

## HAPPY YEARS WITH WIFE HE'S NEVER SEEN

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A Birchington man, blind since the age of 18, celebrates his Golden Wedding anniversary on Sunday with the wife and two sons he has never seen. He is 77-year-old Mr George Millen of Minnis Road, who says that he has had 50 wonderful years with his 76-year-old wife Muriel.

George moved to Birchington at the age of 14 and when he was 17 years old in 1914, he 'put on' two years so he join the Army with a dozen of his friends. He ended up at the Somme in France – one of the major battlefields of the First World War – and lost his sight in a shell attack.

Thanks to the help of a Scotsman in his platoon, he was led away from the firing line. "The Scotsman couldn't carry me because one of his arms had been blown off" he said. George went into St Dunstan's Convalescent Home in Cheltenham, where he met Muriel, who was helping to look after the patients.

A few years later they were married in Muriel's home town of Bibury and they moved to Birchington four years later. Their favourite past-time, which occupied many years, was touring the lanes of Kent on a tandem. "We covered hundreds of miles and only gave up after the Second World War, when traffic got too heavy." said Muriel.

While at St Dunstan's, George learnt the art of basket making and still runs a shop adjacent to his home. He does not do much basket making now, but still makes a quota of hampers each month for St Dunstan's.

Over the years he has made hundred's of baskets and his customers have included hotels and Margate Hospital. He also made the mats for Dreamland's helter-skelter. Several years ago, Cyril Fletcher, the entertainer, came to his shop and got George to make a new bottom for his theatre hamper.