



The Maldens and Coombe Heritage Society

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IT'S A SECRET

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I am currently working my way through documents of the Borough of Maldens and Coombe and in doing so I have come across two intriguing and yet somewhat disturbing references to a factory during the war, although the specifics do not appear to have been made public thereafter. This article is therefore more of a 'you tell me!' as I am not really sure what is being alluded to in the references.

Reference One: 1942

MISCELLANEOUS.

Some mention should be made of a nuisance which occurred at a certain factory and occupied a considerable amount of time. It would perhaps be improper at the present time to give details of the process which created the smell, with rats and plagues of flies and crickets in addition. Suffice to say that little could be done to avoid some smell but strenuous efforts were made to minimize the nuisance of the rats and insects. The work carried on is one of national importance and towards the end of the year had more or less ceased. Should war conditions make it necessary for the process to be recommenced it is hoped, with the experience gained in the past, that similar conditions will not recur. The co-operation of the Government Department concerned will do much to assist towards this end but the very nature of the work makes it impossible altogether to avoid some nuisance.

Note: "The work carried on is one of national importance and toward the end of the year had more or less ceased."

Reference Two: 1943

MISCELLANEOUS.

The nuisance at a factory to which I referred last year only recurred in very modified form. Energetic action reduced the number of rats to a minimum, whilst the fly and cricket menace was not in evidence. What trouble did occur arose from smell, and complaints were very few.

I know the ovens in the Norbiton Potteries in Blagdon Road were used to dry out saturated cereals arriving by convoy and the pottery ponds were often plague with crickets. The smell may have been offensive and grain may explain the rats. The phrase in the 1942 to '*should war conditions make it necessary for the process to be recommenced*' is of interest but at the moment the work at the Potteries is all I can come up with.

Any ideas?