

Memories of Robertsbridge from an evacuee during World War II

I have many fond memories of Robertsbridge.

I was evacuated there in 1940 and stayed at number 11 East Street, as it was then called, with my aunt, Kathleen Fuller, my mothers cousin; her mother Edith and her father George also lived there. I believe that it has reverted back to the original name Fair Lane. My uncle George worked at the Wood Factory down Station Road. The cottage was opposite a Chapel (*the former Wesleyan Chapel, now converted to apartments - Ed.*). A pub called the Seven Stars was at the corner of the street.

I went to Salehurst school and one of my teachers was a Mrs Fisher, I remember her as a lovely lady, so helpful to me when I was settling in to an unfamiliar school. I remember she used to invite me to her house to play with her son. I was only about five years old when I first went there. My aunt had just had a baby boy, his name was John Fuller.

I remember having some lovely times there including hop picking at the end of the road near the Abbey. One of my friends was called Hubert Mab who lived just up the road, and another friend was Gordon French and his brother Peter who also lived up the road. I certainly remember all the Canadian soldiers there and also an Italian prisoner of war camp up George Hill.

I also remember the never ending convoys of Tanks, lorries etc on their way to Hastings, it's hard to imagine it now. Although I was there because it was considered to be safer than London, we used to have the VI's* flying over us on the way to London, and one morning as I was getting ready for school we heard this V1 flying over and the engine suddenly stopped, everyone in the street stopped what they were doing and waited for the inevitable explosion. It crashed into a field just opposite where the old Gravel Pits used to be**. It was a miracle that it crashed where it did and as far as I can remember there were no casualties, but quite a few windows were broken from the blast and also the school roof was damaged which meant a few days off from school which of course didn't bother us children too much.

Derek Stubley

**The V1 Flying bomb was an unmanned gyro guided plane that delivered a tonne of high explosive each time one hurtled into the ground. 2419 fell on London between June 1944 and March 1945. The distinctive noise of their pulse jet engine which cut out after a predetermined mileage terrorised London's population. They quickly became known as Doodle bugs. Although aimed at London some, because of fuel or other problems, fell short and landed in various parts of SE England in the flight path - Ed.*

*** This is the field opposite the Traveller's site in Redlands Lane - Ed.*