I didn't like school at first and used to play on the stile in the school lane until the caretaker came along, Mrs Lambe, and carried me up to the school where I had to stay in the library after school for a while. I was then in more trouble when I arrived home. We didn't have school dinners then and had to go home to dinner and were sometimes caught in air raids when German planes came low and you could see the pilot grinning at you. A teacher always grabbed you and pushed you under the desks because we didn't have shelters then. When they put shelters in the school grounds the teachers would take a tin of broken biscuits there in an air raid and everyone would try to sit the closest to her. The headmistress was Miss Sarr and she came with her two nieces from Guernsey when the Germans occupied it. They were given a house at No 1 Bellfield Road.

Rita Prior

"I hated putting on my gas mask"

I remember the air raid shelters being put up in the school playground at the start of the War. Before the shelters we had to practise putting on our gas masks and sitting under tables in the lobbies. I hated putting on my gas mask, but dutifully carried it backwards and forwards to school for the rest of my school days. We were not allowed home from school if there was an air raid on, unless accompanied by an adult.



Children in gas masks

Village Voices

When Sarisbury Senior school was damaged in an air raid in 1940 some of the pupils came to Titchfield for a while. One of them, Hensley Hurden, lived at Catisfield and used to accompany us home at lunchtime. I enjoyed my time at school, especially mental arithmetic and spelling when we used to stand around the classroom and answer questions. Also reading out loud was done this way. I can't remember learning to read it just came naturally to me. I was told that mum used to hide the newspapers as I could read the headlines as soon as I started school.

I went to senior school at Brook Lane, Sarisbury, catching the school bus at 8.30 a.m. in Titchfield Square. This time was also disrupted with the War. We all carried our gas masks each day and identity cards. I remember wearing a gold bracelet, not expensive, with my name and identity on, EDJD 1215. I still have my school reports to this day.

Margaret Groves

Life at Wykeham House School, Fareham, went on pretty much the same. The library was made into an air raid shelter and we had to go there when there was an air raid, being counted in, but that didn't happen that often. We had our gas masks, which were a bit frightening so they later made them into more child friendly ones, like Mickey Mouse. I would catch the bus to school and back from the Fisherman's Rest pub.

Mr Booth looked after the Abbey. He lived in the house where the garden centre is. It was run as an orchard, but Mr Smith, who was the landlord of the pub, kept pigs there.



Micky Mouse respirator

Celebrations and Leisure

Douglas Elkins

The Lee-on-the-Solent golf course was fully open and used during the War. At the club house an assortment of 'would be' caddies would gather on Saturday and Sunday afternoons in the hope of being asked to carry a member's clubs. For we boys the going rate for 18 holes was two shillings and sixpence (half a crown) actually 12p in real terms.

I caddied for Mr Downing who ran the then garage at Elmore, Lee-on-the-Solent and made sure I was there weekends and evenings whenever I was asked. My two and sixpence per round then became three shillings, an increase of 20%. Similarly when not caddying, the next best activity was to search the golf course for lost golf balls. The professional, a Mr John, always insisted we brought the found balls to him for which he would give us only a penny or two. It was not long before we found we could get better rewards from the members who might be interested in what we had to offer.

Pam Fullick

We lived on the estate and we had to make our own fun. In the summer holidays we walked through the river to the beach with our sandwiches and drink, where we spent all day. In the winter we went to the beach with the mothers winkling. We had three copses to play in. All the various games we played never cost any money.

As a teenager my cousin, Paula Weaver, was still at school but we could go to places if she slept at my house so that her dad wouldn't expect her in at 10 o'clock. The Parish Rooms were for the people. We learnt to dance in the Parish Rooms, as the Community Centre was used by the Territorial Army (TA) as their HQ. Mr Beavis taught us to dance.

As we got older there were things we could join such as the youth club and a Red Cross class run by Miss Maddocks (later married as Mrs Judy Stokes). Also in the Parish Rooms we could see films once a week and when we were a bit older there was a dance we called the village hop. As we reached our teens dancing and cinema were our interests. We also followed Titchfield football team. They were called The Wanderers.

Rita Prior

Ball games and skipping were very popular. We used to play mothers and fathers. We had leaves for plates - really make-believe. I used to

Village Voices

read a lot. I was always in trouble for reading too much. Our house was full of books. During wartime they collected books for the troops. I think I took books to school and I remember getting a shield after taking 50 books. Many lovely books went.

Food and Farming

Donald Upshall

There was rationing, but being out in the country there were lots of chicken farmers and there was always a supply of chickens and eggs. We were lucky because city people couldn't do that.

Douglas Elkins

Farm work was still open to us as well and this too took a turn for the better in the form of Tom Cage whose farm was along Woodcote Lane - due east of Peel Common. One job was the threshing of wheat. Farmers in those days brought in a contractor to thresh his grain and the firm for this was W. M. Wheatley & Son from Wickham, Hampshire. Their steam engine, drawing the threshing tackle and baler, would turn up and set up their stall, as it were.



Steam threshing rig

My job was to rake away the never-ending stream of shucks, which streamed out of the thresher. At first quite easy but as the day wore on the sheer volume demanded frantic efforts to clear the heap of shuck from the machine. The day was from 7.00 am until 5.00 pm with a lunch break at noon. There is a small needle like spike on every ear of corn and these fly everywhere all day long. Mr Gage would laugh when at 5.00 pm I took off my shirt to shake out these little needle spikes. My body had received thousands of mini pricks over eight hours of raking. The pay was three pence per hour the grand sum of two shillings (10p) for a day's work.

Some of us discovered another source of grub in the form of the 'British Restaurant'. British Restaurants were set up in towns by the Government so that workers and bombed out people could access a standard hot meal, so supporting the War effort. The Fareham BR consisted of a couple of joined Nissan huts built upon the back gardens of properties in Westborn Road. The dinner cost 10d (4p) and the dessert cost 3d (1.2p) so for one shilling and a penny it was excellent, and all off ration.



A British Restaurant in London

George Watts

I remember how there were no gaunt faces during WW2 in Titchfield. There were 600 or more market gardeners in the area. His family had strawberry fields at St Margaret's Lane where they were allowed to grow a quarter of an acre of strawberries as a cash crop. To keep vegetables free of disease they had to be grown in a different bed so the strawberries were rotated with potatoes and other vegetables. Most houses in Titchfield had generous gardens and people would swap the produce they grown.

George's dad was good at trapping wild rabbits. Men who were serving in the forces were paid and the army pay was more generous than an agricultural labourer's so soldiers' wives and families were better off. There was also the opportunity to rise through the ranks and be promoted.

Gerald Read

People had pigs up on the Common but we didn't keep our pig all to ourselves. The policeman always came around when the butcher was slaughtering them. And the butcher always had a bit to keep under the counter for his favourite customers! You had to hand some over but you could keep the rest. We had 100 or more rabbits. The rabbits tasted very good in a stew with veg. A lot of things were rationed during the War: bacon, sugar, tea, meat, cheese, preserves, butter, margarine, lard, sweets and clothing to name but a few.

John Williams

My father ran a family business in South Street with a couple of shops and three or four vans mainly delivering general goods and paraffin to the surrounding areas. He had set rounds on different days in different areas. If for any reason my mum had a message for my father or if he had forgotten his sandwiches for lunch, my mother sent me out on my bike to find him. Because I knew his rounds I knew roughly where he would be, but I used to follow the oil patches left on the road. He had 100-gallon oil tanks in the van connected to a tap at the rear to fill the measuring cans but invariably the tap dripped a bit after filling.

He sold a lot of rationed goods. Everybody had a ration book and the coupons had to be collected. One of my jobs, together with my sister, was to count the coupons on a Monday night into their various categories to be taken to the Ministry of Food offices the next day.

On Saturday mornings I used to queue up for my mum outside St John's for cakes. It was interesting because there was always a house martin nesting on the wall above the queue. On the way home I sometimes looked over the bridge of the main road at the fish in the River Meon. Somehow one day, I managed to drop the shopping basket so that the week's ration of cakes went floating down the river! I also shopped for meat at Lankester & Crooks.

I didn't eat a lot of sweets. My father brought our ration home on Saturday evenings, and I remember when I went to school in Fareham some of the boys bought wax balls or sticks to chew, or medical type sweets.

Kate Scott

I think the photo is posed because I remember them saying it was a photographer from the newspaper. Great granny used to tell the story that, during the War, there was a dogfight over the Solent. A parachutist came down near the ladies so they made him take his boots off so he did not run away and marched him up to the NAFFI that was in what is now The Earl of Southampton's day room.



The Posbrook women

Mrs Singleton and great granny took a boot and took it round the pubs, collecting money for people who had been bombed out. One of the women hoeing the field is Flo Churcher, she lived in West Street. In 1985 we were going on a coach trip when she got off quickly to tell me that "There is a dunny on the coach" (*toilet*).

The woman with a beret on is my great granny, Maude Bowman, nee Carse, and Mrs Bedford is the one with a hat on. She was Jono Jones's mother, from Bellfield. Second from the end is Mrs Singleton, sister to Mrs Bowman. They didn't work for Steve Harris, but a company in Portsmouth. Their aprons are sacking but my great granny's is leather. They would gather the potatoes up in to their apron like a bag.

Because great granny worked on the land they were well off for food, as a few potatoes would 'slip' into pockets! Great grandfather had a chicken farm. He said, "chicken farms are the future." They also had a pig in WW2.

Lesley Downs

When I was 14 on 28th December 1939 I came to work on this farm. I was only a boy. I did bits and pieces. It was called Meon Farm then. First of all I drove a horse with a plough. I ploughed, harrowed and rolled the land. We grew spuds, cabbages, sprouts, and corn - all market garden stuff. The ground went right up to Hill Head. Extra food was needed because of the War .

I used to drive horses, up and down the lines. When I was old enough to drive a car or lorry, I used to go with Steve Harris to serve the shops in Portsmouth and Southampton. I later took over the Portsmouth job as an extra. I used to drive to the shops on a Tuesday or Friday unless we had lots of stuff then I did extra days.

I had to collect the money and bring it back into the office. The girl used to check it up. I remember one day, as usual, I would throw the money in and get on with the work. I said "Everything OK," and she said "No it is £28 short". With that the phone rang and the customer said



Horse ploughing

Village Voices

the lad had forgotten to pick the money up. I was really worried at the time but didn't get in trouble. Then things changed. Steve Harris was on his own as his brother left. The brothers went their separate ways but remained good friends.



Steve and Jim Harris

I did Portsmouth deliveries as well as the wholesalers. It worked out. Then Mr Harris said to me one day, "I am going to build some houses down there." I said, "Do what?" "Oh yes," he said, "for people who come to work for me so they have somewhere to live." I thought I would like to live there, up on the main road. Then he came up and said, "Would you like to live up here?" My wife worked here. She came from Bournemouth. Then we went out together. She worked hard, picking strawberries, and she also fed us all well. People worked very long hours in the summer until dusk. I used to cart the strawberries. The farm is really my life but I am a Portsmouth Football Club supporter.

I drove the lorry and a tractor and was still harrowing, rolling etc until quite recently. Nowadays, I let my son think he is telling me what to do. We have a really good father-son relationship but he is the farm manager now. Oh yes, I've had a tractor in a ditch and also pulled lots of other people out of the ditch who went too fast.

Herbert was a prisoner of war (POW) who worked on the farm at the end of the War. He is now part of the family. He sends us biscuits every Christmas. There were six POWs.

Linda Felton

My aunt Betty loved dancing and during the War years there were lots of soldiers to dance with. She worked in the army canteen and loved it. Later when she was married they occupied one of the cottages in Thatcher's Wood where the soldiers had been housed.

Margaret Groves

I can't remember us ever being short of food, because mum being district midwife was always being thanked with food parcels. There

was always plenty of fruit and vegetables available. I remember also always having plenty of meat from somewhere!

Paul Cousins

Paul's aunt lived next door to him and had Land Army girls lodging with her. They were a uniformed force and were drafted into the area to help on the land. They wore green corduroy britches tucked into their socks with green jerseys and hats that looked a bit like western cowboy hats. German prisoners of war were also made to work on the land and some of them stayed after the War to marry local girls. They included one called Irwin Shroeder and another called Kirk.

Pam Fullick

My dad was in a reserved occupation for the Admiralty at Collingwood. He was a good provider and used to shoot rabbits and game for meat and grow vegetables. He kept chickens too and in the right season would go prawning, cockling and winkling. We had to go strawberry picking to make a few shillings. I was given two weeks extra off from school to go potato picking.

We knew where to go scrumping for apples, pears and plums. We picked blackberries and sold some for a few coppers. We also picked primroses in the spring and tied them in bunches and sold them.

In the autumn we went to the chestnut copse at Chilling but often got chased by Mr Mortimer, the owner, with a shotgun. In the summer I went shrimping with my dad. He made me a small net to push along the seabed. The men took their clothes off and put twice as many old ones on to go into the sea, even a hat. I just wore a bathing suit, woollen, which came down to my knees when it got wet. In the winter we went winkling with the mothers. That was a cold job.

Sunday tea was a plate with a pin for the winkles and a plate of bread and butter. We used to get a little bit of butter and cheese but hardly any meat during the War. My dad shot rabbits but we had to spit out bits of shot in the rabbit.

Paula Weaver

Mrs Gann had a fish and chip shop and she also made ice cream. We bought five scoops of ice cream in a dish. We had to rush up the road to get it home before it melted. We went up to the bake house to get

Village Voices

the bread. During the War the loaves looked as though they were two loaves, but we fought because there were only two crusts. We also used to love the skin off the custard and the skin off the rice pudding. We used to go up to Mr Wolf's by the Abbey to get our dairy products and often would get chased by the geese.

Rita Prior

Children were allowed time off school to help on the land, fruit picking and potato picking in particular. They used to have cards, which were signed by the headmaster, Mr Skilton, and their employers. I hated powdered egg. We kept chickens. You had to be registered to get corn for chickens.

Work

Paula Weaver

Mr Williams was our teacher. His family also had a sweet shop and a hardware shop opposite in South Street. He used to come round selling oil, paraffin, candles, kindling etc, thus he was called 'Oily Williams'. There were lots of shops, at least 30 or more. The village was self-contained. It provided everything including numerous public houses.

Rita Prior

"My wages were £1 per week minus four pence insurance"

I left school in December 1944. I stayed at home for a while then one day the grocer called and mentioned that Lankester & Crook Ltd was looking for a cashier. I went for an interview on the Monday and started work on the Wednesday. My wages were £1 per week minus



Rita and colleagues at Lankester & Crook

four pence insurance. This remained the same for at least for two years. The War in Europe ended in May and I remember forgetting to return the weekly set of books to head office on that day. I was in trouble!

A register was kept of all customers' names and addresses from ration books. Points and coupons were used for tinned goods and had to be counted. For some things books were marked (crossed off). Rationing became worse after the War. At one time bread was rationed. The small bread coupons were horrid to count. Bread rationing did not last long.

I worked at Lankester & Crook Ltd for 11 years.

Victor Chase

I had the opportunity of an apprenticeship at Boniface and Cousins garage in Fareham. This was because my elder brother already worked there.

Church, Chapel and Religion

June Pellatt

By the wall of the churchyard is a gravestone where there are the graves of three children. Mrs Hinton, their mother, sent them out shopping with errands that meant that they would return at different times. She killed them all and was sent to Knowle Asylum.

Margaret Noyce

My mother was very Victorian, without doubt, church, Sunday School, no discussion. As I grew older I went to the service for older children and then finally to church with my mother, who always went to the 6 o'clock service. My father never walked inside a church.



Hinton children's headstone

War and Fighting

June Pellatt

We used to live half way down South Street, facing the doctor's. My dad had bought a new radio, which didn't need an accumulator as it was an electric one. All the neighbours came over to listen to it and I couldn't understand why all the ladies were crying. It was a party but then I was told that War had started. I was only six at the time.

Rita Prior

I remember when War broke out; we were watching the men digging out an underground shelter. Mum came out and said we were at War. It didn't mean much to us children really.

Donald Upshall

When the War broke out I was 13 years old - old enough to know what was going on. We had a taxi service at the side of the car repair garage. The first day war broke out, Sunday 3rd September 1939, my father said, "You can go for the ride" on the front seat, next to the taxi driver. He had to send a car to fetch some people we knew from West Wykeham, near Croydon, and I remember driving up the A3. We passed a garage and on a board they had chalked up, 'War Declared'. We were actually at war.

War had only just been declared an hour ago but the siren went and, of course, being the first alarm, the ARP wardens were riding their bikes through the streets, blowing their whistles and saying, "Everybody take cover!" Nobody knew what was happening as the War had only just been declared. I remember thinking, "What is going on?" There was a hell of a big panic! We found the address where we had to pick these people up. The people had cooked lunch, but when we got there they threw the lunch away as they just wanted to get back down to Titchfield. It was a false alarm but we didn't know at the time. Nobody knew what was going on.

Jean Faulds

At the beginning of the war in 1939, my dad, Albert Godbehere, being in the TA, was called up immediately. During the War he was taken prisoner at Boulogne and for five years he was a prisoner of war in Germany.

Shortly after the War began, the private school on West Hill was taken over by the Government and it was turned into a nurse's home. The nurses had to travel to Cold East Hospital to care for the wounded soldiers when

they were brought back from France. We used to clean the nurses' rooms and prepare food for their return from their shifts at the hospital.

Huts were built in the woods at Meon and the Army moved in, with a big ack-ack gun and searchlight. After the War ended these huts were let out to young married couples with a single-decker bus service, which carried passengers to and from work and the shops.

Dances used to be held in the upstairs room of the Queen's Head public house during the War and we danced to a man playing a piano accordion.

Another school taken over by the military was the school that sat halfway up West Street. This was used for the army headquarters. The No. 12 Commando was one of the troops stationed in the village. They were billeted with families who had a spare bedroom. My mum was persuaded to take in two of the commando men, Peter Faulds and Jock Allen. They were very helpful to my mother when the night air raids started. They would get us four girls into the Anderson shelter in our back garden.

When the Commandos were parading and marching in the Square the children of the village used to join in - creating chaos for the well-organised troops.

George Watts

The council built new houses at the top of West Street and our family moved in to number 72. As it was a large house, we had people billeted with us. This proved to be a useful source of income. The first people were four very sad French soldiers who had been evacuated from Dunkirk. They were quickly sent to Scotland for training and returned to France to fight with the Free French. Later the family had some commandos and then an RAF airman staying with them. The Government paid for people's board and my mother was given their ration books. The boarders were actually fed at their base so the ration books were useful to supplement the family's rations. After the War the family had an RAF airman and his family staying with them as RAF Titchfield was being run down.

Andrew Mills

My father was in the Royal Engineers during the War and ended up in the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders - a southerner in a Scots regiment! He was lucky not to have been drafted into the 'Hampshires' as they lost most of their men in North Africa. He found himself, a lot of the time, at home in charge of searchlights and artillery. He was

Village Voices

manning a searchlight in Heath Road, just off Church Road in Locks Heath. There was a house there owned by Mrs Louard, a fairly wealthy family, and my mother was in service there. The searchlight was in a small recreation field at the end of the garden and that's where my mother met my father. They used to talk over the fence.



ATS operate a searchlight

My father was also on a searchlight at Bursledon the other side of the railway bridge on a rise above the railway line, a little bit south of Manor Farm. My father's got a couple of stories of Spitfires flying under the bridge there, just showing off. He also tells of Messerschmitts flying at mast height up the river then zooming up over the bridge to knock out the light. He could remember a plane coming so close he could see the pilot's eyes and he remembered being shot at with the bullets going just over his head and hitting the shed behind. There was a pot-bellied stove in there that just exploded when a canon shell hit it. I can't imagine what that must have been like.

Ben Waterfall

We lived in No. 46 Bellfield, which was off Coach Hill (now 36 Coach Hill) and I was born there in 1940. We had an Anderson shelter in the garden and when there was an air raid I would get into the shelter first and mother would hand my brother Mick to me until she got in. Then she would sit there shaking. We didn't know what was going on.

I remember one time the siren went and there were all these streaks of light across the sky up Park Gate way. They used to drop incendiary bombs to light up the area so that the bombers had something to aim at. So mum said "Get under the bed" and we got under the bed a bit quick.

Mike Ferris

During the early part of the War not everyone was given an air raid shelter and our family and our neighbours had to share the Anderson

shelter which was dug into the garden of our neighbours in No. 80 Bellfield. To reach it we had to clamber over a wire fence and run up their garden path. I recall very clearly asking my mum if I could stay outside and watch the pretty lights that could be seen over Portsmouth. This of course was Portsmouth being bombed and the sky was ablaze with gunfire and the bombs exploding.

Gerald Read

Thank heavens we had the air raid shelter to rush out to. It was a wet and cold place. Mum never knew whether to dig the kids out of bed and then we would catch cold in the shelter. She used to wait until the ack-ack guns went off, then we'd shift!

When the flying bombs hit Park Gate Towers the air raid warden, Mr Bungey, was on duty outside Arthur Hale's bike shop waving his hands about. "Get under cover!" he said, "Get under cover! There's doodlebugs coming over." and getting all irate. My dad said, "I ain't worried about that, when they are still goin' it's when the buggers' engines stops I worries! I'll take cover when they stops and it all goes quiet!" Boom!

The billeting officer was bossy. Mrs Brown said she wouldn't take any soldiers in her house, but he threatened her with a charge and she had to! Still I reckon there was some romances. We didn't lose too many of our girls to them GIs.

Paul Cousins

Paul remembers that there was a large air raid shelter on what is now the grassed open space at the corner of West Street and South Street. It was large enough to accommodate about 40 people and, inside, lining the walls, it had wooden benches on which most would sit. Others would try to sleep in bunks.

This shelter was available to Paul and his family. However his mother very much disliked the smell of Jeyes Fluid that filled the air inside. So instead they chose to remain at home during air raids and would gather under a steel-reinforced table. Paul was the exception. Being the youngest, he enjoyed the comfort of a tin bath, in which he would lie on a feather mattress. Snug in this makeshift cot, he was given the added protection of the cupboard under the stairs, where he often slept soundly.

The main targets of the air raids were Portsmouth and Southampton but, occasionally, something would hit Titchfield. A large landmine fell into mud just north of the A27, behind the site occupied by Priory

Village Voices

Garage. It didn't explode on impact and so later received the attention of a bomb disposal team. Paul also remembers being woken by a loud explosion when a shell landed in the Square. Fortunately, no one was injured and damage to property was small. Flying shrapnel dented some doors, but Paul and other children were amused to collect fragments of it the next morning.

Donald Upshall

"Then right behind them came the dive-bombers - we actually saw them come in"

My first experience of seeing the Germans was around 1940 when I was with my father driving into Southampton over the old Northam bridge. The skys were alight as the Germans had fired incendiaries, setting the balloons on fire. Then right behind them came the dive-bombers - we actually saw them come in. The Supermarine factory was what they were after as that was where they made Spitfires. They absolutely wrecked it and killed a lot of people. We were in Southampton and we were far enough away so we weren't involved in the bombing but we could hear it and see it going on. They built the Spitfires in the Supermarine factory and then took



Battle of Britain 75th anniversary

them up to Eastleigh and flew them from there. In those days, they took them on a trailer. The Germans knew the Spitfires were the top fighters. They were definitely after the factory, and obliterated it in one raid. It was dreadful. It all happened so quickly.

Then, because the Supermarine factory wasn't usable, they commandeered any buildings over a certain size all over Hampshire to make aircraft parts. The Priory Garage on the A27 was commandeered. It was just a filling station, but it was extended and toilets put in for the ladies who worked there.

In 1941 I remember hearing the first German bomber. It was in the clouds. You could hear the drone of the engine but you couldn't see it. Suddenly it came out of the clouds and you could see the swastika and then it disappeared again in the clouds. There was no gunfire and people think it was lost. It was quite an experience then!

After that I remember when the bombers did start coming over at night,