

## New Forest Remembers WWII Project

### Oral History Team: Transcription Document

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**00-00-00**

OK, well ready to go really.

*Yeah, you can start any time you like.*

OK. Well my name is Bertram Jerrard, that's with a J, that's Jerrard with a J, and I was born in the village of Sandleheath on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of March 1937. Although I was just two and a half years of age, I remember the concern and my parents bent over the wireless listening to the declaration of World War 2, although at that time not fully understanding 'till much later what it was all about. I believe my first recollection of the actual war would be the bombing raids on the south coast, Southampton in particular. As a small boy I could see this happening from my upstairs bedroom window where the searchlights would light up the sky as the bombs over Southampton that they detonated. Many of the enemy aircraft would fly over our area, this prior to bombing of Southampton and then moving on. In a short time after that, two searchlights stations appeared in the field some 150 yards below our family home at that time. [I put on there see map attached, I should have shut up there shouldn't I?]

*Yeah, don't worry*

**00-01-15**

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OK. From memory, the two of them, there were two searchlights, and from memory they were set some 200 yards apart and sometime later an ack-ack gun was placed halfway between the two searchlights. On one occasion we heard this open up and understand that an enemy aircraft was brought down as a result, albeit some miles away. The searchlight company were based in nearby Cranborne village in Dorset. I don't know whether they were a company in their own right, but they were probably part of the Signals Regiment or something like that I would think. And for many years after the war the veterans held their annual reunion at Cranborne in the Fleur-de-Lys pub. I believe the last occasion would have been in the early 1990's. I remember cycling to Cranborne to see my aunt and uncle who lived there. My cousin and I somehow gained access to the searchlight brigade hut. I was much younger than he was I have to say (chuckle). This was full of aircraft paraphernalia. This included spotter's silhouettes and notably hundreds of various pictures of aircraft. We thought about taking some, but being honest children, decided against it. Long after the war and when all traces of the searchlight station had gone, we boys would find and pick up many of the spent carbon cartridges. Part of the field is now built on and a garden now occupies the site. I doubt if any of the current owners are aware of the above wartime activity, and I believe one could still find traces, cartridges whatever, of the sites.

#### **00-02-57**

Fordingbridge old school, now the Community Centre, is near the drill hall. During my initial school days the grounds of the drill hall and the school playground were separated by just a narrow footpath, now an open roadway to the main car park entrance. At that time there was a very high wall, a very high fence, built round the drill hall grounds, but it was there solely for the purpose or er, two purposes really, home for the newly formed Home Guard, Fordingbridge Home Guard, and as a holding depot later for the German prisoners of war. A substantial high barbed wire fence surrounded the drill hall grounds in which the prisoners of war POWs were permitted to exercise, play football etc. During school playtime we were told to have no verbal contact with the POWs, but occasionally their ball would come over the fence and into the school playground. There would be a rush then to see which of us children could kick it back. I was caught in the act by our teacher, a Miss Clerk, actually a madam Miss Clerk, long gone to her maker, so (intake of breath) one of our more pleasant teachers but she made no secret of her dislike of the German prisoners of war, describing them all as Nazis. I was reprimanded, the ball taken from me and promptly confiscated much to the distress of the German prisoners. Even as a small child one soon realised and understood the depth of feeling people had towards the enemy at that time.

#### **00-04-30**

I also remember a pillbox being built outside the front of the old school that is now the Community Centre. This was removed in or around 1950. The arrival of the Americans saw a great deal of activity, particularly in Sandleheath, my home. Two houses were commandeered in the village, presumably by the Ministry of Defence. Woodlands House, which is now a rest home, and Sandle Lodge Manor House, now a private residence, the

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later also being a main stores depot for the United States forces. The American soldiers, GIs, were very kind to us, giving us chewing gum and candy, that's what they called sweet candy, when passing. They would lob them when we were on our way to school. They would often throw these from the back of a lorry. If you were lucky the occasional orange, a luxury unheard of in England at that time. The American GIs based at Sandle Lodge House carried out rifle drill in the form of an exercise in the field adjacent to our house and almost opposite. We would try to join in and with no objection from Master Sergeant in charge. He asked if we had an elder sister, and of course being very young and innocent, trusting, we could read nothing into his implication at that time. The Americans also had a temporary fuel distribution depot set up on the outskirts of Fordingbridge near the river Avon. This being alongside the road. There is a crescent road that goes into the village of Bickton and alongside the river. There was a Royal Engineer's Depot along the Stuckton road from Fordingbridge, all of which disappeared on the build-up to D-day.

#### **00-06-19**

Shortly before the lead up to operation Overlord, a battalion of Scottish troops, Highland Light Infantry, and later some of the Black Watch, moved into Sandleheath. This was on a gravel track, the name escapes, we used to call it Triggs Farm, but it's opposite the small Methodist Chapel in Sandleheath, and up there on the left hand side there was a large field. This was absolutely full of troops. Similarly we village boys felt a need to get involved with their activities, there being no objection from the Scottish soldiers who would invite us to eat with them. All perfectly innocent in those days, although I don't think mother would have approved had she known about it. We always managed to eat our meals when we got home. Quite suddenly there was a great deal of transport activity and within hours all the troops, USA, and British, Scottish were gone with remarkable speed and stealth.

#### **00-07-19**

We had a special Home Guard unit at Fordingbridge. There was a chap called Ted Rodgers, who evidently they were specially chosen for this exercise. The whole thing highly secret a little bit like a low key SAS I suppose. Ted Rodgers later went into the Royal Artillery, but he told me in some confidence, Ted was always very sheepish about the whole thing, that this underground bunker was built at Fryern Court and he maintained that there was held enough explosive to blow up all of Fordingbridge and Ringwood as well.

#### **00-08-06**

One of the incidents I remember with some clarity and this was on the 9<sup>th</sup> of May 1941, and there was an enormous explosion the other side of the village of Damerham, this is on the Martin side of Damerham, and this I believe was a Royal Engineers explosives depot. There were two in Damerham, one on the er, where the gravel track leads up to St George's Church as you enter Damerham from the Fordingbridge side. There was a dump right on the right hand corner there. I think one of the buildings is still there, but the other one was the other side of Damerham on the Martin side, and the depot was left in charge of

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the Royal Pioneer Corp. Now the Pioneer Corp, without being unkind about it, apart from the senior NCOs and Officers, were mainly made up of illiterates and semi-illiterates. But anyway, one of them decided I think to have a smoke inside the depot and the whole thing was blown sky high. There were six casualties. Two I suspect may have been, the parents may have reclaimed the bodies and probably buried elsewhere, but four of the graves are in the churchyard of St George's. So there are four graves in a row as you enter into St George's Church at Damerham. They're over in the graveyard on the right hand side overlooking the valley.

**00-09-40**

We had a distribution of things such as Cod-liver Oil, Rosehip Syrup, egg powder, milk powder and a thick kind of orange juice, and in the village of Sandleheath there were two places to go and collect this. One was at Mr Cannon's Farm, which is just prior to you reach the Post Office in Sandleheath, a lane going off to the left hand side, and the other one was a Mrs Wilson who was down near the church of England er, one of the big houses near the Church of England School, and they distributed those. The main distributor in Fordingbridge itself was a Mr Overell who I believe was a former World War 1 serving officer. And they were the people who you went to get this. Most of this was supplied by the National Health Service of course. Presume the National Health Service existed then didn't it, I think? Rub that little bit out if you want to.

*Yeah, we'll put it back on again. The recording is running again.*

**00-10-44**

OK. The school, at school we were distributed with er, we had the milk. Milk was distributed to the school, I think that was er. I started school at the Congregational Church up in Salisbury Street in Fordingbridge, it is now the United Reformed Church, and an upstairs room there, and a churn of milk used to come in and this was doled out to us young children, and we carried this enamel mug, we always had enamel mugs, and we carried these enamel mugs backwards and forwards to school with us, and that was doled out round about sort of 10 o'clock time I think. Meals were taken in the workhouse of all places, and its now, it became the Infirmary and then it became later on the Surgery. The surgery and everything is held there. And I can't close the subject of the workhouse without mentioning that those that were at the national school, which is now the Avonway Centre, during the war years. We were marched up to the workhouse where school dinners were prepared and served in the inmates' dining room. We fed off of scrubbed tables and benches, and sat on benches. Bare walls presented a grim forbidding place unaltered from Victorian times. The food served was wholesome, but very basic and with very little variety. Meat, veg and usually a steamed pudding with jam, semolina or similar. There was a war on, food was scarce, so you ate what was in front of you. Mother supplied, we had to supply the dinner money on a weekly basis and I believe it started at 9d when I started having school dinners there and eventually we paid 1s-3d, old money of course, 1 shilling

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and threepence and that was for your school dinners.

*Tell me now what happened when an air-raid happened.*

**00-12-55**

OK. My father, well I'll mention my dad I think as well. My father who was one of these people that was born in 1900, was just too young for the first war and too old for the second war, so father joined the Home Guard and the wardens as well, he was in both. If the siren went, which it would when enemy aircraft were coming over, mother used to put us in the cupboard under the stairs, and we huddled in under the stairs until the all clear came, and when everything was well, we come out rather tentatively but we come out anyway. Our next door neighbour was very lucky because he was a builder and he had an Anderson Shelter built at the top of his garden. I believe it was well equipped with bedding and all sorts.

*Can you tell us what it was like under those stairs when the bombers were coming over.*

To us boys I suppose it was a bit of an adventure, I think we had almost taken by that stage, we'd almost taken, and when I say boys I'm the eldest and my younger brother Brian who was born in 1938, in September 1938, so there would be just the two of us, but we would also have to put our gas masks on of course. Our mother was very careful about that sort of thing. (chuckle) So she insisted that not only that we go under the stairs but we also wear our gas masks. I had what was an adult's gas mask, but my brother Brian had what they call a Mickey Mouse one. It was sort of blue and red and things like that. And when my third brother came along, he was a baby, being a baby they had one of these cradle things and you clamped this Perspex lid down. It had a breathing hole obviously but with the activating carbon so that the gas didn't get into the cradle. It was like a small bed or small cradle really and he went in there until we got the all clear. When we got the all clear of course, all was well.

*Were there any bombs dropped locally? (Repeated)*

Yes, we had one at Packham House here, and we also had a aircraft come down in Packham House, and then over at Damerham we had a British aircraft brought down and I think it wasn't a full size bomber. I'm not absolutely certain what it was but the pilot unfortunately was burnt to a crisp as he sat in the cab, everybody too late for him. And that was not very far from what we used to call Butler's Farm, and that was – there was a walkway that goes from Alderholt Mill through to Damerham and it's almost the penultimate field you pass before you actually get into the - before you sort of go out to where the church mill end as they call it. Yes, it was in the field there. My father had some artefacts because they were called out to help one day. I don't know too much about it because they were very evasive, he was very evasive about what he did during the war. I know he came

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back with some (laugh) thingies similar to what you've got on, (cough) the pilot's intercom, yeah, and one or two other bits and pieces which have long since disappeared, yeah.

*OK, well we're running again now.*

**00-16-36**

Well, one of the more unusual bizarre or strange things that – Are we on?

*Yeah.*

Oh (chuckle), one of the strange bizarre things was that I mentioned Sandle Lodge House earlier on where the Americans were based. We were coming back – we all, some of us went to the Chapel and some of us went to the Church of England, or in our case the Church of England. And we boys and girls walked back afterwards and one or two of the older lads decided that perhaps they might be able to get into the stores of Sandle Lodge. As indeed they did obviously in the hope as boys will of hoping to get, the idea was to get some sweets and what not free. In the event they brought out several packets of stuff and then fled like blazes 'cos a jeep came up the drive. And then they decided to open this packet upon the common and the first packet they opened unfortunately a big flurry of powder came out and it was full of, how shall I thus put it, well condoms was what (laughter) actually, but they were unrolled ones, they were sort of flat and ribbed and (more laughter) we small boys didn't know what they were. The larger lads did of course and we all laughed like blazes. Lord only knows what happened to them, (laughter) I don't know.

*Can you tell me what a typical day was like in school during the war.*

**00-18-06**

Well as I say we lived at Sandleheath, and even during the winter months we had to walk the two miles from home to school and the same again when we finished school. School was longer then. I think we started at half-past eight or nine o'clock, I'm a little bit vague on that one, and we finished school at half-past four I think it was in the afternoon. But we walked it even during the fiercest of weather and that included the winter just after the war of 1947, we did that. A typical day at school during the war – we'd go in and the first thing we had was various monitors because there was no central heating of course or anything like that. Lavatories or urinals and everything were outside, so you had to go outside if you wanted that even in the worst of weather. Fordingbridge school, main school, which as I said earlier was now the Community Centre, is much the same as it was when it was built in 1880 something or other; 1883 I think it was built. Much the same then and the rooms were. There was no heating, we had a pot-bellied stove in the middle, and the teacher would normally, once we had a monitor, so one child would go to start the thing with anthracite and then it was coke. The thing was fed on coke, and you had monitors for doing that. I the monitor fetched the coal, the coke, and also to keep the stove stoked up.

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Occasionally the teacher would do it, but nine times out of ten the teacher would stand cross-legged with his legs apart, or his legs apart I beg your pardon, with his hands behind his back (chuckles) warming his backside as opposed to the heat coming out for the unfortunate children in front of him. School was very strict, I mean we had, I can mention her now because she was quite an old lady when I was there, there was a Miss Gilbert who was a particularly, rather a spinster lady, with particularly vicious when it came to using a ruler or cane. If you were doing anything other than swat or studying a lesson or anything like that, she'd come along and give you one across the hands usually. And then we had another chap who was a bit nasty actually, I won't mention his name because he was an ex-naval Chief Petty Officer, and one of his favourite tricks we had an enormous Bible. One of his favourite tricks was to belt you across the head with the Bible. Nearly concussed you when he hit you, for I know, I got hit.

Another instant that happened is that the - a boy died, he died at the desk where I was actually, and that was in the - I mentioned Mrs Clerk's name earlier on, and he came in and he was slumped over the desk, and she wasn't, she was a pleasant teacher Mrs Clerk, Miss Clerk, and whatever she thought of the Germans one thing and another, she walked round and tried to wake him up and she was shaking him and she was about to put the ruler over his hands to sort of nudge him, and he died. He died. He'd had a fall on the way to school and he died. I remember his name well, I won't mention his name because he still has relatives as far as I know in the school, but you remember instants like that quite well.

### **00-21-30**

The school discipline was a minister. We had a thief once in the school, he was an evacuee I think, he was an evacuee again I won't mention his name, and we had a cloakroom, so within each classroom there was a cloakroom where you hang all your coats and your heavy gear off in this cloakroom, and what he used to do was go in and pilfer so that a number of children found that things were missing, sometimes money. Anyway he was found out. They laid a trap of some sort or another. I remember the teacher that did the trapping. And he was probably caned in front of the whole school. I found that very distressing even then. It was like an assembly in the morning at the school - incidentally I haven't mentioned that, we assembled at school in the morning, that was the first thing. So a religious ceremony was always something that started the day off. A prayer and a song and one thing and another. On a personal note I think that religious ceremony is no bad thing. You can make up your own mind as later on want you want to do as far as religion is concerned, but I thought it was all part of the school upbringing and sort of gave you an education as to all things. But anyway, assembly, I'm digressing a bit, but the assembly room which was one of the bigger classrooms, that's where we assembled, and that's where we're assembled for a public caning. I saw two of them. Not very pleasant and the humiliation for the child involved was awful really. The chap that I mentioned, the evacuee, disappeared may be a couple of weeks later. I think probably they moved on or he'd gone back home, I don't know what happened about that one. But, yes we were cold, the food

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was awful, but (laughter) we ate it of course. Simply because you knew nothing else, you know, it was almost an acceptance of your, of your situation at that particular time.

*Why?*

Well there are the, the war was discussed quite a lot. I think we almost, as children, became part of your life. You took it for granted really that the war was on. The big surprise was when it all ended of course. At Sandleheath for example we had a celebration, and the celebration was a bit of a picnic up on the common, there was a common at Sandleheath, and tractor rides. So I remember that well enough. They used to take us around on the tractor and when one load got off and (chuckle) another load would get on. We had the police come to the school several times just to tell us, er, find out how we were really. Well they did check up at that time, and incidentally the police then of course, he'd give you a cuff round the ear for stealing or anything like that as opposed to making an issue of it or taking you to court or whatever. That didn't happen, the police would discipline you. As indeed would your parents when you got home.

*Tell me a little bit more about what it was like when war ended.*

**00-24-40**

Right, let me think about that for a moment.

*OK, we're back on.*

Well there was euphoria among older people I suppose, but it, yes, yes it affected us children to some degree, but not a great deal. I mean, I was into my tenth year by the time the war ended and er, (long pause) rationing, I mean we didn't have anything in the way of sweets and that sort of thing, rationing, but somehow we were OK. My father always made sure there was meat on the table. My father used to work away, I mean even although he was a – he'd cycle miles for work, and erm, family were in the well sinking business up until the 1930s-40s and they then went into felling timber. My dad was always in charge as they say, he was a foreman. I suppose they call him a manager these days, but he was a foreman. Things were better, but not much. I don't think things changed very much until things came off ration, which was in the early 1950s wasn't it?

*Don't fix it.*

**00-26-02**

Well, my name is Bertram John Jerrard, that's Jerrard with a J, and I was born on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of March 1937 in the village of Sandleheath, Alderholt Road, Sandleheath, near Fordingbridge, and this is my reminiscences of war time – war time – war time, that doesn't sound right does it? Shall I start again?

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*Yeah.*

**00-26-33**

Yeah, yeah. (Laughter) It's like those things they show on television. (more laughter)

My name is Bertram John Jerrard. I was born on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of March 1937 in the village of Sandleheath, near Fordingbridge, and these are my reminiscences of war time, my experience of the war time and the outbreak of war as a boy.

*That's wonderful, thank you very much.*

OK.

*I've been asking you to tell me about war graves, can you?*

Right, right, yeah, war graves. I've long been – being a member of the Royal British Legion, I've long been a visitor of war graves. I think the first to mention, earlier in the interview I mentioned about the Royal Engineers, which incidentally was the regiment I went in eventually, but I digress. Two of the engineers were killed, drivers, so they were drivers in the Royal Engineers and their graves, they were based in Stuckton and ironically they're buried in Stuckton cemetery, side by side, very near the entrance gate in fact. Over the past 30, 40 years I've visited the D-day beaches and various world war 1 and world war 2 grave cemeteries, and I've done that many times. And my thoughts particularly relevant to this interview, never fail to go back and I wonder just how many of those men that I met remain buried in France. In more recent years I have visited the German cemetery and particularly the one at Isigny-sur-Mer. Yeah.

*Brilliant.*

**Ends: 00-28-17**

**Keywords:** Sandleheath, Fordingbridge, Southampton, searchlights, bombing, searchlight stations, ack-ack gun, Cranborne, Signals Regiment, aircraft paraphernalia, spotter's silhouettes, pictures of aircraft, carbon cartridges, Home Guard, German prisoners of war, POWs, pillbox, Americans, Ministry of Defence, GIs, chewing gum, candy, sweets, fuel distribution depot, Royal Engineers Depot, Overlord, Highland Light Infantry, Black Watch, Ted Rodgers, Royal Artillery, underground bunker, Royal Pioneer Corps, milk, workhouse, food, wardens, siren, Anderson Shelter, bomber, pot-bellied stove, monitors, evacuee, celebration, Royal British Legion, war graves, D-day beaches.

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**00-00-00**

*The recorder is now running if you want to tell us in your own time.*

Yeah, yeah. I suppose it must have been during the Battle of Britain we suddenly found a great quantity of radar foil was dropped over our home and surrounding area. We obviously had no idea what it was at the time. The nearby fields surrounding our home were covered. We boys gathered large amounts of it and took it home. Mother used it to make Christmas paper-chains. The radar strips were charcoal colour on one side from my memory and silver metallic on the other. At a rough guess I would say these strips were something like an inch and a half, may be two inches wide and about nine inches in long. We had those chains hung each Christmas for years after the war ended until they eventually fell apart.

In the summer, it must have been 1944, 1945, a group of us boys were bathing in the river Avon. There were several people there including some young men and women. Suddenly a jeep appeared and two or three army MPs, as we were later to find out, jumped out. Although still in swimming trunks, one of the young men tried to get away. He was a Scottish soldier, but was arrested by the MPs with much screaming from his girlfriend, and I knew that young lady very well. He was driven away. Apparently he was a deserter and as we learned some time later, he'd been absent from his regiment for over two years.

**00-01-35**

We had evacuees staying not far from our home during the war. In particular there were two brothers from the East End of London. They stayed with an elderly lady at the bottom of our road, called Mrs Meaker. She'd lost her husband during the First World War and she had a son who in turn had twin boys, and he then became a widower, and the twin boys would stay with their grandmother, i.e. Mrs Meaker, during the school holidays. The rest of the time she was pretty lonely, so she decided to take in these two brothers. We tried to be friendly with them, but they were boys who had a rough tough upbringing, we suspect from the East End of London, and pick a fight with anyone. They picked on me one day, but my father taught me how to take care of myself and in that situation I retaliated to put it mildly and had no further trouble after that, to the contrary. I believe they went home after they'd stayed something like four or five months.

During the war my mother and father decided it would be very public spirited to take in evacuees. In their case it was a wife and small daughter of a London doctor. Father gave them two rooms to themselves to use and also a separate door for their privacy. As a boy I don't remember seeing that much of them, but I do remember my father giving them vegetables from the garden and various other things. I was too young to know what the arrangement had been with the doctor, but understand that the wife had helped herself to one of provisions and stuff in the house whilst my mother and father were out. This included essentials from the larder. Also our coal and wood for the fire. Evidently she kept the fire

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CHAIRMAN OLIVER CROSTHWAITE-EYRE CHIEF EXECUTIVE ALISON BARNES

going continually and had been cooking over it. Father contacted the doctor explaining that we were not that well off ourselves and the situation would have to change or she would have to go. The wife was very tearful and explained that the husband had not sent her sufficient money to live on. According to my father the doctor turned up to collect them in an Alvis car. An Alvis car as you probably know is a big luxury limousine in its day, so (cough and intake of breath).

**00-03-57**

At school (carrying on at school during the war years), in those days learning a trade was part of the school curriculum. For girls it was domestic science and needle work; for us boys it was carpentry and joinery and gardening. We boys were taken by a bus which was laid on by the Hampshire authorities to Ringwood for woodwork. The school had a fully kitted out hut nearby the school for this purpose in a road named The Quomp. The Quomp is quite a well-known road in Ringwood. The building is long gone. The woodwork master at that time was a Mr Hains, and excellent master, I've never forgotten the skills he taught us. I still use them, as many of the pieces of small furniture I made are distributed among members of my family, including an art deco type photo frame which I still have, and I'm showing to my, (knocking sound) the recorder.

Slight pause here.

**00-05-00**

We had school gardens at Fordingbridge. Now these were situated in what is Bowerwood Road, and now what was formerly the school garden is now known as Padstow Place. This is a small private housing estate about half a mile from the school. Here we were taught all the skills of practical gardening by Mr Lez Carter. He was the Deputy Headmaster, a strict but likeable man. Many of the skills were known to me by helping my father in our garden at home, and most of us boys did that. We were allowed to take home some of the vegetables we grew in the school garden. The rest went off to the local workhouse where the school meals were prepared. The school captain and a prefect, they used to do the write up for our gardening activities in the school magazine. That magazine was called The Ford. I'm still a keen gardener and as well as the benefit of fresh produce for the table, at my age it keeps me fit. I kept in touch with Mr Carter for many years afterward. He and his wife moved to the Isle of Skye. He died there in his mid-80s.

Whatever the weather, we never missed school unless really ill. Most of us would get mumps, measles, chickenpox at some time or another. I personally lived two miles away from the school and the awful winter of 1947 lives long in the memory. During those winter months the hobnailed boots, hobnailed boots were worn by most boys, and usually a balaclava helmet knitted by mother, i.e. proper clothing to suit the weather. In a wartime school there was very little in the way of sporting clothing. The aforementioned boots would be worn for example for organised football matches, the rare exception being the boys

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whose parents could afford the real thing. There were few of them. The school did have a football. This was the old section leather type with an inflatable rubber bladder. This was fine until it rained and became wet. We played in all weathers. I suspect this is why the old players, i.e. Stanley Matthews (chuckle) for example, dribbled the ball. Kicking the thing when wet and heavy could be painful on the ankles and heading the ball nearly concussed one.

**00-07-12**

We were taught manners at home and school, and if we passed a lady on our way to school, we always gave way on the outside of the pavement. If wearing a hat or cap, you lifted it to the lady. Similarly on a crowded bus, you offered your seat to an elderly person. That's the way it was, and that's the way we were. You did this automatically out of politeness and respect for an older person. With the rare exception I suspect qualities like that would be laughed at by young people today.

A private coach service was laid on for those of us lived in the outlying villages, i.e. Damerham, Rockborne, Sandheath, and I believe the Hampshire school authorities arranged this following the previous extreme winter. The coach was owned and driven by a Mr Horner, the private coach owner.

Our education was by a teacher facing you with a chalk and blackboard, written work, dictation and debate, reading openly in class, homework and swatting. I still use the timetable in my head to this day as opposed to using a calculator, and it keeps my brain active at the age of 76. I have to say I don't have much confidence in the teaching methods today, perhaps I'm biased, the results of which in my opinion flatter to deceive, memorising from a screen, most of it then quickly forgotten. The skills I mentioned earlier have been dropped from the school curriculum, as has religious education. The latter should be respected in schools as part of our British way of life. The young person can then decide for themselves as to their religious beliefs into adulthood and make their own mind up. On a political point ethnic religion should be discouraged at all costs in this country.

**End: 00-08-54**

**Keywords:** Battle of Britain, radar foil, Christmas paper-chains, MPs (Military Police), jeep, deserter, evacuees, Alvis, school, Ringwood, domestic science, needlework, carpentry, joinery, gardening, The Quomp, school garden, workhouse, magazine, hobnailed boots, balaclava, football, manners, coach service.

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