

CHEERFUL BLIND BASKET MAKER

Isle of Thanet Gazette 1955

Mr George Alfred Millen, Birchington's blind basket and fibre mat maker, came back to the village in 1918, after losing his sight in the First World War. He is seen here talking to film star Jack Warner in front of his mat loom, at the Margate Trades Exhibition on Saturday.

Claiming to be the first blind man to settle in Birchington, he started his business after only a year's training at St Dunstan's. Mr Millen is very happy in his work - some 10 hours each day, with work on Sundays included – "because it keeps me busy".

When 57-year-old Mr Millen received his training for this deft and delicate craft, he was the youngest man at St Dunstan's, being only 19 years of age.

Mr Millen is married with two sons, who are both doing their National service. His wife Muriel summed him up saying, "He is a happy man with a very cheerful disposition."