



LIVING WITH THE GERMANS 1940- 1944

I had no problem with the Germans, I was quite used to them and one of the things that stands out was how we were looked after, not only by our family, our relations if we still had them over here, but by neighbours. Everyone treasured the children that were left on the island, and I believe there were over a thousand children of school age left on the island when the war, when they evacuated, so there were quite a number of children, and people were very kind to us.

The Germans themselves were very kind to us, because of course, they missed their own children. Where we lived, opposite the cookhouse, they used to pass through our yard, across the yard twice a day, so we were quite used to them. Although they couldn't speak to us because I only spoke, and so did my brother, the patois, which they didn't understand. We certainly didn't know the German! They smiled, they showed us photographs of their children, and many were with tears in their eyes when they watched us play. It's sad to think how much they did miss their children.

You see, I couldn't remember the time before the war. I grew up in the war, so the Germans were natural, they were part of my life, and I was not frightened by it ever. We certainly saw a lot of Germans on the road, but that would have been normal. It would have been strange if we didn't see them on the road. But they didn't acknowledge us, or us them really. We just carried on our own way.

MARGARET LE CRAS

Every Saturday I used to walk along the road to my aunts, and the Germans ... used to wave and that sort of thing. We were frightened of them at the start, but towards the end we got used to some of them, and we knew them by name.

The bunkers were all along Torteval road, that was our area and on a Sunday afternoon we used to go with my grandmother in the wheelchair, and walk her around. They got used to seeing the same people, of course.

WIN LE CHEMINANT



LIVING WITH THE GERMANS

I used to enjoy 'twigging' for wood for the fire, because there wasn't a lot of coal. There was a bit of coal but not a lot, so we used to go down the Fosse Andre. There was a nursery there and we used to go down there and collect it. You could only take twigs officially, but my mother used to use my old pram. I can remember going down one time and Guernsey men were cutting the trees and logs, so it was two in the lorry and one over the wall! My pram had a false bottom - you know the old fashioned prams with a false bottom and the middle part that came out - and the logs were going in there with twigs on the top. I always remember, this was when we had had to move to Victoria Road,

I had a sack of twigs, kindling, sort of small bits and pieces, which wasn't heavy. It was getting a bit late and my mother said to me - go on ahead, because your father will be getting worried - and I remember walking up through Brock Road and this little German approached me and said - 'Your mutter' - Your mother - so I said - 'Down the road' - 'Too heavy for little girl, I carry'. Well I was worried that he was going to pinch it! Well he took the sack and it must have been awful because I was hanging onto the back of it - he's not going to get my sack of twigs! My poor father's face! He was standing at the gate in Victoria Road - "What the ...?"

"He's only helping me carry it!" I said.

I suppose I must have been about 9 or 10 then. He was genuinely concerned that I was carrying a heavy sack, they were like that.

JEAN BUDDEN

The Germans imported large 'purple' coloured horses which they used to let loose to gallop from one field to another down a narrow lane along which I had to go to school. This frightened me as I had to jump for the hedge when they came along.

BRIAN LE CONTE



LIVING WITH THE GERMANS

The first contact with a German was when we were at Ker Maria School. there is a house there called Doman, they had the Red Cross thing there, and the German Doctor was there. He was coming along the road and he was very good with children. Whether this was him or whether he was told to do it, but I asked him for sweets, 'sugarreiden', if I remember rightly. My mother would have beaten me to death if she had known I had asked a German for sweets!

I thought he was about 40 – 50 [years old], "Oh yes, come with me", we went into this house, there was the red cross on the front, which had been painted on, that was their field hospital, and he gave me two tubes of sweets. He said, "Don't you tell anyone, I can't give them all away". Then I went to school, put one tube in my pocket and the other one I was eating. They were very funny sweets, dissolved in your mouth, very sweet. Anyway it didn't take long for the rest of the form to find out I was eating sweets. I wasn't beaten for them but I had to share them out. I only had one tube, but they didn't know I had another tube. And it wasn't for years and years later I realized what he had given me, glucose tablets for the troops, energy!

The next German I met was a German officer, it must have been when they were building the Vardes and we were playing in the Salines Road. A car came along and it was the typical staff car you see in films, open top, summer this was, and this German officer in it and he stopped – I thought, " Oh my God, that's it, we're dead!" – He got out and he spoke English. We thought well, that's a good thing, anyway. He wanted to know the way to the Vardes, the Grand Maison Road. We said

"Do you want the gun emplacements?"

" Yes," he said.

We knew the way to the Vardes so we were able to direct him, but of course he wasn't quite sure, so we said

"Shall we come in the car with you?"

He said "Yes, but just to the end of the road,"

So the first time I had ever been in a car was a German staff car.

I must have been 7, I suppose.

MALCOLM WOODLAND



LIVING WITH THE GERMANS

One day I was riding along on my bike and came to the end of the Grand Fort Bridge and I stopped as a German officer was coming towards me on his large horse. He told me to stop so I did. He wanted to know the way to the Bridge. Then he said “Would you like a ride on the horse?”

“Not blooming likely!”

“Oh yes, you will be alright,”

He could speak English, and he lifted me up and put me on this horse. He said “When you get to the crossroads at the Bray Road, say stop, pull the rein and he will come back.”

So he put me on this blasted horse and I could see all over Brooklands, I had never been that high before. I went on this horse down to the end and turned it round but I must have kicked it because it started to trot, fortunately he stopped it. But I don't like horses, and that was pretty scary.

MALCOLM WOODLAND

When the the nursing home was taken over by the Germans, the matron was given 48 hours to leave it; her staff had already left. All medical stocks were in the attics of the nursing home and the German inspectors had not seen this, so my mother suggested that it all be removed for the use of the local population, leaving just 2 or 3 ‘changes’ of everything so as not to look suspicious.

There was a curfew after which no one was allowed out, I think we had about 2 hours for 2 nights in which to move the stock, but we did it, my parents loading it into an old pram and wheeling it up the road to the hall of our house where Gran and I received it and gradually carried it up to the landing, and when curfew came and Mother and Dad had to be indoors we spent the rest of the evening carrying it into our attic. Then gradually as years went by these stocks would be issued to the hospital, although few stocks lasted the duration of the Occupation, causing great hardship to those who were ill and/or needed operations.

KAYE LE CHEMINANT



LIVING WITH THE GERMANS

One day they (the Germans) were playing, they obviously wanted some wood. They were on manoeuvres and they wanted some wood for their fires I expect, as they were using hand grenades to blow up the pine trees. They were fallen down trees and they were blowing them up by throwing hand grenades at them. This was quite exotic as chunks of wood were flying everywhere; we were very scared about that.

As a child there was this frisson of fear, you never knew what was going to happen when a gaggle of troops came down the road. If they were on skirmishes, they just went where they were going and if you had been in the way they would have walked all over you. Or shot you, anything could have happened. You never knew when you went home if your parents would still be there, if they were on their manoeuvres around the place. So there was always this doubt about, you didn't want to see Germans and if you saw Germans one would probably keep out of sight, or go the other way or not be there out of preference. In actual fact, though, throughout the whole occupation I don't think I had one to one contact with more than 9 Germans.

MALCOLM WOODLAND

We had a visit from a German who came to inspect our house. I was waiting for my mother to go out somewhere and I was dressed with a little beret. I think most children used to wear berets or caps in those days, going to school. And this beret had a little Mickey Mouse on, and I remember him saying to me when he'd been into the house, 'Well, Mickey Mouse can stay here'. I don't think it was anything to do with Mickey Mouse, it was the fact that our house at that time had no bathroom, we had an outside toilet, and we didn't have the facilities. He was looking for suitable houses to occupy, for the troops. Next door was occupied, and they always seemed to have a problem with the gas hot water system, because I remember my parents being amused when they heard the thing blowing up. They [*the Germans*] didn't know how to work it and there would be shouts from next door as somebody was taking a bath when the geyser blew up.

BRIAN LE CONTE



LIVING WITH THE GERMANS– DANGER!

The Germans came to search our house, which was maybe two or three years later I don't know why, but they came to search the house, and they searched ... they burst into the door, and went upstairs, went everywhere looking for anything, we didn't know quite what it was they were looking for. But after they'd gone, my old grandfather said, "Oh, that's got them", he said. "They didn't find my gun that was outside", and my mother and father, they nearly had a fit, because if that had been found at that time, they would have been shot. My grandfather surely would have been, because that was the one terrible thing to keep was a gun, you can imagine going around the island with a gun, shooting perhaps the Germans. So my mother and father said, "Well look, Gramp, we can't hand it in now; the Germans are going to think, 'Oh, that's strange, you've got a gun', so we'll have to all keep quiet, and you children will have to keep quiet as well. Grandpa's hidden this gun in the sawdust in the back yard, so we'll have to just keep quiet and hope they don't come again."

MOLLY BIHET

We had an air raid, the Canadians came over and bombed the radar on the Fort field, which was on, and we had bullets through the house of course. Terrified we were, terrified. I can remember getting under my mother's bed, with her, and underneath the bed was like iron springs, it was the most silly place to go really, because if the bed had collapsed we would have been in pieces, in those days, but anyway. My father always used to sort of stand in the hall and shake like mad, because he had been in the First World War anyway so he knew what it was like.

JEAN FALLA



LIVING WITH THE GERMANS– DANGER!

The Germans had poles all over the island to prevent any landing craft, and they had wires across these poles with mines attached to them, and I remember my brothers would be working around these poles. Well, my elder brother was always very cautious, and he knew how to switch off the mine. He'd switch it off and he'd go right against the pole and do the work. But Len, he didn't bother with that. He'd do exactly the same thing but he didn't bother to switch them off. One day some of these poles were above, on the mount above Brooklands, and our neighbouring farmer had a horse. This horse was rubbing himself against the pole and the mine went off. A piece of shrapnel went through the window in the cellar (at Brooklands) where we had the washing machine and made a neat little bullet hole straight through, but we never found the piece of shrapnel, which was amazing!

The horse wasn't hurt but he was covered in soil. It's amazing really. If there had been landing craft at that level, they could have caused damage.

It was also the fun of the islanders as well, we'd do it to remove the poles and cut them up for firewood. Len was always taking some of their poles, especially when they were putting them up. We'd quickly saw them up so they didn't look like a pole!

HIRZEL DOREY



LIVING WITH THE GERMANS– DANGER!

I also have memories of the air raids, so those were intermittent as the planes were passing over. British planes were passing over to France, probably around Normandy and Brittany. And hardly before the air raids were over and the siren had sounded the 'All Clear' we were rushing to the greenhouses and picking up the shrapnel which fell on the panes and slid down into the gutters. So whereas today perhaps, or after the war years lots of people were collecting stamps and doing things like that we were shrapnel seekers and collectors having the best pieces. We were a bit envious of the fellow next door to us because quite a large chunk fell through their roof, so he had certainly one-upmanship on us.

ALAN BISSON

I also remember as a child playing in the yard, and I heard what I thought was a low-flying aircraft, and I got really frightened because I thought it was going to crash, it seemed that low. I peeped around the corner of the gate, looking towards the Kings Mills Road, looking up towards the Waterworks, and suddenly a tank came into view out of control and it capsized, and actually a couple of drivers were killed. I remember that another tank came along eventually and righted it, but they just backed up the wall and through another wall, and though you can hardly see it, I can still see the repair. As far as I know I think I was the only person who saw that happen. I never heard of anybody actually seeing it capsize, you know. But it was really frightening because I thought it was a plane that was going to crash.

HIRZEL DOREY



LIVING WITH THE GERMANS– DANGER!

Occasionally one was caught in an air raid, not usually bombing but American aircraft would come over to ‘annoy’ the Germans or test their defences and there would be a lot of noise – searchlights in the sky, anti aircraft guns going off and then the danger of falling shrapnel. It was common practice if such a raid should occur to go to one’s front door and leave it ajar (without a light showing of course) so that anyone passing could come in for shelter.

KAYE LE CHEMINANT

We in the Canichers had guns, big guns which were situated in the Blue Mountains at the Cotils behind us, and we used to have to get out of our house sometimes at four o’ clock in the morning, five o’ clock, because they wanted to fire practising their guns, and we used to have to walk up the road and go up to my aunt for three or four hours. We used to have to leave the windows and doors open, but there was damage to our properties as well because of it. But that was their practising, and they used to annoy my mother and father a lot I think, and a lot of people that way.

MOLLY BIHET

And there was always after the air raids, looking for shrapnel and things like that. It’s only when you look back on it you think you did some rather silly things at times!

JEAN BUDDEN





LIVING WITH THE GERMANS – DANGER!

One completely different episode I clearly remember was the night my mother nearly cut my ear off. She used to give me haircuts and one night by the candlelight she was giving me a little trim when there was a terrific thump and whoosh, then silence for a moment, and then it sounded as if the house was being covered by a net. We had no idea what it was, and then there was silence, absolute silence. So my father decided to go next door, opposite, to find out if they'd heard anything, seen what it was, and it wasn't until next morning that we found out he'd walked right next to a bomb crater which had landed in the field just opposite our house, about 30 metres, 40 metres away.

In fact there were a string of about five or six bombs that landed, but none of them went off. The first one landed in the field opposite the entrance to Grow, in the Verte Rue, and the second one landed opposite our house where there now stands a red brick house built over where the crater would have been. The third was in a field a little further up the road going towards the Hautes Capelles parallel to the road. The fourth one was in the field between Aladdin's Cave and the road, there are now bungalows built there, and I believe there was a further one just across the Canus road where Mr Yabsley I think now lives. None of them exploded and the reason given was that it was a plane that was trying to get back to England, a British plane or American plane, a bomber, they were having difficulties and they were so low that in order to get height they released the bombs. As I understand it the bombs were detonated by a propeller on the front unscrewing as the bomb fell. But with the plane being so low the detonator never came out, so we survived. And that meant us being evacuated to aunts and uncles for two or three weeks while they dug the unexploded bombs out.

BRIAN LE CONTE



COMMUNICATING WITH THE OUTSIDE WORLD

RED CROSS MESSAGES

Messages we could get were through the Red Cross. We were able to send a message of, I don't know how many words, say 10 or 12 words, possibly once a month, and we'd also receive one. Its very difficult to send a letter or a message and have something to say. But the sort of thing my brother might send to us was a message reading – 'Very well, got new bike, seeing Martel next week, love to all' – and that's it. So that kept us going, and thinking out messages.

BRIAN LE CONTE

People tried to send messages in code. A cryptic message from England, published in the Star, was widely read and created a great deal of amusement. It came from Mr J H Le Poidevin, headmaster of Torteval School "Tommy, Joe and Sam's boys working very hard. Doing very good work. Should graduate with honours near future". People who knew Torteval well, declared that none of the parents of schoolchildren evacuated under Mr Le Poidevin's care were named either Tommy, Joe or Sam. A little thought recalled that Joseph is Stalin's Christian name, that 'Uncle Sam' in the United States corresponds to 'John Bull' in England, and it needed no scholarship to identify Tommy with 'Tommy Atkins', the typical British soldier.

Guernsey Under German Rule. Durand 1946



CRYSTAL SETS

A very important item was the crystal wireless set. People used to use this to listen to the English news, and pass round to locals. These little crystal sets were made of course during the occupation; they were very, very important to the grown-ups, not to the children so much, but to the grown-ups.

MOLLY BIHET

Radios were absolutely forbidden but of course many people had crystal sets, which were a special little gadget. I don't know exactly how it picked up the signal but the crystal through a cat's whisker somehow gave a sound through earphones. People could hear the British news. I suppose the difficult thing was to hide the earphones, but the crystal set could be easily hidden and there are many stories of different hiding places. But a big worry for me was that during the holidays I often used to go to an aunt and uncle who lived at Bordeaux. My Uncle Lewis and Auntie Deena used to let me stay with them and I used to be able to go up and play up in the attic with my cousin's toys. My cousin had been evacuated with Elizabeth College so I'd go up and play with his toys. One day I went up and of course I saw the crystal set and a pair of earphones. This terrified me, because I didn't want to let anybody know that I'd actually seen, and I was absolutely frightened that I might give the game away, and if my uncle had been found out he might have suspected me of letting the cat out of the bag. He always used to say he knew somebody who had told him the latest news, he'd never let on that it was him. In fact it wasn't until after the war that they said to me 'You didn't know we had that, did you?', and I'm afraid I lied and said 'No', and it was a few, little while later, when I felt safer I think, that I admitted that I had known. But I was very frightened that I would be responsible for the deportation of my aunt and uncle if that had been discovered.

BRIAN LE CONTE





CRYSTAL SETS

I remember the house being ransacked for our little crystal set, and I think that was a bit of a worrying time. They must have checked the wires and saw that they gave probably indication that there was some use in them and they went through the house. But we had a little drawer in the hall stand, and there was clothing over it and somehow they missed that.

ALAN BISSON

Mr Dowding's family had a radio shop, and he taught the boys how to make crystal sets. One day a German soldier walked into my house whilst I was listening to the radio, apologized and said 'You are doing your homework' and walked out again.

DON SMITH

MONEY

In fact it was quite funny really because we dealt in three currencies at the same time because anything circulated. I can remember going in to get stuff, we used German marks, we used francs and also Guernsey money, notes which were printed, 10/-, notes, 5/- notes, half crown notes and the odd bits of copper and silver that were still floating around. And there was an equivalent price for everything. You just bought it with whatever you had to hand. Funny really. It worked quite well.

ARTHUR KLEIN





'SLAVE WORKERS'

Thousands of workers were brought to Guernsey to build this section of Hitler's 'Atlantic Wall' of fortifications from Denmark to Brest. They were not managed directly by the German forces occupying the Islands, but by the Organisation Todt. The prisoners were not billeted on Islanders but kept separately in extremely poor conditions. There were those who were paid, such as volunteers or civilian internees from other countries such as Spain 'deployed' by the Germans to do more useful work. Others were Russian or Eastern European prisoners and they were treated very harshly.

I remember seeing those who built camps, they seemed to be very badly dressed and having a roughish time.

ALAN BISSON

I remember after digging potatoes the Germans would come and turn over the patch for the gleanings, and the slave workers as well. At the end of the war they were eating nettles, and daffodil bulbs.

GORDON HOTTON

I always remember when I was at Les Vauxbelets. In the fields behind the Vauxbelets School, (now Blanchelande where Froome keeps all his equipment), there were lots and lots of huts built there by the Germans to house the slave workers who were occupied in digging out the tunnels at the Underground Hospital. In fact there is still today one building left there, it is a bit covered up with brambles and so on, but anybody goes past it gives you some idea of what sort of buildings they were. Imagine that whole fields were covered with these buildings for the German workers.

FRED GALLIENNE



‘SLAVE WORKERS’

One nasty memory I have as a child was walking home, back from the Grande Maison classroom past a Prisoner of War camp which was at the bottom of the Rue Sauvage, in what is now the Palm Grove Estate. This field was surrounded by barbed wire and there were Russian and Polish prisoners of war. People who had been brought over to build defences, the forts and the wall at L’Ancresse and all the various gun emplacements.

I remember as a young child passing this camp, and seeing all these prisoners of war who were dressed in rags, and very thin and very weak, and they were being lined up for some reason, probably to be checked or counted. I remember one of them was obviously so weak that he couldn’t stand and he crouched down. Supervising these people were a group of people called the O.Ts. We called them O.Ts. They wore a khaki uniform as distinct from the normal greenish uniform of the German soldier, and they had a pretty cruel reputation. When this chap crouched down I remember seeing this O.T. shouting abuse at him and in fact he kicked him in the face and knocked him over. I’m afraid I didn’t stay around, I just ran home as quickly as I could.

BRIAN LE CONTE

The forced labour was more for the bunkers. I remember the bunkers being built, it was purely forced labour with German guards. But there was a lot of sabotaging by the forced labour as well. I can remember that some of the forced labour were at the Blancs Bois, and I remember going with my Dad to New Anneville in the Vale, which was my grandfathers’ place, and we were with the horse and carriage, and we had to stop on our way back, near the Blancs Bois, to let the forced labour going through. There were hundreds of them it seemed. They were going from there towards up the Friquet, and there were dogs all along the line to keep them in line. And I always remember my Dad saying – “Those poor workers are going to Alderney and I suppose that’s the last we’ll see of them”. And he wasn’t far wrong there, because they suffered terribly in Alderney.

HIRZEL DOREY



'SLAVE WORKERS'

As a pastime the Germans built past my uncle's gate the railway track for the train to run through to the various parishes. But I myself stayed in, round Cobo. Every evening that train passed at dusk and my cousin and I used to sit outside and we had a penny each, we used to put it on the rails, and let the penny, see who got the biggest penny, let it get bigger and bigger. I don't even remember who won.

Anyway, during the building of this railway line, it was done by prisoners of war, I remember them very well because they were all dressed in rags. I remember vividly the sacking on their feet, they were very very thin, like you would see in a Belsen Camp. The officers were going up and down with the sticks under their arm and as soon as the prisoners of war slacked or stopped for a minute exhausted they were given a whack to carry on. On one particular day we saw one prisoner of war and he actually fell down, he couldn't work any more, so a lorry was called, with an open back, and he was thrown in and driven away.

ANN QUERPEL

We befriended foreign workers because where we lived there was a couple of fields and there was the foreign workers camp at the Blancs Bois. Some pretty horrible things went on there I can remember. There were Algerians, there were Polish, there were all nationalities, there were French, they were brought over to work for the Germans. Some came freely perhaps, but a lot of others were forced to. I can remember a batch of Jews being driven along the road with bayonets, which is a sight I will never forget, in their pyjama suits. You've seen pictures of Belsen, they brought them over from Alderney to do some particularly dangerous jobs, and they were just driven like cattle. And you weren't allowed to get near them, even, because they were surrounded by armed guards all the time, as though they were wild animals. The only other people who were really badly treated were the Poles. And you know how the Jews had to wear a Star of David, well the Poles had to wear a P on their uniforms, well, like a uniform. Of course that was all looked after by the Todt Organisation.

ARTHUR KLEIN



LIVING WITH THE GERMANS – The good.....

When I was working at the Telephone Exchange there were soldiers on guard, one would tell us the English news, but he wouldn't say it in front of the other one. There were two types.
DAPHNE BRETON

The Germans left us alone if we left them alone. One day on the way home from school I fell over and was sitting there crying when a German soldier came out of a house. He insisted on taking me in and cleaning me up and he put a big bandage round my knee. I will never forget his kindness.
MYRTLE TABEL

The German soldiers were very good, whilst I was at school they sent in a whole load of sweets one time.
DAPHNE BRETON

Across the road from us was a house with German officers in it, and an Italian maid. I used to go across and they used to give me sweets, and biscuits.
JEAN FALLA

We used to march behind them, and goose step behind them and a lot of them just used to laugh!
JEAN BUDDEN

I also marched with the soldiers at the beginning of the occupation, as they marched along the road I joined in.
BRIAN LE CONTE



LIVING WITH THE GERMANS – The good.....

One used to play the piano, he would come in at Cliffdale and play the piano.

LEN LE RAY

Well, the soldiers used to come down our road a lot, we lived near the major railway junction and there were a lot of soldiers around. They used to sing as they went along, and a couple of times they came with their bands, and of course we would hear this and we would march behind them. They never chased us off. We liked it when they had the bands, you could hear them coming for miles, it was very quiet in those days, because there wasn't people travelling around, or the traffic.

MALCOLM WOODLAND.

Two privates made friends with my uncle. They were very good they had one square of black husk bread a day, and they brought their piece of bread for us to share, my three cousins and I.

ANN QUERIPEL

My father was in charge of a milk depot at Cliffdale, where all the farmers from Torteval brought their milk. He had a good friend, a German, Rudolf Englehard, and was a good friend and always kept my father well informed of the news. We remained friends until he passed away a few years ago, his daughter came to Guernsey a few years ago, we have kept in contact with her.

GORDON HOTTON

At the Salines they were digging foxholes, this was probably near the invasion time I suppose, and this young soldier, having a tea break I suppose, showed us his rifle and we were allowed to handle his rifle, and I thought, "This is heavy, I wouldn't like to carry this thing around all day!"

MALCOLM WOODLAND



LIVING WITH THE GERMANS - The good.....

We knew two quite well, and neither of them wanted to be in the war. One was Austrian. He'd been the village postman, his rifle was practically as big as him, and he didn't want to be in the war. The other one was a farmer, he had children, and I remember him coming back from leave, I didn't know why at the time, but my mother told me later. He came to us and he was crying his eyes out, and my mother asked what was wrong, you know, as much as she could understand what was wrong. His boy was in the Hitler Youth, and he had been saying that the war was over, and things against the war, and his son turned up and said he would report him if he didn't stop talking like that, and it broke his heart.

They used to bring us little things, well, what they could, they used to try and get sweets for me and things like that.

Another time he was going back for Christmas leave and I had a little double jointed doll, and he happened to say, or make my mother to understand he had nothing to give his little girl. My mother spoke to me and said would I let him have it. I said "All right then" and he came back with a leg of ham, a big leg of ham, he brought us back when he came back from the farm. As I say they did not want to be in the war, these two in particular.

Although it was rather funny, because the Austrian did not trust the German, well, when I say didn't trust him, they were friends, but we used to get leaflets dropped that were supposed to be for the Germans to read. By rights you weren't allowed to pick them up, but they used to fall on the I don't know, at the time when we lived at the bank they hadn't built it up like its built up now. We had the top two floors and then as I say there was the accountant's office underneath our flat, which had a view out onto what we used to call the 'Leads'. It was a lead roof and you could go out and stand there. That was the only place I had to play, it was like a big balcony. Of course they dropped there, and we used to pick them up and the little Austrian used to translate them, but my mother had to keep the other one occupied while he translated them for my father. He used to say, "You are as far as this...., you're winning. You're winning the war, you're not where they say you are". He would show us our position on the map, but he always used to make sure that Hans, who was the German, was occupied by my mother chatting to him, then he would go with my father and tell the true story.

JEAN BUDDEN



LIVING WITH THE GERMANS - The good.....

One day we were coming through the lanes behind where we lived, by Cambridge Park, near Castle Carey, and my sister and I were coming down, and a German officer came to us, and he said, "Would you like some soup for your tea?" So we said, "Oh, yes please." He said, "Go home", because some of them did speak English, "Go home, get a big saucepan or jug, bring it back, and come in the back door of the Castle Carey." So we did, we went on our own. We went back and there was the big kitchens there, and of course, there was officers living there, and they had the best of food. And they gave us this big jug of lovely barley soup, which I remember it now, very well. And we went home with that, and, I say, the Germans were kindly; there were some, and mostly were kindly to the children. We had a ... sometimes bread and jam, and we were looking and scrounging for potatoes. Don't remember having any sweets. But they were kind that way, and I think a lot of the Germans did really have their family in Germany, and they were worried about, and thought of their family when they were giving to us; their children too. So all in all, I think, if you really did keep to yourselves and didn't interfere with the Germans, it's not everybody had a kick!

MOLLY BIHET

The Germans commandeered all the houses from Belmont right through down Carteret Road down as far as the bridge at Cobo, they were all commandeered and we were turned out of the big one. The German officer apologized when he came to turn us out because he said ' We're giving you a week to go'. And he said 'When I was a small boy the French marched into where I lived in Germany with bayonets and we had to get out straight away. So I'm doing my best' he said 'I'm only obeying orders'. He was a real gentleman, he was a nice man, and I respected him.

ARTHUR KLEIN



LIVING WITH THE GERMANS – The not so good.....

My mother used to say, - “There’s good and bad in every nation” but some of the officers here were quite nasty. I mean I have actually literally seen them ride their horses on the pavement deliberately to see if you would get off. They would be coming down the road and they would see you walking up on the pavement and they would put their horse on the pavement. My mother wasn’t very happy with horses. She liked to see them in the field providing the hedge was between her and them and she would say – “Get off the pavement” – and I’d say “No..”

I always remember being very defiant one particular day, was about 9-ish, and I thought I’m not getting off the pavement, there was a car coming down and I wasn’t going to get off the pavement. “Get off the pavement!” my mother was saying to me, and I stood there defiantly on the pavement. He took his horse off the pavement and grinned. If you stood up to them, they admired you, some of them. I could see a car coming down the road and in those days any cars were forced to drive on the opposite side of the road to now, you had to drive the side the Germans drove.
JEAN BUDDEN

My mother was treated all right because they needed cooks but every evening before she was allowed to come home she was searched to see if she didn’t have any food on her. I remember one day in particular I went up there, I was allowed to go that day and this German officer that was in charge put me on a pony. They had a circle in the front of the garden and it was all fenced off with barbed wire so the pony could only run round in a circle. He put me on it, and then he tapped it with his stick that he carried all the time, of course the pony started to run faster and faster, I was terrified!

My mother was yelling at him to stop because I was so frightened. His Alsatian started barking, and he started hitting it with his stick, and my mother got hold of the stick, it was a thick stick, and she cracked it in half on her knee, and then when he saw that he came and stopped the pony. I was terrified.
ANN QUERIPEL



LIVING WITH THE GERMANS – The not so good.....

One of the many things during the occupation was that you couldn't go into shops and buy things, like clothes, for example. What people did, and you usually found this in the local paper, somebody had a large shirt for exchange for a pair of trousers, or so on and so forth. So clothing was almost worth its weight in gold. Anyway, one day, a friend of ours who lived in St Andrews wanted a shirt. My mother had a shirt that she didn't need and I was given instructions to go and deliver this shirt into rural St Andrews. I was cycling along, and went as far as Les Cornus, St Martins, and I took the lane to the left that works its way towards the German Underground Hospital. Of course at that time we had to cycle on the right-hand side of the road, and the horse and carts had to go on the right, everything had to go on the right-hand side of the road. I was going along there on the right-hand side of the road, then I suddenly thought: "Oh, sod this, I'm going to cycle on the left." So there I was, cycling away on the left, when the road suddenly goes downhill. It sweeps down at the bottom, and goes up the other side, and there was a high hedge on both sides in those days. I was going merrily down on the left-hand side, but what I didn't know was that there was a German soldier on his bike coming down the other side of the hill on the right-hand side!

Well, I think the inevitable happened, we collided right at the bottom, I always knew this old German soldier, because he used to cycle his bike and mumble to himself as he rode along. I think he used to be sort of a messenger, delivering messages from one company to another.

Anyway, we collided down the bottom there, so I quickly got up and ran up the hill and hid in a gateway, where I could look down and see what he was doing, and he was in a furious, absolute rage. He picked up my bike, hurled it against a granite wall, with the farmhouse behind, hurled it against there, then all of a sudden he grabbed hold of the tyres and started pulling at the valves and releasing the air from both my tyres. And then he saw my packet with the valuable shirt inside it, and I thought: "Oh, good heavens, no", you know, "please don't take that, because I've been given instruction to..." Anyway, he didn't even open it up, he just hurled it over this hedge into this farmhouse garden. Then he sort of rubbed himself down and picked up his bike, more mumbling and grumbling, and I saw him riding up past me, and when I thought

the coast was clear, I went down to pick up my bike. Both tyres were flat, so I put it against the wall, and I went to the back door of the farmhouse, (you can always tell Guernsey people, they always go to the back door, anyone who goes to the front door, they're not a 'Guern')! Anyway, I went to the back door, and knocked on there and asked the lady: "Do you mind if I go into your garden and pick up a package".

"Yes", she says, "by all means".

So, off I go, the package was there I picked it up and off I go; I had to go another two hundred yards, I had to push my bike, of course, and I got down there, handed over the valuable shirt to the person it was intended, and then asked if I could borrow a pump for my bike. A young chap came along; he said: "I'll pump it for you", he said. So, but he looked very surprised when he saw that both tires were flat, anyway, he didn't say anything; he pumped them up, and I cycled home. When I got home, my mother said: "Did you deliver the package?" I said: "I certainly did", and that was that. I never told her what had happened in the meantime.

FRED GALLIENNE



LIVING WITH THE GERMANS – The not so good.....

I only know one that wasn't nice. When our supplies were getting very, very low the Germans used to have for their own use, a store in Truchot, where Strangers that used to do the mineral waters was. The Germans used to store their potatoes there. The sacks were all rotten and potatoes would fall out and roll on the ground. Well, it was great fun for us after school to go if we knew there was a boat in, and everybody knew if there was a potato boat in! We'd go and pick up the potatoes that rolled on the floor. Mind you, they weren't particularly nice ones because half of them were rotten anyhow and if you've ever smelt a rotten potato, it's ghastly. But anyhow, in the Truchot sometimes there was an awful big fat German soldier on duty guarding the potatoes. I found out afterwards that his name was Otto and he was horrible, he would chase us and he had a whip and he would crack it. I don't know that he ever hit anybody with it ...Otto was a sergeant down on the docks, that was really his place but he had come up to oversee the offloading of potatoes he was absolutely awful, even to his own men, but that's the only one I came across who was not nice.

RUTH WALSH

My mother was made to work in these kitchens, it was a big house up at the Mont d'Aval in the Castel. I used to go sometimes, but not a lot. I remember all the stables and all the horses, and one particular day I was playing with a friend of mine, at the bottom of the Mont d'Aval near the corner by the Haye du Puits and these two Germans came down the Mont d'Aval with their horse and cart. They had two horses and they were whipping them and whipping them, I'll never forget. When it came to the corner at the bottom of the Mont d'Aval they just couldn't turn the corner and they went straight into the stone wall, so of course the horses broke their legs. We were watching as children over the wall and the Germans just laughed, got down from the truck and shot the horses. Then after a while, more Germans came down and more trucks. In the end, they made us go away, they wouldn't let us watch. When we came back outside the horses and everything were gone. I think probably they ended up on the table, in fact I'm pretty sure.

ANN QUERIPEL



LIVING WITH THE GERMANS – The not so good.....

The Commandant's dog. Hereby hangs a tale. The Commandant lived up the Grange, I can't think of the name, it's a hotel now, Mansell's got it, Grange Lodge, he lived there, and he had this little golden spaniel. Now, when he was drunk, and he used to get drunk frequently, he used to beat it something wicked. There were several ladies used to have to go and clean for the Germans in there, they didn't like it. So they approached my grandfather who lived in the Castel and said 'If the Commandant's dog disappears would you look after it'.

One day these two ladies, who shall be nameless, turned up with this golden spaniel. Goodness knows what we fed it on, but it existed, anyway, and he and I became great friends. I used to take him across the fields to Saumarez Park for a run round there, and that was fine. And then one day I was just playing by the lake there, with the dog, and this German, big German car came driving round the Park. We had just been chasing the moorhens, because there were quite a lot there. And this car stops and these German officers got out with their guns, they were going to shoot moorhens or whatever was around, and lo and behold I realized, because I had seen him at one of our prize givings, that one of them was the Commandant himself. I have never moved so fast. There was a hedge on that side of Saumarez Park about 6ft thick and I just took the dog and we went straight through the hedge. I wasn't very big at that time, and not very fat, but quite amazing I went straight through. I kept away. I was very careful after that, if I saw a German car coming, anywhere, we would disappear. But unfortunately for the dog, I mean food got very short at the end of the occupation, and my grandfather used to take him all the time down the road to his stables or the fields where the cows were. The German soldiers at Lilyvale were always very friendly with the dog and then one day he went inside and he didn't come out, so he finished up as dog soup. But if they'd known what they'd done, they'd eaten the Commandants' dog, they'd have all been shot!

ARTHUR KLEIN



HAVING FUN!

One of the big, the favourite things to do was to go out in a horse and cart, out to the country, where we would take our slice of bread and whatever, anything else that you had to eat, and we would have a picnic. The country chapels would welcome you with open arms because remember, there was no television, no cinema, nothing to entertain you, and so of course this cart load of people arriving from town to sing songs was a great entertainment and a great occasion. I always remember once being given a fig by somebody when we were having our picnic out at Saumarez Park, and that was an absolutely wonderful occasion. I can still remember now the taste of this fresh fig. Somebody out there must have had a fig tree and given us these figs.

MYRTLE TABEL

I had trouble with my teeth, so Dr W Fox and the dentist came to the house. I lay on the kitchen table, the dentist asked for a fine kitchen sieve and a flannel, and dropped ether or chloroform onto it until I went out, and then did the dentistry. The next thing I remember is waking up in bed. I had to stay there for a few days and my mother played gramophone records to me, and the Germans came in because they thought it was a wireless! They came straight in and wanted to see, because wirelesses were absolutely forbidden and if you had one you were likely to be deported. Anyway they came up and it was explained to them what was happening, they must have shown them my mouth and the fact that I was being entertained by playing records, and they left satisfied that everything was OK. I don't think they would have been too pleased if they had listened to the end of the record because it had our National Anthem, and I think they might have confiscated that record.

BRIAN LE CONTE





HAVING FUN!

One of the things in the Occupation was entertainment, there was none! We didn't have a radio, the Germans had taken our wirelesses, as they were then known, so there wasn't much we could do apart from sport. But we used to go to the cinema.

I used to go to the Gaumont in St Julians Avenue sometimes, where there were still some films in the island that had been left here. I must have seen all of these films 5 or 6 times during the Occupation. There were also German films of course. I went in one of these German films but I couldn't understand a word they were saying. The thing was that you were segregated, the civilians had to sit, I believe it was on the right hand side and the Germans sat on the left hand side, and of course no civilians could go in the Circle, that was reserved for Germans as well. So from that point of view we were segregated.

FRED GALLIENNE

We made our own entertainment as best we could and local people discovered hidden talent in the way of acting and musical arts. They gave us concerts and plays which were much appreciated. I remember so many of them after 40 years, probably because entertainment was so rare in those bleak days. The only film shows were of German films and the local entertainments always had to provide front seats for the visiting German party of officers. We were supposed to stand up as they entered, in fact we had to stand up or be reported as insulting the Third Reich, and I remember Mother used to only half-stand up as if she had severe arthritis, the only way she could nearly insult the Third Reich!

So long as food lasted we had private parties in each other's homes, particularly at Christmas and New Year, and you could apply to the Kommandant's office for a special late pass for such an event, I think till 11.00 p.m. There were no street lights of course, you were allowed to carry a light so long as it was darkened, so we had a lantern with a night light in it and the outside covered with blue paper. It showed you latches on gates and door key-holes but little else. One could walk in the road as there was no traffic.

KAYE LE CHEMINANT



HAVING FUN!

Past the other side of Les Blicqs, we'd have this big stone in the gateway. We would put the bullet on this big chunk of granite, get another big chunk of granite and drop this onto the live bullet, and it would explode

When you think about it now you think, good heavens, if people did that today! My mother never knew what I was up to half the time, its amazing the things you do, you don't think about it.

FRED GALLIENNE

Of course one thing the Germans did was to mine the cliffs and all the beaches. The cliffs where I lived along Petit Bot, the Corbiere and the Gouffre, had barbed wire to prevent people going onto the cliffs, although it wasn't a very good effort because there were only strands of barbed wire and you could easily get in between if you wished. Although there were large signs that the Germans erected saying 'Achtung Minen!'

One day I was going along there and there were these two young boys walking along the path ahead of me. Suddenly they slipped through the barbed wire into the minefield. And I thought "Good heavens, what's going to happen here?", so I went along quickly and tried to coax them out, I thought I better not go into the minefield myself, but I tried to coax them out. They were walking through the gorse and so on, and I had a view for a minute and the next in the gorse, and every time they came into view I would say "Come on, come out of there for goodness sake", and I think I threatened them in the end that I would hit them if they didn't come out. I think that seemed to do the trick because finally they did come out, and I can tell you it was a great relief because any minute I was expecting a mine to explode and I probably would have been caught up in it! After that I told their parents about what they had done, and hope they told them not to go in there again. Anyway they are still both alive today so I assume they didn't go in there again. But that was a frightening moment for a while.

FRED GALLIENNE



HAVING FUN!

Air raids were intermittent as the planes were passing over. British planes passing over to France, probably around Normandy and Brittany. Hardly before the air raids were over and the siren had sounded the All Clear we were rushing to the greenhouses and picking up the shrapnel which fell on the panes and slid down into the gutters. So whereas today perhaps, or after the war years lots of people were collecting stamps and doing things like that we were shrapnel seekers and collectors having the best pieces. We were a bit envious of the fellow next door to us because quite a large chunk fell through their roof, so he had certainly one-upmanship on us.

ALAN BISSON

Me and my friend Brian climbed down the cliffs, in spite of the mines, to find the remains of a downed Spitfire, but we were seen by German soldiers who took us to the Commandant. He told us off soundly! I did not tell my father, otherwise I would have had a beating.

DON SMITH



HAVING FUN!

Variety, that was another thing that we enjoyed. We children, and my sister and I used to tap dance and sing on the stage. The Germans were present; there was Germans and locals. Well, the locals loved coming because there were some comedians that used to make us laugh, and that was a good tonic for everybody. But once, my sister and I were dressed in red, white and blue and the Germans made us get off the stage, and we had to get a black instead of a blue, because red, white and blue wasn't the right thing to wear. But we enjoyed those days. Entertainment on the whole was very good, and a lot of the older people made their own entertainment. They got together in school rooms, and houses. We used to have a tune on the piano at home, and have a sing song, and get friends in to play cards: euchre and whist. I remember the neighbours used to be climbing over the walls, because it was after curfew, to get home, you know. But the curfews weren't very good; I mean, people had to be in sometimes at nine o' clock at night, ten o' clock.

There was the cinema, and there was films there with either German subtitles or English subtitles, wherever, there wasn't every week, but there were certain times. My father decided he was going to the cinema once, and he asked me to join him, so we went, and there was always Germans on each exit door; they just watched to see that you weren't smoking. Then, there was a ration of cigarettes, of course, but they weren't allowed to smoke, and you had to behave yourselves. Then my father, because of the newsreel – there was always a newsreel saying there had been German direct hits on our boats. Of course, my father burst out laughing when he heard that, and the Germans came from the exits, and they came to him. They said, "Right, fine – ten marks", and he was fined a pound for laughing! So, my father said, "Right, that's it, never again", he said, "I'm not going to the Victor's any more". So we never went to the Victor's, although it was just two minutes down the road, in St Julian's Avenue. But, entertainment-wise, I don't think we did too badly at all, and, as I say, there was a lot of laughs, and a lot of enjoyment.

MOLLY BIHET



HAVING FUN!

Past my uncle's gate, the Germans built the railway track for the train to run through to the various parishes. Every evening that train passed at dusk and my cousin and I would sit outside and we had a penny each, we used to put it on the rails and see who got the biggest penny and let it get bigger and bigger.

ANN QUERPEL

Boys play soldiers, we played German soldiers. People perhaps don't think this, but the only soldiers we knew were German soldiers, we played dugouts, we played manoeuvres we played with our toy rifles and things, we played German soldiers, and for a while we wanted German shoulder tabs, I had a grey coat and my mother went spare about me wanting to put German insignia on my shoulders but all the other boys were getting their mothers to stitch up shoulder tabs. We used to march along in platoons and everyone wanted to be the corporal or sergeant and march alongside them, and usually the biggest boy would get to do this.

MALCOLM WOODLAND

Sometimes I used to catch the bus at home, go back to Pleinmont, go all the way to town, and spend some time in town, just walking around as there was nothing much to do, and nothing to buy in the shops, although occasionally in Maison Carre, a shop in the Arcade, which is almost opposite the Jewellers & Silversmiths now, they would make, if they happened to get some raisins and currants in a sort of fruit pudding sort of thing. You could go in there, though you had to queue up and you had a small piece each. I think it was made with potatoes mainly, and possibly flour and a few raisins, and not having anything like that for months on end it was really something to look forward to. But you were only allowed a small piece.

FRED GALLIENNE



SHORTAGES

My mother spent most of her life standing in queues for small amounts of food, having to walk to wherever it was being sold as there was no transport (no petrol, no tyres, etc.). Her health was permanently damaged, she lost over 2 stone in weight and although she lived for some years after the war ended, her death could be attributed to the privations she suffered. Manual workers were allowed a little more food for obvious reasons, my father being a clerical worker did not have extra rations.

KAYE LE CHEMINANT

20.10.43

2 people fined in court for selling their children's chocolate rations.

3/4lb apples ration for children under 18 at 9d the ration
Guernsey Evening Press Diary

The ration was not issued free, one had to pay for it, and there was concern by the authorities that the poorer families often could not afford the ration. They had no savings, or very little, and the lack of work meant that their income dropped drastically in some cases.

25.3.44

The Camp at Biberach (of English born Islanders deported in 1942) sent 300 pieces of soap to island children. The balance sheet shows that over £4,000 was spent in additional rations for needy children by the Guernsey Press & Star's 'Help the Children Fund' during the past year. This helped poor families purchase necessary rations for their children.

Guernsey Evening Press Diary





SHORTAGES

I picked daffodils from the fields, and sold them to the Germans at the Wayside Cheer [hotel] in exchange for bread.

ALAN BISSON

We have a local dish called a 'Bean Jar', a very nourishing dish with meat and various vegetables, particularly beans cooked slowly for many hours in an earthenware jar. This was used a lot during the Occupation, but of course the contents were rather basic and towards the end of the period contained no meat as there was none to be had. From being a child who did not care for food, except for a few favoured items, I became, along with all other children, ever hungry and grateful for any item of food, however unpalatable. Fortunately I was small and although growing of course, I grew very slowly, whereas my friend was of adult height and big and she needed more food, as well as growing out of her clothes at an alarming rate. Her last summer dress, and one for me, was made out of the cretonne curtains of our spare room. We had to use 'black-out' curtains anyway so they were only decorative and could be 'lost' for the good cause.

KAYE LE CHEMINANT

To begin with, of course, we had food rationing, there was reasonable amount of food, but gradually, things we'd been accustomed to went. I know I used to go down to the shop and get the jam rations, you had to take your own jam jar, and there was, you had a bit of jam – about this much, just a couple of spoonfuls at the bottom of the jar, and that was your jam ration for, I don't know how long. So, as I tell various people, that from then on we had to survive mostly on vegetables, which we grew ourselves. Fortunately we had greenhouses and a large enough garden to be self-sufficient in vegetables.

FRED GALLIENNE



SHORTAGES

... I used to go with my two brothers who were 18 months and 3 years older than me, picking up potatoes dropped from the lorries being loaded, you might be lucky to get 5 or 6 each. Another time we were down in the Truchot and I had one of the carrier bags that you had then, the old fashioned ones, the brown ones with the string handles. I had been lucky enough, I had picked up 3 or 4 that were quite a reasonable size and quite nice and I thought

“ Oh mum’s going to be very pleased with me,”, you know then all of a sudden- It was quite a young soldier who was up on the tailboard, handing these sacks of potatoes down. He started calling and beckoning,

“Komm see here”, or whatever they say, so I thought he doesn’t want me, but my two brothers. Oh yes, very defensive of their little sister..

‘It’s you he wants, off you go’, and pushed me forward! I thought well, thank you very much!

He beckoned, he wanted my bag, and I thought “He’s going to take my potatoes away!” I was really very angry. I wasn’t going to let it go. My brothers said

“Go on, he wants your bag, you better give it to him”, and do you know what he did, he opened up a sack of potatoes, he filled up my carrier bag, handed it down to me, saying “Go, - off!”

I’ve often wondered what happened to that soldier and I hope he survived, I hope he’s had a good life.

RUTH WALSH

By 1942 house coal was virtually impossible to get. We had plenty of anthracite but anthracite will not burn in open fire so you had to have wood, it became by nature, and the Germans used to mark the trees and cut the trees down. You couldn’t do anything like that. The States used to cut some trees and it was done under control, I remember that. But as for coal, it was a very, very scarce commodity, house coal. It was gorse, and wood, and twigs, and it was a job of children. Children had to do their bit, and that was one of the bits we had to do, was find twigs.

RAYMOND TOSTEVIN



SHORTAGES

We knew someone who worked as a baker and he managed to, somehow, purloin some flour, German flour, not the local one. They also used to bake for the Germans as well, they had to make so many loaves a day for the Germans and he would bring home this flour, no sugar, and Mother would bake it to try to make a little bit of a taste and just mix it with milk and water in a way we were lucky that he worked in a bakery because as I say he would bring home flour. But some families didn't have that recourse to food. Mind you he only had enough to make about one loaf of bread and that was a slice of bread for breakfast. We used to have it probably with nothing on and then for lunch a very watery soup made of a little bit of potato and perhaps some cabbage leaves. You used all the cabbage, you didn't throw away the outer leaves, everything was taken. It was very watery soup, there wasn't very much vitamins in that! I know vegetable soup is good for you but that was a little different. Then for tea the peelings of potatoes were used, mother used to wash them thoroughly and mince them up and mix them with water and bake them in the oven and that was our tea.

RUTH WALSH

Our Sunday dinner was always cooked in a special way. We used the old Guernsey oven at the Hougue du Pommier. We'd take a big dish down there and Mr Le Noury would cook for the whole neighbourhood. He had to cut and put the gorse into the oven, he'd do it the old way, and then everybody would take their dinner down and he was paid a small amount for doing it. On the way back from church you'd pick it up, wrapped in some tea towels or whatever and take it home and eat your dinner, so we could have a proper cooked dinner. But the rest of the time my mother would start it off on this little bogey, and then we had a hay box and it would finish cooking in the hay box, in saucepans. We had a box for years, it only got thrown away not long ago. It was an old carpenters tool box, it was all stuffed with straw, its amazing how well stuff cooked and kept in there.

ARTHUR KLEIN



SHORTAGES

I don't remember too much about where my mother had difficulty, but she would have had difficulty in getting food. When it was lunchtime or teatime, I sat at the table and food was presented to me. We ate everything. My mother was a very good provider, and very good at making meals out of anything. My relations would have been farmers, so I'm sure they got food that way. I do remember my grandmother used to make a cake with potato peels, and she used to call it potato peel cake, and I loved it. She lived in the Forest, down the Bigard, and we would go to see her, especially on the Sunday, and she used to always make this cake. In fact, for a number of years after the war, I used to always ask for it, and was told, oh we don't make it any more, but to please me, my grandmother for a number of years afterwards used to make it occasionally for me as a treat. I probably enjoyed it all the more because we didn't have many other cakes.

But we did eat well; I felt we ate well. My father grew a lot, and, yes, we did all right. We did have quite a bit of land, and he certainly grew a lot of onions, which he gathered. My uncles used to have pigs, which of course had to be declared to the Germans, but in those days no pigs, no sows had a large litter. A sow always had a litter of about five or six, because the other two or three would have been kept what they called on the QT; they'd have been kept elsewhere and fattened, and slaughtered for the immediate family. But of course you had to be very cagey about it, and that, and it is documented that one of my uncles was caught slaughtering a pig, and the story goes that he told the Germans he had to kill the pig because the pig had broken its leg, and he had to slaughter it, so it wasn't his fault. But what amused me no end, as children we were never told that, and after the war our parents never told us what my uncles, or what they in fact had got up to during the war. But only a few years ago I was at a Golden Wedding of another relative who now lives in England, and lo and behold, he recalled the story, and I did think it was ironic that nearly fifty years after the event I was being told of what happened. But since that I have read it in Mr Bell's books; it was true, he did tell the Germans his pig had broken its leg, and he just had to slaughter it and eat it. That is true!

MARGARET LE CRAS





SHORTAGES

My father was in charge of the milk depot, and if there was extra milk he encouraged us to drink it.

We did not suffer so much lack of food as the town children. We were fortunate being in the country. I remember going to Mr De Garis from the Clos Hoguet, who had a crusher, with corn to be ground into flour. We had to take a little bottle of petrol (for the motor). My mother used to make 'guie', in patois, like a second-class porridge, which was very essential to our diet. It was so precious that my mother made it in the evening, and then took it upstairs into the bedroom to make sure it wasn't pinched overnight

GORDON HOTTON

Another thing I remember connected with food, there was a farmer close to the Sauchet, a Mr Langlois, and Gordon would fetch the milk from the farm [Le Pont] on a handcart and take it to Cliffdale, and for that the reward at the weekend would be a little piece of cake or somesuch. I would go along with Gordon and we would share the piece of cake.

My wife is from St Sampson's and she remembers eating potato peels, but we never had to do that.

LEN LE RAY

I remember Nick Gallienne coming past the window and my mother hiding an illegal piece of beef that we were eating in the cupboard. Nick Gallienne said – there's no need to hide it – in other words he could smell it! I remember being hungry once and asking my mother for another piece of bread and I saw her cry, because if I had had another piece I would have been eating tomorrow's ration.

I still see wartime eating habits in myself now, I'm careful with butter, cheese, meat, and always eat everything on my plate.

GORDON HOTTON



SHORTAGES

I don't remember feeling deprived of food in any way. Breakfast, dinner and tea were put on the table, and you ate it. We did not eat between meals. I felt hungry from time to time but small boys do. It was my job to go and get the bread ration from the depot, which had to be cut up to last until the next ration, but I don't remember feeling short of food, not at first.

MALCOLM WOODLAND

We used to have very mouldy cheese, oozing with maggots and what have you, and green bread, and my father and I thoroughly enjoyed it, but my mother would never, ever eat it, never. And I can remember the hay box that she used to cook our meals in, which were normally veg, because we didn't have a lot towards the end of the war anyway.

JEAN FALLA

There was carrageen moss, which we were allowed to collect from the beach. You added water and it set hard, but there was no sugar to sweeten it and I found it very hard to swallow. I avoided it like the plague.

FRED GALLIENNE

I remember eating all sorts of funny things, carrot pudding, drinking blackberry leaf tea, I used to go and get it in St Peter Port on the horse bus. There was a horse bus used to run from the Vale to town and it used to be one step at a time, and you would get there eventually, but the poor horse was hungry as well, and he used to cart a lot of people in the van. Anyway, but I remember going and buying blackberry leaf tea for my parents and other neighbours, going into town.

DAPHNE BRETON



SHORTAGES

Sugar beet was used to get us something sweet in our diet, and I'm sure somebody else has told you the making of the black treacle. But in the corner of our scullery, a scullery was an outside sort of kitchen/utility room, I suppose, we had a copper for heating water. We had no central heating or hot water supply and when it was washday the copper was heated up with a fire underneath, with sticks when the coal ran out, and of course that was another problem, of course we had no gas. The sugar beet was chopped up and put into this copper, and boiled for at least 24 hours until it became a black pulp which was then put into a special rack, and squeezed, with a car jack used to get all the juices out. A bit like squeezing cider apples really. So this thick juice came out, which again was boiled up, to thicken it, and we finished up with a black treacle which, when we had bread, we could spread on the bread or just eat raw, I suppose.

BRIAN LE CONTE

Weeks regular ration, per head, with continuous tendency to decrease.

<i>Bread</i>	<i>4lbs 10oz</i>	<i>2 large loaves</i>
<i>Meat</i>	<i>3oz</i>	<i>2 thin slices</i>
<i>Sugar</i>	<i>3oz</i>	<i>6 teaspoonfuls</i>
<i>Butter</i>	<i>4oz</i>	<i>½ a pack</i>
<i>Cooking fat</i>	<i>2oz</i>	<i>)</i>
<i>Suet</i>	<i>1oz</i>	<i>) less than ½ a pack</i>
<i>Coffee substitute</i>	<i>1oz</i>	<i>3 teaspoonfuls</i>
<i>Flour or oats</i>	<i>6oz</i>	<i>less than ½ a lb</i>
<i>Potatoes</i>	<i>5lbs 0oz</i>	<i>1 bag</i>
<i>Separated milk</i>	<i>3pts.</i>	<i>1 ½ litres, 1 large and 1 small pack</i>

*Transactions of the Societe Guernesiaise- Frossard
People were encouraged to live in 'groups', so as to make the
ration go further and to get more of it at one go.*



SHORTAGES

We ran out of crockery, it got broken, so we put an advert in the Press. People whose children had evacuated had spares, and we had some enamel mugs which came from Mr Brehaut at Melrose but for some reason a dog came and took an enamel mug and I remember chasing it around Torteval to retrieve this mug, because we would have been a mug short.

LEN LE RAY

My main view of the occupation, bearing in mind that it arrived at a very formative time in my life, between 9 and 14, bordering on 15, was the privation more than the occupation, that's what comes through. Lack of everything - no shoes, and we had a lot of walking to do. No shoes, shoes made of paper, compressed paper. But basic things we take for granted today. We had no electricity in our house so we had to find candles. We don't make candles in Guernsey, not then at least, so we had to mark candles - just enough to get to bed. We used to find our way round the house, and if we had to get up during the night it was in the dark.

RAYMOND TOSTEVIN

We had half a church candle, a nice thick one, and for an hour each evening we burned this and during this hour everyone had to do whatever needed light – after that we sat in the dark, wrapped in eiderdowns and blankets playing word games – the blankets were then warm to wrap ourselves in for bed-time.

KAYE LE CHEMINANT





LACK OF CLOTHES AND SHOES

Problems with shoes, there was always a problem with shoes. People who had children would have known that if they'd evacuated, those shoes would have been no good now as the years had gone by, so they used to either sell them or barter them, so it was always second-hand shoes. My father used to always cut the front of our shoes out, so that our feet wouldn't be restricted but they'd sort of show, and it amuses me now, it was almost all the children had shoes with their feet sticking out; their toes would all hang out their shoes. But nowadays that's the way everybody wears them, so the fashion seems to have come back again. I can't say I went barefooted, but our toes were certainly hanging over the edge of the shoes, and everybody was the same.

MARGARET LE CRAS

I only had one pair of wooden clogs because my mother wouldn't put me in those wooden shoes, so she used to barter to buy 'Startrite' shoes. I only had one pair, at the very end of the occupation, navy blue they were. But I didn't grow for five years, so I wore the same things.

DAPHNE BRETON

My mother used to ... sit in the bedroom window knitting, she always seemed to be knitting or unravelling old jumpers to make new ones, even to the extent, if the old jumper wasn't big enough, she'd make a false fronted jumper which had a collar, no sleeves, just a front and a couple of apron strings so that when you put your jacket on it looked as if you had a nice jumper, till you took your coat off.

BRIAN LE CONTE



LACK OF CLOTHES AND SHOES

The clothing, there was a little shop in St Martins, I can still very plainly remember that dress, and I wore it day after day, because of me growing up. And shoes, well, shoes were very, very hard to find. You know, but that dress was really something for me, it was quite a posh one. I had it for many years.

WIN LE CHEMINANT

My clothes of course I grew out of and we had a 'bartering' system with adverts in the local paper so that families swapped children's clothes. No rubber for soles and heels on shoes so they had wooden soles and heels with steel tips and 'horseshoes' on the heels. I liked these because you could pretend to be a German soldier they made such a noise, but the wood was not pliable and made walking rather tiring. A pair of sandals I grew out of; my mother cut off the toe-piece to let my toes stick out and sewed small pieces of coloured wool in the holes. She did the same for sandals of my friends so we went into our 'Red Indian' phase then and all padded about in our 'deer-hide' moccasins pretending to be Hiawatha and so on.

When my skirts could no longer be lengthened at the hem my mother attached them to a broad band of green baize cut from the card table and with a pullover pulled well down, the baize did not show, it was nice and warm in winter too.

KAYE LE CHEMINANT

And shoes, we had those wooden soled ones they brought over from France, very rough inside, we used to put paper inside to protect from blisters. But you try playing football in those, its not easy I can assure you.

FRED GALLIENNE

Once the wooden shoes were worn regularly foot exercises were done at school to prevent flat-footedness.

Hautes Capelles School Log 20 March 1944

Foot exercises, to correct defects caused by the wearing of wooden soled shoes, will have to be done 20 minutes daily.



BICYCLES

Peter Girard [*the headmaster*] got hoses for the bike tyres, as I had to cycle from St Saviours, the Lohier, every day. My bike was stolen at one point and I had to walk for many weeks before I got another.

DON SMITH

Eventually, on our bicycles, we weren't riding on tyres we were riding on hosepipes, which made a terrible uncomfortable ride, I can tell you.

DAPHNE BRETON

I had a bicycle with a hosepipe on the front, and I had one or two good experiences. I can remember peddling down the Fosse Andre, full speed, we were having a race downhill there, and I came off. I went sailing through the air and landing on my face, but fortunately I had my school bag between my face and the road, otherwise I'd be more scarred than I am. But you know this used to happen quite often, it was just one of the hazards of life really, you didn't worry too much about it.

ARTHUR KLEIN

I eventually had to walk to school because the bicycles fell apart, there was no tyres. We did try the hose tyres, but they had a habit of coming adrift when you were cycling down hills, and I had scarred knees many times.

RAY TOSTEVIN





BICYCLES

I was very fortunate. At the start of the war I was given a small bicycle for my 6th birthday, it was called a fairy cycle. I had that for about 18 months or 2 years I suppose. I grew out of it, and my father managed to hear-it was who you knew at that time, who had what where - he heard of someone who had a 14" bike, and it was there, someone had evacuated and they were willing to sell it. It was no use to adults or Germans, so I had a fairly new bike for 2 years, it was a green Ellswick, and it lasted me quite well towards the end of the war. Again, I grew out of that. These were second hand bikes, you never had a new one, it was passed on, people did keep things going, things lasted. Then I was fortunate again, a cousin had evacuated had had an 18" Humber, practically new. I was given that to go to school, as I was going to have to go to Town from L'Islet. But I can remember being a bit worried the first few times I rode it, there was quite a 'stush' in my class, "How did he get a new bike in the middle of this war?" Bikes were supposed to have been handed in, so you had to keep 'schtum'. Everyone rode round on bikes.

MALCOLM WOODLAND





LACK OF SOAP AND MEDICAL SUPPLIES

I know children would say now – “ Oh good, we don’t have to wash or we don’t have to shower” - and I suppose we would have been saying that but its not very healthy and we started to suffer from skin diseases. I can remember having scabies at some point, which I must have been about six years old.

RUTH WALSH.

One thing we did have a lot of during the occupation was that houses were empty and the gardens sometimes had strawberries and raspberries and fruit, and we’d go and help ourselves to these delicacies, if you like. One day there were these apple trees, again by Le Manoir in the Forest, and I thought well, the Germans were all around there, I thought they are going to take all the apples. I thought I would help myself to some apples, but they weren’t quite ripe and I ate some and I was as sick as a dog. And the trouble was, you see in those days we didn’t have the medication, and I know I was ill for several weeks, in fact my mother was quite worried whether I’d recover and I was in bed I know for a long time. But eventually I did pull round, but medication was something we didn’t have. I was probably fortunate then, I’ve never eaten a green apple since. One learns these things.

FRED GALLIENNE

The school nurses examined children regularly for nits, which was called pediculosis and infected children were sent home immediately until they were cured.

The children were also weighed regularly as a health check, and any seriously underweight children were given extra milk and cod liver oil with malt.

Hautes Capelles. 14.3.42

Some children have been ill for many months and many are just recovering from heavy lasting colds. Three boys of one family have been at home nine weeks.





However, from time to time one particular German Doctor took things into his own hands.

On one occasion I was in the shop and a German Officer came in, and he looked at my hand, I had 7 warts on my left hand and he looked at them and he said – my goodness he said, those are big warts, well, I'm a doctor. So I said Oh yes, and he spoke very good English, and he said, I'll tell you what, I'll see your boss, so he chatted to my boss, and he said – if you want to let him come tomorrow morning, stand in the queue with the German soldiers, outside, and come into my surgery and I'll get rid of those warts for him. So he said yes, he can do that, and the house that he was operating from was Royston, at the Friquet at the Castel. So I was standing there with this crowd of Germans, we had to stand outside and we had to go in one at a time. There was another German in front of me and he had warts on a hand, so he apparently was going in for the same thing. So he looked at me, and thought – that nipper there, I was about 14 then, and he said – you go in front of me, so he put me in front of him, obviously he wanted to see what was going to happen to me before he put his hand out.

So I put my hand out and one of the orderlies grabbed it to hold it steady, and sprayed some stuff on my hand and deadened the whole hand, and then he scooped them all out with a sort of scalpel, and there was blood everywhere but I didn't feel anything. Then he put some stuff on and he bandaged the lot and he said to me, "don't touch it at all, and in a fortnight you take the bandage off and you'll find they have come back exactly as they were." And he said "when that time comes, you just pull them off, peel them off." This I did, and he said they will never come back again, and they never did.

FRANK LE TISSIER