

Mrs Phyllis May Kennedy who has lived in Wales for 70 years sent us these lovely reminiscences of her childhood in Hastings which I am sure will bring back memories for some readers.

*Born in the twenties and early thirties living on a Council Estate consisting of Steel Houses built after World War One, very low employment and living in a deep depression, poverty was rife. The slum clearance from the awful conditions down at the old town, the children came to live at "Tin Town" as it was commonly known, where we all attended Mount Pleasant school.*

*The "Broom grove Estate" was built by the corporation as it was known then, to house mainly large families on very low incomes. When I was about twelve years old we used to congregate on a circle of grass at Clement Hill when a wonderful lady would come every Wednesday accompanied by her husband and gather us children round the "Green Circle" just for us to have someone so interested in our wellbeing was wonderful.*

*Her name was Mrs J Kilner and her husband, a retired doctor who had left India where he served until their retirement and came to live in Hastings in the Parish of Blacklands Church. He was Doctor Jack Newport Kilner who would bring Mrs Kilner up to our estate every week until his wife hired a hall in Hughenden Road where we would attend every week. She taught us children to knit and embroider, also to be proud of being in the "British Commonwealth" as it was then, she enrolled us into 'the Junior Branch of The Primrose League' which was founded by "Disraeli", she informed us.*

*With the help of a Mrs Davies (who with her husband kept a Dairy on the corner of Haghenden Road, they would dress us children up into all the countries of the British Empire to enact and represent each nation. My younger brother represented India and I was Britannia with my trident and ("Fireman's Helmet).*

*I shall always remember these wonderful people who took and made so many children worthy of themselves in such difficult times. I should like to think the people of Hastings would have recognised them for their humanity to the children of "Tin Town".*

Dr Kilner served as Assistant Medical Officer for the Bengal Railways. He married Mildred Pratt, from Australia and the daughter of a Doctor, in Columbo, Ceylon [Sri Lanka] in November 1904. Dr Kilner died in Hastings in 1953 whilst living at Lismore, Hollington Park Road.

The Kilners played a full role in the philanthropic life of the town. Subscriptions from them are recorded in local papers to good causes ranging from the Royal East Sussex Hospitals 1 guinea to Battle and Distinct Guides 1 shilling. Mrs Kilner organised concert parties with Lady Isham for the hospitals at Christmas.

During the Second World War Dr Kilner was the commandant in charge of the local Air Raid Casualty Service with 2 assistants. Mrs Kilner was a founder member of the local Women's Royal Defence Services, later the WRVS. She took a keen interest in Dr Barnados homes organising bazaars and opening the home at Silverhill park in 1938.

Other records of Kilners in Hastings include:

KILNER William. 20/11/1900. 74yrs 138 Hughenden Road

KILNER John Newport. Death. Aged 79 husband of Mildred. Hastings Observer 20/6/1953 p12

KILNER Margaret Catherine. Death. Aged 86. Hastings Observer 1/10/1932 p15

KILNER Sarah Jane. Death. Hastings Observer 22/10/1938 p24

KILNER Samuel Eli. Death. Hastings News 8/4/1898

KILNER Sarah Lewis. Death. Aged 61. On November 26th at Jahmai, Linton Road, Hastings. Wife of Samuel Eli Kilner. Hastings News 4/12/1891 p8

Diaries in Hughenden Road in the 1939 street directory were at nos. 7, 16 and 40.