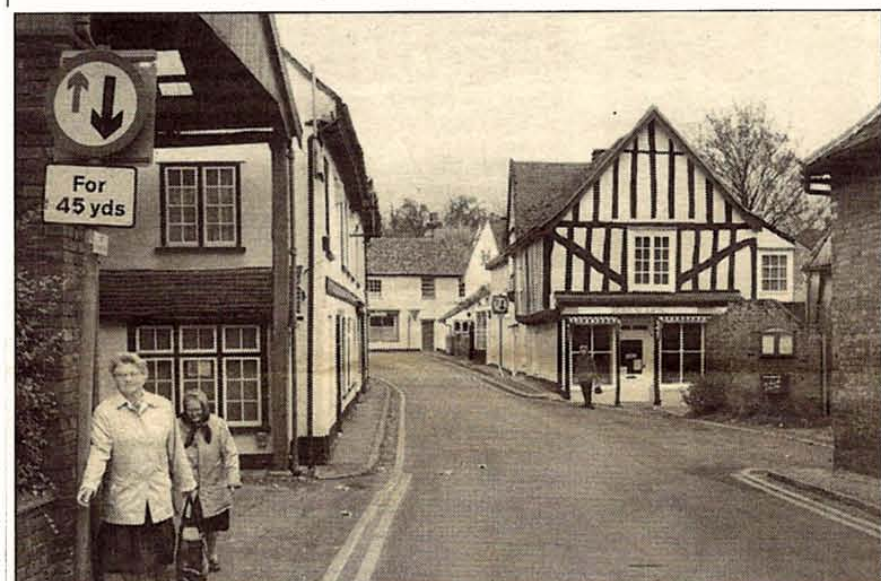


The whole village's affair

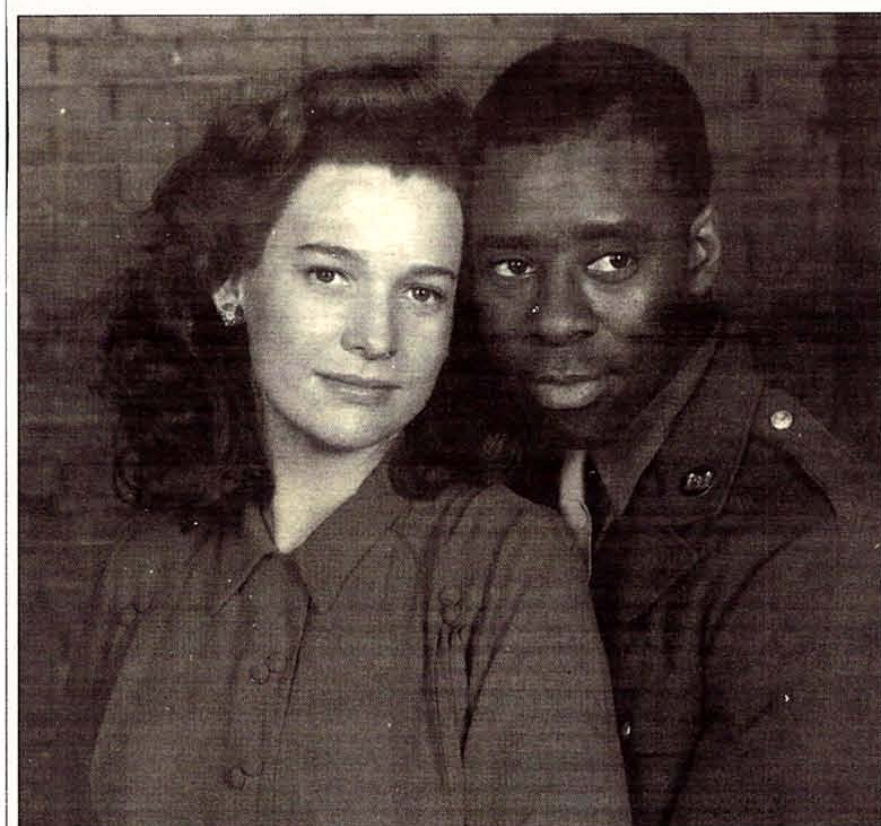
How Nayland went to war again for the TV cameras



THE GIs ARRIVE: The village of Nayland goes into historical costume for the BBC



GONE AGAIN: With the actors and crews departed, the village returns to normal



LOVERS: Kerry Fox and Courtney Vance play the pair at the heart of the drama

★ **AT THE time** *The Affair* was being filmed its working title was *Black Tuesday*. And that gives a better clue to what this bitter-sweet love story is really about.

Set in England during the Second World War, it centres on the tale of an upright British wife, a member of her local town's Welcoming Committee,

falling in love with a black American GI. Black soldiers were subject to segregation in the States, and came under American law during their time in wartime England.

What happens at the end of the story is shocking – and worse, it is based on true stories.

The *Affair* will be screened on BBC on December 3.

LIFE in Nayland usually slips by at a pace as tranquil as the river that flows through it. But that all changed when a film crew arrived. It was as if the village moved back 50 years in time. For a few days this idyllic nook of Suffolk turned into a virtual time capsule. **VICTORIA HAWKINS** and photographer **OWEN HINES** revisited the scene now it's returned from the 1940s.

TELEVISION airds disappeared from roofs overnight. Road signs were taken down and the yellow lines painted out. Piles of sandbags were propped up against buildings.

Bunting and banners appeared hanging from the eaves and complete strangers tapped on front doors and were happily welcomed in to "bombproof" the windows upstairs and down.

Virtually overnight in June 1995, Nayland, and Stoke by Nayland just up the road, were transported back in time to the 1940s. They became settlements under siege.

The whole bang shooting match of a movie-making circus closed in on the picture postcard village and for a couple of days virtually sealed off its centre from the outside world.

A huge support crew pitched camp in fields nearby and a little sub-village of marquees popped up, where costumes could be fitted, make up applied and hair and wigs teased into shape.

Massive outside catering vans lumbered up the leafy Suffolk lanes to feed the troops while booms, lighting and camera gantries were rolled into place.

The BBC, along with American backers HBO Showcase, meant business when it rolled into town to shoot vital scenes for *The Affair*, a mind-blowingly expensive television film with £2.5 million poured into its production.

Army of extras

And the locals weren't left out either. About 150 of them, old and young, were enlisted to form a veritable army of extras for the princely sum of £50 a day.

Neighbours and relatives scarcely recognised each other in costume and suddenly it was wartime again. A sense of single purpose and community spirit permeated throughout.

"For a change," said villager Richard Gray, "everybody was talking to each other."

Life was turned upside down during the two long days – and a night – of filming in the fictional village of Brackenbury.

Then almost as soon as it had begun, it was over.

All is quiet once more. The Mill Stores, which had played its part as the Roxy Cinema, is now quietly going about its business as the village supermarket again with its Lottery ticket sign outside the door.

The splendid old yellow and red Shell petrol pumps, which sprouted up, have disappeared again from the former Norfolk garage site.

The circus has moved on.

Villagers are back leading their own private lives behind their front doors once again and the young girls who acted as extras are back at universities and schools.

All that is left is the memory of hundreds of black GIs marching down the main street.

But for a few days in June it was a real village affair.



LAND GIRL: Emy Gray, 16, far right, a villager from Court Street, Nayland, during a break in filming for *The Affair*. Beside her is Chloe Warren from Wivenhoe, a student in London, and Tasmin Sebba from Wiston. Catherine Ford from the Post Office is one of the girls sitting on the pavement



★ **"IT WAS** a bit like being back in wartime," said Muriel Norfolk from Gravel Hill (pictured left).

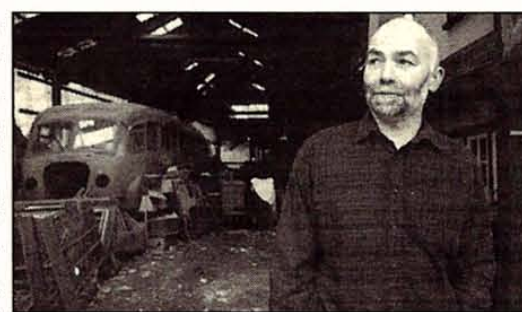
She got dressed up to play her part and put in two long days from about 6.30am, when she was called for wardrobe, until 7.30 at night.

"We didn't have quite as much activity here in the village in the war as we did when they were filming, although we did have some."

"I can remember the village street being machine-gunned. They didn't hit anybody and we picked up all the bullets down the road."

Muriel, who was in her teens during the forties, said: "I went in for the Women's Land Army then."

Three of her grandchildren, Jennifer, 10, Katherine, eight and six-year-old Thomas Norfolk, who live just round the corner, were extras too.



HOWARD Norfolk's forecourt by his home in Mill Street, was transformed into a wartime garage during filming.

"They were outside here until about 4am doing a fight scene," said Howard, pictured above.

"They put a stand up

TINA Stevens, who lives in Nayland High Street, just up the road from the filming, spent a day as an extra.

But even this 31-year-old mum's one day on set meant a heap of work for wardrobe and make-up.

They had to transform every one of the dozens of amateurs who pitched up for work at £50 a day into an authentic wartime look.

They did it all from their temporary camp headquarters in a field in the village!

The team had to get the look right for every single extra. Each man, woman and child had to be kitted-out in original costumes, shoes, hats, gloves, make-up and authentic 40s hairstyles.

"I shouldn't say it," said Tina, "but I thought my dress was pretty horrendous. It was just so old-fashioned."

"But they took a lot of



TINA: In the film

trouble getting it right. My hair was very, very short then and when they did my hair first they just put the wig on and I looked like an old witch.

"So then it was put in rollers, styled, and finally my hat was put on at an angle and then it worked." Her children hardly recognised her.

"We had to stand in Fenn Street for the afternoon and wave and cheer every time the soldiers came along. I think they did it about eight times. I stood quite close to Kerry Fox, the star, and she's a really pretty girl."

"They asked me if I wanted to go to London, but I've got two children. They were leaving at 5 or 6 in the morning and not coming back until late so I said no."

"It was great fun and there were just a couple of days when you couldn't drive through the High Street but that didn't really affect us."

Some of the extras did two days filming in Suffolk and then had a crack-of-dawn start for two bus-trips down to Friern Barret hospital in London for a dance scene.



TINA: Real life



WAVING: English student Emma Wright shows the flag

Short back and sides for all

ONE village extra Richard Gray, 45, who lives in Court Street, Nayland, found himself in the barber's chair having rather a radical short back and sides to play his part in *The Affair*.

"There were some fairly severe haircuts walking around the village at the time," he said.

He was tagged up as one of four 1940s village policemen – which has caused endless fun and games since with his picture being the subject of wanted posters.

For the Grays, it was a real family affair. Both daughters, Anna, 18, and Emy, 16, and their mum Catherine were extras, too.

Auditions

"Pure greed," remarked Richard. "We thought at £50 a day each we'd get a holiday out of it and we were rather hoping it would last ten days. The girls got more though, they went off and did some of the other filming. They were told to get off with the black GIs and our girls did their best! I think they gate-crashed the end-of-production party in London too."

Auditions were held at the village hall. "It seemed that absolutely everybody in the village wanted to be in it," said Richard. "There were huge queues."

"One or two people in the village thought they might lose a bit of business but on the whole they didn't."

"The first day of filming at Stoke by Nayland the weather was appalling. The am dram types were very keen to get in the picture and the others sloped off to the pub for restorative brandies. The following day it was baking. Fenn Street was just awash with people in costumes."



FILM FUN: Catherine and Richard Gray – their whole family were film extras



'ALLO, 'ALLO: Richard Gray as a village Pc

When a film crew moves in, somebody always complains, but these people were fantastic. I've even got letters from them saying what fun it was. That's never happened to me before! **DAVID SEED, producer**