

Annie Martin (1904-1992)

Annie was the well known cockney florist and Greengrocer from Martins stall in Castle Street Farnham. She was the founder of the family run business and a well known character in the Town. She started selling flowers and fruit aged 8 in Ilford and left school at 14.

Annie came to Farnham during the war, about 1941, she moved from Deptford. The bombing was so bad in London she was forced to move here to be safe. Her Father had a scrap metal yard in Long Garden walk and a Grocery shop in West Street. She was married to Albert Martin and they lived in Lowndes Buildings just off castle Street. She started selling flowers from a basket in Castle Street and then progressed to 2 trestle tables and a board. Her husband Albert helped her with the selling.

Rationing meant food was scarce after the War so this made selling difficult. Her son Boy Boy started on the stall. He bought the yard in long garden walk as a store. The family business became well established in Castle Street. The family asked the council if they could stay put in Castle Street rather than pack up each day and this permission was granted. Three Grandsons were also involved in the business. Local Strawberries were a best seller. Their prices were cheaper than Hones in Downing Street. Her husband Albert died in 1945. Annie continued working at the stall until she was in her eighties. She never went on holiday or went to the pub or cinema because she couldn't afford to. The only time she went abroad was to visit her son Tommy's grave in Gibraltar where he died in the war in 1944.

She died in 1992 aged 88 and on the day of her funeral Farnham Town centre came to a standstill as the procession passed through the Town with lots of colourful wreaths and flowers to the West Street Cemetery where she was laid to rest.

Researched by Anne Pullinger. Information from U3A oral history tapes stored at Farnham Museum and newspaper articles from Farnham museum.