

With grateful thanks to Tony Griffiths for the following information and reminiscences:

Tony arrived in the village as a lad in 1941 after the Liverpool blitz forced his parents to seek somewhere safer to bring up their family. By good fortune, Tony's mother had a sister who was the village nurse living in 25 The Street (Nurse Golding who later became Nurse Warner after marrying Harry Warner) and the family moved in with her.

This wasn't Tony's first recollection of Nibley; he remembers the village pre-war when Nibley House was occupied by Lady Buckton who on occasions received Queen Mary. Nibley House was then taken over by the British Army during the war, firstly housing Italian prisoners of war and subsequently German prisoners of war.

Not all villagers were as patriotic as might have been expected and Tony recalls one resident running out of her house when the three German battle cruisers Gneisenau, Scharnhorst and Prince Eugen made their famous channel dash from Brest back to Germany, shouting "they're through".

Tony was a teenager during the war and went to school in Wotton and recalls one of his school friends turning up one day with prized possessions liberated from a crashed bomber that had come down the night before in Wickwar. Despite a very tight security cordon, the lad had managed to lift 50 calibre bullets, bits of Perspex and all sorts of trophies from the plane that had crashed after running out of fuel on its way home without loss of life. On another occasion during one of Mrs Rise's English lesson all the boys were looking out of the window at a plane passing overhead. When asked what was so special about a plane flying over Wotton? Hadn't they seen a plane before? The boys stuttered that they hadn't seen a Messerschmitt in the skies before.

Not all tragedies were war-related; Tony recalls an horrendous accident towards the end of the war when a car travelling from the village down New Road towards Stinchcombe ran out of control as it approached the Stancombe corner only to crash into a bus that had just negotiated the bend. All 4 occupants of the car were killed and the bus driver and conductor very badly shaken.

On a lighter note, our local Home Guard unit – the Wotton Rifles under the command of a local farmer, Captain Baker exercised by the Monument complete with wooden rifles!