

Life at Park Farm

Wartime was a bit of a hassle. Because we had a large house we were allocated quite a few evacuees. At one time we had 13, ranging from 3 to 12 years of age. At that time there was only Mum to look after them. Mum bathed the boys and I took on the girls and light washing. Mum did the sandwiches for the school lunches, being 10 evacuees plus Joy, Pat and I.

We had our share of bombs on the farm. One incendiary bomb landed on a straw stack. The Westcott fire brigade was called to help, but instead of putting their hose in the pond, it was put in the sewer which ran right down through the farm before it was corrected. I don't know who had to clean the hose afterwards.

Another dropped on the end of a row of potatoes where Joy was going to dig some for Mum after she had delivered her 1 pint bottle of milk to Mrs Hellier by the Wotton vicarage - this lady always gave us ginger biscuits. The fire was still burning merrily when we went to see the near miss.

There was a well in the roof of Park Farm house and you had to climb into it through a small attic window. We used to lie on the roof and peep over the top. It was great to watch the dog fights over Ranmore, we even saw an airman drop down on a parachute. There were puffs of smoke from the 'ack ack' guns as the German planes were kept away from London. Dad was a bit cross when he knew what his daughters were up to.

A stick of incendiaries (a bread basket) dropped along the hill opposite the house. Tom Mol (Molyneux) and Alma ran up there and covered them in with earth. Tom thanked Alma for her help and for being brave at 15 years old.

Mr G Lucas Sr was making his way up to the mangle field for hoeing, and Ernest Hawkins, an evacuee, was in the field at the back of the house when a German plane shot at them. They were very shook up but both survived without a scratch. There were eight high explosives dropped in all. One was over the heath where Dr Billings was injured. Another landed in Mr. Freeland's field over the hedge at the bottom of our park. The pond is still there from the hole the bomb made. Then one was buried under the bend in the road leading from the Lake View cottages to the Deerleap. This didn't explode.

We had a tank trap dug along the North Downs, with pill boxes dotted along the upper side of it. The pill boxes were disguised as little houses. The brick work of one is still up Whitedown Road but the camouflage wood work has long gone. This pill box covered any vehicle coming up the hill. In case of an invasion we on the farm were asked to guide any of our soldiers the quickest and safest way to the pill box. A sigh of relief when there wasn't an invasion for we were living the wrong side of the tank trap.