

1 July 1940

I've decided to write a diary. My teacher, Mrs Blackthorn, said we should all try to write one; she said it will help us to make sense of everything that is happening to us and make a good record of important events that might happen. I'm not going to write it every day though, only if I've got time or something interesting to say. It's hard enough doing my regular homework when I have to share a bedroom with two irritating little brothers. Jack is ten and Rob is eight so I'm quite a bit older than them and I wish I had my own space. The houses on our row only have a small living room, galley kitchen and two bedrooms so we've all got to squash in together. There's a loo in our small garden though so if I need some peace that's where I go, although you do have to watch out for the spiders. Mum says I shouldn't complain so much and I have been making an effort, but she always sticks up for her little darlings if we have an argument and with dad away at war I've got nobody to back me up anymore. I am trying to be the man of the house now and look after mum and my brothers better. I tried to persuade mum to have them evacuated out at the beginning of the war - you know to protect them (and save my headaches) - but mum said if they went I did too so in the end we all stayed put. Turns out there wasn't really much need for all the evacuations after all. Emmie and Jon Wilkes from next door got evacuated to Devon but were back within a couple of months. They said they hated being in the country with all the smelly manure-filled fields and the snooty locals looking down their noses at them like they were lepers or something. Jon said

the first thing they had to do before being allowed into the house of this old farmer and his wife was to de-louse. As if they've ever had lice in all their lives! We might not have the smartest clothes and everybody's shoes are wearing thin but we're mostly clean. I'd have punched Farmer David in the nose if he'd suggested that to me. The cheeky old blighter!

16 July 1940

I'm feeling really confused tonight. We listened to another broadcast yesterday by Charles Gardner who was describing a dog fight near Dover. I thought it sounded brilliant; we could hear the bombing going on in the background as Gardner described what was happening and I couldn't help but cheer along with him as he reported what he could see '...and there he goes. Smash!' A lot of people have been complaining about it though. Elsie said Emmie was crying and shouting, 'It's not a football match!' at the wireless. I know people are losing their lives but it is hard not to get caught up in all the excitement too. Sometimes it feels like this war is all just a big game but I suppose if we were the players it wouldn't be so entertaining. I feel very guilty now for enjoying listening to the broadcast. I don't think I'll be able to sleep tonight.

23 July 1940

Mum said I had to get out of the house this morning and look after Jack and Robert while she helped Elsie next door to dig out a little vegetable plot at the bottom of our gardens. We've already taken down the fence so it can spread across the two and we've decided we'll all help to plant and tend the patch when it's ready. I've been reading up on how to grow the best