

**AROUND
KEYNSHAM & SALTFORD
PAST
AND
PRESENT**



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Keynsham & Salford Local History Society

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AROUND
KEYNSHAM & SALTFORD
PAST & PRESENT

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Cover illustration: The Post Office in The High Street Keynsham, next to The Baptist Church

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THE SALTFOUR REGATTA

by Tim Martin

The Saltford Regatta is the direct descendant of the Bath and Bristol Regattas held in the 1840-50s.

For many years the Regatta was run under joint control of Ariel, Avon, Clifton and Redcliffe Clubs, but the Clifton and Redcliffe Clubs combined to form Bristol Rowing Club in 1961. The Clubs each nominated members to form the Regatta Committee.

Avon and Bristol are separate rowing clubs with boathouses on the Regatta course and the Bristol Ariel Club at St. Annes, Bristol.

Bristol Rowing Club now has its Head-quarters within Bristol Docks.

In addition the University of Bristol Boat Club have their boathouse at Saltford.

Before World War I

The Bath Amateur Regatta Committee decided to abandon their Regatta after a heavy loss on the 1888 fixture; this Committee owned the Bath City Challenge Vase and a one-fifth share in the West of England Trophy.

In the absence of other evidence, it seems that the Ariel Rowing Club took the first steps towards ensuring that the trophies should not leave the neighbourhood. By instructing the Captain, in November 1889, to open negotiations with the Bath Avon R. C. for the joint purchase of "City" for £16 and the share in the "West" for £5.

Early in 1890, a sub-committee consisting of, G.E. Davies (Captain), D.H. McPherson and B.A. Baker were appointed to meet the Bath Regatta Committee with reference to a regatta at Saltford. At the end of January a meeting was held at the Rummer Hotel at which Bath Avon R.C. (who apparently had taken over the property of the original Regatta Committee), were represented by Messrs Soane, Dixon F. Burford (a member of both clubs) and J.M. Knight who was voted to the chair. A long and interesting discussion led to the promise by G.E. Davies to lay the following proposal before the Ariel Committee:-

"That the committee be authorised to undertake the management of a Saltford Regatta this season in conjunction with the Bath Avon R.C., provided the total expenditure does not exceed £170, each club to share equally any loss after deducting all receipts, other subscribers' tickets issued by either club to be debited to issues as receipts"

The meeting considered that this proposal formed a primary basis on which the two clubs could act.

Within a week Ariel had adopted the proposal and on the 17th April 1890, the representatives of the two clubs met again with power from their Committees to go ahead with a regatta, with the Ariel proposal as a working agreement.

The principles enunciated in this Agreement were acted upon, with occasional minor changes, until 1906, when growing differences of outlook between the two clubs forced the abandonment of the regatta for that year.

Some account of the events, which led to this state of affairs, may help to make clear the difficulties that beset the promoters of the regatta.

The Ariel members of the Joint Committee had for some years urged that considerable reductions in certain items of expenditure could be made without imperilling the future of the regatta as a rowing and a social function.

The Avon men, on the other hand, were strongly opposed to anything which would detract from the "Henley" scale on which things had been done in the past.

Instructed by an Ariel Committee Minute of the 31st March 1906:

"That if it was proposed to hold Saltford Regatta on similar lines as regarded expenditure, to previous regattas that we instruct our representatives on the Committee to decline to assent to the proposal"

The Ariel Sub-Committee, after considerable argument, persuaded the Avon representatives to agree to some reduction in expenditure and a date, Saturday, 14th July was fixed. Very soon it was found that this date clashed with that chosen by the Cycling Clubs of Bath (after the Joint Committee had already settled on 14th July) for a big sports meeting in their city which, Avon pointed out, would attract most all Bath people who would have been likely to go to Saltford and would employ many ground men and other staff needed for the regatta.

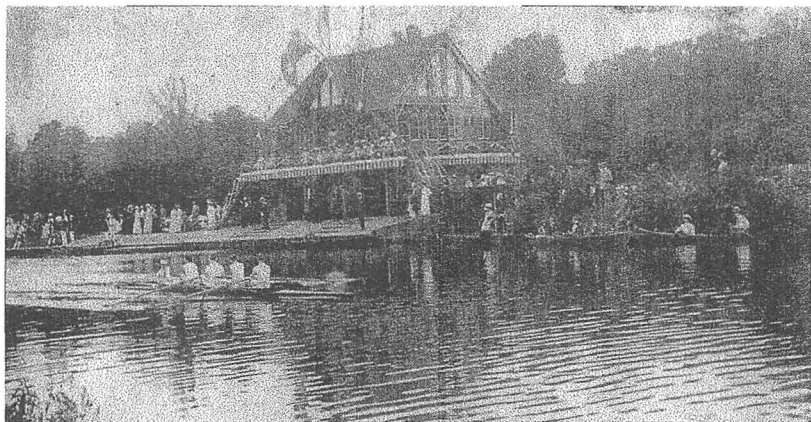
Avon proposed that one of the two Saturdays, 21st or 28th July, should be selected: Ariel maintained that it always rained in the latter part of the month, and countered with a proposal to take Wednesday, 18th July, as the date.

This was not acceptable to Avon who held that the weather was always a gamble whilst loss from the Cycle meeting or a Wednesday Regatta was a certainty - and so, in the absence of agreement, there was nothing to do but to drop Saltford regatta in 1906.

The cuts in expenditure that Ariel stood out for, were to be on printing and advertising, and on the value of the presentation prizes. In this connection it should be remarked that in those days Regatta Committees vied with each other in advertising the money value of the prizes, a practice which was ended by the Provincial Council of the A.R.A. some years

later. In 1903 and the next two years, Saltford Regatta prizes accounted for over one-third of the total expenditure, and cost more than twice the amount of receipts from Entry Fees.

The Joint Committee held Saltford Regatta in 1907 and 1908, much on the same lines as it had been run before 1906, with some reduction in the costs of advertising and prizes, nevertheless the gross loss in 1908 came to the large sum of £104.8.7d.



SALTFORD REGATTA 1908

Then in 1909, Avon R.C. could not see their way to join Ariel R.C. as joint promoters of the Regatta. Nothing dismayed, Ariel decided that the function must and would be held; a Sub-Committee consisting of the Captain (C. Roscoria), Hon Secretary (A.A. Collings), H.E. Townsend, with J.F. Holloway and F.R. Holman as Hon. Secretary and Treasurer respectively were appointed.

Crews which went to Evesham, Llandaff, Cardiff and other regattas induced a number of provincial clubs who had never been seen at Saltford to send entries, and by vigorous action of the Sub-Committee and other members of the Club, success assured.

The old agreement had come to an end with the 1908 Regatta. One club had risked much by undertaking the management in 1909 and having shown courage and achieved success, it was not difficult to persuade Clifton R.C. to come in. For in 1910, with a new agreement, this Club purchased a third part share in the two Challenge Vases and for the five years, the promotion of Saltford Regatta was the joint responsibility of Avon R.C., Bristol Ariel R.C. and Clifton R.C.

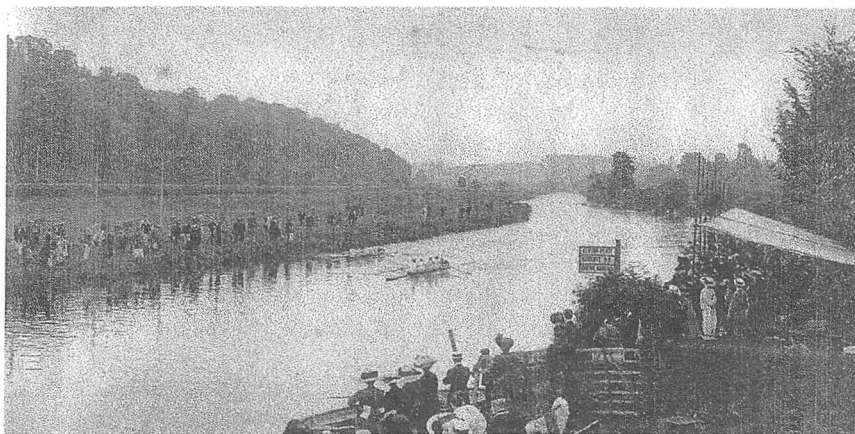
The outbreak of War in 1914, ten days after the Regatta, caused the suspension of racing at Saltford until 1919, when the Jamaica Cup Regatta was revived and for the next two years, took the place of Saltford Regatta. Then, in 1922, the "Henley of the West", shorn of much of its former display, started again, now with Redcliffe R.C. as the fourth promoting club.

Although Clifton R.C. had a boathouse at Saltford for many years before they joined in the management of the Regatta. Their members had confined themselves entirely to pleasure boating and in the Nineties and later, would have nothing to do with racing, some, in fact, disliked the Regatta, and deplored the interference that it caused to their exclusive use of the river.

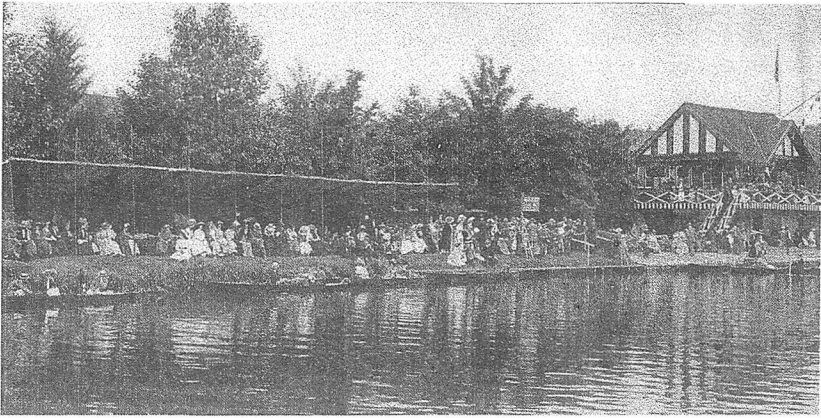
The Regatta Committee was allowed to occupy their upstream lawn and the Judges' Enclosure, very much on sufferance, the rest of the property being retained for the use of their members on regatta days. However in 1903 Clifton colours appeared in a race for the first time for twenty years (the club had rowed a generation earlier), a new and soon to be a formidable rival and valuable ally came into the Saltford Picture.

Redcliffe R.C. remained on the Floating Harbour with a boathouse at Bristol Bridge until enemy action destroyed it in 1940. But, like Clifton R.C., a new generation wanted something better, their case something better than the Floating Harbour and the Feeder Canal. They established a training centre at Saltford, as Avon R.C. had already done so that it may well be said that of the four clubs who, since 1922, shared the responsibility of running the Regatta at Saltford, Ariel alone had no permanent accommodation there.

Some description of the arrangements, which were customary from 1890 until the last pre-war regatta in 1914, may be of interest. On the Saltford side were the Reserved and Judges' Enclosures, moored under the willows were the houseboats and decorated barges but these fell into disuse early in the present century. The layout on the Kelston side was very extensive, and, even for those days, costly.



SALT FORD REGATTA 1910



SALTFORD REGATTA 1910

Canvas fencing completely enclosed the fields from a point more or less opposite to the present bungalows on the Salford side of the river to a point near the Whitegate, running back to and along the railway embankment.

Playboxes were set up at each end of the enclosure, temporary seats were placed along the towpath near to the edge of the river. Rafts, Boat and Competitors' tents were erected below the finishing post, whilst at suitable places were the usual adjuncts of a regatta refreshment tents, prize tent, secretary's office, the band-stand, a large telegraph board, coconut shies, and all the Fun of the Fair.

Police patrolled the enclosures with powers to conduct from one paybox to another persons who might claim right of way along the towpath (one individual did this year after year as a matter of principle).

Ferries connected the two banks, stake boats were often used, umpires rode on horseback (the accounts for 1890 give an item "Boy to hold umpire's horse, 2/-").

This then, with minor changes of details from time to time, was the lay out of the pre-war regatta at Salford.

As indicated in the Agreement, each club was credited with the tickets issued by its members and collected at the gates. To minimise the loss to club funds it was customary to organise a Guarantee Fund, the income from this being set off against a half share in the actual loss on the regatta.

During those years when the West of England Challenge Vase was the first Senior race. The City Challenge Vase became the second one and the Salford Plate (the second to the

“City”) fell out for that year (the winners of the first Senior race were, as now, debarred from rowing in the second). All Four-oared and Pair-oared races were coxed. Scratch Fours concluded the List of Events

As I possess, fortunately, the programmes of most Saltford Regattas from 1890 to 1964 (those from 1896 are “marked up” fairly well). It is possible to give the List of Events and competing crews, and where material does not exist in the ScrapBooks, to give more than a bare resume of the programme.

It used to be said, before World War I, that it always rained on the day of the Saltford Regatta. But analysis shows that, like most generalisations, this was untrue, for twenty-one regattas held between 1890 and 1914, on ten only was the weather wet but with the single exception of 1909 when Ariel ran the regatta alone, a financial loss was suffered

.After World War I.

As members returned to their Rowing Clubs, and new men came along, it very soon became obvious that something must be done to provide an incentive to both the old and the new to prevent them from becoming discouraged for want of competition.



SALTFORD REGATTA 1922

The captains of the four clubs, Ariel, Avon, Clifton and Redcliffe, got together and decided to organise a regatta at Saltford on the lines of the pre-war Jamaica Cup one. But with a programme of events suitable to the unusual conditions, for with novices in the majority and few old oarsmen available, the few overworked coaches (who were also, in almost every case, the administrative officers of their clubs) saw little hope of producing crews of high standard.

The Joint Committee realising that the lay-out, the prize list and the organisation generally must be on a very modest scale, and that nothing like the pre-war costly (and now much more costly) arrangements would be possible, decided to confine the regatta to local clubs.

In 1920, the programme was increased to five events, three being thrown open to all clubs rowing under A.R.A. Rules and the next year all but one event was open. Then, in 1922, Saltford Regatta was formally revived, but with no enclosure on the Kelston side of the river.

Except for the interruption of the Second World War, the Regatta was run on these lines since 1922 - entries increased far beyond those which were customary in the early years of the century.

Saltford held a high place in the regatta fixture list, numbers of competing crews growing from 27 in 1920, 40 in 1947, and 80 in 1964 which is the last programme I have.

The regatta continued until the 1970's when it was superseded by the August Bank Holiday event rowed within Bristol Docks.

T.W. Martin. 2nd June 2001

RANDOM THOUGHTS AND MEMORIES FROM AUSTRALIA.

Sue Trude

Sometime ago, I (Sue Trude), sent a number of our Journals together with “The History of Keynsham & Salford” to a Mrs Babs Stapely (Nee Burslem), a one time resident of Keynsham. The following are extracts from her return letter, the Journals having stirred memories of long forgotten events.

“My dad, Percival Burslem, was one of the first foremen on the then new Fry site, having worked for them when they were still in Bristol at, I believe, Castle Street. He was also overseer when the houses in Chandos Road were built.



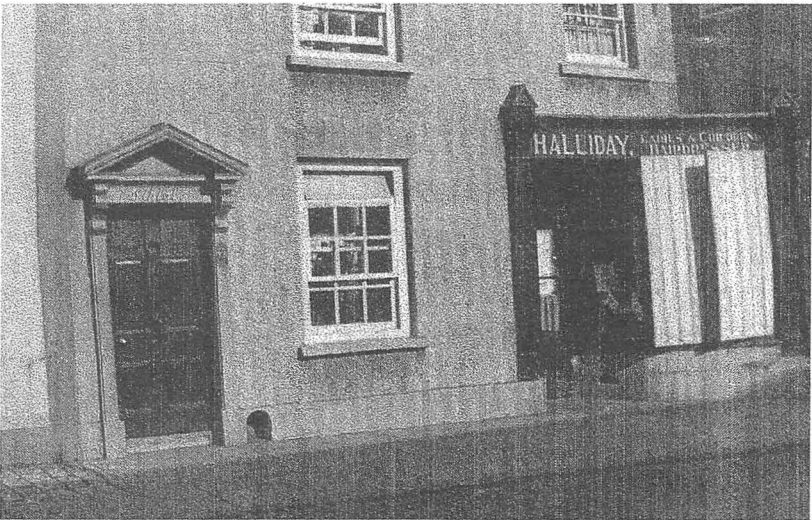
Chandos Road under construction in 1932.
(Photograph courtesy Messrs Cadbury's Ltd.)

At the age of eight I was a pupil of Bath Hill School, the headmaster was a Mr Mann, I think. We sat at desks rather like benches, with a ledge underneath where we put our boxes. We obtained our boxes from a lady who had a shop on the right-hand side of the High Street looking towards Temple Street. She sold sweets on one side of the shop and fish on the other side. She was a dear, although we never saw her wash her hands between serving sweets or fish. We called her Fishy Fry, so I imagine her name was Mrs Fry.



Mrs Catherine Fry's shop was in the rank destroyed to make way for the present Post Office c.1960's. Seen to the right of the street lamp in the picture.

I used to take piano lessons from a Miss Wallis who had a little house on the left-hand side of the High Street, again going towards Bath Hill. Next to it was a hairdressers.



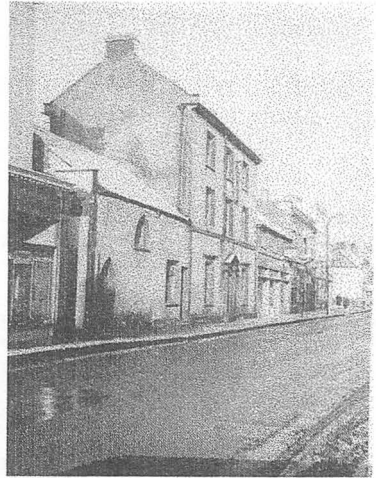
HALLIDAYS

Miss Wallis also had a bedridden mother and it was the only house in Keynsham which was hit by an incendiary bomb during the war, very efficiently dealt with by the A.R.P. Also, once she had heard my awful rendition on the piano, and knew that I played chess, we spent the next 39-40 minutes playing that game. She came from the Isle of Wight and was a champion of some sort. Anyway, she had a timer and if I took more than a minute to make a move, she shut down the game and me only 11 years old!

Your Journal number 4 mentions dear Dr Claude. I remember how full Keynsham Church was when his funeral took place. When Dad was dying, he would come nearly every day and on his way down the stairs would joke to ease Dad's mind, and then quietly tell us how bad it was.



Dr . Claude.



Dr Claude's House and surgery.

[Keynsham Urban District Councillor, Dr Claude Harrison died in February 1957, aged 67 years. He won the M.C. whilst serving in the Medical Corps in Mesopotamia during World War 1. He was exceedingly popular.]

It also remember Hicklings Ironmongers, such a wonderful place to wander around. Nails and screws sold by the pound (lb), as many as YOU needed, not in expensive pre-packed sets of 5 !



Hicklings Shop.

We did bring a brass bowl with us to Australia that was made at the old Keynsham brass mill — was it by the Belgians? Later, I thought it should be returned to Keynsham and kept there, so I wrote to the Council and a Hazel Short replied. I expect she has it now as I suggested she took care of it for Keynsham rather than put it away in some Council cupboard never to be seen again!!”

Mrs Stapeley finishes her letter by saying that when she has a bad night, she puts on the light and reads again from the Journals. Memories come flooding back of the people she and her husband, Denis, knew during their time in Keynsham. Then she puts the book down and usually falls asleep with happy memories of times past.

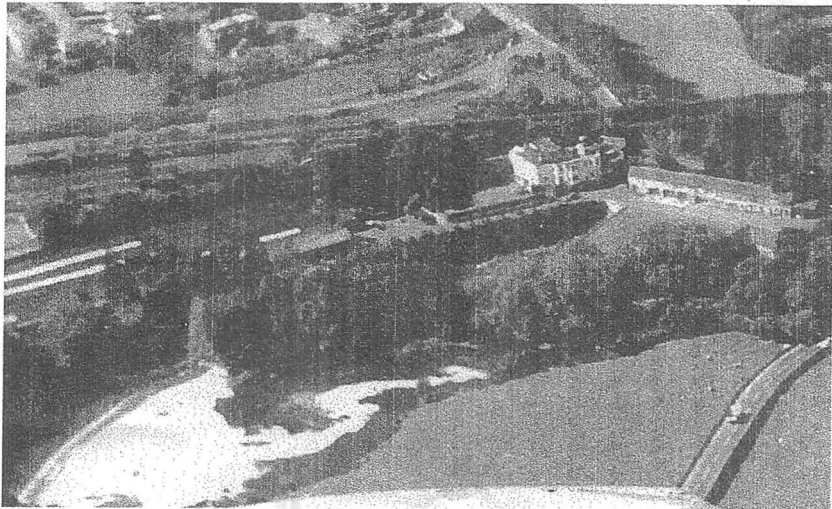
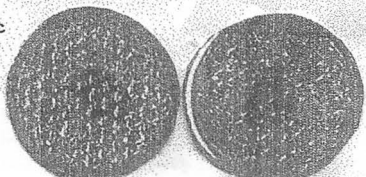
This Indenture

THIS INDENTURE made the nineteenth day of July 1943 between JAMES HENRY TRUDE Son of THOMAS STANLEY TRUDE of the 1st part the said THOMAS STANLEY TRUDE of NENBROKE Road Bath in the County of Somerset Father of the said JAMES HENRY TRUDE of the 2nd part and KEYNSHAM PAPER MILLS LIMITED of KEYNSHAM in the COUNTY OF SOMERSET of the 3rd part WITNESSETH that the same JAMES HENRY TRUDE of his own free will and with the consent of his said FATHER doth put himself Apprentice to KEYNSHAM PAPER MILLS LIMITED to learn their Art and with them after the manner of an Apprentice to serve from the 23rd DAY OF JUNE 1943 until the full end and term of FIVE YEARS thence next ensuing and fully to be complete and ended DURING which term the said Apprentice his said Masters diligently and faithfully shall and will serve their secrets keep their lawful commands everywhere gladly do and in his own time he shall attend such classes for Technical instruction as the Firm may deem advisable He shall do no damage to his said Masters nor see to be done of others but to the best of his power shall tell or forthwith give notice to his said Masters of the same The goods of his said Masters he shall not waste nor lend them unlawfully to any Hurt to his said Masters he shall not do cause or procure to be done he shall neither buy nor sell without his Masters leave Tavern Inn or Alehouse he shall not haunt he shall not gamble or play at any unlawful game nor from the service of his said Masters shall absent himself but in all things as an honest and faithful Apprentice shall and will demean and behave himself towards his said Masters and all theirs during the said term AND the said KEYNSHAM PAPER MILLS LIMITED in consideration of such service and upon the execution of these presents shall teach and instruct or cause to be taught and instructed in the best way and manner they can the Art of ENGINEERING PAYING to the said Apprentice the following weekly wages that is to say NINE SHILLINGS AND THREE PENCE PER WEEK during the first half-year of the said term ELEVEN SHILLINGS PER WEEK during the second half-year of the said term FIFTEEN SHILLINGS PER WEEK during the second year EIGHTEEN SHILLINGS AND NINEPENCE during the third year TWENTY TWO SHILLINGS AND SIXPENCE during the fourth year

THIRTY THREE SHILLINGS AND SIXPENCE during the fifth and last year of the said term (on the date of this Indenture the recognised rate of wages in the City of Bristol for a Journeyman in the trade named was 100/6d per week Should any reduction in this rate take place during the period covered by the Indenture the wages set out above for the said Apprentice may be reduced accordingly) AND IT IS HEREBY AGREED that any time lost through illness or any other cause shall be deducted from the weekly wages and also any fines the said Apprentice may incur And it is also further agreed that should the said Apprentice misbehave himself by disobedience absence from work general bad conduct unsatisfactory work or if in the opinion of his Masters he prove incapable of learning the aforementioned trade the said KEYNSHAM PAPER MILLS LIMITED shall have the power to cancel this indenture AND for the true performance of all and every the Covenants and Agreements aforesaid each of the same parties bindeth himself unto the other firmly by these presents IN WITNESS whereof the Company have caused their Common Seal to be affixed and the other parties abovenamed in these Indentures have set their hands and seals the NINETEENTH DAY OF JULY in the SEVENTH YEAR in the reign of our sovereign Lord George the Sixth by the Grace of God of the United Kingdom of Great Britain Ireland and the British Dominions beyond the Seas King and in the year of our Lord ONE THOUSAND NINE HUNDRED AND FORTY THREE

Signed sealed and delivered etc etc etc

COMPANY
SEAL



AVON MILL SITE 1961

TEACHING THE THREE R'S. Elizabeth White and Sue Trude

Almost every day we hear of somebody's brilliant new ideas for improving education for all. In the light of this, those of us who are descended from Victorian teachers and/or are retired teachers, thought an examination of local school log books of 100 to 130 years ago would be diverting.

What of standards, discipline, parental attitudes, finance, payment by results and testing?

The whole is too wide a subject for the Journal. Much more information will be found in "Keynsham & Saltford, Life and work in Times Past 1539-1945".

Elizabeth White and Susan Trude have studied the log books of Saltford School (1875 - 1904) and Keynsham Schools (1863 - 1899) respectively, selecting various interesting aspects from them.

In 1862, the Privy Council of Education ordered that every school should keep a diary or a log book. Log books were supposed to contain official details such as attendance figures, it being specifically forbidden to include anything of a personal nature. However, some teachers included details of the school and children, thus infringing the rules, but it is these extra details which make fascinating reading today.

The Saltford books are more rewarding than the Keynsham ones and, in addition to general background information, Elizabeth has written about the teachers, discipline and conditions at Saltford. Sue has extracted information about attendance, behaviour, punishments and sickness at Keynsham.

GENERAL BACKGROUND.

In 1861, a new system of allocating grants was introduced. This system of payment by results lasted, with modifications, until 1890 and was disastrous. Schools were allocated grants for the number of children who reached the standard 6 in the three R's. An extra grant was given for attendance. The grant could be reduced for failure in any of these subjects, failure to maintain the registers, bad state of buildings and unsatisfactory teaching. As the major outlay in any school is the salary bill, this system directly affected the teachers' salaries. Consequently, the effects were to limit education to what was required for examination, to hold back bright children, to eliminate innovation and to narrow the curriculum, reducing schooling to rote learning.

Every school had an annual inspection when an inspector came and orally examined all the children, and saw work (eg. needlework) done during the year.

The Education Act of 1870 encouraged churches to set up schools which could be supported by government grants. After 1 year the state would provide schools where there were none. They were run by locally elected school boards, hence the name 'Board Schools'. In the period between 1833, the first grant, and the Education Act of 1870, many church schools had been provided, but after 1870 there was a flood of new church schools and countless struggles to keep out the Board Schools. Education was neither compulsory nor free. It was hoped that children would attend from 5 to 12 years, but in Saltford girls began around 3 years and attended to 10 or 11. Boys went to do fieldwork during the Spring, Summer and Autumn, and returned to school during Winter. Until the arrival of a School Attendance Officer, the Law remained a Dead Letter in Saltford.

SALTFORD SCHOOL 1875-1904.

Prior to 1875, Queen's school was held in a cottage in Queen's Square, possibly in one of Gray's Cottages. A new school was established in 1814 with Mrs Mary Ann Collyer as mistress. It was provided by the benevolence of a former Rector and received money from the National Society, one of two societies through which the government channelled money for school building after 1833.

Saltford had a new school in 1875. The building was paid for by Mrs Juliana Kelly, widow of Admiral Kelly, of Saltford House. The first teacher was Sarah Jane Gould who had a teaching certificate, which was unusual for that time when teacher training colleges were relatively new. She was a local girl and the first trained teacher to work in Saltford. She had a hard job, many of her pupils were three years old and few continued beyond the age of 10 or 11. Even fewer completed all six standards to take them up to 12. In a village of 400 people, she probably had 70 or 80 children at some time or other, all in the one room. She was the only teacher although she may have had monitors or pupil teachers.

Even from the start, this school was too small. In order to qualify for a grant there should have been 80 cubic feet of space for each child on average attendance, but had all the children attended there would have been overcrowding. If they did not all attend then the teachers' salaries went down. Equipment was short, only the older children used paper and pencil, the others had slates, slate pencils and chalk. There was one set of reading books, no pictures or visual aids and no easels.

Sarah seems to have made a promising start for in her first inspection of 1876, the Inspectors wrote; - "The children are neat and orderly, and have greatly improved in attainment under the new mistress, especially in writing. A second set of writing books a portfolio, and a

regular account book should be supplied, as well as easels. A urinal is also requisite.” After these favourable comments, the school seems to have declined; -
“1877. The discipline is very fair, and fair progress has been made by the upper standards. An improved report on the attainment of the infants will be expected if a grant ---- is to be paid.”
“1880. The school is in fair order, but the children are rather restless, and in attainment much improvement is needed, especially in spelling and in arithmetic of the upper standards. The school did not pass in Geography or Grammar. My Lords are unable to allow payment for infant work. They will expect a much more favourable report next year on the school as a condition of any grant.

A new “temporary” teacher, Mrs Agnes Gabb, arrived in 1880. She seems to have been a real tartar, but an overwhelmed one. During one afternoon she seems to have been in charge of 78 children all in one room. After one month, her frustration was expressed in the log book; - “December 2nd. I took standard 1 for mental arithmetic in which they were very dull as in everything else. December 10th. I kept the children in till 5 o’clock for being restless in their lesson”.

To help her she had monitors to teach the lower standards and pupil teachers. The monitors were given simple tasks which they were supposed to convey to the children. The pupil teachers were slightly older children who did a 5-year apprenticeship, from 13 to 18 years. They received a small salary, were taught by the head teacher after school, and at 18 could take an examination to win a Queen’s Scholarship to a training college.

Mrs Gabb had problems with her first monitor, Ada Hancock. In February 1881, Miss Hancock learned long division and in March progressed to compound subtraction, but her powers of retention were limited. “Having once learned the British Isles I gave her several questions to answer, but she could not do them, so she has to learn them again. She is improved in grammar.” However things got worse. On March 30th. Mrs Gabb wrote; - “Miss Hancock has neglected to learn her home lessons for nearly a week, therefore I am compelled to punish her by keeping her without food, tea and supper till she knows them. Her lesson being only the mountains of Scotland and the rivers with their tributaries. Ada lived with her grandfather and Mrs Gabb, so she was unable to avoid censure.

“April 3rd. Miss Hancock neglected her lessons for two evenings. Punished her by keeping her in school for two hours to learn them, and the next evening she could not write them.” By mid-May, Miss Gabb wrote ; - “Miss Hancock refuses to learn her lessons after keeping her three evenings without her tea, She also wishes to give it up as she says she does not like school work.”

“May 17th. Examined Miss Hancock’s class (infants) and found them dreadfully backward” Mrs Gabb’s other monitor, Charles Cooper, was over 12 years old and engaged to teach three hours a day.

Mrs Gabb seems to have been a ferocious disciplinarian for on July 20th she wrote;-
“Punished Fanny Smith for refusing to do her home lessons and being impertinent when told to hold out her hand saying she would not hold out her hand any more for me than her brother did when he refused to do his home lessons. Her parents encourage her in this impudence by keeping her at home the rest of the week and making a complaint against me to the Committee of the school, which has been much exaggerated. The punishment is one stroke of the cane on the palm of each hand.”

In January 1882, Fanny Smith was in trouble again. She was about to be hit on the palm when she withdrew her hand and got caught on the backs of the knuckles. Her father arrived and threatened to summons the teacher. “She is the most troublesome girl in the whole school.” (So much for the log book containing nothing of a personal nature!) By 1882, Mrs Gabb was in real trouble. In 1881, the standard was not reached in spelling and arithmetic and the grant was reduced by 10% for deficient instruction, and they could not allow payment for infant needlework.

Her pupil teacher could not control the class. “The pupil teachers’ class has been in bad order all week. She seems to have no authority with her children and if I reprove her she says I illtreat or insult her. She is not a good teacher but a capital girl to learn her home lessons. Then came trouble because Mrs Gabb left the school in charge of the pupil teachers for three hours whilst she went to Bath to see a Doctor about her throat. The Rector walked in, was very angry and sent the children home at 3.35pm.

The school numbers had almost doubled since 1881, giving rise to acute accommodation problems and although the school was trying to obtain more accommodation, Mrs Gabb was having to cope with bad overcrowding without additional equipment. She was under severe stress. An extension to provide an infant room was planned and the children given one and a half days holiday while the schoolroom was prepared for a fund-raising concert, but Miss Gabb had resigned before the room was ready. In March 1882, the HMI arrived without warning and found the registers unsatisfactory. Fourteen absent pupils were marked present and six pupils had been allowed to leave before two hours had elapsed. The pupil teacher answered “present” for several pupils. So Mrs Gabb resigned. (A short while later she found employment at Marksbury School.)

A husband and wife team, Mr and Mrs Mahoney, took over. The wife taught the infants and all the needlework whilst the husband did the rest, thus sharing the work Mrs Gabb had to cope with. When they began on 3rd April 1882, they found a dreadful situation:-
“The children were very disorderly and know nothing of the standard subjects for the year”.

“April 5th. Examined the standards in geography and found they know nothing whatever on the subject. The order is something dreadful and retards the work a good deal.”

“April 19th. Examined the infants of five years old and found out of fifteen only one knew the alphabet. However, the numbers were rising, so the parents obviously liked the new regime. On April 20th, 86 children were present and, by the end of that week, four infants had learned the alphabet.

Things were improving. The new infant room came into use and children were encouraged to bring their own Home Lesson books, copy books, pens and pencils. This, in addition to the school fee, must have been a burden for poor families. By July there were 96 children on the books although daily attendance averaged 65. Attendance was always a problem. In August and September, Mr Mahoney complained that the children were very late back from dinner, some not arriving until 2.35pm. Maybe they had to take dinners to their fathers in the harvest fields.

Within six months of Mr and Mrs Mahoney’s arrival, came the dreaded examination on which their salaries depended. The results were better than expected. 47% passed against the previous 40% but the grant was reduced because of Mrs Gabb’s misregistration. They received glowing reports for Religious Education teaching, otherwise;- “The spelling is a great difficulty. The children appear to have no language except what they learn in school. They have little or no acquaintance with common words and will misspell the simplest words at times.

The Mahoneys had the same sort of trouble with parents as had Mrs Gabb, sometimes with the same parents. In July 1883, the master gave 4 strokes of the cane to Jane Ollis. Her father arrived, used foul and abusive language and summonsed the master for assault. The master was supported by the Rector and all the managers, and as the Curate had witnessed the incident, Mr Ollis had to apologise and withdraw.

There is a common misconception that all Victorian parents believed in “spare the rod and spoil the child”. This is not so, for many parents did not want their children subjected to corporal punishment, although they did not emulate Mr Ollis. “July 1884. Mr Lumbert wishes to send his children to school without having them corrected in any way. The only option he allows is to have them kept in. He removed them from Corston School because he refused to allow them to submit to the ordinary discipline of the school there, and his terms did not meet the rules of this school.”

Some parents tried to find other ways around the school’s discipline. They got the Doctor to write saying the child was too delicate to attend all day, or be punished, or read, or sew or be made attend regularly. “August 22nd. 1884. Ruth Gale appears to be quite incapable of learning anything, and her grandparents will not have her corrected.”

“August 26th. Dr Thomas from Keynsham wrote that Charles Withers’ son, John, is of very weak intellect so that he should not be pushed or made to attend school regularly or

be punished in any way.” John caused discipline problems later on. The Ollises too caused further trouble.

“Mrs Ollis sent a message to say that if I kept her children in she would not send them at all.

However, by 1883, the school received a much better report. How the Mahoneys must have laboured to achieve it. “The children are very orderly and an advance in attainment has been made since last year. Handwriting, however, requires particular attention and the upper standards did very poorly in arithmetic. The needlework is creditable. The infants answered with considerable intelligence and their elementary was very fair.”

The teachers were given suggestions for improvement, including a fuller range of object lessons. The pass rate was 78%. The average attendance throughout the year was 61, but on the examination day, 48 were present. 44 passed in reading, 39 in writing and 29 in Arithmetic. One wonders if some children had been invited’ to stay away.

The government was trying to make education compulsory, and in order to encourage attendance, the managers of the school produced a new scheme. If a child passed in all three subjects then the parents only had to pay full fees for the first half of the year: the second half was at half fees provided the child made 125 attendances. This did seem to increase attendances, and fees, but at harvest time perhaps only about 30 attended out of a possible 80 or 90.

The Mahoneys suffered from frequent illnesses and the school had to be closed. The registers were giving trouble with nonattenders being marked present. In theory, the children were supposed to attend school, but this was largely ignored.

Mr Mahoney wrote in 1884;- “Mr Lumpert defied the law by keeping his children, Rosalind and Gertrude, away from school for nine consecutive weeks without just cause, and also sending his daughter, Fanny, to work before she was qualified or had passed the second standard. In this case the Act is nothing more than a dead letter. Mrs Roche’s children have entered no school for a period of 15 weeks.”

He sounds like an exhausted and dispirited man and resigned just as an attendance officer was being appointed.

Mr and Mrs Simpson were appointed and had their first inspection soon after they arrived in October 1884. The average attendance was 70, but overall the results were poor — “— but as the circumstances have been against the production of good work and as the school is being carefully taught, grant will be given. Much improvement will be expected, and a full supply of specimens of needlework required.”



Saltford School, with Mr. and Mrs. Simpson

The Rector and Curate got top marks for their Religious Education achievements with standards 5 and 6.

Throughout 1885, one or other of these gentlemen came in every morning to teach arithmetic to the older children and their wives inspected needlework and knitting.

Mrs Kelly had regularly visited the school in the 1870's but was now becoming elderly. Nevertheless, she still gave the children an annual treat in the summer when they had games and tea in the paddock of her house. The children wore themselves out and many were absent from school the next day. Mrs Kelly also gave warm material for the girls to make cloaks, and presented cuffs for the best girl pupils.

In the 1885 inspection, the Simpsons efforts were recognised;-" A creditable increase has taken place in the number and attendance of children. There is also an improvement in attainment, though considerable further improvement is needed. Grammar has been taught, but does not yet entitle the school to a grant. The master needs additional assistance. Considering the remarkable increase in the numbers and attendance due to the exertion of the master and the consequent entry of backward scholars, the school may this year be classed as Good."

The school had passed its worst days. In 1886 the report was glowing; -

This school passed a very creditable examination. The clergy and teachers take a warm and kindly interest in the children; the good effects of which were testified to by the numbers attending the school and the results of the examination.”

Mr Simpson had to cope with a great scandal in 1886. Two of the boys were discovered to have obtained the answer books for the arithmetic done in the school. The master sent for the Rector who decided all books must be changed. This would have been enormously expensive, so an agreement was reached with all parents to keep the answer books from the children. This is a very revealing incident.

There are many references in the reports to the kindness of Mr and Mrs Simpson;-
“1887. A very kind and genial influence is exercised over the infants and the elder children.”
A similar comment was given in 1889.

By 1893, a more critical note appears in the examination reports; -

“The great fault of the school is the lack of discipline. The children talk unbidden and are not ready in obeying orders. Poor Mr Simpson was often ill and the school had to be closed. In 1895 it had only been open 193 days, so the children missed about 8 weeks schooling, allowing for the holidays of the time. He had been at Saltford for 10 years. Was he worn out with his efforts? There were frequent comments about the low ability of the children;-

“1892. Their intelligence is not of a high order.”

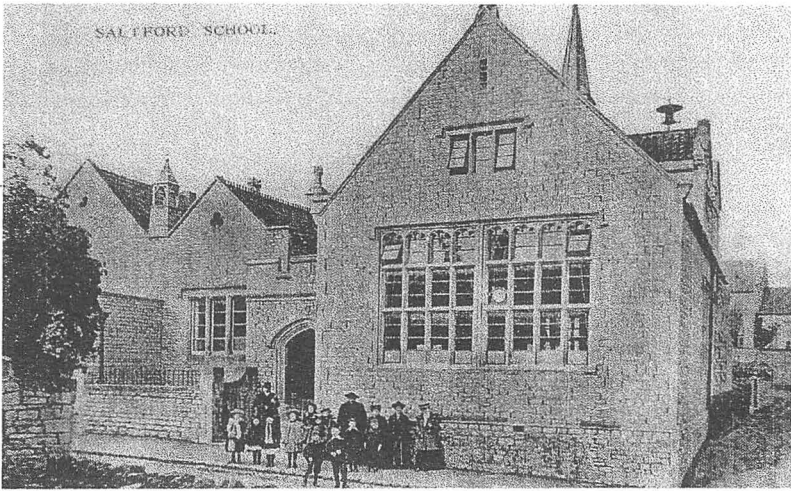
“1896. The children are quiet and orderly, but they are lacking in intelligence. The children left school early, before standards 5 and 6, for 11 and 12 year-olds. In 1896, the inspectors commented that there appeared to be some defect in organisation for a school in a village the size of Saltford to have only 5 children in the 4th standard of 9-10 years olds and none at all above this standard. (The children were at their ability level, not age level.)

In 1897, Mr Simpson was teaching five standards unaided. In 1898, his daughter, Eva, joined as a pupil teacher but was often ill. (I have great suspicions about the drains because these problems seem to have declined after the school was connected to the West Gloucestershire Water Company in 1902.)

During Mr Simpson’s last year, the discipline was described as good but the children’s progress only fair. The writing in the exercise books was bad, the only bright spots being the infant slate writing and the history in the highest class.

In 1902, the school was modernised and enlarged by Rev. Ward to contain 108 children. Once the school came under the Education Committee of the County Council, it dramatically improved and, by 1920, its pupils were winning scholarships to secondary schools, prizes in musical festivals and in essay-writing competitions.

ELIZABETH WHITE.



KEYNSHAM PAROCHIAL SCHOOL LOG BOOKS 1863-1899.

KEPT IN AFTER SCHOOL.

Bath Hill Parochial School was opened on 9th June 1857 and the Temple Street building dates from 1894.



Headteachers varied widely in the amount of detail and type of comment entered in their log books, making it difficult to assess the level of misbehaviour in the school or the type of punishment administered. In some cases the names of every child reprimanded would be noted but other headteachers would make no mention at all of the childrens' behaviour.

As for corporal punishment, the use of the cane is mentioned on two occasions only. Once in 1867, when a child in the infants' class was "kept in all dinner time and given the stick" for telling lies, and in 1880, when Mr Wheeler (headteacher of Junior School) discontinued using the cane because parents had sent notes objecting. Soon after this, an entry in the log book by the School Correspondent, stated that no corporal punishment whatsoever was to be used but the children to be punished by standing on a stool "or something".

Restlessness, inattention, disobedience, fighting, noisy behaviour, throwing stones, answering in a rude manner, poor writing, poor arithmetic, arriving late and playing truant all warranted punishment. This consisted of missing playtime, being kept in after school, marching, extra tuition in writing and staying behind until three sums were answered correctly. (Some of these seem more like punishment for the teacher than student!)

Those arriving late, that is, after the register had been marked, were either sent home or kept in after school. They were not entered on the register otherwise the number on the roll would have been incorrect - - - and failure to maintain an accurate register could cause the grant to be reduced. At least twice a week, either the Vicar or a school manager would call

at the school and log "I have checked the register and found it correct

Playing truant was common. In September 1866, three boys were kept in after school for this. The same problems were occurring by 1888, and although there was a Truant Officer, he seems to have been ineffective. The log records that speaking to the Officer had no effect, and the Officer complained that the parents just laughed at him. Poor man.

Some families were far more troublesome than others. Some children consistently came to school dirty. There were no washing facilities at school, so the children were either sent home or sent to wash at "the spring". One small boy and his infant brother were eventually expelled for uncleanliness.

Mrs May appeared to have great trouble with her family. She called at school on two occasions in June and July 1865, asking that her boys, Sydney and Charles, be punished for being late, and kept in for being disobedient. Sydney was already in trouble for answering rudely.

Two boys were punished for writing immoral words. A punishment seems to have entailed weeding the playground at playtime.

One mother used bad and insulting language to the headteacher and assistant, so her child was excluded from school until an apology had been received (Oh! for a more detailed account!)

In August 1865, young Frank Wellington decided playing was preferable to school, I wonder what his punishment was.

To maintain discipline in those days must have been extremely difficult. The classes were large, the rooms small and the number of children present varied from day to day and from morning to afternoon.

School was closed for certain occasions . In March 1864, the whole school went primrosing. On 8th December 1864 Clifton Suspension Bridge was Opened (on a very wet day) and most pupils were absent from school. On June 23rd 1868, the Circus came to town. On June 10th 1874, the school was closed because of the Bristol Agricultural Show.

There was a holiday for the Prince of Wales' visit to Bristol in July 1878 and the Queen's visit in 1886. On June 20th 1887 there was a holiday for the Jubilee and the Queen's Birthday in May 1889. Sometimes events such as bazaars and sales of work were held at the school.

Rather surprisingly, children were given the day off to attend the Liberal Demonstrations in September 1892.

Other absences were due to Keynsham Fair, a Wild Beast Show, a Prize Fight, Bath Races, Salford Regatta, Tea Meetings and Sunday School Treats which were held on weekdays.

The weather too, affected attendance. Heavy snow on several occasions during February 1888 meant the closure of the school.

Sickness was another cause of absence and sometimes, school closure. Measles seem to have the most widespread, serious disease, there being epidemics in November 1866, January 1867, September 1879, 1882, 1890 and March 1898. Several children died. Chicken Pox struck in 1874, 1881, 1885 and 1893. Scarlet Fever was also around in 1874, 1882, 1892 and 1894. Ringworm was rife in 1880, 1885, 1892. Whooping cough took its toll in 1882, 1887 and 1892.

Several tragedies are recorded. Charles Bees, 4, was drowned in March 1874. Ernest Cooper drowned on his way home from school in July 1884 and Thomas Drewith fell into the river in June 1888. Poor little Amy Roadnight was burned to death whilst playing with fire in January 1891.

There could have been no continuity in the lessons given. One teacher noted quite frequently in the log book "recapitulation of lessons as so many children have been absent".

The children were taught by 1 mistress, 1 pupil teacher, and 1 monitress. In September 1891 the log noted "101 children present, being taught by the mistress and 1 monitress 13 years of age. More help is urgently required."

How did they manage?



BATH HILL SCHOOL 1900

Two Inspector's Reports are of particular interest.

November 19th 1864. "No grant has been allowed on account of the infants for the eight months during which they were under an uncertificated mistress."

March 1895."The children have been taught in various localities during the year, but now they have been transferred to these new will no doubt make very satisfactory progress - -

It would appear that diptheria was not prevalent here in 19th century. The first mention in the Keynsham log book is in 1921 when the school was closed because of it. The Head went to the Isolation Hospital and one child died.

How lucky we are today!

SUSAN TRUDE.

LETTER FROM KING GEORGE VI - 1946



8th June, 1946

TO-DAY, AS WE CELEBRATE VICTORY, I send this personal message to you and all other boys and girls at school. For you have shared in the hardships and dangers of a total war and you have shared no less in the triumph of the Allied Nations.

I know you will always feel proud to belong to a country which was capable of such supreme effort; proud, too, of parents and elder brothers and sisters who by their courage, endurance and enterprise brought victory. May these qualities be yours as you grow up and join in the common effort to establish among the nations of the world unity and peace.

George R.I.

IMPORTANT WAR DATES

1939		1941	
SEP 1	Germany invaded Poland	JAN 31	The remnants of the 6th German Army surrendered at Stalingrad
SEP 3	Great Britain and France declared war on Germany; the R.E.F. began to leave for France	MAY	Final victory over the U-Boats in the Atlantic
DEC 13	Battle of the River Plate	MAY 13	Axis forces in Tunisia surrendered
1940		JULY 10	Allies invaded Sicily
APR 9	Germany invaded Denmark and Norway	SEP 3	Allies invaded Italy
MAY 10	Germany invaded the Low Countries	SEP 8	Italy capitulated
JUNE 3	Evacuation from Dunkirk completed	DEC 16	Scharnhorst sunk off North Cape
JUNE 8	British troops evacuated from Norway	1944	
JUNE 11	Italy declared war on Great Britain	JAN 13	Allied troops landed at Anzio
JUNE 22	France capitulated	JUNE 4	Rome captured
JUNE 29	Germany occupied the Channel Isles	JUNE 6	Allies landed in Normandy
AUG 8-Oct 31	German air offensive against Great Britain (Battle of Britain)	JUNE 13	Flying-bomb (V.1) attack on Britain started
OCT 28	Italy invaded Greece	JUNE	Defeat of Japanese Invasion of India
NOV 11-12	Successful attack on the Italian Fleet in Taranto Harbour	AUG 25	Paris liberated
DEC 9-11	Italian invasion of Egypt defeated at the battle of Sidi Barrani	SEP 1	Brussels liberated
1941		SEP 8	The first rocket-bomb (V.2) fell on England
MAR 11	Lend-Lease Bill passed in U.S.A.	SEP 17-26	The Battle of Arnhem
MAR 28	Battle of Cape Matapan	OCT 20	The Americans re-landed in the Philippines
APR 6	Germany invaded Greece	1945	
APR 12-Dec 9	The Siege of Tobruk	JAN 17	Warsaw liberated
MAY 30	Formal surrender of remnants of Italian Army in Abyssinia	MAR 20	British recaptured Mandalay
MAY 20-31	Battle of Crete	MAR 23	British crossed the Rhine
MAY 27	German battleship Bismarck sunk	APR 16	Opening of Conference of United Nations at San Francisco
JUNE 21	Germany invaded Russia	MAY 1	German forces in Italy surrendered
AUG 12	Terms of the Atlantic Charter agreed	MAY 1	Rangoon recaptured
NOV 18	British offensive launched in the Western Desert	MAY 5	All the German forces in Holland, N.W. Germany and Denmark surrendered unconditionally
DEC 7	Japanese attacked Pearl Harbour	MAY 9	Unconditional surrender of Germany to the Allies ratified in Berlin
DEC 8	Great Britain and United States of America declared war on Japan	JUNE 10	Australian troops landed in Borneo
1942		AUG 6	First atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima
FEB 16	Fall of Singapore	AUG 8	Russia declared war on Japan
APR 16	George Cross awarded to Malta	AUG 9	Second atomic bomb dropped on Nagasaki
OCT 17-Nov 4	German-Italian army defeated at El Alamein	AUG 14	The Emperor of Japan broadcast the unconditional surrender of his country
NOV 8	British and American forces landed in North Africa	SEP 5	British forces re-entered Singapore

MY FAMILY'S WAR RECORD

Footnote:
Were you at school during the War?
Did you receive a Royal Letter similar to this?
Please let us have your memories.

