

## *George (Bonnie) Hollis Martin (1919 - 1992)*

Bonnie Martin was born in London on 11<sup>th</sup> March 1919, but moved to Littleworth when he was thirteen months old. The family lived in the end of a row of cottages, behind The Cricketers pub, known as The Lanes. These were pulled down in the 1970/80's (?) and replaced by a block of council flats where Bonnie lived until his death.

Bonnie went to Wheatley School when Mr Key was headmaster. He remembered playing cricket in the school playground and, on one occasion, the ball went straight through one of the school windows.

When he left school he got a job in the saw mills at Morris Cowley where the car bodies were made of wood. However, when they began making the bodies out of metal, there was no longer any work for him and he lost his job. Later, he got a job on a night shift at Pressed Steel as a metal shearer, until he was called up for war service on 16<sup>th</sup> October 1939.

He was in the army for six years and enjoyed every minute of it. He spent his war service as a gunner with the 32<sup>nd</sup> Field Regiment Royal Artillery, in France, Italy, India and the Middle East. He was described as a hard-working and conscientious N.C.O. who 'had a good control of those placed under him'. He was awarded the 1939-1945 Star; the Africa Star and 3<sup>rd</sup> Army Clasp; the Italy Star; F & G Star, and War Medal 1939 - 45

Throughout his life Bonnie was a keen supporter of village football and cricket teams, acting as groundsman, linesman, umpire or referee.

In 1948 Bonnie went to work as a storeman at the Wheatley Military Hospital and stayed there until it closed in 1961.

Bonnie worked in the Regimental Museum at the Cowley Barracks for a year or so, but the Oxford and Bucks had just pulled out and it was being taken over by the *Green Jackets*, and much of the memorabilia was transferred to Winchester. So he decided on a change of job.

In 1964 he became assistant caretaker to Reg Beechey at Wheatley Secondary School. He had to be there at 6.30 am to get the boilers going, and then he went back to his home in Littleworth for half an hour at 8.30 am to have breakfast. He was then on duty from 9 am - 11 am, and again 2 pm - 6 pm.

He died in 1992