

Wartime West Sussex 1939 – 1945

CANADIANS

Southwater girl marries Canadian

From *Memories from a town that disappeared, Horsham during World War II* (Horsham Museum, 1989)

By Violet O’Gorman (for Dennis O’Gorman), Mississauga, Ontario

We saw your request in the Toronto Sunday Sun, and my husband wrote a rough copy of what he would like to tell you, but since then he had to go into hospital, and has asked me to write his story for him.

He went to England with the first convoy of Canadian soldiers in December, 1939 and his first posting in Sussex was at Knepp Castle in late 1941. Early in 1942 he was moved to ‘Woodgetters’ on the Shipley Road in Southwater.

The Cock Inn was a favourite watering hole, and since it was close to the Village Hall, where dances were held once a week, the soldiers would end up there.

My home was in Southwater, but I worked in Horsham, and some of the girls I worked with, together with some of their friends, would come to the dances. They would come out on a bus, but would have to walk home, and my husband would escort them, I think to the Rushams Road area, and then walk back to the ‘Woodgetters’.

At that time, I had a boyfriend stationed in the same camp as my husband. One evening my boyfriend had to break a date, and since my husband (to be!) was going into Horsham and would be passing my home, he asked him to stop by and tell me.

That was the beginning of our romance, we married, and had our first child in 1943.

My husband loved the countryside around Horsham, and since I drove a bread van, and made deliveries around Slinfold and other areas, my husband would come with me when he was on leave.

He took his discharge in England in February, 1946 and worked at Southwater brickworks until September of that year, when he returned to Canada to find a home for us and the children. I came to Canada in November 1946. We still have friends in Horsham, and have made many trips back to see them.