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# A history of Old Alresford

Written by Bernard Tucker

Old Alresford has an interesting history. This is somewhat surprising to those who pass through it today since it seems at first glance to be little more than a suburb of New Alresford. However, Old Alresford (as its name suggests) actually predates New Alresford – even though its population is only a tenth of its neighbour's.

As with so much of England, Old Alresford has changed over the centuries. Thatched cottages have been adapted or demolished; most of the thatched roofs have gone. Several new groups of houses have been built, the village green tidied up and made smart. It's only when one talks to those who grew up in the village that one realises, for example, how comparatively recently the main road through the village was tarmacked and the stream which ran along the east side of Basingstoke Road culverted to enable a pavement. The village school has been gone since 1986, the village shop has disappeared, the children's home at Southdowns has become a group of some fourteen houses. At Manor Farm a courtyard of barns has become seven smart houses.

Around the Parish various Bronze Age artefacts have been found: a round barrow near Upper Lanham; two bowl barrows near Colden Lane; the site of a barrow east of Old Alresford Pond; five bowl barrows near Manor Farm. Iron Age sites of settlements have been identified near Pinglestone Farm and Upper Lanham with Celtic fields near Godsfield. In 1844 a Roman villa was discovered north of Old Alresford; in recent years Roman coins and artefacts have been found in the village and there is the suggestion of a building north of Pinglestone. A Roman road seems to have existed south of Upper Lanham Farm.

The village was probably in existence as a hamlet about AD 650. In the Domesday Book of 1086, Old Alresford appears as part of the Liberty of Alresford, owned by the Bishop of Winchester and comprising the modern parishes of Old Alresford, New Alresford and Medstead, each with its church. From the Domesday Book it seems that between 500 and 600 people lived in the Liberty. It is therefore impossible to compute how many lived in Old Alresford itself. However, Raymond Elliott in *Alresford Displayed*, (11: 'Alresford at Domesday'), suggests, in a sketch map of Alresford in 1086 that there were a number of dwellings in the field opposite the church as well as a number around the Green.

The Chapel at Godsfield was founded by Henry de Blois and given to the Knights of St John of Jerusalem about 1170. The existing chapel dates from 1350-65 with fourteenth century additions. In 1365 the Knights moved to (North) Baddesley and in 1540 the Order was suppressed and eventually became St John's Ambulance. Before the last war it was a youth hostel. Some suggest a lost village might have been there.

Old Alresford appears to have been a thriving community with rich farming lands, the produce of several mills and good farms. The Bishop then improved his property by forming the causeway (The Great Weir, today's B3046) and creating Old Alresford Pond in 1189, which brought income from the reeds and flags to be farmed out as well as producing plentiful fish. At the same time the marketplace of New Alresford was created.

On three occasions Queen Elizabeth made a royal progress through Hampshire and Surrey. Generally, she followed what was one of the two main routes from Winchester which passed through Abbotstone, where she was entertained by the first Duke of Bolton at his house.

In the Civil War the Battle of Cheriton was fought in 1644. New Alresford was set on fire by the retreating Royalists and Parliamentary troops are reported to have extinguished the fires. Colonel Richard Norton ('Idle Dick') of the Manor House in Old Alresford was a friend of Cromwell and commanded a cavalry regiment in the battle. Peter Heylyn, the distinguished theologian and Rector of Old Alresford, a Royalist, was removed during the Commonwealth and restored in 1662.

Since the population of the parish was about the same in 1845 as it is now and clearly had fewer houses it is obvious that the families in the village were far larger than today. Seven children in a family was not unusual. In the Rev Cardew's census of 1845 we read that no less than eight labourers who worked for Robert Saunders slept in a barn at Langham (Lanham) farm. We have a list of 'persons belonging to Old Alresford' in November 1792 which indicates eight instances of families of seven, one of eight and one of nine.

As well as the main part of the village there were, as now, small settlements at Armsworth, Nettlebeds, Fobdown, Lanham and Pinglestone. The farms round the village were at Upton, Coombe, Upper and Lower Lanham, Nettlebeds, Pinglestone, Fobdown and Manor Farm. Large houses also came into existence: Old Alresford Place and the Manor House (which was replaced by Old Alresford House) in Colden Lane; in the eighteenth-century Old Alresford House, Upton House, Hill House, Old Alresford Cottage (the present care home at the top of what was called Bulpett's Hill) and Armsworth House

What do we know about the people who lived in the village in 1845 when the curate, Rev George Cardew compiled his census? There were 578 persons, 59 over 60 years old and 262 children. They lived in 107 tenements. 152 of them were (church) communicants. About a quarter of the women could read as could a third of the men. About half could also write. (Universal schooling did not become compulsory until 1870.) In addition to their housework, most women did stone picking, turnip cutting, weeding and similar jobs. Family food was mostly bread and potatoes with perhaps some bacon at the weekend and very thin tea. The whole family often went to bed in winter at six o'clock to save fuel and candles. The Earl of Guildford in Old Alresford Place with his four children had seventeen servants; at Upton the Earl of Onslow with a family of five had fifteen servants, while the Rodneys at Old Alresford House had eleven servants.

Through the national censuses following the first in 1841 and other lists we can see some of the jobs which inhabitants of the Parish carried out: wheelright, corn miller, maltster, blacksmith, iron founder, wood dealer, farmer and, of course, agricultural worker. In the census of 1881 there were listed over 70 men involved in agriculture, mostly as labourers. Upton and Pinglestone farms employed some 30-40 workers.

What sort of village did the Rev Cardew see from his house (the present Brook Lodge)? The Green was then a swampy area with wild orchids, celandines, cowslips and other wildflowers. It had a dipping well near the slip road at the north end which supplied water for the village until the twentieth century. Thatched cottages flanked the western side extending from the present Christy Hall down to Abbotstone Cottage (the blacksmith's). Past the Rev Cardew's house there were several cottages as far as Kiln Lane, with cottages at its lower end including a smithy. The smith lived in Prospect House with the forge at the side of the road; his two assistants lived in two cottages. There was an iron foundry (hence Kiln Lane) and a malt house processing hops grown further up the road.

The Old Alresford Parish Council was set up following the Local Government Act of 1894. At the same time, the Rural District Council came into being as an intermediate responsible body between parish councils and county councils (which were introduced in 1888). Until 1930 the RDCs were also Poor Law Guardians, responsible for their local union workhouse (locally at the junction of Sun Lane and Tichborne Down in New Alresford, later a hospital, now a private house). As recently as 1926 the Workhouse accommodated 47 inhabitants and in the same year 160 'casuals' had been admitted. The Parish Council records give an interesting insight into events in the village in the Twentieth Century. Its first annual meeting was in 1895. The Parish Council declined the provision of mains water in 1913, arguing that there was no demand since wells could be sunk easily and local springs never failed. In 1912 a phone was installed in the post office, which was then at 'Green End' (now April Cottage)

Since 1845 there have been additions and conversions to the houses in Old Alresford. Most of the thatched cottages were either demolished or converted to modern homes. In what was recently

renamed Inhams Row there was a row of cottages, the right-hand end one of these was at one time the post office. The four next to the post office were mostly destroyed in a fire of 1910; 30 people lived in the four cottages.

The forge next to Prospect House is now Forge Cottage; the two cottages where the smith's assistants lived is now Prospect Cottage. The Malt House in Kiln Lane became in 1908 the post office, and then a shop. It is now a private house.

The nine houses currently in Green Close replaced a number of allotments in the 1960s. The courtyard barns at Manor Farm are now seven smart residences.

### **The Onslow Family**

The philanthropic donations of the Onslow family have all been changed. Southdowns, built in 1866-69, originally for the training of domestic servants, in 1889 became an orphanage (sending its children to the village school); from the end of the last century, a group of some fourteen private houses have been developed there. The family had the school built in 1846. (It closed in 1986 to become a private house). In 1852 the Onslow sisters built the Almshouses in memory of their mother. Originally three houses they are now two. Over the porch a stone carving reads: 'She stretched out her hand to the poor. She reached out her hand to the needy'. The almshouses were modernised in 1973 and are now under the trusteeship of the Parish Council. The Onslow family also built the four Well Cottages just south of the school.

*The Green* had become a depository for rubbish and refuse until it was leased by the Parish Council about 1904 from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners as lords of the manor. The Green was finally purchased personally by Parish Clerk Stanley Beyer from the Church Commissioners for £25 in 1967. The Minutes of the Parish Council describe the unanimous vote of thanks from the Council for this kind gesture. It was drained by a group of volunteers who completed the reclamation by 1969 using spoil from the Wessex Hotel in Winchester to raise the level of the ground. Posts and chains were installed in August 1969. The sale was undisputed and helped by the 1970 Commons Registration Act. In 1972 the Green was registered.

The *Fulling Mill* stands on the parish boundary with the River Arle flowing under it. It dates from the 16/17th centuries. The process of fulling involved eliminating impurities from the wool (sometimes using urine). A supply of running water was necessary. The workers were 'fullers' or 'tuckers'. The cloth was stretched on large frames or 'tenters', held in place by 'tenterhooks' (hence 'held in suspension'). The cottage was restored in 1948.

Built in 1583, *Weir House* became the home of the Perin family. Henry Perin, who died in 1697, left money for a school for 19 poor boys: six from New Alresford, five from Old Alresford and four each from Bishops Sutton and Cheriton.

*Victoria Cottage* on Basingstoke Road with a thatched roof dates from about 1650 with additions in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

In the mid seventeenth century *Drovers Return* (opposite the phone box on the Green) was built as three cottages. Drovers brought cattle on the hoof (often from Wales) to the cattle market in New Alresford. The owner and his wife lived in an end cottage; the middle one was a beer house and the third cottage was lodgings for the drovers. After being derelict for a few years the cottage was remodelled to its present condition in 1968. The thatched seventeenth-century *Northleigh Cottage* in Kiln Lane was originally two cottages.

### **ST MARY THE VIRGIN CHURCH**

The church of St Mary the Virgin that we see today dates from 1753. It stands on a knoll to the east of the main road. Its location is that of two earlier places of worship: a seventh century Saxon church briefly mentioned in the Domesday Book and, after a fire, that church reconstructed about

1400.

An experienced dowser, Peter Ewence of Bishops Waltham, several years ago showed the outline of the Saxon church. A path led from the church to a lychgate to the south of the church. He also found the position of the font and the existence of a building (a 'cottage') to the south of the churchyard which was of the same area as the churchyard today.. The graves of many parishioners from before the Domesday Book are presumably buried there.

The list of Rectors of Old Alresford in the church begins in 1225 with Godfrey de Tostes.

The earliest register of marriages dates from 1539 and with others is kept at the Hampshire Record Office in Winchester.

The stained-glass window commemorates George Withers, a prolific and important satirical poet (born in 588 at Bentworth near Wield). During the Civil War he became a supporter of Parliament and was a prisoner in Oxford Gaol He died in 1667. The other window commemorates Henry Perin.

There is also a memorial to Lord Rodney's wife Jane, who died in childbirth in 1757. He is buried in St Paul's Cathedral.

In 1752, during the rectorship of Dr John Hoadley, the church was described as 'out of repair to be mended soon' and it was decided to rebuild it, including its roughcast tower which was itself rebuilt in 1769 using bricks brought from the demolished hunting lodge of the Duke of Bolton at Abbotstone. The church, with its six bells, was reopened in 1771 by Bishop Wilberforce; reports described the loud snoring of the owls in the tower disturbing the address. The owls were removed.

In 1850 the churches at New Alresford and Medstead, having originally been part of the Old Alresford benefice, became separate parishes.

During the nineteenth century the south chapel was added in 1859 and in 1871 the box pews were removed. A lychgate at the entrance to the churchyard was presented by Joseph Fell Christy in 1893. The church was much changed in the late 19th century and the eighteenth century work was Gothicised ( to make St Mary's very much like other churches in the Candover Valley often built by members of the Baring family). The Preachers Book of Old Alresford (in the County Record Office) lists church attendance: for example Easter Day 1895: 75 people.

The memorial to those who died in the first world war is on the north wall: Tom Bulpitt, Patrick Chichester and Hugh Morgan.

### **OLD ALRESFORD PLACE**

The house dates from the early 1600s when it was the rectory of St Mary's Church. In recent years it housed the offices of the Diocese of Winchester and a conference centre. Percy Laming, a London stockbroker, bought Old Alresford Place in 1908 and lived there until the mid 1930s. (In 1905 Hill House in Colden Lane became the rectory, which was later established at Top House at the top of Kiln Lane, now a private house.)

During the First World War the House became a convalescent home for wounded soldiers. In the last War the Provident Mutual Assurance Company bought the property as a wartime headquarters.

In 1945 the house was sold to the Children's Social Adjustment Ltd, who ran it as a centre for maladjusted children. They left in 1961 with the house in a poor state. The Rector, Canon Julian Rudd, was told in 1960 by the local policeman that the house was up for sale and the Diocese bought it for £21,300. Because of the state of the building renovations the eventual cost rose to £57,000 after renovations. Considerable additions and conversions were made.

Initially the House was staffed by Anglican nuns from the House of Bethany in Bournemouth, who left in 1981.

The house is mainly interesting on account of its rectors.

Dr John Hoadley became Rector in 1736 and ten years later he invited two friends to stay with him. They were London's most famous actor David Garrick and the famous artist William Hogarth.

In 1633 the current Rector, Dr Marshall, exchanged livings with Dr Peter Heylyn, Chaplain to Charles I. The King required the presence of his Chaplain when the court came to Winchester. Heylyn, who died in 1662, carried out a programme of rebuilding the house and planning gardens and pleasant walks with a bridge across Colden Lane to the church.

In 1795 the Rev Francis North (later Earl of Guildford), lived at Old Alresford Place. He held the living until 1851. He later became the Warden of the Hospital of St Cross in Winchester. In 1849, enquiries into the finances of the Charity and particularly into North's income, led to Anthony Trollope's *The Warden*.

George Henry Sumner became Rector in 1851. He was a Canon of the Cathedral and eventually became Suffragan Bishop of Guildford (then under the Diocese of Winchester). His wife Mary founded the worldwide Mothers Union in 1876; she is the subject of a monument in the south chapel. They left in 1883. The last Rector to live in the House was Rev George Pardoe from 1904.

## **OLD ALRESFORD HOUSE**

Old Alresford House was built on the site of the old Manor House, which probably dates it from the time of Henry VIII or earlier. The Norton family lived there. Colonel Richard Norton ('Idle Dick' 1615-91) was a staunch Parliamentarian and supporter of his friend Oliver Cromwell (who probably visited him there). Norton had a high profile in the Civil War and was prominent at the Battle of Cheriton (29 March 1644)

Today's House was begun in 1749 under the architect William Jones and completed by 1752 for George Brydges Rodney; costs were met from the prize money obtained by him during the wars of the Austrian Succession.

The landscaping of the estate was carried out in the 1760s by Richard Woods, a skilled contemporary of Capability Brown. Mike Hall, a recent owner of the House, spent a great amount of money on bushes and trees to restore the park to Wood's original plan (which still exists).

What is now Swan Cottage, on the south side of the Bighton Road, was originally inhabited by the keeper of Old Alresford Pond.

George Brydges Rodney, born in 1718, grew up in Avington, the home of his godfather and guardian George Brydges. He joined the Royal Navy at 13 and had a distinguished career until his retirement in 1782 and death in 1792. During his naval career he fought in the Seven Years War (1756-63) and had great victories in the Caribbean, defeating the French and Spanish (notably at the 1782 Battle of the Saintes off Dominica). He was continually rewarded with promotion, ending as an admiral with a barony and a pension of £2000. His first wife, Jane Compton, is commemorated by a marble monument in St Mary's. The vault in which Rodney is buried lies outside the church on the south side near the transept devoted to Mary Sumner. It is marked in front by a small marker stone, which contains, slightly below ground level, the inscription '(T) he way into the vault'. There is a monument to him in St Paul's. As well as his naval career he was an MP for four different constituencies, Governor of Newfoundland and of Greenwich Hospital at different times.

In 1782 he had bought farms at Pinglestone and Lanham as well as Old Alresford Pond in 1756.

Rodney was considered by contemporaries as 'vain, unpleasant and unscrupulous'. Edmund Burke denounced him as 'guilt in stars and ribbons. Guilt rewarded and countenanced by the Official and the Opulent'

The Rodney family continued to live in the house until 1870 when it was bought by William Whitear Bulpitt, a wealthy banker, whose family remained there until 1905 when the property was leased by GFGR Schwerdt, a German industrialist and a catholic, who carried out a number of internal alterations. He bought the House in 1926 and died in 1939, being buried in his mausoleum

in the churchyard which was consecrated in 1932

The next owner was Wing Commander Constable-Maxwell, First War fighter 'ace' and his wife. They turned one wing into a catholic chapel.

Along Colden Lane, just a few yards from the road and the wall of Upton House estate is an ice house (currently boarded up). There are many of these around the country, dating back several centuries. This one was built for Old Alresford House.

### **Buildings from the eighteenth century**

Manor Farmhouse dates from the Georgian period. Once the property of the Bulpitt family, in 1832 the owner was shot and killed by his insane son.

*Lower Lanham Farm* is from the eighteenth century.

**Upton House** in Colden Lane was built by Admiral Rodney's brother James in 1768. The two brothers were at odds since George Rodney claimed that all the land was his. He planted an avenue of beech trees between the two houses as a screen. Upton Farm was built about 1770 opposite Upton House.

Later owners were the Onslow family, including the 4th Earl of Onslow who was born at Upton in 1853. Arabelle and Matilda Onslow lived there; their philanthropy in the village is described elsewhere. Onslows were still living at Upton in 1859.

Joseph Fell Christy, a retired hat manufacturer, lived at Upton until his death in 1911. The 1891 census shows his household (his wife and two daughters) consisting of a butler, two footmen, a cook/housekeeper, three housemaids, two kitchen maids and three ladies maids. He was for many years on the Parish Council.

Lord Templemore lived at Upton from 1926 until 1950. His two sons Dermot and Patrick grew up there between the wars. Major Patrick Chichester, Grenadier Guards, was killed in action in Tunisia in 1942 and is one of the three Old Alresford names commemorated in the church. His brother, Dermot, later succeeded as the seventh Marquess of Donegal and lived in County Wexford until his death in 2007. He had been a prisoner of war in Italy but escaped. He wrote of his happy memories growing up in Old Alresford. From 1962 until his death in 2013 the owner was Rear Admiral Morgan Giles MP for Winchester.

*Hill House* in Colden Lane was formerly called Upton Cottage. Rebuilt around 1752 on the site of a much older property it was reputedly a lodging house on the old road from Winchester to London. It was the Rectory from 1905 until 1938.

*Armsworth House*. Alderman Thomas Houghton JP lived there for some years. An upper room was for some seventy years a chapel containing an altar table of 1620 from Old Alresford Church and services were held every Sunday evening. A fourteenth century pyx was found on the estate and a set of silver coins from the Stuart period.

*Armsworth Park Farm* was here in the eighteenth century. J T ('Squire') Villebois. Master of the Hampshire Hunt, established his kennels there after moving from Preston Candover.

*Pinglestone Farmhouse* has a barn which has been recently dated as a fifteenth century tithe barn.

*Old Alresford Cottage* was built about 1752 and later enlarged. It is now Old Alresford Cottage Care Home. *Arle Mill* was once a corn mill; by the end of the nineteenth century it had closed down. It then became a laundry and in 1973 was converted to a private house. *Green End* (now April) Cottage was once the village post office

A number of buildings in the Parish date from the nineteenth century and later.

Around 1870 *Fobdown Farm* was rebuilt on the site of an older building. Church records of the seventeenth century record it as Fobden.

There are barns at Armsworth House, Upton Park Farm and Manor Farm.

*Alma Cottages* (Basingstoke Road) were built in 1898 for Mr. Eddols, the New Alresford baker.

*Kiln Lane* was extended at right angles with the building of the so-called 'Swedish houses' in 1947 and the extension of eight further houses completed in 1998.

*The Christy Hall* has several times been extended and refurbished (notably 1966-69). A cottage next to it was demolished by 1968 to provide the present car park. The Hall was opened in 1912 built largely by private donations and named after a major donor Joseph Fell Christy. It has had two extensions added over the last century. The smaller room is the Bernard Clarke Rom, named for the long serving Chair of Old Alresford Parish Council

The *Old Alresford Working Men's Reading Room* became the present Rose Cottage. It was built for George Sumner, the Rector, in 1879, comprising a games room, a library and a kitchen. The account of the opening (with speeches) and the rules still exist. It was the work of local builder Henry Broad.

Marjorie Clarke and her mother May Fletcher both told me that a public house, The Fox, was once situated on the corner of the Green by Wearne House (hence Fox's Corner).

Censuses, terriers, maps and other lists tell us there were a number of cottages in the village. Unfortunately, although there is ample evidence about the inhabitants of the cottages, the actual buildings (all leased) are described in different ways. It is impossible to be precise about which cottages are being described in various records. In 1933 seven cottages were condemned and replaced by six new cottages built in 1935 by the Rural District Council (now Winchester City Council). In 1939 there were old cottages still not condemned which had been built from the rates around 1754. In 1963 six 'Barton' cottages were described as 'unfit for human habitation'. Many cottages were rented from the Parish Council (rents collected by the Parish Clerk). Electricity came to the Parish cottages in the 1950s.

### **Watercress**

Watercress has always figured strongly in the history of Old Alresford. John Dorey was a member of an old local family; the last member of which, Alec Dorey, lived in Chelsea Cottage, Basingstoke Road, until his death in 2002. Alec was for many years behind the counter in Stiles (now D & G Hardware) in Broad Street. John Dorey was growing watercress in the 1860s. In 1880 John Mills arrived and dug out the Nythe. In 1896 'Baron' Hunt began growing watercress at Fobdown and the Dorey family expanded the beds at Pinglestone. Now watercress is grown in four or five places in the Parish.

### **Roads**

The old road from Winchester to Alton and on to London passed through Abbotstone. It then passed Fobdown and went through Manor Farm, crossing the marsh and river at 'the ford of the alder trees' (hence 'Alresford') by the village Green before passing on to Bighton and Medstead. The road would have probably been the one used by drovers bringing sheep on the hoof to be sold in New Alresford.

Kiln Lane is an oxdrove way and has the characteristic wayside embankments of a much used route.

In 1903 the Parish Council had requested a 10mph speed through the B3046. In 1924 the road was tarmacked to alleviate dust nuisance. The 'Church path' from Brook Cottage to Colden Lane was created in 1966 from land belonging to HCC.

The path opposite the church was created by Hampshire County Council in order to enable a means for villagers walking into New Alresford. Until then the hedge (now next to the path) ran alongside the road. There were a number of road accidents. In 1912 the Baring family's groom cycled into pedestrians on Bulpitts Hill (the B3046). In 1913 a little girl was knocked down by a chauffeur and recovered. In 1928 a child from the Children's Home was knocked down by a cyclist.

## Sport

Sport has not much featured in Old Alresford's history apart from cricket. In 1886 a group of parishioners met to set up the Old Alresford Cricket Club. In 1890 Joseph Fell Christy of Upton House donated his meadow to the Club as the Rector's meadow was no longer available. A boys' cricket club was apparently formed in 1913. Until 2017 the ground, in Colden Lane, remained the home of OACC. Reports suggest Alresford in the eighteenth century was one of the strongest sides in England. However, at the time there were teams both in New and Old Alresford which sometimes combined. Sadly, during 2017, OACC was dissolved due to the difficulty of raising teams; only one player lived in Old Alresford and the rest came from New Alresford.

An indoor sports club has been functioning in the Christy Hall for some years and badminton was also recently played there. Between 1981 and 1983 a junior mixed club flourished with 39 paid up members. Through the Nineteenth Century there are reported of entertainments being laid on either by the schoolchildren or by groups in the Village.

## TOADS

The Old Alresford Dramatic society (TOADS) was formed in 1986 by parents of children at the School when it closed (after a campaign to save it). TOADS have performed a spring show and a pantomime each year since then. Throughout the Twentieth Century there are references to entertainments being put on in the Village - either by schoolchildren or groups of villagers.

### Old Alresford in two wars.

At the start of World War 1 26 parishioners joined up (including six members of the same Bulpitt family); fifteen were already serving. St Mary's contains the names of the twelve who died. Argyll and Sutherland troops were briefly billeted in the Hall, followed by the Cameronians. The Parish Council made a claim for damages caused to the building.

In 1914, Lady Rodney (who had bought Upton House) made it available for French and Belgian refugees.

Three parishioners who died in World War Two are on a plaque in St Mary's: Tom Bulpitt, Hugh Morgan and Patrick Chichester.

In World War 2 The Grange at Northington was the headquarters of the US 9th Division. In January 1944 General Montgomery drove through Old Alresford en route to The Grange and in March Churchill and Eisenhower also travelled through, probably to plan Operation Overlord ('D Day'). In June 1944 troops travelled through Old Alresford to the Coast for D-Day.

The late Alec Dorey remembered a JU88 dropping leaflets over the village; these were printed to boast the disastrous Dieppe Raid by mostly Canadian troops in August 1942. Local people were ordered to give up the leaflet, but Alec showed me two he had kept. He also remembered taking cover as an ME110 was chased by a Spitfire low over the village firing at the enemy plane.

There is the well known incident of a Flying Fortress with a full bomb load being steered away from New Alresford by its pilot (who survived) and crashing to the East of Old Alresford Pond.

Air Commodore Christopher Paul, who lived in Wearne House until his death in 2003, recalled returning from a Mosquito raid in France and seeing below him the armada of D-Day en route for the French beaches.

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