

The Fen Lane Gang

When the war was at its stage of getting ready for the Invasion, The Fen Lane Gang which consisted of Fred Allen {leader}, Pete Mason, Gordon Townsend, Roy Boyce and anybody from the Village who cared to belong , made a Hobby of recording all Army vehicles that past the Royal Oak on the old Great North Road. The convoys would stop near Black Horse Farm as the Army had set up field kitchens in the farmyard to feed the troops.

Members of our Gang would hang around and the soldiers would give us Berets, badges, tunics etc. and we made ourselves into make believe soldiers. Fred Allen used to wear a black beret with two badges as our leader; he took inspiration from General Montgomery. To explain the recording in more detail, we built a hut in the tree at the side of where the new dual carriageway was going to be laid for the A 1. From there we had a panoramic view. We used to fry Moorhens eggs and Mushrooms {in season} in the hut. We found a pair on binoculars on the Village tip up Gidding Road. One day we were in the hut watching the Army convoy through the binoculars and recording which lorries were Bedford's or any other sort, when all of a sudden a jeep full of M.P'.s arrived and wanted to arrest us as German spies. We had quite a job convincing them that we were only playing at being Soldiers. What else would 11 and 12 year olds be doing when war was all around us?

Gordon Townsend