

Memories of Merrow

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Introduction

There have been several histories of Merrow, which trace the development of the village from early times to the present day. This book, however, looks at Merrow through the eyes of its present-day residents. Many of the articles here were originally published in *Merrow Matters* during 1998 and 1999, although some are published here for the first time. We have arranged by topic to show the differences and similarities between them. The articles we have included are as follows:

Memories of Merrow, by Elise Ireland (first published in *Merrow Matters* No 2, Summer 1998)

“There is always an exclamation of surprise when I admit to newcomers to Merrow that I have never moved further than half a mile from the house in Epsom Road in which I was born, and that I was christened and married in Merrow Church. But, believe me, there are quite a few of us

around! I can think of many people with family roots in Merrow who have never moved – unless there is a good reason, who would wish to move from such a pleasant area? It is so near to Guildford and its theatre and entertainment; and there is the close proximity of London, the airports, and the South Coast, not to mention the glorious countryside around us, the Surrey villages, and the view from Newlands Corner to the South Downs. How fortunate for me that I married a man who commuted to Guildford for his employment, and who was delighted to leave post-war Hounslow and childhood memories of night-time terrors from the bombing during the war, to marry and live in Merrow.”

Merrow House and Guildford Sunset Homes, by Roger Marjoribanks
(first published in *Merrow Matters* No 2 and No 3, Summer and Autumn 1998)

The Catholic Parish celebrates its silver jubilee, by David Allan (first published in *Merrow Matters* No 3, Autumn 1998)

Your Letters, David Fogwell (first published in *Merrow Matters* No 3, Autumn 1998)

Your Letters, Bill Howard (first published in *Merrow Matters* No 3, Autumn 1998)
Bill now lives in the Sunset Homes in Merrow Street remembers the POW camps on the Downs.

Down Road Post Office, by David and Evelyn Brown, (first published in *Merrow Matters* No 4, Spring 1999)

The Story of one POW, by Horst Flick (first published in *Merrow Matters* No 4, Spring 1999)

Merrow's Ancient Yew Trees, by Derek Smith (first published in *Merrow Matters* No 4, Spring 1999)

A Merrow Childhood, by Audrey Purser (first published in *Merrow Matters* No 5, Summer 1999)

“We still both live in Merrow with our families just around the corner. I love everything about Merrow, the Downs, the golf course, and the community, and all my friends.”

The Early Years of Bushy Hill Estate, by Len Holt (first published in *Merrow Matters* No 5, Summer 1999)

“As for my wife and myself, we are now both OAPs, our children are married and we have five lovely grandchildren!”

A letter from New Zealand, by Jean Nicholls, N■e Burchatt (first published in *Merrow Matters* No 6, Autumn 1999)

“In January 1949 (*as a teenager*) we as a family took on the exciting adventure of moving to New Zealand – it was over twenty-five years before I was to return.

Now I live in my adopted country. I have a lovely home full of grandchildren, dogs and Merrow memorabilia. The native bush, with tree ferns instead of beeches, laps two sides of our property and a mountain stream tumbles over rocks at the bottom of the garden. The great cone of our mountain shows its snow-capped face in the brilliant blueness of our summer sky and the black iron sand of our many beaches that is shaped by buckets and spades and the waves of the Tasman Sea.”

The Old Rectory, by Gerry Coates (first published in *Merrow Matters* No 6, Autumn 1999)

May's memories, by May Gregory (first published in *Merrow Matters* No 6, Autumn 1999)

Dorothy's memories, by Dorothy Stemp (first published in *Merrow Matters* No 6, Autumn 1999)

“It all made Merrow a lovely, happy place. I shall never forget.”

Additional articles:

Memories of Merrow, by Edgar Tunnell (1904-1988)

“In my early days, I knew everyone in Merrow and knew every house in the village although none of the streets had numbers. Merrow Street still has not. I no longer know the streets around here let alone the people who live here.”

Edgar Tunnell was born in Merrow Street in 1904 and lived there until his death in 1988. He was born at No 1 Coxhall Cottages and later moved, with his sisters Irene and Zoë, next door into Coxhall, which used to be the stables on the Coxhall Estate. Irene and Zoë moved to Lime Grove, East Horsley, in 1997

Many of Edgar's relatives lived in Merrow during the early 1900's. His great uncle, William James Swayne, was a butcher and grocer living at Mayor House until he sold the business to Mr Kimber. His uncle, Arthur Wigman Swayne, lived at Garden Cottage and was in the choir at St. John's. Arthur's wife, Florence, was the schoolmistress at St John's (Merrow street) School. Edgar's Uncle, Frank Gould, was the village Blacksmith and, with his son, John, lived at the Old Forge, next door to Mayor House.

My Life In Merrow by Joan Boxall

I now enjoy my retirement and holidays. I...am extremely happy in my accommodation at Sunset Homes, and think how lucky I am to have had on the whole such a happy and varied life.

Merrow in the Thirties, by John Sutton

“I hope that my recollections from my childhood will give a little pleasure to others.”

Uplands, by Gerry Coates.

The Swayne family occupancy of Hall Place Farm, by John Swayne.

Letter from Ron Seagar to the editors, Summer 1999.

Merrow Dramatic Society, by Anne-Marie Davies.

We have also received some lovely contributions from local school children – Boxgrove School has been studying the various building in Merrow, Bushy Hill children have been interviewing our elderly residents about the War. We also have their accounts of celebrating the new millennium and, inspired by the Guildford Time Vault, Merrow Infant School has been considering what they would put in theirs.

The History of Merrow Matters

Merrow Matters has been around for over two years now. It came about as a result of the Merrow Residents' Association's initiative in trying to set up a Millennium project.

Representatives of local organisations were invited to a meeting in July 1997 to discuss establishing a committee to investigate some way of Merrow celebrating the Millennium. No one at that meeting was prepared to commit themselves to such a committee and several organisations already had plans for Millennium projects. What emerged from that meeting was the need for a communications network that would reach the whole community – a self-financing newsletter that would list local organisations and advertise anything were planning.

Throughout the autumn and winter of 1997/98 we produced draft copies of a community magazine and attempted to 'sell' it to local businesses. At the same time we contacted local organisations to consolidate our information about them and to build up our calendar. In February we went to print with a slim, twenty four-page booklet with our local organisations' listings and a calendar of events. We had twenty-two advertisers, many of whom had promised to support us for the year.

As we anxiously awaited the delivery of our 'baby' we set about arranging for its distribution. We called on all our friends and acquaintances and eventually coerced about seventy people into delivering *Merrow Matters* to each house in Merrow.

The response was very encouraging: people seemed pleased with the idea of a local magazine; several offered us articles and we gained ten more advertisers for the second issue, which grew to thirty-six pages. In the autumn of 1998, Claire Rymell and Ruth Crofton-Briggs joined the editorial team, providing much expertise and support for the venture.

In the first issue we listed forty-eight organisations, which included schools and churches, as well as clubs, societies and youth groups, such as guides and scouts. For the third issue we sought out all activities being held in the various halls throughout the village and unearthed many additional classes to add to our list: ballroom dancing, bridge clubs and exercise classes. Many of these are organised by people outside Merrow who were very pleased to get the free publicity we were offering. We now list nearly ninety 'organisations' in, or meeting in, Merrow.

One of the original concerns was would we get sufficient copy to make an interesting read. We needn't have worried: the people of Merrow have a lot to say and very few articles are solicited. Obviously with only three issues a year, the 'news' we print can't be that topical, but we can report on events, new shops and planning issues. Both the MRA and the Boxgrove Neighbourhood Watch and Residents Association now have a page with us to report on their activities. Many local people are eager to tell us their memories of living in Merrow and we have published several of these accounts. We have also been given accounts of the older houses in the area which make interesting reading and give us a different view of the past. In this volume, our millennium issue, we have reprinted these accounts, but organised by topic, rather than author. We hope you enjoy it.

Sue Stranger

Merrow childhood

My first introduction to our church, St John's Merrow, was when I was baptised on the 23rd April 1939 by the Rev. GG Williams.

My memories of being a child in Merrow were very happy, carefree days. Being brought up in Down Road, I spent many hours playing on the Downs, taking my young puppy or kitten to play in the grass and all the wild flowers, which we are so fortunate to have. I knew from an early age how privileged I was to live in Merrow and the beautiful Downs.

I became a Brownie, and I was taught a lot of things by the late Miss Marjorie Elliot and gained badges to put on the arm of my uniform. We also went on outings, one time to Chessington Zoo. We thought it was marvellous going down the slides and having a swing, and the animals were something else! Being a Brownie gave me a good start in life. We were told to be good to others and help our mother and father at home. We had a happy time learning new things.

One year I had a scooter for a Christmas present, so I used to scoot all along the Epsom Road to the top of Merrow Street and then sail right down to the Common, where my grandmother lived. My grandmother lived in Merrow all her life until she was 94 years old. She had eleven children.

Audrey Purser

I was born in Down Road, the youngest of four children.

At Christmas time, (a week or so prior) Claud Bookham and myself would go out carol singing. Neighbours used to like this and it gave us a little extra money for Christmas. On one or two occasions with other children from the road we went to sing carols at Pareora, a big house nearly opposite Pit Farm Road, where a Mr Walter of Mazawattee Tea lived. He took us in and gave us a drink and something to eat (I can't remember exactly what) and then gave us all little jumpers to wear. Unfortunately we boasted to other children, so naturally many went to visit and it stopped for good.

There were very few vehicles about in those days, so we were able to play in the street. Hop scotch, skipping, marbles, fag cards, spinning tops, bouncing balls at the wall, it was all great fun for us.

On Derby day, usually a Wednesday, in the first week of June, we would dash out of school, run down the road and sit on the gate by the Bridle path and wait for the charabancs to come back from the races. Then we shouted out “Throw out four rusty coppers”. If they had had a win, we were usually rewarded with a few coppers, which we ran into the road to collect before the next charabanc came along. There wasn’t much traffic in those days.

I was a Brownie at the age of eight and we held our meetings at Miss Margaret Duncan’s house – Earlston, in Hillier Road. She was Brown Owl and Marjorie Elliot was Tawny Owl. Later on Miss Duncan then took the Guides and Marjorie became Brown Owl.

The hut was built in the grounds of Miss Duncan’s home and we all used it until Miss Duncan died and the property was sold. It was transferred to the bottom of Levylsdene until the developers again wanted the ground. The piece of ground where the guide hut now stands was, I believe given for all time.

Joan Boxall

There were fewer golfers on Merrow Downs during the war years and my brothers and I enjoyed hours of pleasure roaming and playing on the Downs. There was much more freedom and it was safer for youngsters to explore the countryside in those days. Italian and German prisoners-of-war were imprisoned behind barbed wire on the Downs and we would watch them playing football on the scaled-down pitch they had prepared. *Elise Ireland*

Down sleepy little Horseshoe Lane lived my friend Katherine McLeod with her ponies. They had a large property with paddocks and stables. We girls would ride all day through the woods and bridle ways and often over the Downs to the forge at Shere.

I spent many happy hours with Juliet Oldham in the friendly St. John’s Vicarage, and now wonder if the Rev Oldham solved a problem he had – how to legally get round a bequest and free the much needed money which had been left (in perpetuity and specifically) for the purchase of long, red flannel undergarments for the needy of the Parish! *Jean Nicholls*

In Merrow it is peaceful and you hardly have the traffic. And you’re in the middle of London and the coast. *Thomas Roberts, Merrow Infant School*

Living in Merrow is very quiet and peaceful and where I live has not got many people. But in London it is packed with people. *Iain McMachlan, Merrow Infant School*

School

The keynote of the Thrupp family’s life in Merrow was service to the community, founded on a deep attachment to the Church. One of Mr Thrupp’s first acts was to give the land and pay for the building of the first school in Merrow Street. This was a National School, that is to say an elementary school under the auspices of the National Society, which had been set up some years earlier to promote the education of the children of the poor in the principles of the Church of England.

Mr John Woodger (a Godalming man) and his wife were appointed as teachers. Later, when the school had expanded and taken on extra staff, Miss Adelaide Thrupp became ‘correspondent’ to the school (a kind of permanent inspector); although she did not suffer fools gladly, and her visits may have been awaited with rather mixed feelings by the staff, her influence overall was entirely for the good. She braced the slackers, gave prizes to the industrious, threw Christmas parties and paid for outings for the children – in general she ensured that the school remained a model of its kind. *Roger Marjoribanks*

Our family of six children, all went to St John's Merrow School, as did about three families of Grover. Later on some of us left to go to different schools in Guildford. Such as the Archbishop Abbots School which was in the grounds of Abbots Hospital. Two of my brothers went there, and one changed to the Grammar School in Upper High Street or Spital Street, as it used to be.

When High Path and Down Road were built, the latter had an Infant School. When they reached a certain age they left there, and had to go to the St John's School about 1½ miles away. Also the younger pupils had to leave Burpham for St John's, which is even further, and all had to walk both ways. There were no cars or buses for schools then. We were lucky, we had a very short walk. *Edgar Tunnell*

We all went to Down Road Infants school at the age of 5. It was a very happy little school and my teachers were Miss Gough and Miss Withers. When the boys reached the age of eight and the girls age nine; we transferred to Merrow Street School. It was quite a long walk, but we had one and half-hours for lunch. We walked home, (or ran) had lunch and then back to school and then home again afterwards.

I had three different headmasters during my years at Merrow School. Mr Pleass, Mr. Donnellan and Mr. Mountain. Mr. Pleass was very academic and musical, Mr. Donnellan was more for sport, so we had netball, stool ball, for the girls and football and cricket for boys every Friday in the Merrow cricket ground. Mr. Mountain liked drama, so we had quite a lot of acting and singing. Our teachers at that time were Miss Burnham, Mrs Masey, Mrs Swayne and Miss Pratt – all good teachers.

During my time there, chocolate drink was introduced, to be given out at elevenses. Two of the girls were chosen to mix it up in the cloakroom. We had a sort of urn, in which we mixed the powder with water, put it over a small gas ring on the floor and boiled it up. There was no kitchen for learning cookery, but the Women's Institute paid for a kitchen to be built on to the village hall. We were then able to walk to the hall and be taught cookery by Miss Foster.

Miss Baring-Gould who lived at Boxgrove House on the right hand corner on Epsom Road had a companion called Miss Newell. She was a skilled embroidress; and any girl who wished, from our area, could go on a Saturday to be taught embroidery. She would draw flowers from the garden onto greaseproof paper, then put carbon paper between that and the material and she would transfer them for us to embroider. I made a night-dress case for my mother, it had a large bowl of tulips on it. My friend Rosemary made a bag with an orange tree on it and my friend Phyl made a handkerchief sachet but she doesn't remember what flowers she did. *Joan Boxall*

There were only two State schools here then – Down Road School for the little ones, and Merrow Street School for 5-14 year olds. After leaving Down Road School, my sister, two brothers and I, in our turn, walked to Merrow Street School passing the forge in Merrow (where the Service Station is now) and the horse stables next to the Horse and Groom Pub. The children would walk in 'crocodile' fashion to the Village Hall and back for school dinner, which was served there.

Whilst we were at school, other children were evacuated from London to the safer area of Guildford and Merrow so much so that our schools had difficulty in coping with the extra pupils, part-time education prevailed for a while. However, at 11 years of age, we sat the Scholarship Exam for the grammar schools in Guildford (later, this exam became the 11-Plus). It was a difficult time for children – there was the fear of the air-raid's eerie frightening siren, the carrying of gas masks at all times, and the hurrying to the air-raid shelters to wait for the welcome sound of the 'all clear' and release into the fresh air again. *Elise Ireland*

I went to Down Road School in 1944. When the sirens went off, we all had to go into the air raid shelter and were given paper to draw on until the 'all clear' sounded. When we were having lessons, we could hear the marching up or down the road of the Prisoners of War. Their camp was on the Downs. *Audrey Purser*

Going to Merrow Infant School – I like my teacher because she is kind to me and the lunch is very scrumptious. *Claudia Harvey-Smith, Merrow Infant School*

The good thing about living in Merrow is so that I can get to school early. I like school because my teacher is nice and kind. *Victoria Bennet, Merrow Infant School*

Shops

Thomas and Frances' Swayne's next son, Thomas, was a grocer in Merrow. He lived in Mayor House on the site, which is now 'La Boulangerie'. This was next door to The Old Forge (now the Garage and Safeway), which was run by his son-in-law, William Gould, and later his grandson John Gould, who wrote "Merrow from Ancient Times".

Upon Thomas' death in 1876, the Grocer's shop passed to his son William, who sold out to Mr Kimber in about 1912. Thomas' great granddaughters, Irene and Zoë Tunnel, continued to live in Merrow until 1997, when they moved to Lime Grove in East Horsley.

There are various entries in the account books of interest to Merrow residents: in 1829 Thomas Swayne sold Mr Connisbee 10 sheep and 1 lamb for £11-15s-0d. Conisbee's butchers had a shop in Merrow until about 1992, when, sadly, they closed down. They do still, however, have shops in East Horsley and Ripley. Thomas also supplied his son Thomas' grocery business in Merrow as well as other members of the family.

John Swayne

My mother used to push a pram with two of us in it, and two more walking, from Merrow Street, all round the shops in High Street, Market Street, North Street, Friary Street. If we were good we stopped for a glass of milk, 1d in the dairy near Lympos and Smee, the East end of Spital Street. Then we would walk all the way home.

Gypsies came round with hand made pegs to sell. Bread, meat, fish, coal, the muffin and crumpet man, and even Sainsbury sent horse and cart round to the houses each week.

Merrow had its own blacksmith and a carpenter and wheelwright and both were kept very busy, but now both have disappeared, and the petrol station is on that site. There was a butcher and a grocer and a general store, plus two small shops, one in High Path and one in Down Road. The latter sold papers and writing material mostly.

The Horse and Groom was built in 1615 and has been altered, especially inside, over the years. At one time three windows were uncovered that had been covered over to avoid the Window Tax of many years ago.

There were two Post Offices, one run by Mr Harms and Son, two local Postmen and one Policeman. *Edgar Tunnell*

After school at Down Road, I delivered bread for a Mr Broom who was the grocer in the little shop at the bottom of the road. Bretts and Grimmonds were bakers in Guildford, and delivered bread twice a day, morning and afternoon. I would have a little basket and deliver a cottage loaf, coberg, or milky loaf to whoever had ordered them. Later on when I was 11 years old I did the paper round in Down Road, having to get my entire round ready myself. This produced half a crown and a bar of chocolate for my pocket money.

Mrs Elliott ran the post office and sweet shop. The sweets were always in glass jars and she was very generous to us children.

Sometimes I would go on a little errand for Miss Gough to Mr Woodcock the butcher at the bottom of High Path, and picked up her meat twice a week, for this I was rewarded with a sixpence.

On Sunday the muffin man would come with a padded cap on his head, and on top of that was his big tray. In the week sometimes the knife sharpener would come with his little bicycle contraption. Also the rag and bone man, who if you took him out a jam jar, would reward you

with a windmill made out of wallpaper, and pinned with a small pin on to a piece of stick.

Wall ice cream and Eldorado ice cream tricycles would come once or twice a week, mostly Sundays though, and we children were allowed to have a penny snow fruit, and sometimes mother and father would have a threepenny ice-cream block with two wafers.

Everything you needed was delivered to your door - the coal was delivered for 1 shilling a cwt, or £1 per ton. Bread was delivered by the Co-op. Milk was delivered, first of all by pony and trap from Whites Farm and Humphries of Merrow Street. It was then taken over by Lympass and Smee, who had a van. We didn't have milk bottles then. There was a big churn and the milkman filled his small hand churn from the larger one with a pint ladle which fitted on the churn, he then measured our milk into our own milk jug.

Mr. Denyer had a small market garden where the Daryington Drive, Holford Road houses are now. We would get all our vegetables there, which was fun because he also kept cows and pigs.

A Mr Daniels worked at the anvil in the old forge. While walking to school we got great enjoyment out of watching him at work, shoeing the horses. **Joan Boxall**

Mrs. Kimber owned one of the shops, she was a kind lady, and I still remember her putting tea and sugar into little bags.

Just along the Epsom Road there was a big house that was eventually made into tea rooms. It was called the Walnut cafe and in the summer tables were set out on the lawn for afternoon tea. Further along was the old blacksmiths and the farmhouse with its stone wall and horse chestnut trees with their red flowers. As a boy my husband carved his initials into that red brick wall!

Dorothy Stemp

The Hoskins Brothers were wheelwrights for many years and they lived in a small cottage at the entrance to Levylsdene House which was owned by Mr. and Mrs. Laing.

Merrow Street had a lot of small businesses e.g. a watch repairer, shoe repairer, milk dairy, coalman and builder. It was a joy to see the muffin and crumpet man with a tray on his head covered with green baize, walking and selling his goods ringing his bell as he went. **Ron Seagar**

Every morning, after the milkman had been with his horse, my father would send me out with a bucket and shovel. I really didn't want to do it, but he said it was good for his roses! (I can still see my sister Sheila smiling at what I was having to do!)

It was quite an event whenever we saw a red container outside Mr. Hoare's shop, the Down Road Post Office. It meant that he had some ice cream, and that was a treat. My mother did all her shopping there, and sometimes sent me to collect the bread. I would choose my sweets for which we would have to save enough coupons on our ration book. Sometimes I would be in awe of Mr Hoare, as he was quite a big man, who looked down at you over his glasses.

We had a wireless with an accumulator in, and when that ran out, I used to rush up to Merrow to the Old Garage and get some more 'juice' for it, and rush home, to listen to 'Dick Barton'.

Audrey Purser

Mr Kimber, who owned the local grocery store, called for my mother's order each week and then delivered the items to her door (no supermarket torture in those days, but a much more civilised system for the housewife). **Elise Ireland**

I stirred lazily in my garden chair as a small parcel landed in my lap. "Mail from England". My husband sat expectantly beside me. "Look Colyn! Just look what I've got here!" I excitedly waved a slim green volume "A Merrow magazine AND it's got the Old Forge on the cover! - My father's old garage!" My father was known as the 'Gentleman Proprietor' of Merrow Service Station for as long as I can remember until late 1948. He gave driving lessons and taught golf.

[I remember]...Queuing for sausages at Bert William's the butcher on the corner of High Path Road and pressing our noses longingly on the window of the sweet factory in Swan Lane;

watching the magical making of long sticks of rock, boiled sweets and humbugs. Our short-lived glee after we found we could buy sweets without coupons at Merrow Chemist shop: tiny blocks of chocolate and liquorice root! *Jean Nicholls*

No shop existed on the estate in 1953, which meant a long walk to the village to visit Kimber's Stores. Once a week my wife would gput both babies in the pram and walk from the estate, through Merrow Woods, down Boxgrove Road, along London Road into Guildford, to do her shopping, and then walk back again, in all sorts of weather. *Len Holt*

Our milk, two deliveries daily by hand cart, came from Lee Farm Dairy – their depot and shop being in the premises now occupied by Troward Anderson at 174 Epsom Road. The dairy was managed by a Mr and Mrs Hammel and I think that there was a small tea room on the premises. Later in the decade there was an amalgamation of dairies and it became Stoke Hill and Lee Farm Dairies. Bread, and cakes if we were lucky, was delivered daily in a little maroon Ford van by H Kimber and Sons. One the sons, who has already been mentioned in earlier editions of this magazine, was Mr Harold Kimber. I can well remember his weekly calls to collect our grocery order – he was such a cheerful character and always had kind words for us boys. He would come up the drive with pencil behind his ear and order book in hand, approach the back door and knock, then call out 'HK' One day I remember that he told my mother of a new line of confectionery – it was the now well known 'Kit Kat' bar which then sold at 1d for a small one and 2d for a large one. Yes, we were lucky boys that day. I'm sure that we eagerly awaited the return of the little maroon van that evening with that special order. I expect that many readers will recall hat many years later Mr Kimber became Mayor of Guildford. *John Sutton*

The Post Office

The end of about 113 years of Down Road Post Office was seen on January 15th. We have been there for ten years and have enjoyed serving the locality in the post office and shop. We are now passed our 'sell by date' and hope to enjoy a period of retirement. We have six grandchildren who we hope to see and entertain more.

Whilst we have been there, about 20 'locals' have helped in the shop or post office and we are grateful to them. Our longest serving members of staff are Renee Wheeler in the shop and Linda Hills in the post office. They have helped to make our shop a 'social' centre with their reliable and friendly service. Thanks, in particular, to them.

As no-one was willing or able to complete the necessary conditions for running the post office on site it became necessary to find an alternative arrangement. It seems the time of owner-run small shops and post offices is fast running out unless, like some rural shops, there is some form of assistance.

The original owners, according to the census of 1891, appear to be Mum as sub-postmistress, Dad running the 'corner shop', four sons variously dealing with horses and deliveries (there was a stable at the end of the original garden) and two young daughters at school – doubtless at the one in Down Road. Many will remember Mrs Elliott, Mr Hoare, Mr Stanley, Mrs Davies or Val – who were among the sub-postmasters before us. *David and Evelyn Brown*

Work

The Thrupps kept a fairly modest establishment by the standards of the time: in 1871 there were three servants in the kitchen, a housemaid and parlourmaid, coachman, gardener and groom, together with, presumably, the family's personal attendants (they were away from home on the night of the 1871 Census).

Ten years later, after Mr Thrupp's death, there were just five women servants living in and a gardener and groom in the grounds. In addition there was a considerable number of people scattered up and down Merrow Street who were serving or retired employees of the estate, but not

personal servants. Probably all in all the Thrupps gave a livelihood directly to some 50 or 60 people. **Roger Marjoribanks**

Thomas and Frances's eldest son William founded a building firm based in Stoke Fields, Guildford. He appears to have started his building activities in about 1829, when loads of building materials were delivered and recorded in the farm accounts. Edward Luck had a kiln and William used this for firing his bricks. He built St John's Church of England School in Merrow Street in 1853 and the Stoke Hill National School in 1872. He appears also to have specialised in churches. He renovated St Martha's in the 1840s, built Burpham Church in 1859 and Christ Church Guildford in 1873. Upon his death in 1877 the firm was split into two, each part run by one of his sons William and Thomas. William later became Mayor of Guildford in 1887, 1888, and 1893. His firm was in business until the 1930s. Thomas Swayne's building company was in business, albeit after amalgamations, until the 1980s. **John Swayne**

I went to the Technical Institute in Park Street, before starting work at the Drummond Brothers works in Broad Street, near Rydes Hill, where I worked in several departments for 50 years before retiring.

My father was a boot maker, as was his father before him. He made boots and shoes, complete, by hand and also did the repairs for all around Merrow. I remember him telling me, he left school at 15 and was sent to Albury to take back some shoes, which had been repaired, only to discover that there was nobody at home, and he had to bring the shoes back.

My father, William Henry Tunnell, had many jobs in the village. He was Parish Clerk, Secretary to the Merrow Down Conservators, Secretary of the Rifle Club, Secretary of the Horticultural Society, Rates and Rent Collector for Merrow and parts of the Clandons and the Horsleys, Secretary of the National Deposit Friendly Society, Verger, also Tax Collector. He supplied news to Surrey Advertiser of births, deaths and marriages etc., Agent for Merrow House Estate, Member British Red Cross.

Also I remember when the large flintstones were dug up at Newlands Corner and gravel was graded through a grill with varying sizes of mesh. In those days workmen took a pride in their work, and the flints were stacked about one foot high in a rectangle, the sides and top were very straight and level. Fossil hunters used to come from miles around to inspect those piles, and my Father showed us what to look for in the shape of Shepherd's Crowns, and I still have a few to this day. The stones were spread on the roads and pressed into the surface with heavy steamrollers, which used to be parked by the pond in Merrow, where they sucked up water for the boiler. The driver would put the end of the hose on a shovel to prevent taking in any mud with the water. **Edgar Tunnell**

When I left school at the age of fourteen I went to work as a between maid for Miss Johnson at Woodlands, in Horseshoe Lane. I had to be there by six am, and my first job was to clear the ice from the front step, as it was wintertime. My mother came with me in the morning as there were no lights in Merrow at that time, and it was rather frightening. Mother was just as frightened to come back in the dark. I only stayed about three weeks as I developed housemaid's knee, having had too much kneeling to do.

Then I had a job at the Cow and Gate factory in Chertsey Street. I had to learn how to fold boxes for the Farmers Wife cheeses to go in (they had to be picked up in the correct way to be put in the boxes), then waxed paper had to be cut, to wrap up the boxes in a special way. One had to progress by stages to these jobs and it was all done on piecework, so one had to work pretty fast. I stayed there for three years and then went back into service. Firstly for a Mrs Pimm of Pimms Furniture in North street ending up at Mrs. Masseys in Grove road, 'Masseys Chemist'.

War was declared and I was on the point of going into the armed forces when in 1941 Mr. Kimber advertised for a shop assistant. I applied, as I had always wanted to work in a shop. He took me on for a month's trial at the Burpham shop and I stayed there for 13 years not knowing whether I had passed my trial month!

During my time at Kimbers, I learnt to bone a side of bacon, and skin a whole cheese, and pat up the butter. Orders were taken by phone and when not serving customers they were made up ready for van deliveries twice a week. It wasn't always easy to satisfy customers under rationing. There were never enough non-rationed goods to go around, which caused problems. Ration books had to be marked to make sure of fair shares each time small amounts came in.

I used to cycle back and forth to work and it was a little frightening when the huge tanks and lorries came up Boxgrove road on their way to the south coast during the war.

In 1953 I left Kimbers and went to work at MAFF as a machine operator, and worked my way up to be a senior supervisor.

I retired in 1978 as a clerical officer. *Joan Boxall*

May Barnett worked for the Eustace's as a between maid (cleaning the boots, cleaning the silver etc.) at the Rectory for four years from about 1925, having worked beforehand from 1923 as a between maid at two houses elsewhere in Guildford.

As she (May Barnett) told me, the Rectory must have been built for a wealthy Rector, because it had servants' rooms in the attic (Rectors often had private means in those days as they usually were the youngest sons of well-to-do families). When May Barnett was there (the Rectory) the Eustace's had a cook, two maids, herself as between maid, a gardener and a gardener's boy and probably a chauffeur. The gardener and the boy lived in the gardener's cottage in the grounds, the others in the house. *Gerry Coates in The Old Rectory*

My father worked for the late Mr and Mrs Daley, who owned the stables at Merrow, opposite the Merrow parade of shops. He looked after horses and often helped out delivering a foal in difficulties. I used to go and watch and help if I could. I loved stroking the horses and talking to them. Now the stables have been turned into bungalows, but still retain the shape of stables. As I walk by, it brings back memories of years gone by!

Sometimes on a Saturday I went with my friend Jean and her father in his van to deliver the local bread and cakes, which were supplied by Kimber's of Merrow. There was a lovely aroma of bread and cakes in the van. It made us feel very hungry and we would eat the breadcrumbs up after they had all been delivered.

When I was old enough, I became a newspaper girl and collected the papers at 7.00am from Mr. Guest, who owned the newsagents at the bottom of High Path Road; my round was Down Road. *Audrey Purser*

Farming

Three generations of the Swayne family lived and worked at Hall Place Farm (now The Old Farmhouse) continuously from 1766 until 1897. Documents relating to the farm are deposited at the Surrey Record Centre in Woking. These documents include counterleases deposited by the Hospital of the Blessed Trinity (Abbots Hospital) in Guildford, and Account Books covering the period up until 1851 deposited by a relative, Mr Bob Swayne.

The lease of the farm was originally purchased from the Hospital by my great great great great great grandfather, John Swayne, in 1766. He was a doctor in Dorking and, being 62 years of age at that time, presumably bought the lease as an investment for his son William, who was at that time working for his future father-in-law, Thomas Greathurst, on his farm at Effingham. John never lived at the farm, but continued to live in Dorking until his death in 1773.

William Swayne ran the farm. He married Anne Greathurst at Effingham in 1769. They had six children although only two of them, William and Thomas survived to adulthood. Sadly, Anne herself died in 1783, shortly after giving birth to twin girls William later married Rachel Humphreys at Merrow in 1787.

One of William's friends in Merrow was William Luck who farmed Coxhall Farm in Merrow Street. This was a friendship which lasted three generations and culminated in the two families running their farms together. William Swayne and William Luck were joint Land Tax Assessors for Merrow for a number of years from 1781.

Upon William's death the lease passed jointly to his only surviving sons William and Thomas. Sadly, the eldest son, William, died aged 30 in 1806 and so Thomas ran the farm for the next 50 years.

The Tithe map of 1839 shows the land owned or rented by both Thomas Swayne and Edward Luck. Unlike today, when the land belonging to a farm is normally contained within a boundary, this shows individual fields within the area farmed by the various farmers within the area. The 1851 census return shows Thomas Swayne as a farmer of 184 acres employing 7 labourers and Edward Luck as a farmer of 210 acres employing 8 labourers.

The only other children of Thomas and Frances who stayed in the Merrow and Guildford areas were John and Richard. They took over the lease of the farm on Thomas' death in 1860 and continued to run it until John's death in 1897. The 1861 census return shows John as a farmer of 176 acres employing 7 men and 2 boys. By 1881 this had fallen to 80 acres employing 4 men and one boy. After John's death his widow Jane, and his brother Richard, moved out of the farmhouse, but continued to live in Merrow until they died within a month of each other in 1910.

The leases of the farm were each for 21 years, although they were normally renewed before they expired. The original lease of 1766 was renewed in 1785, 1805, 1821, and 1844, and the counterleases are deposited at the Surrey Record Centre. There should presumably also be leases dated about 1864 and 1884 but unfortunately these have probably been lost. The 1844 counterlease was signed jointly by Thomas Swayne and his nephew, Edward Luck. Sadly Edward was the last of the Luck line and the Coxhall Estate was sold in 1878, the year following his death.

The name of the farm was changed to 'The Old Farmhouse' in 1929. This was presumably when it ceased to be a farm. St John's Church Hall was built on the site of the old farmyard and those who remember the old safety curtain at the Village Hall will have seen a picture of the farmyard before the Hall was built. *John Swayne*

There were several farms in Merrow, but one by one they have been built on, and only a few of the farm houses exist. Those which come to mind are Great Goodwin's Farm, Hall Place (Epsom Road), the farm in Park Lane (Back Lane) but I do not recall the name. Other farms were Little Goodwin's in Smoky Hole, Boxgrove Farm, opposite side of Merrow to Great Goodwin's Farm. It was along part of the [Merrow Downs Course] that farm animals were driven, towards One Tree Corner and on via Warren Road to the North Street (Guildford) cattle market, which was held on the left side of the street. There was a weighbridge at the bottom of North Street (also on the left). *Edgar Tunnell*

Our milk had come from the fields (where Merrow Park now stands) in the early years of the war until wartime legislation ruled that our milk was to be supplied by White's Farm.

David Fogwell

Everyday Life

Most of the everyday items of today were not invented then. I remember later customers walking into my friend's shop and saying "My husband had to go to work without his breakfast, because the toaster broke" or "My husband is down to his last shirt because the washing machine is full of dirty clothes and will not work".

I remember Mrs Robinson who came from Yorkshire to live in Coxhall Cottage, used a 'Dolly' and a washtub in the Yard, every week, and there were yards of lines to hang all the wet things

out to dry.

Mrs Clare ran a laundry and, when the weather was fine, there were many lines of bed sheets, tablecloths, etc. There were also two smaller laundries in High Path Road but now we have a cleaners in the row of shops from Bushy Hill Drive to Garden Cottage, which is almost opposite the Horse and Groom.

Houses and cottages used to get their water from wells, again most of these have gone. There was one for the Windgate cottages, one between Coxhall Cottages, one inside the parlour of Hall Place Farm, one opposite the Old Cottage in Trodds Lane and one at the rear of St Catherine's Cottages. In summer, the water from these wells was beautifully cool, and usually we were jokingly told to look out for frogs. Mother used to live in Church House when young and she said that if the bucket was not fastened well on to the hook it came off, and usually lost.

Merrow Street was flanked with elm trees and that made it very dark, except on moonlight nights, called the parish lantern, by some. There were no street lamps in Merrow, and the last one coming home from Guildford was near the Gatehouse by the boundary of Merrow.

Edgar Tunnell

I was born in Trodds Lane in a small house. There was no running water and for many years we had to get the water from the well. It was very hard work! ***Dorothy Stemp***

Church

In 1802 there was a dispute between the Parish and William Swayne about the repair of the fences between the Churchyard and the Farm. This dispute culminated in the Parish impounding all William Swayne's pigs which were running around the churchyard. Although it would appear that William Swayne was responsible for all repairs to the property, the Hospital told him that it was the Parish's responsibility and backed him up by paying for the resulting Court case.

They lost the case and paid William Smallpiece, the solicitor, for all the expenses incurred. This must have been quite embarrassing for William since he was a Churchwarden and a very active member of the Church. He was, in fact, a Churchwarden at St John's from 1773 until his death in 1803.

Anne Swayne herself died in 1783, shortly after giving birth to twin girl. She and the twins were the first Swaynes to have been buried in Merrow churchyard.

Thomas and Frances Swayne had 11 children - six sons and seven daughters. They were all born at Hall Place Farm and they all survived to maturity, which was quite unusual in those days. Most of these children are buried in Merrow Churchyard. In fact there are over fifty Swayne graves in the Churchyard counting both those who were born Swayne and those who married Swaynes. Most of these are to the north of the Church near the corner of Trodds Lane and the Epsom Road; others are to the east and the south of the Church. John Swayne is buried in Ockley churchyard, where most of his generation of the family are buried.

William Swayne appears [also] to have specialised in building churches. He renovated St Martha's in the 1840s, built Burpham Church in 1859 and Christ Church Guildford in 1873.

John Swayne

The Browells continued the Thrupp tradition of service: Major Browell, for instance, was a churchwarden for many years and is remembered as a strict disciplinarian. Both families' names are commemorated in St John's Church in Merrow: the Thrupps in the pulpit and the Browells by the Browell window.

From 1949 at Guildford Sunset Homes, occasional Sunday services were held, the Salvation Army visited to sing hymns and the local Brownies and schoolchildren also visited. St John's Church provided goods at Harvest Festival time and the School also gave gifts.

Roger Marjoribanks

We had our Sunday School, and the once a year Tea and Games, usually at Merrow House, or The Croft, or sometimes at the Grange,

Of course men and boys made up the Church choir and bellringers.

I can remember some of the women of Merrow, going to the Church, dressed in bonnets, and short capes, usually black or dark grey. Two sisters Miss Hitchcock and Mrs Pointer always dressed that way. ***Edgar Tunnell***

My paternal grandparents first lived in a tiny cottage in Trodds Lane (almost opposite where they now lie in St. John's Churchyard). They later moved to Down Road where my two aunts, Edie and Ethel lived together at 'Roselea' until their late nineties. Some may remember the two old ladies constantly walking to worship at St. John's. ***Jean Nicholls***
(are these the two referred to above?)

The Sunday school classes were held at the village hall, we would march to the St. Johns church for the 11 o'clock service and come out again during the hymn before the sermon. Sunday school was also held in church in the afternoon when questions were asked and answered on the Bible. About once a month we would have a church parade and march from the Village hall in our uniforms. On Armistice Day we marched with the Ex-servicemen from World War 1.

The Band of Hope held meetings in the chapel in High Path Road and once a charabanc arrived with a party of people from 'Black Cap Cigarettes'. They had a wonderful time, picnicking on the Downs. What I remember most of all is them singing 'Bye Bye Blackbird' with great gusto.

I've been a member of Merrow Church for 81 years, having been baptised and confirmed at St John's. I've not always been a regular worshipper when I was working, but try to be now.

Joan Boxall

There was a corrugated iron Congregational Church in High Path Road: my mother played the organ there as a newcomer to the Village.

The focal point of Merrow must be the Church and the peaceful churchyard where two of my grandparents and my mother and father lie at rest. Here, in St John's, I have memories of my brothers and me madly hand-pumping the church organ (before the electric pump was installed) for my sister to play, and my brother ringing the church bells. In the early 1950s, the Rector, Rev Oldham, produced and directed a Nativity Play in the Church. There was a small orchestra, a choir, and excellent wardrobe costumes, all resulting in a fine production which was much enjoyed by the audience and players alike.

Elise Ireland

I went to Down Road Sunday School every Sunday afternoon. I remember Betty Randall telling us about Jesus and drawing pictures. We had a stamp to stick in our books each week. We always went to Littlehampton for the Sunday School Treat. We would be picked up at the bottom of the road with our bags of sandwiches and drinks. We even had vouchers so we could go on the roundabouts for half price! What a great day out!

Later I went to Sunday School in the afternoons at St. John's Church with Reverend A Ford, our Rector at the time. I went to confirmation classes and later was confirmed by the then Bishop. I was married by the Rev. A Ford, and he also baptised one of my children. At Harvest Festival my father would go down to the allotments and dig up beetroot and parsnips, which I took with my sister, Sheila, to church with great pride. The church was beautifully decorated with flowers, fruit and vegetables, and the one thing I can remember was the two big wheat sheaves either side of the altar. It was a very happy service ending with, 'We plough the fields and scatter'.

We were married in March 1961 at St. John's Church, Merrow, by the Rev. Ford. We had two children, Stephen and Sarah, who both sang in the choir and rang the bells. I hope their future generation will do the same. ***Audrey Purser***

Uplands is not now in Merrow but belongs to Christchurch Ward. Until 1955 it was within the ecclesiastical boundary of St John's Church, Merrow. In that year the boundary was revised by the Diocese of Guildford and, with Gateways, it was transferred to the parish of Christ Church, Waterden Road in exchange for Boxgrove Park.

Gerry Coates in Uplands

Mrs Eustace (who lived at the Rectory) was a charming lady who took an interest in the Church and the village. The GFS used to hold their meetings there and sometimes the Mothers' Union did too. I think Mr Eustace was a churchwarden at one time.

Mr and Mrs Eustace and a granddaughter are buried in one grave in the Churchyard. The son, Charles, is also buried there under the Trodds Lane fence with the children.

Gerry Coates in The Old Rectory

The intention to build a Catholic Church in Merrow goes back to the early 1950s, when Sunday Mass began to be celebrated weekly in the Merrow Grange Convent. The Catholic community in Merrow remained part of the Guildford Parish of St Joseph, but when it outgrew the size of the chapel in Merrow Grange, the Sunday worship was transferred to the chapel in St Peter's School in Horseshoe Lane East. Fund raising for a new church had already started and a site was purchased in Levylsdene in 1954. That site, now occupied by numbers 2, 4 and 6 Levylsdene, was later sold for housing development. This occurred in 1965 when Craigie House, the boarding accommodation in Horseshoe Lane West for St Peter's School, was no longer required for that purpose and its site was earmarked for the new church as well as for a Catholic primary school, which was opened there in 1966.

Some years later, it was decided to add a Middle School (for children of 8 to 12) to St Thomas' Primary School, and there was no longer enough land available there for the hoped-for new church. However, the nuns at Merrow Grange came to the rescue and a part of their land beside the route of the proposed Laustan Close road was sold to the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton as the final site for the Church of St Pius X. Planning permission was obtained and work on the new church started in 1971. The first Mass in the Church was celebrated on Sunday 10th December 1972 and the Church was officially opened by Bishop Michael Bowen two months later. ***David Allan***

CARE - A Brief history

You may have heard of 'CARE for GUILDFORD' but you may not have realised that CARE has its roots in Merrow.

In 1974, Elizabeth Doughty read an article in the Methodist Recorder describing a scheme in Rickmansworth which provided the help a neighbour might give to those in need – a Care scheme – and was struck by the need for something similar in Merrow. She obtained more information about the Rickmansworth scheme and circulated this to the Methodist, Anglican and Catholic churches in Merrow. Great interest was shown and a working party was established in early 1975 to investigate creating a Care scheme in Merrow. The working party interviewed fifty local statutory and voluntary bodies to see what was already available, what was needed and to assess the reaction to a Care scheme in Merrow. There was a positive response but concerns about self-sufficiency and reliability.

During mid-1975 it was felt that the proposed scheme should be enlarged to cover the whole of Guildford Borough, not just Merrow, and Mike Thornton, the Secretary of the Guildford Council of Churches was approached about establishing a scheme through the Council. The working party was invited to describe the project to the Council of Churches in January 1976, who reacted positively and set up a subcommittee to carry out a feasibility study. All the churches were given more information and asked for their views and social services were involved. Then success, in June 1976, the Guildford Council of Churches accepted the scheme as its project for 1976/7, donating £250 and promising ongoing support.

There followed the hard work of setting up the organisation, advertising CARE to potential clients and recruiting volunteers: 85 volunteers by August and 155 by October. Then the day everyone had been working towards arrived. After two years CARE for GUILDFORD was formally launched by Pamela Harding, then the Mayor of Guildford, on 29th October 1976 at a ceremony in the Guildhall and CARE opened for business the following day.

In the early days, CARE relied financially on donations from the churches and clients. Later its work in the community was recognised by grants from Guildford Borough Council, Surrey Health Authority and the Poyle Charity. However substantial legacies from two grateful clients allowed CARE to become a self-sufficient autonomous voluntary organisation. To this day CARE still has a large percentage of its volunteers from Merrow and is always looking for more.

One last word: in 1978 CARE handled 1910 requests for help and by 1999 this had grown to 5904 all thanks to the enthusiasm and initial hard work of a small group of caring Merrow residents.

Daphne Bingley and Bill Riddell

Forgotten landmarks

As boys, we used to spend a lot of time around Merrow Lake. There was, on the east bank, a changing area constructed of wood. There was no roof. Swimming in the lake was very popular with the young. There was also fishing, and in winter, if the ice was thick enough, people came up from miles around to skate or slide. Sadly it fell into decay, the banks crumbled, and some trees fell into the water.

Many years later, when Merrow Park was built, the builders promised to restore the pond to a beautiful new pleasure spot. The trouble seems to be that a new drain was put in the south end for the water to flow into the pond, and a similar one at the other end, for the water to flow out. As the pipes were at the same level, no water stayed to fill the pond, but it went on through a narrow ditch across the centre, and out of the north end. So the landing stage, built about five feet high, has never been used, because there is no water for the boats except perhaps very small toy ones. (Cattle also stopped to drink at this pond? Clandon also had such a pond opposite the Church. Both have since been filled in, because they got rather smelly, and were breeding places for mosquitoes.)

The Grange had lots of land. It had all of the land south of Horseshoe Lane (later East and West was added) and the land between Grove Road and High Path Road, which was for vegetables etc.

Between Coxhall Cottage and Peace Cottages there was a pound in which stray horses were impounded until claimed by their owners. Many times gypsies congregated there to see three or four of their horses locked up. When Coxhall Cottage was sold many years later it was given the name we know today, Pound Cottage.

Many things have now disappeared, such as the famous Horseshoe over the doorway of the Forge. This horseshoe was so complicated, that the bricks had to be shaped and assembled first on the ground, and then transferred to the wall. It was admired and photographed for many years, until the premises changed hands, and the whole front was knocked down, and, of course, the horseshoe was just a heap of rubble.

I took a photo of the Old Rectory before it was pulled down, and my picture was on the front page of the Surrey Times, paper, with a write up about all of the Parsons etc. who had lived there, before the new place was built by the sports ground. ***Edgar Tunnell***

'Craigie' was a big house, turned into Craigie Hotel, and then pulled down later to accommodate St. Thomas of Canterbury School.

Merrow Croft was a large house owned by Mr Pike Pease (later, Lord Daryington). When he left

Merrow it was used by the Church Army for poor women from London, (he was head of the Church Army). Before it was demolished we held a Merrow Pageant in the grounds.

Mr and Mrs McCloud lived in the big house before it was taken over by St. Peters School. Mr. and Mrs. Best owned Halldene, next to the village hall. Later it was taken over by the nuns who were teachers at Merrow Grange when it was a school.

Levylsdene was the large house where Mr and Mrs Gilliat and their family lived, and there were fields where fetes were held.

The Fairway was all poppy fields, which we also passed on our way to school.

As you go up the Fairway, just before the roads separate, there used to be a row of trees, and somewhere there was the scout hut in which they call the Roll. When the houses were built it was pulled down, and transferred to the present scout site.

There was a little house where a Mr and Mrs Hoskin lived (who worked at the forge) which was pulled down when the estate was built.

Joan Boxall

Next to Merrow Street School was a big house called the Rectory where Mr. and Mrs. Eustace lived; below Merrow Street School was Manday Farm, the fields and cottages and Merrow Common.

At the top of Merrow Street was Merrow House where Major Browell and Mrs. Browell lived. In the summer we had races and fetes in their lovely garden.

Just along the Epsom Road there was a big house that was eventually made into tea rooms. It was called the Walnut cafe and in the summer tables were set out on the lawn for afternoon tea. Further along was the old blacksmiths and the farmhouse with its stone wall and horse chestnut trees with their red flowers. As a boy my husband carved his initials into that red brick wall!

I remember Levylsdene House with its long driveway: fields on both sides and the view at the back of the house across the Downs.

At the top of Horseshoe Lane was a big hotel. When the war started it became a hospital for the wounded.

When I sit and think back, I can still see the long summer days and all the men and women hay making in the fields: the old public house and St. John's church where my grandmother and I always worshipped. ***Dorothy Stemp***

The Rectory was built in 1885. The occupants from 1885 were: Rev L R Flood 1885-1900; Rev H V Johnson 1900-1908; Rev A R Fletcher 1908-1923.

At some stage, about 1921, Rev Fletcher decided to live elsewhere because the house was too big. In about 1923 it was decided to sell it and build a new Rectory which is the one which is still in use (St John's Rectory, 232 Epsom Road).

I found somewhere a story that Admiral of the Fleet, Lord Jellicoe, lived there temporarily during and immediately after the First World War. This, unfortunately, I have not been able to authenticate - yet.

May Barnett the between maid remembers the Rectory during the 1914-18 War when she was a young child living in Peace Cottages. There was no Church Hall and part of the Rectory 'belonged' to the Parish. It had a side door with access to the parish room. Here meetings were held and a parish layette for poor pregnant women was kept. She remembers her mother, who was about to give birth to her fifth child, telling her to go to this room to collect the layette, or 'parish bag' as it was called.)

The Rectory was sold about 1923 and bought by the Eustace family, who changed its name to 'Stoodwell'. Mr Eustace died in 1944 but his wife continued to live there until the early 1950s

when Mrs Eustace sold it and moved to Peaslake. It was bought by a family called Booth who sold it in about 1959 for development. It, together with the gardener's cottage, was demolished in 1960 and the site was built on to form Rectory Close housing estate.

Gerry Coates in The Old Rectory

In 1926 I came to live with my Grandmother ...in... Merrow. The Old Rectory had been sold when the present Rectory in Epsom Road was built (before my time!) It was purchased by a Mr Eustace and his family who renamed it 'Stoodwell' (or Studwell). Mr Eustace had a wife and three children: two boys and a girl. There were two quince trees and a mulberry tree in the grounds and Mrs Eustace always brought Granny some to make jam and jelly (lovely!) As far as I know, Mr and Mrs Eustace's daughter Alicia still lives in the Shere/Peaslake area. **May Gregory**

We had a big, white house at the top of the road, but that was pulled down and now there are three houses in its place.

I remember playing in the field where Levylsdene is now. It used to have horses and masses of buttercups in it. Mrs. Gilliat used to live in the old original house which is still there. **Audrey Purser**

The days have gone when I walked through the wheat fields at Levylsdene House and through Merrow Woods and the fields, which have now become Bushy Hill Estate...we walked to Merrow Street School passing the forge in Merrow (where the Service Station is now) and the horse stables next to the Horse and Groom Pub.

There was no roundabout at St John's Church then, and one could stroll through the large gates and around the grounds of Clandon Park.

My father was born in Guildford and on his marriage in 1927, he and his new wife moved to Merrow. There were no houses between Down Road and High Path Road then, just fields: the Epsom Road was more of a lane than a road.

There were plays produced by Woodhall Duckhams Engineering Company's Drama Group at 'Uplands' (now the site of the MAFF). This Engineering Company left Merrow after the war and the Ministry of Food Offices were transferred from Colwyn Bay to Merrow, bringing more young people into the area. There were dances and music societies to enjoy there – many of the newcomers lived in hostels at 'Uplands' and were happy to join the local clubs for entertainment and social activities. Merrow was a pleasant place to spend one's teenage years. **Elise Ireland**

Merrow has become bigger through the years. It was once a village and looked like one, but now it looks more like Guildford. There used to be a lot of fields but now there are no fields except for one. **Sophie Furniss, Boxgrove County Primary School**

Before a hundred years ago Merrow was just a village with houses surrounded by farms. But now there are lots of roads ... (and)... also many schools such as Boxgrove, St Thomas School, Bushy Hill School and St Peters. **Sandra Vracar, Boxgrove County Primary School**

In 1758 Epsom Road was used for stage coaches going between Leatherhead and Guildford. Tolls were collected to keep it in good condition. The last toll keeper was Mr Benjamin Harms in 1861-1867. Tolgate Collage was originally built in 1839 which makes it 161 years old. It has two storeys. It has diamond shaped windows and a wooden front door. It is made out of bricks and terracotta tiles. The first engine came through the Tolgate in 1863. **Alison Curran, Boxgrove County Primary School**

Great Goodwin Farmhouse is down Old Merrow Street. It is about 100 years old. Many years ago it was a working farm but today it is a private house which means people live in it and we were not allowed to visit. We guessed that it was built in the 19th century. When we got back to school we found that it was built in the 16th century so our guess was wrong. It has six small windows and a small black door. It is quite big and made from brick and tiles. It is quite big and made from brick and tiles. Its garage looked quite like a barn for keeping animals in but I couldn't smell

anything. One thing I could tell had been changed was that there were electric lamps because in the 16th century they didn't have electricity. *Emily Raye, Boxgrove County Primary School*

The Horse and Groom is used for selling drinks and food. It is a pub where people enjoy themselves. It got its name because there are horses which race on a racecourse. It is not there now of course. Its name has changed several times, these are the names – Hare and Hounds, Running Horse Inn. *Charles Davies, Boxgrove County Primary School*

Merrow House

Merrow House was built on the west side of Merrow Street in 1802 as a substantial gentleman's residence. It is severely classical in appearance, a little reminiscent of Clandon House, square in plan and of three storeys, with a stone parapet concealing the slate roof, which was not thought at the time to be a stylish feature. The windows were originally composed of many small panes, typical of the period, but these were reglazed in 1876, by which time the Industrial Revolution had made it easier and cheaper to manufacture larger panes.

Although the two porches and the front door are original, much of the building has been altered over the years. A kitchen and stair turret were added to the north side during the 1820s, a big new room added at the south west corner in 1876, with further extensions to the west in the early years of the twentieth century and again in the 1940s. There was a stable block to the north (quite unthinkable that a Victorian gentleman should not have his stables!) but this was demolished in 1975 to make way for the present flats.

Nothing is known about the house's first owners: in the 1820s and 30s it was occupied by a family named Tinkler (who built the kitchen block) and then by a Mr Robert Austen. But its life only begins to come into focus in 1853 when it was bought by a wealthy middle aged gentleman from Chilworth, Mr Joseph William Thrupp, who lived there with his wife Ruth and unmarried daughter Adelaide until his death in 1873. The Thrupps were in origin Londoners: both Adelaide and her mother had been baptised in fashionable St George's, Hanover Square.

Merrow House was the centre of a considerable estate. Plans of 1876 and 1883 show that it consisted of nearly 200 acres and included all of Merrow Park to the west of Merrow Street as far north as the boundary with Burpham, a substantial strip to the east and a few fields to the north of Epsom Road.

Mr Thrupp died at the age of 73 in 1873. The vicar in his valedictory sermon, after mentioning his generosity to the school, summed up his character by saying, "By his urbanity, philanthropy and unassuming manner he endeared himself to all who had any acquaintance with him". Mrs Thrupp lived on to the age of 82, though in increasingly poor health. When she died in 1886, the features of her character which were stressed were her 'Work for God' and her 'Kindly sympathy in sorrow or sickness' – though it was made clear that she, like her daughter, had little time for those who made no effort to remedy their disabilities for themselves.

Miss Thrupp continued to live alone with her servants, to run the estate, oversee the school and in general play the part of a thoroughly conscientious lady squire until she too died, aged 78, in 1908. The Thrupp family had indeed given an example of Victorian philanthropy (now so often derided) at its best. She left her property to her nephew, Colonel E.T. Browell, who in turn left it in 1917 to his youngest son, Major Henry Frith Browell.

Major Browell died in 1947 and Merrow House passed out of private hands. However, the Browell family still owns property in Merrow: the latest of the line, Mr Hugh Browell, who lives in South Australia, very recently visited Merrow both to look after his affairs and to pay his respects to his forebears in St John's Church. He remembers the sunken garden as 'a very creepy place'.

After Major Browell's death in 1947 the house and gardens were bought by the trustees of the

Poyle Estate, a long established Guildford charity, who leased it to a new charitable housing society, Guildford Sunset Homes, for the purpose of establishing a home for elderly people of limited means to rent. Work to adapt the house was completed in 1949 and the new Home was officially opened by HRH the Duchess of Kent, who arrived for the ceremony in a red helicopter of the Queen's flight.

In its early days 31 people lived in the house and a further 10 in the old stable block. At that time the ambience was a little like a rather old-fashioned charity home, with men and women separated in different corridors; there were two small dormitories for women and one for men, but the majority of the residents lived in single rooms. While management was in the hands of the Committee of Management of Guildford Sunset Homes, the day-to-day running of the Home was carried out by paid staff. Apart from the Matron and her Deputy, the staff included a morning and an evening cook, with care assistants for bathing and general care, two cleaners, a laundress, a gardener and a care assistant specifically for night duty. Three meals a day were served and, in addition, local ladies came in to serve tea and give the staff some time off. The residents themselves were expected to help with laying tables, washing up and tidying their own rooms. Local doctors visited their own patients, while a hairdresser and a chiropodist also called.

(A continual programme of improvements to the home was carried out over the next fifty years, culminating in a major modernisation and construction programme in 1991 ensuring that Sunset homes were able to suit a wide cross section of the current needs of Guildford's elderly.)

1997 marks 50 years of service by Guildford Sunset Homes to the elderly of Guildford. Even those fifty years, let alone the previous 145 years of Merrow House's existence, have seen great change, but this change has always been, and will continue to be, devoted to the interests of those for whose benefit this Charitable Association was formed. We may hazard the hope, indeed the confident belief, that Joseph and Adelaide Thrupp and their successors smile down with approval at the way in which their old home and the newer residences are now being used.

Roger Marjoribanks

Uplands

Some of you may have read '*Merrow Downs, A Chronological History*' produced by the Merrow Residents' Association in 1991 or Louise Lewis's recent book '*Merrow, The Village and The Downs*'. In both of these you will find a brief reference to the house named 'Uplands', which was built in 1862 and still exists in the grounds of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food on the south side of the Epsom Road at the top of Boxgrove Road.

The main feature known about the house seems to be the fact that a Colonel Lane Fox lived there for a short time in the 1870's while he was Commandant of the Military Centre at Guildford. He became a Lieutenant General and changed his name in 1880 to Pitt Rivers when he inherited the Rivers estate. He founded the Pitt Rivers Museum at Oxford University in 1884 which houses his large collection of mainly archaeological objects. These have been vastly added to since then.

Quite recently I was put in contact with a friend and neighbour of the great grandson of the architect and first owner of 'Uplands' and was sent a copy of some of his jottings from the diary he kept at that time. His name was William Willmer Pocock. He lived in London and bought the site of 5 ½ acres in 1861 for £549. 15s while living for the summers in a rented house in Boxgrove Road. He then built Uplands and took up residence when it was completed. At that time there were only seven houses south of the Epsom Road between Uplands and Albury Road and Uplands became the first house in Merrow from Guildford. For the first two years he and his family lived in it only during the summers. Later he "*built on a butler's pantry, servants hall, manservant's room etc and made it a complete dwelling*" and took up permanent residence.

Since receiving these papers about William Pocock the Ministry has been kind enough to allow me and my wife to view the house and to give me copies of some of the papers they have relating

to it. It is a Grade II Listed building and has been kept in very good condition by the Ministry who used it for offices until two years ago. Few alterations have been made other than the addition of a rather unsightly brick building tacked on to the extension, referred to above, that William Pocock added in the 1860's. The gardens around the house are very well kept and probably little altered since the that time.

One feature of the house is a big bay window in what was the dining room. William Pocock refers to this in his diary. His wife, when the house was being built, said that the room was going to be too small. He told her that it was the same size as the one she thought too large in their house in London. He goes on to say that: *"Sure enough when finished, she said it was still too small – not of course from prejudice! – tho' I thought it large enough. Can a man have greater pleasure than pleasing his wife? I built a Bow to widen it. In doing this I had two wrought iron girders weighing 7 cwt each. Not having many hands and not wishing to wait for tackle, I lifted one at a time, by putting it on two supports not very far apart, and then lifting one end at a time and blocking it up and then the other, and repeating the process till I got it to the proper height, when I cut away the wall for half its thickness sufficiently to insert the girder, and pinned and firmly strutted it up. I then went thro' the same process with the other, and then pulled down the wall beneath. There was a slight settlement, but nothing to signify, and this might have been avoided with a little less haste."* He obviously did an excellent job because the bow window is still a very prominent feature of the house.

Though Pitt Rivers became a man of note. William Pocock clearly did not regard him highly. When his tenancy ended he wrote *"He was a literary man, and left business to his wife, a most disagreeable woman who swindled me out of £50 or £100, and tried to rob me further only I was too sharp and yet not sharp enough. They left it in a shocking state, but shuffled out of paying the last quarter's rent and dilapidations, going abroad etc"*.

In 1864 William Pocock bought the adjoining 6 ½ acres which he had been renting and then a further 8 acres to make a total of 21 acres in all. He sold the house and land probably in about 1876 when he moved back to London permanently.

Little is known about the owners from then until 1939. In 1938 planning permission had been granted by Guildford Borough Council for the erection of 47 houses on 12 acres of the site, the area as it is today. The house itself was probably empty by then. At the outbreak of war in 1939 any development was shelved, the site was requisitioned and then occupied by The Woodall Duckham Vertical Retort and Oven Construction Company (1920) Limited. The Company designed coke ovens for conversion of solid fuels to coke and other by-products, an important industry for the war effort. In 1949 the site was taken over by the Ministry of Food, who moved from Colwyn Bay, and was bought by the Minister of Works in 1951 for £18,000. The Ministry, now the Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries & Food, has occupied the site ever since, and today there over 600 people working there.

It would be interesting to hear from anyone who may have more information about 'Uplands' especially in those years 1875-1938. ***Gerry Coates***

Merrow Grows...

Merrow was in those days self-contained, and people got together. They had their own band, Cricket Club, Golf Club (in conjunction with Guildford). There was a Concert Party, a Horticultural Group, a Rifle Club, an Amateur Dramatic Society, where many Merrow and other people from Clandon, Horsley etc. joined in. Now there is now no band, no Rifle Club, no concert party, but the drama group still exists. ***Edgar Tunnell***

I was born at Twynings in 1935, the house being built by my parents, who later built the present Twynings at the bottom of our orchard, in the garden of our house. Our gardens extended to the fields of Levylsdene. On a recent visit to Merrow I was able to tell the then owners of our old

home, why a certain big patch of grass refused to thrive; it was sown right over the solid concrete roof of our air-raid shelter! I was so happy to see the old wrought iron-gate still in place after all my childhood efforts to keep it closed – in case it got seen and taken to the munitions factory.

Jean Nicholls

Development in Merrow started in the early 1930s. Local firms developed many of the houses. Arthur Stanley, a builder in Down Road, built a lot of houses in the Fairway. It was a big occasion when the Parish of Merrow became a part of the Borough of Guildford, when all and sundry walked the Borough Boundaries. I have seen development such as the Downsway (off Trodds Lane), Holford Road, Darlington Drive, and the widening of Epsom Road. From the Horse and Groom to opposite Goulds was a tall brick wall, which marked the boundary of a large house and garden. **Ron Seagar**

In 1945 we watched the MOF, as it was known then, being built. We used to slip through the wire fences and play in the unfinished buildings, and then the security man would come and chase us away. Little did I know then that I would be working there in years to come! **Audrey Purser**

I moved onto the Bushy Hill Estate in the Autumn of 1953 with my wife and two babies; pavement and kerb stones were still being laid, back gardens looked more like a cemetery with hundreds of stark white fence posts, no trees, no hedges, only barren ground littered with builder debris.

We occupied a three bedroomed house, heated by a solid fuel boiler and one fireplace in the sitting room. No gas was supplied, only electricity. The rent was £1 2/6 (£1.12) per week. Buses didn't run through the estate until 1954, no cars were owned, only a few vans and motorcycles, but hundreds of bicycles.

In 1955 I was invited to join the newly formed Bushy Hill Tenants' Association. The two main objectives were to help, where possible, all tenants of the estate and to build our own Community Centre. By this time, a shop had been built and the first occupant was a Mr Wake, who allowed us to hold our monthly meeting there. Winter times were freezing, sitting next to the fridges. We had grand ideas about the type of Club House we required, situated at the foot of Four Acres, on the playing field – it consisted of two floors, containing a main hall and games rooms.

To obtain money for this project, selected tenants were collecting 2/- (10 pence) per week from most households; the areas were known as 'stints'. Summer fêtes were held to increase our funds, but we soon realised that building a large Club House was beyond our means, so upon the advice of Guildford Borough Council, we were allowed to build a Marley building on Four Acres playing field, adjacent to Bushy Hill Drive. This took place in 1973 and was opened just before Christmas of that year. In 1998, we celebrated our twenty-fifth anniversary just before Christmas.

Len Holt

All this talk of local history has turned my mind back to the recent past of not quite 30 years ago. We came to Merrow in 1972, but how different it was even then! That first day we turned off the A3 into Merrow Lane and came up past farms, under the railway bridge and up, yes up, Merrow Street again past fields, old cottages, a copse full of bluebells, and trees in their early summer finery. Rectory Close was 12 years old then and a little backwater a short distance from the shops and bus route, but surrounded by fields

The fields were used by the children for kite flying etc. and we used to walk across, past the pig farm, into Park Lane – a small sunken lane between high banks of elm trees with violets (white and blue), primroses, bluebells and other wild flowers growing there. We walked down to the Mushroom Farm where you could go round the back to the shed and buy your mushrooms as they were still being sorted. They were FRESH!

Another vivid memory is of taking our daughter, Claire to school at St John's, or Merrow Street School as it was then called, and lorries hurtling up and down Merrow Street from the Epsom Road crossroads by the Church to the A3 –you couldn't let children walk alone to school in those

days. The school then, of course, was the old building, just three classrooms. We parents spent one Saturday clearing the field of sharp stones so that the children could use it for play. “One day they will build a new school there”, we were told – at that time both Merrow and Bushy Hill schools were for 5-12 year olds.

Merrow Crossroads was altered, the Epsom Road was diverted through part of the allotments to the lodge gates of Clandon Park, having its bends ironed out and leaving The Old Farmhouse isolated in the middle of a large traffic island. Park Lane lost its banks and flowers and became the main road down to the A3, and Merrow Street became quieter once more.

Then, of course, there were plans for Merrow Park – and the day came when we saw surveyors knocking pegs into the ground, and then diggers appearing in our fields! After that it was a regular Sunday afternoon walk to see how much they’d built and meeting all the neighbours doing the same thing.

There are always pros and cons. We have lost the ‘country feel’ and can no longer look across the fields and allotments to the Church, nor do we now know everyone walking along Merrow Street these days, but we do have very good friends who came to live in the houses of Merrow Park.

Megan Swayne

Merrow Village Hall

My first experience of the Village Hall was at a school concert and being told to stand at the back of the choir on the stage and to mouth the songs, but on no account to utter a sound. Later, there were plays to be taken to and, in the fullness of time, I took my own children to see the amateur dramatics. In between times, there were meetings, jumble sales and elections. The Hall was always there, along with its backdrop on the stage showing the Parish Church and Hall Place farmyard.

How did we get our Hall?

Frances Baring Gould, a member of the Baring (of Barings Bank) family, purchased Merrow Grange in 1895 – a fine Victorian property with extensive grounds. His Aunt lived at Boxgrove House, just on the corner of Epsom Road and Boxgrove Road, and the family was, therefore, of major consequence in the village. In 1907,

Mr Baring Gould purchased a plot on the Epsom Road and, at his expense, erected the Hall, as it still exists, to be used for public meetings, lectures and entertainments for the inhabitants of Merrow. There was a library and reading room provided as well as recreation rooms and steward’s accommodation. The Hall ran at a deficit until 1921 with Mr Baring Gould meeting the annual shortfall personally.

In 1921, local ex-servicemen were considering starting an ex-servicemen’s club when Mr. Baring Gould, with another local gentleman –

PK Lang CBE – came up with a proposal. The Village Hall was transferred into Trustees’ names and they then leased the property to the Club in return for a nominal rent and the obligation to run and maintain the Hall. The Club was to be titled the ‘Merrow Village Hall and Club’ and Mr Baring Gould lent further monies to the Club to enable it to build its initial rooms at the back of the Hall. He was President of the Club for many years and, later, Mr Lang succeeded him in this office.

In 1926, the Club acquired 1½ acres behind the Hall for use as a bowling green and, in 1949, exchanged the far end of this land for land to the side, thus rationalising the overall site. There has been no further acquisition of land. The entrances onto Epsom Road were closed to motor vehicles in 1988, when the Council constructed the alternative and safer access via the Hall Dene property next door.

A few further facts from the past can be related:

The Hall was used, during the 1920s and 30s, for teaching cookery to the girls from the village school.

From 1940 to 1945 the Hall was requisitioned by the Authorities for various purposes, including use as a 'British Restaurant' – this being during the food rationing period – does anybody recall it?

In 1959, Mr Lang, then 96, laid the foundation stone to the Club's third billiard room, having presented his own billiard table to the Club some years earlier and, in the same year, the Hall's semi-jubilee was attended by Mrs. Hancock daughter of the late Francis Baring Gould.

The Club has extended and improved its facilities over the years and now caters for the wide range of interests of its members.

The Hall Trustees are not involved in the day to day management of the Hall and Club, but, as landlords, have the usual rights to intervene if the lease is not being adhered to and also some power in respect of the Club – for example, all changes of Club rules have to be approved by the Hall Trustees.

The people of Merrow can be grateful for the gift of the Hall and to all the people who, over the years, have given of their time and talents to the Club and Hall on our behalf. *Ian Anderson*

Note: For Hall bookings, enquiries should be made to the Club Steward - Telephone 01483 562421 (Not to the Trustees).

Special occasions

In coronation year. 1953, age 14, I played Queen Elizabeth II in 'A Pageant of History' (written by an old Merrow man Mr. J. Gould) and presented by Merrow Church Sunday Schools. It was held at 'The Cedars', Merrow, the old house at the top of Merrow Street, the late Dr. Millagan's house at the time. We had an audition at the church room for the parts we would play. I was chosen as Queen Elizabeth, as they said I was the one who looked most like her!

There was great excitement on June 2nd, 1953, the day of the Queen's Coronation. Down Road was celebrating in style. Everyone was dressed up in costumes, all different, parading up and down the road. Houses with bunting flags flying, tables laid up with all the 'goodies' on – singing and dancing – what a wonderful day! *Audrey Purser*

On the 24th May (Empire Day) the piano was always pushed into the playground. Miss Pleass, the headmasters' sister, would put a vase of red, white and blue flowers on the top and play for us. We dressed in our uniforms – Guides and Scouts. Mr. Edmund Elles would come, and we would sing Land of Hope and Glory and the National Anthem and salute the flag. This was quite an enjoyable day as we were given a holiday.

Joan Boxall

Once a year, there was the Merrow Fête, supported by Clandon. It lasted the whole day, and there were either three or four marquees, in which were on show handicrafts of all kinds.

I remember one year, after the First World War, a man winning the needlework section, with his army badge on a cushion. The women were all against that. However it was pointed out to them, there was no rule against a man.

There were children's sports in the afternoon, and adult sports in the evening including the high jump which was mostly won by Mr Mumford who lived at Newlands Corner. This man had lost a leg in the war, and they told he had others at a disadvantage because he was not as heavy with one cork leg.

I remember Mathews came with all the fun of the Fair (often spelt Fayre) and they paid for each item they set up, for the day. Ripley charged £1 per wheel. I do not know what Merrow charged.

Sometimes Merrow Show would be held in Clandon Park, near the House. Once a balloon came over very low, to have a look, then dropped sand to rise again. Some people got the sand on them.
Edgar Tunnell

New Year's Eve is the day before New Year's Day. For the year 1999 New Year's Eve it is very exciting because it is not only a new year but a new Century and Millennium. In the evening we are getting more excited as the Millennium draws closer. There are fireworks and parties going on. A few seconds before midnight there is a countdown all over the country. The most popular celebrations in England are in London. As the clock strikes twelve we are in a new Millennium. On New Year's Day we are in a new Millennium. **Amelia Chong, Bushy Hill School**

When it was the day before 2000 my mum dropped me off at my nan's to stay. I brought my Pokemon. I had a bath and then went down stairs for a drink and a story. My granddad and mum listened as well. My nan read the story then I went to bed. In the morning I went down stairs and my granddad said "Happy 2000". It was the best year. **James Bolton, Bushy Hill School**

The War

In the winter the POWs would make wonderful sledges so the local children could speed down all the slopes and bunkers on the golf links. We had great fun! **Audrey Purser**

My eldest brother was an officer in the Red Cross, and both he and my father helped trains at Guildford and Clandon Stations of wounded Belgians who were taken to Clandon House, which was a Hospital at that time. I was only a boy scout in those days but I spent some time at Clandon Park House and St Lukes, which also was a military hospital in 1914 to 1918. In the Second War, I was in the local Home Guard. I was also in the Drummond Works First Aid and Fire Fighting Sections, and worked mostly at night 72 hours each week. For these duties I had three tin hats and three uniforms. **Edgar Tunnell**

On Armistice Day we marched with the
Ex-servicemen from World War 1

I was also a Ranger and during the war Merrow Grange (which was vacated by the Baring-Gould family to live in White Lane) was used as a military hospital. We Rangers took it in turns to go along each night to make and serve the drinks.

War was declared and I was on the point of going into the armed forces when in 1941 Mr. Kimber advertised for a shop assistant. I applied, as I had always wanted to work in a shop...It wasn't always easy to satisfy customers under rationing. There were never enough non-rationed goods to go around, which caused problems. Ration books had to be marked to make sure of fair shares each time small amounts came in. I used to cycle back and forth to work and it was a little frightening when the huge tanks and lorries came up Boxgrove road on their way to the south coast during the war.

I was considered to be in a reserved occupation, as it was to do with food, but I did have ARP duties to do. I was what they called a runner. We had our headquarters in Mr. Smiths, the builder's shop, at the bottom of Down road. We had two camp beds for resting, while waiting for the warning air raid siren. My job was to cycle to take messages to the other ARP wardens in the area, if there were any bombs or damage. Fortunately I was spared having to do any. We were fairly lucky in this area, but not without an occasional tragedy.

I belonged to the local Woman's Institute (during the war), and their meetings were held in the Congregational Chapel in High Path Road, normally held at the village hall. This was taken over as a British restaurant, also supplying Telfers or Waltons pies to the community on ration. The WI also made jam and bottled fruit from local growers for the community.

At Newlands Corner during the war the Canadian soldiers had a NAFFI and we took it in turns, under the guidance of the secretary Irene Puddicombe, who later became Mrs Bailiff, to serve in

the canteen in the evening. I think I remember them coming with a lorry to pick us up. *Joan Boxall*

There were fewer cars then, but it was busy through Merrow during the War, with army tanks carving up the road surface. Convoys of army lorries drove along the Epsom Road, sometimes for hours upon end: the lorries being packed with young soldiers who, on their way to the war areas abroad, would throw out their 'good-bye' letters addressed to their families, for us children to post for them.

There were fewer golfers on Merrow Downs during the war years and my brothers and I enjoyed hours of pleasure roaming and playing on the Downs. Italian and German prisoners-of-war were imprisoned behind barbed wire on the Downs and we would watch them playing football on the scaled-down pitch they had prepared. Later, at the end of the war, the POWs came to the Church Services and were employed as gardeners by residents of Merrow. When the POWs returned to their own homes, 'pre-fabs' (temporary houses) were erected on the same site and were occupied by families for many years.

There is, of course, the less pleasant memory of seeing, from the Downs, the red glow in the sky and my mother saying, "that is poor old London burning" during the Blitz. *Elise Ireland*

During the Second World War, Merrow House was the Headquarters of the local A.R.P. and various members of that body kept watch from the roof for the fall of incendiary bombs; fortunately the Guildford area suffered very little. *Roger Marjoribanks*

I was born in Berlin in 1926, educated in elementary and high schools, was trained and finished a thorough apprenticeship as an instrument-maker at Siemens. Soon afterwards, I was called up into the Air Force. As there was not any fuel left, we were trained for ground duties and came to the Front Line.

On November 4th 1944 I was taken prisoner-of-war by a Polish tank division in Holland and transferred into an English Prisoner of War Camp in Jabekke (Belgium). At the beginning of April 1945 we were shipped to Tilbury in England and from there sent to Kempton Park for a couple of days for de-lousing, finishing up at Doncaster Racecourse. A few weeks later we came to Sheffield Prisoner of War Camp for de-Nazification. Weeks later we were moved again, by train, to what was called Concentration Camp 163, in Butterwick, York. There we worked mainly in farming.

Suddenly, we were 'heaved' right down to the South, to Chilworth, walking up past Blackheath at 3 o'clock in the morning to Hallams, (which is now Bateman's Opticians). I will never forget this camp. It was the first time of seeing a whole potato for dinner, as before that we had been given only soups. At Hallams we heard about an Italian POW Camp in Merrow, built by the Italians themselves. When the time came for the Italians to go home, the Germans took it over very slowly.

This camp became my home for a while, as a football injury brought me into a small hospital in this camp. After healing my wound, I stayed in the Merrow Camp looking after two boilers for the hospital. In September 1946 I had a permit given to me allowing me to exercise one mile around the camp. Food-wise it was a pretty good place. I had made some English friends and at Christmas 1946 I was allowed to stay the night with them.

The camp itself was quite well constructed. On four corners were outlook towers and even three years ago I found four concrete holes giving away the position of the four main beams of one tower. Even today one can still see the concrete foundation where the entrance to the camp was.

The barbed wire started there to the left and right going around the periphery, but leaving out the towers which in that time were not occupied. This, of course, made it easier to cut holes in it – for emergencies! I must say the real English soldiers were very good to us. I underline *real* because the ones with a 'three day old uniform' made our lives a misery at times. We had a very good band in camp which at times played for dances and for some local events, and thanks to them I

met my wife.

During my time at the camp I had received a letter from my father telling me to learn as much English as possible. My answer was, "Everything that is English, I've learned to hate!" A few weeks later I was courting an English girl and changed my mind!

Merrow Camp was dissolved and all of us went to Swanscombe in Kent and then to Wilton Park, near Amersham, where I was married on May 15th 1948 with the help of an interpreter. I was released from camp on June 6th 1948. I had a terrible time finding a job, as the unions would not agree to the employment of Germans. Eventually I found a job as a watchmaker for four and a half years. Then as things were easing a little bit, I found a job as a toolmaker. In 1954 I became a British Citizen. **Horst Flick**

At the outbreak of war in 1939 any development (to Uplands House) was shelved, the site was requisitioned and then occupied by The Woodall Duckham Vertical Retort and Oven Construction Company (1920) Limited. The Company designed coke ovens for conversion of solid fuels to coke and other by-products, an important industry for the war effort.

Gerry Coates in Uplands

[I remember] The roars of my father when frantically chasing evacuee children as they raided our bird aviaries and fishponds.

Jean Nicholls

At the top of Horseshoe Lane was a big hotel. When the war started it became a hospital for the wounded. **Dorothy Stemp**

A large piece of Merrow Downs on the Guildford side of the Golf Club was fenced off. A number of wooden huts were erected for the prisoners living quarters, plus an area for outdoor exercise. Washing facilities were provided in brick and concrete buildings. The camp was divided in two sections: the lower being for the guards and administration personnel. These huts were of concrete and breeze construction.

When finally taken over by Guildford Borough Council, all the huts were turned into temporary dwellings for people living in rooms etc. and having young families. The wooden huts were divided in two, by building a wall across each one. Each half was then divided into two bedrooms, kitchen/ living room and toilet. Water was laid on. This was my responsibility. Myself and my family were the first tenants and we stayed for five years. ...the temporary homes continued to be used until 1955. **Bill Howard**

Mrs Houd told us that Bushy Hill School was just fields. The war went on for 6 years. She had two sisters and a brother. Mrs Houd was 16 when the war started. There were buckets outside the air raid shelters full of sand to put the fires out. She worked in a fire station. Some of the good Germans did the gardening for people who couldn't do it.

Barbara Edwards told us that she was born in 1932 and lived in Haslemere. She had an evacuee living with her and she was away from the bombing, except for one bomb that went off at the Rex cinema killing one person. Her Dad built an air raid shelter underground which she had to go down with her gas mask on. There was food rationing. She had coupons to use to get sweets and she grew vegetables because there were not many in the shops. The queen during the war was called Elizabeth and the Prime ministers were called Chamberlin, Churchill and Atlee. Barbara had two brothers who had to go in the army for five years. **Lara Richens, Bushy Hill School**

She was 19 when the war started. She did not have an air raid shelter in her garden. The gas masks were smelly. She only could get a tiny amount of everything. Two bombs were dropped in Merrow. Her roof fell off and it came in to her house. The baby's cot got knocked over the baby, the baby had to go to hospital, it was very frightening. The baby had to go in the chest of drawers. **Susie Argyle, Bushy Hill School**

I met Mrs Smith at Bushy Community Centre. She told me that she was twenty-five when the Second World War started. Some of her favourite songs were 'It's a long way to Tipperary', 'Run Rabbit run' and 'Pack up your Troubles'. Mrs Smith said that a bomb dropped in a nearby road one night. It was very scary. She had a ration book. **Charles Thompson, Bushy Hill School**

Evelyn was born on 12th April, 1926. Evelyn's mother's name was Mary and her father's name was Mick. Evelyn got evacuated with her sister. She stayed with Mr and Mrs Trueman and their son Ronald. Ronald was in the Navy. Mr Trueman was a Mechanic and Mrs Trueman was a Housewife. Evelyn's sister and another girl also lived with Mr and Mrs Trueman.

Evelyn, her sister and the other girl went to Battersea Central School for girls. She was 13 years old. She said that she got a Ration Book and she was allowed 2oz of butter, 2oz of sugar, powdered eggs, hardly any sweets and were not allowed bananas. They were given food coupons and clothes coupons.

Evelyn said that D-Day was The invasion of France (and) meant troops and boats were used to go over to France. Planes flying over head.

Joan was born on the 29th November, 1926. Her mothers name was Evelyn. She had three brothers and two of the brothers fought in the War. The other brother stayed at home with her mother. Joan's mother was an ARP Warden. Her father's name was Tom and he worked in the Air Force. She worked in a Clothes Shop and had to work from the time she was 14 years old. She stayed in an Anderson Shelter.

Joan said that she got a Ration Book and she was allowed 2oz of butter, 2oz of sugar, powdered eggs, hardly any sweets and were not allowed bananas. They were given food coupons and clothes coupons.

Joan said that D-Day was the invasion of France and other countries with planes and tanks. **Emma Butler, Bushy Hill School**

I spoke to Edna. She was nine when the war started. She lived in Farnham and one of her brothers lost his leg in Italy. Her mum and dad kept chickens so they could have their own eggs. She bought tablets instead of sweets. She was 15 when she first went to the beach with her aunty. She had a wooden table and went under it when the siren sounded. The teachers told them not to talk about the war in case there were any spies around. One of her brothers was in the Air Force.

Nicky Holt, Bushy Hill School

One of the ladies said if you were under five or five you had a green ration book. Her sister worked in a hospital and made injured soldiers better. She used to wear stockings and hated them. A lot of windows were broken. Another lady had two evacuees staying with her and they still write birthday and Christmas cards. She never had to use her gas mask. They used to have a table in their dining room and used to go under there because they did not have an air-raid shelter in their garden but their next door neighbours did. During the war when she was 26 years old she lived in Merrow. You used to have 6d to watch television for an hour. She used to have to go outside and catch arms and legs so they could match them with the body so they could say to people sorry your son has died. She used to be in the fire services and used to tie her hair up with a ribbon. Also she had a smart uniform and a hat. **Emily Potter, Bushy Hill School**

The Downs

On Derby Day, we would sit on the wall at the bottom of the road and wait for all the cars and charabancs to come along and wave to them. We thought that was very exciting, as we had never seen any before.

All through the hot summers I would play, with all my friends on the Downs – cricket and rounders – and then have a picnic in the woods. My mother would make me dripping sandwiches

and put them in a brown paper bag. What a feast! We would all share our ‘goodies’ together, and chat about this and that, and decide what to do next. We would usually end up with another game of cricket. We used to have two lots of swings on the Downs, one just above Holford Road and the other just past the Bridle Path. They were big wooden frames and very, strong, which lasted many years and we had many happy times swinging. My, younger brother Alan took it into his head to walk across the top of the swings and promptly fell off, breaking his leg. He never did that again!

When it was October, we would start to collect for the bonfire. We borrowed a handcart from Albert Smith, the local builder and decorator in Down Road, and would collect the garden rubbish from all the houses nearby. We built one very large bonfire – it used to tire us all out! Then we would collect for the Guy so we could buy the fireworks. One of our parents would light the bonfire at 6.00pm, on November 5th. We ate crisps and lemonade bought at the off-licence at No 43 Down Road (it has now been returned to an ordinary house). **Audrey Purser**

Merrow Downs used to be cropped by about 200 sheep which belonged to Reg House, but since he died the Downs is so overgrown it is no longer possible to walk where we played or had picnics as children. We went there one evening to watch Crystal Palace going up in flames.

I remember my father telling me of the Merrow Downs Race Course, and even took us children over the Course. It would be hard to find today, but I remember quite a lot of it. It crossed the Road twice. The first crossing was just above the last house on the left of the lane (Newlands Cottage) and the other crossing was about a quarter of a mile further towards Newlands Corner. There used to be posts to prevent cars driving in from the road. **Edgar Tunnell**

We spent many of our leisure hours on Merrow Downs, climbing trees, and the May Day ceremonies were always held there. We would get our mothers to give us sandwiches and bottle of drink and we had little picnics and stayed and played for hours.

People were allowed to tether cows, goats etc, which kept the grass down and gave us something to watch.

We had two sets of swings on the Downs one for Down road and one for High Path road.

On November 5th we always had a bonfire at the top of the Downs, just past the road which runs across the bottom of the hill. The boys used to take great delight in throwing a squib behind us girls, and our clothes always smelt terrible with all the smoke. Nothing was officially organised. It was all just fun.

My father played golf on the Downs. He belonged to the “Guildford Town Golf Club” it was a cheaper version of Guildford Golf Club for the poorer people, it had its own separate building, which can still be seen today.

(The Band of Hope held meetings in the chapel in High Path Road and once a charabanc arrived with a party of people from “Black Cap Cigarettes”. They had a wonderful time, picnicking on the Downs. What I remember most of all is them singing ‘Bye Bye Blackbird’ with great gusto.)

On Derby day, usually a Wednesday, in the first week of June, we would dash out of school, run down the road and sit on the gate by the Bridle path and wait for the charabancs to come back from the races. Then we shouted out “Throw out four rusty coppers”. If they had had a win, we were usually rewarded with a few coppers, which we ran into the road to collect before the next charabanc came along. There wasn’t much traffic in those days. **Joan Boxall**

There were fewer golfers on Merrow Downs during the war years and my brothers and I enjoyed hours of pleasure roaming and playing on the Downs. There was much more freedom and it was safer for youngsters to explore the countryside in those days. Italian and German prisoners-of-war were imprisoned behind barbed wire on the Downs and we would watch them playing football on the scaled-down pitch they had prepared.

There are, however, things that will happily never change – the sight and sound of toboggans

hurtling down the fairway on Merrow Downs after the first fall of winter's snow. *Elise Ireland*

My knowledge of Merrow Downs goes back to the late 1920s. The downs have grasses and wild flowers that give an aroma which one will not experience anywhere. During these years this vast area was patrolled and kept under control by a very kind gentleman named Mr. Miller, who lived in Trodds Lane. The view from Merrow Downs looking north to north-west is magnificent.

In the valley, accessible via a track from near the Golf Club over the 17th and 18th fairways was a cottage which was I believe the game keepers residence. One evening while on the 5th fairway of the golf course I can remember watching the Great Fire at Crystal Palace. *Ron Seagar*

The memories came flooding back: riding my ponies from our home 'Twynings' (now number 7) in Grove Road, up under the beech trees to our beloved Downs. How the trees abounded with russet red squirrels, tails flashing in the sunlight.

This year (*last year?*) we are planning our fourth visit. Each time as we drive by the Silent Pool to Newlands Corner, I thrill with the same feeling of 'coming home'. Turn your back on the car park and that wonderful view is still the same. Sadly, many changes mark the passage of time and one cannot make time stand still – especially on the road by the Merrow roundabout! *Jean Nicholls*

When I was young I remember Merrow as mainly Downs, fields and lovely little lanes.

...below Merrow Street School was Manday Farm, the fields and cottages and Merrow Common.

When I sit and think back, I can still see the long summer days and all the men and women hay making in the fields... *Dorothy Stemp*

Merrow's Ancient Yew Trees

For me, the best thing about living in Merrow is being within walking distance of the ancient yew trees near Newlands Corner, on either side of Trodd's Lane.

I suspect that many Merrow residents may be unaware how unique they are.

Most of Britain's best-known ancient yews are in churchyards. In Surrey some impressive yews can be found in the churchyards of Crowhurst, Tandridge and Hambledon, for example. Much more unusual is finding ancient yew groves in a woodland situation. There is a fine yew wood with ancient trees at Kingley Vale near Chichester; Norbury Park, near Leatherhead, has some great trees, and at Borrowdale, in the Lake District there is a small but celebrated group of magnificent yews on a beautifully wild hillside. In this context, Merrow ranks highly due to the number of ancient trees and to their individual appearance.

Ancient yew trees are individuals, each one having grown into its own unique and magnificent form. Living and dead branches alike contribute to the sculptural beauty of the trees and the mighty trunk forms the heart which captures your attention. Branches which snap and sag down, and trunks which split and fall, live on and sprout new growth towards the light in a different direction from which the fallen parts now point. You can read the history of such trees, changes in directions of growth revealing the reaching, twisting, falling, writhing struggle towards the sunlight that the tree has slowly danced in its long, long life.

Records have been kept of measurements of some church yard trees for several centuries and it has been the study of these records which has enabled people to use measurements to assess the age of yew trees. (Old yews generally become hollow making it impossible to use annual growth rings to age them.) Thus at least one Merrow yew has been estimated to be two thousand years old.

With the millennium on everyone's mind it is worth reflecting that some living things in Merrow were thriving at the beginning of this millennium, and some were small seedlings at the beginning of the previous one. These wonderful trees have, for this reason, a strong claim to come into our thoughts at the start of a new millennium, though I don't think they would really fit into any kind

of organised celebration. Solitude is necessary in order to experience the emotional response, to feel the sense of awe and respect that these living, growing beings engender when you spend time in their presence.

I have visited them at night when the blackness below the dense canopy is total. Shafts of moonlight which do manage to reach a portion of trunk make them silvery grey, like monoliths at Stonehenge.

When the bark is wet with rain the redness in it is heightened and the contours of the branches look like glistening muscles tensing. Once, as I sat in the quiet stillness of one grove, a wren hopping close was in extreme contrast to the mighty yews – a bright, brief spark of life beside huge, slowly smouldering furnaces.

Even dead yew trees such as those on the bracken slopes near Newlands Corner retain a solid presence and stand as their own memorials.

Unfortunately many of the most magnificent yews are so close to Trodd's Lane that the distraction of traffic noise is almost constant. Imagine what the yew groves were like a thousand years ago, silent and with perhaps a fantastically shaped Methuselah, no trace of which remains today, dominating the scene. Can anyone imagine what their world will be like a thousand years from now? ***Derek Smith***

Transport

Bicycles were the main transport in those days, and we had six or seven of them in our shed. The first buses came to Merrow Church from Guildford and back. It cost 2d from Horse and Groom in Merrow, to Horse and Groom in North Street Guildford or 3d to the main Railway Station.

[when we went to school we] all had to walk both ways [more than 1.5 miles]. There were no cars or buses for schools then. We were lucky, we had a very short walk. ***Edgar Tunnell***

There was an open top double-decker bus (Aldershot and District) which we called the Merrow Swinger. It ran from Merrow Horse and Groom through Guildford to Guildford Park. The fare was 1 penny for children and 3 pence for adults. It was only if we had to have teeth or eyes attended to at Farnham Road clinic that we were allowed to get on the bus from school.

There were very few vehicles about in those days, so we were able to play in the street. Hop scotch, skipping, marbles, fag cards, spinning tops, bouncing balls at the wall, it was all great fun for us.

Down Road, High Path and Grove Road were the only roads this end of Merrow on the right hand side, and Horseshoe Lane was the only one on the left.

I used to cycle back and forth to work and it was a little frightening when the huge tanks and lorries came up Boxgrove road on their way to the south coast during the war. ***Joan Boxall***

My mother told me she was the first lady in the village to drive her own car. ***Jean Nicholls***

The Miss Johnsons

I well remember the exciting times we had capturing and returning the famous trap pony of the Misses Johnson. Dare I reveal he was actually an entire stallion with a roving eye! ***Jean Nicholls***

Like others I remember the Johnson sisters, who would fall asleep in their pony and trap, and how the pony would go along the lanes and always know its way home. ***Dorothy Stemp***

There is always the unforgettable memory of the Miss Johnson sisters, sitting sleepily in their trap, while their pony carried them home to 'Woodlands' – along the Epsom Road and down

Horseshoe Lane West, with, it appeared, very little guidance from the occupants of the trap! ***Elise Ireland***

I also can remember the Miss Johnson sisters nodding their way home from Guildford as their pony took them home. One memory of that pony – it must have known the Highway Code – as it had to negotiate two sets of traffic lights along the Epsom Road. The first set at the Waterden Road/Warren Road crossing and the second at the top of Boxgrove Road, a much narrower junction in those days. Not once did I see the pony jump red lights. It always stopped if the lights were at red and moved on again when changed to green. All this without any apparent prompting from either of the Miss Johnsons. ***David Fogwell***

I would like to add a couple of incidents which have nothing to do with the pony and trap. We had not been in Grove Road for long before my father was confronted by one of the good ladies at our front door complaining that he had given our house the same name as theirs – he should change it otherwise they could no longer omit ‘Horseshoe Lane’ from their address. Their address was longer for the future! The other incident occurred I would guess, about the mid-thirties. We were walking along the Epsom Road past the top of Boxgrove Road when a couple of ladies were in a car driving up that road on the right hand side and about to turn into Epsom Road towards Guildford. A couple of sailors on a motor-cycle were coming, in the opposite direction on their correct side of the road – needless to say there was a head-on collision. Did I say that these incidents had nothing to do with the pony and trap – perhaps this is why it came on the scene! ***John Sutton***

Health

We even had a parish nurse and I remember her name was Mrs Parish.

...Clandon House... was a Hospital in world war I. I was only a boy scout in those days but I spent some time at Clandon Park House and St Lukes, which also was a military hospital in 1914 to 1918. ***Edgar Tunnell***

We had two nasty epidemics in Merrow. When I was 11 there was an epidemic of diphtheria and we lost quite a few small children through it, including my little five-year-old nephew. The other was polio, and some children suffered paralysis. Our family was clear of both because of inoculation. ***Joan Boxall***

Nurse Harness, the District Nurse, rode her bicycle around Merrow and attended to my mother through her four pregnancies and births ***Elise Ireland***

Just down from Trodds Lane was the Old Cottage where Dr. Lancaster lived. It is still there today. His son now works in the Warren Road surgery. ***Dorothy Stemp***

(May Barnett the between maid at the Rectory remembers ... part of the Rectory ‘belonged’ to the Parish. It had a side door with access to the parish room. Here meetings were held and a parish layette for poor pregnant women was kept. She remembers her mother, who was about to give birth to her fifth child, telling her to go to this room to collect the layette, or ‘parish bag’ as it was called.)

Mr Eustace had a wife and three children: two boys and a girl. One boy was a cripple who spent his day in a long box-like carriage pushed by a nurse. ***Gerry Coates in The Old Rectory***

Entertainment

The children and teenagers in those days ... only got as far as entertaining the local people. There was no radio, no television.

Families used to invite neighbours for whist (card) evenings, but that seems to be a thing of the

past, as is the bridge parties of the large houses. Another thing was a musical evening where friends played or sang music. Television kills off a lot of the old-style family life, which is a great pity.

Home handicrafts used to be the thing in those days. Drawings, paintings, needlework, basket work, pen and pencil sketches, *Edgar Tunnell*

My brothers used to play cricket. There were two clubs – Merrow Downs and Merrow cricket club. They had their own pavilion just below the Ridgeway. A local club also played football on one or two pitches.

I belonged to the Merrow Dramatic Society. I've always been fond of acting. The first play I acted in, at the age of six was "Trial by Jury". The Afternoon Woman's Institute put this on. I was in quite a few little sketches, which we performed at fetes. One or two sketches took place in the home of Miss Todd at the Greenwood in Boxgrove road and at one time the home of Ethel M Dell the author. I have learnt many skills from WI and I am still a member. *Joan Boxall*

There was a thriving Youth Club, a Drama Group and a lively Church Youth Fellowship to which I belonged as a teenager. There were dances at the Village Hall, and plays produced by Woodhall Duckhams Engineering Company's Drama Group at 'Uplands' (now the site of the MAFF). This Engineering Company left Merrow after the war and the Ministry of Food Offices were transferred from Colwyn Bay to Merrow, bringing more young people into the area. There were dances and music societies to enjoy there – many of the newcomers lived in hostels at 'Uplands' and were happy to join the local clubs for entertainment and social activities. Merrow was a pleasant place to spend one's teenage years. *Elise Ireland*

Social events and outings were organised from time to time. At Christmas there would be a party organised by the House Committee, with a visit from Father Christmas bringing presents. For Christmas lunch all the Committee members would come in to help. All residents (whether living in the house or not) would be invited and trays taken to those not well enough to attend.

A summer fête was held in the grounds to raise money for comforts, and, to add interest, Merrow Horticultural Society held their annual show in the grounds. *Roger Marjoribanks*

Merrow Dramatic Society

Founded in 1922 as Merrow Literary and Dramatic Society (with a production of 'Dogs of Devon'), the group changed its name several times over the next few years – including the names Musical, Amateur and Operatic in its title.

They finally became the Merrow Dramatic Society in 1940, with the group performing operetta, literary meetings, slide shows and plays. 1940 was also the year that saw the last full-length production for some years in Merrow, due of course to the war, although many shorter entertainments were put on to help keep up morale.

After the war, attempts were made to revive enthusiasm in the group, but the real turning point came in 1951 when Blanche Gould (MDS's current longest serving member) produced an open air 'Pageant of Merrow' to commemorate the Festival of Britain – a thousand years of village history with a cast of seventy, a carthorse and a donkey! Many photos and the original script of this production remain in the society's archives today.

In 1963, to satisfy local demand, the first Merrow pantomime was performed in the Village Hall – a tradition which has continued every year since, playing to annual audiences of over 1,000 until recent fire regulations ensured this number was cut down somewhat!

In the late 1960s a storage hut was needed for scenery, and this was built at the outrageous cost of £141.56. Now, MDS are likely to lose this piece of local antiquity (commonly known as the small lean-to shed) due to yet another new golf course being built, and are desperately scanning the

locality for something similar in which to store scenery and props – preferably at a similar cost!

In recent years, MDS was a founder member of the Yvonne Arnaud Theatre, and five of its members were among the founders of the Guildford Drama Festival. In fact, over the years several entries have been made in both the Guildford and Woking Drama Festivals, and plenty of prizes have proved our talent.

Over the years, MDS has staged a wide variety of entertainments from Greek Tragedy to Music Hall, and in 1992 put on its first all-junior production, 'The Dracula Spectacular', with a cast of nearly 60. The Village Hall had never seen the like! Currently the annual programme consists of a traditional village pantomime in January, usually written by Vice-Chairman Arthur Reed, a Green Room, and two plays in the Electric Theatre, with an occasional musical thrown in for good measure. Some major recent successes include 'Lend Me a Tenor', 'Daisy Pulls It Off', 'Little Shop of Horrors' and 'Stepping Out' – all sell-out shows. The group has also ventured into the unknown with off-beat productions of 'Mort' and 'Straight and Narrow' and more recently with an all-woman play, 'Steel Magnolias' last November.

A special Millennium production of Benjamin Britten's 'Noye's Fludde' is being prepared for St John's Church in April 2000 – a massive undertaking for all of Merrow. *Anne-Marie Davies*

Merrow's Time Capsule

From children at Merrow Infant School

In my time capsule I would put ...

... a Lego man because I would never forget it. And I would draw a picture of me ... and I would put in a TV so that they could watch it. *Joe Cutler*

... a photo frame, so people would know what my family looked like. My best Teddy because it was one of my favourite things. *Rachael Day*

... my Grandma ... because she always wants to learn about the future. *Samuel Maughan*

... my medal because my dad's grandma gave it to me. *Jamie Lee*

... a picture of my family so every body knows what my family looks like. *Ben Busby*

... a dictionary so people in the future can use it, ... spaghetti bolognaise because I like it. *Ignus van Zyl*

... a one pence coin, two pence, five pence, ten pence and all the coins because then people in the future will know what coins they had in the year 2000. *Charlotte Lamble*

... my very special silver locket with a very fine silver chain because the necklaces might have changed style. I would put a piece of bark and a leaf in because the environment might have changed. *Bethany Curtis*

... some clothes because people would like to see how much the fashion had changed. *Charles Newman*

... some of my mummy's mummy's jewellery because it is very , very valuable and precious. *Fran Thompson*