

# Past times...



John Wilkes came to Chalklands in 1938 when his parents bought a new bungalow for £550. He was seven years old and, until last year, the bungalow at 141 was his home through growing up, starting work, marrying, having a family and eventually moving into an active retirement. He remembers Chalklands as a very different place then and it was only the prospect of moving that prompted these memories. It was also being urged by Bill Leftwich, chairman of the Chalklands Residents Association, to leave the memories for future Chalklands residents...

Chalklands was owned by the Jameson family and John Wilkes recalls that some of the homes were built before the outbreak of the Second World War.

Building work ceased during the war and started again afterwards. During the war the Land Army built a tented camp at the top of Chalklands where numbers 67, 69, 71, 73 and 75 are now. They built a brick kitchen which was left standing (possibly in number 67 or 69).

All the children used to collect jam jars and conkers for the war effort. Arthur Jameson also gave permission to grow vegetables on the land where numbers 13 and 15 are now, but without much success.

At 129 John remembers Mr and Mrs Roberts. Their daughter Nelly was a 'knocker up' for the Home Guard as they were one of the few families who had a telephone.

When there was a 'flap' on she would cycle round knocking to wake up the Home Guard to report to HQ, which is where Hunt and Nash are now. John recalls that the members of the Home Guard were Mr Wilkes, Mr Wheeler, Stan Roberts and Sid Hare.

John remembers the Home Guard in action along Marlow Road and he recalls that at 56 Chalklands there was Mr and Mrs Meek. Mr Meek was in the Home Guard because, due to a mining accident in South Wales, he could not join the army. At 8 Chalklands there was Mr and Mrs Robinson. Mr

Robinson was a member of the Royal Observer Corps. He used to go to the Observer post next to the cemetery in Broad Lane.

There are more memories from John as he recalls that at 26 there was Mr and Mrs Townsend. Mr Townsend worked at Broom & Wade making tanks and his wife started a club called CVC (Chalklands Victory Club). At 30 Chalklands there was Mr and Mrs Ken Meek. Ken was in the RAF and worked on Spitfires in North Africa. At the end of the war in 1945 a large bonfire was constructed on the roundabout. The Land Army girls brought along lorry loads of timber for this. Arthur Jameson came up with a can of paraffin to light the fire.

On a sadder note John remembers that at 39 Chalklands there were the Saint family. One of their sons was killed in the war. John can remember the coffin being delivered by Great Western Railway, then transported by lorry from the railway station. Another son, Wally, married Miss Dow who was headmistress at Wooburn Church School.

After the war John started to work for Arthur Jameson as an apprentice plumber, working on all the new houses and bungalows as work restarted on the Chalklands estate.

The builders yard was at numbers 66 to 72 as well as 31, which was the back entrance to Arthur Jameson's house in Blind Lane.

John remembers that building materials were in very short supply. Arthur Jameson bought Bracknell Brickworks' entire stock. These red sand bricks were known as rubbers. Mr White, who lived at No 43, was hired to transport the bricks. John went on two trips to pick some up with him.

Looking at numbers 57-59 you will see some of the bricks. Plot numbers 91-101 needed a licence for the bricks as there were being built for the workers at Jacksons Mill.

While waiting for the next customer Arthur Jameson used to keep cows and chickens where plots 109 to 119 now stand. He also farmed other bits of land and thought nothing of taking workers off for a day's haymaking when necessary.

John Wilkes was married in 1971 to Marilyn Pink whose family had moved out from Wembley. Her brother, Derek has become a well renowned builder of good quality houses. John and Marilyn were able to continue living at 141 and set about creating a family home.

With a planned move to be closer to their daughter and her family John looked back on other Chalklands residents who were a vital part of the growth of Bourne End. At the first house there was Mr and Mrs Jack Gine. Jack worked at Loveridges Garage in the village. At number 47 lived Mr and Mrs Hedley Shortland. John and Naomi owned the Shortlands Department Store in the village. At number 42 lived Mr and Mrs Webb. They were the first residents to have a television after the war and used to invite the children to watch 'Muffin the Mule'.

John's list goes on to talk about Mr and Mrs Willard who lived at 82. Mr Willard was the manager at the Royalty Cinema in the village (where the carpet shop is now).

And while his numbering is correct there was a time when Arthur Jameson gave the next number to the home he was building - even if there were plots in between. Chalklands numbering was a postman's nightmare for many years.

In assembling John's notes Bill Leftwich says "We live in an age where time appears to be passing faster and faster and where we can so easily forget life as it was experienced in the past."

"Perhaps it is a symptom of getting older myself that I believe that it is essential that the older generations in our community are encouraged to recall these wonderful memories and recollections, both good and bad, and that these are recorded and documented for the benefit of future generations. John has done us all a great service in this respect."

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