

# Wartime West Sussex 1939 – 1945

## BATTLE OF BRITAIN

### Air battles over Worthing

Extracts from *Despatches from the Home Front, The War Diaries of Joan Strange 1939-1945* (Monarch Publications, 1989)

**1940**

**August 11<sup>th</sup>** On the nine o'clock news details of a further big defeat of German raiders over the South Coast today – fifty raiders are known to have been destroyed – we've lost nineteen fighters. The Weingartens say that the explanation of so many German bombs not exploding is that they were made by Czechs in the Skoda works and were filled with sand.

**August 15<sup>th</sup>** Hitler's day! 'By this date Britain would be brought to her knees' and the RAF has had its day, having brought down 169 raiders over Britain in twenty-four hours. Croydon airport was attacked for the first time.

**August 16<sup>th</sup>** Mother and I went up to tea with Miss Goldsmith at High Salvington. As usual the siren went off, at about five o'clock. We continued tea but planes got nearer and nearer. Suddenly firing broke out and planes seemed to be immediately overhead and very low – then a thud-thud and more firing. We adjourned to under the stairs while Miss Goldsmith pulled her blinds. She was very reassuring saying they often had it like that on the hill.....finally the all clear sounded at 6.45 – six raiders were brought down in and around Worthing and the thud we heard was one in Honeysuckle Lane on the top of the hill. We got back to Worthing and called on Ken and family – Ken, as an air-raid warden, had been patrolling and had watched the various 'dog-fights' as they are called.

**September 30<sup>th</sup>** At five o'clock a big air battle took place over Worthing – the sky seemed to be teeming with glistening white butterflies very high up and the raiders puffed out white smoke screens. Our fighters forced them out to sea and later on the nine o'clock news we heard at least forty-five have been brought down. Sixteen of ours are lost, eight pilots safe.

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