

# Land Settlement Association

Bulletin No 45

(May 2020)

## Sidlesham Heritage Trail



### VE Day 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary – Friday 8<sup>th</sup> May

The LSA Heritage Trail website has several references to events during World War Two: evacuees, bomb at Keynor Copse, Canadian and America soldiers and the Home Guard.

**No 1:** According to the Sidlesham School Admissions Register Rita Hackwell and Mervyn Griffiths (evacuees?) were also registered at No 1 Keynor in the care of Mrs Kemp. They left the school in October 1943 and returned to Trealaw in the Rhondda.

**No 2:** Fred Phillips was here during World War II, he appears in the photo of the Keynor Home Guard,

**Keynor Cottage** (Keynor Lane) called Blue Cottage in the School Admissions Register in 1939. Freda Reed with daughters Muriel (Mills) and Margaret (Grainger) and son Malcolm lived here during the war, when their father Albert joined the army, having previously been a tenant at No 83 (Fletchers Lane). Mrs Reed sold sweets to the school children from her front room.

**Keynor Hut** (adjacent to Keynor Farm House in Cow Lane) was the base for the Home Guard. Photo with 14 of the 25 men identified.

**No 11:** A Canadian soldier was billeted here during the war. (Photograph supplied by Beryl Bowyer, nee Cowan at No 12)

**No 12:** Two evacuees from Tooting were with the Cowans. I have a photo of their parents Mr & Mrs Frost, when they visited after the war.

**No 19:** Fred & Winnefred Ruckley arrived here in 1939 from Tonypany. Fred had been a miner in the Rhondda Valley. Fred was on the 1939 Census at Batchmere Training Centre, he is also on the photograph of Keynor Home Guard. In October 1939 Peter Watson was evacuated from East Ham, London, in the care of Mrs Ruckley - he was evacuated again this time to South Wales' in May 1941.

**No 22:** Dad (John Bailey) arrived late 1937, the family followed in early 1938. Mum and dad worked the land until 1947 when they moved to Selsey. John was in the Sidlesham Home Guard and awarded a certificate for service 12th June 1940 to 31st December 1944." (Joan Crees, daughter)

**No 27:** Harry and Beatrice Willks were tenants in 1936 having moved south from Hebburn with the Santon family (No 34). Harry joined the Royal Navy when war broke out and both families then moved to Dartford. Harry Wilks died off Cromer in 1942 when HMS Vortigen was sunk. (Sylvia Higgs, daughter).

**No: 39:** Mrs Kemp cared for Phyllis and Elaine Mitchell (evacuees?) who were on the School Admissions Register at the beginning of 1944

**No 42:** Doug Lichfield arrived from Wales in 1946, after the American soldiers, who were billeted here during the war, had moved out.

“The empty holdings during the end of war were used by the American army preparing for D-Day, they managed to put a hole out of the chicken house which also passed through the chimney of 42 and 41”. (David Lichfield, son)

**No 50:** The Dixon family had 4 evacuees - Dennis Cambridge (Tooting) until he left school. Robert (Bob) Brownhill (Balham?), Henry Mullin and Charlie ? were here for shorter length of time. All 4 went to school with Norman Dixon.

#### **Mutton Farm House** (Keynor Lane)

During World War II the children from No 45 were 'evacuated' here when a bomb landed between the apple trees on the smallholding and blew the windows out of the house.

(Becky Wilson, No 45)

**No 66:** John & Alan Hayman (evacuees?) were on the School Admissions Register at No 66 (Street End Lane) for one month in 1943, in the care of Mrs Cross. They left in June to return to Abertillery.

**No 69:** Derek and Joan Brown (evacuees? ) were also on the School Admissions Register in September 1943, in the care of Mrs McKenzie.

**No 78:** "I've just watched on BBC 1 South Today news a film clip about the land settlement 80 years ago. On one of your photos of a group of men was my granddad, front row first on the right. His name is Horace Hook who eventually brought his family down from 7 Campbell Street South Shields to join him when given the opportunity to rent a piece of ground to live on. He then moved to Hunston South Over Way and became the local policeman. During the second world war he joined the navy and served on mine sweeping vessels, one of which sank off the north east coast called Ceylonite. (Andy & Gary Hook, grandsons)

**No 86:** The Wilsons had two evacuees, two young girls from London, and I know the family kept in touch for a while over the post war years.

“Another war time story the family told me was of the day they were all working in the top field here at 86, Arthur, four years old, was standing on top of a chicken coup, when a

German plane flew low over the holding, off-loading the rest of his ammunition before crashing, but on seeing the family and little Arthur on top of the chicken coup, he actually stopped while he flew over them. The plane crashed in the field beyond. I think the pilot survived". (Diane Wilson)

**No 88:** The Home Guard 'allegedly' used this property as a base during World War Two. "It also had Canadian soldiers billeted there at one time and. I'm sure much to the delight of the Wilson's daughter here at 86 the family had a piano and the soldiers would come in some evenings for a good old sing song. One morning the family awoke to find the front room window had been opened and there were stacks of tinned food placed on the floor by the window. The Canadians were gone, and they never saw those boys again. wonder if they survived." (Diane Wilson)

**No 103:** The house may have been occupied by soldiers in the war (Nick House, son)

**No 104:** A Nissen hut still stands on site - "I remember distinctly, one of the 'old boys' at the time (1962) remarking that it housed a Canadian ant-aircraft gun crew. The gun itself was located in our back field (southern end). This was presumably to defend the thousands of Canadians mustering in the area for D-Day, mainly off the Redlands Lane area. (Stefan Bartkowiak)

**No 137:** Cecil Berry was here in December 1940 when his children were admitted to Sidlesham School. William Coleman (evacuee ?) returned to Bexley Heath, London in March 1941. (School Admissions Register)

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**KEEP WELL    STAY SAFE    KEEP IN TOUCH**

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**Thank you for all your continued support and assistance with this project.**

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