

August 1942

Saturday 15<sup>th</sup>

... Tom Garland and family left at 9.30—taken in the car to the station by Mommy—we get 4 gallons a month now. At 9.40 Mrs. Shiner called to fetch me, and she dropped me and Hugh at the bottom of Duxton hill. We walked on for 40 minutes until the bus caught up. We arrived in Cūiche.

## Home Front

**August 1942:** Summer holiday work on the harvest at Shiner's farm near Glatting (stacking the cereal crop into stooks is called 'shocking up'). Canadian army units were stationed nearby. David (Wolfe) was a neighbour and friend (who went to Eton), and George was an evacuee staying at Glatting.

After lunch I drove down in the car, Hugh and I being dropped at the cinema. Russia was strongly urging an Anglo-American invasion of France to open a 'Second Front'.

News out in Russia: *Malia* convoy fights through, *Eagle* (our a-c. carrier) sunk.

Monday 17<sup>th</sup>

News—Maikop oilfield very scorched and left by Russians. More threat to Stalingrad. America consolidating with very heavy losses in the Solomons. I shocked up in the morning 9-12, repairing fallen ones—a miserable job...

Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup>

More shocking up. ... It was a scorcher of a day, and we were doing horribly floppy and tickly barley—I was miserable and we were all bad tempered and worked badly, getting little done. ...

News. Churchill has been having important talks with Joe [Stalin] and [Ambassador] Harriman (USA). (This yesterday published). Daddy said

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*Said Churchill to Stalin*

*"I think you're a darlin'."*

*Said Joseph "You've said it,*

*But a 2<sup>nd</sup> front would be more to you're credit."*

*Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup>*

*Cooler day. I was woken at 7.30 by Margaret shouting excitedly "Mommy! Mommy! We've started a Second Front!". I leapt out of bed saying "Good God!" and went to hear the details. Francis had heard in the village, we'd landed in France. What excitement! We turned on the news—A raid by a force, largely of Canadians, was in progress in the Dieppe area. This is not an invasion. DAMN RUMOUR. My goodness what a flop. Awful anticlimax.*

*We worked six hours on the barley field, hard, and we just finished by 4.15 with help from Mrs. Shiner. ...*

*The Dieppe raid was a disaster—as a result of poor security, the Germans were ready, and the Canadians suffered heavy casualties.*

*Thursday 20<sup>th</sup>*

*... We went off to Petworth by car at 9.30, to shop and to have Margaret and me vaccinated for smallpox, of which there is an outbreak. He cleaned the skin, poured on serum, and then jabbed slightly painfully with a needle six or seven times. Margaret he scratched and rubbed. ...*

*Letter from J [of Benenden]—thank god I met the postwoman today. She too is sobered. It's a silly business, because none of them share my interests really, though I suppose few at school do either. Quite a nice letter, though. ...*

*Friday 21<sup>st</sup>*

*Shocking up barley in the morning. David came to stay, as his mother's gone to have two growths on her back operated on (due to X-ray burn 12 years ago). In the afternoon we first tied up loose bundles, then we thinned swedes until it started to rain, when we went into the piggery and entertained the pigs. ...*

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Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup>

... we went to two really bad films—but not bad enough to be funny—'The Man who came to Dinner' and 'The Stork Club'—both Hollywood at its worst. The news had some quite good Malta convoy pictures. ...

Thursday 27<sup>th</sup>

... 2 exhausted soldiers (Canada) came in for a wash, eventually stayed for supper and night. One was feeling (and looking) rotten—he had eaten too many apples (whose??)—we gave him bicarbonate of soda, which worked.

News—flare up expected in Egypt; fierce sea and air battle in Far East; Stalingrad threat held at the moment, serious. Big Russian attack N.W. of Moscow—35 miles advance.

Sunday 30<sup>th</sup>

John's birthday. Not very good weather. During the morning and after lunch I painted a beehive and then helped in a glorious honey separation and bee utensil wash, which only ended just before tea.

After tea I went for a 'nice quiet' walk on the downs with Daddy. Up the green slope, and then we found ourselves in the middle of an enormous camp of soldiers, with all the lorries etc. hidden under blackthorn and a nice white table cloth for supper (officers). Our quiet walk caused some amusement. We went on to Bignor Hill and down through the woods, back past Salter's.

2 soldiers arrived, to whom we gave tea and sandwiches—one had fallen down the hill, hurting his knee and back. The food was George's, taken away in punishment for being 20 mins. late yet again for a meal. Eventually Mommy took them off in the car to the Bury-Arundel road, as they were making for Goring (Worthing).

As she left, a cyclist (soldier) came in, who was similarly fed. All three were very nice. Then as we started supper, 4 'whacked' 'deserters' from the HQ platoon came in—we gave them a wash and then they came and had supper—minus the first course. All were very nice—[Canadians] from the country. Amused at scale of [English] farming. From Angmering, which one failed utterly to pronounce.

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*After supper we all (except Nora who doesn't like alcohol and is having a fit of depression) drank John's health. Nice having all these people in.*

*Monday 31<sup>st</sup>*

*...Margaret and I spent the whole morning cleaning and greasing Martin's car—quite fun, and we worked together, better than usual. (There are apt to be rows when we do this). ... we poured out the honey from the centrifugal machine, getting over 20 lbs—2 x the expected. Good.*

*... David came back ... He'd spent the morning [at Shiner's farm] gossiping—the men are discontented with the foreman, J B, because his interest has (noticeably) switched from the farm to the nice (both are) landgirl Joan (who is Mrs. Williams), and he's neglecting the farm. ...*

*Margaret leaves tomorrow for 4 weeks in a shell filling factory as a guinea pig to study the effects of TNT poisoning (blood etc. tests before and after) .*

**September**

*Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup>*

*...we flattened some pennies under the train (David's pennies). What's the penalty for 'defacing a coin of the Realm'?*

*News—a stand before Stalingrad, 1,000,000 axis troops there. Flare up in Egypt, no major engagements yet.*

*Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup>*

*The post brought the following card, much earlier than I'd expected: from the HM Gresham's School, Newquay. School Certificate, July 1942. You have obtained a certificate with Matric. Exn. in the list of subjects which follows. ... [signed] Excellent (PSN). Gee! Far better than I'd dared expect ... 6 VGs [very goods], 3 Cs [credits]. I felt quite happy.*

*... At 11 o'clock we had been at war for three years. How many more? This must be the last war. ...*

September 1942

Sunday 6<sup>th</sup>

... [Daddy, Nora and I] went up Farm Hill where we basked and collected blackberries, seeing two interesting birds—a redstart and my first nightjar. On the way back we collected rubber salvage (half a tire used as pheasants' drinking trough, pre-war), which I had to carry and roll; and I arrived back hot, dirty and cross, after having to make a detour due to its refusal to roll straight. Also Nora annoyed me, as she refused to carry anything. ...

Stalingrad drive held, Germans claim Novorossisk.

Monday 7<sup>th</sup>

Daddy left by the 9.5, after a happy weekend. There were nice letters awaiting him too, 2 from John, happier with nice rooms, sailing, swimming and more medicine; 1 from Martin who had flown from London to Malvern in a 'Defiant' in 20 mins. They'd gone up in a Blenheim, but no planes large enough for 3 were available for the return, so they went in 3 Defiants flying 20ft apart.

Margaret is filling landmines, and has a lovely hostel to live in. Her hair may go orange if exposed (TNT). ...

Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup>

... Stalingrad still holds, we ... won victory in Egypt when Africa Corps [German] tried to advance last week; Churchill reviews war situation in house. ...

Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup>

Lots and lots of Dieppe leaflets [dropped] in the night. ... after lunch David and I collected some 70 each from Shiner's big field, and we left the ones chewed by sheep. ...

These were German propaganda showing pictures of dead and captured Canadian soldiers from the Dieppe raid.