

School-Time Memories

Some recollections of past pupils of Dolton school.

Norman Lock

Mr White was a retired teacher who came back to teaching due to all the extra pupils evacuated to this area. He drove in every day from Braunton in a little 'soft-top' Austin Seven (or something similar). He was quite strict and on his first day at the school he sat on his desk and introduced himself saying "We'll get along if you behave yourselves, but if you don't, there'll be a weeping and wailing and a gnashing of teeth. I'll be the one gnashing my teeth and you will be the ones doing the weeping and wailing."

He set two of the older pupils, Norman himself and Harold Hutchings (son of Richard Hutchings who then ran the post office in Merrymeet, Church Street), the task of replacing the old canvas roof of his car using a large sheet of canvas he had supplied to be cut into shape and stitched together. During their time unsupervised with this car parked in The Square they managed to start the car and drive it around the square a few times!

Bill Baker (an evacuee)

"There was an odd thing that happened during the war, when my sister Betty and I were walking to school one morning, we noticed all the telephone wires and trees were covered in thin strips of aluminium foil, much like the foil now used on Christmas trees and some of it was littered around on the ground, I learned in later years that it had been dropped from aircraft to test if it was possible to disable enemy telephone lines and radar.

I also recall one morning; it was just a few days or so before the D.Day landings, we turned up for school in the usual way and the American army had taken over the whole school during the night, the playground was full of American soldiers cooking and eating breakfast on long stainless steel petrol fuelled stoves which gave off a loud roaring sound, in the classrooms all the desks had been pushed to one side so that the men could sleep on the classroom floors, their left-hand drive jeeps and lorries were parked outside in the square, which at that time was used by the boys as their playground, they gave the children small packs of sunshine biscuits and chewing gum, before leaving they moved the desks back but of course put them all in the wrong order so they had to be re-arranged, I sometimes wonder how many of those young American soldiers survived till the end of the war, our school lessons started a little late that day." (We are grateful that Bill who moved away from the village, still keeps in touch)