

We had several emails from Michael Rabjohns;

I am 86 years old and now live in Stafford. I was a pupil in the old Huish school in the early 1940s. The headmaster was a Mr Rutt, my form master was Mr. Dickenson. Mr. Day was the arts master, Mr Eel (known as "Bummer") was the religious master. I can't recall the names of the history master although I seem to remember he wrote a book on the history of Taunton. He used to come into class with a piece of wood stuck up his back and jokingly threatened us with it. He called it "Ebenezer !" I can't recall the PT teachers name, he may have been called up to the forces during my stay. The name Mitford rings a bell.

I was part granny reared, living in Belvedere West, as it was known then. Being a "know it all" teenager, after some corporal punishment from granny, I ran away one day, down to my Mother in St. Austell. Just prior to my absconding down to St. Austell, I went to Mr. Rutt's office and said "I haven't done my homework!" He of course said, "Why not?" I said "because I'm not going to do any more" I think he was so shocked, he just sent me to my classroom.

Our French teacher was a Mrs Searle. All the boys fancied her. I was one of the Huish Army Cadets, and I think a Mr. Tipper was the captain. The Sergeant Major, a pupil, was a very large chubby fellow.

The cycle rack was in the bottom corner by the gates. There was a hut in the top corner which was used for the singing lessons.

Remove D classroom was in the far top yard corner and used to be the woodwork room before the war. There were a couple of wooden huts further along. I remember getting three on each hand from Mr Eel - OUCH!

Mr. Rutt's office was in the corner of the main playground and had outside steps to access it.

Michael has many memories of the town during the war : Between Belvedere and Albemarle Road there was a blacksmith shop where I used to watch the G W R cart horses being shod. I see now it's Premier Car Valet, and beside it was a drive up to the old Malt House where the American soldiers were billeted. They also had a Club in the large old house off the main road. I think it was known as the P X. There were two brick air raid shelters in Belvedere Road and Italian POWs worked in the coal yard opposite. My grandmother, whose father was Italian, invited the POWs from the coal yard, up to dinner!

During the war there was a permanent fairground under cover opposite the old cattle market in Priory Bridge Road. They just had the small stalls and bumper car rides. There used to be a garage on the main road where you came out from French Weir, called Marshalsea's. The RAF took it over to take crashed aircraft to in order to salvage whatever they could. My father was posted there after he came back from Italy.

Something else I have remembered about during the war. There is an opening to a yard next to St. Margaret's Hospice shop by the river bridge in town. On more than one occasion a uniformed soldier, complete with rifle and fixed bayonet was on sentry duty, marching up and down the yard up to the pavement and back. I never asked anyone about it so I don't know what was in there.