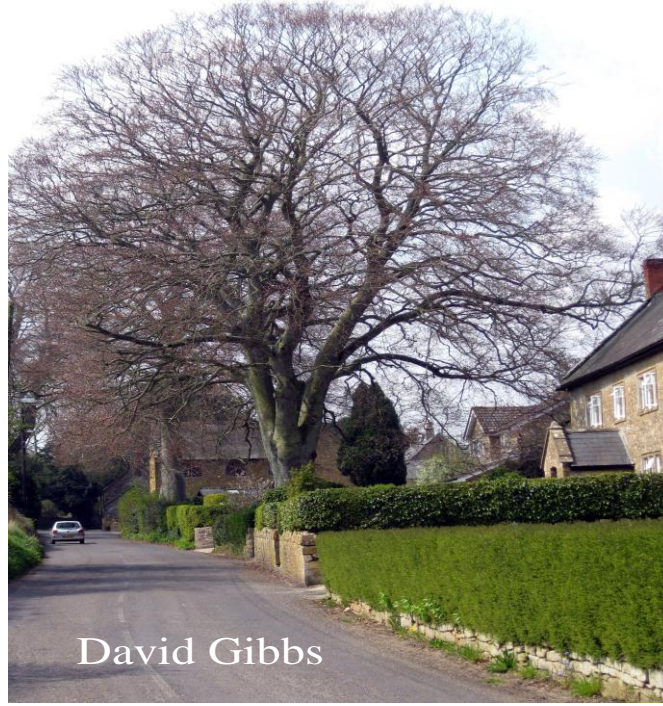


A Miscellany of
**MERRIOTT
MEMORIES**



Introduction

In the late 1980s, I wrote a series of articles about my childhood experiences growing up in Merriott in the 1940s and 50s. One was published in a national magazine, *Home and Country*, the then official organ of the Women's Institute. The others were published in *The Visitor*. Two have found a permanent home on the BBC *Peoples War* archive www.bbc.co.uk/ww2peopleswar. Some articles were also published on this website and in March 2017 others were added.

The articles were deliberately nostalgic, the primary intention being to remind people who had the same or similar experiences to my own of our younger years. At the same time it enabled me to record, in what I hoped would be an entertaining way, aspects of a way of life that in most cases were already a distant memory.

Twenty years further on I decided to gather the published articles together, add others that have not been published, and record them in a readily accessible form that hopefully will pass down the years. *A Miscellany of Merriott Memories* was the result. Unfortunately, the cost of printing meant publishing in printed form, apart from family copies, was not a viable option, hence my resorting to including some of the articles in this digital archive.

A number of the articles in the book are principally of family interest. They have not been included here.



'My particular memory of the refugees is as a very small pre-school boy sitting on our cottage steps in Broadway when suddenly around the corner from Moorlands would come this group of young Spanish women and girls. With shrieks of exuberance, they used to head for me and would sit beside me for a while, cuddle me and otherwise make a fuss of me in typical Spanish fashion before making their way up the hill to the chapel. I imagine I would have quite enjoyed the attention.'



One of my very earliest shopping memories is of getting my hair cut in George Sprake's barbershop down at Knapp. I remember having to sit quiet as a mouse, waiting my turn in the chair. I have a feeling that small boys needing haircuts were automatically relegated to the back of the queue because sometimes it was a very long wait whilst George dealt with a seemingly never-ending procession of men waiting to be shaved. When that was the case, all you could do was amuse yourself by watching the reflections of lather-covered faces in the big mirror.'



'My mother usually wanted to know my intended whereabouts. 'Where you off to, then?' she would ask, and for that question there was a number of stock answers like 'down over mill' or 'up across Hitchen'. The answers didn't tell her a lot but they were usually sufficient to keep her parental mind at rest. Whether, with my friends, I actually went down over mill or up across Hitchen was another matter. With so much freedom we might end up somewhere totally different, and we usually did.'