

MAISIE MAPLE

1919-1996

Maisie Maple was born in 1919 and came to Birchington in 1944 with her eldest son Luke, who was born in May 1943. They lived in 'Woodcot', Wilbrough Road to start with. Maisie's maiden name was Howlett and her parents, Tom and Gladys, moved to Broadstairs from Kennington, London in the 1920s. Tom became a woodwork teacher in a local private school, while Gladys ran a small cigarette kiosk.

Maisie's first job was as an usherette at the local cinema in Broadstairs, but she soon joined the dental practice of Mr Slade, where she helped out in his surgery. It was at this time that she met Charles (or Charlie, as everyone later knew him) Maple, an electrician working for ITESCO, the then local private electricity company.

At, or around, the outbreak of WW 2, Maisie received her call-up papers to the local Air Raid Reporting Centre, based beneath Piermont Hall in Broadstairs and had to leave Mr Slade. Not long after this her father's school was evacuated and he was made a foreman at an aircraft factory in Coventry, but lived with Gladys at Hitchen. Not long after their move, Maisie followed them to Hitchen sometime before March 1942, as that was where she married Charlie Maple. Charlie by then was serving with an Anti-Aircraft Battery and based up at Auchencairn, near Castle Douglas in Scotland. They returned to Scotland together, where she remained until his regiment was sent to North Africa with REME, in charge of a motorised workshop.

At this point, Maisie returned to Hitchen in July of 1943 and then down to Birchington the following year and spent a lot of time watching for the postman or tradesmen to call. Although by then she had her first son Luke, life was very lonely in Birchington by a sociable person like Maisie, because it was still a war-zone area until 1944 and most of the properties were empty and locked up for the duration.

Eventually, in October 1945, Charlie came home and started his own small business as an electrical contractor, operating from premises in the New Inn (later the Pewter Pot) yard. By 1947 they had moved into 16 Albion Road, which was their home from then on. In September 1952 Maisie and Charlie's second son Andrew was born. Apart from running her little family, Maisie joined several local groups, including the Red Cross, the Mothers' Union and the British Legion. Collecting tins could always be found in her home!

One of the jobs she undertook for the Red Cross was to run a therapy group in the back room of the old Church House. Maisie's address book was full of local names, as her friendships covered every area of village life! Her commitment to those friends, neighbours and trades-people was very obvious, as she knew so much about them all. She was a great listener – as well as a good talker! She took on the job as Treasurer of the Red Cross and gained a great reputation for 'guarding' the cash. She was overwhelmed with surprise when 1994 she was awarded a medal for 50 years service to the Red Cross. Whatever she did Maisie always gave her 'all' to it. She always had time for people, no matter what the circumstances.

Charlie died in May 1992 soon after they had celebrated their Golden Wedding. Maisie lived on for another 4 years, making just as much use of those last years as all the others.

Her son Andrew wrote a delightful tribute to her for her memorial service, from which this brief note has been made.