

**Between the Willows**

**London: VE Day plus one**

**By Don Byers**  
 This week I conclude my recollections of a wonderful "leave" spent with Mr. and Mrs. Elliot, in Piltown, Sussex, during WWII—quoting again from my notebook.  
 "May 9, 1945. After a short drive from "The Mitchells", Mr. Elliot and I boarded the London train at Hayward's Heath.  
 Because of his hearing impairment, conversation was difficult as we clipped along through the lush countryside. Mr. Elliot none-the-less seemed in good spirits while I was as excited as a school boy on his first outing. Apart from passing through two days ago, I had never really seen this world-famous city.  
 At Victoria Station we climbed into an open-backed cab. The tour of London had begun! And here are my impressions of the sights we saw:  
 Buckingham Palace—many large windows shattered. King and commoner shared the "Blitz".  
 Victoria Square—the fountain, now free of VE Day waders. No wonder Queen Victoria's statue is frowning.  
 Westminster Abbey—bomb damage is apparent. People kneeling in prayers of thanksgiving.  
 Houses of Parliament—not spared by the bombs. Where is

**Around the Campfire**

**Cattail can be cooked**

**By Rocco Losole**  
**HABITAT:** Also known by the names of 'Rushes', 'Cossack Asparagus', 'Cat-O-Nine-Tails', 'Flags', 'Swamp Bulrush' and 'Reed Mace', the Cattail is common to moist or wet places such as marshes, shallow ponds and lakes, ditches and stream borders. Some species may be found in brackish waters.  
**DESCRIPTION:** At maturity Cattail can vary from 3-12 feet in height. The cigar-shaped, spongy, dense flower spike, made up of thousands of flowers, is found at the top of a tall, firm stalk and can vary from 4-8 inches in length. The young spike is yellow and then turns brown from the bottom up. By fall it will turn a fluffy gray. The stalks are tightly surrounded by a sheath of long, parallel-veined leaves which are pale-green in colour and 1/4-inch wide. These sword-like leaves taper to a point and often have submerged bases. The 1/2-1 inch thick roots are rope-like and branch frequently.  
**PREPARATION:** The flowerhead is most tender in early spring just as it is ready to break from its husk. They make a delicious cooked vegetable and are eaten like corn-on-the-cob with butter. The summer pollen may be eaten raw or ground into a flour, resembling musty wheat, which is high in protein and Vitamin A. An excellent Cattail bread can be made by hitting the flower spike over a pot, causing the pollen to fall out. Grind this pollen into a fine flour and mix with fat and water. Form this mixture into small balls, flatten them into cakes on a griddle and cook slowly until desired consistency is reached. The pollen was used by Indians in bread, cakes and flour as well as for the flavouring and thickening of soup. A very comfortable make-shift pillow can also be made by stuffing an old shirt with the pollen. Caulking walls and barrels as well as insulating footwear to prevent frostbite are other uses of the pollen. Excellent tinder can be obtained from the pollen as well.  
 The leaves, collected while they are still green, hung in bundles to dry and then soaked until they are soft provide material for a chair or rush mat.  
 The young shoots of cattail are succulent either raw when added to a salad or as a cooked vegetable added to a stew. The shoots should be collected from early spring to fall when they are less than one foot high by yanking them free of their roots. The shoots are also used for mats, baskets and other woven materials.  
 Care should be taken not to confuse the young sprouts of Cattail with those of the deadly poisonous Blue Flag.  
 The shoots of Cattail are perfectly cylindrical, while those of Blue Flag are flattened.  
 When cultivating the roots, dig up the entire root, including the bulb-like areas at their ends which will form next year's sprouts. The rootstalks should be harvested in the fall after the cattails have turned brown. Remove the outer peel and they can be eaten either raw or cooked. As a potato substitute they may be cooked or roasted after scraping, cleaning and slicing. I prefer them steamed.  
 To make a flour from the rootstalks cut them into small pieces, remove most of the fibres, add water, and boil into a thick gruel. Dry the gruel, remove remaining fibres and pound into a meal. This flour is equal to any commercial flour in nutritional value being 80 per cent carbohydrate and 7 per cent protein. The bulbs on the root are the only part I would recommend you eat raw.



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the House of Commons?  
**Big Ben**—the most famous clock in the world is on time today.  
**St. Paul's Cathedral**—the dome was spared but bombs pierced the roof and penetrated the floor below. People praying amid bricked-up statues. All around St. Paul's is utter and absolute destruction—everything in sight is in ruins.  
**Tower of London**—ageless and ominous. Stout stone walls and foreboding towers.  
**Tower Bridge**—London Bridge did not fall down.  
**Trafalgar Square**—Nelson surveying the people he died to defend.  
**Leicester Square**—echoes of Music Halls and darkened cinemas.  
**Piccadilly**—crowds, "birdies" and restaurants.  
**No. 10 Downing Street**—a rather ordinary building with a plain wooden door.  
 In addition to historical sights, we caught the show at "The Windmill" (the only theatre that remained open throughout the "Blitz") and had an excellent meal at an elegant restaurant.  
 We rode in cabs, buses and the Underground. We walked a lot, too. And Mr. Elliot quietly insisted on paying for everything.  
 Late that evening we returned to "The Mitchells" to find that John had arrived during our absence. He looked a bit pale but otherwise none the worse for wear.  
 During the days that followed John and I toured the countryside by bike: the church in Fleshing where King Harold and his knights attended services before the Battle of Hastings in 1066; the quiet country lanes and historic pubs. It was most certainly an experience to be deeply etched in memory.  
 That is why I shall never forget the Elliots—or Lady Ryder who made it all possible.

**Milton Then and Now**

**Those early picture shows**

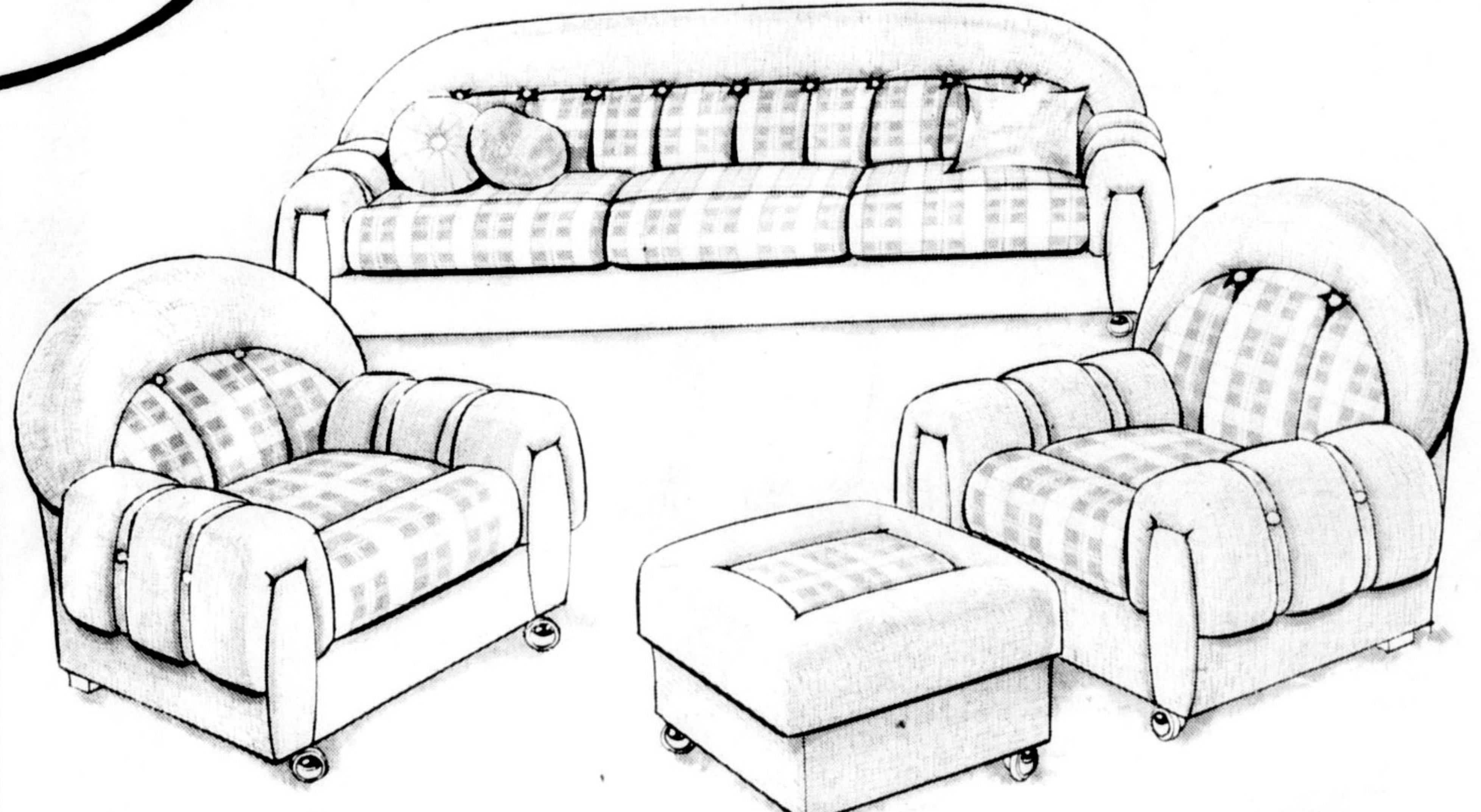
**By Mel Robinson**  
 By 1910 motion pictures were becoming commonplace in this town as a form of public entertainment. By later standards the photography and equipment were of rather poor quality. There was no theatre in town in those days. It was the Milton Band which promoted early showings at Victoria Park and at Livingston Park.  
 On June 30, 1910 at the first band concert of that season Carey Bros. showed "a fine lot of motion pictures." The band was strong that season. Its general membership and its soloists were the best they had ever been. It contributed a fine musical programme to go with the picture show. As this was open air entertainment with poor control over admissions, the silver collection of \$40 was gratifying.  
 Carey Bros. continued to provide films for showing at the band concerts that summer, but by the end of July there were problems. The silver collection that Friday night was \$26.40 and of that amount, \$20 went to Carey Bros. As other expenses amounted to more than the remaining \$6.40, the band was starting to lose money.  
 When the next season started at the end of June 1911, there was no mention of Carey Bros. It was simple announced that the films were coming from New York. As in 1910, there was no mention of titles for the films and no references as to the nature of the entertainment. The pictures were one-reel with a group of them to make up the evening's entertainment. There was little likelihood of them needing censorship.  
 As in the previous year the silver

collections began to dwindle as the season wore on. The Champion announced that the proceeds from the concerts were to be used to buy seats for the park (Victoria Park opposite the Court House). If the seats were to be bought, in fact if the shows were to be continued, the crowds would have to be more generous.  
 A special attraction on August 11, 1911, was a showing of views of the Coronation which took place in June of that year. The receipts were satisfactory for that one, and the entertainment was enjoyed by a large crowd.  
 Webb's Amusement Co. began the weekly showing of pictures indoors in the Town Hall on Saturday November 4, 1911. This was a cause of concern to the editor of The Champion. He had pointed out on numerous occasions that the hall, like the majority of those in smaller towns, was a fire trap. The highly inflammable films were of real danger. He noted that they were kept protected in an iron box, but emphasized that great care would be necessary. The project seems to have been dropped before too long. Possibly the entertainment provided by church and other groups was too well established during the indoor seasons.  
 In 1912 T.C. Livingston was busy promoting his park for Sunday School picnics and other events. He persuaded E. Syer, a local grocery merchant to become manager of a project to bring a series of motion pictures for showing at his park. During the summer months there were a number of shows which some Miltonians

can still remember.  
 A successful attempt to provide pictures on a regular and better organized basis was introduced in the fall of 1912. T.D. Hume, a successful flour and feed dealer operated a store on Main St. to the west of the location of the present Roxy Theatre. He had obtained the use of a spacious building at the site of the Roxy, and had an extensive remodelling job done to make it suitable for use as a motion picture theatre.  
 It was neatly finished inside and out. There was a ticket office at the centre of the front of the building with entrances on each side of it. Chairs were used for seating. It was hoped that the theatre would be popular not only for picture shows but also for meetings and for entertainments needing less space than the auditorium of the Town Hall.  
 The first show was held in the new Princess Theatre on September 25, 1912. The venture was successful from the first. With the project well established by the end of the year, Mr. Hume issued special invitations for January 8, 1913 to the Mayor, the Reeve, members of the Council, the town clerk, the editor of The Canadian Champion, and Jasper Martin, a prominent business man.  
 They were there with the regular audience to see some films of life on western cattle ranches. Then the special visitors stayed on to watch some special films which had been brought in for their entertainment. Coffee and other refreshments were then served.



**selection**



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