

**Written by Dorothy Stanley**

### **Some Wartime Memories**

1939, with the outbreak of war imminent, my parents, brother & self were living near Dover Priory Railway Station (not the safest of places in time of war).

On Saturday September the 2nd, my Father learned that a property in Temple Ewell (a Village 3 miles from Dover) was for sale, however the owner was prepared to rent for a while. My Brother & I were sent to find the property, named Swerford, this proved no easy task, as the house was fairly remote, eventually we found a Villager who thought it up there in the trees!

Eventually, we discovered the property & were very impressed, after a long walk up the steep drive we found the house, with an impressive balcony & amazing views, North, towards Canterbury. The grounds including a tennis court and lawns & very many trees in total about 3 acres. We returned to Dover by bus, nearing Cherry Tree Avenue the air raid siren sounded, the driver immediately stopped and turned us all off, we made our way to nearby shops, after a while a van came along & asked directions to the Police Station, so we obtained a lift for showing him the way.

As we reached home, we met our parents walking down the garden from the trench (pre air raid shelter) and reported that the house was ideal. Dad then phoned a friend who owned a local transport firm, and later that afternoon a lorry arrived to transport the furniture etc., to commence life in our new home, soon after moving in Dad decided to purchase the property.

One afternoon there was a knock on the door & an Officer, Sergeant & several soldiers of the Hampshire Regiment stood there. The problem was that their ration truck was missing, they had nothing to eat or drink since morning, & would be most grateful for tea, which would be replaced once the truck arrived. All that afternoon the maid & I went up & down the garden with pots of tea. Evening time arrived but the truck did not, so it was all up to the kitchen where they enjoyed cocoa & all the food we could spare.

At that period of the war only a certain number of lorries were allowed into Dover, so The Avenue became a lorry park, all well camouflaged, also 2 or 3 Ack Ack posts among them. Gunners and a guard were always on the road, & eventually our kitchen became an informal guard room. We provided cocoa in the mornings tea in the afternoon, & in the evening, hot drinks with games of cards & word games. At Christmas, several of the Regt. spent the afternoon & evening with our Family, we made it as Christmassy as possible. As thanks, they presented a silver plated cake stand with the Hampshire Regt. crest engraved & a card signed by all.

We were sorry when they were transferred to Herne Bay, and later overseas where several of our friends lost their lives. After the war, some settled in Dover, one opened a Newsagents business, a few married local girls. When I was called up, I joined the NAAFI at Connaught Barracks, other nearby NAFFIS included the house that became St. Michael's School and the wonderful Kearsney Abbey, a

magnificent building & grounds, now, all that remains of the building is a tearoom – still with the high ceiling a wooden panelling.

Our nearest neighbour was an eccentric lady, who always wore mens' pyjamas, she had an air raid shelter in her garden where she slept. We too had an Anderson shelter, our dog hearing the siren was always first in! There were several bombs that landed close (German bombers that could not find their target would lighten their load by dropping their payload before returning home across the Channel) luckily, in the Village little very serious damage was caused, but many buildings had their windows blown out, and at a nearby farm a bomb landed on the muck heap spreading the contents far & wide, including on an unfortunate farm worker.

One evening we were having supper when the first shells arrived in Temple Ewell – the Germans were shelling from France, we removed pictures and mirrors, also opening windows to lessen the blast, with shells exploding in the air the noise was terrible. Some people living on the lower road called to see if we were all right, as they thought the house had taken a hit. As soon as it was light we walked in the woods picking up pieces of shell. One of the worst sights was to see Canterbury burning, about 13 miles away, the flames were very visible.