

January 2004

### **MRS IRENE MARTIN AND MRS ETHEL MILES**

Mrs Irene Martin (nee Viney) of 33 Kings Close Rowlands Castle  
Born 1915 and lived at Clatford, near Andover. When she left school at 14 years of age, she worked for an Admiral Marks, who lived in an old farmhouse where the rats ran along the walls.

Commander Marks, son of the Admiral, married and moved to Rowlands Castle. He invited Mrs Martin to join his household. Having obtained permission from her mother, she did so and worked for Commander Marks from the ages of 16 -20. The Commander moved away but by then Miss Viney had met Bert Martin and married him.

Bert Martin was born in Rowlands castle;'over Durrants'. They lived at 20 Bowes Hill, which at that time was two cottages, now one. Bert was milkman for Bernard Brown, a tenant farmer on part the Idsworth Estate. At the start of the Second World War, Bert was in a reserved occupation, but he wished to join up. He applied to the Army but his feet failed the medical examination. Undaunted he applied to join the Marine police at the dockyard. He was accepted and undertook shift work, travelling by train to Portsmouth.

Mr Brown, the farmer, was not pleased at losing his milkman and threatened to turn the Martins out of the tied cottage in order to offer accommodation to a potential applicant. So Mrs Martin undertook the milk round instead of her husband in order to retain the house. She had a daughter Doreen, born 1938. A friend used to have the baby overnight and Doreen was collected by her father on return from nightshift.

Mrs Martin had a truck bicycle; on the front she carried two 2 gallon churns. The round started at 5.30 a.m. In the evening she bottled up the milk on the farm. Her round was Uplands Road, Finchdean Road, Woodbury lane and Castle Road.

She describes the customers as 'so kind'. Mrs Southam, the wife of the doctor ('lovely man') gave her a pair of ski boots that she wore the whole time and they did not wear out.

On completion of the milk round, Irene Martin had to pick Brussels sprouts (often frozen). These were delivered to the 'Coach and Horses' Restaurant, situated by the former Hilsea bus Garage.

She undertook the milk round for 6-7 years until the end of the war. Bert obtained a job in the building trade and they were granted a Council house, 14 Kings Close, next door to Mrs Miles

A son Stuart was born in 1946. Bert became an employee of Southern Electricity Board, until made redundant aged 64; He worked for a year as a Caretaker at Horndean School before officially retiring. Mr and Mrs Martin move into a flat at 33 Kings Close shortly before Bert died in 1991.

Mrs Miles and Mrs Martin lived next door to each other for about 48 years and remain close friends. They have had a good relationship with other people in Kings Close but have never been into their houses.