

Village

Exhibition of Memorabilia

ILMINGTON MANOR | MAY 26-27 & JUNE 2-5
A DIAMOND JUBILEE EXHIBITION



The Fifties
ILMINGTON REMEMBERS



LOTTERY FUNDED

This exhibition of daily life in the 1950s celebrates the Diamond Jubilee of HM the Queen with a fond look back to the early years of her reign.

Lofts and attics around the village have produced a wealth of nostalgia and memories of the decade. Every exhibit has a story to tell, making this a very personal and fascinating display of memorabilia.

We are indebted to Martin Taylor for generously allowing us to use his home for this walk down memory lane. Martin grew up in this historic house and was a Fifties schoolboy; he recalls a time of chauffeurs and servants, of short trousers and boarding school.

TO HAVE AND TO HOLD

- ▶ **Wedding Dress 1952:** Made by John Bryan's grandmother Florence Bryan for Christine Humphreys marriage to Edwin Warmington at St.Mary's Church, Ilmington. Material for the dress, much of it hand sewn, cost her father £12 from Bobby's in Leamington. 'It was such a hot August day that my bouquet of tight rosebuds burst into full bloom by the time the wedding ceremony was over.'
- ▶ **Mink Stole 1955:** A wedding gift to Sylvia Scott (Gardner) from her bridegroom, Major Peter Gardner, Exmouth Devon.
- ▶ **Pearl leaf Necklace 1952:** Bought in Northampton by Sheila Brightwell (Ribbons) to wear for her marriage to childhood sweetheart Maurice. She celebrated her 21st birthday the same week – 'but I didn't have a party!'
- ▶ **Wedding Album August 1959:** Colin and Mary Waterman tie the knot.

PHOTOGRAPHS:

1. **Courting couple Maurice and Sheila Brightwell (Ribbons) circa 1951**
2. **Maurice and his bride Sheila, Northampton December 1952:** The

bride wore a white tulle dress with matching white satin jacket which their terrier, Coco later had fun with tearing round the garden. This year marks their Diamond Wedding

3. **Ron and Terry Hall, Birmingham late 1949:** The dress was hired as it was difficult to get a wedding together after the war; it snowed when they left the church, and Ron was in agony because he had pulled a cartilage
4. **Brian and Paula Dixon nee Thirkell:** childhood sweethearts in Middlesborough, their parents made them wait until Brian was 21 to marry. Paula was still a teenager
5. **Paula Dixon and a young wedding guest:** Paula made her dress using twelve yards of net, nine yards of silk and nine yards of lace
6. **Colin and Mary Waterman nee Skerratt August 1959 St Christopher's, Moseley, Birmingham:** Mary made her own head dress and veil, the bridesmaids' dresses were also home made
7. **Pam Sabin and her father Herbert walk the path to St Mary's Ilmington , December 1957**
8. **Edwin and Christine nee Warmington, St Mary's Ilmington 1952:** The bride was 20. Her engagement ring was bought during a special trip to Birmingham with Betty Ward (Bryan) and her fiancé John to buy their wedding rings
9. **John and Betty Bryan nee Ward, St Mary's Ilmington 1951:** Betty was 21, the reception was at the Village Hall
10. **Mr and Mrs John Bryan 1951:** On honeymoon at John's aunt's on the Gower Peninsula. Betty is wearing her aqua blue going away outfit

THE BABY BOOMERS

- ▶ **Pram:** The Beecham family pram, used by Hugh and subsequently by him and Rachel for their three daughters, Celia, Eve and Grace.

- ▶ **Christening Gown 1950:** Made by Wendy Nelson's mother, Barbara from her 1944 lace wedding dress, and subsequently worn by four more family babies. The rest of her dress became a lampshade for the lounge standard lamp!
- ▶ **Teddy Bear 1951:** A 1st birthday gift for Wendy Robinson (Nelson), he was described by an antique expert as 'much cherished.' Recently valued at £100 – but he's not for sale.
- ▶ **Hairbrush and teething rings:** From the nursery of Joyce Bridges' sister, Margaret.
- ▶ **Smocked dresses:** Worn by Sarah Hobson 1956-7
- ▶ **Romper suit:** Worn by Simon Hobson in 1957 as pictured.
- ▶ **Blue Rabbit 1959:** Soft toy handmade by Jennifer Wilson (Phillips) during her teacher training course in Domestic Science.

PHOTOGRAPHS:

1. **Barbara Dewsbury** nurses **Paul Bryan** 1953
2. **Paul Bryan**, Ilmington 1953
3. Christening Cake for **Wendy Elizabeth Robinson** 1950
4. **Edwin Warmington** and **John Bryan** push **Linda** and **Paul**, Ilmington 1953- men ahead of their time!
5. **Wendy Robinson (Nelson)** in her Silver Cross pram 1950
6. Simon Hobson in his romper suit with big sister Sarah 1957
7. **Ken and Jeannie Hall** with **Pauline and Trevor** 1953 - they went on to have four more children

CHILDREN'S CHOICE

- ▶ **Hornby Dublo:** A 14th birthday present for Colin Edward's brother Graham, this working model was coveted by most boys in the 50s. Set up for hours of fun in a large attic room, Colin himself was more interested in kicking his football around than getting up steam.
- ▶ **Sorry:** A favourite game played by Lesley Gallant and her sisters when they visited their aunt and cousin.
- ▶ **Two boxed games:** Loaned by Joyce Knowles (Bridges).
- ▶ **Muffin the Mule:** A replica used in the Ilmington School 50s Christmas Play and one of the top ten toys of the decade, thanks to his BBC television show during Children's Hour.
- ▶ **Andy Pandly:** Kindly loaned by his owner, Val Hobbs – no exhibition would be without one of Britain's most enduring puppets, who came to fame through Watch with Mother, televised weekdays.
- ▶ **Mr Turnip:** Another favourite with young children who enjoyed watching Whirligig, this is another treasure from Val Hobbs.
- ▶ **Sledge:** From Daphne Fry Scott's treasure trove of mementos hoarded by her Mother. Daphne, a farmer's daughter grew up in Long Sutton, Somerset.
- ▶ **Stamp Album 1956:** Keenly collected by schoolgirl Joyce Knowles (Bridges) who spent her childhood in Anston, near Sheffield.
- ▶ **Nature card collection:** A less harmful version of cigarette cards, these were tea cards courtesy of Typhoo Tea and another of Joyce's collections.
- ▶ **Eagle Annual:** Loaned by Colin Edwards, this was a perennial favourite gift for generations of young boys.
- ▶ **Steam engine 1958:** A surprise Christmas present for Mike Lane aged 11. This Mamod SE3 twin cylinder superheated steam engine had a Meccano compatible base. It still works!
- ▶ **Sewing Box:** Like most young girls, Joyce Knowles (Bridges) was encouraged to sew and embroider by her Mother, an excellent seamstress. 'I hated sewing. You can tell by the amount of thread still intact that it wasn't my favourite hobby!'
- ▶ **Mini Garden:** Budding landscape gardeners were given their chance to

be creative with this late Fifties toy. Daphne Fry (Scott) was no exception. 'It looks horrid now, but I loved it!'

- ▶ **Butter Pats:** 'They represent my childhood' says Joan Murray White. Another farmer's daughter, she and her mother would spend hours using them to make butter during her formative years in rural Gloucestershire.
- ▶ **Whimseys:** These tiny ornaments were lovingly collected by many 50s children. Jennifer Wilson (Phillips) has kept them in her ornament box for over fifty years.
- ▶ **Dance Certificate 1954:** Wendy Robinson (Nelson) went to 'ballet, tap and acro' classes from the age of 4. This certificate came with a baby bronze medal – now misplaced! It took me years to realise that acro meant acrobatics!
- ▶ **Girls' Story Books, annuals and oil lamp:** Selection kindly lent by Cotswold warden Vivienne McGhee. She used a paraffin oil lamp to light her way to bed and read by gas light. She read all the **Enid Blyton** books - her favourite story as a small child was **Bob Bushtail's Adventures**.
- ▶ Joyce Knowles (Bridges) was another avid reader. **The Famous Five** she read in bed; **Jane Emerges** was a Sunday school prize for attendance and good conduct **Christmas 1955; My Bible Book** was a standard child's possession and her **Geology book** was a lifelong fascination.
- ▶ **Dolls House:** Triang model handed down to Wendy Robinson (Nelson) from the daughters of a family friend, later refurbished for her sister and again for her daughter. For many children hand me down toys were the norm rather than the exception in the 50s.
- ▶ **Baby Doll:** Lesley Gallant's much loved first doll.
- ▶ **Daphne Fry (Scott) still has her dollies:**
- ▶ **Blondie**, the doll she scalped (see family photograph).
- ▶ **Rosebud**, Walkie talkie doll who Daphne gave a short back and sides.
- ▶ **Pre Cindy teenage doll** late fifties, dressed by her Granny.
- ▶ **Upside down two faced doll** a gift from abroad.
- ▶ **Yellow organza party frock circa 1953:** made by Daphne's mother- 'I would have worn it all day every day if I could!'
- ▶ **Smocked bought dress 1954:** As worn by Daphne in beach photograph, aged 3.
- ▶ **Blue smocked dress 1958:** Made by Domestic Science teaching student Jennifer Wilson (Phillips) as part of her coursework.
- ▶ **Confirmation Certificate 1954:** Joyce Knowles (Bridges) becomes a fully fledged member of the Church of England.
- ▶ **Boy Scout Uniform:** Michael Lodge of the 167th Sheffield Troop, King Edward V11's School. In 1958 he and no fewer than eight others from the troop received their Queens' Scout award from the Chief Scout, Lord Rowallan at Scouting HQ, Gilwell Park, Essex; a remarkable achievement.
- ▶ **Girl Guide Uniform:** Jennifer Wilson (Phillips) recalls being in the Heather patrol, 67th Company, Newcastle upon Tyne.

PHOTOGRAPHS:

1. **June and Sarah Hobson** 1956
2. **Bill (William) Sabin and David Wilkins** circa 1950
3. **Paul Bryan** and his mini band circa 1956 – ever the musician
4. Happy days - **William (Bill) Sabin**, left with **Irene and June Sabin** (centre) early 50s
5. One of the celebrated WI children's tea parties, Ilmington Village Hall
6. **Daphne Fry (Scott)** on the beach in her smocked cotton frock (exhibited here) circa 1952
7. **Daphne Fry (Scott)** pictured with her

grandparents, family and Blondie, the doll she scalped circa 1955

8. **Wendy Robinson (Nelson)** in the back garden, Birmingham 1953
9. Full of fun- **David Sabin**, mid 50s
10. Off to the party- **Wendy Robinson (Nelson)** and Roderick, the boy next door, Birmingham 1953
11. **Paul Bryan** and his home made skis, Back Street late 50s
12. **Ilmington Girl Guides** 1953
13. **Michael Lodge** third from right with quiff, en route to Scout HQ at Sheffield Midland Station 1958
14. **Michael Lodge**, right of the Chief Scout, after receiving his Queen's Scout award 1958
15. Ilmington Boy Scouts 1953

THE BEST DAYS OF YOUR LIFE

- ▶ **School Reports:** David Sabin is a brave man to reveal his reports from Ilmington School throughout the 1950s! David subsequently passed his 11+ for Grammar School. Before Shipston High School was built, those who failed the exam stayed on at Ilmington School.
- ▶ **School Year Book:** Joyce Knowles (Bridges) thoroughly enjoyed her days at Martley Grammar School near Sheffield. 'But I saw an advert in a book about the Refractory Brick Company in Bristol which looked all clean and smog free- so I decided that was the place for me.' Joyce went on to study at Bristol University.
- ▶ **Apron:** Made by Daphne Fry (Scott) in primary school; she gave it to her Mother who kept it in a drawer as a keepsake.
- ▶ **School Uniform and pump bag 1952:** Jennifer Wilson (Phillips) took the 11+ on the day King George VI died. She passed to Leeds High School for Girls. Like most girls of that era, she made her own pump bag.

PHOTOGRAPHS:

1. **Colin Edwards** Silcoates School,

Wakefield, Yorkshire circa 1955

2. **Colin Edwards** in class back row, left, Silcoates School circa 1955
3. A summer outing, Ilmington 1954
4. Infants, Ilmington School 1952
5. Juniors, Ilmington School 1952
6. Seniors, Ilmington School 1952
7. **Simon Barrett**, Ilmington School early 50s
8. Ilmington School May Day, Village Hall circa 1954
9. Sports Day, Ilmington School 1956
10. School picnic, Playing Fields circa 1953
11. Performing Robin Hood, Ilmington 1953
12. Maypole dancing, Ilmington 1954
William (Bill) Sabin, centre

PUTTING ON THE STYLE

- ▶ **Design books:** June Hobson studied at Leicester College of Art until 1952. These stunning designs are an example of her prestigious talent. Her vintage patterns would be much coveted today.
- ▶ **The shoe that met Victor Sylvester:** Autograph hunting was all the rage in 50s Britain. Betty Bryan improvised when she met the great man and asked for his signature at a dance in Banbury with husband, John.
- ▶ **Women's Magazines:** A selection courtesy of Daphne Scott's mother. From 'Woman' to 'The Housewife' these were titles that offered household , beauty and fashion tips, as well as romantic short stories, knitting and dress patterns as standard fare. The Royal Family were a major preoccupation.
- ▶ **Red and Black Dress:** Bought by Jennifer Wilson (Phillips) in Fenwick's of Newcastle on Tyne. She recalls as a 19 year old going out all dressed up for tea with a girlfriend, complete with hat, handbag and gloves.
- ▶ **Black and Yellow Dress:** 'My Mother wore this dress to meet me from school' remembers Daphne Fry (Scott). 'All the mothers wore frocks or skirts, never trousers. My Mother was a farmer's wife

but she always dressed this way!

- ▶ **Black and Gold Silk Dress late 50s:** A special occasion dress bought in Bond Street by Sylvia Gardner. 'I loved clothes and the first thing I made was an evening dress. We had no nerves about home dressmaking, just got the material and a pattern and went ahead.'

PHOTOGRAPHS:

1. **Betty Ward (Bryan)** in sunhat 1950
2. **Irene Sabin** in her camel coat
3. **Sheila Brightwell (Ribbans)** off to the beach, circa 1950
4. **Mary Skerratt (Waterman)** with her parents in Scotland, 1956
5. **Sheila Brightwell (Ribbans)** left, in the beauty competition, Hopton Holiday Camp, 1951. She came second wearing a white linen two piece made by a friend's mother
6. **Irene Sabin**, left with sister **Pam Hale and nephew Tom**
7. Ready for the college dance, **Mary Skerratt (Waterman)** in gown borrowed from a neighbour 1954
8. Home dressmaker creations for **Sheila Brightwell (Ribbans)** far right and friends **Pam and Joyce** circa 1952. The girls met every Thursday night to dress make
9. **Mary Skerratt (Waterman)** casually dressed and wearing a Corka helmet for a spin on her fiancé Colin's Lambretta, 1956. Her Father drove the rest of the family. Her mother hated her jeans and white duffle coat

NEVER HAD IT SO GOOD

- ▶ **Blue Cornish Ware 1952:** Collected by June Hobson, the only coloured or patterned crockery she could get hold of at the time of setting up home.
- ▶ **China tea service 1952:** Wedgewood Cornflower dinner service was marked 'For export only'. June Hobson managed to get these seconds. The pattern was only sold in the USA.
- ▶ **M1 Ashtray 1958:** Presented to

Maurice Ribbans by his employers, civil engineers Sir William Owen and Partner to mark the opening of Britain's first major motorway. Maurice was later awarded the MBE for his outstanding public relations work on the project.

- ▶ **Racing Memories and Prize Pewter Tankard 1952:** The late Bill Smart in action at Silverstone race track in his Frazer Nash 4ED Meadows Shelsey Model. 'In those days it was just ploughed fields, no stands. I used to time keep. When we married Bill sold one of his racing cars to pay for carpets' says Tish Smart.
- ▶ **Hair Clippers:** Owned by Joyce Knowles (Bridges) father and still in pristine condition.
- ▶ **Kitchen Utensils 1952:** A Prestige wedding present for June and Tony Hobson.
- ▶ **Post Office Savings Book:** Lent by Nicci Turville. 'My Nan Violet Langston worked as a Scullery Maid at Meon Hill for 10 shillings a month. She saved for her 1953 wedding; then as Violet Taplin she saved for the birth of her first child, my Mum in May 1954, making lots of withdrawals to pay for baby items. Soon afterwards she closed the account.'
- ▶ **Money, money, money:** In 1950 the average weekly wage was £7 10s 5d (£7.52) for a man, £4.2s.5d (£4.12) for a woman. A pint of beer cost 1s 3d (6p) and a cinema ticket was 1s 6d (7.5p)
- ▶ **WI Certificates:** Ilmington WI flourished in the 50s with numerous activities including drama and singing at which they excelled. Girls could become members at 14.
- ▶ **Good Housekeeping Cookery Book:** As bought for Christine Moon (Wright) when an Acton schoolgirl. 'My first recipe book, I made lentil soup at school and left it in the cinema. I still use the book today!'
- ▶ **Array of knitting patterns:** As knitted over the decade by Irene Sabin for herself and her family.

- ▶ **Kodak Camera** Owned by Joyce Knowles' (Bridges) father in late 50s and used on family holidays to Blackpool 'We always stayed in the same place, a South Beach boarding house where you had to bring your own food.' They would travel from Sheffield by train.
- ▶ **Selection of Newspapers and Magazines:** Maurice Brain was an avid sports fan, as these newspapers testify. Many of the furniture and design ideas in the home magazines, courtesy of Daphne Fry (Scott) are now 'retro style' and are being replicated today.
- ▶ **RSC Programmes 1952-6:** Spot the famous names courtesy of Dick Shurey.
- ▶ **Ercol Chair:** Loaned by Joyce Bridges and a perennial favourite designed in the 50s.

PHOTOGRAPHS:

1. Darts Team, The Red Lion circa 1950
2. Ilmington Cricket Team 1957
3. Ilmington Rovers Football Club 1950-1
4. Ladies Hockey Team, **Terry Hall** second from right front row
5. Sledging: **Betty Bryan**, front and friends on Ilmington Downs early 50s. Betty recalls that she split her trousers
6. Out for a drive: **Paul Bryan** and his family in their first car circa 1956
7. Cider pressing a village preoccupation
8. **Helga Harris** and **Ted Freeman** at Ilmington Horticultural Show
9. Ilmington WI Pantomime, with President and Producer **Barbara Jewsbury** centre back row
10. Another Ilmington WI drama production
11. **Mrs Dumbleton** and **Mrs Everett**, Ilmington WI Pantomime
12. **John Bryan's** motorbike circa 1955
13. Church Parade Corpus Christi circa 1955
14. **Mrs Biles**, right, and **Pauline Gardener** in the grocery shop, Ilmington
15. **Maurice Ribbans** on National Service with the RAF 1950
16. **Maurice Ribbans**, centre, with fellow reporters at The Northampton

Chronicle and Echo 1952

17. **Violet Langston**, young scullery maid who saved her pennies with her brother, **Ken Ilmington** circa 1951

ROCK AROUND THE CLOCK

- ▶ **Wind Up Gramophone:** Lent by Daphne Fry (Scott) and kept in her family playroom. 'We only had Scottish music to play, nothing we really wanted to listen to.'
- ▶ **78 Records:** Found recently at Shipston tip by Daphne.
- ▶ **Selection of LP's:** Family favourites including Liberace played by Wendy Robinson's (Nelson) family on their radiogram.
- ▶ **Brian Dixon and his band:** Brian, centre was a keen guitarist who with his group played at gigs across the North East. 'He was always surrounded by girls' says wife Paula, who was one to follow him avidly.

LONG TO REIGN OVER US

- ▶ **The dress that went to Buckingham Palace:** Worn by Sylvia Scott (Gardner) for a reception at Buckingham Palace, 5 June 1953-three days after the Coronation. 'My parents were in the Abbey for the Coronation because of his position in the Army. I watched the Coronation procession from somewhere overlooking the Mall, it was really exciting.'
- ▶ **Coronation Souvenir Programme 1953:** as given to schoolgirl Margaret Wild (Goldsmith) when visiting London to see the flags and decorations just after the Coronation.
- ▶ **Coronation Chair:** mini Lloyd Loom as given to Daphne Fry (Scott).
- ▶ **Coronation Book:** a school prize for Joyce Knowles (Bridges) who was five at the time of the Coronation.
- ▶ **Elizabeth Our Queen book:** Presented to schoolgirl Jill Perry (Coupland) by Portsmouth Education Committee as a souvenir.

- ▶ **Coronation Mug:** given to Joyce Knowles (Bridges). 'We watched the whole event on my Gran's television at Corner Farm, North Anston. It was the first TV I'd ever seen, it was in a wooden cabinet. The whole family, about 30 of us were there. Dad wouldn't have a TV until the picture went to colour.'
- ▶ **Commemoration Book 1953:** Souvenir of the big day also given to Joyce.
- ▶ **Daily Mail June 3 1953:** Kindly lent by Martin Taylor.
- ▶ **Illustrated London News Coronation Special Edition 1953:** Kindly loaned by Jennifer Wilson (Phillips).
- ▶ **Selection of Royal booklets:** The Royals had never been as popular as the nation followed the young Queen's every move. These were treasured by Jennifer Wilson (Phillips).
- ▶ **Coach and Horses and Model Soldiers 1950s:** Kindly loaned by Nick Murray White, an avid collector.
- ▶ **Commemorative Portrait:** Lesley Lane, captured for posterity aged 7.
- ▶ **Coronation Curtaining, Westminster Abbey 2 June 1953:** A section of special curtaining commissioned for the Coronation service and embroidered with silver thread. Kindly loaned by Keith Moule.
- ▶ **God Save the King pennants circa 1950:** Pennants for King George VI, HM the Queen's late father who died in February 1952, also loaned by Keith Moule.
- ▶ **Royal Greeting June 1953:** As sent by Her Majesty to thank Ilmington British Legion for their loyal greeting on her Coronation.

PHOTOGRAPHS:

1. **Joyce Knowles (Bridges)** at a children's Coronation tea party, Anston near Sheffield which took place after the Coronation
2. Celebrating the Coronation in Ilmington with a jug of cider or two, 2 June 1953

3. Fancy Dress for the Coronation, Ilmington June 2 1953 – **Bob Bramble, Mrs Maisey, Len Sabin and Sam Freeman**

The Fifties

ILMINGTON REMEMBERS

The Fifties, Ilmington Remembers is a twelve month project which aims to record for posterity the memories of those who lived here during that time, and to share them with the younger generation.

This exhibition forms part of that archive and we are very grateful to all those who have contributed.

Our work with Ilmington School has involved a Fifties Tea Party, music and dance workshops which led to the school production of A Fifties Christmas, and poetry sessions which have produced work about the Jubilee. You can see displayed here samples of the children's work.

The project has also commissioned a special work from Ilmington's Judge the Poet (David Raeburn) to mark HM the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. 'The Crown of Life' is a fitting tribute to the vibrancy of our village, both today and in that era long past.

To tell us your memories or to comment on the project visit:

www.fabulous-50s.com