



# V2 Rocket Attack *Memorial*

Hextable Memorial and Gardens

Saturday 14th March 2020

75 years to the day

Main Road, Hextable



## V2 Rocket Attack *Memorial*

2020 marks an important anniversary for Hextable. Shortly before 23:30 on 14th March 1945, a V2 rocket landed on buildings in Hextable, killing 10 civilians.

The rocket landed on the site that is now occupied by the parade of shops in Main Road Hextable that were built in the 1950s.

On this anniversary day, Hextable Parish Council, in partnership with Hextable Heritage Society and St Peters Church, are proud to be unveiling our very first blue plaque in Hextable, at the site where the V2 landed, and dedicating a new area of open space opposite the village green as 'Hextable Memorial Garden' to remember those who lost their lives in the event.

# Remembering

**Marjorie Jean Carter, aged 17**

**David Charles Coomber, aged 12**

**Horace and Margaret Coomber**  
*David's parents*

**Brian Thomas Ludlow, aged 5**

**Peter John Ludlow, aged 1**

**Ellen Margaret Ludlow**  
*Brian and Peter's mother*

**Mary Ellen Mitchell**  
*Ellen's mother*

**John Albert and Violet Gladys Williams**

It was a devastating loss, but miraculously John and Violet's 3 year old son, Brian, survived after being thrown out of his house by the blast, landing in a nursery next door.



# the story

## BEHIND THE BLUE PLAQUE

When growing up in 1950s Hextable I would frequently ask my two older sisters, June and Iris, about the War. Various incidents and events were always recounted by both in great detail and included their evacuation to Devon, bombs falling in Hextable, a German plane coming down, anti aircraft fire, nights in the shelter and, of course, the V2 rocket landing in Main Road.

My eldest sister, June, was always ready to "live in the past" and would happily recount to me her memories of the rocket incident. On most occasions, even in later life, she would have a tear in her eye when talking about those who lost their lives. Both June and Iris knew the two boys from the village school who had perished. One of these, Brian Ludlow, had been an infant and the other, David Coomber, had been in the same class as June. June was twelve years of age and Iris ten at this time.

The emotions generated by my sisters' experiences of this tragedy have manifested in my own



Iris & June in 1944

psyche. As such, I never pass the 1950s parade of shops without giving a thought to what happened on that exact spot back in March 1945. As a result, and with encouragement from my own son (who is something of an aficionado regarding WW2), I raised the subject with fellow committee members of Hextable Heritage Society in order to procure a blue plaque to identify the site and to ensure that the memory is not lost.

Thanks must therefore go to Sharon & Graham Mitchell for their assistance in having the blue plaque cast.



Brian Ludlow, born 1939, a victim of the V2 rocket attack.



Mary Mitchell, mother of Ellen Ludlow, a victim of the V2 rocket attack.



Ellen, Peter & Brian Ludlow were victims of the V2 rocket attack.

## GATHERING AT *Main Road*

Welcome and introduction

Greetings from  
Darren Kitchener

Reflections from  
Mr John Meakins

Some of the history from  
Mrs Sharon Mitchell

Remembering and  
naming of the those killed  
Two minutes silence

Prayers

May God give peace  
**May God give us peace**

**GATHERING AT THE**  
*Memorial Garden*

Acknowledgement  
and unveiling

Reading from  
Matthew 5

Words from the public in  
memory & thankfulness

Reading & prayer

Act of commitment

Closing prayer  
of blessing

We are glad to be joined today by members from Kent  
County Council, Sevenoaks District Council, Swanley  
Town Council our own Hextable Parish Council.



**RECOLLECTIONS OF**  
*Stan Robinson,*  
**RESIDENT OF ROLLO ROAD.**

"By now at ages 7 to 9 we had become expert observers, so the introduction of the V2 rockets was very exciting to us. We used to sit on the top of our hill facing east from the Copse that's to the top right of the new recreation ground watching and counting the launch vapour trails from the French coast in fine weather then listening for the twin Boom when they started down over us (breaking the sound barrier although we didn't know this at the time). You could see the puffs but never spot a rocket until the final explosion. Even when one went boom boom then bang over us we were not frightened, just excited with the shower of red hot aluminium trophies that rained down all around us amazingly hitting no one!!

I don't ever recall any of us ever being frightened during the war apart from the very real fear of evacuation! One night I woke suddenly to find our two large front sash windows gone, the blinds and curtains standing straight out into a blinding white light, then the ceiling fell on me and I've been a bit deaf ever since.

A V2 had hit the butchers shop in main road destroying three or four houses plus the large detached house next door to the butchers', killing about 11 and injuring many more including one of our group. The large house was just a pile of rubble and the ARP found a baby still in its cot uninjured on top when they got there a few mins. later! That horrible smell was back and total silence when we went round a bit later, I don't recall any fire.

Somehow after that it all became serious and the fun went out of it."

# Thank you

Hextable Parish Council would like to thank Kent County Council for their generosity in providing this new open space for the village, as an area of ground that can be enjoyed by future generations.

The organisers would also like to say a very special thanks to John Meakins, who personally funded the blue plaque, and we are grateful to Sunil Chopra for giving permission to install it.

Today's event has only been made possible by people and organisations working together and shows what can collectively be achieved.

**Cllr Darren Kitchener,**  
Chairman Hextable Parish  
Council

**Mrs Sharon Mitchell,** Chair of  
Hextable Heritage Society

**Rev Johnny Douglas,** Vicar  
of St Peter's Hextable and St  
Paul's Swanley Village

