

Newsletter Late 2023



Another beautiful moon across the harbour (Adrian Wakeford)

Chairman's Report

Welcome to this Newsletter that will see out 2023 and see in 2024. We have had a successful few months with many activities at group level and more at whole u3a level. As I am prone to do, I must sing the praises of our Group Leaders and various individuals who help out. I also realise what is about to follow makes me sound a bit like that cracked 78 rpm record that keeps skipping backwards (I think I have the right audience so some of you will remember 78 rpm records. Only just, of course!) However, as always, we are too often on the verge of losing our precious groups because volunteers just do not step forward to take charge. We do understand this reticence, but you can expect our Groups Coordinator, Jackie Treacher, to keep chasing around for leaders. I will emphasise from personal experience that it can be good fun to run a group (I lead two groups). You can choose a style from perhaps democracy to maybe a little assertive and delegate to lighten your load. I will leave it to the members of my groups to decide where I am situated on the democrat to dictator spectrum!

The Sea Shanties Group, the Emsworth Off Quays, performed to a rain soaked but appreciative Westbourne Fete on Saturday 22nd July. We ran a successful stall at the Emsworth Show on Bank Holiday Monday 26th August. Many helpers came forward and the Off Quays again performed. We did very well this year for gaining new members from this event, the sun shone, and all participants enjoyed it.

We had a Children of World War Two Tea Party as well (see page 28). Thank you to all those who helped and to Anne Fox Robinson who both helped and provided a splendid venue. Not sure that spam sandwiches are really ready to make a comeback, but thanks for the gastronomic reminiscence! And thank you to all those children of World War Two that volunteered such interesting accounts of their experiences back then. Their writings will go forward to a national archive and perhaps will be valuable research material for future generations. Some of their accounts appear in this newsletter.

I must also mention our New Members coffee mornings and our Monthly Meetings. I do think the New Members coffee mornings add a little extra welcome and explanation as to what we are all about. So my thanks to the team that put these together and host them. Also our monthly meetings which work out so well, though there are many moving parts and much that

could go wrong. I am sure that we have all enjoyed the Speakers Programme that Gill Davies, our Speakers Member, sets up. Gill will be off on a long trip on the Seven Seas in the first few months of 2024, but has organised the speaker programme whilst she is away and arranged for Marilyn Kemp to keep her seat warm.

Finally some future events require mention. Any day now it will be the Emsworth and District u3a Christmas Lunch – the social event of the Emsworth yule calendar! I am really looking forward to this. Also on Wednesday 31st January next year we will be holding our usual “Thank You Lunch” for Group Leaders and the other helpers that do so much to smooth our u3a’s activities along.

So, that was 2023 (well nearly) with 2024 to look forward to. On behalf of your committee, I would like to thank you all for making this year such good fun and we look forward to the next year.

Take care of each other. And if somebody needs a kind gesture, or a thought or a word of comfort, then do reach out to them. As well as a season of jollity this can also for some be a time of reflection, sadness, and loneliness.

Best wishes

Adrian Wakeford

Chairman, Emsworth and District u3a

Your u3a

Events & Outings



CHRISTMAS LUNCH FRIDAY 1ST DECEMBER.



Final planning for our Christmas Lunch at Chichester College is nearing completion. 90 of our members are joining us for this festive occasion.

Coach Trips

I am thinking about an outing in the Spring. A possibility is a visit to the National Trust property, Chartwell in Kent, the home of Winston Churchill. Could you let me know if you might be interested in this venue. If I have enough interest I will start the planning process.

Maureen Nicholas Events and Outings Organiser

On the run

'G' our hamster is annoying, gone again the little beast
Chewed a hole in every blanket, made a nest between the sheets
Been inside the kitchen cupboard crunching cornflakes for a treat
Know he's there because we hear him scrabbling with his little feet

'G' our hamster is annoying, on the run a month or more
All the 'doggy chews' are missing, apples gnawed down to the core
What next nibble will he fancy - bird seed sprinkled on the floor?
We will need some serious cunning so he doesn't run outdoors

"G' our hamster is annoying, still at
large and getting fat
When we bought a humane
mousetrap, he didn't care to go in that
Now we know his secret hideout,
maybe we'll not need a cat
A homemade bottle-trap might get
him, dangled down between the slats

"G' our hamster is annoying, tried to
tempt him with some bait
Seen him down behind the boiler,
sunflowers might seal his fate
They're his favourite, yes he's sniffing,
come on 'G' it's getting late
He's creeping down inside the bottle,
Yes we've got you, sorry mate!

Ruth Brown



Overheard in **WAITROSE**

Woman came in one day and literally filled a shopping trolley with roast chickens on a day they were on sale. Found out after talking to a cashier that the woman was vegan and the chickens were for her dogs.

'Daddy does Lego have a silent 'T', like merlot?'

Editor's bit

My thanks to all those who sent in items — please keep them coming. I have some more Wartime Memories for the next issue, but as that will be after Christmas and the New Year, I hope for plenty of stories about that period to appear! My email address is tonibr@btinternet.com, and there is a link to me on the u3a Emsworth website. My snail-mail address is 12 Orchard Lane, Emsworth, PO10 8BH, so send letters here. I can accept offerings in just about any format.



2024 Subscriptions

Subscriptions to Emsworth and District u3a are due to be renewed on 1 January 2024. For the past six years the annual fee has been unchanged but this year, with the cost of everything increasing so sharply, we have reluctantly had to take the decision to make a small increase.

The cost of the new subscription will be £15 for individuals and £28 for two people sharing the same address. I'm sure you will agree that this is still excellent value for money – at just over one pound per month there is such a wide variety of activities to choose from.

I will not be at the November meeting, but Gill Polgreen and June Dowsett will be there to take your cash or cheques. Many people now find it easier to pay through the bank, and I will be sending round a reminder with our bank details shortly.

As usual there is no monthly meeting in December, but I hope to see many of you at our Christmas Party. I will be at the January meeting to collect any outstanding subs.

Hazel Irwin Membership Secretary

Emsworth and District u3a

Overheard in **WAITROSE**

'Excuse me, do you stock the earl grey chocolate thins? I either got them from here or Selfridges and I can't remember for the life of me.'

Monthly meeting talks for 2024

19th January	The Rev'd Dr. Nicholas Henderson - "Russia Part I" From the Kievian Russia in the 8 th and 9 th centuries and towards through the Mongol invasions, the rise of Muscovy and the Tsars, we can trace the development of autocracy to the end of the 19 th century. Russia wrestles during this period with an ancient conundrum "East or West", "Europe or Asia"?
16th February	AGM + Sally Botwright — "Hearing Dogs for Deaf People" Hearing Dogs train clever dogs to help deaf people. Dogs are trained to alert deaf people to important and life-saving sounds they would otherwise miss — sounds that many people take for granted like the doorbell, alarm clock and even danger signals like the smoke or fire alarm.
15th March	Ben Cross - "British Alstroemeria — Cut Flower Industry" Lilies of the Incas, Peruvian Lilies or Alstroemerias are beloved by florists due to their longevity as a cut flower. "The perfect flower - is how our team describe them" says Ben Cross, the fourth generation of his family to grow Alstroemerias in a wholesale nursery near Chichester.
19th April	Julian Le Good — "A Portrait of the Architect As a Young Man". Julian was one of the fortunate ones who witnessed the evolution from drawing boards propped up on brick samples; yards, feet and inches via "draughting machines" to Computer Aided Design and 3d Modelling. Julian's life as an Architect was one of laughs, misadventure and the absurd!
17th May	Harry Venning — "The Art of the Cartoonist"

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COFFEE ROTA

Shown below is the rota for serving the tea, coffee and biscuits at the monthly meetings.

Depending on the size of Group there may be two Groups for any one month - will Group Leaders please liaise and ensure that at least three people 'volunteer' for this duty.

If insufficient people turn up to provide the service then no refreshments will be served at that meeting

2024	January	Discussion 2 / Family History
	February	Classical Music App / Listening to Jazz
	March	Science, Engineering & Tech / Poetry Writing
	April	Poetry / Gardens 1
	May	Wine Appreciation / Art Discovery
	June	Theatre Group / Discussion 1
	July	Gardens 2
	August	No meeting
	September	Board Games
	October	Amble & Pub lunch
	November	French Discussion / Rhythm & Rock
	December	No meeting

Any queries please contact:
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More memories of World War 2

As a starter for this section, I remind you that one of the articles in the previous newsletter was entitled *The Walk to School in Wartime* by Liz Mardel-Ferreira (then Dib McMeeking). Following on from that article comes another article from Liz and a poem from Gill Polgreen.

The Walk to School in Wartime — The Sequel

Do you enjoy a good coincidence? If you do, then read on!

After the piece about My Walk to School in Wartime appeared in the newsletter I had a message from Gill Polgreen, another U3A member. She had been interested to read it as she, too, had been brought up in Nottingham, two hundred miles from where we both live now and had lived just up the road from my old school. She went on to say that her mother had eventually moved to a bungalow 'off Lucknow Avenue'. That sounded familiar! Was it at 'The Point' a local group of four bungalows? Yes it was, and that's where MY mother had moved to when she was on her own. I sent her a photo — yes, it was the SAME ONE! She sent me the estate agents pictures of the inside as it was when it was sold again (ah, she'd obviously had a new kitchen and had also added a front porch!) I looked up dates — yes, it was April 1988 when my mother had died, and Gill's mother had moved in in November of the same year. You couldn't make it up!

Liz Mardel

One house, two mothers; a poem for Liz's mother, Mary.

by Gill Polgreen

Liz's mother, Mary

You weeded the same dandelion-welcoming soil, she weeded,
You pruned the same vigorous ivy, she pruned,
You trod the same mossy flagstone paths, she trod,
You picked abundant roses from the same bushes she picked
But you didn't know her, she was my mother.

Liz's mother, Mary

The comforting aroma of your baking filled the same kitchen hers did
You enjoyed getting lost in your books in the same lounge, she did
The television lulled you into an early evening doze, as hers did,
And you woke with a start to the same doorbell chime, she did,
But you didn't know her, she was my mother.

Liz's mother, Mary
You both drove the same tree-lined roads to get to the shops
Both cursing the same brake-defying hills on icy mornings.
You both greeted your visiting daughters on the same doorstep,
Always welcoming, "Lovely to see you, come on in, I'll put the kettle on."
But you didn't know her, she was my mother.

Liz's mother, Mary
After you died, your daughter Liz and your other children,
Sold your happy home to my lucky house-hunting mother, Dinah.
Who made it her happy home for nearly thirty years,
Thank you for the contentment you left in its walls.
Mary, I wish you'd known my mother, Dinah.

Memories of the War

with Sue Peak Young

I don't have a lot of memories re WW2 but I will jot down those I have stored in my brain.

My mother walking 5 miles to get a fresh egg for her toddler - and I wouldn't eat it.

Going to the food office for orange juice in small dumpy bottles — it tasted very good, unlike the powdered egg.

Sawdust on the floor of the butcher's and using the ration book for meat.

My father was a Squadron Leader in the RAF and I didn't see him until after I was 2 years old.

I have a memory of black out material and parachute silk.

Overheard in WAITROSE

To a bemused looking sales assistant: 'Perhaps you'd like to explain to my guests why Waitrose only had enough Foie Gras for 5 people.'

'I have the school run, french horn practice and a personal training session.
Who could possibly work and have kids?'

RECOLLECTIONS OF WORLD WAR 2

Denis Johnson in conversation with his wife Margaret

Denis was 6 when war broke out and living with his mother and sister in Wallasey. His sister was 10 years older and born in Boston so was able to join the American army at the age of 17 which she did partly because she escaped this then rather dreary Country and became well fed, provided with nylons and smarter uniform, dashing GIs and was sent to Paris to work for the Generals in the George V Hotel.

Wallasey took some of the Luftwaffe damage from Liverpool as a decoy harbour was built there to deflect the bombing from the city, so they were incessantly bombed and were hit 3 times which meant that he moved house and schools each time, but he was fascinated by the Spitfire fights overhead and would not be dragged indoors. He helped to build a steel air raid shelter the size of a double bed in one house and an Anderson shelter in another. He was finally sent to board in a prep school that had been moved from Bromley to Wales which he hated.

As an appendix to the 5 years, he used to glide and it may interest people to know that the reparations in 1946 meant that German ships and aeroplanes were kept by the British. The air force was told to destroy their gliders but those pilots who knew better either flew them back to the UK or loaded them onto ships. They were used in peacetime by the Surrey Gliding Cub that started in a farmer's field belonging to Ann Welch (who was one of the team of women who flew newly built aircraft to the required airfield during the war) and her husband. Part of the membership then started Lasham Gliding Club where some of them are in the museum on the airfield.

I was aged 3 when War broke out and living in Wakefield with my parents, my sister aged 5 and brother newly born. We were fortunate because our father owner several grocery shops and bake house and was not accepted for enlistment because he would have been responsible for accounting for the food coupons being properly used and supplying the food. He did ARP night work from the roof top of the Town Hall.

My mother knit more socks for sailors than we could count and she did voluntary work in the nearby hospital.

When I started school, we were supplied with gas masks that we slung over our shoulders but when no airplanes seemed to fly over Wakefield, we left them at home. We had bunks in our cellar but seldom needed to use them. Leeds took all the bombing because of the steel works and manufacturing of tanks etc. At Waddington's games factory in Leeds some Monopoly games sent to prisoners of war in Germany were marked with a code, and maps made of silk and Deutsch Marks and other items suitable for escapees were hidden in them.

I remember the effects of the war lasting for another 5 years - we had no luxuries and petrol, food and clothing coupons continued which meant still

scrimping and saving. There was shortage of everything, second hand clothes were the norm and compared with today's portions we had a very meagre diet. Anyone with a garden grew food throughout the war and preserved it for the winter which actually was very healthy for us.

Postscript by Margaret:

I also remember that all the beaches in Yorkshire where invaders could successfully land were protected by at least 2 coils of barbed wire, and these were not removed for a couple of years after War ended. I assume that was the case all-round the UK but it restricted beach holidays when eventually we could have such things.

MEMORIES OF THE WAR

By Josette Fox, nee Venet, French citizen.

I was born in October 1939. My father had already been called up and was captured at Dunkerque. I met him for the first time in 1946 when he was repatriated from Russia. He was a prisoner of war in Germany, Stalag 1B, liberated by the Russians and, I think sent back from Odessa by ship, I cannot say that I have bad memories from that time as I was looked after with my sister by my mother and my paternal grandparents. I also was too young to understand what was happening, At the top of our road was a railway line and I remember seeing German soldiers holding guns by the doors of the carriages.

One day a German soldier came to our door to warn my mother as I was still outside after curfew.

I also remember being woken up during the night, wrapped in a blanket, and being taken in a push chair to a shelter, which was a sort of cave where mushrooms were grown. There were lots of people sitting on the ground. Some neighbours had had a shelter built in their garden, but they never asked us to go in there.

My mother was a teacher, she worked all through and she managed to organise some small celebration for our birthdays, She also told me that she had to leave our house and walk further south as we lived not far from Paris and close to an important railway dépôt which was constantly bombed by the Allies

The last memory was of the Americans arriving in their tanks - I remember them laughing a lot and giving us things, in particular pieces of pink soap. It turned out to be Lifebuoy. The smell of that soap came back to me when I was in hospital for the birth of our first baby.

Wartime memories from a Portsmouth schoolgirl

Miss Marie Gilham, Committee member

I was born in December 1939 so not quite eight when the war was started. I was the eldest child of Tom and Dorothy Gilham, followed by Tom in 1934 and Kathleen in 1936. My father was a greengrocer with shops in Portsmouth. The one which operated during the war was in London Road, North End - the others were all damaged. We were comfortably off and lived in a large four bedroom detached house on Havant Road in Cosham.

My father had been in the Navy in the First World War, and was already 40 when the second started. He also sold food so was not called up this time. My parents did not want us to be evacuated so in the summer of 1940, after air raids were intensifying on Portsmouth, we moved to a four roomed bungalow in North Boarhunt in the north side of Portsdown Hill, between Southwick and Wickham. My maternal grandmother also came with us so my mother was able to work in the shop.

There were four bungalows at the top of the lane leading southward from a pub called the Boars Head on the main road. Although they were not old, "Pandora", as ours was called, had no electricity or running water. It was possible to install electricity but for water we had a well in the garden, and of course there was no bathroom, just a Privy in the garden. I do not remember much about my schooling from 1939 to 1940 but I went in 1937 to a private school in Drayton, followed by Tom in 1938. We had an Anderson air raid shelter in the garden but once we got to North Boarhunt the soil wasn't suitable so we had a Morrison, a bit like a billiard table in Pandora. We did not go to school for a year but when Kathleen was five in 1941 we all three went to Southwick primary school.

I was fortunate to pass the entrance exam to the then private Purbrook Park County high school (which became part of the state grammar school system after the 1944 Education Act) in the summer of 1942 when I was not yet 11, and was very happy there, obtaining my School Certificate in 1947 and the Higher School Certificate in

1949, just before these exams were changed.

For the first years we were often in the air raid shelters or under our desks and of course at home we spent many nights in the Morrison shelter as we could hear the air raids on Portsmouth.

We had a large garden and grew all manner of fruit and vegetables and kept chickens and rabbits. Roast chicken was the Christmas treat. We went back to Cosham in 1944 before the end of the war, joining in with dancing in the street after VE Day and the street party after VJ day. We were very lucky as no family members were killed. I remained at Purbrook, not wishing to transfer to a Portsmouth school. I am thankful that I was a child - children were told very little those days and did not really appreciate at the time the awful dangers we were all under.

Recollections of WW2

by Graham Crane

I was 15 months old at the outbreak of war and spent 66 of the 68 months European duration living near Clapham Common in London SW11, about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile from Clapham Junction in Grandison Road, until 1942 and then Broomwood Road about 1 mile from the Junction – a prime target, being the “busiest” station in the World at that time.

Of my five recollections, the first three are undated. Although the first is recorded on the internet the dating seems to stop in 1941, so probably occurred in Spring/Summer 1942 when I saw a German bomber release its bombs which landed about 150 yards away. As they fell, my Father (it must have been the weekend) pushed me into our garden Anderson shelter – much to my annoyance!

The next memory around 1943 was of a visit to a Portchester bungalow (near the crematorium) with my mother to see the parents of her fiancé who had been killed in a Lee-on-Solent airfield accident in 1928. I remember that they had a pony and trap and we went to Gosport (by bus probably as I think the trap was only a 2 seater) where I had my first view of the Navy from the Gosport Ferry.

Also, probably in 1943, as conventional air raids diminished in 1944, I recall watching and hearing the AA shells exploding around a German bomber illuminated by search lights from both Clapham and I think Tooting Commons.

The first recollection I can put a date to occurred on 23rd June 1944 – my 6th birthday. It was a sunny Sunday and no birthday party was planned as the “Doodlebug” onslaught had just started. Around midday, we heard an unfamiliar aircraft noise. I rushed to open the front door and saw this jet plane over the house across the road. My Father joined me and recognised the V1. As we watched, the engine stopped and again I was grabbed and this time pushed under the stairs as we had no shelter or cellar in 134 Broomwood Road. Very soon, there was a loud crump muffled by the girl’s high school between the explosion and our house 200 yds away. Today for the first time, I googled the time and place and learned that 6 people were killed, 8 houses destroyed and 20 seriously damaged. (I am surprised that only 6 people were killed, maybe on a sunny June weekend, many were on either Clapham or Wandsworth Commons – both less than half a mile away).

It was many years later taking my teenage son to the Science Museum and seeing a V1 (only about 5 meters wingspan) that I realised just how close it was to the house opposite.

As a result of our “near miss”, my Mother and I joined some Welsh friends who were retreating to Ebbw Vale for a couple of months until the situation improved. We stayed with delightful neighbours, Bessie and Charlie Price in Tredegar Road. She was a primary school teacher, so I joined her class, and he was a Foreman in the vast 2 mile long steelworks, so I was shown Bessemer Converters pouring molten metal and rolling steel plate!!

My final war time experience was viewing the VE Day celebrations of May 8th 1945 in Whitehall from the 3rd or 4th floor of Scotland Yard where my Father was a police officer in the Criminal Record Office. There was a sea of cheering and happy faces even though victory over Japan and the dropping of two atom bombs were still 3 months away.

Eveline Taylor's memory of wartime 1939-1945

I truly did not understand the meaning of the horrendous news. I had just enjoyed my eighth birthday. Schools always closed around that time and I had always escaped that peculiar practice of being carried by body, stretched to receive bumps and thrown upwards, matching the number of years. I learned instead, that, with my sister, we would probably be going away without Mum and Dad. It was the evacuation of children by thousands from London which I remember. Somehow in my mind, I thought it was a holiday. The issue of a gas mask and a label pinned on my blazer did seem strange. We had joined our schools at London Bridge station. My sister was now 12 years of age, and in the secondary school, but she had been linked with me. Dad was not at the station, and I did not understand why Mum was crying. Though she was tearful, I was excited and waved happily goodbye. It was later on arrival at Burgess Hill that I think that the penny dropped.

We had to wait for someone to call our name. A local dignitary was the billeting officer. After a short journey, we were standing at the front door of a terraced house with Mr De Caux, to be billeted with Mr and Mrs Thorpe. They were having their Sunday lunch with several others around the table. I have no idea if they had been expecting us at that time, but they welcomed us in so eagerly that I felt reassured. It was to be six years later, except for a couple of short reunions, when I returned home at the end of the war. Those years with the Thorpes were among the happiest years of my life. As a child, one does not dwell upon the long-term, it is that capacity to take each day as it comes, to live for the day. My Catholic upbringing tells me that, but age has a habit of losing the knowledge.

Life became a time of waiting for Mum and Dad to come down from London to be with us for the occasional weekend. Dad had been called up for military service, he spent three weeks near Southampton, getting acquainted, only to find himself being discharged for duty with his old firm. The powers that be had managed to secure his return to be the Fire and Security officer of that Thames-side company. He had to join

the Home Guard on ack-ack guns in Southwark Park as well, and this lead eventually to a four-hour night's sleep every night if he was lucky. Apart from the bombing all through the Blitz, home and war work had its toll on him. At the end of the war he spent two months in hospital at Orpington.

Now what about my mother? She was due for war work too. Luckily, she had the right qualifications to be an operative within the local hospital. There the seamstress was an essential part of the massive linen unit. She would be employed most of the time, altering or repairing, bedding, uniforms, and anything else to be mended on her machine. Mum had a very different machine from her tabletop Singer. It was more industrial. She still kept the housework and necessary meals going, as well as clearing up any bomb blast mess that might have fallen. My parents were lucky that there did not appear to have been any structural damage at that time, but the dust and a mess still rained down after each night's bombing. To my reckoning, they were heroes. When Dad spent all that time in hospital after the war, she was working, looking after Sheila and I and visiting Dad regularly.

When my sister was nearly 16 years old, she left Burgess Hill to take up an apprenticeship in Selfridge's, Oxford Street. This meant I was left without family. At the time there were the Rossi twins billeted at 'Auntie' Thorpe's with me. Their parents were Italian, perhaps father was interned. Their mother ran a little sweet shop in Deptford quite alone, with very little English to help. We three little girls had a great time together. Our greatest pleasure was to be taken to the local cinema to see the latest films suitable for our age group. Uncle Thorpe always accompanied us. He enjoyed it as much as we did. The stars of the film, then were Betty Grable, Don Ameche, Alice Faye and the very handsome John Payne. Also Clark Gable and Tyrone Power, equally good looking. One of the most memorable things to happen then was when my schoolteacher, Miss Bottomley, married the cinema owner. It was also the time of the massive military gathering for D-day. Many of these men, English and Canadian were the ones we waved to as they drove past us on the London Road in Burgess Hill towards the South coast. How many came back, I wonder.

Thinking of the war and what it did to us, as adults and children, myself at an early age in life, I have had to think in the now fashionable context of mental health. We didn't have a name for it then. At the age of 90 however, I now realise it did have an enormous influence on the rest of my life. We were separated as families for many weeks, sometimes sharing with strangers or making close friendship with new people. I think for most of us, there must have seen changes in our make-up. I know that once, when my mother remarked, "You've no need to worry about Eveline, she'll always get along," I now know she may have been right. The practice was constant, but it has not always been easy. The lesson learned for me is that the wartime separation let me into a self-survival attitude. The lack of demonstrative love was of a lesser degree, than that which is shown today. Though with the rise of the "me" society, perhaps that too shows a sad lack of recognition. We really do need love, it is necessary for true happiness.

When the war ended, there was great happiness and probably sadness. I know the Thorpes missed their Charges very much. A house that was always filled with young people could seem empty with just these two dear ones alone. We always visited them when we could for many years after. Also the allowances from the Government for each evacuee was stopped. True, there was less expenditure, but it must have had an effect upon them.

The world celebrated the end of the war in Europe in May 1945, but had to wait until August of that year for the end in the Far East. It was unbelievable that the Japanese could think of continuing fighting in the circumstances, knowing that it was now a matter of time. Time was not allowed for them, and the Atom bomb began their finality, followed by years and years of its consequences. The men and women who had suffered so much torture and deacease in the war were now free. The hell they had endured was now to be seen and it was very difficult for people to feel sorry for the Japanese. During those last months the evacuees were returning to their homes at last. Myself among them.

Memories of the War

by Diane Lusby

Just some memories of my childhood during WW2.

I was born in early 1940 in South Wales. We went to live in London where both my parents worked for British Drug Houses: their occupations were necessary as they were dealing with the production of insulin for diabetics and therefore my father was in the Home Guard.

Apparently, at the sound of air raid warnings, my mother (just 4ft 10inches) would run like hell with me in her arms to the nearest underground. Woe betide anyone in her way! We were actually 'bombed out' and I remember being taken to another house where a lady in a red dressing gown welcomed us in.

I remember the Barrage Balloons which I thought were elephants in the sky! I also remember the sound of the Doodle Bugs but of course I did not know of the pending danger.

I went to a nursery school in Hornsea Gardens and the teacher was called Miss Daylong. We slept in little cots every afternoon and were given a big spoonful of Malt – YUCK! Even worse, cod liver oil and orange juice!

The decision was made for me to be evacuated back to Wales for my safety. I was too young to say I was an "evacuee" and called myself a "Wacawee". When in Wales my parents used to save their coupons and send me chocolate animals in Shredded Wheat boxes from London.

Once on a train from Wales at the end of the war, an American soldier gave me a Jaffa orange and I thought it was a nice smelling ball. I was about to throw it but luckily my mother caught it!

My father (I didn't know him at first) took me to queue for a banana..... I was very disappointed as it was only a single banana because in the alphabet books the letter 'B' was a full hand of them!

I do remember in Wales we had a little dog called Monty, named after General Montgomery. Years later I actually met Montgomery and told him about the name of our dog! He was quite amused and said lots of people called their dogs Monty after him.

Well, these are a few of my memories and I hope it paints a picture of different aspects of the war; and thank God I am still here to talk about it, unlike so many who lost their lives.

Wartime Memories

of Ian Archer

I was born on 9th April, 1940. My parents, Daisy and Fred had been married seventeen years when I arrived, their only child. My father worked at a factory in Portsmouth where he had been apprenticed as a young man. He and my mother were part-time caretakers for a solicitor, J.R.C. Miller of Portland Place (in recent years, renamed), Grove Road South, Southsea, a three-storey Georgian property where they occupied a basement flat, rent-free in return for their duties. Dad served in the Hampshire Regiment during the First World War and, because of his age, was not conscripted in the Second.

Portland Place (as was) is almost next door to St. Jude's Church and the crypt was used as an air-raid shelter during the early part of the war. I was told that, on one occasion after the 'all-clear' siren had sounded, my mother emerged with me in her arms and almost fainted with horror, seeing a number of heads rolling about in the road, before realising that they were from tailors' dummies blown out of the shattered windows from the shops in Palmerston Road!

After one air-raid when the windows of the flat were blown in, it was decided that, with a five-month old baby, it would be prudent to move away from Portsmouth to escape the bombing, or so my parents thought, so they re-located to Emsworth, where they rented an end of terrace cottage in The Gardens (renamed Bosmere Gardens in 1948 when the council estate was built). I have vivid wartime memories from the age of three (I can picture a third birthday card I received). The rush along to the air-raid shelter after the siren had sounded is fresh in my mind and the sound of that alarm in documentaries and films about the war still gives me the shivers. The tracer bullets were pretty and I was fascinated by the searchlights. From inside the shelter the boom of the ack-ack artillery was quite frightening. The engine sounds of the Luftwaffe aircraft were distinctive, a more 'throbbing' noise and I remember my father saying, 'They're Jerries'.

My mother used to go by bus into Portsmouth occasionally to shop. We were in a draper's shop in Southsea and I could just about see a cushion perched on a large wooden counter. Whilst we were there the siren

sounded and customers and staff had to rush to the basement until the 'all-clear' sounded. I enjoyed, at the age of three, our visits to Portsmouth because I loved to see the several barrage balloons which were distributed round the skies of the city. On one occasion we managed to venture as far as Southsea seafront where I recall the great rolls of barbed wire on the beach. Back in Emsworth my mother was walking, with me in a pushchair towards Hollybank Woods where there was an army camp. A soldier with a rifle slung across his chest barred our way and turned us back -- a striking memory.

Ironically, since we had moved from Portsmouth to distance ourselves from the bombing (My father was still working in the city and I recall him leaving some evenings to do fire-watching on the factory roof), we almost lost our lives when a bomb exploded literally feet away from our shelter, demolishing two houses in Harold Terrace. Fortunately, there were no casualties although our house suffered broken windows and a cracked gable end. I can still see the look of horror on my parents' faces at the moment of the explosion. I was very frightened. Strangely, this bomb is not shown on the map showing the locations of bombs dropped on Emsworth, held by the local museum. The space at the end of the terrace remained a bomb site until the early Seventies when a larger house was built where the two smaller cottages had been.

On 8th February, 1944 I was lying in bed, downstairs because it would have been easier to get me along to the shelter in the event of an air-raid (becoming rarer at that stage of the war) or a flying bomb, when I heard the sound of two aircraft flying around (I could actually discern the two separate engine sounds) when there was a very loud bang. This was another occasion when I was terrified because, after the bang, the house shook as one of the aeroplanes skimmed the roof and this was followed by an explosion as the Mosquito, with its two-man crew crashed a few hundred yards away in what is now Brook Meadow. The other aircraft, a Wellington came down in the harbour with the loss of its five man crew, victims of a tragic accident. A booklet was published detailing the incident, and there is a plaque to be seen on a bridge in Brook Meadow commemorating the pilot of the Mosquito, Arthur Woods, a film director in peacetime, and his Norwegian navigator.

My final (unless others come to mind later) memory is of my father holding me in his arms while standing in the doorway of the air-raid shelter,

listening to an unusual sound approaching from the east. Shortly, a type of aircraft appeared low over Emsworth gasometer (not gasholder!). It was a flying bomb (V1, Doodlebug). In the bright moonlight it appeared to be silver although I now know that they were painted black. It passed harmlessly and crashed at Stockheath (now Leigh Park) I understand, exploding but causing no casualties.

Memories of WW2

by Dorothy Bonner

My name is DOROTHY BONNER (nee Peacock) born September 1932, then I lived in a small hamlet – Finkley, near Andover, Hants. Smannel and Little London also formed the neighbouring villages.

Little London is where my paternal grandparents had a small farm, Mount Pleasant Farm. After grandad died the family moved to Southsea, the farm was tenanted so grandma had to move out.

Andover is where my maternal grandparents lived – the Queen Charlotte Inn, London Road, Andover. Grandad was the landlord and after he died grandma became the licensee.

When my dad was called up, we had to move because we lived in a tied cottage and the landlord needed the house for a farm worker. That's how we came to live with grandma in the pub.

Mount Pleasant Farm was on the outskirts of Little London, on the top of a hill. There was a searchlight battalion in one of the fields and a huge barrage balloon. On the farm Aunts and the children set special traps, and every morning we went round the traps – because if we caught any rabbits, it did spread out our meal rations. The skins also had a use, specially treated they made nice warm gloves.

Beginning of the war

As soon as the war was declared all the men in the villages “signed on”, they then came home and waited to be called up. Dad was called up and joined the Royal Army Service Corps (RASC) – in the meantime he became a sergeant in the Home Guard. They did duties around the local area keeping watch and guarding us.

Dad's army training was carried out somewhere in the Lake District and he lodged with a lady called Mrs Burton. When this training was finished, they set sail for Singapore. Off the Cape the ship broke down and couldn't be properly repaired, so they limped up the East coast of Africa. He then joined the North African Campaign for the rest of the war. THANK GOODNESS, because Singapore fell to the Japanese. After the campaign in North Africa ended he went on to Italy – he never spoke about this part of the war.

Battle of Britain

Dad and I watched the dogfights standing on our air raid shelter in the garden. Around Andover at this time there were numerous Army camps and airfields, so I suppose it was a prime site to be targeted.

We also stood on the shelter and could see the red sky when Portsmouth and Southampton were bombed and burned.

We didn't have any bombing near us, just the occasional bomb drop if they had any left on their way home. I remember one plane being brought down, but it was so heavily guarded that no one could get near it.

Rationing and Food

We had special "RATION BOOKS" with some items having to be registered with particular shops in town. Even sweets were rationed, actually until the 1950's.

Our books had PK marked on them, because Grandma kept chickens and this mark enabled her to get special food for the hens. She also kept some young pigs in the stables. When it was time to kill them, this was done on the farm. Half the pig was ours to salt down. The other half went to the Ministry of Food.

When eggs were plentiful, they had a large pan in the larder and that was filled with isinglass – eggs from the chickens were placed in the middle and used in the winter. They could be cooked with but not boiled.

Also attached to the house was a large walled garden in which all the fruit and veg grew. No shortage of fruit and veg, but I don't remember any salad items being grown. But it wasn't an everyday requirement those days. If we went to visit our relatives for a week, we had to go to the M of F office in the town and collect a coupon sheet for the basic foods we needed while we were away.

All of the windows had to be taped, this I believe was in case they broke they wouldn't shatter and cause injuries.

If we moved around outside after dark the torch we used had to have a shield to point the light beam down. Cars also had shielded lights for the same reason.

School

This I think was the start of school dinners, at least in senior school. It also helped with the rations at home.

Shoes had to have coupons to be purchased and in senior school if you were size 5, I think and above, we had to have extra because they were classed as adult and therefore used more coupons.

We all had one third of a pint of milk a day at school. The crate with the milk was aired by the stove in the classroom. Can you imagine warmed milk at lunchtime, but we loved it.

The gas masks in their boxes had to be carried everywhere. Now if the siren sounded, we had to collect our gas masks and run over the playing fields to the air raid shelters. I don't remember doing this at all, I suppose most of the raids started at night.

D Day

There had been a buildup of British and American troops in the area and the day before D-Day the pub was full to overflowing. Lots of jollity and singing – the next day they were all gone - it was like magic. We never saw them again.

At school on D-Day we all went to school assembly. Miss Althouse, our headmistress, announced what had taken place and we must pray for everyone's safety especially for the husbands of two of our teachers. The teachers were both in tears on the stage, because the husbands went across to France on that day.,

I remember standing in the Guildhall, Portsmouth, but not whether it was VE or VJ Day. You can imagine thousands filled the Guildhall Square.

Now its getting everything back to "normal" after peace was announced, and the men and women were coming home.

Memories of a wartime childhood.

Brian Thomas, while living in Gosport Road, Fareham

The siren in the night

I was living in my maternal grandmother's shop on Gosport Road, Fareham in early 1944, probably March/April, together with my mother and baby brother. The timing I recall because my brother was in a Moses cradle. He was born in late February 1944, so must have been no more than one or two months old. I was therefore about two and a half years old.

It was night-time and I was woken from sleep by urgent shouts from downstairs: "Brian! Brian! Get up - and stand on your bed!"

I could hear the air raid siren wailing as I groggily did as told. A few minutes later my mother dashed into the bedroom, bundled me into her arms and quickly took me downstairs into the shop and put me into the shelter under the counter, where my brother already was, in his Moses basket. "Stay there" I was told.

I could hear my mother and grandmother talking in the shop front and peeked out to see what was going on. They were standing near the outside door looking up through the window and pointing upwards. I quietly emerged from the shelter and crept up behind them to see what they were looking at.

I saw two aeroplanes manoeuvring around each other and, forgetting that I was not supposed to be there, asked "What are they doing?"

I was immediately told to get back into the shelter and look after my brother, which I did. I guess it was a "dogfight" that I had glimpsed.

The convoy

I remember watching from the shop front, maybe a few weeks later, as a procession of military vehicles went down Gosport Road towards the coast. They made a great impression on me because of the continuous, almost hypnotic, noise of tyres, or possibly caterpillar tracks, as they droned on their way. Maybe part of the build up to D-day?

The flying elephant

While living in Gosport Road I used to play in the field next to the house. The field formed a reasonably large gap between our house and the next one further towards the coast, and it sloped upwards in that direction.

Toward the back of the field, at the top corner, was a hut and I remember being amazed to see what, to my young eyes, looked like a huge elephant next to the hut. It slowly rose through the air, flying from a cable anchored near the hut. It was of course a barrage balloon.

One day I ventured up to the hut and poked my nose in. I was invited in by the men for a drink. They sat me down and gave me a cup of very strong hot tea which made me splutter and cough as I tried a sip. They all laughed and for the first time I heard the expression “It went down the wrong way”.

A close call

I recall hearing my mother talking about her time living in Gosport Road during the war. Apparently she was told by an air raid warden, after a nearby bombing raid, that if the “stick” had contained one more bomb our house would have been right under it. Luck can play a large part in life's events.

When living in Camborne, Cornwall

Evacuees

We moved to Cornwall later in 1944 to live in my paternal grandmother's house. Several older children, evacuees from London, moved into the converted stables just up the lane.

One of the girls liked to play tricks on me. While playing in the lane one day she got me to hold a broomstick by the end, close my eyes and spin round and round, telling me to let it go when she said.

Her timing was impeccable, I released it and “Crash!” - it went straight through a window. It made quite a neat hole, slightly greater than the diameter of the broomstick, with short cracks radiating from it! I was in trouble.

The pane was three to four feet wide, although not very high. Getting a replacement for anything in those days of shortages was not easy. No one had the money for it anyway, so the hole was covered with a smaller piece of glass.

Some years after the evacuees went home we had to move into the house where they had been. For quite a long while we had to live with the rather unsightly “temporary” repair to the window. Poetic justice?

My memories of the War

Sonia Price (now aged 95)

When war broke out I was 11 or 12, and living in Salcombe in Devon, having moved away from London.

To begin with we were all told the new rules! At first, there was an occasional German plane on its way to Plymouth. We were warned to take shelter if we were outside – ie getting back inside the house if we were near enough - otherwise we should knock on any door, and we'd be let in. We were instructed to get back home as soon as we could. The intention was then to maybe to move to Wales where my father was stationed. He was in the RAF, not as a pilot, as he was too old at 39.

Shortly after this fairly quiet period, we began to see French sailors who had been rescued from their boats. My mother told me that I was absolutely NOT allowed to practise my French on them. We also saw more planes coming back from their bombing raids over Plymouth. We often had to take shelter or hide somewhere in case we got shot at. It was really scary!!

We had to get used to the blackout. All the windows had to have heavy window curtains to prevent any light giving the German Bombers clues that there were houses below that they could drop any spare bombs before returning back. Their planes could blow up if they landed with spare bombs on board.

We had food rationing. I noticed it straight away, with virtually no butter to spread on our sandwiches. It was in Salcombe that I heard my first bomb. It was at night, and we were staying with my mother's friend, who had a very substantial staircase that we could shelter under. I admit it terrified me and I suspect most others because it sounded so near. The bomb fell on the village school. Fortunately, it was night-time, but I don't know what the pupils did after that because the very next day we started the journey back to London. At the time there was rumour that both we, and the Germans, would not bomb the Capital cities.

London seemed to be still safe when we arrived and for a few days nothing happened. On the following day, we (my Mother, me and baby sister) were due to leave London again to travel to the Midlands to join my father who was now stationed up there. But this was the night when the Nazis decided to start bombing London. We were staying at 9 Cromwell Road, Kensington. Just opposite the Natural History Museum

I woke up in the middle of the night to hear a plane flying over us, then another. Then I was knocked unconscious. When I woke up sometime later my legs were really hurting, but I managed to get up and looked for the light switch, but couldn't find it, and none of the doors would open. Although I was shouting out there was no reply. I sat on a basement windowsill and eventually fell asleep. When I woke up later, I heard a voice saying, "You better start shouting," but there was no one there, however I started shouting for help again. After about 30 minutes someone heard me and got help from some men who were looking for survivors. One of the men, who was the bravest man I've ever known dug through the rubble and got me off the windowsill and got me to a tunnel he had made. He told me to crawl though on my stomach. He then went back through the same tunnel and found my baby sister still asleep in her cot. He also rescued her. He was the bravest man I've ever met. I sincerely hope he got lots of medals!

I was in hospital for about 4-5 months until my legs healed. My sister, me and my Uncle and Aunt were the only survivors of the bomb that hit the house. My mother and grandmother were both killed.

Shortly after leaving hospital my father was told, he was being sent to South Africa (they were training pilots there and also in Canada). We went to South Africa with him and went to a British boarding school that had opened in South Africa (Rodean)

The war was still on when I returned to England to be with my father again as a sixteen-year-old in 1944.

Additional note from her daughter:

If you go to Cromwell Road by the Natural History Museum, you can see a magnificent terrace of houses. Halfway along is a modern flat sandwiched in between. Although I knew my grandmother had been killed in the war and that my mother has scars on her legs, she never really talked about the bomb dropping on their house. It wasn't until my daughter was asked at school to ask their Grandparents to tell their War Memories, that my mother told us her story and we went to look at 9 Cromwell Road with my mother. A few years ago we went with my mother to find her Mother's grave at Cuffley in Hertfordshire. She said it was the first time she had seen it, 70 odd years later!!

Like many of her generation, she can be quite matter of fact about her experiences. They locked them all away.

Wartime Recollections Party

On a beautiful sunny afternoon in Emsworth a small group of Emsworth and District u3a members gathered to share reminiscences about their childhoods spent during the second World War. They had been taking part in an Oxford University project designed to save these memories from being lost and now, with all the stories collected in, there was a sense of celebration at something very worthwhile completed.

u3a member Anne generously opened her garden for the afternoon and the first hint of something unusual happening was a very impressive vintage Jeep loaned by a neighbour and now standing outside her house. The back garden was looking very jolly, with gazebos

and cushions, fresh table linen and pretty tea pots, and there was a real feel of times gone by. There were sandwiches on offer, biscuits and cake with lots of tea all served up by a small number of volunteer waitresses.





After the first round of tea, Adrian called everyone to attention for a short speech of welcome and congratulation before producing printed song sheets. We all know the old wartime ditties so well and joined in with gusto, with one brave couple delighting us all by taking to the improvised dance floor.

After the sing-along Bridget bravely set off the air raid warning siren, which sent a frisson of fear through everyone, even those of us too

young to remember a time when there was a genuine emergency.

Adrian made us all laugh by modelling a gas mask, which had been kept all these years and brought along by one of the guests. It looked very uncomfortable, and I'm sure that at the time they were issued nobody was laughing.



Then it was back to more tea and recollections.



As with children of all ages, keeping the tummy filled was of vital interest and many memories centred around food. Many remembered helping to produce and preserve vegetables and collect eggs, with lawns dug up and planted and chickens reared, and most people seemed to have had a healthy but basic diet. In a time of meat rationing there were recollections of catching rabbits for the pot! Government issue of malt extract, cod liver oil and orange juice seem to have been loved and loathed in equal measure, and fruits that we take for granted, such as bananas and oranges, were exotic treats rarely seen until the war had ended.



There was talk of fear and dangerous situations, but also of the excitement – particularly from boys! - at watching aerial dogfights from the relative safety of air raid shelters. Barrage balloons were seen as flying elephants and objects of wonder. Some recalled being evacuated to supposedly safer areas, whereas others survived attacks on their homes and had to move house and school, some more than once. As well as producing food parents seem to have been always busy, with mothers doing volunteer work and knitting for servicemen and women, and many fathers not on active service being engaged as ARP wardens and fire-watchers.



Throughout this lovely afternoon there were many smiles and much laughter, some sad memories but also many happy ones. Guests enjoyed discussing and comparing their various experiences, and just talking about this important time in their young lives. Some were reluctant to leave

Hazel Irwin

Overheard in **WAITROSE**

"I suppose we could have a coffee. I've just spoken to Susan and she's still doing the ironing and there's nothing worse than being in your own house when the cleaner is still there."

Marlborough College Summer School July to August 2024

The school pupils break up for the summer holidays and Marlborough College give a heartfelt welcome to its summer school attendees. The school offers 400 ways to learn and create adult courses range from astrophotography to painting like Monet picture framing to Japanese cooking fly fishing to Greek in a week. The summer school is a celebration, not just of learning and discovery but a celebration of the finest food prepared by our talented chefs, of delicious cocktails served by our bar team, and an exciting timetable of entertainment from lectures and recitals, outdoor theatre & comedy to Gala nights held in the stunning Memorial Hall. Accommodation is in the pupil's boarding houses and I so enjoyed my week in the girl's boarding house which is fully equipped with kitchenettes, meeting areas as well as TV and games rooms and free wifi. It is basic but all meals and entertainment are included, as is use of the sports and leisure facilities. The food was good on help yourself basis - a wide selection of delicious, freshly cooked meals and light bites and a 4-5 course dinner each night. The beds were hard so I will take a mattress topper and extra pillow next time! If residential you are expected to arrive on Sunday afternoon and leave the following Saturday morning

Do visit their website, summerschool.co.uk, where there is a full description of all courses, covering such diverse subjects as Literature and Creative Writing, Arts and Crafts, Fly Fishing, Water Colour Painting and Light Aircraft Navigation. It's a wonderful way to spend a week in the summer.

Ann Fox-Robinson

Overheard in **WAITROSE**

"I work at Waitrose on the counters and yesterday whilst working on the meat and fish counter, I had a man and wife browse through our meat section. I asked if they were looking for anything in particular and they responded "your dry aged sirloin steak".

We had some unopened dry aged sirloin and I informed the customers that I would be happy to open it for them. I opened the pack and asked how many slices they wanted and how thick they were to be. 2 thick slices later costing around £16 I wrapped up the meat and gave them to the couple, I told them to enjoy....surprisingly the man responded "Oh dear, we don't eat meat, we are both vegetarians....this is for our dog Clifford....it's his favourite".