

Derek Chambers
Blaisdon Hall 1943? - 1947?



Derek aged 22, in civvies, but in the RAF

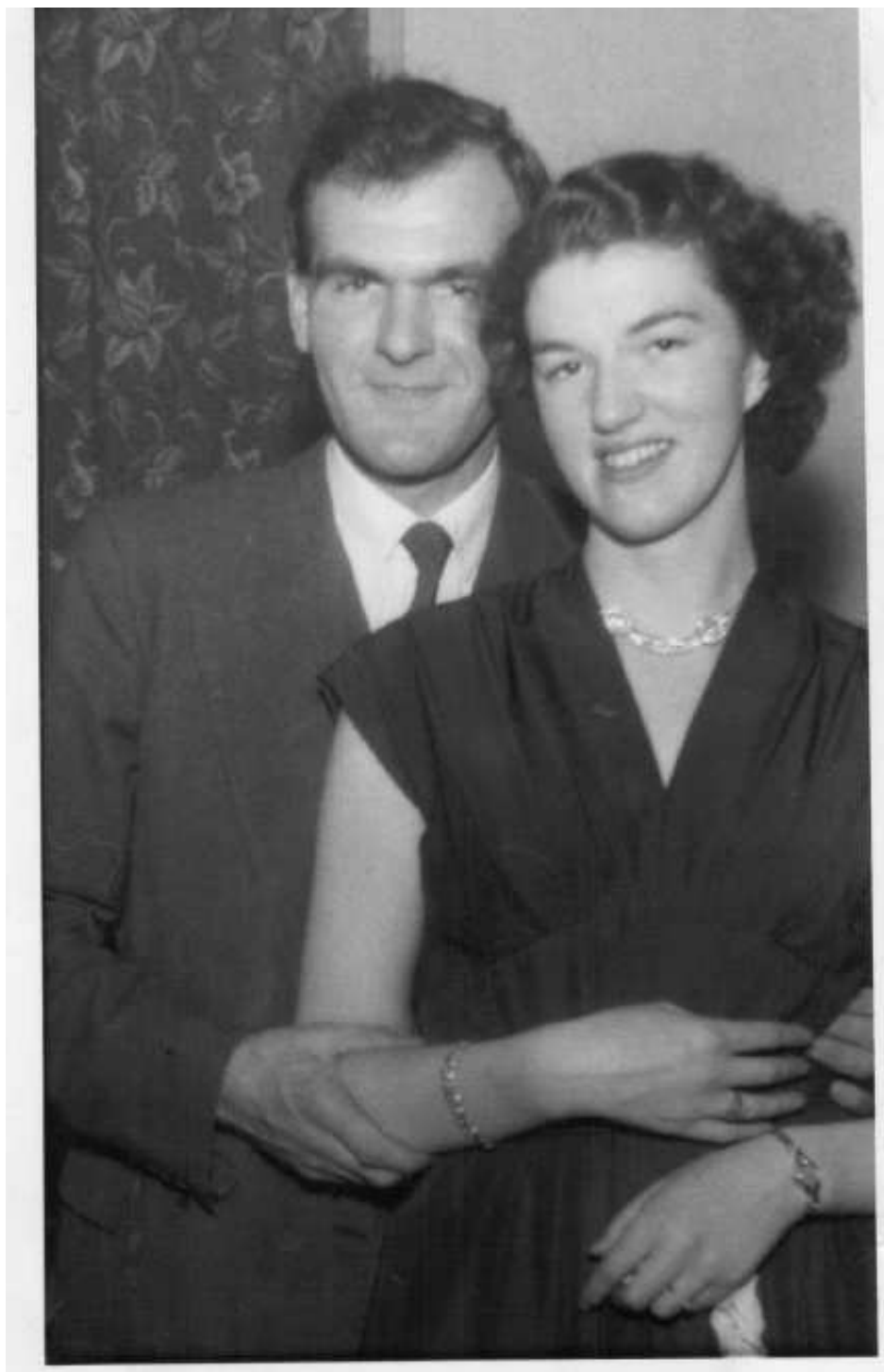
Dear John,

The following is a rough transcript of what my Dad wrote about his memory of his first arrival at Blaisdon. I think I copied you on the info I got from The CCS (Westminster) about Dad. They had records showing he went to Blaisdon in either July or October (he remembers it as October) 1943 and leaving for Ballinakill in August 1946

As I remember it, I was thirteen years old, when I left Bodmin Orphanage on the long journey up to Gloucestershire. We arrived in this new and unfamiliar place in the dark of an October evening in 1943. When we got off the train at Blaisdon (in the blackout) I was a little afraid and then suddenly, out of the darkness a familiar voice called out to us 'Keep close and follow me'. We followed him closely to Blaisdon Hall and when we got inside into the light, this familiar voice turned out to belong to George Austin, another ex Bodmin Orphanage lad who had come to Blaisdon about a year or so before me. We were given some supper, a big mug of hot cocoa and some bread and butter I think and then we went off to bed.

The next morning, we assembled in the downstairs office where we were informed which trade we would learn for the next few years before we went out to make our way in the big bad world.

Many years later in the late 70's or early 80's, while on holiday with friends in Shropshire, Doreen and I took a drive down to Blaisdon, when we got there I noticed a chap working in the garden who looked familiar. I got out of the car and he turned round as he heard the car door shut. It was George Austin, by now head gardener at Blaisdon. I'll never forget his welcoming line; he said 'Good Lord, Derek Chambers. I'd recognise those eyebrows anywhere!'



**Derek and his lovely Fiancé, Doreen , in 1952,
who later became Derek's beloved wife.**



Derek on honeymoon in 1957. He is photographed leaving the aeroplane in Dublin.

Derek and Doreen spent their honeymoon in Eire, with friends Derek had made while at the Salesian Seminary in Ballinakill.

He went there in '47 after 4 years at Blaisdon to study for the Priesthood.

He eventually realised that a life of celibacy was not for him and returned to England in '50 to join up.

Derek around 1987, aged around 57. This was his mug shot for the local golf club when he became club Secretary.

In the interim he had rejoined the RAF in '58 and served till '76.

On leaving the RAF he bought a small village shop and ran that for 10 years.

When he sold the shop, he was intending getting a part time job and playing more golf. When the Secretary job became vacant, he killed 2 birds with 1 stone, by working part time at the golf club!





This is Derek aged 80. He turned 81 in February 2011

What a rich and varied life this Blaisdon Old Boy enjoyed.



Thanks for your story, mostly provided by your Son, Mark, above.

We are looking forward to seeing you all at the Blaisdon Reunion in August 2011, please God.