

A Home Guard Scrapbook

Recently, papers belonging to Herman Lofthouse, who fought in France in the First World War and who was a sergeant in the Kildwick and Farnhill Home Guard in the Second, have been made available to the Local History Group by John, his grandson.

Rather than try to write a history, Herman's papers are presented here as a scrapbook – a not-quite-random collection of pictures with just a small amount of text by way of explanation. It is our hope that other people might like to help us expand this collection with pictures and information of their own. So if you have anything on the Kildwick and Farnhill Home Guard that you'd like to share with us, please email us at admin@farnhill.co.uk.

Ready for action



The current popular view of the Home Guard is, sadly, coloured by the TV programme "Dad's Army". But the photograph above shows a well-organised and well-equipped group of men.

Whether the "Machine Gun Section" represents the whole of the Farnhill and Kildwick Home Guard unit is not known, but the photograph shown below, a clipping from the Craven Herald of May 3rd 2012, shows a slightly different cast of characters.

THURSDAY, MAY 3, 2012

The History Pages



**Lindsey
looks
back
with Lindsey Moore**

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This week's nostalgia picture shows members of the Farnhill and Kildwick Home Guard.

It has been loaned by Margaret Barrett, of Silsden, whose father, Owen Alec Hartley, was one of the local defence volunteers.

He lived in Farnhill and had already served with the RAF and Fleet Air Arm.

In civvy street, he was a weaving overlooker at Bairstow's Mill, Sutton-in-Craven.

Mrs Barrett has few details of the Home Guard, but knows that three of the other volunteers were

Mr Slingsby, Mr Kitson and Mr Tidswell.

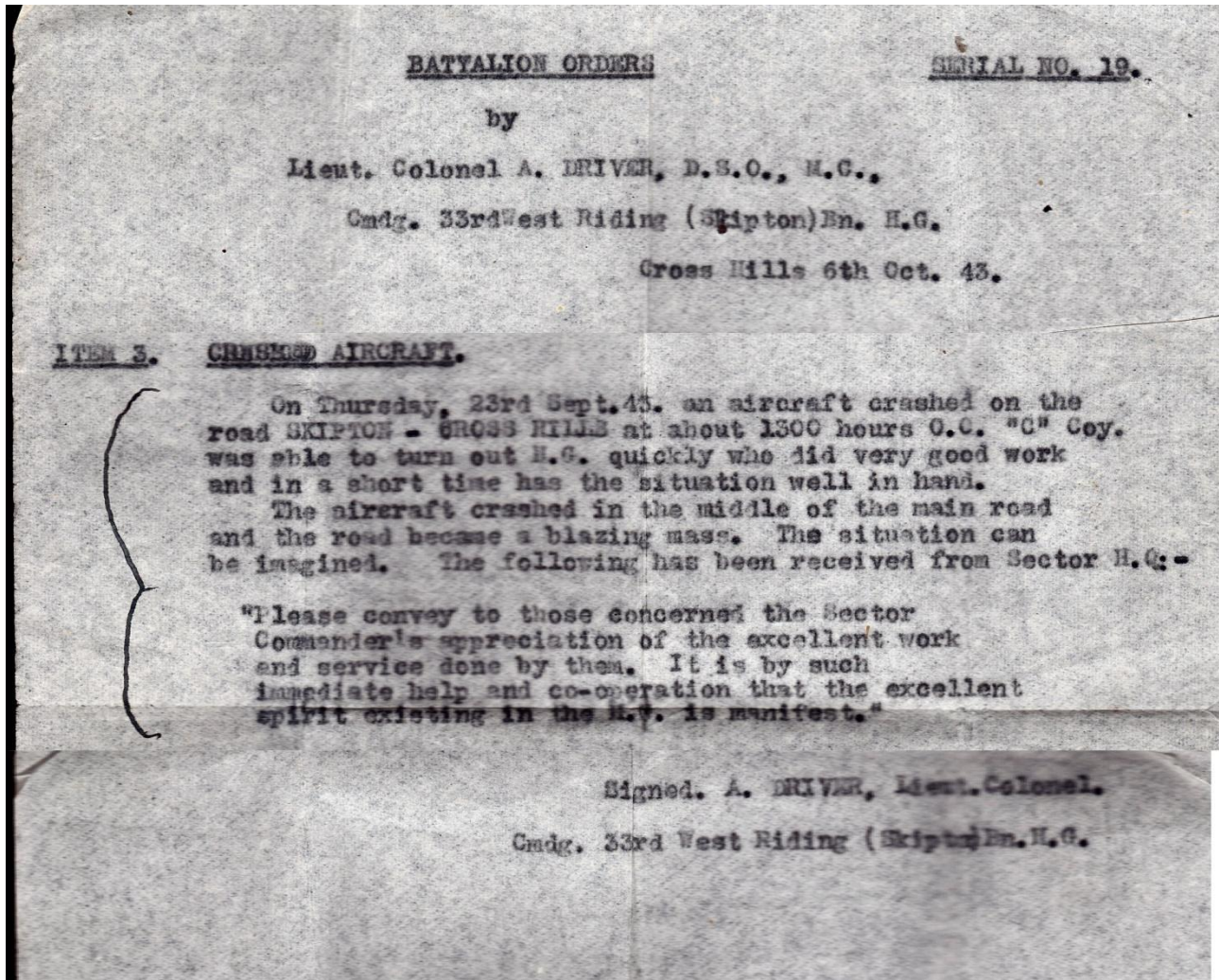
● Do you have any old pictures of Craven scenes or people?

We are always looking for photographs to include in our popular Nostalgia feature. Send them by email to lindsey.moore@cravenherald.co.uk or post them to Lindsey Moore at The Craven Herald, 38 High Street, Skipton BD23 1JU. Or you can call her on 01756 794117. You can be sure we will take good care of your photographs and will return them in good condition.

On duty - the Bradley air crash

On September 23rd 1943 a Wellington bomber on a training flight and crewed by members of the Polish Air Force crashed near the canal close to Farnhill Wood; all seven airmen on board were killed.

The local Home Guard were dispatched to the site, and were afterwards commended for their actions.

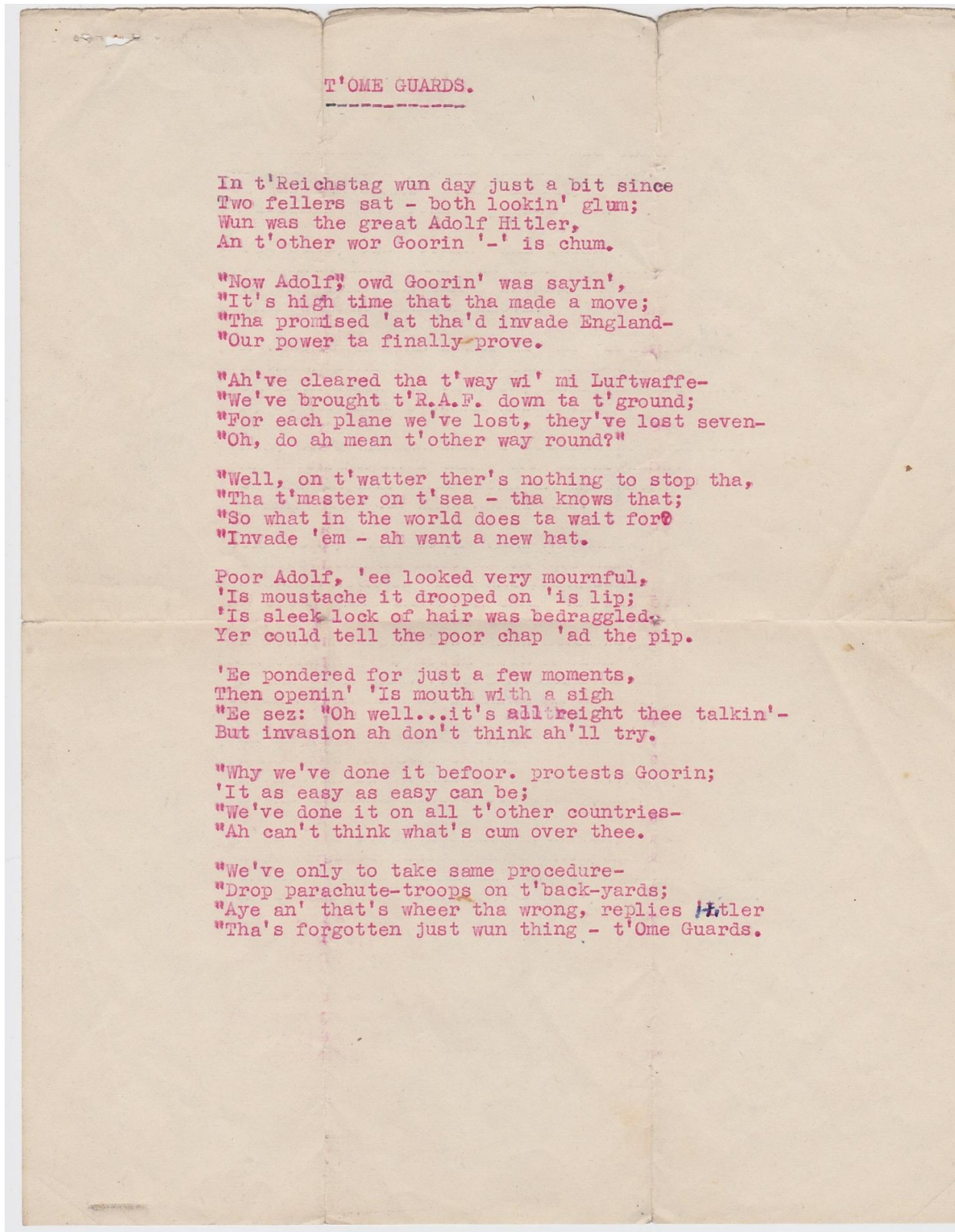


The above is just a part of the Battalion Orders for 6th October 1943. Printed on what feels like tissue-paper, the much-folded original is very fragile and the image above has been through some considerable software processing in order to make it at all readable.

For further information on the crash, see <http://www.yorkshire-aircraft.co.uk/aircraft/planes/dales/hz251.html>. The crash memorial, erected thanks to the efforts of Peter Whitaker and Jim Hartley, can be approached by walking along the canal towpath from Cononley Lane Ends towards Bradley; it is just beyond the northern edge of Farnhill Wood.

How the Home Guard saw themselves

The Home Guard, the butt of many jokes both during and after the war, had a slightly different view of themselves.



Well, owd Goorin at first 'ee lokked puzzled,
Then 'oldin' is coat by the hem;
An' burstin out laughin' right loudly,
Sez; "Tha don't mean tha frightened of them?"

"Why, ther only a Fred Karno army,
"they only join up if they please;
They're bow-legged an' knock-kneed. an' bandy.
"Wi whiskers reight dahn te ther knees.

"There's tall 'uns, an short 'uns, an' fat 'uns;
"An thin 'uns, an' chaps without hair;
"Some's got gout-that's beside floatin' kidneys.
"An ther's some 'ats got no breath ta spare:

"it's all reight thee laughin' Sez Adolf,
"But they've rifles - machine guns as well;
"An between me an' thee an' the lampost,
"They'd be glad ta blow us lot to well.

"Them owd 'uns can still use a rifle,
"An in past wars 'ave won many palms;
"Why the medals 'at some of 'ems wearing,
"Fill ther chests an ' go under ther arms.

"An ther's wun other thing to consid,
"An' it's reason for most of mi fears;
"Ther's nearly two million of 'em,
"An 'ivvry ruddy wun - Volunteers:

"An' if some of em are a bit wheezy,
"An if some em walk with a stick;
"The mooar John Bull appears crippled-
"The 'arder the fooil seems ta kick.

It would be nice to be able to say that this poem was written by a member of the local Home Guard, but in fact it is by C. Bramwell (see http://monologues.co.uk/Military/Hitlers_Downfall.htm). Nevertheless, the fact that someone bothered to type it out and that Herman kept it, strongly suggests that it must have struck a chord.

See [Appendix A](#) for another C. Bramwell WWII monologue.

THE GREAT UNPAID.

Members of the unpaid, unfed, unthanked, part-time, part worn, sockless, shirtless army known as the Home Guard are supposed in the first place to be crack shots with a rifle, bayonet fighters and expert throwers of hand grenades. They are supposed to know the weight and length of the rifle and all its parts. The weight, characteristic contents, parts and destructive power of several kinds of grenades and bombs. Many are supposed to be expert machine gunners and all are supposed to be tommy gunners. There are many other weapons they are supposed to use too, but as only 1,700,000 men know about them, they are too secret to be mentioned here.

Apart from this they are supposed to know the exact position of local post and telegraph offices, railway stations, police stations and petrol filling stations, the distances and routes to neighbouring villages and towns, the telephone systems and the positions of available instruments. They are supposed to know the names of their section, platoon and company commanders, to recognise by sight their colonel, they have probably never seen and know the name of their zone commander they have (often) never heard of. They are supposed to know the address, location and nearest route to platoon, company battalion and zone headquarters which are often changed overnight without their knowledge, and to be experts in field craft, street fighting, map reading and defence in depth.

They must know how to deal with paratroops, how to camouflage their position from air observation, how to use natural cover, how to move unseen and unheard, how to crawl on a middle aged tummy through under growth, and how to convert themselves from a clerk or a business man who wouldn't hurt a fly in the daytime into an assassin at night.

They are supposed to know how to destroy tanks and erect road blocks, how to deal with all known gases and how to provide themselves with an iron ration without points. Incidentally, they are supposed to earn their own living and mount a 12 hour guard at least once a week for which they are paid 18 whole pennies to spend on whatever luxuries they can find. And now all Home Guards must attend first aid lectures.

This means they should have a working knowledge of pressure points, bandaging, splinting, artificial respiration, and should be able to treat cases of poisoning, concussion, fainting, fits and shock. Not one of us will be surprised if we are expected to take a course of midwifery in our spare time to prepare us to give a hand in a grave emergency.

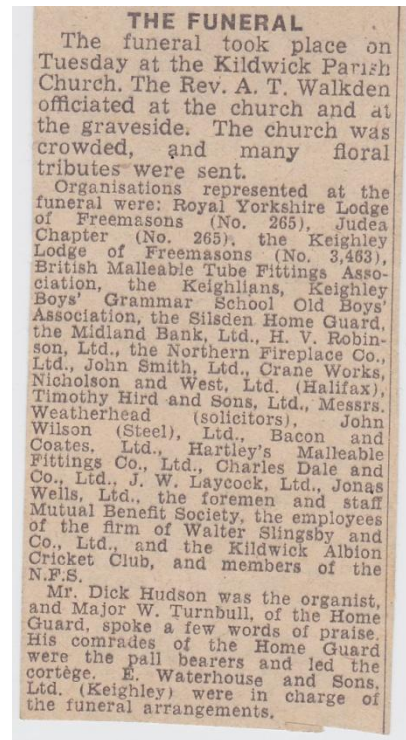
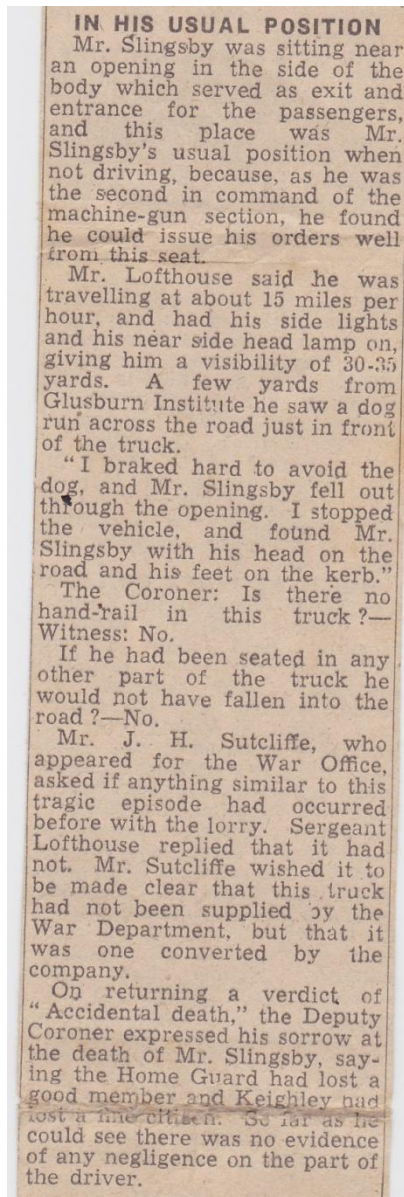
Another much-viewed scrap of paper. You can almost hear the chaps in uniform reading it and saying to themselves "How true, how true".

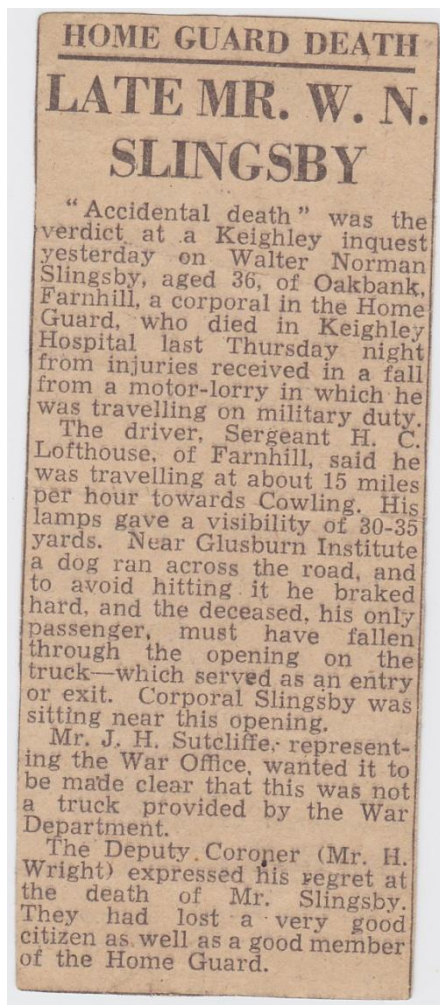
Note on pre-decimal coinage: 18 whole pennies = 7½ pence.

Tragic death of Norman Slingsby

Accidents happen in war time too.

Two newspaper reports.





Corporal Walter Norman Slingsby, 33rd West Riding (Skipton) Bn. Home Guard, died on 15th October 1942. His name can be seen on the Kildwick war memorial. A tragic death in the service of his country.

When it was all over



In the years when our Country
was in mortal danger

HERMAN CRAVEN LOFTHOUSE

who served 8 July 1940 - 31 December 1944

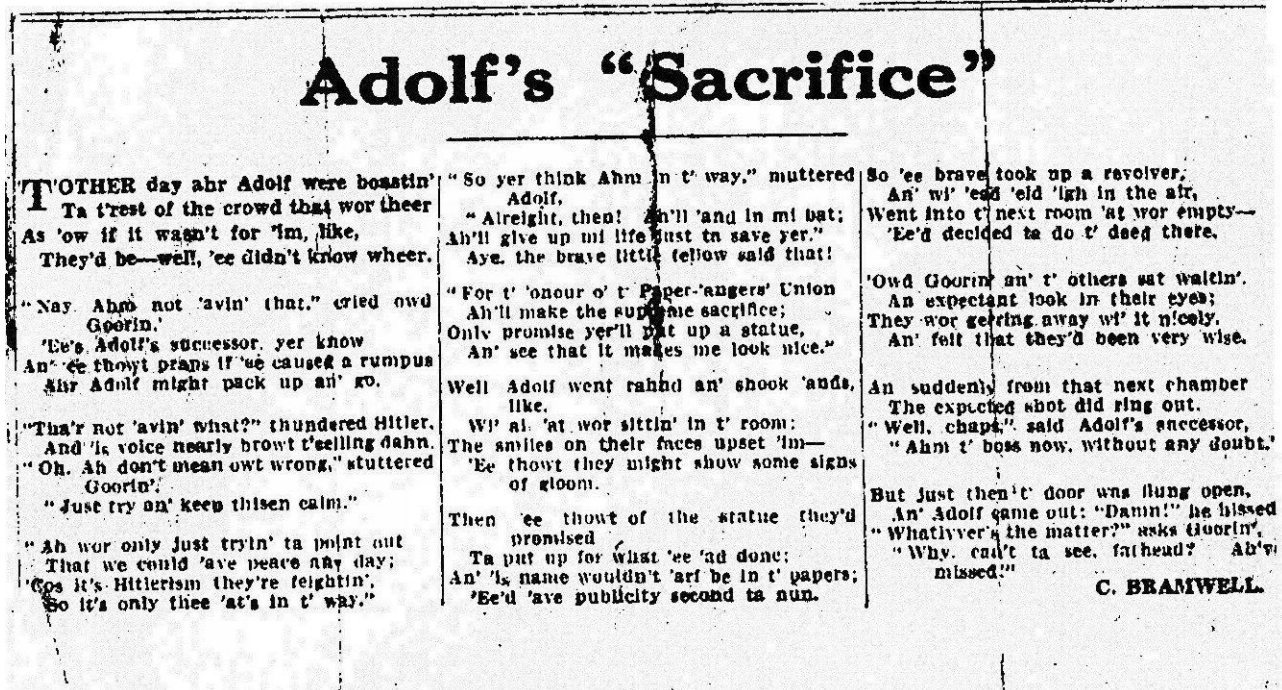
gave generously of his time and
powers to make himself ready
for her defence by force of arms
and with his life if need be.

George R.I.

THE HOME GUARD

Appendix A - Another C. Bramwell monologue

Liz Horsley, of South Yorkshire, has kindly contributed a newspaper cutting found amongst her late father's papers. It's another poem/monologue by C. Bramwell; this one probably dating from the end of the war in Europe.



What next ?

It's up to you really.

Do you have any material on the Farnhill and Kildiwck Home Guard that you'd like to contribute to this scrapbook ? If so, please contact us via email to admin@farnhill.co.uk.