

CHARING & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY
www.charinghistory.co.uk

CDLHS In Our Historic Times

Issue 12 part 1

December 2020

A

Potpourri of

Christmas Memories

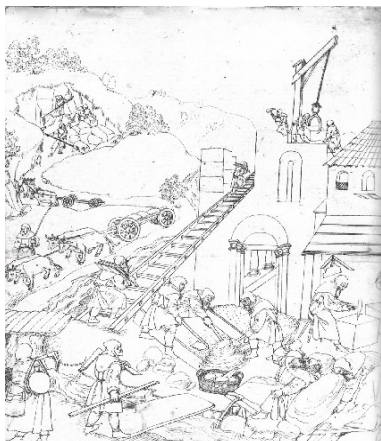
gathered from members, friends
and relatives, with additional memories
from past Charing residents

Hello, and welcome to the first of our two issues this
December.

I hope you will 'dip' in and enjoy!

Valerie

Message from CDLHS Chair



C15 drawing of building work on Schonau Abbey, Germany

On Thursday December 3rd, we had our first Talk of 2020/21, entitled 'The Master Masons – the Men Behind the Great Cathedrals', which was delivered by Imogen Corrigan – by Zoom. 34 Devices linked in to the Talk, so we estimate that about 45 people were present. This included members from Charing Gardeners Society & Lenham Heritage Society – thank you for joining us. We were very pleased that unexpectedly, our good friend Jack Ottaway, called in from the USA. Very many thanks for joining us Jack! Nancy was unable to attend as she was working – but more about that later.

The feedback has been very positive & the Talk was our first using the Zoom facility. Our thanks go to Celia for finding Imogen & her talk material, and for organising it so successfully.

Keith Oram

Correction to IHT issue 8, 'Squeeze the Brake' article: 'Three Dr Littledales'

Apologies; Dr Herbert Littledale died in 1950, not 1945, as previously stated.

Thank you to Susan Wiseman for the correction, (her grandmother was Dr H. Littledale's housekeeper during the war years).

Valerie

**This issue has only been possible with contributions
from Sylvia Beck, Dorothy Burdick, Nerissa Greenwood,
Peter Kent, Hazel Le May, Kate McIver, Kirsten Moon,
Francesca Oram, Keith Oram, Sarah Pearson,
Lucy Simmons, Harold Trill, Hilary White**

Thank you all for your memories and stories



**Others have been taken from Oral Histories of
Daisy Anderson, Hilda Barnard, Miss Down, Mr Towner,
Harry Ward**

**Also, an extract from Florence Richardson's memory
from 'A Kent Christmas'**



As I received all these contributions, my own memory was sparked, so I've included a couple of them. One of mine was of rushing to open the bumper Christmas edition of 'The Radio Times', turning immediately to the Christmas and New Year pages; just to appreciate the special borders and compare them; only after that, reading what was actually going to be on television. That habit stayed with me for many years. I also remember I did not particularly like the change to full colour borders– which is the reason this issue is in muted tones! (Be reassured, your computer, or printer, is not the cause: normal colour will be resumed next time.)

I do hope you enjoy some reminiscing too.

Valerie

Note: generally, I've grouped and mixed up the contributions, (to show a change in 'voice', I've used alternate italics.)



Christmas Day in Kent about 140 years ago.

Florence Richardson wrote in 1983 about her parents' childhood experiences of Christmas in 1880's in a cottage on Hoath, Farm near Canterbury.

"Children with older brothers and sisters might be lucky enough to get a small Christmas gift. As my mother was one of the eldest in the family, she never expected a present. She received her first gift when she went into service. An apron! My father had older sisters, who gave their mother a shawl, the of the which doubled as a bedcover. Their younger brothers were given an orange each and perhaps a pencil or crayon, which would be greatly prized. (In those days grocers bought by bulk and packaged the goods themselves. They used thick white paper as wrappers which the children used as writing or drawing paper.)"

Florence Richardson's mother grew up in Hoath, near Canterbury. Her father was in charge of the horses at Hoath Farm.

With today's modern kitchens and appliances, "it is difficult to imagine the cooking Christmas dinner for eight people in a cottage in the 1880s. Small wood faggots would have been used to heat up the interior of the bread oven. When the loaves had been baked, the brick oven would still retain enough heat to roast a joint of pork or a cockerel. the vegetables would be cooked in a pot hanging from a look at the open fire, while the Christmas pudding would bubble gently in an iron saucepan standing on a trivet that was fixed on that hot bar of the open fire. This fire had to be constantly stoked with chopped wood as it warmed the room had aired to the washing as well as keeping the pots boiling. Then after the family had enjoyed their best meal of the year, my grandfather would have a short nap while my grandmother did the washing up. The older children would bring in wood to dry for use the next day, fill up buckets with water from the outside well or pump and check that there were candles ready for the evening use. Then the family would put on their outdoor clothes, bank up the fire and set off to visit older relations. That is, those who lived within walking distance about 3 miles each way.

Dear Zantass
 I do not mind
 what i get for
 christmaz!
 Happy Christmas
 to you and your
 reindeer.
 love
 Kathryn

Dear Santa Claus
 My Christmas list
 Hair things
 Hair brush
 Socks
 tape of some sort
 Peter rabbit book no.11 or another
 clothes
 both things +
 anything else
 Happy Christmas
 from Kathryn

Dear Santa

Dear Santa
 i do not mind
 what i get for
 christmaz.
 Thank you!
 Happy
 Chrizmaz!
 love
 from
 Kathryn

Chris
 Stocking
 I 'ave what
 I'm
 givin'

Keineth's
 same for me please.

King
 Niff-Norris
 Stocking

Mr
 zantass

Christopher's Christmas List
 Dear Santa
 Football
 Arsenal home shorts
 Mr Freeze
 Books
 Sweets
 clothes
 money

Christmas approaches

There is a point in Autumn when the smell in the air changes. Christmas is getting closer. Advent calendars. Advent masses. Advent wreath, purple candle. Carols. Walking to the church with a candle (sporting a paper skirt to stop the wax drip). Picking the wax."



"The sudden profusion of exciting toy adverts with their catchy jingles."



"Best of all were advent calendars with glitter on. I cannot get excited about cartoon advent boxes with chocolates or tiny Lego models in, unlike my own offspring. I only have to look at a glitter-sprinkled advent calendar and the childish excitement of Christmas flickers again inside me!"

"My Dad leading the necessary additional preparations for Christmas; vigorously cleaning and polishing the silver and glasses– holding them to the light to check they shone; no smears allowed!"



"Decorations going up - always later than everyone else. The smell of the Christmas tree. Prickles. Christmas baubles for the tree. Two trees! Tinsel on the shelf and round the pictures. Nativity scene. Gold chain with stars. Cards on a ribbon on the stairs (hung up on Christmas Eve, or a few days before). Holly. Table decorations. Holly wreath on the door."



Christmas approaches continued

“Best of all were advent calendars with glitter on. I cannot get excited about cartoon advent boxes with chocolates or tiny Lego models in, unlike my own offspring. I only have to look at a glitter-sprinkled advent calendar and the childish excitement of Christmas flickers again inside me!”

“My Dad leading the necessary additional preparations for Christmas: vigorously cleaning and polishing the silver and glasses— holding them to the light to check they shone: no smears allowed!”

“Happy memories of the whole family involved. Us, the children, ‘helping’ to twirl the colourful crepe paper streamers; passing the drawing pins to my dad on the stepladder, as he put them up. First, all around the edges of the room, then from the corners into the middle. My mum following behind, hanging shiny lammeta over each twirl. Then all of us stopping, just to gaze, ‘Christmas’ had begun.”

“Positioning the tree carefully in the window. Dad testing the bulbs. Dressing it carefully -positioning the baubles and tinsel, so definitely no gaps. Successive trees each year in the 60s became more and more laden- the actual tree hardly visible.”



The 60s

“I was born at Egg Hill Farm in 1960 and as a child , I loved to decorate the Christmas tree with my older brother, mum and dad. In the bottom of the big cardboard box of tree decorations there was a handful of metal clips attached to small saucers incorporating 2 curved vertical stands. I was fascinated by these unused objects. Mum told me that they were for wax candles that would be clipped to the tree and set alight. She said that they were very dangerous because the trees could catch fire easily – and so we never used them. We had a brand new innovation instead - lovely twinkly multicoloured fairy lights. I would love to have seen real candles on the tree, just once.

And in the bottom of the box there were very plain wartime angels that my mum made with cardboard and gold paper. Could you actually get gold paper during the war? Maybe they were made later in reality. There was a very simple gold wire star too that was always put on the top of our tree. There was also a little wooden plane with a wooden teddy sitting in it and my brother and I always argued over who was going to hang it on the tree.


My gran had fantastic glass peacocks with a moulded glass hook on their backs to hang them from on her tree. They were so fragile – and actually rather *unlovely* because once they must have had fabulous feathers protruding from a glass tube at the back but these had long since fluttered to the ground and been lost. They looked like exotic naked turkeys! But we hung them on the tree anyway.


When I was given pocket money I was thrilled to bits to buy my very own Christmas baubles from Mrs Winzar’s shop at the top of Charing hill. 55 years later I remember that visit to the shop so clearly – and I have the baubles still! They came in a shallow box and are mostly striped with painted gold diamond and snowflakes on. I still remember standing in the shop and stroking the tinsel on the display stand while mum paid for her shopping.


Not long afterwards there was something else new to put on the tree... Everybody was decorating their tree with Angel Hair. We loved it at the time. I can’t think why now! It was white fibrous stuff that could be teased out into cloudy cobwebs that had a snowy effect on the tree.”

Happy memories....!

The Decorations


“Not long afterwards there was something else new to put on the tree... Everybody was decorating their tree with Angel Hair. We loved it at the time. I can't think why now! It was white fibrous stuff that could be teased out into cloudy cobwebs that had a snowy effect on the tree.” 

“And then there were paper chains. We bought packs of these from Mrs Winzar's shop and later the newsagent in the village. They came in plain colours in the early years – never as wonderful as the shiny paper ones that came later. I remember spending hours and hours licking and sticking the strips into links in the chain with my mum and my brother. How painfully slowly the chain grew – and then there would be the ones with hardly any glue (or else they'd been over-licked) that annoyingly curled themselves unstuck and broke the chain.” 

“We made paper chains for weeks beforehand. Many years later, I made them with the grandchildren, when they were tiny. Those strips were self-adhesive though - we'd had to make paste from flour and water - much messier!” 

“Making paper chains at school.” 

“Putting up decorations on the ceiling with drawing pins, especially the concertina type paper shapes.” 

“How I loved to watch the Angel Chimes spinning round, with its red candles, rearing horse, gold discs and tinkling sound. I have inherited two of these and never use them now.” 



Teenagers

“As young teenagers growing up in Surrey, we belonged to a Church Youth Club - YPF (Young Peoples Fellowship). The young curate had invited us all round one evening to cook(!) a Christmas meal for everyone, at his flat above the vicarage.

The menu was planned and everyone was put to task, and I was in charge of slicing and cooking the mushrooms. My friend's job was to keep an eye on the Christmas pudding as it was steaming. However when she took it out of the basin, she dropped it in the washing up bowl - which was full of dirty water!

She hastily retrieved and strained it and said, laughing, 'Oh well, no-one will ever notice!' It was a very moist pudding, and enjoyed by all there - We never said a word.....!"



“I felt it was the beginnings of ‘being grown-up’- charity carol singing, with a group of other VI formers. We sang, laughed and ‘rattled our tins’, as we visited different pubs.”

“Going to Midnight Mass on the way home from an evening out, in the 1960’s. Sober, of course. “

“My first Midnight Mass, and a tall, grumpy man standing in the crowd at the back of the church, complaining loudly to his wife, that their young son, standing with them, should be at home, and tucked up in bed dreaming of Father Christmas and the train set he hoped for.”

“Watching ‘The Snowman’ on Christmas Eve. Midnight Mass. Carols. Opening the BIG tin of Roses. It glowed. That smell. Putting stockings out. Excitement. “





Family

“ My parents usually came to us for Christmas Day bringing my mum’s cousin Gladys in tow. They were all in their eighties. Our children always wondered what colour hair Gladys would be sporting – any shade of brown or auburn! (it was actually white!) Gladys belonged to an Astrological group who could forecast notable events which the children were always desperate to prise out of her. Two stick in my mind: on royalty – Princess Anne was the best “King” we never had, and on John Major, after he was elected as PM, “We can see a grey ship on a grey sea against a grey sky”.



“When I was a child we always had various extended family members to lunch on Christmas Day. Among them was my great aunt Gertrude. She came for many years and seemed very ancient to us children. The problem with catering for her was that she didn’t like plum pudding or mince pies. Thus it was traditional to make a jelly exclusively for her. Shortly before she died, aged about 98, she revealed that she hated jelly. On being asked why she had never said so before, she replied that she had it because she adored brandy butter and felt she must eat something with it..... “

‘Anyone for jelly and brandy butter for Christmas lunch?!’



“Our children said it wasn’t Christmas until my father (Pupps) fell asleep at the dinner table wearing his paper hat! It happened every year.”



“The table fully extended, extra chairs found from mysterious places and somehow squeezed in to have enough settings. Starched white tablecloth, coloured napkins; candlelight reflected on the glasses, jolly crackers, and in the middle; a pretty ‘frosted’ piece of bark, and nestling on top among the holly and ivy, red berries and tiny baubles. Squashed in the middle, elbows tucked, minding one’s manners, and listening.”



“Christmas in 1969, with my new fiancé playing cards with her family, while covertly listening to the police radio on my new FM radio.”

The Parents

"My two sisters, my brother and I used to put on a nativity play for our parents every Christmas when we were small. We would rig up a curtain in the doorway between 2 rooms, compete for whose doll would be baby Jesus and rehearse for days beforehand, wearing whatever costumes we could devise. I hope our parents enjoyed it - I never thought to ask them later."



"The Pre-school Nativity – all was going well with the rehearsal..... On the day, a shepherd carried a cot mobile with 6 sheep on it another shepherd was off with nits there were only 2 kings as one had been rushed to hospital with meningitis and the star didn't appear in the sky as the family 'had done a runner'! But the show still went on!"



"We had an unexpected visitor that Christmas in 1980. At 5 pm on Christmas Eve, our 5 year old daughter was covered in spots. By 5.30 her brother was too! They had chickenpox!

Christmas Day's photos showed them opening stockings and presents, whilst covered in calamine lotion. 3 weeks to the day, our 2 month old baby was covered - mostly round his nappy area.

Curiously my brother, then in his 30s, caught it too. He was really bad, with spots in his mouth, beard and hair - he had come round on Christmas Eve to drop off presents, and didn't even come inside the house!!"



"Holding one's breath, tiptoeing carefully out, but still managing to find that wretched, creaky floorboard when leaving presents on behalf of Santa"



"One Christmas when our daughter was about 5 or 6, I tied some small bells on to a long stick, climbed on to the garage roof, & 'jingled' the bells outside her bedroom window. She was awake, but totally oblivious to any noise outside."



"When the children had hung up their stockings, we'd always leave a mince pie & glass of scotch for Santa, & a couple of carrots for the reindeer. Miraculously, everything had been eaten & drunk by the time Christmas morning arrived."



"Our first Christmas as parents was most exciting, the second even better, as I was able to buy a train set!"



The Food

"In the post war years, we always had stuffed, roast rabbit for Christmas lunch. Delicious! Dad, being a countryman, bred rabbits and took orders from all the neighbours. Many's the time the rabbits got out and we'd all have to chase around the garden catching them."



"The most memorable would be Christmas dinners, chicken. It was a luxury in those days."



"A memory of the first Christmas with our responsibility for cooking the traditional turkey meal etc for eight. My brother, when about to carve the turkey, looked rather puzzled and commented it was "a funny shape": before he realised it had been cooked upside down. With some difficulty, but as ceremoniously as possible, it was made 'respectable', and its correct status was achieved. So, Adrian began to carve with concentration. However, a few minutes later, he bent down to peer into the cavity, muttering, "This is a strange bird". Investigating some more, he dramatically exclaimed, "It's got plastic guts!" (I didn't know the butcher leaves the giblets inside, wrapped in plastic."



"Remembering the excitement between us, as the cellophane was taken from a huge, special scenic box of chocolates. The anticipation as the lid lifted to reveal the tray of assorted shape chocolates in all their mouth-watering glory."



"When I was at Junior school, we lived in a small village in South Gloucestershire and grew lots of vegetables (a necessity). Runner Beans were stored in large jars with lots of salt. The week before Christmas, the beans were steeped in water to desalinate them – but the taste of the salt was always there."



"It was always traditional in the houses of both our parents, that besides the full Christmas lunch, about 3 hours later we all sat down to Christmas tea. How we all had room for that I really don't know. The silly thing was that this was repeated on Boxing Day, New Year's Eve and New Year's Day – all in different houses."



The Weather

"I particularly recall one Christmas plagued with very heavy snow. A bright sunny Christmas morning with crisp heavy snow, may have been 1962. Just like in the movies."



"I was 10 the winter the snow fell on Boxing Day 1962 and stayed around till February . I have no memories of whether we missed school (hopefully), or the pipes froze (probably). What I remember is the delight of deep snow over the Christmas holiday, of it not turning to slush and disappearing; and endless games. The lake in the park froze, and stayed frozen. Of course all the kids loved it. We had a wonderful Boxer dog, who was basically brother, co-conspirator, and sometimes protector to my sister and me. He wouldn't go on the frozen lake at first, and barked from the edge as he worried about us. Then tried it out and thought it was terrific fun.



But then the thaw came. By now Max loved the ice and charged ahead of us: launching himself from the footpath straight into the thinning ice and freezing water. The swans were alarmed. We had to smother him in scarves and run him home to get warm.

Oh talking of winter weather, feet freezing in wellies, then really hurting when you got home and warmed them up! "



Christmas Day

"Christmas morning. Magic. Opening stockings with my sister. Satsumas. Gold coins. Chocolate in the morning! Smells of cooking. Nana and Pop-Pop. Crackers, hats, stuffing. Someone sleeping. Games, maybe TV. No Mr Frosty."

"In the evening, after the remains of the cold supper had been cleared away. At last - the games!"

"Christmas night, after the enjoyable, busy day. Savouring the stillness of the dark room, with just the lights of the Christmas tree and silence. Everyone in bed. "



Christmas Memories from three generations

Nanna Elspeth (1902-1987)

I was always fascinated by my grandmother's tales of Christmas as a child. She was the oldest grandchild in her family, born in 1902, and remembered spending time with her grandmother Alice, born in 1844. They had a Christmas tree in the stairwell of Alice and Peter's house. Nanna and Alice then went shopping at the market for things to put on the tree. The item I always remember her telling me about, and have never been able to pin down, was "spun sugar bird cages"

This would have been just before the first world war.

Mum

When she was around 5 in the very early 1930s my mother was looking forward to Father Christmas visiting her town in an aeroplane. He was due to land on the barracks field behind their house. Mum caught chicken pox and couldn't go but was held up at the landing window to see the plane arrive.

Me

I remember, when I was very small, the little artificial Christmas tree we had that my mother had made for her school class after the war. The "lamina" that we had on the tree was made of tiny strips of lead. Over the years they got more crinkled, crushed and broken but I loved how they draped so well and didn't waft off the tree.



Mum's Christmas Musing

Nadolig Llawen 1930

Mam decorated the tree while the three sisters slept and dreamed in their beds. She finally added glittering tinsel and a simple treat for each child as times were hard. Edna the youngest spotted them next morning and claimed one on a low branch as hers. The tallest and eldest chose the highest one. That's not fair grumbled Myra the 'middle-ist' eyeing each shiny sugar mouse dangling by it's cotton tail, reluctantly she settled for the nearest. Five days till Christmas Day and temptation was strong. Avoiding their Mam's eye each child crept up to admire the tree, smell the pine and quickly lick her mouse till it's bright eyes glistened - a glorious sugar rush. Each day a few licks. By Christmas Day three emaciated mice hung among the chubby cherubs and plump Santas. Mam was not at all amused, but their father roared with laughter.

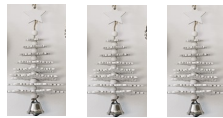
“The first Christmas I can remember properly was December 1940 when I was five years old. Blackout curtains at the window, small fire in the grate but lots of exciting things to open. I had a little stocking with useful things in it like gloves and some presents wrapped in brown paper, all that was available since there was a war on. Just a few little toys and sweets (not yet on ration) and best of all a clockwork London bus which I loved.

We had a nice Christmas dinner with chicken, sprouts, roast potatoes and parsnips. The vegetables were grown by my Dad in our small back garden as we all had to do our bit towards growing things ourselves.

At 3pm I was told to keep quiet while we gathered round the large radiogram to listen to the King's speech. My parents were chatting about the bombing and the state of the country, now ruled by a coalition government led by Mr. Churchill.

I played with my toys and then went to the cupboard under the stairs where my camp bed was. I longed to go and sleep in my nice bedroom upstairs but that wasn't to happen till 1945 when the war ended.

After Christmas we took down the homemade paper chains and the pretty ornaments my parents had saved from pre-war times and packed them all carefully away.”



Some Christmas Memories

“About 1936 The Lions’ held a children’s Christmas party. Then each child received a brown paper bag with an apple, a banana and an orange inside. It was like manna from heaven! We didn’t have that fruit at home. We could not afford it.

circa 1937 Christmas with my mother and sister at my mother's sisters In Forest Gate. We actually had CHICKEN for dinner. Had to draw and pluck it first. I always got a silver three penny bit in my Christmas pudding.

1941 (evacuated) Come Christmas, and my mother sent me a wonderful car assembly set. Beautifully made pieces in real paint, and colours of the make of car. They were open- topped cars of the 1930s era. I carefully assembled them, three in the box, and they had a wind-up spring and they would run across the floor. The cars were very well made and at least 10 inches long!”

Shops open until Shops at least 10 p.m. Christmas Eve.

Treasured Possessions.

I think Christmas in our household is pretty traditional, as it was when I was a child and when our boys were growing up. Stockings at the bottom of the bed, mince pies and a drink for Father Christmas, with a little note (some of which I still have), early rising on Christmas Day and a house full of family.



When our eldest son was about 7 he asked me what I would like for Christmas. I answered a wooden crib set. He then disappeared for quite a while. A little later he returned carefully carrying a wooden crib set he had made..... from lolly sticks!

Every year it is one of the first things to come out of the box, and sit on the mantelpiece, and one of the last things to be packed away on Twelfth night. Imagine the panic when one year we couldn't find Baby Jesus!

Over the years we have made it our mission to buy a Christmas decoration from wherever we went on holiday during the year. We now have quite a collection from far and wide, along with some brought back by our sons as gifts from places we will probably never visit now. These decorations always give us pause for thought each year as we put them on the tree each year.



Also we have a box of special decorations that hold a special memory of someone, some time, or some place.


Finally, one of my childhood memories is making the Blue Peter Christmas decoration, generally from wire coat hangers, with my mum. And finally having a whole chicken that came in a tin although my family say I imagined that bit!

from CDLHS Oral Histories recorded in the 1960s and 1980s

Christmases in Charing


born about 1890

“You took your turkey round to the bakehouse ovens. They took round a turkey one year and then father went to carve it he said this isn’t a turkey, its a goose, and they'd got the joints all mixed up! The biggest delight, from what he used to say, was to go round the" next day with a basin and get the lovely big — and they were lovely, basins of dripping. You don’t see now really, dripping over the- joints.

Harveys shop windows Yes, when they decorated up for Christmas with the fruit, they put this cardboard shield really. I suppose there was some sort of clockwork attached to it in some shape or form, and the mouse came out so far and the man stood there, you see. And when the mouse went to go back, the man’s knife used to fall. But of course, it never caught it! Then the other window was always done up with crackers. That was a big Christmas thrill that was.” 


born 1891

“The Charing Brass band were always welcomed Christmas time. They consisted mostly of the Cackett family, John Cackett Harry Cackett, and Alfred Bob Hughes and Fred Clarke, Lenham and drummer Jim stone.

The church was packed at Christmas and many had to stand. The candelabras were filled with candles and lit, as well as candles on long sticks on the pews.” 

born 1891

The vicar (Rev Fotheringham) laughed at me too, ‘cos I told him once I went to Midnight Mass, and as I was in the choir I had to go up the side door of the Lady Chapel. Oh, it snowed bad, 11 o' clock at night, and it was over the top of my wellingtons.”

I remember one Christmas. Eve, I had to go down to the Station. My coalman hadn't been near me. He (?) said " I can't bring up the lorry I'll have to carry it, Five hundred weight of coal up to my house on his shoulders. Oh they used to come round you see. Mr, Ruglys used to bring the coal round. 

Christmases in Charing continued

born about 1904

“They used to say years ago when the men used to walk to work early in the morning, if there was snow about and it was a cold winter morning, Mr Whyman of ‘The Swan’, used to get up and make them a bowl of rum punch, so they could have a drink as they walked. As children he used to give us locals a tree at Christmas,

The big houses always used to invite the tradesmen to the parties, Christmas parties. We used to go to Pett Place, and of course every year (again Pitt's time) the schoolchildren had a treat up there too, One year they'd have a Christmas tree with presents, another time we'd have an entertainer.

Just a plain meal o' Christmas was the usual fare.

Well, living in a village, it was quite a get together, really, lots of fellows would call in for a drink, how do you do, and that sort of thing, mostly spent indoors, we did, as children, until I left school, then I used to get out more, it was just a family affair.

Toys, as a child? I had a Meccano set No, 2. That was a gift to us nine. We had quite a lot of little gifts, the stockings were just a few sweets, an orange, and a few nuts; very often found a penny at the bottom.”



Christmases in Charing continued

born about 1917

"We used to have a nice party at Christmas, General Pitt used to invite all the school, and give them a big tea party in his big garage, or laundry — it was a big outbuilding anyway."



Christmas 1917

"The Christmas Services this year were very bright and well attended. The weather was not very kind to our Carol singers on Christmas Eve, the night being damp and foggy but the carols were cheerfully sung at seven stations in the village. The ideal weather for the purpose is bright moonshine, with a thin coat of snow on the ground, and a dry frost in the still air. But such a happy combination is rare and it might well have brought the 'Gothas' overhead, we could not reasonably complain of its absence. Anyway we enjoyed the carols. Thanks are specially due to Mr. Rudge for training the children for them.

The church had been very tastefully decorated by Mrs. Fotheringham, Mrs. Sayer and Miss. E. Sayer, Mrs. and Miss Storey, Mrs. Norwood, Mrs. Machin, Mrs. Middleton, Miss.. E. Hardwick, Mr. Reeves, Mr. Lupton and Mr. Filmer."



from January 1918 Parish Magazine



Notes: Mrs Machin mentioned is Marjorie Machin's (mentioned in previous IHT issue) mother. A 'Gotha' was a German night-flying bomber.



Noticeboard

-  **Coming soon:** the next IHT Christmas issue aims to provide you with some food for thought, as well as some festive cheer during this challenging 2020 Christmas period. It will have the usual mix of articles, a bumper quiz, and a few jokes, all with a seasonal theme.....
-  **SMARDEN HISTORY** have a YouTube channel, and it's well worth looking at. Their videos include 'The History of Smarden' parts 1 and 2, as well as the currently relevant, 'Smarden's Deadly Year,' of 1671.



We hold contact information of members, and interested people, to send them society news and information on local history. We do not share the information with third parties.

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