

# Swindon Advertiser

## *Evening Advertiser WWII Wartime Extracts*

Three brothers serving in the same regiment in India were the sons of Mr & Mrs J. Simpkins of 20 Ermin Street Villas, Blunsdon. Formerly employed in the Highworth mat factory, the brothers were stationed at the same fort in Madras. 'They write home twice a week,' reported the Advertiser, 'but Mrs Simpkins isn't able to reply so frequently as formerly as air mail to India costs 1s 3d for half an ounce.'

Boys at the Limes Home, Stratton St. Margaret were busy sewing and knitting for the troops. Under the supervision of the matron, Mrs Small, the boys had made bed socks and scarves for the troops at the front as well as hospital garments such as operation stockings, and it was reported 'they rarely drop a stitch!'

After a 5-2 thrashing by home team Stratton Villa, a team of soldiers were treated to an evening's entertainment at the White Hart Inn. The football match was described as 'interesting' during which the soldiers made a rousing start, scoring twice in the first 20 minutes. Villa players C. Woolford and D. Woolford delivered four of the goals while Martin scored with a header from a corner kick. Mrs Butler and her helpers provided a good spread and the game was followed by a darts match and a sing song.

Meanwhile two other youngsters made headline news when they appeared before Swindon Juvenile Courts this week in 1939. A Stratton father took centre stage when his twelve year old son was ordered to pay for the damage caused to a workman's shed. Charges were dropped against his younger accomplice with the older boy ordered to pay 5s damages and 4s costs. The father claimed that another boy had already vandalised the shed and objected having to foot the bill for all the damage. 'With present day education lads should know better than go about thinking they can treat other people's property with impunity,' said Mr F.A. Blake, Chairman, referring to reports of destructive acts by children in Stratton parish.

And a heated discussion at the Stratton Parish Council Meeting followed matters arising over ARP provision at Upper Stratton. A decision was passed to write to Swindon Corporation asking them to expedite the erection of an ARP post. Councillor W. Townsend then brought up the issue of the ARP post at Lower Stratton. "There are women stuck there doing their knitting, drawing £2 a week," he said. "It is an absolute disgrace. Someone has got to foot the bill. Their husbands are working in good jobs and drawing good pay. The whole scheme wants reorganising from top to bottom," the Advertiser reported. Councillor S.C. Casson joined in the debate, stating that if having a post at Upper Stratton meant increasing the costs of ARP provision and 'particularly paying women wardens £2 a week,' he would strongly oppose it.

"I've been rationed all my life," 78 year old Mrs Sarah Ann Hunt told an Advertiser reporter who interviewed an elderly Stratton St Margaret couple when they celebrated their Diamond Wedding anniversary this week in 1940. Married on November 20, 1880 the couple had raised their eight children in Hunter's Grove." I can't say we've had a particularly eventful life, but we've known happiness and that counts for a lot," said Henry Hunt who started work at the age of eight minding the cows on a Wootton Bassett farm for one shilling a week. Aged fourteen he took a job in Swindon as a horse driver before starting work on the railways on the construction of the Highworth branch line and after that on the Swindon to Marlborough line. He later moved 'inside' and spent 43 years in the GWR Works boiler shop. A keen gardener, Mr Hunt, 80, was described by his wife as never happier than when he's on that allotment.

"I should think something was wrong if I couldn't grow enough potatoes and green stuff to last us the year round," he declared. Mrs Hunt, 78, who was born in a thatched cottage at Stratton Green said she was unimpressed by the modern girl who smokes and 'makes up' and admitted she was a bit old fashioned. "Please don't say I'm running them down," she told the Advertiser. "That would never do."