

1st November 2009.

Hallo Lillian,

A very wet and windy Sunday, so I have been looking for photographs.



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You ask about wartime memories.

I may have told you before that I was in the garden when Mill Road bridge was bombed. I was 12 or 13 at the time and was standing on the garden gate trying to glimpse a very low flying aircraft. Looking back over the house I was horrified to see a wing tip lift over the roof with a swastika on it.

I dashed back to the house - I never ran so fast on the track! - as the crunch of bombs assailed my ears. They missed Mill Road bridge but fell either side, demolishing two railway workers houses. Michael Bowyer, the historian told me they were after the engine turntable on Cambridge station. About 50 years later

a lovely ginger cat called Winston used to visit me for titbits. Eventually I found he lived in Catharine Street whose garden is back onto ours, and belonged to Chris and Roger Simpkins. Roger had been a baby in his mother's arms in one of the houses demolished, but they escaped without injury although they had to move in with an aunt and never went back to the Mill Road house. It's about 400 yards from here. I believe the bomber was shot down by fighters from Debden.

We didn't have any buzz bombs or Cambridge, they mostly fall in the country side around here. Aimed at London I think we were at the limit of their range. It was horrible to hear them go put-putting over and waiting for the engine to cut out when they would fall. They, and the V2 rockets, caused great devastation when they fall in built up areas.

As it was the 70th anniversary on 3rd September since the outbreak of war, there have been quite a lot of articles in the paper - reminiscences, so I enclose these for your interest. I should, of course, be interested in the articles/photos you have if they differ from these I am enclosing. It may be the same photo you have of 'Wearry Bones on the ground' - it's a miracle there wasn't an explosion, as both were full of bombs and fuel. I had a letter from Robert Edwards, her pilot on the day of the crash 17th September 1944. Contrary to the rules he had his rear gunner up in the plane for take off, as she was an 'old lady', nearing the end of her operational career, so saving him from injury. I'll look the letter out.

I would never have come to America, I am East Anglian born and bred and I love my little green corner of England, and have never travelled well.

One of the things I missed most as a child was confectionary. After Sunday

School, I used to look with longing in
 the sweet shop window on the corner opposite
 the chapel. It was full of Cadbury chocolate
 bars, but they were all dummies made
 with cardboard. The sweet ration was
 just 2 ozs a week at one time. There were
 black market foods of course, but we never
 had any dealings with them. However my
 poor mother managed to feed us I cannot
 imagine. Once I remember queuing for
 ages for a cake on the market square
 and leaving it in my bicycle basket whilst
 I visited my grandparents whose house
 fronted on Wimsommer Common, leaning
 my bike against the railings. When I
 came out to go home I found to my
 great dismay that one of the horses
 grazing on the common had put his head
 over the rail and almost completely
 demolished the hard won cake! I cannot
 remember the aftermath, or what
 excuse I gave my mother!

Clothing was very difficult and rationed
 with coupons for everything. At the end
 of each school year we had a sale, outgrown
 items of uniform would be brought in
 to be sold to younger/smaller pupils.
 Rules on school uniform were quite strict



even during the war. Only pupils who had been evacuated from other schools in more at risk areas were allowed to wear their own old school uniforms.

During the war the Derby has run at Newmarket and my first visit to the racecourse was on Thurs 19th 1943, Derby Day. We were to go on a school trip to Wicken Fen nature reserve near here, together with the boys' Grammar School meeting outside their school in Hills Road. My friend and I were late and missed the main party. Nothing daunted, we set off on our bicycles to catch them up. Out along the Newmarket Road we pedalled. "What a lot of people going to Wicken Fen" we said as we joined the throng. No cars, no petrol, just bikers. It was Derby Day and we ended up on the racecourse. I saw Straight Deal win the Derby, but fell in love with an 'also ran' in the last race - Ti-Chin - and was hooked for life.

Tea time and getting dark.
Keep well over the winter.

Best wishes,

Pam

P. S. We had a rare treat, about a month ago Marshall's aerobious celebrated their 100th birthday with a flying display which my neighbour and I watched from the garden. His father was a pilot in WWII.

We saw 8 Tiger Moths flying in formation, many fighters, the Vulcan, the Red Arrows and to my delight I saw the B17 from Duxford come in to land.

The wash dump where Weary Bones ended her days, surrounded Marshall's and is only about a mile from here. Every time I go to Newmarket I pass the spot where she rested as a road runs through it now. I used to call it 'Weary Bones' road'.

During the filming of the Hampster Belle we often saw them flying and all of them flew over the racecourse when I was at Newmarket, but I didn't have my camera ready!

The photograph you have of Weary Bones down on her belly is almost certainly the one I have 'after the accident'. Does it say 'getting ready for the 70th mission'?

These are all the photos I have - all the information I have about them is on the back, from Walter.

We are having a postal strike, so I don't know when you will receive them. Any questions, just let me know.

If we had been invaded in 1940, I would have been 13 years old and planned to join the resistance as a runner/messenger. I would shoot my mother first so that she did not fall into the hands of the Germans. I don't know how, I didn't have a gun? My father would of course, have been killed by them. I don't know what would have happened to my little brother, he was too small to have run away with me.



One of the most distressing things for a child was the many pets destroyed because of the fear of gas attacks, which we were expecting. (I always carried my gas mask but hated wearing it. It was alarming and claustrophobic.) and the shortage of food for them.

The racing/breeding industry was very hard hit. Rations were only available for horses who had bred a winner, so many beautiful young mares were destroyed because they had not yet bred winners. 'my' first favourite, Ti-Chin, was foaled in 1939, and his dam, Jacqueline of Fairault, was destroyed to comply with government policy. Tick won 5 races and set the 7 furlong track record on the July course at Newmarket, June 1944, for very many years.