

# CHINNOR HERITAGE



During the Second World War the men and women of Chinnor fought their war on what Winston Churchill call the 'Front line of Freedom' in the fields and hills of the countryside.

From contemporary sources this is a fictional account of farm life during that period compiled by:

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**Rebecca's diary: an account of  
her life in Chinnor during the  
second world war.**

## Forward

We do hope you enjoy what is a fictional diary of a teenager living in Chinnor, saw and spent her everyday life during WW2

No doubt many of her thoughts and ideas still resonate today

Chinnor Heritage would be grateful if you do enjoy reading Rebecca's diary for a small donation to help with adding further functionality to the website including a search engine and drone mages.

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**Thank you**

## **Introduction**

Once upon a time, and now, there was a lovely village called Chinnor which nestled at the foot of the Chiltern Hills. It was a farming village, and the soil was rich and fertile providing wonderful crops. At first the people who lived in the village were mostly farmers but over the years many had founded their own businesses such as blacksmith or grocer. It had a rector and at different times in history someone to take care of the villagers' health by mixing up herbal medicines or helping to deliver babies.

In this village was a family whose ancestors had lived in the village for hundreds of years and their names were recorded in the parish records as far back as 1500.

Mother Anne and Father John owned a farm. They had a daughter called Rebecca aged 12 coming up 13 as well as a son aged 18 called Joshua. Grandad who also lived with them, was retired, but helped around the farm. They

had a cat whose name nobody could



remember and was just called puss

Puss was a farm cat, and his main job was to get rid of the rats which threatened to destroy the crops stored in the barns. Unfortunately, nobody had told him this so instead of going out hunting he spent his time curled up in front of the fire and at night slept on Joshua's bed. They also had a sappy dog called Freddie who was a sort of a sheepdog but nobody was quite sure.



## **Lead up to war 1938 - 1939**

For a long time, the government had been aware of the very strong likelihood of a war with Germany? and consequently had laid down plans to protect as many of the population as possible from the dangers of bombing.

## **Evacuation**

The first indication of the Government Evacuation Scheme appeared in April 1939 which set out the Government plans for moving children and vulnerable adults, the blind and the handicapped and pregnant women, evacuating mothers and children first.

The evacuation began on the 1st September 1939 and it was envisaged that 3,000,000 people would be moved and that it would take several days to complete. Approximately 9,000 school children were evacuated to Oxfordshire in the first four days of September 1939. Approximately 6,000 were evacuated with their teachers and were distributed among 98

schools in Oxfordshire, seventeen temporary schools being opened. Amongst the areas listed for evacuation was Barking from which St. Joseph and St. Ethelburga schools were evacuated to Chinnor



Friday 1<sup>st</sup> September 1939

We join *Rebecca* as she begins to write in her diary which was given as a birthday present on her 12<sup>th</sup> birthday from her mother last January:

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What a day!!! The family has been turned upside down!!!! We were just having breakfast after milking when there was a knock at the door and in came Miss Leverkus our doctor's sister. Her job was to find families in the village to house evacuees from London.

Mum is a member of the Women's Institute and they had been talking about this for months. Mum and Miss Leverkus sat and discussed the situation and after consulting dad mum agreed to take two children. I'm not sure what I think about having small children in the house. I like my own room and I certainly don't want to share. Apparently, a bus load of children was due to arrive shortly so I decided to have a look and chose them myself.



When I arrived with mum, there was a large group of children some with their mothers. They did look scared! clutching their toys and their gas masks and, they had a label attached to their coats. I wouldn't have liked that.

Anyway, I went up to one boy aged about 8 and told him my name was Rebecca and asked him what his was? 'David' he whispered. It was difficult to hear him with all the noise going on. He said that he wanted his mummy. Then he started to cry, saying that he could not find his twin sister and he was supposed to look after her. He then told me that she is wearing a red coat and carrying her teddy bear. David looked very sad. So, I said I would help try to find her. It didn't take long to spot her in her red coat. I said hello and are you lost and have you lost your brother David?' she said yes and told me her name was Mary. We held hands and walked back to where David was standing with mum.

Mum gave them both a hug and said we should all go back for some lunch and send their mother a postcard to tell her that they had arrived safely.

After we had had lunch David and Mary sat with mum to write a post card home. We found a 2d stamp and Joshua took the card to our post office at the top of the high street.



Mary and David were still very tearful and sad at being away from their mum but after supper and a cuddle from my mum they got into their twin beds upstairs under the eaves of the farm house not in my bedroom I am glad to say!!!! and sobby dog and puss got onto the beds to comfort them and keep them company.



## Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1939

Today its bright and sunny and our normal Sunday chores started with milking our herd of shorthorns, as well as trying to stop puss licking the milk from the buckets. Our Sunday church service was early today and the Rector Mr Moxon did not talk too long so we were back in plenty of time for elevenses. I usually have a glass of milk and one of mum's home-made biscuits. David and Mary had some to.



After elevenses, Mary and David went with their teacher to Thame as they were Roman Catholic, and we are Church of England. Mr Moxon had warned us to listen to the wireless as the prime minister was about to make an announcement. So, we all sat around the wireless listening to the Prime Minister Mr Chamberlain explaining to everyone in the country about his

governments' plans to try and prevent a war with Germany.

We all listened in silence as Mr. Chamberlain admitted that his plans had not worked and that

'Consequently, this country is at war with Germany.'

I was both excited and scared 'what would I do'!!! I was due to leave school next year when I am 14 and either go into service or go to one of the lacemaking schools or stay and work on the farm. I don't fancy the first two.

We all sat in silence for a long time trying to understand what the news meant for us all.

Dad was worried about what would happen to the farm but grandad said that he was there to help and that farmers like dad would not have to fight we will need all the food we can grow ourselves.

Joshua upset mum by saying he would volunteer right away for the Ox and Bucks (Light Infantry). Mum started to cry which frightened

us all as she never cries even when the calves are sent to market after she has raised them from babies. Dad went to the dresser and rummaged around for a while and eventually took some leaflets out of a drawer and said he had better read them as they were from the government about what to do in an air raid, fire precautions in war time and how to use your gas masks, didn't honestly think we would ever have to use them'. They are ugly and smell unpleasant. We must carry them everywhere with us even going to school.





so, that is how all our lives changed because of what the Prime Minister said on the wireless

Later, when they came back from church in Thame David and Mary went to the welcoming tea arranged by the WI for all the evacuees and their mothers, 60 children 30 mothers.

Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> September 1939

Mary and David are still very sad and homesick, and I feel very sorry for them. Puss and soppo dog sleep with them every night to keep them company and this seems to help. They are really scared stiff of cows not having been close to one before as well as our farm horses, Flanagan and Allen (after the comedians) who are as gentle as lambs.



Well about today's upset. Joshua has enrolled in the Ox and Bucks light infantry (lightbobs) and starts his training in a couple of weeks. Mum is trying to be brave but not succeeding very well I found her sobbing into the flank of our Jersey

house cow Daisy as she milked her. Dad is walking around looking very glum and grandad keeps on about General Haig whoever he is.



## Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> September 1939

Joshua left for his army training today, so everyone is feeling miserable. Gillian his girlfriend came round to say goodbye. She is very upset as they have been walking out for over six months now.

Dad got some good news though he is to have two land girls to help on the farm. He is not too happy about this as they could be city girls and he doesn't think they will be any good. Farm work is very heavy and very long hours especially in the summer. I don't know where we are going to put them. I am not sharing my room as I said before, war or no war!!!!!!!



Mr Smith has appointed himself as an ARP warden!!!! Bossy old coot he has been going round the village inspecting everyone's black out curtains and shouting if he saw any lights showing. He loves shouting 'turn that light out'.

Although we are not a military target dad says we are under the flight path to the midlands and there are some RAF stations nearby.

Mum says I am not old enough to go to their dances yet unfortunately and dad said over his dead body. Honestly!!!! Haven't got a dress to wear anyway, I've grown so much nothing fits!!



We might have to have one of those Anderson shelters. Hope not they don't look very comfortable



### *Anderson air raid shelter*

I found this information in a book I borrowed from our library. It's quite interesting so I thought I would copy it out and put it in my diary. You know I might want to read about them in the future.

- Designed in 1938 by Sir John Anderson to withstand German air raids.
- Named after Sir John Anderson.
- Made of curved and straight panels of galvanized corrugated steel.
- Designed to house six people.
- Over 3 million Anderson shelters were put up in Britain.

Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> October 1939

Gosh we were very busy with the harvest today nearly forgot first aid classes tonight. Dr L runs these and is usually very interesting. We practice using bandages on each other and my friends and I can't stop laughing we looked like mummies.



Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> October 1939

Dad and grandad are sitting listening to 'Its that man again' (ITMA). which does a lot to cheer them up. Even mum is looking a bit better although

Joshua has gone. She is convinced he could have had an exemption (that's a big word for me but it means he would not have had to go to war because by working on the farm, farming is a reserved occupation) but he was determined to 'do his bit'. Dad said he could easily do his bit by working on the farm and not upsetting mum, but she said she understood.

I had to go to the library to look up 'reserved occupation' because Dad was too busy to explain it to me. My English teacher says I'm very good at English and I often get a gold star for my work.

Mum took Mary and David to get registered with Dr. Leverkus as patients. Poor Dr Leverkus is working so hard, sorting out the evacuees some of whom are so ungrateful for all

her work and just take themselves off back to London without even telling her.

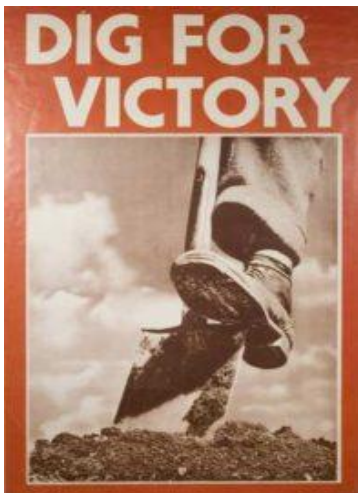
Apparently, it's too quiet here!!!!!! And they miss their shops. Actually, according to mum Chinnor is well prepared for war. For some years mum has been attending the Chinnor branch of the WI and they have been having talks on first aid and how to cope with an emergency.

Now war has been declared a first aid post has been set up in the village hall to supply hot water and bandages, and Dr Leverkus has started giving lectures on first aid to the whole village. We have a Red Cross committee and Mrs Cuthbert is the deputy commandant.

Friday 13<sup>th</sup> October 1939

Another message from The Minister of Agriculture they get boring, but they have come up with a new plan for food called Dig for Victory.

All spare land must be used for growing food. There is lots of spare land in Chinnor that could be used such as the front of the village hall and White's field. The parish council is having a right go at allotment holders who are not doing anything with their plots!!!! Everyone is digging up their gardens we are forbidden to plant flowers only vegetables.



Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> October 1939

Mary and David seem to be settling in better. Chinnor village children go to school in the morning and evacuee children go after lunch as the school is too small to have us in school all together.



Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> October 1939

Harvest festival today. I like harvest festival and all the jolly hymns we sing. 'We plough the fields and scatter' Most of the villagers were in Church and many of them in uniform. Not quite sure what they all are, might have to visit the library again. I did think about those who could not be with us today as they are away fighting the war.

25<sup>th</sup> December 1939

Hello Diary, sorry not to have written before it's been so busy. What with harvest, and winter planting, then trying to get ready for Christmas.

We went to church after milking. David and Mary very homesick. Chicken for Christmas Lunch. Last night's midnight service was cancelled because of the difficulty in blacking out the stained-glass windows in the church.

Mum made a Christmas cake from a Ministry of Food recipe 156 I made mock marzipan from almond essence mostly sugar water and flour. As there was no wrapping paper it made keeping presents a secret hard, but we managed. Mum filled stockings for David and Mary with homemade toys sent by their mother. We listened to the King and his message to us all.

We were late with the second milking and the cows were very restless. David and Mary not so frightened of them now.



Our King he looked so very solemn sending his Christmas message to all here and across the world. He must be very very sad.

Monday 1<sup>st</sup> January 1940

Can't help but think of the king's Christmas message I have made a note of it in my diary,

He said:

*'I said to the man who stood at the gate of  
the year give me a light that I*

*may tread safely into the unknown*

*He replied Go out into the darkness and put your  
hand into the hand of God*

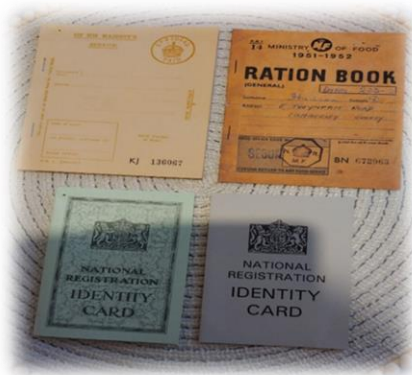
*That shall be to you better than light and safer  
than a known way.'*

Monday 8<sup>th</sup> Jan 1940

Gosh something else for us to do. The government has announced a system of food rationing which will apply to everyone. It is to make sure that everyone has a fair chance of obtaining food.

It is starting with bacon, butter and sugar. We all have ration books and must register with a butcher and a grocer for our rations. In Chinnor this is Chas. Brazell grocer and butcher, Mr Saw!

The ministry of health is organising a national campaign to vaccinate children from diphtheria. Apparently, it is on the increase due to people crowding together in air raid shelters.



Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> January 1940

My birthday!!! 13 years old. I'm a teenager. How exciting is that. I wonder if I will get more pocket money now.

As usual a diary from mum plus some books. Nothing from dad but mum says the books and diary are from both.

As long as I have a book to read, I am happy! (the library in Chinnor is very small). Mum made me a birthday cake from rations.

## Easter Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> March 1940

We had cardboard easter eggs with sweets from our ration inside from Miss Hicks shop in station road. Better than no sweets at all.

Mum has started our spring nettle tonic doses. Nettles are full of goodness and a wine tonic or nettle soup is very common in the village.



I am sure at 13 I am too old for all this, but mum insists.

Friday 5<sup>th</sup> April 1940

Mum is looking very tired and worn out. She does get paid 10/6d and 8/ to feed the twins, but she still has to cope with sorting out the various ration allowed for bacon, ham, butter and sugar for everyone on the farm as well as coping with all the extra work.

The land girls have one allowance, grandad another and mum and dad another. Plus, there is all the extra work in looking after the twins who have yet another allowance.

David started to wet the bed when he arrived. Mum was very kind and said it was because he missed his mother, and everything was so strange and new. It still gave mum a lot of extra washing to do with soap powder rationed.

David's head teacher came and visited him to have a chat and reassure him. As if this is not enough, we have not heard from Joshua for some weeks. He is in France with the Ox and Bucks and the German army is advancing across Europe and everybody is talking about the danger of invasion. Gosh I am scared.



Dad's life is made more difficult as the army keeps leaving obstacles in the fields to make it more difficult for planes or paratroopers to land. Trying to plough around the obstacles is a nightmare.

Mr Smith keeps coming to the school for gas mask drill and demonstrate stirrup pumps



as well as banging on about blackout regulations. I found this about blackout regulations in an old magazine and copied it out so that I would not forget.

'Blackout regulations were imposed on 1st September 1939, before the declaration of war. These required that all windows and doors should be covered at night with suitable

material such as heavy curtains, cardboard or paint, to prevent the escape of any glimmer of light that might aid enemy aircraft. The Government ensured that the necessary materials were available. External lights such as streetlights were switched off, or dimmed and shielded to deflect light downward. Essential lights such as traffic lights and vehicle headlights were fitted with slotted covers to deflect their beams downwards to the ground.

Shops and factories had problems. Factories with large areas of glass roofing found it impossible to install temporary blackout panels and permanent methods (such as paint) lost natural light during daylight. Shops had to install double "airlock" doors to avoid lights showing as customers arrived and departed.

Blackouts proved one of the more unpleasant aspects of the war, disrupting many civilian activities and causing widespread grumbling and lower morale.

The blackout was enforced by civilian ARP wardens, who would ensure that no buildings allowed the slightest peek or glow of light.

Offenders were liable to stringent legal penalties.<sup>1</sup>

Blackout restrictions greatly increased the dangers of night driving and fatalities increased. Therefore, as a result, some aspects were relaxed and speed limits were lowered. Fatalities were also recorded amongst merchant seamen falling into the docks at night and drowning during the blackout.

Crime also increased under cover of darkness, from looting, theft, burglary, robbery, fraud, and gang-related activities to rape and murder, and even serial murder.'

Gosh that last bit really frightened me, but mum said I was letting my imagination run away with me

I really like practicing my writing copying out these bits from old magazines. My teacher will be pleased. Hope I get another gold star

Monday 15<sup>th</sup> April 1940

The land girls are good fun.

One is very posh and is call Pamela and is a really good worker the other, also very good, is Caroline.

Pamela has worked on her father's estate and didn't fancy the WRNS which her mama, as she calls her, was keen for her to join.

Apparently, they are what she called a naval family going back some generations!!!! I was surprised that she put up with the cold and the food so well as she was so posh, but she said that having grown up in a medieval castle and gone to boarding school it was no big deal!!!!!! The other day she let me try out her lipstick!!! Mum had a fit!!!!



A major disaster this morning, because of the obstacles in the fields our farm horse Flanagan cut his lower leg on some metal. The vet costs a fortune so mum, who is actually very clever at anything medical, dressed his



wound. He was very good and stood still for her. Not sure when he can work again, we may have to borrow a horse from the village. Allen will not like that as he is very particular who he ploughs with and always likes to be on the near side.

Mum gets all her medical knowledge from the doctor book which a few of my friend's families also have. It has some very interesting chapters in it which mum says I can read when I am older!! Little does she know. She also goes to Miss Hick's shop in station road which sells, in addition to sweets, Miss Hicks's own medicines, mostly bottles of pink liquid.

Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> April 1940

Letter from Josh!!!! Somewhere in France. Can't tell us anything but he is alive. I felt a bit like crying.

Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> May 1940

Mr Chamberlain has resigned as Prime Minister and Winston Churchill has taken up the job. He is known by most of us as Winnie





Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> May 1940

We are to have a citizen's army of Local Defence Volunteers in case of an invasion. The idea is to use men who are either too young or too old for the forces, like granddad, or what they call reserved occupations like dad.

They both came home from their meeting of the British Legion in their headquarters in the Royal Oak eager to enrol.

Yesterday, Winnie made a speech to the House of Commons and he said that 'he had nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat'. Dad said not much different from farming.



## Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> May 1940

Joshua's birthday, he is 19 today. Think he lied about his age to join up. So, missing him. Sent letters and cards I hope he gets them; they must be sent to his battalion before he is allowed to have them. Many prayers for his safe return. Mum made a small cake and we sang happy birthday for him.



## Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> May 1940

War news bad. The German army has surrounded us at the port called Dunkirk in France. The King has called for a National Day of Prayer on Sunday. The twins have an uncle in the Royal Navy and all available Royal Navy ships are sailing across the channel to rescue our soldiers. Civilians with boats have been asked to be ready sail to help bring back out troops. I feel very sad.



## Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> May 1940

On the news this morning the government once again has sent out a call for any boats at all that could cross the channel and bring the men back.

I sat glued to the wireless for the latest news. There was no news of the Ox and Bucks.



## Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> May 1940

Everyone who was able to be spared was in church this morning for the King's Day of prayer following a military parade through the village behind Chinnor band. Boy scouts, Red Cross, ARPs etc. which was filmed. They all looked so very smart and proud. I can't wait to join up. Mum says not to be so silly I'm only 13 and it's bad enough not knowing what's happening to Joshua let alone letting me join up as well. 'Get on with your chores my girl she said'.

Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> June 1940

Now we must go and look for any scrap metal.  
Guess who gets that job?.

Mum sent me round the farm to the old out houses to look for old scrap iron or metal, there has been a national call for any salvage to help the war effort. To think that our old plough might become part of a spitfire!!!!!!



Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> June 1940

How horrid, France has fallen and there is only the channel between us and the German army.

Apparently, Winnie has said that what he called the battle of France is over and that the battle of Britain was about to begin. Everyone is very nervous and stressed expecting an invasion at any moment.

Mr Smith is worse than usual ranting on about 5<sup>th</sup> columnists, parachuting nuns and goodness knows what else.

Dad and grandad have now joined the LDV in Chinnor and met up with others in the scout hut for a parade. Mr Benton put himself in charge apparently (he served in the first world war). its official title is 4<sup>th</sup> Oxfordshire Battalion 11 platoon home guard. They haven't got any weapons yet but are improvising with anything sharp to hand, like pitchforks and hoes. Some have had previous military experience which is valuable.

Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> June 1940

More news good and bad!!!! This afternoon there was a knock on the door and there stood Mrs Hill our postmistress holding a yellow telegram in her hand. She said she had brought it herself as it might be bad news and she knew mum and dad very well. It was from the War Office

Mum went very pale. We all held our breath as she opened the envelope slowly and read the message.

**From the War Office**

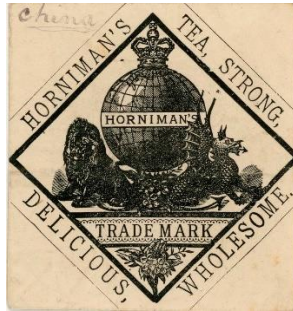
***Information received through the International Red Cross Committee states that your son Joshua is a prisoner of war.***





Monday 5<sup>th</sup> July 1940

Tea is now rationed 2 ozs per week each!!!!!! We will never win this war without tea!!!!



Our old tea tin is not even half full now.

Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> August 1940

Busy with harvest all hands to the pump no time for writing. LDV now Home Guard. Still with pitchforks!!

## Monday 12<sup>th</sup> August 1940

Since they came to stay with us mum sets the twins to write home to their mum and dad every week, but mum reads the replies first so that the news is not too frightening for them.

Their mum and dad always try to sound cheerful and send positive news of friends and relatives.

Haven't written much about the twins since they came to stay but they have settled into farm life well except for getting used to our cockerel who is permanently bad tempered. Think he is always like dad who is always bad tempered these days.

Mary who was once very frightened has now learned to milk a cow!!!!!! Well Bluebell anyway who is so dozy she would hardly notice.

David likes to ride on Flanagan when they go to the fields for ploughing or harvesting but mum not happy about this as grandad told her the

story of a young boy who was killed 55 years ago  
when the shire horse, he was riding, bolted



Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> August 1940

RAF Benson was attacked last night by fighters using machine guns to try and damage aircraft on the ground. I am frightened as the war became very real and close to home. Haven't hear about any casualties yet, I hope everyone is OK.

According to Chinnor's Unofficial War Cabinet (who think themselves so important) and meets in the Lord Nelson pub after HG parade on Sundays. Twitter on about how Hitler needs to knock the RAF out of the skies and obtain total air superiority before attempting to invade.

We have taken on rationing, like the Government said. We have mum's strange recipes from the WI, restricted travel and general disruption

Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> August 1940

The war in the air has now been called the Battle of Britain all over our coastal defences. It goes on and on.

Winnie spoke again on the RAF and their bravery.

'Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few'

## Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> September 1940

Horrid war news. Last night there was a massive air raid on London. Apparently, the docks were targeted with incendiary bombs, and they returned later with high explosive bombs. Nearly all the city was ablaze. Hundreds of people killed. Dad turned off the wireless quickly so that the twins would not hear it and become frightened.

It is difficult to shield the twins from the news as they hear news at school. Mum tries to comfort them as much as possible, but they are often very tearful. Even puss and sobby dog are not a lot of help although puss puts up with being hugged very tightly by Mary.

We are holding up against Hitler when he is bombing our coastline so it seems he is turning his attention to our big cities. What a horrid little man he is.





David and Mary are very very upset and scared, their dad is a firefighter in the city and mum a nurse at Barking hospital which used to be an isolation hospital. Which means it was only used for diseases such as TB but now is a casualty hospital for Barking and Dagenham. Mum sat with them all day trying to comfort them. Late with milking.

1<sup>st</sup> October 1940

It gets worse!!!!!! 4 bombs landed around Kingston Blount last night fortunately no one was hurt.

I wish with all my heart this horrid war would stop and everyone go home to their own homes. I hate it.

Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> October 1940

A Bomb landed on Aston Rowant no one hurt.  
Can't understand why bombing AR. Dad says it is  
not always deliberate, bombs might be dropped  
to lighten the load of a damaged plane. It  
happens all over the countryside.

Friday 25<sup>th</sup> and Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> October

The Germans bombed the RAF airfield in Chalgrove.



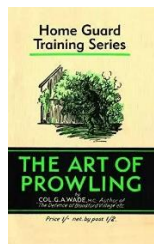
Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> October 1940

New rules from the government we are not to put our clocks back an hour this year.

Dad not happy.

He and Grandad just back from a weekend training session with the Home Guard. Still with pitchforks. On the art of 'prowling' eg how to move across country without being seen and how to capture a German paratrooper without getting killed yourself.

Dad says he has spent 2 days being taught by an idiot of an officer from headquarters all the techniques he has been using since he started poaching at the age of 14.



Monday 28<sup>th</sup> October 1940

Gosh oh golly gumdrops, wonderful news a postcard from Joshua he is in a prisoner of war camp Stalag V1j near Krefeld. He says he is ok for food and being well treated. He obviously doesn't want to worry mum. Dad I was not so sure.



Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> November 1940

How very sad, the most serious and destructive raid on Coventry lasting all night. I have only seen pictures of the beautiful cathedral but we have been told it was destroyed and there are many casualties.



## Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> November 1940

Terrible fright last evening we were all listening to ITMA again with the twins, when the sound of an air raid siren went off. We all jumped to our feet and rushed to the window pulling the blackout curtain back to see if we could spot any German aircraft.

'Put that light out' shouted Mr Smith

I reckon he has been dying to yell that since the war started!!!!

Mum led the way to the basement of the Rectory which is the public air raid shelter for us in Chinnor.

As we walked up Church road, we saw Bert Howlett on his three wheeler bike calling out the other air raid wardens. Mary was upset as the rules were that soppo dog and puss could not go into the public shelters. Once inside the basement we listened out for the sound of German aircraft.

This morning, we woke to the sound of a mighty explosion and a cry from an ARP warden calling



for assistance in the grounds of the Black Boy pub in Station Road. A stray high explosive bomb had exploded on the allotment behind the pub. The explosion blew the glass out of Brazell grocer shop in Lower Road!!!

The landlord of the Black Boy had two grandchildren evacuated to him for the duration but when their mother heard about how close the bomb had landed, she took her children back to London immediately.

An Incendiary bomb landed on Kingston Blount and several incendiary bombs were dropped in surrounding fields, only one casualty, a slightly injured bullock.

Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> December 1940

Mum helping at the WI Christmas shop which raised £25 which they have sent to the Village Hall they are going to hold a party for the evacuees.

Asked mum if I could go with Gillian to a dance at the village hall. She and dad discussed it, dad not happy as I am only 13 nearly 14 but for once I could go but had to be in no later than 9.30pm. OOH dad I said, but he put his hand up which means no argument.

Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> December 1940

## Christmas day

Got the decorations up last night they are rather old and looked a bit depressing but there is no paper to replace them. Mum has made a Christmas cake and Christmas pudding from recipes provided by the women's institutes.



Back In September they had had a competition within the Chinnor group for a wartime cake and mums' recipe came second!!! Of course, we are ok for eggs but sugar and flour are rationed.

We all made presents for each other and David and Mary did drawings for all of us. The picture of dad which they did was so funny they made his nose look so big. I could not stop laughing. Dad did one of his 'Urh humps' but he did laugh in the end.

Monday 30<sup>th</sup> December 1940

The twins' dad was one of the firefighters answering Winnie's call to 'save St Pauls'

Then a Telegram from twins mum came today.

'Dad in hospital with smoke he inhaled and burns, serious raid on London last night. St Paul's cathedral surrounded by smoke and flames.' Stop



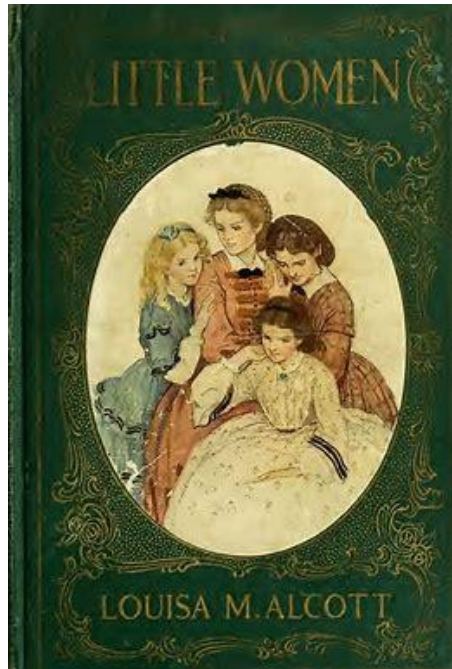
Saturday January 18<sup>th</sup> 1941

Yippee it's my birthday and I am 14 today.

That means I can leave school now I hate it so I will be pleased to leave.

Oh no, when at breakfast I said this to mum and dad about leaving today, they said I was staying on until the end of the summer term and they have told the school that. Its not fair, most of my friends are leaving on their 14<sup>th</sup> birthdays, why not me. Dad said I was not to argue.

Things are getting very scares, but mum and dad have managed to get me a new book, well new to me anyway, it is slightly battered but I don't mind that. It's called Little Women. I have only read a couple of paragraphs, but I know I am going to enjoy **it**.



Disaster this morning during milking. That cow of a cow Bluebell kicked the milk bucket over as I was milking her. Milk everywhere puss, came to help mop it up!!!! Dad cross

Thursday February 13<sup>th</sup> 1941

Apparently the Chinnor WI has not produced as many onions and tomatoes as they should. Not sure what is going to happen.

Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> February 1941

RAF Chalgrove bombed again. Dad has been issued with a booklet 'First Aid in Air Raids' it is very good not just theory but practical for an air raid situation.



Monday 10<sup>th</sup> March 1941

Medicinal plants scheme

I learned something new today. It seems we are getting seriously short of medicine as we normally buy them from Europe which of course we can't do now, so a County Herb Committee has been formed to collect medicinal herbs and plants from the countryside.

The WI is taking the lead with this and recruiting help from the girl guides, scouts and school children. It all must be carefully planned and co-ordinated as the plants do not keep but have to be dried immediately after harvesting and they all get harvested at a different time. It seems that we particularly need foxgloves, which are growing all over the Chiltern Hills around Chinnor.

They are used to make a medicine called digitalis which is used for heart problems.



Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> March 1941

Parade day for dad, grandad and the Home Guard in the Rectory yard. They do look funny trying to be soldiers.



We were told to put our clocks forward an hour although last October we did not put them back. This gives us 2 hours of extra daylight in the evening. Apparently, it is so that we can save energy and workers can get home in daylight before the air raids start.

Dad not at all happy and no one has told our cows this and the change in routine has upset them and their milk production. As if this was not enough their food is rationed as well as ours. Dad says 'How anyone expects us to produce our quota of milk when the cows are not fed properly is anyone's guess.'

There is an outbreak of measles in the village 9 cases reported so far. I hope the twins don't get it from school it is a really nasty illness.

Apparently, you might have to be nursed in a darken room to protect the eyes. Fortunately, we do not get ill often. When we do mum has her own medicines which she swears by hot water and black current jam for colds. My friends' mums have other cures:

David's mum gives him raw eggs in hot milk and Samuel has whiskey and hot milk which seems to cure everything. Generally, we just get on with it. It's the same with accidents.

When grandad got kicked in the head by our fat old cow Bluebell (mum says that is no way to speak of God's creatures) he was just a bit odd

for a few days but didn't get any medical help. Mum offered to get aspirin from Brazells but grandad said no.



We had a letter from Joshua via the Red Cross he is well and misses us very much especially soppo dog and puss. He must work labouring as he is a private but under the rules of the Geneva Convention. The Red Cross have visited the camp to make sure they are all being treated properly.



**ICRC**

## Friday 11<sup>th</sup> April 1941 Good Friday

An incendiary bomb landed on Chinnor. No one was hurt thank goodness. Lots of villagers in church this morning thanking God for sparing our village

## Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> April 1941 Easter Sunday

Mr. Moxon's sermon uplifting or as uplifting as it could be with the national and international situation. He is rather boring. Mum and I rather weepy thinking about Joshua who sang in the church choir. Wondered if there would be a service in the camp. Dad said he was sure the army chaplains would hold a service.



Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> May 1941

Mum back from WI meeting. Two soldiers from Aldershot coming to the village for 7 days leave and hosts are required. Mum would love to help but with 2 land girls, the twins as well as the farm and with grandad not well again she just cannot help.

So, she is going to help with collecting clothes for bombed out Londoners. Apparently, the Holborn WVS has sent a request for help. Went through my wardrobe but it is mainly school uniform or dungarees which I have grown out of.

David and Mary have grown a lot since they came. David is getting quite tall, and Mary is becoming very pretty. They were so skinny when they first arrived.



Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> May 1941

I do miss Joshua so much!!! Especially on his birthday but glad he is relatively safe in POW camp, and we do get letters from him via the International Red Cross and we can send him cards which do seem to get through. Mum  
tearful

Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> May 1941

How awful the HMS Hood has been sunk by the Bismark in the Denmark Straits. Only 3 survivors. I cried a bit.



27<sup>th</sup> May 1941

German battleship Bismark sunk!!!!!!! In the Atlantic. Revenge for the Hood!!!! Our Atlantic shipping will be safer now. Mum says revenge is not good



Monday 9<sup>th</sup> June 1941

Dad not happy today he received a long form from the ministry of agriculture Oxfordshire War Agricultural Committee called the National Farm Survey on which he had had to give total acreage of the farm, every detail of his crops and livestock as well as how many men and women he employs on the farm.

Dad was actually quite livid as if he hadn't got enough to do, they wanted him to spend time counting chickens!!!!

The twins offered to help and count the cows honestly!! I know they mean to help but dad is a farmer, and he does know how many cows he has got!!! mum realised that the twins were upset so has taken them off to count the chickens.

CROPS AND GRASS		Statute Acres	LIVE STOCK on holding on 4th June, including any sent for sale on that or previous day		Number (in figures)		
1	Wheat	-	43	Cows and Heifers in milk	4		
2	Barley	-	44	Cows in Calf, but not in milk	-		
3	Oats	-	45	Heifers in Calf, with first Calf	1		
4	Mixed Corn with Wheat in mixture	-	46	Bulls being used for service	-		
5	Mixed Corn without Wheat in mixture	-	47	Bulls (including Bull Calves) being reared for service	-		
6	Rye	-	48	2 years old and above	Male - Female -		
7	Beans, winter or spring, for stock feeding	-	49				
8	Peas, for stock feeding, not for human consumption	-	50	1 year old and under 2	Male - Female 3		
9	Potatoes, first earlies	1 1/2	51			OTHER CATTLE	
10	Potatoes, main crop and second earlies	4 7/8	52	Under 1 year old—	3		
11	Turnips and Swedes, for fodder	1	53	(a) for rearing (excluding Bull Calves being reared for service)			
12	Mangolds	2	54	(b) Intended for slaughter as Calves	-		
13	Sugar Beet	-	55	TOTAL CATTLE AND CALVES	11		
14	Kale, for fodder	-	56	Steers and Heifers over 1 year old being fattened for slaughter before 30th November, 1941	-		
15	Rape (or Cole)	-	57	Ewes kept for further breeding (excluding two-tooth Ewes)	-		
16	Cabbage, Savoys, and Kohl Rabi, for fodder	-	58	Rams kept for service	-		
17	Vetches or Taras	-	59	Two-tooth Ewes (Shearing Ewes or Gimmers) to be put to the ram in 1941	-		
18	Lucerne	-	60	Other Sheep over 1 year old	-		
19	Mustard, for seed	-	61	Ewe Lambs to be put to the ram in 1941	-		
20	Mustard, for fodder or ploughing in	-	62	Ram Lambs for service in 1941	-		
21	Flax, for fibre or linned	-	63	Other Sheep and Lambs under 1 year old	2		
22	Hops, Statute Acres, not Hop Acres	-	64	TOTAL SHEEP AND LAMBS	2		
23	Orchards, with crops, fallow, or grass below the trees	-	65	Sows in Pig	-		
24	Orchards, with small fruit below the trees	-	66	Gilts in Pig	-		
25	Small Fruits, not under orchard trees	7	67	Other Sows kept for breeding	3		
26	Vegetables for human consumption (excluding Potatoes), Flowers and Crops under Glass	17 1/2	68	Barren Sows for fattening	1		
27	All Other Crops not specified elsewhere on this return or grown on patches of less than 1/4 acre	-	69	Boars being used for service	-		
28	Bare Fallow	-	70	ALL OTHER PIGS (not entered above)	Over 5 months old - 2-5 months - Under 2 months -		
29	Clover, Sainfoin, and Temporary Grasses for Mowing this season	-	71			TOTAL PIGS	5
30	Clover, Sainfoin, and Temporary Grasses for Grazing (not for Mowing this season)	-	72			Fowls over 6 months old	20
31	Permanent Grass for Mowing this season	10	73	Fowls under 6 months old	10		
32	Permanent Grass for Grazing (not for Mowing this season), but excluding rough grazings	10 1/2	74	Ducks of all ages	-		
33	TOTAL OF ABOVE ITEMS, 1 to 32 (Total acreage of Crops and Grass, excluding Rough Grazings)	47 1/2	75	Geese of all ages	-		
34	Rough Grazings—Mountain, Heath, Moor, or Down Land, or other rough land used for grazing on which the occupier has the sole grazing rights	-	76	Turkeys over 6 months old	-		
			77	Turkeys under 6 months old	-		
			78	TOTAL POULTRY	30		
			79	GOATS OF ALL AGES	-		
			80	HORSES on holding on 4th June	Number (in figures)		
			81	Horses used for Agricultural Purposes (including Mares kept for breeding) or by Market Gardeners	(a) mares - (b) geldings - 2		
			82	Unbroken Horses of 1 year old and above	(a) mares - (b) geldings -		
			83	Light Horses under 1 year old	-		
			84	Heavy Horses under 1 year old	-		
			85	Stallions being used for service in 1941	-		
			86	All Other Horses (not entered above)	-		
			87	TOTAL HORSES	2		
			88				
			89				

LABOUR actually employed on holding on 4th June. The occupier, his wife, or domestic servants should not be entered.		Number (in figures)
35	WHOLETIME REGULAR WORKERS	
36	Males, 21 years old and over	2
37	Males, 18 to 21 years old	-
38	If none, write "None"	-
39	Males, under 18 years old	-
40	Women and Girls	-
41	CASUAL (SEASONAL or PART-TIME) WORKERS	
42	Males, 21 years old and over	-
	Males, under 21 years old	24
	Women and Girls	-
	TOTAL WORKERS	26

Thursday June 12th 1941

Super news today!!! Mum back from WI who want to adopt a POW via the Red Cross and they have decided to adopt Joshua!!!! Mum is all of a tizz, keeps bursting into tears. Dad pleased for once.

Mum has found something for the war effort. The WI discussed forming a poultry club. Mum says she can give advice and help as we have some hens. Also, a committee to help with preserving fruit etc.

Fed up with school can't wait to leave. Not long now only a few weeks.

Friday 13<sup>th</sup> June 1941

Leaving school soon must do something for the war effort.

Tried to join the Home Guard and help making Molotov cocktails with the men. This was refused at every level!!!! They even laughed at me because I am a girl. Bet they would not have laughed if I had been a boy. Honestly!

The land army seems the most logical, but I cannot join until I am 17. The same for the services.

However, I have heard of some girls joining the land army before they are 17. I suppose the best thing is to stay here and help on the farm. If I join the land army I can get paid for it, 22/6d. which will be a help for mum and dad. Mum will be happier if I stay at home since Joshua is a POW in Germany.

Some of the local furniture factories in Princes Risborough have been requisitioned to make aircraft parts but again I am too young to work in a factory. The hours are very long 12 ½ hours 5 ½ days a week (nothing compared with farming!!!)



## Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> June 1941

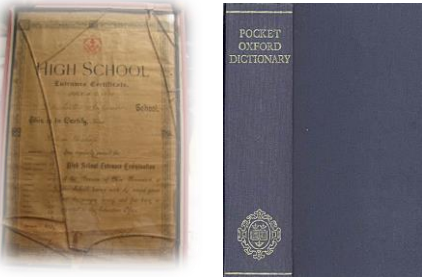
Clothing is being rationed now. and the twins have different clothes coupons. It is because they are growing apparently. We are allotted 66 coupons a year. 11 coupons for a dress, 8 coupons for a man's shirt or pair of trousers. Women's shoes 7 coupons. Dorcas society run by the Congregational Church is helping.

Men and Boys	Adult	Child
Unlined mackintosh or cape .. .. .	9	7
Other mackintoshes, or raincoat, or overcoat	16	11
Coat, or jacket, or blazer or like garment ..	13	8
Waistcoat, or pull-over, or cardigan, or jersey	5	3
Trousers (other than fustian or corduroy) ..	8	6
Fustian or corduroy trousers .. .. .	5	5
Shorts .. .. .	5	3
Overalls, or dungarees or like garment ..	6	4
Dressing-gown or bathing gown .. .. .	8	6
Night-shirt or pair of pyjamas .. .. .	8	6
Shirt, or combinations—woollen .. .. .	8	6
Shirt, or combinations—other material ..	5	4
Pants, or vest, or bathing costume, or child's blouse .. .. .	4	2
Pair of socks or stockings .. .. .	3	1
Collar, or tie, or pair of cuffs .. .. .	1	1
Two handkerchiefs .. .. .	1	1
Scarf, or pair of gloves or mittens .. .. .	2	2
Pair of slippers or goloshes .. .. .	4	2
Pair of boots or shoes .. .. .	7	3
Pair of leggings, gaiters or spats .. .. .	2	2

Friday 25<sup>th</sup> July 1941

At last. Final day of school. We had an assembly where our head wished all the leaves good luck. Mum and dad had made me stay until the end of the school year and not leave on my birthday when I was 14. They said they had enough to cope with what with the Twins, two land girls and grandad and did not want me hanging around being no use to anyone.

We did get a leaving certificate.



I got a prize for my hand writing. It's a dictionary

Mum and dad were so proud of me, and mum was a bit tearful

Friday 1<sup>st</sup> August 1941

First day as an unofficial land girl!!!! I am working with Pamela today to make sure I understand the routine. Can't wait to join properly and get paid!!!!

Dad heard today via the WI that two Canadian soldiers had offered their services for two weeks during the harvest. Dad shot off and bagged them before Mr. Eggleton or Mr Nixey could get them!!!!

Granddad is not well his chest is very bad again so we will be glad of the extra help.

Monday 4<sup>th</sup> August 1941

Out with mum again today and the girl guides collecting dandelion roots to be taken to the drying centre.



Monday 15<sup>th</sup> September 1941

We have all been so busy helping the WI, by all I mean guides, scouts school children in fact anyone who is available to collect the plants needed to make medicines.

## Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> September

Today our harvest festival was held in church and there was large turnout this this morning. Everyone is trying to be positive. I cried during 'All be safely gathered in' thinking of Josh.

Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> September 1941

Mum has started our annual dosing up in preparation for winter!!! Daily doses of Virol yuk! and cod liver oil advertised as good for school children under strain!!!,


But I'm not a school child I'm out working, flippin cheek still being treated like a child. I'm 14





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**PURE COD LIVER OIL**  
With Hypophosphites of Lime and Soda



Is three times as efficacious as the plain oil.  
It is almost as palatable as milk.  
It does not nauseate or produce a loathing for food like the plain oil.  
The Hypophosphites and Oil are so skilfully combined that they are much more potent in building up flesh and strength than if taken separately, and it is, doubtless, to-day the best remedial agent for the cure of

**CONSUMPTION, CHRONIC COUGHS,  
BRONCHITIS, ANÆMIA,  
WASTING DISEASES OF CHILDREN,  
And GENERAL DEBILITY** that exists.

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Our farmhouse is very cold in winter (as the school house) it only has heat from the open fire on which mum cooks and heats water from our well. That and an outside privy makes winter a bit of an ordeal only made better by syrup of figs on a regular basis, in our house Saturday night but I know it is other days for some of my



friends. Coal is in short supply, but we have common rights to wood from the woods around Chinnor which was supposed to be for the poor. Grandad is getting on a bit now and a lifetime of farming in all weathers has taken its toll. His chest is very bad and the lack of ventilation in the cottage with the fire going all the time does not help at all. Mum gives him regular doses of Owbridges lung tonic and rubs his chest with camphorated oil.



Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> September 1941

Dr Leverkus, Chairman of WI, has issued a challenge to all members of WI to collect 3lbs of dandelion roots each to be delivered to Mrs. Whites home before being sent for drying. This all in the middle of harvesting it is utterly exhausting even with our land girls to help. I'm tired.

Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> October 1941

Helping the WI again and this time collecting rosehips which are a valuable source of vitamin C as fresh fruit is rarely available and in the yearly report from the WI for 1941 it was reported that 236 lbs of jam had been made and sold to the shops in the village. War Weapons Week



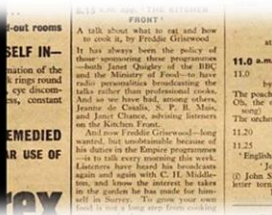
## Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> November 1941

No bonfires due to blackout nor any fireworks. Mum put some potatoes to bake in the bottom oven so that we could all enjoy jacket potatoes which we would have had in the bonfire.

Friday 28<sup>th</sup> November 1941

More awful news. RAF training flight crashed on Chinnor Hill. Two aircrew are dead. Some of the boys from the village when up the hill to find the wreckage and any bodies. How gruesome but that's boys for you.

Sitting at breakfast after morning milking listening to the wireless and the Radio Doctor was rambling on again!!!! The programme is called Kitchen Front and has radio personalities telling us what to eat and how to cook it!!!! Mum sits muttering to herself about numpties and what do they know about anything.



## Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> December 1941

We woke up this morning to the dreadful war news that the Japanese had attacked Pearl harbour. Not quite sure where Pearl harbour is but most of the American fleet in harbour there was destroyed. Lots of service men killed.



Rationing again 1 egg per week or I packet of dried eggs per month. Does not affect us as we are domestic poultry keepers, and we give up our ration books and get chicken feed instead.

Long queues at the butchers today no wonder mum is always so tired. Last week it was the grocers. Trying to get everyday tasks done is becoming almost impossible and so time consuming. We are all so tired.

Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> December 1941

America has now declared war on Japan Hitler has declared war on America. It seems like everyone is declaring war on each other.

Dad came back from the Red Lion where there had been a lot of muttering about the Americans arriving late for this war same as last time!!!!

## Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> December 1941

Sad news today. The Home Guard were on exercise again and a pilot from RAF Halton who was helping hit some overhead cables and crashed. He didn't need to help as he was off duty.



## Wednesday 24th December 1941

We put up our rather tatty Christmas decorations. We can't get new ones, so we have to make do. David and Mary did not seem to mind they were tatty

There were very few presents under the tree but some for the Twins from their mum and dad

## Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> December 1941

Christmas day. We try to make it as jolly as we can for David and Mary. They do miss their mum and dad.

We have done our best mum has knitted scarves and gloves for the twins to wear around the farm when it's very cold.

I had some hand embroidered ladies' hankies from mum and dad. They are very pretty, and I will keep them for best

Early milking done and we can relax a bit until we need to do early evening milking. Dad dozed off after lunch in his chair. Mum was reading. The twins were playing ludo and arguing.

I read some of my book 'Little Women' by Louisa May Alcott and the first line just about sums everything up!!! 'Christmas won't be Christmas without any presents, grumbled Jo lying on the rug.!!

Mum got tea ready, and we all had a piece of the Christmas cake she had made using our rations.

Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> January 1942

Gosh I'm 15 today! I do feel very grown up. Wish mum and dad would treat me like a grown up.

I had such a lovely surprise. Mum has made me a dress. It's beautiful. The first new one I have had since the war started. I can wear it to parties and dances, if they let me go.



My friends gave me home made cards which are lovely. I showed them all my dress. There were lots of Oohs and arr's and wasn't I lucky

Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> February 1942

Soap rationed to one small tablet, but we can have a bit more as we are working on a farm so get very dirty. Sweets also rationed to 8 ozs per month. Meat milk cheese eggs cooking fat rationed.

I'm fed up with this rationing. David was very happy about the soap rationing. He thinks he won't have to wash so often. Mum said to him 'think again my lad'

## Saturday February 14<sup>th</sup> 1942

My friend Janet's, older sister Maureen is getting married in a weeks' time. Maureen's fiancé is being posted with his squadron overseas at short notice. Very little time to prepare and cope with the rationing. Maureen's mum is all of a tizz and asking for food contributions as well as any spare!! Clothing coupons

Apparently for special occasions (weddings and funerals) there is a greater ration allowance and neighbours have been contributing.

Mum is baking a cake, but it will be sponge and covered with white cardboard to make it look like a wedding cake I shall be making my famous marzipan that we had for Christmas. A white dress is out of the question because of the coupons, and it would be silly to use the coupons for a dress for one occasion.

No valentines for me, Maureen got a homemade one from her fiancé with lots of sloppy words inside.

## Saturday February 21<sup>st</sup> 1942

Today is the day!!!! Maureen is marrying John before his overseas posting so up early for milking then getting ready for the service at St. Andrew's church.

The wedding breakfast will be held in the village hall next to the church unfortunately, the national loaf does not make for dainty sandwiches! They are having marmite or fishpaste. Trifle made with sponge cake, jam and custard.

Maureen has managed to get enough coupons for a very smart suit and of course John will be in his uniform.

Lovely service, but only a few artificial flowers as the real ones are very scarce due to dig for victory.

Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> March 1942

Mum back from WI meeting apparently WAAFs from High Wycombe would be grateful for hospitality when off duty. Dad not pleased says if he has any more women on his farm he will move in with Flanagan and Allen.

Mum suggested afternoon tea would be appropriate which should be over by second milking.





Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> March 1942

Great fun today!!! 3 WAAFs came to tea and brought purloined rations. Not sure where they came from, and no one asked.

The girls looked super in their uniforms, not as good as the WRNS but certainly better than the ATS or land army. We had a lovely tea and chat about the air force.

They could not talk about what they did at Wycombe, but they talked about all the different jobs available in the WAAF ie mechanic, driver, radio operator, parachute packer, plotter, cook or work on a balloon site. Sounds more interesting than the land army. I still have to wait until I am 17 ½ so for now I am helping on the farm.

They said all the services are the same you get ordered about by a load of bossy women, and I will not be able to keep my hair in the Veronica Lake style I have!!!! And the food is awful, and you sleep in a dormitory. No way!!!! I have said before I want my own room!!!

Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> March 1942

Mum says the WI have decided that the fruit preservation scheme they have been running should continue and a Fruit Preserving Committee was formed.

They are also organising themselves and volunteers to harvest medicinal plants and it was agreed to collect various varieties at different times. It's all hands to the pumps to gather as much as possible before we have to turn our attention to the harvest.

It was exhausting enough last year with the dandelion roots. This year we have to start with nettles and in June we collect dandelion roots again. Even later various herbs need to be collected as well as rosehips in September. There will be no one left for gleaning the wheat or helping generally with the harvest.

The latest is that there will be no petrol allowance for private motoring.

Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> May 1942

WI have received more circulars on the value of medicinal plants particularly nettle leaves. I hate stinging nettles they hurt, and I can never find a dock leaf to rub on the sting

Friday 15<sup>th</sup> May 1942

Joshua is still a POW and he is 21 today. If he had been at home we would have had a big family party. Being 21 is very important because you can legally go into a pub and have a beer. You can vote. Plus, you no longer have to ask for your parent's permission to do things, like getting married.

Mum says we will have a very big celebration when he comes home to celebrate his 21<sup>st</sup> and his freedom.

Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> May 1942

Whitsun all the Barking children have gone back to London now and the village seems quite quiet not that they were noisy. I think we will all miss seeing them around.

Friday 19<sup>th</sup> June 1942

Sitting in the kitchen after breakfast (spam



fritters again ) mum has a recipe for a new (for us) dish called Woolton pie receipt 151. It is basically a vegetable pie with seasonal vegetables with a cover of potato or wheatmeal pastry.

## LORD WOOLTON PIE

### THE OFFICIAL RECIPE

In hotels and restaurants, no less than in communal canteens, many people have tasted Lord Woolton pie and pronounced it good. Like many another economical dish, it can be described as wholesome fare. It also meets the dietician's requirements in certain vitamins. The ingredients can be varied according to the vegetables in season. Here is the official recipe:—

Take 1lb. each diced of potatoes, cauliflower, swedes, and carrots, three or four spring onions—if possible, one teaspoonful of vegetable extract, and one tablespoonful of oatmeal. Cook all together for 10 minutes with just enough water to cover. Stir occasionally to prevent the mixture from sticking. Allow to cool; put into a pie-dish, sprinkle with chopped parsley, and cover with a crust of potato or wheatmeal pastry. Bake in a moderate oven until the pastry is nicely browned and serve hot with a brown gravy.

Friday 11<sup>th</sup> July 1942

This daylight saving is useful with the blackout I was able to cycle into the village to see Janet yesterday evening.

Janet has no idea what to do yet so is volunteering as an auxiliary nurse at the hospital in Thame. While I was there, I heard Lord Haw Haw broadcasting from Germany with his usual propaganda rubbish about how well the Germans are doing.

Dad will not listen to him and turns off the wireless when he is on which is every day at 10.30 pm with his 'views on the news'. Some people laugh at him especially his silly accent, but others listen in case he lets slip information about a raid that friends or relatives are on.



What a horrible man he is I hope they catch him

## Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> August 1942

Had a bit of a shock when I woke up this morning and I screamed out for mum who came rushing up the stairs and into my room. She took one look and became all soft and soppy. Oh, my darling girl you have become a young woman today. She put her arms round me and kissed the top of my head.

Then it was all down to practical things, and she soon had me sorted out. I was a bit shaky, and mum came upstairs with a lovely cup of milky tea and a tiny bit of sugar from our sugar ration.

Mum sat on my bed, and we had a long chat. She was so reassuring. But said it was best not to talk about in in front of dad or Joshua once he is home.

We still had to go out to collect more rosehips and foxglove leaves. Mum said it was perfectly normal and as women we had to get on with it.



Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1942

Well would you believe it, Janet's mum is pregnant, so has a green ration card plus an extra egg a week and is being looked after by Mrs. Mundy.

Janet's dad was home a few months ago from the merchant navy. She is very worried for him his ship is in the Atlantic convoys and always in danger from U boats in spite of a Royal Navy escort. It has been called the battle of the Atlantic and is vital for food and our survival.

Two collections of foxglove leaves have been taken to Oxford today.

Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> November 1942

No bonfire celebrations again this year.

American airmen have arrived at RAF Chalgrove. Dad not happy!!!! Chalgrove is only a few miles down the road and with dances etc at the village hall we are bound to be invaded!!!!!!

Friday 25<sup>th</sup> December 1942

Christmas day

Not much to write really as we can't celebrate very much as things are so scare. In church we sung all the lovely carols and wished everyone a very Happy Christmas

Friday 1<sup>st</sup> Jan 1943

Well, what will this year bring? War news is good in one way as Hitler has invaded Russia and as it is midwinter is the stupidest thing to do.

I remember in history once we were learning about Napoleon invading Russia and a general said that Russia has two generals January and February. So even I know it's a barmy idea.

Because of the extensive bombing, the government has started to issue items of utility furniture for families who have been bombed out.

Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> January 1943

Good war news. The German army has surrendered at Stalingrad. It has been a long battle against the Russians who are on our side. It seems the Germans just ran out of supplies.

Another one of mum's WI experiments, French peasant soup. Dad not happy.



Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> January 1943

Mum just back from WI meeting. Mott have sent a circular about the distribution of fruit juices and cod liver oil for infants, this will be done via the clinic which Dr L set up.

Monday 18<sup>th</sup> January 1943

I can't believe I am now 16. Still not been able to wear my dress mum made for me last year. Dad won't let me go to dances at the air force station. He is such a spoil sport.

I Had a big row with him today. Mum always backs him up. He says he does not want me learning rude words or getting funny ideas as he puts it. Whatever that means. Mum doesn't know what he means either honestly, I've heard him in the milking shed when the cows are restless and what he says to poor Flannagan and Alan when they are working!! Well!!!

Homemade cards again and mum has knitted me a new warm hat to wear when I am out working on the farm and its cold.

Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> February 1943

This evening, I am going + see the film My Learned Friend at the Village Hall cinema night. It's a Will Hay comedy so parents said I could go with Janet.



Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> March 1943

Dad not happy at all!!!!

Ever since they have arrived our two lovely land girls have occasionally gone to RAF Benson for a dance. Now they have switched their allegiance from the Brylcreem boys to Chalgrove and the US air force.

Apparently, the Americans have stockings and chocolate which is also a big draw!!!! No wonder I could not bribe Pamela with my sweet ration to take me with them!!! Well, it all came to a head this morning.

Neither of them turned up for milking!!!!!! It seemed the promised transport home did not materialise due to fuel shortage and when they did get home, they overslept!!!!

The cows were pretty fed up too as it took us much longer to milk them being two people short. Dad said there was no point in joining up to serve the country if you didn't do it properly and serving the country did not include the US air force. Anyway, mum calmed him down after a bit and puss sat on his lap to keep him still.

Monday 29<sup>th</sup> March 1943

Janets mum has had her baby, a lovely little boy. She had one or two problems and Mrs Munday had to call Dr Leverkus to help.

The baby was slow to cry, and Dr Leverkus revived him with some brandy. Janet's mum is drinking loads of Guinness to help her produce more milk.

Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> April 1943

The baby is not feeding very well and may have to be given extra cow's milk. This will involve a great palaver of milk, boiled water and sugar and cod liver oil. This is not so good. Dad says the milk in Chinnor is not pasteurised or tested for tuberculosis as it is far too expensive to do.

Janet's mum has decided to be 'churched'. this is an old custom which has not been conducted for some years, but Mr. Moxon has started it up again.

It is a church service to give thanks for the safe delivery of a woman in childbirth. We are lucky very few women die in the village due to Dr Leverkus's skill and experience.

## Easter Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> April 1943

There were not a great many people in the church today for Easter Sunday Service. Many of the villagers are away on active service although quite a few have jobs which would qualify them for exemption.

Some of the women have joined the services including Dr Leverkus sister-in-law who joined the ATS in 1941 as well as Freda French who joined the WAAF at the same time.

## Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> May 1943

Our Mayday celebrations very low key this year again. Usually, we decorate ourselves with garlands and parade around the village singing our garland song:

*Good morning young ladies and gentlemen, I wish  
you a happy day*

*I've come to show you my garland on this the  
first of May*

*For it is the first of May the first of May is  
garland day*

*So pleased to see my garland, I'll call no more  
today.*

After this the boys would normally carry the maypole up to the home of Mr Benton where we would have maypole and country dancing and a lovely tea. This year as before it was much quieter due to rationing and many of the residents being away.

Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> May 1943

Another birthday without Joshua. Mum is hoping and praying for the end of the war so that he can come home. Dad says 'fat lot of good praying does'

Mum very cross with him and told him to not be such a heathen

## Monday 17<sup>th</sup> May 1943

Exciting news on the radio this morning and as usual with Alvar Liddell reading it. He sounds so posh

The RAF staged a large raid last night over the Ruhr valley which broke two dams and flooded the armaments factories and countryside for miles around. They used a new type of bomb and dropped it from Lancaster bombers.



Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> June 1943

Sad news this morning, the actor Leslie Howard has been killed in a plane crash. The plane was coming back from Portugal and apparently a German plane was seen in the area. He was brilliant in *Gone with the Wind*.

Another of mum's WI experiments, 'surprise potatoes.'



Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> June 1943

Went to the library in the village Reading Room this evening and got a new book. 'Mystery at Wichend' by Malcomb Saville a children's novel. The library is really good. New books are sent from Oxford every month.

## Saturday June 19<sup>th</sup> 1943

Today starts our wings for Victory week and we are aiming to raise £5.000, the cost of one spitfire. It involves a lot of different activities in the Village Hall following a parade of Home Guard, Civil Defence and Chinnor Silver Band. Also, a treasure hunt, and psychic readings!!! Dances, a whist drive, Ministry of Information films which are normally quite boring telling us what we can and can't do!!!!

On Thursday there is a concert featuring Halton RAF Concert Party and on Friday there will be gift stalls.

The week finishes off on Saturday with a dance with Cecil Saunders Dance Band and announcement of the result.

I wonder if the American air force will come!! I must persuade mum and dad to let me go to the dance



## Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> July 1943

Yippee mum and dad have said as I'm 16 I can go to the dance. At the village hall. I will wear my lovely dress. Bit stuck for shoes though. Maybe mum has something as we are both the same size.

Dad did go on a bit about dens of iniquity. It seems that Chinnor village hall is less likely to be a cauldron of sin and debauchery than an RAF station so they said I could go.

## Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> July 1943

My first dance. I shall never forget it. My friends and I arrived about 7.30pm. We were all giggling with nerves. What would we do if no one asked us to dance. We had been practising with each other.

Anyway, we need not have worried. We all sat on chairs which had been put round the edge of the hall, Then the music started up and the young men moved towards us. Every one of us was asked to dance. No wallflowers.

I am sure we must have danced every dance only stopping now and again for lemonade or orange juice. Dancing makes you very thirsty.

One young airman keeps asking me to dance. He said his name was Chuck and lived in Wisconsin in America. Not that I was sure where Wisconsin was in America. Might have to look it up in my Atlas.

Well, he did ask if he could walk me home before their transport came to take them all back to camp. I said no, I would be going home with my friends.

Chuck asked if he could see me again. I had to say no, dad would kill me. I did feel mean as he would be going off fighting. I wish this war would end.

Thursday July 8<sup>th</sup> 1943

More requests from the WI it seems that we must harvest foxgloves and raspberry leaves.

I am fed up with collecting all these things its back breaking and ruins my hands. What boy wants to hold a hand which is rough and has dirt ingrained in it. I keep washing them and eek out what is left of some hand cream I found in the bathroom cabinet. Must be mums but she has not said anything

Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> August 1943

Harvesting so little time for anything else.

Dad not happy.

The War Aqs have been round with their forms again telling him to up his quota and what he should be growing!!!

Mum ordered me inside whilst dad and the officials were having a discussion!!!!



Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> September 1943

Mum's sister Aunty Barbara is coming to stay in Chinnor. Not with us we have no room but at a billet in the village. She is in the ATS and will be working in Thame. We don't know what she does as it is very secret.



Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> October 1943

Italy joins the war. Fortunately, said Dad, on Hitler's side!!!!

Pictures again this evening *Get Cracking* with George Formby and Dinah Sheridan its about rivalry between two home guard units!!! I wonder who will turn up to watch it!!!

## Friday 5<sup>th</sup> November 1943

Yet another bonfire night with no bonfire or fireworks. Some of the children have been out asking for 'penny for the guy' with a scarecrow in a wheelbarrow. Mum and dad felt sorry for them and gave them home made biscuits.

Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> December 1943

Everyone is trying to be jolly, but the war drags on and we are all so tired.

Mum and dad did their best, but what with grandad not being so good and no further news from Joshua it's very difficult.

We had to do the milking as usual. At least the weather was cold and bright, and I went for a walk round the village with my friends. We met up with soe boys and had a laugh and giggle. There not so bad. Good to have a bit of fun

Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> January 1944

At last, I'm 17 and in six months can apply to the services whoever will take me so that I can do my bit for the war effort.

Some of my friends have already enrolled. Mum is hoping the war will end before I can enrol.

I rushed downstairs to find mum had laid up the breakfast table so lovely and all for my birthday.

Cards and small gifts were laid at my place at the table.

Dad went all soppy saying he can't believe his baby girl is 17.

Then out to the milking and normal routine

Friday 21<sup>st</sup> April 1944

Its Good Friday today. Before war broke out on Good Friday mum would go into Thame to buy some fresh fish and collect some bread.

Now we cannot get fresh fish, so mum makes do with making us a vegetable hotpot. Mum says we should not eat meat on Good Friday

## Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> April 1944

Easter Sunday and Mr Moxton gave one of his lengthy sermons in Church. I nearly fell asleep if it had not been for mum nudging me in the ribs. Then we all stood up to sing There is a Green Hill far away.

Monday 15<sup>th</sup> May 1944

Hopefully this time next year Joshua will be home with us. I do hope he is ok its been such a long time. Life in a POW camp must be very hard and so different to what he is used to.



Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> May 1944

In Italy a terrible battle has been taking place and at last the Monastery at Monte Cassino has been taken by allied armies. So many have died. They say Rome next stop!!!!



Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> June 1944

The milking nearly didn't happen this morning!!!!!!

The most amazing news!!!! We have started to invade Europe!!!!!!

It was announced this morning that a mixed force of English, American and Canadian troops have landed on French soil and are trying to establish a land fall in Normandy. Its been called D-day

Not only that but the Ox and Buck Light Infantry were in a major battle at Benouville bridge across the Caen canal along with the airborne division and paratroopers.



Can't help thinking about Joshua he would be gutted at missing it all. It is so amazing we have waited 5 years for this news maybe it also means Joshua will be released from his POW camp and come back to us soon!!!!

We must not get our hopes up too much there is a long way to go yet. Mum and dad crying with relief and excitement, puss and soppo dog not impressed. I have no idea where the land girls are. This is the most amazing day to live through. In years to come people will have

difficulty understanding our reactions if they have never lived through such terrible times It has to go down in history and always celebrated, never forgotten.

We must not forget either that I am also nearly 17 ½ ready to enrol. Mum says they won't want me now. I hope she is wrong.

## Christmas Day Monday 25<sup>th</sup> December 1944

Church after milking and a good turnout from the village. Difficult to sing all the familiar carols and hymns without the usual people i.e. family and friends beside you. Lots of people missing relatives 7 men from the village have been reported dead or missing in action.

Many organisations have done their best to maintain morale. The WI organising plant collection, the Village Hall putting on dances, parties and film shows to take our minds off the war.

Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> January 1945

I can't believe it, when I first started writing a diary, I was 12 coming on 13. Now I am 18 and the war has still not ended. Having said that all the news is good, and we really are making good progress in driving the German army back.

Joshua is still a POW. Its so long since we have seen him. Dad misses his help on the farm. The land girls are OK but now anxious to get back to their homes and families.

Now the end of the war is in sight Dad not so cross and mum not so tearful.

Everyone I know is suffering from war fatigue. Not just physical fatigue from working long hours in factories and on the land but the constant worry about loved ones and being separated from them. Some people might say we had it easy in the countryside. Yes, we were not bombed to smithereens like some areas, but we had our share of stress due to absence of loved ones and bureaucracy. The forms dad has

had to fill in. He says he won't be sorry to see the end of those.

Our lovely village, Chinnor, we really did all pull together. Helped each other, and comforted those who had lost, missing or POW's. This dreadful war has really brought out the best in everyone

Not sure what I am going to do now the fighting is almost over and none of the services are taking on new recruits. I never did get to join up and get paid. Although Dad did once I was 16 and working full time on the farm pay me a small wage of 28shillings per week no matter how many overtime hours I might have put in. The land girls got paid for overtime. I don't think dad was always fair.

Even though I am now 18 Dad won't let me walk out with any boy. Says he is keeping me safe. Safe from what I ask!! Some of my friends have boyfriends. And, they have been kissed!!!!!!

I might keep writing in my diary, then again I might not, it was only intended for the war years, but who knows.....



## Addendum



In Memory of the Men and Women of Chinnor  
who gave their lives

### **1939-1945**

Colin Cuthbert

Walter Frost

Ernest Hopkins

Victor Ludgate

Douglas Rolfe

Sidney Rumbelow

Molly Sherwell

Ronald Slaymaker

William Turvey

Dudley Witney