

GOXHILL TALES

Even though the words “When I was a lad”, have always brought a groan from the kids and a chorus of “Jackanory, Jackanory”, I thought you might like some of these tales. They are my recollections, not necessarily historical fact and may have been coloured by the years, retelling and for the sake of a good yarn.

When the Second World War was declared all sorts of civil defence and fund raising organisations were set up. Goxhill, like everywhere else, had its fair share of these such as Special Constables, Air Raid Precautions, Fire Watchers, Women’s Voluntary Service, Toc-H, the Red Cross (who had a big fund raising sale every August Monday), the Pig Club, and Goxhill’s very own “ello ‘ello”.

PIGS TALE - Jacob van den Bos (Bussy) was secretary of the Pig Club. This took some co-ordinating - basically, virtually every family had a pig to fatten for food and the Pig Club organised the collection of pig food and it’s rationing to all and the general well being of pigs. Every piglet was crucial, even the runt must be saved, whatever. A tiny runt, abandoned by its mother, cold and dying was taken to Annie van den Bos. She wrapped it in a blanket and put it in a dripping tin in the oven of her log burning stove to keep it warm and alive. When “little pig” felt revived he flicked his tail over the side and got it singed off.

ALIEN - Inspector Cook and bobby PC Blowman were the local constabulary. As Bussy was an Alien (Dutch) they had to confiscate his shotgun. He couldn’t have been considered much of a threat because they brought him it back the next day.

ACTIONS STATIONS - One moonlight night, during an Air Raid on Hull, Alan Robinson from Staveley House and Cliff Northen were Fire Watchers on duty at Ruards Road Crossroads. A parachute came floating down. They dashed towards it, ready to face the enemy and make an arrest. Lucky they didn’t get too close; it turned out to be a land mine, which landed not 20 yards from Staveley House, wrecking the property which wasn’t repaired till after the war.

THE CUNNING PLAN - After the Air Field was built, but before the Americans came, it was guarded by the Koyli’s (Kings Own Yorkshire Light Infantry), mostly East Hull lads. The Home Guard were tasked with a mock attack on the Air Field to test their defences. In command of our lads was Harry Farrow (Leggy). He had a cunning plan that would get his men straight to the centre of the base and give the Koyli’s a surprise attack. They crept up a big sewer that runs from Carr Gutter, under Chapelfield Road to a manhole in front of the dome topped hanger. However, when they got there their plan was foiled, because a lorry was stood on the manhole.

SABOTAGE - The Americans had the airfield as a training base. At one stage there were many flying accidents, too many. Sabotage was considered. Many of the planes involved seemed to be dispersed around Alf Dent’s, Field Farm on Chapelfield Road. So much so that the guards were removed and they watched covertly from a distance but nothing happened. When Alf came home one Sunday evening he got talking to one of the ground staff who said “He knew how to fix these son of a bitch pilots”. He told Alf what he did - it was technical and meant nothing to Alf but he remembered what he’d said. After a sleepless night he went to the Guard Room and demanded to see Colonel McGee, the Officer in Charge, but was told he wasn’t there and wouldn’t see him anyway. Alf said “Well I’m staying here till I’ve seen him”. At that point the OC arrived in his jeep and Alf jumped up and cornered him and made him listen to the story. He asked if he could identify him, which he did. The guy was never seen again.

SUPERMAN - A pilot had to make an emergency belly landing in the field below Sandholme Planting. Alf Dent was working nearby and managed to get the pilot pulled out - only to get into trouble from the Air Base Recovering Team for risking his life as the plane was full of fuel and could of “gone up” at any time.

“ELLO ‘ELLO” - Across the country top secret resistance plans were made in case of invasion. In each area people were recruited and explosives were issued. Goxhill was no exception. In case of capture and torture you were only allowed to know one other member of the team. A secret password was set up. The word should be used in casual conversation, but out of context. Two men took the Goxhill explosives into the marsh and buried them for safe keeping, using two local land marks to pinpoint the hiding place, one being the brickyard chimney. Luckily they weren’t needed. After the war they returned to recover the explosives, but the brickyard chimney had gone! Don’t worry, after much digging the explosives were recovered.

Years after three men were stood discussing how to repair the sluice gates at East Halton Skitter. In the interest of national security they cannot be named, however they were a River Authority Engineer, a local contractor and a Land Agent. For some reason one of them decided to use ‘the password’. They stared at each other, and all used the word. All three had been involved and had never known.