Moorden During The Second World War

Bomb Damage...

Moorden is in close proximatly to the old Penshurst Airfield, which was used as an emergancy landing strip during the Second World War & then for No. 653 Squadron who were stationed there in 1942. Due to its nature it did attract a fair bit of activity even in the early years of the war & could possibly be why the surrounding areas like Moorden suffered greater bomb damage than elsewhere.

Three known bombs fell on the farm during the war. One fell in the West Field Hop Garden, bringing down a lot of the hops & hop garden with it. A second fell in a field towards the river causing little damage other than ricocheting schrapnel into nearby trees, a piece of which was extracted recently after timber from an oak in the area was being sawn up for logs.

RAF Detling Photograph of Penshurst Airfield, taken at 25,000ft, 2nd June 1942

The third bomb that was dropped on Moorden landed in the small paddock between the Farmhouse & the oasthouse (left), luckily missing both buildings. The shock however, blew out all the glass in the windows, & the roof tiles off the oasthouse & incidently killed a large number of chicken that were in the field at the time.

c.1940, Bomb damage to the oasthouse at Moorden

c.1940, Bomb crater near Moorden Farmhouse

Elizabethan Spoon Unearthed By Second World War Bomb

Fascinatingly an old spoon was found amoung the disturbed soil within the bomb crater at Moorden.

It was discovered to be silver, with an ornate acorn finial & dated from the Elizabethan era.

After all those years there was just one crack along the bowl of the spoon, perhaps caused by the bomb damage itself.

The story goes it had fallen from Queen Elizabeth I's picnic hamper when she stopped to lunch in the fields at Moorden on her way to Penshurst Place.

AIR-RAID DAMAGE IN VILLAGES

COUNTRYSIDE LIT UP LIKE DAY

THE PILOT APOLOGISED

BOMB DAMAGE IN BOROUGH

HOME GUARDS ON PARADE

(Above) 1940s, Kent Courier article describing damage after heavy German raids over Leigh & the surrounding areas on the night of the 8th December

Example of the stlye of spoon found in the Moorden bomb crater

The War Effort...

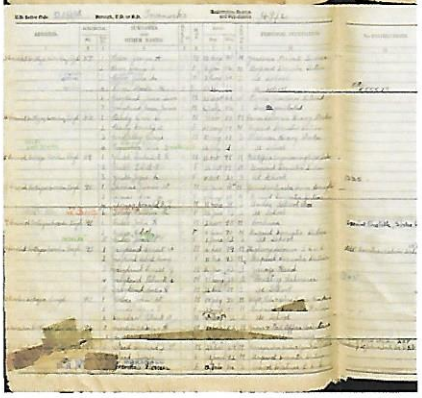
Farming during the Second World War became of great importance with the need for more food to feed the nation. As part of the war effort the men & women of the Day family at Moorden farmed the land hard, but also served as A.R.P Wardens, Ambulance drivers or W.V.S First aiders like many other agricultural labourers & recidents living in & around Moorden.

By 1941 Moorden had the largest amount of acreage under orchard than ever before and the National Farm Survey of this year documents it at forty acres. The arable crops grown at the same time were mainly wheat and oats, but also included beans, peas, potatoes, and for fodder; turnips, swedes, mangolds, kale, and vetches or tares. Twenty-five acres were due to hops and four and half were allocated to market garden produce like vegetables and flowers.

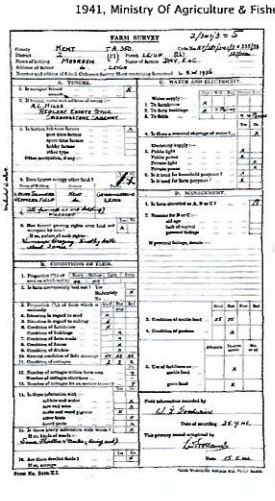
An increase in both pasture and meadow may relate to the high numbers of sheep kept on the farm. The flock of 343 ewes and lambs coexisted along with a herd of 58 cattle, 79 pigs and 242 chicken and ducks. It is interesting to note that five horses were also still kept for agricultural purposes working alongside two Fordson standard tractors.

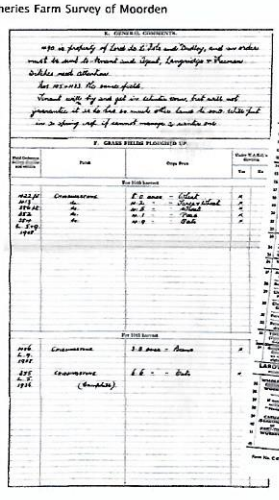
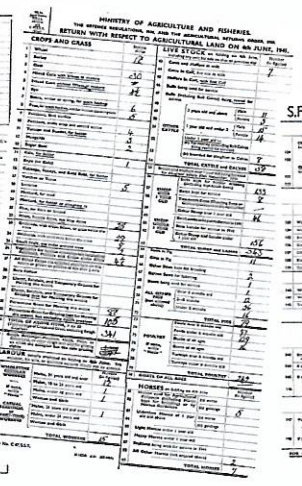
Table of Land Use Acreages at Moorden Farm

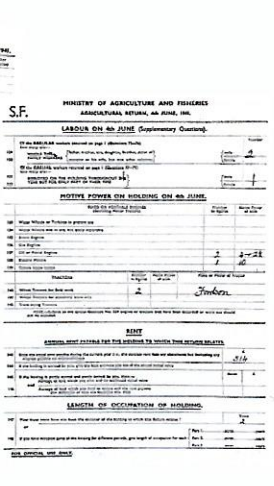
	1804	1841	1941	2001	2022
Pasture	9.47%	20.88%	32.97%	69.35%	40%
Arable	45.26%	54.95%	19%	14.52%	0%
Hops	4.21%	4.4%	7.85%	0%	0%
Orchard	2.11%	2.2%	12.56%	0%	0%
Meadow	32.63%	17.59%	27.63%	16.2%	60%
[Source]	Chiltern Estate Maps	Leigh Tithe Map Schedule	National Farm Survey	DAS	T. Day


Extract from the 1939 Register undertaken on the eve of the Second World War showing Moorden residents along with their age, occupations & special skills, all vital information to be used to help towards the war effort

1941, Ministry Of Agriculture & Fisheries Farm Survey of Moorden


FARM SURVEY



MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES. RETURN WITH RESPECT TO AGRICULTURAL LAND ON 4th JUNE, 1941.


MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES AGRICULTURAL RETURN, 4th JUNE, 1941.

LABOUR ON 4th JUNE (Supplementary Questions).