

Nazi bomber machine-gunned girls during match umpired by Barbara



The late Barbara West, left, and with Stanley Nye and Martin Batt when Alfriston won the best-kept village award in 1991



# Hockey legend dies at 100

A FORMER England hockey player has died at the age of 100.

Barbara Winifred West taught at Brighton and Hove High School during the Second World War before moving to Chelsea Physical Education College in Eastbourne.

Hockey was her great passion. In 1938 she embarked on a tour of New Zealand for her country and, after the war, played and won 18 matches in a visit to the US in 1947.

However, her most startling hockey experience came during the war while umpiring an away hockey match against Hove County School.

by ADRIAN IMMS

adrian.imms@theargus.co.uk

The junior game was interrupted by German machine gun fire from a passing bomber "one lovely autumn afternoon".

As part of a 30-page memoir, she recalled: "I suppose my worst wartime experience was being machine-gunned.

"Out of the setting sun came a German plane with guns blazing.

"As well-trained youngsters we all

went flat on the ground. I have never prayed so hard in all my life."

The 50 children crawled to a nearby hedge where it was discovered that, remarkably, the only injury was a girl stung by a nettle while taking cover.

Aside from a 60-year involvement with hockey – playing, coaching, umpiring, selecting – Miss West also ran several Girl Guide groups and was captain of Shoreham Sea Rangers.

She lived in Alfriston, where she was a parish councillor for more than 30 years during the 1970s, 80s and 90s.

One of three sisters, they all lived in Alfriston, forming a tight bond.

Miss West also had a half-brother called Roger Hosking, who died last year.

After a brief spell in a Seaford nursing home, she died on November 4 at East Surrey Hospital, aged 100, after being admitted with pneumonia.

Her nephew, Patrick Hosking, 54, told The Argus: "She was a great hockey player and did a lot for the Women's Institute.

"Anyone who remembers her is very welcome to the funeral."

Miss West's funeral is at 11.30am at St Andrew's Church in Alfriston tomorrow.