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Review Autumn 2025

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Chairman's Review

Roger Nash

It has been fascinating this year to explore the history of Rudgwick in the Second World War. Apart from the articles in this and the Spring Reviews, you can find more on our website under the "History of Rudgwick" tab, last section, "World War 2". There are now 28 titles in the collection. Those who contributed to our call for Rudgwick 1945 memories will find them under that title, with the exception of Martin Watts's memories which were so lengthy, accurate and wide ranging that I have given him his own article. He is the son of Kathleen Watts who you may remember died aged 104, his memories being of a childhood at Gravatts Farm. He now lives in Sheffield and was able to share more memories with me and my family, who live nearby, when we visited in August.

Two other articles which are comprehensive histories of the war years are those on the village in parish magazines and in local newspapers. The most unexpected discovery in both sources was the award of the George Cross to a man from Rudgwick. Several other articles are personal stories of evacuation or working as a land girl.

In the Spring Review next year I intend to write a summary of all things post-war in Rudgwick, including how the village changed under new national priorities for housing and schools.

This Review is the last for which our redoubtable editor, Doug Betts, is responsible. He has done a splendid job, not easy to lay out all the articles together with illustrations, normally in 12 pages. I am sure all our readers will want to join me in grateful thanks. **Now we urgently need a new editor. If you or anyone you know can take up this twice yearly task, please get in touch for more information.**

We attended Rudgwick Day again this year, on a very hot day, which it seemed discouraged visitors more than it did us. Footfall in the vicinity of our gazebo was low, but we had an exhibition on the War which interested many. We were pleased that the EGRGA flower show marked their 80th anniversary. More of that in the next Review.

On the planning front, it has been relatively quiet few months (*but see Paul Kornycky's article next page*). HDC are continuing to take an unconscionably long time on some applications, even a few hanging over from last year; in July it was five. The Mucky Duck is one such. That, however, has been thrown up in the air by it coming on the market. Proposals for a Forest Pre-School in Rowhook were very contentious in the locality, though both RPS and RPC were more equivocal. HDC decided to refuse permission.

Walks this summer have not been attended as well as we hoped, so some discussion is ongoing about this. Sadly, your chairman is one who has opted out this year on grounds of a pair of dodgy legs. We have only just had the number of leaders needed. They deserve our thanks for undertaking this on everyone's behalf. After all, the walks were one of our earliest activities nearly 40 summers ago.

Footpath news.

1. The path opposite the church, which historically led to the former vicarage, and to Lynwick Street (and now the Milk Churn), has been newly surfaced by WSCC. It is a steep slope in parts, and was almost impassable and an embarrassment to the village. The old flagstones have been incorporated on the edge, preserving this reminder of past attempts to create a usable path *(see photo on next page)*

2. Good news from Loxwood, where the track from Pephurst layby, Loxwood Road, to the site of the aborted clay pit (remember that?) has now been declared a public footpath for its entire length, providing an alternative route for the big number of dog walkers and other users of the popular layby, linking to existing paths at both ends.

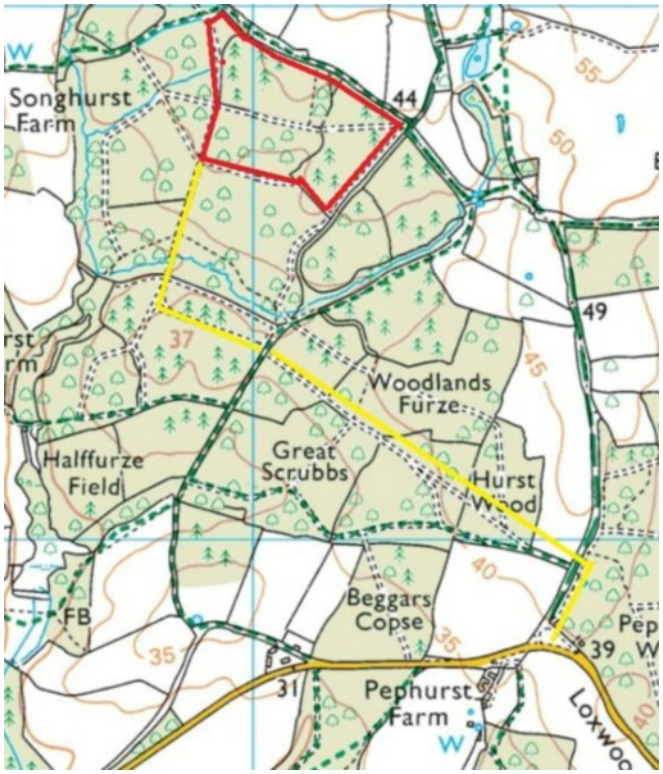
Our thanks go to WSCC rangers, and to Tim Bennett of Loxwood who guided the claypit route through the planning system *(see map on next page)*

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Footpath opposite the church, flagstones on right



New right of way from Pephurst (yellow); former proposed claypit (red)

Planning Matters

Paul Kornycky

It almost goes without saying that having an up-to-date local plan is crucial in order that planning can be 'plan led'. Without one, Horsham district, and Rudgwick parish in particular, is open to 'speculative development'.

This predominantly means that potential sites outside (strict) settlement boundaries (also known as BUAB – built up area boundaries) can be considered for development even if they have not been allocated in the local plan. This is made worse by the fact that if 5 years have passed since the local plan was adopted, then the supply/delivery tests set out in the NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework) use a target figure not taken from the local plan but calculated by the government's bogus formula. Inevitably this figure is much higher; in Horsham's case it is 1357 homes (minimum) per year versus the 800 homes per year in the currently adopted local plan.

So these tests are inevitably failed and then the 'so called' tilted balance comes into operation; i.e. if the proposed development is considered 'sustainable' then it must be approved unless the harm arising substantially and demonstrably outweighs the benefit. In practice this means that greenfield development for housing, on the fringes of settlement boundaries, is very difficult to refuse.

The Water Neutrality restrictions have hitherto prevented many such applications gobbling up the greenfields of our district. But a very recent government announcement states that this failsafe will be disappearing effective from 1st November and so the flood gates will then be open. At the time of writing virtually no information is available as to how Southern Water will supply the massive amounts of extra water for new homes, whilst still respecting the important Arun Valley protected sites.

Since the district's new local plan seems doomed to failure (some might say as a deliberate tactic of the Housing Ministry) we are a very long way off getting a new local plan to return us to a world of 'plan led' development. In fact we may not get a new local plan before Horsham District Council ceases to exist on 1st April 2028 when such matters will be dealt with (most likely) by a faceless unitary authority covering Horsham and Mid Sussex Districts together with Crawley Borough. Even then the housing numbers required will probably be double that of the 800 per year in the current local plan. Oh joy!

Turning to application DC/25/1269 for the site in Bucks Green which is currently under consideration for (up to) 90 homes…… a smaller (subset) site was provisionally allocated by HDC in its draft new local plan for (at least) 60 homes. So, it is reasonable to expect that permission will be granted for housing in that location. Both the Preservation Society and the Parish Council are working hard to ensure that development is restricted to the (smaller) site as allocated since 60 new homes would still be a 100% increase in the number of homes in the Bucks Green BUAB. That's surely enough isn't it?

Also, there are major concerns that the accesses proposed for both vehicles and pedestrians are woefully inadequate and there is absolutely nothing in the current proposals to try to calm traffic on the A281 passing through Bucks Green, where we all know that traffic volumes are high (10,000 movements per day) and a not insignificant number of these (almost 10%) drive at speeds in excess of 35mph in the 30mph limit.

There are some encouraging signs that WSCC highways will support RPS and RPC in addressing some of these concerns; let's hope that persists.

Rudgwick in 1939, Part 2

Doug Betts

Continuing the story of Rudgwick at the outbreak of war in 1939 (See Part 1 in Spring Review 2025, which dealt with the population of the parish)

What work were the people of Rudgwick (and Cox Green) doing in 1939?

According to the 1939 Register (*see Part 1 for discussion of the Register*), there were 1315 with an occupation (562 men, 753 women), including 135 from Cox Green (49 men, 86 women). Many are the same or a very similar occupation and I have 'grouped' them into types of occupation to simplify the list, including 'double counting' where a person had more than one job in different groups (over 30), so the total is more than 1315. Not all would necessarily have been working in the parish; transport by train and cycle was available. Equally, work within the parish could be carried out by people living outside and travelling in (for example, 2 teachers at Rudgwick school came from Horsham daily).

Women's occupations (753 women)

'Unpaid domestic duties': 449 (of 753 = 60%). In the Register, as in the censuses, any married woman without a named occupation is deemed to be undertaking unpaid domestic work, thereby hiding the crucial part that women play in the economy, including child rearing and care, supporting their husbands (sometimes with his actual work) and thus enabling him to work, shopping and food production, often tending an allotment, as well as housework of all kinds. Some of these women also volunteered for war-related part-time roles *(see:'Rudgwick's preparations for war' in Spring Review)*

Domestic service and household work not in the home: 131 (17%)**.** This group includes those working as servants in the big houses in the parish and others doing paid domestic work. The servants include maids, cooks, housekeepers, young children's nurses, 'general' domestic servants, etc. While still a major employment group, it is one that would probably have been larger earlier, and one that would diminish greatly post-war.

Independent: 57 (7.5%)**.** These women have a pension or personal income. We do not know which are 'well off' or 'just about managing' but perhaps a surprising number? (Cox Green had:16,19% of the CG total, a high %).

Retired: 25. Includes 12 who did not state their previous occupation, plus 4 teachers, 3 nurses, 1 dressmaker, 1 clerk, 1 bank clerk, 1 artist, 1 church worker, 1 servant).

Shop & post office work: 17. Probably the most familiar faces in the parish for those shopping in the grocery stores, baker's, general stores, and post office, etc.

Teachers: 11 (not including 4 retired)**.** 6 were staying here to teach evacuees. Some may have been working outside the parish and 2 teachers at Rudgwick School came from outside Rudgwick. (Cox Green had 1 teacher, headmistress of a primary school, not Rudgwick's).

Nurses: 9 (not including 3 retired)**.** This seems quite a large number and I am unsure of how many were working privately looking after elderly patients. I have also included 9 'children's nurses' in the 'domestic' category (above) on the grounds that they were probably working for families with young children. 2 said they were a 'state registered nurse', one said 'general nurse'. [Note: The SRN in the nurse's bungalow in Bucks Green was the District Nurse].

Health related, other than nurses: 6. One GP, 1 matron, 1 dispenser at doctor's surgery. In Cox Green: 1 health visitor (for Surrey), 1 dietician and 1 health practitioner (at a 'psychological re-education centre').

Clerical/secretarial work: 10. 4 secretaries, 4 clerks, a bookkeeper and a stenographer.

Telephonists: 2.

Farm work: 9. Includes 5 'farmer's wives', 1 running a poultry farm, 1 in dairy work (and 1 unemployed herdswoman).

Pub work: 1. Just one showed as the wife of the publican assisting, though this was almost certainly true of the other 6 pubs, where the wives are shown as 'unpaid domestic duties'. Also one unemployed barmaid!

Incapacitated: 18.

Dressmakers: 2.

Currently unemployed: 7.

Evacuation related: 8: 2 evacuees with their children; 6 working with evacuees.

Other: I writer, I commercial traveller (both Cox Green).

War-related volunteers – *see 'Rudgwick's preparations for war' in Spring Review 2025.*

Men's occupations (562 men)

Farming and land-related work: 159 (28%) The land is still the largest source of men's work in the parish. I have included farmers, bailiffs, farm labourers, cowmen, dairy men, stockmen, forestry workers, gamekeepers, poultry farm workers, market gardeners, horsemen, carters, tractor drivers.

Building construction and maintenance: 88. Here I have gathered together contractors, labourers, bricklayers, carpenters, painters & decorators, plumbers, electricians, workers on roads and in the brickworks.

Labourers (trade not specified): 24.

Gardeners: 68. A surprising number? It reflects the growing middle class, the number of country houses, and lack of any mechanisation in gardening. Lots of boys left school to be garden boys.

Drivers/vehicle mechanics: 41. Includes chauffeurs and other drivers, those working on maintaining vehicles (often part of the same job).

Other mechanics: 9.

Domestic service: 10. Includes butlers, a footman, grooms, a caretaker, a chef.

Butchers: 4. Includes a butcher, a butcher and shopkeeper, a butcher's roundsman and a shop and slaughterman. Also a butcher's errand boy.

Grocers and other shop workers: 14. Includes a baker, a baker and grocer, a grocer and sub-postmaster, a shopkeeper and sub-postmaster, 2 other grocers, 3 assistant grocers, a greengrocer and fruiterer, a fruiterer, a fishmonger, a general shop keeper. Includes a bread (delivery) roundsman.

Milk/dairy production and delivery: 5. Includes milk roundsmen.

Pubs: 7. Landlords of our 7 pubs.

Post office and telephone work: 7. Includes postmen and sub-postmasters, and a night telephonist.

Railway work: 5. Includes porter/signalman (2), signalman, ganger, loco driver.

Clerical & other 'white collar' work: 8.

Professional & managerial: 32. Many and various!

Armed forces officers: 11.

Merchants: 13. Includes a coal merchant.

Other occupations: 25. Boot repairer, Undertaker (2), Gravedigger, Blacksmith, Policeman, Tailor, Church related workers (2), Teacher, Playwright, Sculptor, Printer, Dentist, Doctor (2), Organ builder. (Cox Green had a Teacher, Psychotherapist, Blacksmith, 3 Students, Commercial artist, and one in Church related work).

Incapacitated: 4.

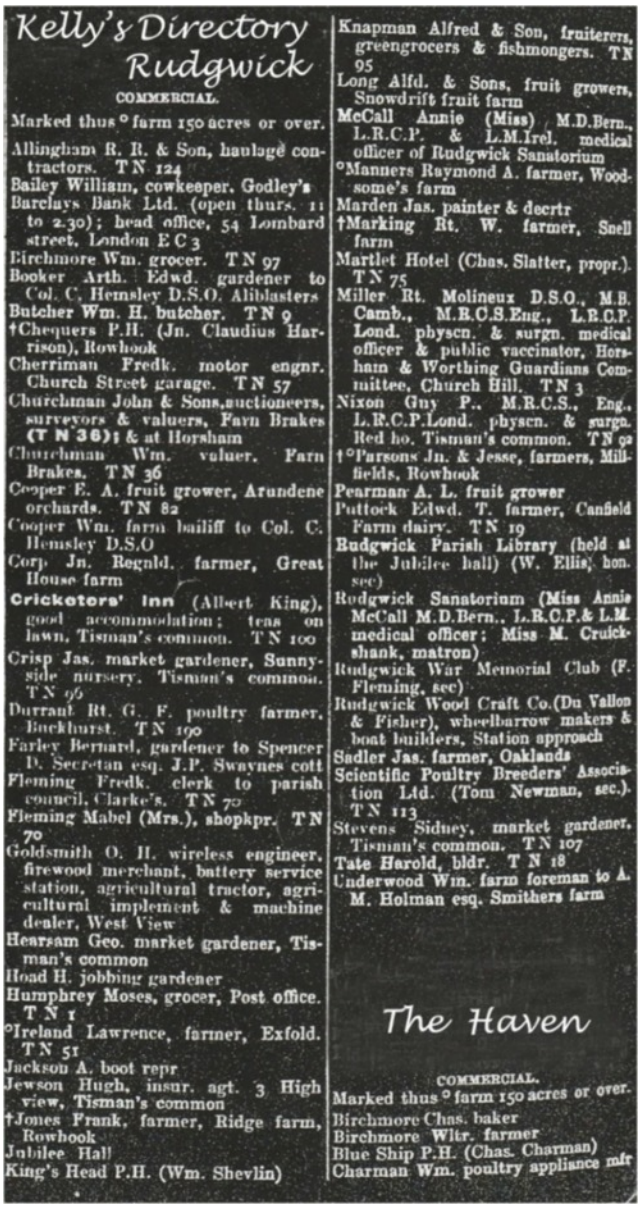
Currently unemployed: 4.

Retired: 53. Includes 11 who did not show their previous employment. Of the remaining 42, there were: Farmers (2), Chauffeurs (3), Army veterans (4), Labourers (2), and a Cowman,Farm bailiff, Grocer, Insurance worker, Secretary, Colonial Service employee, Indian Civil Service employee, Shop worker, Miner, Gardener, Bank Messenger, Coach painter, Solicitor, Salesman, Artist, Builder, White hunter(!) Cox Green: Bank officer, Insurance worker, Importer, Draper, Grocer manager, Grocer's assistant, Gardener, Master baker, Doctor, Butler, Farm worker, Indian army veteran, Army veteran).

War-related volunteers – *see 'Rudgwick's preparations for war' in Spring Review 2025*

Rudgwick Businesses in 1939

Local directories tell us where residents were obtaining goods and services in 1939. There were 2 butchers, a general store, a newsagent, 2 grocer/post offices, a fruiter/greengrocer, 2 other shops, 3 motor engineers/garages, 3 poultry farms, a bootmaker, a boot repairer, 2 builders, a blacksmith, 2 electrical engineers, a painter & decorator, a chimney sweep, 7 pubs (including the Martlet Hotel, and at least one pub with rooms), a tea and guest house, tea rooms, a coal merchant, orchards, fruit farm, market gardens, auctioneer/estate agent, a woodcraft company, a sanatorium, a haulage contractor, a bank (3½ hours per week), 2 doctors, and several large farms. The directories did not cover all the facilities available, particularly some offered by individuals. Nonetheless a wide range available locally, though one would need to travel further afield for higher order goods.


Kelly's Directory Rudgwick

COMMERCIAL.

Marked thus ° farm 150 acres or over.

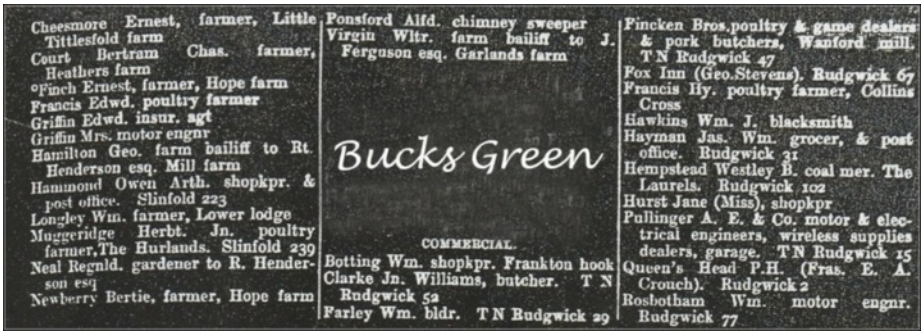
Allingham R. R. & Son, haulage contractors. T N 124
Bailey William, cowkeeper, Godley's
Barclays Bank Ltd. (open thurs. 11 to 2.30); head office, 54 Lombard street, London E C 3
Birchmore Wm. grocer. T N 97
Booker Arth. Edwd. gardener to Col. C. Hemsley D.S.O. Alblasters
Butcher Wm. H. butcher. T N 9
†Chequers P.H. (Jn. Claudius Harrison), Rowhook
Cherriman Fredk. motor engnr. Church Street garage. T N 57
Churchman John & Sons,auctioneers, surveyors & valuers, Fawn Brakes (T N 36)† & at Horsham
Churchman Wm. valuer. Farn Brakes. T N 36
Cooper E. A. fruit grower, Arundene orchards. T N 82
Cooper Wm. farm bailiff to Col. C. Hemsley D.S.O
Corp Jn. Reginld. farmer, Great House farm
Cricketers' Inn (Albert King), good accommodation; teas on lawn, Tisman's common. T N 100
Crisp Jas. market gardener, Sunnyside nursery, Tisman's common. T N 96
Durrant Rt. G. F. poultry farmer, Buckhurst. T N 100
Farley Bernard, gardener to Spencer D. Secretan esq. J.P. Swaynes cott
Fleming Fredk. clerk to parish council, Clarke's. T N 70
Fleming Mabel (Mrs.), shopkpr. T N 70
Goldsmith O. H. wireless engineer, firewood merchant, battery service station, agricultural tractor, agricultural implement & machine dealer, West View
Hearsam Geo. market gardener, Tisman's common
Hoad H. jobbing gardener
Humphrey Moses, grocer, Post office. T N 1
°Ireland Lawrence, farmer, Exfold. T N 51
Jackson A. boot repr
Jewson Hugh, insur. agt. 3 High view, Tisman's common
†Jones Frank, farmer, Ridge farm, Rowhook
Jubilee Hall
King's Head P.H. (Wm. Shevlin)
Knapman Alfred & Son, fruiterers, greengrocers & fishmongers. T N 95
Long Alfd. & Sons, fruit growers, Snowdrift fruit farm
McCall Annie (Miss), M.D.Bern., L.R.C.P. & L.M.Irel. medical officer of Rudgwick Sanatorium
°Manners Raymond A. farmer, Woodsome's farm
Marden Jas. painter & decrtr
†Marking Rt. W. farmer, Snell farm
Martlet Hotel (Chas. Slatter, propr.). T N 75
Miller Rt. Molineux D.S.O., M.B. Camb., M.R.C.S.Eng., L.R.C.P. Lond. physcn. & surgn. medical officer & public vaccinator, Horsham & Worthing Guardians Committee, Church Hill. T N 3
Nixon Guy P., M.R.C.S., Eng., L.R.C.P.Lond. physcn. & surgn. Red ho, Tisman's common. T N 92
†°Parsons Jn. & Jesse, farmers, Millfields, Rowhook
Pearman A. L. fruit grower
Puttock Edwd. T. farmer, Canfield Farm dairy. T N 19
Rudgwick Parish Library (held at the Jubilee hall) (W. Ellis, hon. sec)
Rudgwick Sanatorium (Miss Annie McCall M.D.Bern., L.R.C.P.& L.M. medical officer; Miss M. Cruickshank, matron)
Rudgwick War Memorial Club (F. Fleming, sec)
Rudgwick Wood Craft Co.(Du Vallon & Fisher), wheelbarrow makers & boat builders, Station approach
Sadler Jas. farmer, Oaklands
Scientific Poultry Breeders' Association Ltd. (Tom Newman, sec.). T N 113
Stevens Sidney, market gardener, Tisman's common. T N 107
Tate Harold, bldr. T N 18
Underwood Wm. farm foreman to A. M. Holman esq. Smithers farm

The Haven

COMMERCIAL.

Marked thus ° farm 150 acres or over.

Birchmore Chas. baker
Birchmore Wltr. farmer
Blue Ship P.H. (Chas. Charman)
Charman Wm. poultry appliance mfr


Cheesmore Ernest, farmer, Little Tittlesfold farm
Court Bertram Chas. farmer, Heathers farm
°Finch Ernest, farmer, Hope farm
Francis Edwd. poultry farmer
Griffin Edwd. insur. agt
Griffin Mrs. motor engnr
Hamilton Geo. farm bailiff to Rt. Henderson esq. Mill farm
Hammond Owen Arth. shopkpr. & post office. Slinfold 223
Longley Wm. farmer, Lower lodge
Muggeridge Herbt. Jn. poultry farmer,The Hurlands. Slinfold 239
Neal Reginld. gardener to R. Henderson esq
Newberry Bertie, farmer, Hope farm
Ponsford Alfd. chimney sweeper
Virgin Wltr. farm bailiff to J. Ferguson esq. Garlands farm

Bucks Green

COMMERCIAL.

Botting Wm. shopkpr. Frankton hook
Clarke Jn. Williams, butcher. T N Rudgwick 52
Farley Wm. bldr. T N Rudgwick 29
Pincken Bros.poultry & game dealers & pork butchers, Wapford mill. T N Rudgwick 47
Fox Inn (Geo.Stevens). Rudgwick 67
Francis Hy. poultry farmer, Collins Cross
Hawkins Wm. J. blacksmith
Hayman Jas. Wm. grocer, & post office. Rudgwick 31
Hempstead Westley B. coal mer. The Laurels. Rudgwick 102
Hurst Jane (Miss), shopkpr
Pullinger A. E. & Co. motor & electrical engineers, wireless supplies dealers, garage. T N Rudgwick 15
Queen's Head P.H. (Fras. E. A. Crouch). Rudgwick 2
Rosbotham Wm. motor engnr. Rudgwick 77

Conclusion: It is clear that at the outbreak of war, the parish was well provided for in goods and services, given that most of the population would still be both living and working here most of the time. It would be interesting to compare Rudgwick in 1939 with Rudgwick in both 1921 and 1911, the years of the available censuses (not available for 1931, destroyed by fire in 1942), perhaps projects for someone in the future *(but see also 'Rudgwick's Centenary Census 1911' by Roger Nash in the Spring 2011 issue of the Newsletter)*. It would also be interesting to compare Rudgwick in 1939 with, Rudgwick in 1951, the date of the census (there was no 1941 census, of course). Unfortunately, the over-restrictive '100 year' rule means that the 1951 census will not be available for analysis until 2051! So the 1939 Register *(see Part 1 Spring Review for information about this Register)* offers the best (and last) picture of our 1930s parish, which no doubt had already changed since 1918, and was now sure to be changed by World War II and its aftermath.

Bucks Green Camp and the Military Presence in Rudgwick 1939-1945 (from Autumn 2011 Newsletter, by Malcolm Francis)

Malcolm says: with information recalled by my mother-in-law, Babs McWilliam, here is the time-line of the military presence in Rudgwick throughout the War: "In the early part of the summer of 1939 three searchlights and their crews arrived. One was stationed at Hoopwick Farm, one opposite the Haven Post Office and one at Baynards near the Fullers Earth works (the site of the then Cranleigh Brickworks). There were no more arrivals during the time of the "Phoney War" until the summer of 1940 when the Royal Horse Artillery arrived after the Dunkirk evacuation. They stayed about two months making up their numbers.

When they left, Rudgwick then hosted the Northamptonshire Yeomanry for a short while. The County of London Yeomanry came to a camp site on the Lynwick Estate for about eight months; when they left in the summer of 1941 they went to Salisbury Plain en route to the Middle East. The next group to arrive was a small party of the Ordnance Corps. By the end of 1941 a large camp had been built at Watts Corner, on land that became the estates of Princess Margaret, Queen Elizabeth, Tates Way, etc. The headquarters were situated in Gaskyns House (now Pennthorpe).

The first Canadian troops arrived at Christmas of that year, they were a medical and dental corps. Ellens House was used as a hospital and Honeywood House for the dental corps. A large party of Canadian Artillery soon occupied the Watts Corner Camp. These troops were going to and fro to the coast in preparation for the Invasion of Europe. As the war came to an end the Camp was filled with Prisoners of War who stayed there until they were repatriated. There was a short time in 1944 when American troops were based on the Lynwick Estate, flying light reconnaissance aircraft."

Bucks Green Camp 1945-1948

The empty Army Camp, also known as Gaskyns Camp, was still in existence in 1948. It was situated where Queen Elizabeth and Princess Margaret houses now stand. Some entries in the Parish Magazines for 1945 and 1948, written by Rev. Wynn give us an idea of the last days of the camp and the housing shortages of the post war years:

"Prisoners of War: For four months we have had relays of [British ex-] prisoners of war in the Bucks Green Camp and in the neighbouring camps. In many ways we have come in contact with them. At first, men came here straight from Germany and just stayed for 24 hours to refit and shake down before they went home on six weeks leave".

Volunteers from Rudgwick used to help in sewing badges and mending, and various odds and ends, so that they might leave in good order. Then they returned in batches for a three week period of rehabilitation. During these periods the Vicar acted as assistant chaplain at Stroude Park Camp (on the A281 opposite Rapkyns) and took Padre's hours on Tuesdays. "Early in September the Bucks Green Camp gave a party for the Rudgwick people. There were sports on Gaskyns cricket ground and a free tea with lots of all sorts of good things to eat. The Royal Artillery Band attended and altogether it was a very delightful afternoon. The day's festivities were wound up with a dinner at Gaskyns, which was attended by the Brigadier and the Colonel and about fifty officers and guests. The dinner was served in the old billiard room with the band playing in the next room.

Our sympathy and good wishes go out to all the prisoners of war who have come and gone during these last months. Many of the staff who looked after them have become our friends. Now they have dispersed far and wide, and we hope that all who have come to Rudgwick will have pleasant memories of our village and villagers. We understand that there are Canadians coming, and we must try and give them a good welcome. They will soon be going to their own homes across the sea. Probably their last memory of England will be of its green and pleasant land here."

"The Nissen Huts have gradually been filled up with people who were in desperate need of a home. There are now forty-six families who, for want of better accommodation, use the huts. There is certainly shelter from the rain and a stove for warmth and cooking, electric light is being laid on, and there is some rudimentary form of sanitation, but many of them are crowded together, and dogs and cats and children play all over the place. The Vicar is anxious that something should be done to help the social life of the camp, so he has applied to Horsham Rural District Council, that he should rent a hut, and he has been promised chairs and tables. It is also suggested that the Youth Club might like to share a hut. "

"The Vicar has obtained possession of Hut 21, and he hopes soon to get it in some sort of working order, and he would be grateful for volunteers to help. He is getting particulars about a plastic flooring which can be put down by unskilled labour. Once the floor is satisfactorily laid, then the chairs and tables and the piano can be installed. He has also received a promise of a cupboard, which should be most useful, but we shall want things like cutlery and china, especially if the application for a catering licence is granted. However, in thinking about food and drink, we must remember that man doth not live by bread alone, and that each one of us is a composite being, both body and soul."

Malcolm says: I have some memory of the site in the Fifties when the huts were still present and barbed wire was strung across the road entrance. A lot of the older residents of Rudgwick still used to refer to "The Camp " after it was finally demolished….

Editor's note: It appears that the early presence of the Army in Rudgwick in 1940 was not well received, if a letter written by the chairman of the Parish Council is typical of local public feeling. He was highly critical, in particular, of the behaviour of officers in their billeting with local residents. It is also to be hoped that his disparagement of the Army in their recent heroic retreat in France and almost miraculous escape at Dunkirk, leaving behind many dead, wounded and imprisoned, did not reflect the general attitude of the public. The letter can be read in the Autumn 2011 Newsletter.

Air Photographs of Rudgwick, 1944 (USAAF)

Roger Nash



Church Street South

This is a follow-up to my piece in the Review, Autumn 2022, *Rudgwick Camp, The Royals Estate*, which was in part based on a WSCC air photo of 1946. Recently a large number of similar aerial images from 1944, flown by the US Army Air Force (USAAF) Across much of England have been released. You can see them and search locations on Historic England's website.

On this image (north to the right), framed by the A281, Church Street (left to right) and the railway: find the Bucks Green Camp, allotments in the triangle to north (surprising that there is not total coverage at this time of need for home-grown food), Gravatts Hanger, partly clear felled (which is interesting) on the right, Gaskyns in its extensive grounds top centre, the station goods yard top right, and the river Arun flood plain in the bottom left, where Wanford Mill can be seen, as well as the relict meanders. Less clear cut but significant are the rectangular shapes and lines to the left of Gaskyns. Are these kitchen gardens, glasshouses etc, now part of Orchard Hill?

What I wonder is the white area opposite the camp entrance by the A281? Located between Mill Hill and the footpath, it is now scrubland. Might it have been a training area for the camp? The camp itself is spaciously laid out across half a dozen fields, but with certain clusters, possibly centred on the cluster by the roundabout. We know there was a NAAFI building, perhaps located in one of the larger buildings there.

On the right, the east side of Church Street, are long gardens extending right down to the hanger; some owners may have "dug for victory" here. No Woodfield Road then. The gap, now Thurne Way, has a track to Thurne Cottages, probably the last houses to be completed in Rudgwick in 1939.



Bucks Green

From the Camp and Gaskyns area bottom right, the A281 may be traced heading to top centre at The Fox, itself obscured by cloud, but with the road triangle a significant landmark. The inter-war houses on Loxwood Road are also mostly obscured. The housing around the Haven Road junction is not much different from today, as are the row of semi-detached properties backing onto the white field on the left side of the A281, and also by the triangle, where Then as now there were commercial buildings too small to make out. Bucks Green has altered little in its fundamental footprint, and no Pig Farm.

The King George V Field stands out, not as a playing field, but as an arable crop field in near-white hue, referred to above. The recreation field was not created until just after the war. There is another 1946 WSCC air photo which shows it under development. (Its neighbour field has ridges all across it – potatoes perhaps). Notice, too, the park-like nature of the fields belonging to Gaskyns between the big house and Lynwick Street.





Church Street, Centre and North

It is difficult to do justice to this long street on one image, or on one page. The enlarged image on the left has the poultry farm. Look for a small turning circle off the street and the long wooden poultry sheds of the Scientific Poultry Breeders Association (SPBA). These are where Coralee and Wyndhams are today. Church Street's longstanding linear layout and the one sided morphology of development on only the western (top) side is very clear cut. That was changing before the war, with several, but not continuous, developments on the eastern side, on the land of Parsonage Farm.

Kilnfield Road will be built much later (1960s) in the undeveloped Field on the far left of the longer image. Farnbrakes, a bungalow, may be seen close to this gap on both images, with poultry sheds next.

There follows,heading up the hill, a long gap before two drives can be made out, close together, the first to Summerfold, then called Pitfield. Both the house and the poultry farm were respectively the property and workplace of Tom Newman and BPA. There is some evidence of cultivations, "digging for victory" perhaps, alongside the Pitfield drive. Much of the apparently grassed backland field is now RPC's Churchman's Meadow play area. The back area between Pitfield and SBPA is now built on as Summerfold, and may faintly be discerned as an orchard in the image. The second drive was, and still is, leading to Windacres, off the image.

Some few sheds in a field to its right are the Bailey smallholding, now the Barley Croft development. The next drive, with several curves, is Highcroft Drive, which of course went to The High Croft, located at the end of the drive, with a tennis court on the other side of the drive. Nestling in the angle between the drive and Church Street was The Old Parsonage and several outbuildings, and just to its right is the church with a prominent shadow. Several houses have since been built along Highcroft Drive. Dukes Farm shows signs of cultivation in its large back garden.

Turning now to west of Church Street, which was then as built up as it is now, mostly our lovely older houses, move your eye to opposite the church, to The King's Head field, where there is much evidence of rectangular patches of cultivation on its unlikely sloping ground. This is the only known evidence of this, so was it some kind of patrons' victory digging allotments? We need to be told! The graininess of the image makes it difficult to see whether the owners of the many long back fields of the old houses here were also digging their land, but it seems highly likely they would have had large vegetable patches at the very least. A comparison with the Google satellite image shows just how overgrown many of these fields have become in the last 80 years. Of particular visual interest is the area behind the row of brick semi-detached houses in Wyndhams field, where the backland is distinctive in its cover. Look for the long rectangle within the field, and try to imagine what is growing there within its shapes.

Moving now north to Cox Green, on the right of the image, note how one sided it was, development having taken place since it was sold from John Aungier's Lynwick estate in the 1920s, but not yet on the side owned by Dukes Farm. These houses, as now, had big gardens, with ample opportunity for cultivation. The signs are there if you look carefully.

I am glad the USAAF were not taking these pictures in order to attack us, but equally I do not want to give the current President any ideas! Perhaps the Yanks were on training runs in 1944.

A Pallinghurst Country Gal: part of the childhood story of Vera Jones abstracted from the original by John Cozens (from Spring 1995 Newsletter)

Vera was the second youngest of the six children of Jesse and Lucy Wait. Jesse worked as a farm labourer for Mr MacAndrew of Pallinghurst House, now the Rikkyo School, whose estate stretched from the Rudgwick/ Loxwood area to Cranleigh. In 1928, when she was a year old, the family moved from Ellens Green to Brickkiln Farm, near Tisman's Common, where she spent her childhood. Now only a pile of stones remains of the home that had a boys' bedroom, a girls' and one for their parents, as well as a scullery, a best sitting room and huge living room that contained the cooking range. The place of the missing bathroom was supplied by an old tin bath, kept outside, and a privy at the end of the garden. The house, of course, lacked both mains water and electricity but had a well in the garden that also supplied Mr Buckman in nearby 'Keeper's Cottage', who carried water in two buckets on a yoke across his shoulders. Paraffin for lamps and batteries and accumulators for the wireless had to be fetched from Bucks Green garage.

Vera vividly remembers 'Lord Haw Haw', the traitor William Joyce, telling about the building of Dunsfold Aerodrome through the crackling reception. Raising six children on a farm labourer's wage was not easy and all the management of home and money fell to Lucy. The house came free, as did milk from the cows Jesse milked at Chill Beans farm and the rabbits that it was his job to catch. Vegetables came from the garden in season and tomatoes from Mr. Stevens' greenhouses near 'The Cricketers', now 'The Mucky Duck'. Some of the milk went into rich milk puddings, while its cream was made into butter by the children. Steak and kidney puddings and bacon puddings varied the menu and the family, though poor, was well fed and healthy. Domestic chores determined the pattern of the week.

Monday was washing day, when Lucy stoked the scullery copper very early and was still hard at it at 4.15pm when the children came home from school to cold meat from Sunday and bubble and squeak. Tuesday was ironing day, when she put a thick blanket topped by a clean sheet on the big kitchen table and used flat irons heated on the red-hot cinders of the range. Lucy and Jesse both worked hard. After his week's labouring for Mr. MacAndrew, Jesse would garden on Saturday afternoons for the Greek Papperitas family, who lived in a quaint cottage on one of the lanes leading to Tisman's Common, and in the spring he did copse cutting at the weekend, selling the sticks to Mr. Weston, a wood merchant from Epsom. Even the labrador and Jack Russell dogs used for rabbiting were bred by him for the estate.

Some years later, after a serious accident at home, Jesse was sacked from the Pallinghurst estate and took a lighter job with Mrs. Turpin, so the family moved to Heartfoldswood Cottages.

The family's shopping was largely done in Rudgwick. Each Saturday, Lucy and the children walked three miles each way to Mr. Burchmore's grocery shop in Church Street but bread was delivered by the Loxwood Cokelers' store to Mrs. Bachelor at Ivyhurst Cottage, near Pephurst, and collected by the children. By the time they got it home, most of the delicious crust had disappeared. Half a crown (12½p) a week paid to Vera's Aunt Mabel in Bucks Green, whence the coal merchant collected it, paid the family's coal bill, although the fuel could be delivered only during the summer, when the lanes to Brickkiln Farm were not too muddy. Fish and chips were bought from Mr Knapman's shop in Bucks Green every Friday or Saturday and on Christmas Eve he delivered the fruit and nuts for which Lucy had paid into his Christmas Club. As Mr MacAndrew gave no Christmas boxes to his employees, Jesse happily helped himself to two of his employer's pheasants for Christmas lunch, birds so unknown to one Christmas guest of Vera's that she described them as 'turkeys', another bird with which she was obviously not familiar.

After Christmas came primrose time, mushroom time, haying time, harvest time and blackberry time. Haying and harvest saw all the estate workers working together, even Howard Kingshott, the thatcher, being needed to thatch the ricks. Mushrooms were picked from 5am. and taken to the London markets by Mr. Francis, the carrier from Bucks Green. The baskets were returned next evening for use the next day.

Vera attended Rudgwick School, then at Bucks Green, where the Headmaster was Mr. Bacon, naturally known as 'Rashers' to his pupils. The other teachers were Mrs Hearsman, Miss Simmonds and Miss Francis, who left to get married. She was replaced by Miss Tuff, then a pupil teacher, whose parents kept a shop at Tisman's Common and who walked all the footpaths on the Pallinghurst estate to keep them open.

Each morning, at 7.45 by the Loxwood House clock, the Wait children left for school, each with a penny to spend at the shop kept by the Botting family near The Fox Inn. On her first day at school, Vera fell, cut her chin and had to be patched up by the village nurse, who lived next to the Bucks Green garage. It was Mrs.Botting who lent her sisters the old pram in which they wheeled her home.

The schoolchildren had to take sandwiches for lunch until Mrs Bacon began to cook mid-day meals at 1/3d (about 6p) a week. Vera's mother must have been an excellent manager to provide 1/3d a week plus 1d a day for each of her children. Among the highlights of the school year in those pre-war days were Empire Day, with patriotic songs in the playground and a half day off; the Sports Day held in the grounds of Gaskins, now Pennthorpe School, and Armistice Day, with its service and two minutes' silence.

On a few Saturday mornings, Vera remembers, there were cookery lessons at Aliblasters, taken by Colonel Hemley's cook. The Wait children regularly attended the little church at Tisman's Common, where Mr. Campbell, the curate, took all the services and the Sunday School. On Saturday mornings, still in his long black robes, he led the children on exciting expeditions like crossing Hyes lakes on a raft made of planks and beer barrels. 'Over-familiarity' with the children lost the curate his job. No one bothered to find out from the children that none of them had ever been touched.

Vera's childhood, happy if poor, as it was, ended in 1942, when she was 14 and went to work as an underhousemaid for Mrs McBain at Lakers Lodge tor 4/-.(20p) a week, living in, with a half day off a fortnight. After 18 months she went to the Burnleigh Guest House at Loxwood for £1 a week, living in, to work for Mrs. Kennard.

Now [*1995*] she takes her grandchildren to the pile of stones that was Brickkiln Farm and explains to them some of the differences between their childhood and hers.

Alfred Bacon at War, Part 2, Rudgwick Primary School 1943-1946

Roger Nash

(See also Part 1, 1939-1942, RPS Spring Review 2025)

1943

As a result of the Christmas party at the Bucks Green camp in December, a British Columbian former teacher was invited in to talk to the pupils about his home province, a rare bit of real geography. An insight into teacher transport occurred when Miss Simmonds, and passenger Miss Jackson, were delayed arriving as her car broke down. More changes in managers brought in Mrs Helen Beaumont (from Beckington) instead of Mrs Burge, Spencer Secretan (from Swaynes) instead of Frederick Cherriman (from Buckhurst, not long in post) and Mrs Alice Stanford (from Llanelly) instead of Mr Churchman who had died. Mrs Maxwell was recalled to London, and a supply teacher left. Not long afterwards, Mr Bacon wrote a strong letter to the managers about the changes in staffing and his difficulties managing evacuees' and village children's education. "*I think the time has come for managers to enter a most emphatic protest against the continuous reorganisation made necessary by the presence of evacuees. Our own local children have been badgered from pillar to post for over two years and their education has not progressed as it should have done."* He went on to say it was as bad for teachers as for children. It also entailed moving children to or from the Hall yet again. There was no reply from managers as far as can be seen. To cap that, there was a shortage of materials for needlework classes, and managers were somewhat insensitive to this in wanting to know why the girls were not having classes.

1944

25 February, children were coming in very sleepy following five nights of bombing, presumably after sleeping in cold shelters.The following were all I could find about this month in Sussex and Surrey:

"In February 1944, Sussex was the target of air raids in Worthing and a Lancaster bomber crashed near an ancient church. On February 9, 1944, Nazi raiders damage Worthing, killing an 88-year-old woman and her daughter. The Woolton Restaurant in Lyndhurst Road was hit by a bomb, injuring Dorothy Macpherson. Children at St Mary's Catholic School were machine gunned, but only a few were injured". "Lancaster bomber crash: In February 1944, a Lancaster bomber crashed into a hill near an ancient church in Sussex, killing all eight people on board."

In Worthing, February 22nd "was a very unpleasant evening. I had just got in when the cuckoo (alarm) sounded. Uncle Bert departed to the sound of gunfire. We had diving planes and bombs for about an hour. I was on fire- watching and went out to look for anything untoward from time to time; there was nothing except I heard shrapnel falling nearby. Mother sat in the passage working her drawn-thread work trolley cloth. Had I been an artist I could have drawn a good picture of 'Life in 1944 with me in tin hat sitting on the stairs.'" (Wartime West Sussex 1939-1945)

Also, *"On 23rd February 1944, three of my mother's sister's children were killed by enemy action in a bombing raid in Weybridge Surrey." "Your family were probably killed in a German counterattack plan called Operation Steinbock. Also known as the Baby Blitz, it was a retaliation for the day and night bombing of the German cities that ramped up at the end of 1943. I suspect that your family were killed in the raid on the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company research Centre in Shepperton. This was a high value target for the Germans as it was key to the development of more efficient aviation fuel and was attacked on the night of 22nd-23rd Feb 1944."* (Exploring Surrey's Past).

The next complaint of our exhausted headmaster was that Ministry of Information films were being shown in the village hall; some pupils were attending. Why could they not be shown in school when we have all the equipment required? Fair point. Later, three incendiary bombs were found in the ditch at the bottom of the school meadow, explosion had failed to light the magnesium. The police removed them.

D Day was ignored. A few days later, 19 June, it was the turn of the teachers to write to managers. *"Under present conditions, the teaching staff feel that we can no longer be responsible for the safety of the children and that until such time as an efficient warning scheme can be evolved, the onus of responsibility must rest on the managers and the Local Education Committee…. The alarm bell rings in the nearby fire station during the daytime when no firemen are on the premises. Surely, if the warning can come through to save bricks and mortar it could also come through to the school to safeguard the lives of the children."*
The context was the V1 flying bombs (robot bombs, Mr Bacon called them) which had suddenly started to pass over and sometimes fall on their way to London, unprecedented in warfare, and in many cases heard over Rudgwick, a very memorable but frightening sound, I am told. It may not have been known here then that the RAF at Dunsfold was bombing the V1 sites which had already led to the tragic accident at Pallinghurst in January 1944 (2 aircraft, 8 killed). What of the fire station? I had heard before that the roadside outbuilding at The Fox was once a fire station. Here is some evidence of this.

On 28 July a V1 passed overhead, children dived under their desks, it was a real worry: Mr Bacon wrote that that term was *"the most worrying of my 45 years in teaching".* Why was the bizarre advice from the ARP wardens for children to stay home when the sky was overcast? A note in the log was tucked in between two items above about the Food Control Office.

Returning in September, the number on roll was 115 local and 21 evacuee children, a big reduction over time as children returned home, only to now be in new danger in London. On a mundane level, three teachers attended a series of lectures in Horsham on "backwardness in children" - seems both banal, and to us, a worrying use of English.

1945

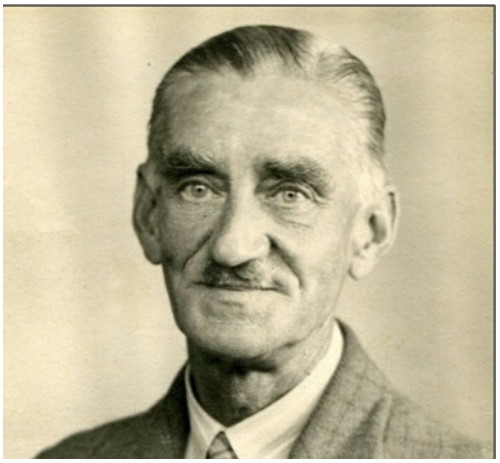
As the country entered the last year of war (though they did not know it), another rearrangement of classes was necessary when Miss Lawford returned to London in March. The main school classes were split into just three age groups, Bacon taking the top class, lamenting the days when several visitors take him from the classroom, which will resonate with senior staff in modern schools.
But VE Day "the cease-fire" did come, and the school was closed for two days.
A looming problem, not fully explained, was the future of the canteen. Where was it? it was clearly being condemned as unusable. I believe "canteen" meant the kitchen, which was located in a cramped space under the classrooms (the school built on a steep slope). Photos show the children

eating in the classrooms. In June, Mr Bacon offered his house, such was the intractability of the situation, his kitchen and the downstairs rooms. Managers investigated the use of The Home Guard Hut (at Bucks Green Place). Worse, the cook had resigned.
The question was also being asked, did they still need the Memorial Hall? The answer was yes, as Infants continued to use it into the 1970s. Managers set up a sub-committee consisting of Mrs Beaumont, Miss Boxall, Miss Tuff (staff), Mrs Stanford and Mrs Churchman (who was a supervisor). In September, the war ended, the Bacons' house was indeed used. There were 96 on roll with evacuees all home, the lowest on roll since before the war. A sign of the future: the sports field moved to the King George's Field, on the cusp of its opening, just part of it mowed by Henry Ireland of Exfold Farm, paid for by the LEA.

1946

It was on 31 January that Alfred Bacon, only the third headmaster (nearly 30 years, the longest of any in the school's history), tendered his resignation for 30 April. When he came to Rudgwick in 1917, straight from the army, he had already been head at Lurgashall School, where his only daughter Rita was born. He was interested in gardening, motorcycling, sport including tennis (founder member of the Rudgwick club). Marguerite was school dinner supervisor from its inception in the 1930s. She was also president of the WI 1927-1931. *See pages 194-5 in Rudgwick's Great War Vol 1.*

The Managers did a sensible review of what they wanted: a good disciplinarian, able to take an interest in the children, interested in country pursuits (maybe gardening, not hunting?). The principle remains in the way heads are appointed today. Three applicants were short listed, Philip Briggs, George Robinson, Albert Walters. There had never been a headmistress, nor would there be for many years yet. However, none got or took the job. In July, after an interregnum, presumably a temp drafted in, William Huggett was appointed. Little did anyone know he would only be head for a few months, as in November 1947, he was, sadly, electrocuted in his bath, aged 38. His one claim to fame was that he was the first head to have a degree (BA, Goldsmith's). His headstone is to be found in Rudgwick churchyard. He was born in Brighton, taught in Croydon during the war, and had married Dorothy Randall, whose family were local from Plaistow, in 1938; they had no children. She lived until 2010.
In August 1946, the managers viewed the plans for a new canteen, the large prefab building still glimpsed today behind the hedge on the A281 hill. Alfred Bacon, meanwhile, only enjoyed a couple of years of retirement first in Horsham with his recovering daughter and grandson Paul, then to Shoreham, where he was originally from, and where he died in 1949 aged 63. Paul led a fulfilling life, and in later life was a long serving parish councillor in Billingshurst, complete with scar over one eye. He died in 2019. Paul's mother Rita ran a florist's in Horsham Carfax and Horsham station, later in Billingshurst, for many years, despite some lifelong disfigurement. (*See Part 1, Spring 2025 Review for Paul and Rita's injuries in the 1942 air attack*)



Alfred Douglas Bacon 1885-1949



Rudgwick School girls in uniform (post-war)



Rudgwick School boys football team (post-war)

Books update: Coming Soon! History and Enclosure of Tisman's Common, Rudgwick: By Roger Nash

A much revised and updated version of a booklet: *Who Put the Common in Tisman's?* By Alan Siney, 1995

Essential reading for Tisman's Common residents and all interested in the history of Rudgwick! £12

More WWII-related stories from Malcolm Francis

Clear Skies (Autumn 1995 Newsletter)

The skies over our village, throughout the Second World War, saw thousands of aircraft, from the desperate days of the Battle of Britain to the "Thousand Bomber" raids. On the night of one of those raids, my mother-in-law, Mrs Babs McWilliam, recalls that she witnessed a stream of bombers heading east that took three hours to pass over the village. There were occasional interceptions of enemy aircraft overhead, one German aircraft crashed at Roman Gate and another at Knowle Lane. This village was luckier than some others, with only a few bombs dropped from fleeing raiders. In 1944 a V1 flying bomb exploded in the fields behind Cox Green, near to the present site of the Rudgwick Steam Fair (*now former site - ed.*). It was a Sunday lunchtime and blast damage was confined to windows and a demolished garage.

In 1948, at the age of 4, I can remember my father and a next-door neighbour, Mr Barrett, dismantling the makeshift air raid shelter at the bottom of the garden of my parents' house in Lynwick Street. Mr Barrett, who was ex-Navy, spent every night of the war in the shelter, sleeping in his hammock, he wasn't going to take a chance. I remember, at that time, asking my mother about "The War" - adult conversation always seemed to be ".....during the War", "..... before the War", etc.

One was aware that there had been a great upheaval, but things had become a lot better. I could sense the wartime atmosphere, there were a lot of Army camps around the area, at Gaskyns (the site of Queen Elizabeth Road), at Lynwick, and in the Haven close to the A29. Many homeless families post-war lived in these camps as there was a severe shortage of housing.

When visiting my grand-parents at Dunsfold I could see many "Blister" hangars, close to the road, at Dunsfold Airfield. These were the ones that looked like a giant Nissen hut, fronted by canvas curtains. The hangars housed "wartime" aircraft, actually they were cargo planes, some taking part in the Berlin Airlift (1948), which were serviced at Dunsfold. There was also a red, flashing navigation light at the end of a runway close to the road, which seemed a sinister echo of the war to a youngster like me.

Air traffic over the village was very spasmodic, an occasional flight. Often they were the old DC3 "Dakotas", a favourite work-horse of post-war airlines, their slow progress being marked by the gently throbbing engines. A light aircraft sometimes passed and to see a helicopter was a major event! This was just a few years before Gatwick was established as a major airport - hard to believe it was dubbed a "white elephant" when it was first opened in the '50s.

Looking back to the war, Mrs McWilliam relates that she was helping with a house-to-house collection for the Spitfire Fund and had a very cold reception from the occupants of 'Kings' in Church Street. She later mentioned this to a friend, who promptly said "It would serve them right if they were bombed". A week later a stick of bombs fell across the village. Where did they land? In Rudgwick Brickworks, close to the houses in Lynwick Street and opposite 'Kings' in Church Street! *(No one was injured - ed.)*

Timber! (Autumn 1999 Newsletter)

During the Second World War Rudgwick, like many other local villages, had quite a few incidents. A German aircraft crashed at Roman Gate and another one at Knowle Lane, near Baynards. Two American B25 Mitchell bombers collided over Pallinghurst, now the Rikkyo School; and a V1 "Doodlebug' exploded in a field *(see previous article, left).*

The third of the stick of bombs dropped across the village by a retreating German bomber in 1940 exploded very close to a large oak tree on property adjacent to the Brickyard, which was owned by a Mr & Mrs Middleton. Their wood and asbestos bungalow and my parents' brick bungalow nearby fortunately escaped the blast; the oak tree taking the full force of it. This tree, though severely damaged survived and continued to grow, though in a somewhat lopsided fashion.

As a child in the 1950s, I can remember the bomb crater by this oak tree slowly filling up with soil and garden rubbish. Twenty years later, in the early 1970s, this bungalow was sold to a Mr & Mrs Frank Baker, who ran a small-holding on the site. As neighbours, I got to know the Bakers very well. Frank was an extremely practical man, a landscape gardener by profession, and an expert with a chainsaw. By now the old oak was beginning to die, its life possibly shortened by the bomb blast 30 years earlier, and Frank decided that it would have to be felled as it was dangerously close to Lynwick Street.

He wisely felt that this was beyond his capabilities, and called in a friend, who was in the tree-felling business and who had a tractor with a large winch and full insurance cover, to take on the job. The tree was prepared for felling, with the tractor's winch cable attached so that the tree would fall away from the road and the overhead telephone and electricity wires. The tractor was positioned to take the strain by putting its 'sprogs' deep into the ground to take maximum tension. Large chainsaws got on with job of sawing through the massive trunk and the tree started to topple, spun round on its base and fell the wrong way, pulling the tractor and winch straight out of the ground. In doing so, it brought down all the overhead cables and the shock wave ran from pole to pole, up and down the street. Several of the houses on the opposite side of the road had the insulating brackets, that were attached to the fascia boards, pulled out by the shock, and the telephone and electricity men spent hours repairing the damage. I wonder if the ensuing insurance claims mentioned War damage. The old oak had certainly left its mark.

Piano (Autumn 2015 Newsletter)

I used to have an old friend who had lived in Guildford for many years. He recounted that at the outbreak of the Second World War a lot of people decided to put their valuable furniture into storage and the local Pickford's warehouse was filling up fast.
My friend, whose office was near to the warehouse, watched as a large grand piano was winched up the outside of the building to the top floor. Unfortunately the block and tackle equipment failed just as the piano was being swung inside - the piano plunged to the ground and exploded! Everybody thought that it was a German bomb. The piano exploded with such force, due to the stress on the large iron frame strung with hundreds of steel wires, that the body of the piano was just matchwood. One can imagine the telephone call to the piano's owners…..

It's not cricket!

And finally (as I sign off), this lovely piece from the parish magazine of July 1945, picked out by Malcolm Francis in 1998, which will still resonate with people of Rudgwick 80 years later. First, a message from the Vicar:

"My Dear People, on the whole, the parliamentary election campaign seems to be proceeding without too much bittemess. Most people seem to be agreed that education and housing are the problems that need to be tackled at the earliest possible moment. There was a public meeting in Rudgwick about housing and town planning, which is reported in this magazine. We must be on the lookout lest the enthusiasm of the planners, who seem to know nothing about their job, should spoil our village. Your affectionate friend and Vicar, A. Norman Wynn"

New Houses for Rudgwick

The Parish Council arranged a meeting on May 30th to enable the village to hear about plans for new houses to be built by our Rural District Council. A large and representative audience attended, showing the deep interest felt in the subject. Capt. Brutton was in the Chair, and with nine (*Council members?*), Mr Longley, Chairman of the RDC Housing Committee, Mr Kay, Architect to the Committee, The Surveyor (*District or County?*) and Mr Robinson of the County Town Planning Committee. Mr Longley started by explaining the need for new houses, and the reasons the Local Authorities had for being the first to start building, as they would have priority in labour and building materials. Rudgwick is allotted 12 houses to start with and the question of a suitable site arose. The parish already possesses a site in Lynwick Street, abutting the railroad, but he questioned it as being the best available.

He was interrupted by Mrs Tilley, saying "Give us a bit of Gaskyns", and various speakers made it clear that a site bordering Lynwick Street and opposite 'The Fox' was what they desired. The Town Planner then produced a map and explained that Chichester wishes to place a by-pass road through this site, and that they consldered the field on the opposite side of Bucks Green the most suitable place, thus making it into a compact little "town". Instant uproar arose, the field in question being the village Recreation Ground. This was disputed by the planner, who wished to insist that the private cricket field in Gaskyns was parish property. When convinced that he was in error, he said it would be quite simple to obtain the cricket field for recreation and give up the other for new houses. The meeting entirely disagreed, and when a questioner asked whether the proposed sewage outfall was not to be quite near this site, and was told that this was the case, it became more vociferous than ever.

The Planner then threw in a bait, with tennis, bowls, etc., in his cricket field, but with no avail; for what good such future dreams planned by the county when we have not enough houses to live in? In point of fact we would prefer to plan our amusements for ourselves, and it would be somewhat more democratic. It was then asked if yet another site could be suggested. Mr Secretan said why not build first on the site we already owned in Lynwick Street - it would save delay in making a start. Mr Wynn agreed with this, and suggested a road could be made right through to church street and so enable people to reach the station more easily. Mrs A. Waller asked "Why not in Church Street", and Mrs Beaumont said that there were two possible sites there. By this time the whole meeting was involved in general and individual argument. Capt. Brutton asked for a vote on the site discussed, with a result: first - opposite 'The Fox'; second - Lynwick Street; and never a vote for the recreation ground. Mr Kay had brought the most excellent plans for the proposed houses, and il was a great pity that they received so little attention owing to the protracted argument about the site. A vote of thanks to all the speakers was proposed by Mr Jackson and carried unanimously. So a most interesting and highly amusing meeting came to an end, and we hope that the opinions of the village may be consulted more often in future. Selah!

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