

## Sherfield to Bramley 1936/7

“Leaving Sherfield on the Bramley Road one went up a gentle hill and at the top of this hill on the left were and may still be – a couple of brick huts. These were part of yet another anti-aircraft gun site during the dark days. The track into them was also the easy way in to Bullsdown Copse. Bullsdown Copse was magnificent. Carpeted with bluebells, its paths lined with clumps of primroses as they wound between clumps and stands of Hazel, It was a lovers’ paradise in the spring and summer months. Past the huts was down hill and a sharp bend to the left (houses on the opposite side of the road) and you were almost at the R.A.O.C. Depot entrance.

The camp looked to be well built and the barrack huts looked comfortable. I never went into one but before the war, villagers were able to go there to the Cinema and the NAAFI and shop. There was a huge Drill hall or Gym where the films were shown and where I had my first boxing contest. My Father worked in the camp and sometimes slept there to look after his beloved Horses. They were used to pull the dustcarts but Father knew their origins and loved them as only an Irishman can. Their names were “Billy’ and ‘Charlie’. Billy was an old pet and would “Shake hands’ with you if asked. “Charlie’ on the other hand would rather take a piece out of anyone near him. I asked my father once why this was so. He lifted me up and with his other hand parted the hair on Charlie’s withers and ribs. There were whip scars there. He said”That’s why son”.

Going past the camp would take you into Bramley village. There was a Railway crossing – with gates- then the Railway Hotel on the right. The Station was on the left. Further on again on the left hand side was another fascinating place for a boy to pause - a genuine, working Blacksmith’s shop. There were still a good many horses to be shod in the area although the tractor was taking over rather rapidly. A little further on and there were two semi-detached houses, almost identical to ‘Wheeler’s Court’. Another Uncle & Aunt lived in one of them. They faced the road to Little London. I cycled to there twice to visit the local G.P . A delightful, old Irish Doctor named Daly. Dr Daly used to drive from village to village making house calls (how different now). I was in bed with a badly gashed knee and being tended by him, when workmen came to erect the electric power pole that was to carry power to our house and the Willows.

I can’t remember the year but it was about 1936/7”