

Wartime West Sussex 1939 - 1945 ON THE HOME FRONT - DAILY LIFE

Remembering wartime in London and South Harting

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I was living in a flat in the Elephant and Castle when the war started. My husband Charlie was in the Home Guard and he told us that when the bombing started, the best placed for people who lived in flats was in the stairs. Hearing the bombs dropping was very frightening and the worst night was when a bomb exploded in the next turning to where I lived. We were not allowed near the windows but next morning when I looked out I saw that the bomb had completely flattened a cottage. The bombing worsened later on.

We all had ration books and there were always long queues for food. When my friends wanted to buy clothes I would give them some of my coupons.

My husband said we ought to move to the country and I didn't care where so long as we got away. I took my two youngest children to Cornwall where I stayed with a lovely family in a farmhouse. After a couple of months, Charlie wrote and said things had quietened down a bit so I came to live in Harting. I had Pauline and Martin with me and Ron, Vic, Stanley and Shirley were already here. Mrs Ward put us up until we could find a place and when Brookside Cottage became vacant we were lucky enough to get it. My daughter June was born here and then Charlie got work on Mr Shaxson's farm at Elsted and then we moved to Redlands to have all my family with me.

With a place of our own we decided to get our furniture from London and Charlie and some of the farm lads went to get it. When they got there they discovered that it had been looted and they only brought back my dining table, four chairs, and one or two other things. My new sewing machine had been taken and a lovely pair of glass ornaments which used to belong to my mother had also disappeared.....

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