

### **Recollections of of times gone by.**

As many readers will know 'The Beacon' has published several reminiscences of older residents of the parish. I would to see more. Last year a history of the Village was published (now -out of-print - \_ after two impressions) and I am aware that more recent events-.and persons are being forgotten.

How about it? Most of us have memories, which will be lost if not recorded. How I wish. when It was younger that I had listened more carefully to the likes of Billy Peachman and Arthur Rivett when they were mardling.

To start the ball rolling I will give a few of -mine and hope others-will follow suit. In 1951 the Festival of Britain celebrations took place on River Green. The church choir accompanied by the then rector, the Reverend Reginald Fielding, were on Hearts Cruisers punt, mid-river complete with piano. The combined weight caused the punt to. Sink and like the. Bands on the 'Titanic' for a while the choir kept singing. As. the water rose, so did .their surplices and the overall effect was like a the corps-de-ballet. Eventually panic set in. What I cannot remember is what happened to the piano —did it go down?

Much of my childhood was spent roaming around the village. I now appreciate we were trespassing but during the war nobody bothered. The Whitlingham marshes not yet ploughed and ruined were full of orchids, marsh marigolds, ladies smock and ragged robin flowers and the dykes were alive with newts, frogs and sticklebacks.

We always felt safe as we were under the watchful eye of the signal box keeper, and of course Whitlingham Station was still operating.

Also, do you remember Nobby Clarke who ran a ferry across the river as well as recovering from the river for the authorities.

Norwich was still a port and many ocean going vessels. came past the marshes and one source of amusement was to sit and watch panic amongst day cruiser passengers confronted by a large sea going ship at Whitlingham bends. Another was distracting American airmen sailing past. the River Green so that they didn't see the railway bridge until it was too late.

An earlier recollection of the river green is of being fired at by a Messerschmit aircraft and being grabbed by the collar by a 'man who ran across the road and dumped me into Richmond Court flats for safety. I was more frightened of him than the aircraft.

The war must bring back many memories for many of you. The night of the Baedeker raid (April 1942) when the flares were dropped to" illuminate the targets; the ack-ack guns which showered us with metal; collecting of 'spent incendiary bomb shells to make into spill holders.

The land mine that came down on a parachute and landed on marshy ground but shook many buildings and was the cause of the church spire having to be taken down and re-built; the smoke tracers on the V2-rockets being fired on Walcheren Island which we could see on a clear day; and what amused me.

Harry Barber (the then Parish Clerk) was out giving" instructions on how to deal with incendiary bombs when his house was. one of the few to receive one. To this day his old home-in Pilling Road has a flat roof where it was damaged by fire.

The woods, which we called Norwich Union woods but 'on the map are named Weston Woods, were not fenced off as now and we spent hours there, as well as using them as a short cut to school. Behind both Thorpe House (original building) and

the old village schools; was »Dale's Farm; its fields now covered by Bishops Close, but then, as well as being occupied by cattle were used by Thorpe House School ..for a hockey field.

Many a well-aimed swipe hit a fellow player with a spray of muck! Another memory is of pig slaughtering days at the farm, a very noisy affair which caused teachers difficulties as we all got

very upset and were not attending the lesson.

Lastly, for my contribution, my father was in the special police during the war and one of his duties was to check the underground tunnel, which runs under Yarmouth Road by Broadland District Council offices — Thorpe Lodge then. He was supposed to be looking for possible Germans lurking there ready to attack Norwich. Dad's Army is not too far fetched!

So come on, lets be having anecdotes or memories of our village. Either let me. have them for the History Group or hand them to Steven Ford at the Parish Council offices at the Dussindale Centre,\* Pound Lane, Thorpe St Andrew, Norwich, NR7 OSR.  
Janet E. Smith Thorpe History Group

\* This account was many years ago, the council has moved since and Steven has retired.