

Buttsbury – from the 1940's  
Mill Hill House - Perry Street  
Recollections of Pat Woodward (nee Ball)



LITTLE CLEARINGS c 1949  
Set in Mill Hill Wood

Just prior to the Second World War, Pat's father, W.W. Ball, moved from London, where his father, also W.W. Ball, had an Engraving business. Factories were built in South Green known as W.W. Ball & Son - 'Ball Plastics' – Engravers at first and later producing plastic mouldings for items such as black telephones, egg cups, beakers, and dashboards for Fords.

Wally Ball jnr was one of six children and later married Pat's mother, Grace Geeves, a local girl, one of four daughters of Sam and Maggie Geeves. His other daughters were Elsie, Nellie and Jessie. The Geeves family lived for a time in Railway Cottages, situated where "The Pilgrim" is sited today, as Sam was employed in the shunting yard on the local Railway. Pat recalls other families who lived in Railway Cottages including the Clarkes and Sussoms.

Pat was born in Kennel Lane, South Green where her family lived in a house called 'Santa Rosa', and came to live in Perry Street in the early 1940's with her parents. Her brothers, David and Alan, were born during and after the war. The bungalow to which the family came to live was known as 'Little Clearings' set in 15 acres of Mill Hill Wood and situated well back from Perry Street, some distance from Buttsbury School with access along the path tracks. These tracks can be located on some of the earlier maps.

Pat and her brothers lived with their parents in 'Little Clearings' for some years. This was one of the original bungalows built in the area and had a shed-like building attached where some time later Pat's maternal grandparents, Sam and Maggie Geeves, came to live for a short while. This was suitably refurbished to accommodate them. Nearby was 'Great Clearings' which had been burnt down, and 'Bushwood' where lived Mrs Turneau. Bushwood's land covered almost 15 acres as well extending to where Rosebay is sited today. The homestead is recalled as having a huge expanse of land towards the front avenue.

During the early 1950's, it was decided to have a new house built on ground fronting Perry Street. This house was named Mill Hill House and a swimming pool was also built alongside. Charles Bolt's home was situated a little to the north on the corner of Mill Hill Drive and Perry Street. Next door to them at the time was 'Oaklands' and the Christ Church Mission to the south but very few other homes in the area and only Buttsbury School sited almost opposite.

## ANVIL HOUSE



## FORMERLY MILL HILL HOUSE

Pat attended the Perry Street School and here it was that she met her husband to be, Peter Woodward. They have contributed a School Photo. Pat has recalled the names of all the children. Peter's family have lived in the area of Stock and Billericay for many generations, his grandfather having a Builders and Undertakers business in Stock in earlier times. (See Woodward Recollections).

Pat and Peter married in the 1960's and lived in Mill Hill Drive in a bungalow known as 'Viola' which they renamed 'Torc Cottage', adjacent to Charles Bolt's land, as mentioned above, (now occupied by six identical houses). 'Torc Cottage' was ultimately compulsorily purchased by the County Council to accommodate the building of the Buttsbury Junior School during the late 1960's and for many years the bungalow was used by one of the staff of the school until it, too, was demolished in more recent times. It is now a conservation area within the school site.

Pat recalls some of the families who lived in bungalows nearby, including Hough, Moody and Rowe, who lived along the original Queen's Park Avenue, and other families along Perry Street, including the Shillings and the Mannings.

She has fond memories of her early years in the Buttsbury area.

Buttsbury -- from the late 1940's  
Potash Stores, Potash Road  
Recollections of Mildred Cordell



POTASH STORES, POTASH ROAD



POTASH STORES, INTERIOR

During the early part of the Second World War, Edward Cordell thought it wise to relocate his wife and young daughter to a safer environment and decided to view a bungalow in Potash Road. So, without his wife having seen it, he bought the bungalow and with their eldest daughter, he and his wife left their Shoreditch home in 1942 to live at 'Brendon', as it was known, in the Potash Road. Their younger daughter was born in Potash Road in 1947. It was dramatically different in Billericay compared to their previous environment, with a large field at the rear, used later for riding, a hobby in which their young daughters were involved. The field was sold in 1960 and now forms part of the Bridle Estate. In the 1940's, the bungalow was one of about thirty homes, which included Potash Cottages. By 1960, the number of homes in the road had increased to about forty. Tithes were still paid on their property, 'Brendon', for the first four years but records do not survive.

The Cordells had married at St Leonards Shoreditch, Edward Cordell being an Auditor for Charringtons which necessitated travelling around the country. Mildred Cordell's father was a Licensed Victualler at a Public House in Shoreditch. Edward continued in his profession until 1958 when he retired through ill health. The fare to London at that time was about £6 per quarter and so few people travelled on the railway that you always had a choice of seat. He cycled to the station and left his cycle at the paper shop at the top of what is now Radford Way, for which he had to pay 6d. a week.

In the early days, local residents did feel that they knew everyone else and mothers took it in turns to take their children to school as it was quite a walk to Buttsbury School. Potash Road was made up, but had no footpaths or lights, with ditches both sides of the road, which filled up after heavy rain and flooded the road at the point where Brookside adjoins Potash Road and children had to be carried through the flood water to go to school.

In 1953, Mildred Cordell decided to have a shop built on the side of the bungalow. There were very few shops in the immediate area, one being the Bush Hall Stores on the Stock Road, Queens Park Stores in Perry Street and another at Gooseberry Green. The main shops were, of course, in Billericay High Street so some distance away. Rationing was still in use at the time and customers had to register with a store. An item such as custard powder was unavailable to many unless they were registered with a particular store.

The shop had started on a small scale, initially selling all rationed foods and general groceries, ice-creams and sweets but it gradually became apparent that anything was welcome to satisfy customers needs and the stock was expanded to incorporate many other items. Much of the stock was bought from the Cash and Carry at Chelmsford and hardware, such as brooms and dustpans etc from a shop in Leigh on Sea.

Potash Dairies supplied the Stores with milk for sale. There was a small sweet factory in Perry Street in the early days and Mildred Cordell was allowed two or three jars of sweets to sell. Half day closing was a law at the time and the Inspectors insisted this law was complied with. Bush Hall closed on Wednesday, and Billericay Stores on Thursday so Mrs Cordell decided to close half day on Tuesdays.

As different commodities were obtained from other sources, customers increased and the business expanded. In 1958 the shop was extended to incorporate other items, such as wool, obtained from Yorkshire mills. Coinciding with the increase in trade, Mr Cordell had retired from his job by this time, and having bought a little van, was able to deliver orders to customers, who had either ordered personally or by telephone - there was no exchange number - only a three digit number in those days.

As well as Potash Dairies run by the Hunts, other families recalled in the early days, are Charles and Ethel Stammers at No 1 Potash Cottages. Charles' mother lived at No 2. It is recalled that she always went out wearing a bonnet and a black shawl. Eva Stewart lived at No 3 and Mr Stan Jorgenson and his wife at No. 4. Potash Cottages are believed to have stood from Napoleonic times and still stand on the corner of Potash Road/ and The Bridleway.

Opposite to where Potash Stores stood is an area which cannot be built on, as pipes laid during the War to transport oil from Shellhaven to airfields in Norfolk, are believed to be still in use. The bungalows built on the north side in 1954/5 remain.

Mrs Cordell's parents had moved to Billericay during this time and lived in Headley Road. When her father became widowed in 1960, he bought a house in Hunts Mead, employing a house-keeper. Upon his death in 1969, Mrs Cordell felt in need of a change and decided to let the shop and, with her husband, moved from Billericay to live in a village in Norfolk, remaining there for some years, later moving to Frinton where her husband died and she was persuaded by her daughters, who have remained in the area, to return to Billericay where she now happily lives.

During the time she lived away, the shop was let to a number of people but as the supermarkets etc increased in the area, trade diminished and Mrs Cordell decided to sell. The shop has now been replaced with new detached homes built in its stead. It served the community for many years, and is sadly missed by many residents who now have to travel a distance to buy their supplies. Fortunately, many of the new supermarkets now deliver to homes in the area and should you be able to own and operate a computer, items can now be ordered over the Internet!

#### **A few notes from Mildred Cordell**

Mrs Arlett who lived on the Stock Road and owned Craggs Poultry Farm comprising 8 acres abutted the Cordell's field. She was bought out by Moody Homes at the same time as Mrs Cordell's field.

Mrs Cordell's son in law Geoff Mesnard - his parents owned a butcher shop at South Green parade. His uncle ran a butchers in Frinton. She believes that he married Ada Ball - a sister in law of Mrs Ball).

Buttsbury 1915 – 1935  
Gooseberry Green – Perry Street  
Recollections of Madie Puffet (nee Childs)



**HANNAKINS COTTAGES**  
From an Illustration by H Richman

### Background

Madie was born in 1915 to Robert and Alice Childs, one of five children, her brother Laurence having also described his memories. She, too, was born in the small, thatched, weather-boarded cottage situated near Gooseberry Green, at the rear of the Railway cottages, where 'The Pilgrim' is now situated. Her name is quite unusual. She was named after one of her paternal aunts, Mahala, nicknamed Madie. The Childs family are of a long-established family from Stock, both her father and grandfather, Joseph, working as agricultural labourers in and around the area. Joseph and his wife Susan, with their family, lived in the Tudor house on the Stock Road, near the 'Old King's Head'. Madie's mother hailed from Hanningfield, a member of a local family with the surname 'English'. Her parents were married at Stock in 1904, later moving to Billericay, and her mother Alice died in the mid 1950's. Grandma English lived until 1964 to the grand age of 99 years.

Although Madie has lived out of the area for nearly fifty years, she can still remember the time she lived in the cottage with her family, including her brother Laurence, who is a well known local artist, and her sister Doris. Two of her siblings died young. The cottage fronted the Mountnessing Road by the railway line with apple trees, locally known as 'custard trees' and 'Blenheim Orange', situated on either side of the path in the large front garden. From the rear the view was uninterrupted towards Little Cowbridge Grange with open fields, obscured these days by the new development. Unfortunately, after the Second World War the cottage burnt down due, it is thought, to an electrical fault.

### Younger days

Madie, together with her siblings, attended Great Burstead School. There were no buses or cars to convey children to school in those days and she recalls having to walk to school, sometimes taking the path over the railway as this was a shortcut. There was no street lighting of course at that time and it was often quite dark walking home from school in the winter months. Of the Teaching Staff, Miss Quilter and Mrs Spinks are recalled who lived on the corner of Laindon Road opposite the Rising Sun.

In earlier times, all the children had bicycles, and girls were no exception. Madie enjoyed riding around the area. She saved up for the bike herself and remembers cycling from Gooseberry Green over to her grandparents in Stock Road to pick up vegetables which her grandfather had grown himself. Another occasion she recalls is that, one day when she was

out with a friend walking along the road, they met two boys, one being a lad called Albert, and one who was wheeling a bike that looked just like hers. When they all stopped for a chat, she found the bike had been loaned to the boy by her mother as he had an errand to run, so whilst he went off on the bike, Madie stood talking to Albert. They remained good friends throughout their schooling and later started courting.

On leaving school at 14 years of age, there was not much work available locally so Madie obtained work with Ilford Films, travelling to Brentwood, and remained with them for about five years. Just prior to marrying she took up a post as a daily help at a local house in Mountnessing Road where she stayed for a short while.

On 22nd February 1935, Madie and Albert were married at St Giles, Mountnessing Church, just three days after her twentieth birthday. She wore a pink dress with jacket and matching hat which were all purchased in Romford. She has fond memories of Mountnessing Church, recalling the celebration of her wedding and the baptisms of all but one of her own children.

Albert's father was originally a Policeman in the Stoke Newington district of London, and later lived in the Ingrave area. He subsequently gained a gardening job in the Mountnessing Road area and, as Dick Stevens for whom he worked, owned a cottage at Hannakins the family were offered this accommodation.

Albert was an agriculture labourer, working on the local farms, and when he and Madie married, they lived in farm cottages in such areas as Padhams Green, Mountnessing Hall, Bluebell Wood, and Arnolds Farm, where they raised their nine children, 5 sons and 4 daughters.

Wages, when they were first married, were in the region of 28s.0d. a week (equivalent to £1.40 in current money), with 4s.0d (20p) deducted for rent. Times were hard and employees worked seven days a week on the farm - with no holidays. They also had to pay for a nurse and doctor for a confinement at home which was rather a drain on their resources. Madie recalls that in those days you didn't have the labour saving machines which we enjoy today. On wash days, you had to use a copper situated in the corner of the kitchen. Sticks were gathered and put under the copper and lit. When the water became hot enough, the wash was boiled and a mangle, with two wooden rollers, used to squeeze the excess water out of the washing. Later, gas coppers were used.

Getting around in those times was mostly by bicycle, although the children were fortunate to have transport to Buttsbury School, a taxi being provided to the Perry Street school which the three eldest children attended. This was in the early 1940's when Miss Corcoran was the headmistress and in Madie's words was a 'darling'. Whilst living at Mountnessing Hall, the children attended Mountnessing Junior School, walking along a footpath to the village and travelled by bus when they later attended the senior school at Brentwood.

Although there were some buses to the main towns, such as the City Coaches, getting around in the countryside during that period was usually accomplished riding a bike, even when pregnant. Madie laughingly recalls that when she was expecting her youngest she was still using her bicycle and, when she clambered onto the seat, her tummy was so huge that she became stuck on the handlebars! But, there was no other choice when it was necessary to get to the shops.

During the Second World War, Madie recalls an incident which happened when Albert was working at Mountnessing Hall, when an unexploded shell was found near the cottages in which they were living at the time. A huge crater was made when the shell fell on the allotment adjacent to the field and all the crops were lost.

## Perry Street and Gooseberry Green Area

Madie recalls there were very few houses in those days in the area, and in the early twenties you tended to know many of the local families. They were friends with members of the Ricketts family, who ran a Dairy round, and who bought Madie and Albert a lovely wedding present on their marriage. She recalls Doug, the Milk roundsman and Phil the Greengrocer's son. Another member of the family, Eric Ricketts was a composer of pop songs during that period. *(Does anyone remember any of them?)*

One of Madie's friends was Molly Coleman who had married Les Ricketts. They later moved to Chelmsford and, most tragically, Molly was found murdered only two or three years ago. The Colemans lived in Perry Street beyond Orchard Avenue situated near to where Newhouse Farm had stood.

Madie also recalls some of the families who lived in Railway Cottages, including the Clarks and Geeves. Also, Doris Parker, later Doris May, who lived in the corner house where Bridge Parade is now situated. There were two cottages on this site. One gate opened on to Mountnessing Road and another gate onto Perry Street. One had a walnut tree and children were allowed to pick up and collect the walnuts for which they had to pay 8d. for 100. The occupier was Doris May who now lives in Roman Way.

Arthur Lindsay married Mollie? Next door lived the Nugents.

The only shops nearby were Sunnryllo Stores, Mountnessing Road, and Shuttleworth Stores in Perry Street, and Madie well remembers Mrs Shuttleworth. Other names she recalls are Mr Christie, Mrs Attridge and Mrs Knightbridge. Various roads were named after local residents such as Knightbridge Walk, Hares Chase, Atridge Chase and Ricketts Drive. This area used to be known as Bakers Meadow where there was a pond, on which skating took place in the winter time - no houses then, but later two bungalows were built by Mr Wally Williams. He was in charge of digging the original swimming pool in Lake Meadows and many local people, including Madie and friends, were persuaded by the builder to get together to help dig the pool. When this was completed they all had great fun learning to swim etc. It was opened in about 1929. *[Does anyone remember the details of this?]*

Situated next to Mrs Knightbridge's bungalow was the 'Old Farmhouse'. When Mrs Knightbridge's bungalow was sold, the land was used to build about ten new bungalows and part of the farm's land was used as well. On the other side of the 'Old Farmhouse', where barns used to stand, flats have been built to house senior citizens, now called 'Old Farm Court'.

She also recalls Queens Park as a very tempting play area with trees and bushes and very few bungalows, most initially used as weekend retreats. She, too, remembers 'Dusty Flowers', who lived near Buckwyns and mended bicycles etc., as being a rather frightening figure if you suddenly came across him. Not too far distant was the Norseby View Drive area, sometimes known as the Garden Estate, much of it an orchard at that time, with very few properties, and views over open countryside.

Mill Hill Wood was of considerable size during those days too. No schools at that time and no Mission until the early 1930's. From this time, land became available as some of the farms were auctioned and building plots were sold for housing.

## Leisure

There were netball teams for the girls. Teams led by Betty Weedon. (*A photograph exists of this team.*)

They also had a Maypole around which they danced. (*photograph depicted in Roger Green's book.*)

The boys played football.

Madie attended the Girl Guides and remembers the Billericay Carnival in earlier times when they had the Mile of Pennies. She also recalls the Fairs by the Rising Sun, which she and her siblings thoroughly enjoyed, which are still held from time to time.

Many imaginative games were played in those days which didn't cost anything. One of these was "The May Queen", in which the children at Gooseberry Green often participated. This involved one of the girls being chosen, then dressing up as the 'Queen'. The Plantation which ran between Gooseberry Green and Cowbridge contained many chestnut trees and Madie recalls that many of these had been chopped down and the stumps were used as the 'Throne' and the other children would hold her 'train' and process around.

Generally, alongside Perry Street heaps of shingle were piled in readiness to build the roads up, but the children would make use of these heaps by spending hours busily constructing Grottos and outline fancy things on them and when they had finished would ask people passing by to judge them.

Madie has been very active throughout her life, as wife and mother and homemaker, bringing up her nine children. Her family has grown dramatically and she can now boast she has 26 grandchildren and 21 great-grandchildren of whom she speaks with great affection. Madie's husband died some years ago, and her eldest son has recently passed away, but is remembered for his great interest in vintage tractors. The remainder all live in south Essex and follow such professions as nursing, engineering and marketing.

Madie has never been idle and was talented in floral arranging which she thoroughly enjoyed. She ultimately had a stall at Pitsea where she sold bouquets and flower arrangements and also made arrangements for private functions.

At the grand age of 85 years, Madie is still quite mobile and has, after nearly thirty years, only recently given up as Social Secretary to a local club for whom she has arranged holidays and outings for local residents. I understand she has taken this job on again temporarily until someone else can take it over permanently. She has seen many changes in the growth of Billericay and Basildon in her lifetime, including the construction of the New Town, and nostalgically remembers early times in the Buttsbury parish.

**Buttsbury from the early 1930's  
Crescent Road  
Recollections of Christine Woodward (nee Pugh)**

Christine Woodward is now a young active 85 year old, seemingly twenty years younger. With her parents, she moved to the Crescent Road area of Buttsbury when she was about 14 years old. She was born in Aldershot Military Hospital during her father's 21 years service with the 3<sup>rd</sup> Dragoon Guards, and had started school in India when he was serving there. On their return to England, Christine attended school at Hornton, near Banbury, Oxfordshire.

Leaving the Guards, Christine's father decided to come to Billericay to live and with her mother, all three moved to Brook House, Crescent Road, where they ran a Poultry Farm. This was situated on the corner of what are now Raven Lane and Crescent Road. They had quite a few chicken sheds on the land and supplied eggs etc to local outlets including the Isolation Hospital, which was opposite the poultry farm.

There were very few homes in the Crescent Road area at that time, and before the bungalows were built in Brightside and they had uninterrupted views across open fields towards Mountnessing. Christine recalls especially Crescent Nursery run by Miss Cousins and Miss Black and Miss Verrall and Mr and Mrs Wellington who lived in bungalows between the poultry farm and the nursery. The poultry farm was sold in the 1950's when both parents had passed away.

Christine's brother, some years older than her, had taken up a Butcher's apprenticeship in Oxford and remained in that area for his lifetime, occasionally staying with his parents.

Coinciding with her move to Buttsbury, Christine started work. This included a placement at Woolworth's in Brentwood. Her weekly wages at that time were £1. 2s. 6d. and her daily return bus fare on the City Bus was 8d. She later worked as a Children's Nurse for a family who lived at the top end of Perry Street, near to the bollards, at the junction with Stock Road.

Christine's parents were well known for their social work in the district and Christine herself was Entertainment Secretary to the local Junior Imperial League, as well as being a member of the 'Ace of Clubs' and the Young Conservatives. In 1934, whilst a member of the 'Ace of Clubs', she was elected the May Queen and was crowned in the Archer Hall by Lady Carne Rasche.

**MAY QUEEN 1934**



**CHRISTINE WOODWARD NEE PUGH**



**CHRISTINE & LADY CARNE RASCHE**

The May Queen celebrations had included a procession along the High Street to the Archer Hall. A display of dancing round the maypole, stately minuets and ballets had also taken place, with a dance in the evening, at which all the past Queens were present, the music provided by the 'Duco Dance Band'. (In 1984, a feature appeared in the local press, looking back fifty years to when Christine was the May Queen).

It was at this Dance that Christine met her future husband, Alfred George Woodward, to whom she was married on the 3<sup>rd</sup> June 1940 at the Church of the Holy Redeemer, Billericay. She wore a floral dress with a plain mauve coat and a hat made from both materials.

Alfred Woodward was the son of Bert (Herbert) Woodward and Katherine (nee Doona who hailed from Ireland), and grandson of another Alfred G Woodward, born in Stock c.1870, who had started a building business there, known as A G Woodward, Builders & Undertakers. Bert later started his own business and as well as building houses locally was involved in 1933 with the building of the Christ Church Mission in Perry Street. As a matter of interest, whilst Bert was working on a church at Little Baddow, he uncovered a picture of St Francis of Assissi.

Christine's husband, Alfred, was involved in the building of many local houses, although the one in which they came to live when Christine was a young bride and where she has remained for over 60 years, was built by her husband's grandfather. There were two sets of semi-detached houses built along the Stock Road, almost opposite Bush Hall Road, the adjoining home occupied by Alfred's cousin and family. Other homes in the area built by Alfred are those in Ruskin Dene, others in Lilford Road and Tye Common and a few in Perry Street. In later years, he was very much involved in building sheds on about sixty farms in the area.

At the start of the War various homes were acquisitioned by the Army, and the one in Stock Road was no exception. On their marriage they were allowed back in their home to live, provided they took in soldiers who billeted with them for some months. Dukes Farm, situated a short distance from them, also billeted people during the War, the boys sleeping on the top floor and the girls on the ground floor. Doodle bugs dropped fairly near the house during the War, one is remembered as having fallen near the pond which was situated near to the junction of Newlands Road with Springfield Road, and another she believes, which fell in the area of Norsey View Drive.

In 1942 Christine and Alfred's son Peter was born at home. Christine recalls Nurse Ventris, who was a real, old-fashioned type mid-wife - very hustling and bustling and cheerful lady, who cycled around the area in her uniform with a little black hat atop her head.

In the early days of her marriage, Christine recalls that looking after the house and family took up most of her time, and so excluded leisure pursuits. There were no labour saving appliances in those days and it was necessary to polish red tiles on the kitchen floor, sweeping - no vacuum cleaners then, and washing which took up most of the day.

Shortly after the baby's arrival, it was thought expedient to evacuate Christine and Peter to a safer environment in Wolverhampton, and they were sent off to stay with a relative, but only stayed for a few weeks. She was expected to work even harder here, using a Dolly tub for the washing and of course heating a flat iron on the stove to iron the clothes. Black-leading the stove was another task to be accomplished. Christine decided she was over-worked and returned to Billericay and was considered to be something of a heroine living so near to London which was a prime target during this period.

As mentioned previously, Christine has for many years been involved in voluntary work and until recent times, spent over 25 years with the Meals on Wheels service, sometimes serving clients who were quite a bit younger than herself. For 34 years she has assisted with the Baby Clinic at both the site near Quilters and the Health Centre in Stock Road. Many mothers probably remember her as, for a short while, the clinic was also held in the choir vestry at Christ Church in Perry Street, which enabled many local mothers to take their babies along to be weighed and to see the Health Visitors.

Christine recalls that in earlier times, they knew the names of many of the people living in the Stock Road and Perry Street area but now, of course, it has grown out of all proportion.

Nearby, of course, is the Mayflower School. She remembers the first brick being laid on the site. Part of the building can be seen from her rear garden situated on a field where she used to pick mushrooms. Forty years ago, Stock Road and Perry Street were just dirt tracks with few vehicles but now very busy. Transport and local amenities have improved vastly since and she feels satisfied that living where she does, not too far from local shops and bus routes, it is still a very convenient place to live. She has spent many happy years living in her home of sixty years, which is probably a unique accomplishment. Her daughter Caroline, born after the end of the War in St Johns Hospital, Chelmsford, lives with her family in Cornwall whilst her son, Peter, continues as a building contractor, thus perpetuating the name of Woodward in the area. He and his wife Pat both attended Buttsbury Junior School, marrying in 1963.

From an article by the late Don Jarvis, Historian of Stock, regarding Peter Woodward's great grandfather, the following is reproduced with permission:-

"When a death in the village occurred, often the first intimation of this would be the 'tap-tapping' or light hammering coming from the workshop of Mr Woodward of 'The Chestnuts'. Mr Woodward was a builder, but perhaps better known as the village undertaker, and the unmistakable sound of hammering as he fashioned a coffin would cause immediate speculation as to which local resident had died. This was in the days when Stock was a very quiet village before the days of thundering road traffic, when sounds such as hammering would be carried throughout the village. Residents of Stock would not have dreamed of having a coffin made outside the village. Mr Woodward made the coffin, and also conducted the funeral processions which were usually made on foot with the coffin on a large-wheeled hand bier pushed by one or perhaps two of the bearers, with Mr Woodward himself in top hat etc. leading the procession.

Mr Woodward also had other talents. He was an expert woodcarver as well as being a church organist, walking to St Mary Buttsbury every Sunday. The 1914-1918 War Memorial in the church is an example of his work the unveiling having taken place in September 1920.

As a builder he also carried out many repairs to the Church and discovered and opened up one window which had been bricked up for many years. He is interred in Buttsbury churchyard. His wife worshipped at the Congregational Church."

**Buttsbury Primary School 1949-1950**  
**Recollections by Peter Brierley**

Looking back upon the fifteen months of my life spent at the school brings back many happy memories, many of which are vivid because of a radical change. My parents, along with my aunt and uncle, brought me from a smoky, industrial area of Halifax in the West Riding of Yorkshire to the rural area, Billericay. My father was to change from being a millworker to a fruit grower. I was making a significant change from being a townie and one with a pronounced northern accent to being a lad with prospects. Prospects of frequenting open spaces, vast woodlands and of attending a tiny, so it seemed to me, village school.

On the first day for me at my new school, I walked from our house on the edge of Norsey Wood, a great place for exploration and for building dens, along a short footpath near Caxton Stores, along a track with wild raspberries and much open space, then a little way down the leafy Perry Street to the school.

Buttsbury School had just three wooden classrooms, all in a row, with a corridor running along the front of them. The right-hand room was Miss Watson's Class of infants. In the middle was Mrs De'Ath's lower junior class and to the left was my room, Miss Malby's upper junior classroom. Pupils stayed for two years in each class. Further along the corridor was the Headmistress's room, which also served as the office, then came the cloakrooms and finally the hall/dining room (the only part of the building not of wood but constructed from concrete blocks). The toilets were outside in the centre of the playing field; they were unlit, unheated and somewhat smelly. Provisions of this kind I was entirely familiar with.

Now it was the playing field which caught my attention when I first arrived. My Halifax school had no such luxury. To my eyes this seemed vast, extravagantly so.

After formal introductions to staff and to a few selected pupils I began my lessons. The first of the day was mathematics. On occasions Miss Corcoran, the headmistress, would take the upper half of the class. She was a stickler for accuracy and mental arithmetic. Her lessons were punctuated by many bits of good practical advice such as: "Read, mark, learn and inwardly digest" and "Don't waste the time or you will waste the opportunity". Her lessons were also fun and for me that was wonderful indeed. I learned percentages very quickly at the school: the pupil's daily attendance records were chalked upon our classroom blackboard and as the number of pupils totalled exactly 100 it was written as a number out of 100 which is as a percentage.

Soon there came P.E. (Physical Education) and with it another new experience. The pupils were obviously trained for and well used to the 'Essex' apparatus which in well-ordered fashion rose before me. I had never seen anything like it. It was splendid and very exciting. The individual components such as stools, benches and planks could be fitted together in different ways thus presenting innumerable challenges. Everyone worked very quietly and studiously using all the available space.

There was the usual one-third pint of milk with drinking straw provided at the start of the midday playtime. Class monitors were appointed for this task and for all the other numerous, routine jobs. It seemed to me that every pupil was a monitor of some sort. Then came the opportunity to run wildly over the playing field; girls strictly segregated from boys of course! My Yorkshire accent attracted some interest among a few of the pupils and for several weeks I was repeatedly asked, "say something!" We played some very exciting games and I particularly remember how kind the midday assistants were to all of us when we needed a drink, grazed a knee or just wanted a bit of sympathy.

In the winter, and I do remember some severe, cold spells, we would thaw the bottles of frozen milk which were bursting out of their circular, cardboard tops on the hot water pipes which ran along one side of the classroom. If the frost were particularly severe we were allowed to huddle in the infant classroom as it housed the coke-fired stove and was therefore the warmest room with the exception of the school office. The outside toilets could be frozen up and visits there were brief and kept to a minimum.

I was appointed one of the ink monitors. On Friday afternoons, during the playtime, it was our job to mix a blue powder and water and then empty the ink wells on every desk, not of ink but of blotting paper and sludge, and fill with fresh ink. Blue fingers were the mark of all ink monitors. Friday was also desk inspection day: school textbooks were to be kept on the left-hand side of the hinged top desks where they would be well away from the dreaded blue ink. Only pupils' exercise books were to be exposed to the perils of ink blotches.

The school offered a wide-ranging curriculum. Music was popular and everyone in the top class was expected to be in the choir, even growlers were encouraged as long as they mouthed quietly. The school entered with great enthusiasm the Southend Music Festival. The trip to the seaside was very popular especially when it was traditional for the headmistress to treat everyone to an ice cream (a rare treat then).

In country dance lessons I was taught to do the Scottish sword dance, probably because I usually danced with three left feet! In craft I wove a very handsome patterned scarf and made many a model out of all kinds of junk. My reluctance to dispose of junk still persists. My only complaint about the school would be that for some peculiar reason I was made, and I do mean forced, to change completely my style of handwriting although I had a reasonable style when I arrived at the school. I was also made to hold my pen in a different, and what seemed to me awkward, way.

For any youngsters reading this now I would like to note one very special feeling which was prevalent, I believe, in most schools then; there was a fierce sense of loyalty towards the school. No self-respecting pupil would let the school down. If a pupil did let the side down by disruptive or unacceptable behaviour then fellow pupils would take it upon themselves to pour scorn upon such behaviour. I cannot recall any incidence of stealing at the school. Nor can I remember any bullying. These things were not tolerated by the pupils themselves.

I enjoyed my schooldays, made good friends and had some great times. Before leaving, I was selected, by 11+ examination for a place at King Edward VI School.

Later, whilst training to be a teacher, I returned to Buttsbury Primary School (still on the original site and before the new Junior School was built) for teaching practice and saw how the establishment had developed. School buildings, you may have noticed, seem a lot smaller when seen through the eyes of an adult than when looked at through the eyes of a child. Memories flooded back.

I have now taught in the Billericay and Basildon area for over forty years. Recently I returned to Buttsbury Junior School to assist with a local history and environment study. More memories!

**Buttsbury/Billericay from the 1940's**  
**Recollections by Doug Brown**  
**(Grandson of Ann Attridge of Perry Street)**

**Background**

The recent Buttsbury Local History Exhibition brought back many memories to me, although not happy ones. Happy times at Billericay were few. My Father passed away when I was 11 and my mother at 16. Up until 21 I could not shape my own destiny when I left the area. Enclosed are a few things I remember at the time. Putting the flags out on 'Hurlocks' in 1951 for the Festival of Britain. The School Dentist who stopped me going again for 41 years and the doctor who filled me with terror. The only things I miss are a coal fire in winter and the old steam trains.

As a child I always had colds and sinus and the engine of the passenger trains to Southend used to stop under Stock Road bridge. I found that by putting my head over the side and sniffing up the steam smoke and soot was one of the finest head clearers going - far better than Obas Oil. This filled Mum and Gran with horror as they thought I was going over the side. I suppose that was my 'cannabis' of the day.

Norsey View Drive was unmade in my day with mostly wooden shacks or sheds put together. I used to deliver Sunday newspapers there - "Sunday Dispatch" - "Pictorial" - "Reynolds News" etc., the former and latter being broadsheets and weighed a ton. I worked for Percy Howard about four shops up the High Street from the Church. Gran was very fond of snuff which I used to buy there when I got the papers.

I had a good look around Buttsbury School while I was there but could no longer smell Mrs Beadles' cooking in the hall where we were. I wasn't into food at the time. I was so skinny I was put on cod liver oil and malt. On reflection, it should have been a bottle of Guinness a day!

**Family history**

Gran was born in a tepee, at West Malling, Kent, on 2 March 1863. The family of Romany gypsies used to pick hops. Later in the year they travelled to Essex for lifting the root crop. Later they obtained a Gria and Varda (Romany for Horse and Caravan) and camped on Laindon Common. Later grandfather, who was a gamekeeper at Blunts Wall, met Gran who was 'tatering', married, and lived in a Little Cottage in Tye Common Road.



**ANN ATTRIDGE**  
**of Perry Street**  
**Courtesy of Doug Brown**

Romany - Some Indian as Yog = Fire - Open fire out doors - not Gunfire  
Pani = Water

Bavol	=	The wind
Shelta	=	Secret Gypsy language sometimes known as Cant
Muskra	=	Policeman also known as Gavver
Caer	=	House
Chuchi	=	Rabbit
Duckering	=	Fortune Telling
Chal	=	Man
Drom	=	Road
Gria	=	Horse
Varda	=	Horse drawn Caravan
Vass	=	Hand
Rackley	=	Woman or Girl
Tan	=	Camping Place
Chavvy	=	Child
Dick Hoy	=	Lookout
Chericlo	=	Bird
Hotchiwitchi	=	Hedgehog - these were baked on fire in clay
Hodnidod	=	Snail
Tooken	=	Sent to prison

Grandfather was a hard drinking man, as were all the men at that time. Fights used to take place at The Plough, Tye Common (on the corner of Frithwood Lane). When Grandfather didn't come home at night, he used to say he slept with 'Mrs Greenfield' i.e. in the fields, as he was too drunk to get home. The wives were often beaten and once Grandfather carried an 8 stone live pig from Billericay to the Kings Head, Stock, for a bet.

With the growing family of 11 children, Grandfather could no longer remain a Gamekeeper and moved to No. 1 The Cottage, Perry Street, working as a labourer, digging the Lake for Major Spitty and later the Railway. Major Spitty had a look-out at 'Hurlocks' where he used to watch the men digging. If they stopped, he sacked them.

Grandfather used to take me out into the woods to snare rabbits and hares. He used to tell me, one fist high for a rabbit and two for a hare. Later I became an expert rabbit catcher and could light a fire under any conditions. He also taught me to name birds in flight and know their identity by the song which I can still do to this day. I am never happier than when out in the woods and fields where one observes silently. I once had a robin land on my hat.

### Schooldays

When I was five, I went to Buttsbury School, which had three classrooms, each heated by a coke stove. At that time, the teachers had to light the fire which they were hopeless at. When it was found out I was an expert fire lighter, it was my job to keep these fires going. Sometimes I got these stoves white-hot. We never had a cold classroom after that. I used to go to school an hour earlier to do this.

The Teachers at that time were Mrs De'ath, Miss Watson and Miss Malby. Miss Corcoran was the Head and Nurse Green used to check our hair for lice and our body for fleas. I hated every minute of school. It took my freedom away, locked behind the railings. I was convinced this was prison, which I had heard so much about. I could not wait to get into the fields and woods again.

One night, there was a bad air-raid and a huge red glow in the sky in the direction of Buttsbury School. I was convinced 'Gerry' had got it. What a shock next day to see the school still standing. The bomb dropped in Springfield Road. I think three people were killed. I was so disappointed that night. I got some matches and paper and was going to fire Buttsbury School but as they locked us in during the day, so they locked us out at night. The only way in was over the railings but I realised this was too risky an entrance and exit!

The radio was very much the norm at that time and one of the programmes listened to was the Radio Doctor. A doctor, Charles Hill, who used to broadcast at 6.55 and 7.55 each morning. On this particular day, he must have said "Keep your childrens' bowels open". We had a toilet with a bucket which we all used, and it was always full. It was so disgusting I used to pee through the many knot holes around the sides and to poison the stinging nettles, but they always won. One day, I was surprised to see the bucket empty and Jeyes Fluid covering the bottom. I did wonder if the King would be calling! What I didn't realise my mother was watching me to see if I deposited a fresh terd in there each day. When I didn't I was given sennapods each night. Problem was, they didn't work first thing in the morning - only after hot porridge and a mug full of hot tea - and always en route to School, about half way between both. Then it was a huge trouserful. Then I used to return to Grans, howling my eyes out. Gran lived in Perry Street which was nearer. We lived in Queens Park. This seemed to go on for weeks. Once I was returning home with a trouserful, when an old biddy stopped me and said "My darling child, why are you crying?" As she got closer, she took her hanky out, put it to her nose, and said "Poo, you dirty little s... you have s.... yourself. Hurry up home at once and get cleaned up, you stink". What a b..... old turncoat. When I returned to Grans, she said "Why do you keep s...ing yourself?" When I told her about the Sennapods, Gran and Mum had one almighty row, to which Gran said "Don't you tell me how to bring kids up, I had 11 including you, and none had to have Sennapods." From that time on, life returned to normal, although I think our family Motto should have been "Fear God - Honour the King - and keep your Bowels open".

In reverse order, I thought Buttsbury School was awful until I went to Billericay School in School Road. To me, the Teachers were Sadists. If you couldn't learn you were beaten until your could. One girl was abused by a Teacher who went mad because she could not read. I have no doubt she hated school now more than I do. No matter what the weather in winter, we were in shorts outside, playing football - no top, just shorts and football boots. On return, we were put under cold showers to harden us up they said. All it did to me was to have a hate of games of any sort involving a ball. I won't even let a dog chase a ball.

We had a cross country run down the Laindon Road to Church Street via Great Burstead and up the Southend Road. My friend and I made sure we were last leaving and we cut across fields to Kennel Lane to hide in a barn. While we were in there it poured with rain. We rejoined the other runners when we broke cover at Bell Hill. What we didn't realise, 'Sir' had also taken cover under the Lych Gate at Great Burstead and was doing a head count. Thirty two left the school, 30 went past the lych gate, and 32 returned. He thought he would be clever - "I want all your shorts put in a row", he said. Then he tried to find dry ones - all were wet as ours had been under the tap on our return. However, we didn't get away with it again because the Teacher always left last and there were too many others who always wanted to win up front.

To me it was education by fear - fear of getting beaten if you couldn't learn and it was this fear which prevented one from learning in the first instance. I think I learnt more in the year I left than I did the whole time there. I got short changed in a shop once. I soon learnt after that. I was an excellent reader from an early age and Gran used to say "Why don't you stop reading, you will read your senses away". Gran could not write her own name as she was

never taught. I was so good at biology. I am sure this was thanks to Grandfather and his knowledge of the countryside which he showed me. I was put on other subjects I was poor at.

### Local residents

#### Queens Park in the 1940's

Queens Park Stores – Spencer

Shuttleworth Stores – Grace Welham (Mrs Shuttleworth's daughter) Husband Len, son Jim Brown (Me, Doug)

Heasman	Burgess	Purchase	Bauser
Peters	Reynolds	Smith	Fowler
Jordan	Whitehead	Thomas	Wild
Manning (Alf)	McClellan	Robinson	Cripps
Ted Perry	Spaul	Les Wainwright	Leswell
Livermore	Kemp	Hawes	Shuttleworth (Arthur)
Jude	Tamplin	Brockway	Ford
Wedlake	Harris	Witts	Manning (Charles)
Haynes	Manning (Archie)	Medworth	Shurmer

#### Buckwyns

Bob Perry	Jameson
Picton	Hatcher
Bell	World
Cox	Banks
Dusty Flowers	Manning (Archie)
Hipkins	Clarke
Shuttleworth	

1. Arthur Cox laid on the main water to Buckwyns but as it was not deep enough in the ground, it froze in winter. It was a single 1 inch pipe.
2. Dusty Flowers lived in a shack but was a brilliant mechanic. It was suggested he invented the motor lawn mower but it was patented by Ransoms. Dusty never washed and used to sleep on a heap of coal in his shed. He also had a steam generator for electric light.
3. Hipkins was a recluse who also never washed and never changed his clothes. He was almost blind and was found dead in his shack one day by Phil Ricketts, the local milkman.
4. Mr Tamplin was also a brilliant mechanic. He had a bank of batteries fed by a generator which used to cut in when the batteries got low. He had lights everywhere and an electric lathe.

The early settlers to Queens Park were Londoners - more would turn up each week. First they camped in tents for the weekend, then they built sheds to live in and would fence off a piece of ground suitable for their needs. They would register the plot with the council and after seven years, claim 'squatters rights' but some used to claim after about two years, saying they had lived there before but didn't know they had to put a claim in. Weekend nights were spent at the Railway Hotel or Crown. My Uncle Jim played the banjo, my Dad the mandolin and Uncle Alf the piano. They all returned to London either late Sunday or first train Monday, depending on the hangover.

### **Names of some Residents: Mountnessing - From the Hospital in Mountnessing Road to Buttsbury School in Perry Street during the 1940's**

Monk - Purdy - Poulson - Beaumont - Wrayton Charles - Pond - Croker Isles - Nugent - Collard - Brown (no relation) - Ricketts - Elleman - Hare - Knightbridge - Shuttleworth - Spencer - Grout - Attridge - Armatage - Radford - Leadbetter - White - Atkinson - Webb - Christie - Osborne (The latter was a Police Officer in Billericay - George Osborne had retired then). Plus Ball - Pemberton - Oliver - Thurtle - Roberts

Obviously there were a few more residents in Perry Street but their names escape me for the moment.

### **The Good Old Days**

I keep hearing of the good old days - this is nonsense. The people were hard, the work was hard, i.e. Monday wash day - Light a wood fire under an iron copper in the garden to heat the water to boiling point. Add blue bag, soda and soap flakes, then put clothes in boil for an hour removing them with a stick into a bath of cold water for rinsing. Then through the mangle. In bad weather conditions, this could take a week with clothes drying round the fire and steam everywhere.

One story which still fills me with horror is during the War, I was in Hornbeam Woods (about where Somerfields is now in Rosebay). I heard a huge crashing of branches high up in the trees. I thought an eagle had landed. To my terror I saw a V2 Rocket swinging to and fro and gleaming in the sunlight with the German Swastika on the side. I ran, I fell, I couldn't breathe. I got home screaming "Rocket in the woods, rocket in the woods". At the time my parents were listening to one of the greatest organists of all time - the late Reginald Dixon (I still have some of his records). Suddenly, the whole bungalow shook twice as the rocket was dislodged and hit the ground. We returned to what was the wood, now flattened, and collected dead wood, pigeons and many dead rabbits which kept us in food for some time.

Another time, I was in Mill Hill Wood, when a V1 or Doodle Bug stopped right overhead. I was convinced "this is it" but this dropped at Great Blunts which was at the Stock Road end of Perry Street. We had air-raid shelters at Buttsbury - two in all. These were brick buildings with a small escape hatch at the rear. We also had an Anderson shelter at home and one night there was quite a bad raid and I was told to get in. I didn't realise it was full of water and, as I was pulled out in the torchlight, I saw two grass snakes in there with me. To say I freaked out was an understatement and I have been terrified of any snakes since. Once, as a coach driver, I was at the zoo and took shelter from the rain which I didn't know at the time was the reptile house. I was soon out getting wet again!

When I first left school, I got a job at the London Co-op Society as a grocery assistant. This is the last shop on the corner of Western Road, now a Hair-dresser, the butcher next door is now a record store. The Manager at that time was an Arthur Hare, a total eccentric, who used to walk so fast he caused a slipstream and came to a stop with a skid. As there were no fridges at that time, the bacon lad used to shout out "The nocabs got toggams" - spelt backwards means "The bacons got maggots" and could not be served until it was washed out.

The Co-op at that time owned Hurlocks and at the Festival of Britain in 1951, Colin Wood and myself had to put the flags out on it. We were given a huge key like a church lock key. Hurlocks had five steps up to the huge door and had two concrete pillars and a canopy. The door was about 6 inches thick. The cobwebs were as thick as string. The rats were like small pigs. At this point, we pulled our socks over our trousers and went up the huge stairs knocking down cobwebs with a stick. A door led to a flat roof with railings all round. In the centre was an open door to the lookout tower and another flight of stairs. At the top the view was spectacular. We looked down on the church clock - saw St Pauls in London and all

round Billericay. We hadn't put any flags out till Hare came after us to hurry up. We put bunting on the front and ran the Union Jack on the flagpole. The rope was green mould. Later we had to take them down.

About September, we had to pick the fruit from the walled garden. The walls were about 10 feet high and a suntrap. It was so hot in there that we stripped off to our underpants. Then Hare turned up. He went ballistic and we had to dress right down to the tie to pick the fruit and told we were disgusting. The fruit was sold in the store and the proceeds went to our Christmas outing to a London Theatre.

It later became my job to bone the bacon in the cellar and remove the toggams. We had to listen at the side of bacon, especially the collar end, for a ticking noise. This was maggots moving around and this section had to be cut out and washed to remove the smell. It was then cut up and sold. Bacon was on ration at that time. One of the girl assistants used to tease me a lot - Iris was her name. I hated shop work, especially after being in the open, and soon left. I then went into a garage. The work was so interesting, I enjoyed it. I later passed a City & Guilds for motor mechanics but am lost on the modern cars of today.

### **Pre NHS**

Every week half a crown was paid to the Court Rubens or the panel as it was called at the Ancient Order of Foresters. This building was a time warp even in the 40's. It was next to the Co-op going up the High Street. It had three small steps and a bell which was on a spring on the inside door which used to ring for ages. Inside was an office which had a glass screen in front with the words in old leaf A W Seagers Court Rubens. After a while, Mr Seagers used to turn up from a side room looking just like Captain Mainwaring of 'Dad's Army' without the bowler.

He sat immediately behind the screen and dipping a pen in a glass inkwell used to write in our book the date and the amount paid. I remember he always put on a pair of 'grannys' half glasses before writing. I think this gave us access to medical attention without the huge bill - a kind of insurance. We had three doctors in Billericay - Mr J Douglas Wells where Sheredays is now, Dr Gunter - this building is through an arch alongside the chemist in the centre of town - and a Dr Bowsmann, about next door to the Library, going towards the Police Station. Dr Wells was such a kindly man, I was very sad when he retired.

Dr Gunter used to terrify me, a tall upright non-smiling man. What I didn't realise at the time he was a brilliant doctor and died quite young. Prior to his visit, the whole house had to be cleaned from top to bottom. The front step had to be red oakerd, the stove had to be black leaded, the hearth whitening, the toilet up the garden had to be white washed inside, the bucket emptied and Jeyes fluid in the bottom. The newspaper and jaffa orange tissue removed, and a toilet roll on a piece of string hung up. A hand washing bowl, a clean folded towel and a new bar of soap already in the kitchen. Then it was all eyes to the window to await the doctor. On his arrival, in a shiny limousine, water had to be heated on the stove.

It was like an audience with the King at that time. "Yes doctor, no doctor, thank you doctor, do you think doctor, Goodbye Doctor". This was the norm. He left a prescription or would say "Call into my Surgery and you will find a bottle of medicine waiting for you", which he had made up. On getting this medicine home, this was put on the table alongside the sugar bowl. It was a teaspoon of medicine and four of sugar, as what was in that bottle was quite disgusting!

Buttsbury - 1930's - 1940's  
Queens Park - Perry Street  
Recollections by Ivy Dallimore (nee Robinson)

BUTTSBURY SCHOOL 1935



Photograph: Courtesy of Frank Webb

Back Row l-r: John Weston Dennis Williams Ivy Robinson Joyce Reid Grace Walters Frank Webb  
Centre Row l-r: Alan Brock June Barker June Pond Betty Horsnall Billy Sheridan - Muriel Puffet  
Front Row l-r: Theodore Gray Pat Sutton Monica Hayward - - - John and Douglas Hardwicke -

My home was in Queens Park - just a small bungalow where I was born in 1930 - yes, it really is that long ago!

Queens Park was very rural - to put it mildly. There were bungalows and houses dotted around the area, not only on the 'main track', which was a cinder path, but also in the fields and woods surrounding.

Of course, I can still remember many of the personalities who lived in the area. A lot of Queens Park was shrubland where as children we would play simple games and make 'dens'. The countryside round about was very pretty really. Lots of wild hedges where we would pick blackberries, sloes or perhaps crab apples. One of my favourite walks was to the Bluebell wood at bluebell time and here, too, on the outskirts were dwellings which, for some folk, were holiday homes; it must be remembered that at the time 25 miles to London was considered quite a distance, usually on a steam train!

The corner shop where Queens Park joined Perry Street was Shuttleworth Stores and here one would find just all sorts of items but, for us, sweets in jars on the top shelf were the attraction!

The only other shop in the vicinity was in Perry Street - walking from Queens Park towards Perry Street and then turning left. The name was Spencer's stores and I can remember this gentleman with a basket on his arm delivering bread.

Buttsbury School was much further in Perry Street and on the other side of the road. It was here I went at the age of 5 years and was there until the age of 11 years, so you will understand my experiences there take in the first 3 years of World War II.

The school was a wooden building, 3 classrooms and a cloakroom, which housed our outdoor clothes whilst at school - and had just one tap over a very large sink. Other facilities were of a very basic nature indeed and were at the back of the school in separate blocks, one for girls.

one for boys and a special one for teachers. The playground was asphalt and rough grass surrounded it with chestnut fencing for the boundary. The grass wasn't cut very often and, when it was, we would gather it up and weave it in between the fencing and mark our separate 'houses' by laying it in 'rooms' on the grass. Simple pleasures.

Where the school fronted Perry Street were very large trees, where in summer days we would sometimes take our lesson books; this was considered a great treat. In the playground there would be the usual rough and tumble football games and there were others like five-stones, skipping, whip and top (who would have the most decorative top to spin?). I can remember going home from school and spending hours with coloured chalk on my top.

The more organised games with the teachers were games like 'rounders'. We certainly did not have many facilities for other games.

I think we were very fortunate with the teachers we had. When I went to the school in 1935 Miss Parish was the infant teacher, Mrs De'ath Standard II and Miss Evans the Head. I can say that, in my opinion, we had a very good basic education from these ladies, who were dedicated to helping us. Altogether, I think there were around 80 children in the school at that time. I can remember a teacher staying behind after school with me to help me with my arithmetic. I was a dunce at arithmetic! And I am still.

A typical school day would start with a morning hymn and prayer, followed by a Bible lesson, then mental arithmetic. We would have 'playtime' when there would be crates of small bottles of milk delivered to the school for us and, of course, straws. (Who could make the most noise through their straw?) We would have an English lesson with reading and writing and instructions on the blackboard.

Before we departed for lunch we would sing a 'Grace' and then those children with sandwiches would take the little chairs into the playground and sit against the wall of the school, when a teacher was always on duty. Others would go home to lunch. On our return another 'Grace' was sung and in the afternoon we would be taught some handiwork. Then in good weather, quite often, we would play rounders in the field. School finished at 3.30 when a vesper would be sung. Quite often 'Jesus Tender Shepherd Hear Me'.

The Revd Pemberton would make his visits once or twice a year on his bicycle to the school, as indeed he did to homes in the area, whether the occupants were churchgoers or not. He was much liked and respected. We also had a blind piano tuner. I can remember many of the poems and songs we learned at school. They would be about the countryside or seasons in the main. One song was about snowdrops.

'Where are the snowdrops?' said the Sun  
'Dead' said the Frost  
'Buried and lost  
Every one'.  
'A foolish answer' said the Sun  
'They will not die  
Asleep they lie  
Every one.  
And I will wake them  
I the Sun  
Into the light  
All clad in white  
Every one'.

I hope, dear reader, that what I have written will give you some idea of life in Buttsbury during the 1930's.

I cannot now pinpoint the spot where my old home stood - ah well, that's change isn't it?

Ivy Dallimore (nee Robinson)  
November 1999

#### **Additional Memories**

I have one or two "unusual" memories. One is of the HUNT passing the bottom of our garden in Queens Park. This would have been 1940-'ish. Another is seeing skating on the lake, Lake Meadows. Again it would have been 1940'ish.

Before Mr Radford lived and sold from greenhouses (lovely tomatoes) in Perry Street, I seem to think the family who lived there before were the "Stoppes". I believe they were some of the 'skaters'. Some things are "blurred".

I am trying to make a list of songs and poems we sang at Perry Street School.

I am in touch with Mrs M Beale whose maiden name was "Knightbridge" and lived at Perrymead in Perry Street in my time at Billericay. She did not go to Perry Street School. She has enclosed newspaper cuttings and I have permission to send them on to you. I expect she might like them back but you could ask. From the illustration the entrance to Queens Park was at the side of 'Shuttleworths' by the lamp post.

The illustration of the Railway Cottages is by Harry Richman (whom I knew) who lived Queens Park/Buckwyns area and became involved in Billericay Museum. He used to visit an elderly lady (a Mrs Bush - long since deceased) as I did as a little girl. He was a good pianist and Mrs Bush had a piano! Mrs Bush lived by Gooseberry Green.

I could write a lot and some day might. I can remember all Queens Park, Buckwyns and Perry Street. Most of Billericay too!!

Ivy

Buttsbury - From the 1930's  
Potash Road  
Recollections by Don Hunt



ORCHARD HOUSE, POTASH ROAD

"I would like to share some of my memories of life in Potash Road and the surrounding area in the late Twenties, Thirties and Forties, with the exception of Service in the Royal Navy during the 2nd World War. I lived in Potash Road until whisked away by May in 1991.

Why the name 'Potash'? Simple really, because Potash was produced in that area. It was produced by burning soft wood, twigs etc down to a high temperature, filtered through muslin and liquid in pans. Potash was used for softening water and cleaning things as soda is used today. Its main use now is for fertiliser.

Potash Road was just a gravel track, very dusty in summer, very wet in winter, tending to flood for long periods in the winter. The fields flooded at the Brookside Junction.

The only houses in the road then - starting from Norsey Road were the Keepers Cottages on the corner of Goatsmoor Lane. Incidentally, this Lane was made up of cinders - very dirty - still known to us as Cinder Lane 'Feet Filthy'.

The Keepers Cottages were occupied by Mr and Mrs Cooper, he was Gamekeeper for the Forty Acre Wood. (Woe betide you if he caught you in the wood) and Mr and Mrs Newman next door. Mr Newman was a Gardener at Ramsden Hall.

Next, about 200 hundred yards up the Road on the same side was a wooden bungalow with a corrugated iron roof. This was where I was born and spent my early years - I still remember the noise made by rain on the corrugated iron roof. A really large house stands on the site today. The original bungalow was called Providence Bungalow - then Magdalen Bungalow.

Opposite, and still there, is Orchard House. My paternal Grandparents lived there. They moved to Billericay in 1904. There was an old Bakehouse near here where Cottis originated.

My Dad's Dairy business started from there. More about that later.

Further down on the same side of the road as Orchard House was another wooden bungalow occupied by Mr and Mrs Walters. Mr Walters played in the Brotherhood Band and could often be heard practising in his garden on summer evenings, much to the amusement of us kids. Incidentally, he was a great Arsenal supporter and thought nothing of cycling to Highbury for Home games. The Potash Cottages further down the road was 'Wayside Cottage' a very frail looking affair. Mr and Mrs Hawkes lived there. Next door, where a new large house has been built, was another wooden cottage lived in by Mr and Mrs Freeman. That was demolished before the War.

Opposite, fronting Bridleway and Potash Road, were four terraced cottages. In three of them lived Kings, Stammers and later Eva Stewart. I cannot remember who occupied Dale Cottage. Down the Bridle path Trixie Olde and her mother. Incidentally, the Bridle Path ran from Potash Road through to Stock Road. It was virtually impassable during the winter. Gypsies came in summer.

That, then, was the extent of houses in Potash Road in the late Twenties/early Thirties. As I said, other house began to be built in the mid-Thirties.

Some of the fields between Orchard House and Norsey Road were sold as "Weekend Plots" and some of these plots cost as much as £7.00!! This was in the early Thirties - about 1932. Farmland was sold off in Little Norsey Road, Headley Road, adjoining Stock Road. Some chalets were built in various parts of Billericay. Some of these became 'semi-permanent' when their owners were bombed out of London during the War - in the vicinity of Lilford Road, Headley, Little Norsey etc.

Another 'Development' was a corrugated Iron Hut lived in by a hermit type (where Pam Carter lived). I forget his name but we kids were scared to go too close.

In the mid-Thirties, two Poultry Farms were opened - one by Mr Bray and one by Mr Horne. Both had been wounded in the 1st World War. One of them - Mr Horne's - carried on till well into the 1950's! My father had a house built on land next to Orchard House in 1931. This has since been demolished and two large houses built on the site.

In the mid-Thirties, two or three houses were built at the Stock Road end. There were no utilities. Water Gas and Electric were to come years later. Water was drawn from Wells. The Occupants of the Keepers Cottages walked to a Well situated opposite the corner of Outwood Common Road and Norsey Road. In fact, an Iron Post still stands, all that is left of the fence surrounding the Well. Cooking by coal, paraffin or wood burners. Lighting by paraffin - delivered by a Mr Solden from Ramsden Heath. What a job trimming wicks of lamps.

Toilets were generally outside at the top of the garden. Although one or two did have cesspool sanitation. Bath, in our bungalow, was in a tin bath in the kitchen!! Although later served as a boat on a pond near where Sue Potts now lives. Mr Sayne lived in Jubilee Cottages. When we moved next to Orchard House we did boast a bathroom but water still had to be pumped from the Well. About 1936 my parents and grandparents bought a small electric generator which charged batteries to give both houses light and to give some electric for the Dairy. This then was Potash Road in my boyhood days.

There was a Bus Service at the Stock Road and Norsey Road ends of the road. So Billericay, Wickford, Chelmsford, Southend and London could quite easily be reached. The Services were operated by Eastern National City Coaches. Pattens (later taken over by E.N) Wickford and District (later taken over by City) Westcliff Motors and Old Tom from Laindon.

Incidentally, the fare from the Norsey Road end of Potash to Billericay was one and a half pence (old money).

From about 11 years old, I was given a bicycle and I was able to go cycling with my friends who lived in Woodside and Jubilee Cottages on Norsey Road. Some of the bikes had solid tyres - not a bad thing really because most of the Roads and Lanes were of gravel and punctures were quite common. Remember there were very few cars, mostly horses and carts.

So we quickly found where to find primroses, cowslips, where the mushroom appeared, where hazelnuts and the best conkers were. It is good to know that all wild flowers are now protected. Nearly all of these sites have disappeared under houses. However, the bluebells in Norsey Wood and Forty Acre Plantation are as good as ever. This year particularly good.

Incidentally, there used to be a wonderful rhododendron plantation in Forty Acres. We wandered fairly freely in Norsey Wood but Forty Acres seemed always under the scrutiny of Mr Cooper the Gamekeeper - it was very risky going there. This then was Potash Road in my childhood schooldays.

My early schooldays were spent at Quilters School in Landon Road. We walked at first and later we did have a small school bus - seats round the sides, run by a Mr Amos from Ramsden Heath. Very often though in summer we would walk home, especially if there were games (football etc) after school. I later went to Chelmsford Tech by bike in summer and by bus during the winter.

**Entertainment:** In the winter, we played lots of games indoors - Draughts, Ludo, Jigsaws, card games. We had a wireless about 1934 - battery operated of course, with accumulators, which had to be re-charged every week. We had to have two - one in use and one being charged. Why they were called Wireless I can't imagine - they were huge affairs with wires everywhere!

**Spring:** We went bird-nesting. If pheasants eggs were found, we told Mr Cooper who would take some to put to broody hens - sometimes he might give me a penny. Frog spawn collected and put in jam jars. Making 'dens' of any old twigs, dried ferns etc. Gathering dandelions and cowslips for wine. The girls made cowslip balls but I forget how they did it.

**Summer:** During the summer we went everywhere on our bikes fishing, spinning tops, hoops especially in the school playground, playing for cigarette cards. Holidays, day trips to Maldon, Southend or London.

One highlight was T.A. manoeuvres with searchlights tracking airplanes. Little did we realise the horrors to come in 1939!

**Autumn: Harvest time.** Acorns for Dad's pigs, he paid us well - 2d. (old money) a bucket. Rabbiting in harvest fields. Some boys were lucky and went beating the pheasants towards the guns. We went early morning gathering mushrooms before they were trampled by cattle etc. I think the squirrels got most of the hazelnuts. And conkers of course. There were also Fox Hunts - thought nothing of it then, but now have mixed feelings.

**Dad's Dairy Business:** Started his business just before World War I with one house cow supplying just the cottages with excess milk. Really started about 1919-1920 just after the War with a few cows. Business grew as Billericay developed and extra supplies were obtained from Mr Nisbet at Great Blunts. His own cows were phased out and about 1934 from Barleylands. Some bottles and other artefacts are in the Museum there. Originally, distribution was by Horse and Cart. Hand cans were filled from 17 gallon churns on the carts and customer jugs were filled from 1 pint or half pint measures. Bottles came in gradually and customers did not like them at first. Remember the cardboard caps which had 'Press in the Middle' on them? When you did the whole cap went into the bottle and you got milk all over the place! These cardboard caps were not very hygienic and were followed by the aluminium cap which encloses the top of the bottle - still in use today. Old Stan Hunt had his first van in about 1932. After the War I did help at weekends. That is another story to be told later."

**'Sayings' and 'Taboo':**

Rooks Flying High Sun in the Sky  
Rook Flying Low for your Coat you Go

Sowing seeds:

One for the Rook One for the Crow  
One to Rot one to Grow

Mackerel Sky Not Long Wet  
Not Long Dry

Red Sky at Night Shepherds Delight  
Red Sky at Morning Shepherds Warning

Never open umbrellas indoors  
Never cross on stairs (too narrow anyway!)  
Never take lilac, May bloom or snowdrops indoors  
Cast ne'er a clout, till May is out (Month or Blossom)  
Never help anybody to salt

Dropped Pins should always be picked up -  
See a Pin and pick it up  
All the day you'll have good luck  
See a pin and let it lie  
Before the sunset you will cry.

**What are they?**

Bishy Barneybee	Ladybird
Coney	Rabbit
Dodman	Snail
Erriwiggle	Earwig
Huck a Buck	Leapfrog
Lamb's Tails	Hazel Catkins
Tittermatorter	Stickleback

**Costs of some things in the Thirties:**

Ford Car	£100
Man's Suit	£2.50
Radio	£5 (expensive)
Loaf	4d.
Milk	3d to 3½d pint.

Buttsbury/Billericay – from the 1950's  
"The Knoll", Perry Street  
Recollections of Roy Mizen

PERRY STREET



The Baptist Church Site

I first saw Perry Street (formerly Peartree Street) in the summer of 1958.

We were house-hunting, and Bairstow Eves had given us details of houses to be built on the fields "just beyond Moat Edge Gardens on the other side of the road". The development is now known as "The Knoll".

At that time, Perry Street was little more than a country lane, with no footpaths and lined with beautiful mature oak trees. Some of the trees had to be removed in order to provide drives for the houses. The houses were built by A J Smith of Hornchurch, and were probably the last houses to be built in Billericay with solid 9" facing brick walls, because shortly afterwards the Regulations changed and 11" cavity walls became the order of the day.

We moved into 153 Perry Street in July 1959, a wonderful summer.

Soon after we moved in, there were two proposals by the new Basildon Council which I, and some of my neighbours, objected to.

I can't remember the order they appeared in the Council Minutes, but there was the question of the width of the roadway which was to be constructed with footpaths. Initially, it was proposed by the Engineer to the Council, that it should be 22'0" wide. We objected, because not only would we lose frontage but, we argued, traffic would find it easy to use the road as a by-pass to the High Street. We supported, and planned, a road through Queens Park, which at that time was sparsely inhabited, mainly in weekend huts and overgrown with bushes and trees. (Residents of The Knoll may well remember the "Egg Man" who came round with his basket of eggs, and who was famous for his bonfires!).

However, after an exchange of correspondence and meetings with Councillors, it was agreed that the road should be 16'0" wide. (Later, the Engineer had his way and that is why the top end, by the school, widens out).

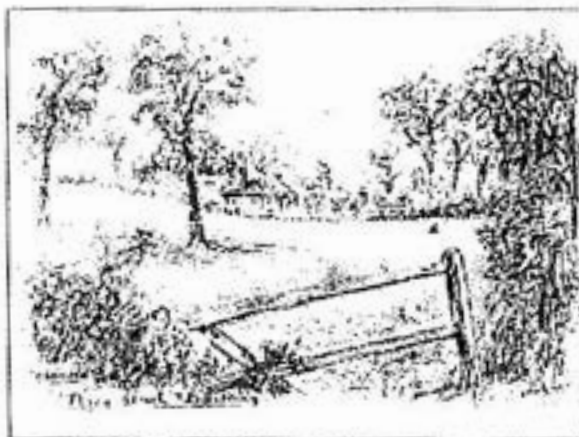
In the early sixties, a Mr and Mrs White lived in a bungalow on land which stretched from Moat Edge Gardens to what is now The Copse. Their son had run a small Nursery from there and had planted many rare species of trees. It was so lovely (and opposite our new houses) that the Council had previously put a "Protected Woodland" Order on the land.

This, however, did not stop the Engineer proposing that a car park for Lake Meadows should be constructed on the Woodland, with an entrance opposite 153, complete with an attendant's hut, toilets and ice cream kiosk.

I got together with our neighbours, called a Public Meeting, and organised a petition. There were about 80 people at the meeting in St John's School and the vote taken was unanimous against the Car park. We exchanged letters again with the Council, attended a meeting with them in the Old Town Hall (which was used for Council Committee Meetings and a registrar's office at the time). Eventually the idea was dropped.

Mr and Mrs White had died before I moved away in 1967; the Council cancelled the Protected Woodland Order and the Baptist Church and The Copse development was built on the land.

**Billericay/Buttsbury/Billericay - from the late 1930's  
Gooseberry Green – Perry Street  
Recollections by Joyce Spaul**



**'OIDONNO' PERRY STREET**

**From an Illustration by H Richman**

**At one time the home of Alan Spaul, Joyce's husband**

Gooseberry Green, a grassy triangle, which gradually disappeared. Where the factories start and Ricketts Drive, was a field with a pond in it. In the winter, the pond froze over and we used to slide on it until we saw the school bus coming down the hill to take us to the Secondary School.

There were fields all the way up to the bungalow where the Knightbridge family lived. Apart from one bungalow at the bottom of the hill called 'Oidunno', where her late husband lived with his parents for a short time before moving to Queens Park.

There was one very nice bungalow next to Knightbridges, which is still there. Just before Lakeside were two wooden cottages. Granny Attridge lived in the one next to Lakeside - in those days it didn't have a name as it was just a grassy track down to the swimming pool. Where the bungalows are now on the other side of Lakeside was just one bungalow where a family named Lott lived. On the other side of the footpath was a house with a nursery behind it which was owned by Mr Radford. Then came a small poultry farm owned by Bennett's. It had a duck pond in the garden, one of the daughters was a friend of mine.

Then we come to Hill House Drive. Next to that was a house which the Rev Thomas lived in, with a load of raspberry canes in the garden. I can't remember what was after that, no houses as far as I know.

Perry Street School was next, which I started at in 1934. There were 3 classrooms. The Infants (all three years) taken by Miss Parrish, the middle class (two years) was taken by Mrs De'ath (pronounced Dee-ath), the third was the top two years taken by Miss Evans, who was also the Head Mistress.

Coming back on the other side of the road before you got to Christ Church Mission (the wooden one) was a long drive leading to a bungalow almost in the wood. Opposite Hill House Drive was a very large house. I think they had one of the few cars in Billericay. Then fields down to the road which then was a cart track, with just one or two bungalows and a house, with the shop next to that. There was a small dwelling just before Queens Park.

Next to Queens Park was a shop owned by Mrs Shuttleworth in those days. After the shop there were two cottages. We now come to Uplands, a grassy track in those days, with a few weekend bungalows. Stone House came after that with their ground going all the way beside Uplands which was shorter than it is now. From there, all the way down to the brook was a bungalow and grounds owned by one of the Rickett family.

Brook Bungalow was there then (now the nursery) so were the two semi's next door; then nothing until Norton Bungalow (now 2 new houses) scrubland next, until you reached a large house made into two with Mr Whittaker in the Perry Street side (later on the Raytons) and Mrs Parker in the Mountnessing side. I remember them both having a very large walnut tree in the garden.

**Buttsbury Junior School**  
**A few memories shared by**  
**Brenda Stenton – a former Teacher**

I was preparing the children for sports day using the limited area of the playground on the Perry Street site. Demonstrating the correct way to throw a ball, I lobbed it through one of the 4' x 4' windows in the demountable. The cheer I got was resounding but I felt so foolish when reporting it to the office, when asked who actually broke the window, I had to reply 'I did'.

A second incident on the same site also concerns a broken window. A boy ran across a classroom in the old building and failing to stop smashed his hand and forearm through a pane. I happened to be passing and saw the incident. Terrified that he would withdraw his arm and compound the damage, I yelled 'Don't move'. Legend has it that everyone within half a mile of the school froze!

At a Christmas party on that site, the children were singing "Have you seen the ghost of Tom?" I had the idea of donning a skeleton costume made from a sheet which was in the costume cupboard. Popping up outside the windows and peeping through the glass door whilst Margaret Hamer, playing the piano, skillfully managed never to catch me, proved great fun. Daringly, I nipped round the building to look in through the windows fronting onto Perry Street but I forgot that all the parents would be there to collect the infants. Did I feel an ass rushing about in a flapping white nightie with bones printed on it. They all laughed but I can't imagine what they thought!

Happy, happy days.

**BUTTSBURY 1<sup>ST</sup> YEAR JUNIORS 1977**



**Buttsbury Juniors – 'State Banquet'**  
**Celebration of Queen Elizabeth II's Silver Jubilee**  
**held on the original School Site at Perry Street**

*Courtesy of Brenda Stenton*