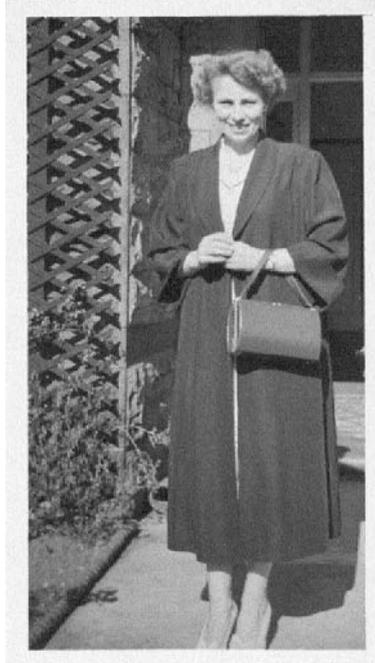


Peggy Worsley

Home Diary 1948



Transcription and commentary by
David Worsley

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Introduction

In transcribing this diary, I have learnt so much, and have been struck by so many differences between life then and now. Although two full years after it ended, the war it still cast a great shadow over so many things: continued rationing; shortages; etc. These pages have the smell of the war in them, and the way in which neighbours helped each other.

There are poignant moments. My cousin Peter takes his first steps. Auntie Annie visits from Canada – goodness knows what she expected to find. Dad visited Ireland and returned home with such luxuries that I had never seen, but which Mum had not seen for years. And of course, my model electric Hornby Dublo Railway train set at Xmas. I felt guilty reading about the train. Ted never had one, and his present was not a patch on mine. Yet, Mum recorded the hours that Dad and his neighbour put in getting the track and buildings ready, and it is clear that the present was for him really. Unlike many of today's presents, it was not a one day wonder, I wouldn't leave it alone, and remember playing with it for years to come.

Among the every day routine (Monday – washing; Friday – shopping; Sunday – Sunday school) are hidden moments that will send shivers up the spines of to-day's PC mothers and the infamous Health & Safety brigade. For example, my parents went every week to the pictures in South Harrow – leaving Ted to baby sit me. I was 8 in this February, and Ted became 13 this November. On the eve of Con & Geoff's return to Liverpool, the four grown ups went to the Greenwood pub for drinks, and then on somewhere else. They left Ted and I in charge of Peter – then about 16 months. There are also stories of journeys made by Ted and I, either together or separately, by bus train and bicycle to the neighbouring shopping centres, and in the case of the bikes, to Windsor – 12 miles away. And, of course, the tragic death of the twins from over the road who died playing on the London Underground railway track that ran alongside the South Harrow Park. Ted and I were sensible – we only played on the track that carried the main line express trains from St. Pancras to the west; and by the Grand Union canal.

There's black berrying, swimming, 93 degree temperatures, the Olympics in London, rain snow and sleet, gardening, concreting, etc.

There's not much here for the stranger. But for those who know/knew the cast of characters the effort of reading will be richly rewarded.

Transcribed by David Worsley, Summer and Autumn 2004.

“Memoranda

Starting Jan: 1948 with 38 clothing coupons

Jan 10 th : Shoes, Peg, Shoes, Peter, socks	8 coupons
Jan 24 th : Shoes Bill black	9 coupons
March 4 th Dress Peg	7 coupons
March 6 th Socks Bill	1 coupon
March 6 th Wool David	2 coupons”

Some Background

Peggy was born Margaret Temple in 1913 in Liverpool. Both her parents had travelled, and married later in life than was usual. William Temple was an engineer, and had worked in Nigeria and Turkey. It was from these trips that he contracted malaria from which he suffered from time to time throughout his life. Elizabeth Lucas was born in Minnesota USA. She was always proud of the fact that she had sailed the Atlantic three times, and all before she was ten. Her parents had intended to settle in America, but returned to Britain.

Peggy was the eldest of three girls and bore the brunt of her father's regrets at not having a son. She was expected to behave towards her younger sisters in a strong authoritarian manner – which she never shook off – and contributed to the running costs of the house when her father died.

Intelligent and talented in all household affairs, she managed the war time rations well, while juggling the usual childhood illnesses and escapades of her two lively boys; Ted aged 12, and David 7 at the start of the year. She had kept chickens in the back garden of her London suburban house. Approved by the ministry, she issued fresh eggs to a few neighbours, and had to keep records and mark their ration books. Subject to checks, this gave her the right to buy poultry food. She designed the costumes for a school play put on by the school that Ted went to, and helped other mothers to make them for their own children while making those for the principles herself – from whatever material was to hand, which was very little considering it was just after the war and rationing continued unrelentingly.

Bill was 36 years old. His background was humble, born in Liverpool one of four girls and four boys, one of whom died very young. His father died when he was fourteen, yet had a big influence on him and his future. By this age, Bill had been playing in the Salvation Army band for several years, and had taken part in a top section competition playing the soprano cornet. Both he and his elder brother were gifted players who held their own with professional players. Bill was offered a job with a local company but when his father learnt that the job was to play in the band he forbade it, saying “No! You work for your living”. This puritanical streak carried on when he in his turn put the breaks on the music playing of his two boys when they later found themselves in a similar position.

He got an apprenticeship as a Tool Maker, the most prestigious craftsman of metal workers, and distinguished himself, rising to run a factory with over 50 employees – but that was later. At this time, just after the war, he worked for Alka, a Swedish owned company that made machines to fill and cap milk bottles. He was employed as a service engineer, and had a war that saw him out of uniform and ‘at home’. There were two reasons: firstly, all metal was at a premium with none or very little available for the civilians; and because of the machines that Alka made. A dominant company, virtually all the milk supplied in London and the Southern England went through Alka machines into the bottles that reached door steps every morning. Milk was a strategic resource with a certain peculiarity – it keeps coming! When a dairy receives fifty thousand gallons a day, then they must either fill the bottles and deliver them, or throw the milk away – a terrible wastage. Bill was the sole service man for this area, and it was his job to keep the machines going. Because Alka could get no metal for spare parts, Dad had to repair every machine with the broken pieces. As the war continued, they took on a Heath Robinson appearance, as his modifications strayed further and further from the original plans.

But I placed the ‘at home’ in inverted commas for a reason. His work was continuous as he could not leave a dairy until the bottling line was running again. Many times he worked straight 24 hours. On one occasion he had worked for three days and nights without sleep. Getting on the London Underground Piccadilly line at Cockfosters, the extreme eastern end, he fell asleep. He was in the last coach. The train traversed London to Uxbridge – five or six stations beyond our stop. The guard and driver changed ends and returned across London to Cockfosters, where the crew changed ends again. Recognising Bill and finding him sound asleep, the guard woke him, asked him where he wanted to get off, and let him fall asleep again. He was awoken at South Harrow, where he found a taxi to get him back home.

Some Background

One evening when he walked in towards the end of the war, Peggy brought the two boys together and said “Do you see this man – he’s your father”. “What did you do that for?”. “ Just wanted them to know, they don’t see you that often”. In 1942 he spent a combined total of ten nights at home.

In 1946, Con & Geoff were married. They came to our house for their honeymoon, and stayed until Peter was several months old, during the next year. When he picked them up at Euston, Geoff was quite impressed. “I didn’t know you had a car, how long have you been driving?” he asked, all young happy and relaxed. “Since Tuesday”. It was Saturday. The reply, although recorded, should not be published. They were a welcome addition to the home, and brought much laughter to it – at least from the boys’ point of view. Geoff made balsa wood planes on the dining room table, and he would often hold parts together in one hand, the glue tube in the other, and have to bite off the knob of dried glue that always formed on the end of the tube. However, there was an adult spat over the suddenly high electricity Bills. It turned out that Con & Geoff liked to read in bed, sometimes for hours, and the extra light burning sent Bill into a paddy.

Although covering a year shortly after the war, it still throws a big shadow over these pages. Well, that’s not exactly true. Living through it, Peggy’s words seldom mention or comment on the circumstances of the day. For example, rationing continued for several years yet. To modern eyes – 60 years after the period – the effect of rationing on the daily food, shopping, clothes etc. was extreme. Yet here we find no complaint, indeed only an occasional comment about a shortage. It’s the casual acceptance of these supply hitches that are the more poignant to the reader. More obvious, and telling in the degree of excitement shown, are the occasional times of plenty or feast days, for example: the days following Bill’s trip to Eire; and Christmas.

January, 1948

January, 1948

1 Thursday

Quiet day, in all day, knitted and listened to radio at night. Bill got shirt off Bornhag¹, lovely

2 Friday

Con & Peter arrived 9.30 am for a day, left 4.0 with Ted for home. Stayed in, Radio, knitted

3 Saturday

Starting DIDDLEUM CLUB. ½d shares, rising ½ per share each week²

Bill 3 shares 1½d✓

Peg 3 shares 1½d✓

Con 2 shares 1

Ted 1 share ½✓

David 1 share ½✓

Bill working all day at factory, got home at 5.30

Ted skating rink Sat morning

David Sunday school party. I stayed in - Radio. finished blue cardigan, fits lovely.

4 Sunday

Bill working. David Sunday school

5 Monday

Wash day. Pictures with Bill.

6 Tuesday

Connie said she'd come for the day, and didn't, hope all is well.

Bill involved in accident, car damaged slightly.

Dog run over outside 61 Fairway

David went back to school. evening radio and knitting. Talked about holiday in Devon.

7 Wednesday - Wet day

Boys Own Exhibition with Ted all day, very good.

Found out cigarette cards worth £2/10/0 and £2.

Quite a day. Quiet evening.

8 Thursday

Went to Connie's, all quite well³. Radio and knitting. Ted back at school today.

9 Friday - Wet day

Only went out to shop, an awful day. Evening read book.

¹ Another manager, but from the Swedish main factory.

² Money was put each week into a sealed money box, and saved up for Christmas.

³ Connie lived on Ealing Common. This was quite a journey from The Fairway, involving the 187 bus to Park Royal, then another to Ealing common, and taking best part of an hour.

10 Saturday

Bill 3✓

Peg 3✓

Ted 1✓

David 1✓

Bill working, took Ted to Greenford, back at 2.p.m. All went to Peter's⁴ party with Colin Brown⁵ Had nice time. Got new shoes, black.

11 Sunday

Bill at home to-day. Another awful wet day. Put Xmas tree in garden. Ted's shoes mended, heeled.

David at Sunday School. Quiet day.

12 Monday - Dry at first then raining.

Didn't start washing till late. Con & Peter arrived at 9.30, left early at three.

Two routine domestic chores, mending the shoes and washing the clothes. Shoe mending involved getting small amounts of leather for the soles, and ready made rubber heels. He had two different shoe makers lasts, and would sit cross legged on the kitchen floor torturing the shoes with a rasp, pincers hammer and a sharp knife. It required some skill and no little noise to rip off an old sole, then replace it with new leather. This had to be cut to size, nailed into place, then trimmed down to size with the sharp knife. Finally, a special tool was heated on the gas cooker and run around the edge of the new leather. This scorched the edge, and gave a very pleasing appearance. It might also have made the leather last longer, I don't know, but when the smoke rose we knew it was nearly over and we could expect a pot of tea.

The weekly wash required far greater effort and happened every Monday. The routine was nearly always the same. It started with all the bed linen being taken off, and bowled down the stairs, together with towels and discarded clothes from the Sunday bath. In the kitchen, Mum had a thing called 'a copper', which was filled with water and then put on. The copper was a large boiler standing on four legs. It had an outer skin which got hot, but not too much, and an inner skin which was a very large container like a saucepan. This was made of copper – hence the name. Underneath was a gas ring with a rubber pipe, which was attached when in use to a gas outlet close to the stove.

In a cloud of steam, there followed a massive activity that involved boiling sheets under wear etc. into submission, interspersed with hand washing, rinsing, and ringing out. It quite literally took hours for the family's weekly wash to take place – and so much sheer physical effort. The boiling items had to be lifted out of the copper with a pair of tongues held up

⁴ Connie's son, Peter, was born 7th Jan 1947

⁵ Colin is David's friend from 39 the Fairway - born the day after David

January, 1948

for a while to let most of the hot water drain back, and dropped into the sink. There, it was rinsed with cold water, rung out and put onto the draining board – several times.

After this, the wet laundry was loaded onto clothes horses, drying lines in the kitchen and so on. Ironing sometimes happened the next day – or was it often? I don't really remember too much except that it was politic to keep a low profile during this general activity.

Finally, the copper was emptied through a little tap on its front, the kitchen cleaned round, and by then it was time to prepare an evening meal. Those of us who know how easily yesterday's roast meal can be reheated and served will understand only too well what was on Monday night's menu. Oh, and don't forget that the beds have to be remade!

13 Tuesday

Quiet day. Pictures with Bill.

14 Wednesday

Went to Con's to set her hair for Friday night. Quiet evening. Ins agent called. Radio and sewing. Bill put sole on my new shoes¹.

15 Thursday

Went to hairdresser. Did shopping. Quiet evening radio and sewing

16 Friday

Spent quiet day. Johnson's Dance with Geoff and Con. Had fine time. Met quite a lot of people. Dance held at Kerwell's Cafe, Eastcote. {Evitsky} asked us to next dance. Geoff definitely had enough to drink, so did the rest of us. Quite a nice time.

17 Saturday Wet day

Bill 4½✓ After last night we are spending .
Peg 4½✓ quiet day. Radio and knitting. Ted &
Ted 1½✓ David tried to get in to see Dick
David 1½✓ Whittington but didn't, so have taken
letter to Geoff delivered here.

18 Sunday

Quiet day. Stayed in all day. Bill & David worked all day on garden doing garage base. David went to Sunday school.

19 Monday

Washed to-day, nice day for Jan.

¹ It was Bill's habit to put a rubber Phillips stick-a-sole onto the leather sole of the shoe. It kept out the water as well as helping the shoe to last much longer.

20 Tuesday

Went to Wimbledon to see Mrs Wagland, she is very well and pleased to see me. Have promised to go (next) week, on Tuesday, to help her to go shopping. A cold day, took me two hours to get home.

21 Wednesday

Con & Peter came for the day. Had nice day. Bill went to Worthing, will be there till to-morrow.

22 Thursday - Sunny Day, cold

Spent the day cleaning & polishing. Alfie William's² and his young lady friend called to see us. Very nice. Bill home again to-night.

23 Friday - Very cold

Shopping all morning. felt tired about tea time. Bill came in about 5.30 and took us all to see "Dick Whittington" at Harrow Coliseum. 3rd rate show Slim Allan Colleano's Co. Horrid wet night with sleet, and very cold.

24 Saturday - Wet all day

Bill 6✓ Bill gone to the factory to-day again,
Peg 6✓ also bought new black shoes. Con &
Con 2✓ Peter arrived 2.30. Geoff came
6.p.m.,
Ted 2✓ just in time for tea, all left 8.30.
David 2✓ Peter very tired.

25 Sunday Nice sunny day

Bill Ted & David all working on garage floor. Ground very wet. David Sunday school

26 Monday - Very wet

Wash day. Quiet evening, Bill late.

27 Tuesday - wet

Stayed in all day. Bill late home.

28 Wednesday - wet

Went to Connie's. Pictures with Bill.

29 Thursday - very wet

Went to Independent Milk Supplies Dance at Seymour Hall. A beautiful place with plenty of evening dress. Very nice time.

30 Friday - wet day.

Shopping, quiet day.

31 Saturday

Bill 7½✓ Con & Geoff, Peter called at 3.p.m.
Peg 7½ stayed till 9. Alf Williams called at
Con 2½✓ about 7, stayed till 11.30. Bill

² Alfie is the son of a neighbour.

January, 1948

Ted 2½✓ working till 5.30. A busy day for me.
David 2½✓

This car made many trips up to Liverpool. For many years, we were loaded into the car for the journey. Ted and I were stacked up in the rear seats, sitting on suitcases and surrounded by pillows and bed clothes we would need later. One year, we would stay at his relatives, the next at hers. These Christmas runs were a hard endurance test for Bill. A 200 mile journey through either heavy rain, or fog for hour after hour at an average speed of around 20 miles per hour, was some marathon. The car was of course unheated. The inside of the glass misted up constantly, and the dynamo (nowadays the modern alternators are far more powerful) gave little power to the headlamps. Nor was the car wind proof, with holes in the bulkhead and ill fitting doors, Dad sat in sometimes freezing drafts the entire way. Wrapped in our blankets, the rest of us did not endure the worst. We were always tired after the journey, but no one more so than Bill.

The dynamo caused other problems. Giving only a low voltage, the spark was often too small to fire up the engine, especially in the winter when the oil was very thick, and there was so much moisture in the air. Many times, Geoff and Bill had to take out the spark plugs and heat them on the stove before replacing them, while dancing because of their heat.

The factory at Minerva Road, Park Royal. Dad's first



car, an Austin Big 7, reg. No. FTW771

February, 1948

1 Sunday

Bill at work until 3pm. Mr & Mrs Adams & Jack came to tea, enjoyed themselves very much. We all had a nice evening. David Sunday school.

2 Monday

Washed to-day. Everywhere wet.

3 Tuesday - rained all day

Went to Mrs Waglands. Went out, had lunch in British Restaurant, not bad. Got home 6.15, took me 2 hours.

4 Wednesday

Con & Peter for day, left about 4. Met Bill at Sudbury Odeon. "Circus Boy" very good.

5 Thursday - Wet day

Went to see about welfare work, nothing doing as I haven't had any nursing training. Called at Con's, had lunch there. Mr. Cloud called in to see Bill about 7.30. Had headache.

6 Friday - very wet morning.

Shopped this morning, got very wet. Ted going to pictures with Malcolm Souter straight from school "Great Expectations".

7 Saturday

Bill 9✓ Bill working Sat morning. Home Peg
9✓ early. Jack Adams, Ted & David
Con 3✓ went to pictures to see "Circus Boy"
Ted 3✓ while Bill and I went to get Bill's
David 3✓ new suit, but had to wait to leave it at
Carmells till cheque was cleared. Will call next
Friday.

8 Shrove Sunday

Bill home all day. Went to Williams' (Ragnors Lane) for tea, all of us. Had nice time, played cards and lost 1/3.

9 Monday

Washed to-day

10 Tuesday

Pancake day to-day, had nice pancakes. Made David's birthday cake.

11 Wednesday

Went to Con's to-day for day. Cold but nice. Peter walking by himself now.

12 Thursday

Quiet day. In all day. Coal arrived. Put marzipan on David's cake.

13 Friday - damp day.

Called at Harrow, Carmells for Bill's suit. Very pleased with it. Met Bill at Odeon to see "Crossfire", very good. Called in at Greenford. Shopping this morning.

14 Saturday

Bill 10½✓ Bill not working to-day. Took David
Peg 10½✓ to buy his birthday presents, a
Con 3½✓ painting book & a gun.
Ted 3½✓ Iced David's cake with Cub camping
David 3½✓ scene. very nice

15 Sunday

David was 8 years to-day. Had little party, Con, Geoff, Peter, came to tea with 2 friends of David also Jack Adams. Quite a nice day. Peter quite steady on his feet now, walking everywhere.

16 Monday - cold day

Washed to-day. Cold but nice and got everything dry.

17 Tuesday - nice but cold

Went to Greenford, paid Elect Bill. Ironed all afternoon. Bill started to make David's aeroplane.

18 Wednesday - cold day

Should have gone to Con's to-day but didn't. Bill in early and very cold, no heat on in factory. Betty rang up, Mum's coming to stay next Wed. Betty and Harry going to Glasgow on business. Also heard Aunt Annie sailing for England next month, not sure of date. Am dying to see her again.

19 Thursday - very cold day

Con & Peter came for the day, 9.30 to 4
Ironed to-day a little. con set my hair for me. Parted with coat & suit - 22/6¹

20 Friday - very cold day

Shopping to-day. Bill went to work by bus, couldn't get car to start, frozen up. Quiet day. Ted pictures straight after school.

21 Saturday - very cold day

Bill 1-0✓ Stayed in all day, all of us
Peg 1-0✓
Con 4

¹ Twenty two shillings and sixpence, £1.12½p in to-day's money.

February, 1948

Ted 4✓
David 4✓

22 Sunday - very cold day

David went to Sunday school. Ted had tea at Peter's (Taylor), Mr. & Mrs Taylor came in about 7.30 for game of Solo(whist) First time I've played Solo for ages, quite enjoyed it. Won 1/3 [one shilling and three pence – about 6p]

23 Monday - cold day

Washed to-day, and got little room ready for Mum. Busy day. Betty on phone, Mum coming 10'o'clock train Wed. next

24 Tuesday

Did bedrooms to-day, and down stairs, and shopping. Quiet evening.

25 Wednesday

Went to meet Mum at Euston, met Con & Peter there. Mum's train 15 mins. late. Mum not been well, looked very tired and needs rest. Betty sent lovely pair of blankets for me. Con & Peter came home with us, they went home about 7.30. Bill came in with ices for us all.

There was an Italian cafe very near to the factory in Minerva Rd, Park Royal which sold the most delicious water ices. Dad often brought home a tall glass or two filled with vanilla ice, carefully wrapped to prevent it melting or spilling. A real treat.

26 Thursday

Kept Mum in all day to-day, she slept well. We talked all day about new house. Must be very nice. Quiet evening.

27 Friday

I shopped all morning, and Mum David and I went to Con's for lunch, and had a nice afternoon. Mum came back with me and David at 4. Spent quiet evening at home. Bill worked on David's aeroplane.

28 Saturday

Bill 1-1½✓ Didn't get up early. Bill went to
Peg 1-1½✓ Greenford and also to Mr Adams, he
Con 4½ had lunch with him. Ted & David
Ted 4½✓ went to South Harrow to see Snow
David 4½✓ White, but didn't get in the afternoon
so went back to try the evening. They both enjoyed it
but David so excited and was sick twice, they got
home OK at 10.30. Mum Bill & I went to pictures at
Sudbury Town. Home in car. Washed Smudge - she
was dirty. David got bible from Auntie Mabel.

A simple statement that has dogged my life ever since "They both enjoyed it but David so excited and was sick twice". There are other instances of this excitement or nervous energy, like the visit to the dentist, and the train set. They put it down to an over active imagination, and my entire life has been influenced by it, sometimes to the good and more often not so good.

29 Sunday

Mum went to Con's after dinner and stayed till 7.30, Geoff and Con brought her home. Bill and I stayed in all day and David went to Sunday school with his new bible.

Mrs Waglund, Ted, and Peggy



March, 1948

March, 1948

1 Monday

Did some washing to-day, Mum didn't mind, we spent rest of day quietly. Bill phoned about 5 and we went to pictures, Mum, Bill and I.

2 Tuesday

Mum and I went to Con's all day, had a nice day, got home about 5. Spent quiet evening at home. Mother phoned Betty and decided to stay another day here to go to Ideal Home Exhibition wed.

3 Wednesday

Mum and I went to Ideal Home Exhibition at Earl's Court. Got there about 10.30, left 3.30. Never sat down once and had a lovely time, there was some lovely things there. Mum enjoyed it a lot. Quiet evening at home.

Mum often went to the Daily Mail Ideal Home Exhibition. Held annually at either Earls Court or Olympia, I forget which, it was obviously a great draw. I was taken one year and remember only the crowds, the gadgets, and unbelievably, the complete houses built out of brick complete with roofs furniture etc. I may have been a poor companion as I was only taken once.

4 Thursday

Up early to-day. Mum going home. We were all ready and Con walked in with Peter at 9.0 am so she came to Euston station with us. Got Mum in diner (dining coach), left at 10.30. Con Peter and I went and had "eats", then got to bus to Oxford St. and had a nice look round. I managed to buy a new dress, got one to fit me. Got home about 4 and Con stayed till 8. Bill and I took her to the bus.

5 Friday

Did little shopping this morning and spent rest of day cleaning up. Went to Con and Geoff for Geoff's birthday party, all went and had drinks local back to Con's at 9.30 for eats, had a nice evening, got home about 12.

6 Saturday

Bill 1-3✓
Peg 1-3✓
Con 5.
Ted 5✓
David 5✓
Didn't get up early to-day. Went to bank for Bill and did rest of shopping. Bought wool for pullover for David, navy. Ted, David, Bill & I went to see local dramatic soc. in "See How They Run". quite a good show, we enjoyed it. Bunty Taylor was Penelope {Turf}.

7 Sunday - a nice day

David went to Sunday school. Smudge seems not so well.

8 Monday - nice day

Did washing. Smudge has certainly got something wrong with her back paw. She calls out to me about it, I will watch it, she won't eat. Went to pics to see "Millions Like Us", quite good.

9 Tuesday - a lovely day

Smudge is quite ill. Called vet Mr Wilson, he came at 1.0pm and said it was an abscess. He cut it and cleaned it. She is on M&B tablets and won't eat at all. We are all sorry for her. Spent quiet day and evening. David doesn't seem to be well.

10 Wednesday - weather beautiful

Con & Peter came to-day 9.15am till 6pm. David away from school not too well. Smudge is a little better to-day, but still not eating. Have had a busy day and feel tired. Bill late home.

11 Thursday - another fine day

David home to-day but a little better. Smudge a lot better and has eaten fish and had milk. I went to hairdressers at 2.0pm and spent rest of day quietly.

12 Friday - beautiful day

Went to Cricket Club dance, had a fine time. Dinner not very good, Bill felt ill after it and was not well at all for rest of evening. Got home at 1.0am. Went to Con's to-day and called for Bill's suit from cleaners. David went to school to-day, quite well.

13 Saturday - lovely day

Bill 1-4½✓
Peg 1-4½✓
Con 5½
Ted 5½✓
David 5½✓
Quiet day. Bill in bed all day not well. I went to bank and then to Hammersmith with David for new suit and anything else I could get. Quiet evening. Ted had to go to school this morning for a detention.

14 Passion Sunday - lovely day

David Sunday school. Bill quite better to-day. Bill Ted & I met David from SS and we all went to Mrs Edmonds for tea. Had a nice time, and we were late getting home.

15 Monday - nice but cloudy

Did washing. Smudges paw healing nicely. Went to pictures to see "Mark of Cain". very good

16 Tuesday

Went to see Mrs Wagland¹ to-day to do some shopping with her. We first went to church to see the grave. I took three snaps of it, and then Clapham Common Outsize shop, Mrs Wagland bought a dress, and we had lunch, did a little more shopping and the tea and the home again. I got home ¼ to 8. Nice day.

17 Wednesday

Con & Peter came to-day, Peter very lively. Ted came home to lunch, and managed it fine in the time. Con left at 3.30. Mrs Taylor called in and David went to bus stop with Con. Quiet evening, making David's pullover.

18 Thursday

Bill rang up 20 to 12. coming home to lunch at 12. Took me with him to Greenford factory and then to Express Dairy Cricklewood, was much nearer that I thought, and I was home again at 4. Quiet evening. Stan Jones doing my needlework box.

19 Friday - nice day, wet.

Should have gone to Con's to-day but didn't as Ted came home to lunch to call at Wood End School. David finished school to-day for Easter holiday. Goes back April 12. Jack Mac on phone tonight to chat to Bill. Bill not a bit happy. Smudge is quite better now.

20 Saturday

Bill 1-6✓ Bill went to work to see Mr S². this morning, but he wasn't there will have to leave it till Monday. Ted
Peg 1-6✓ went to Peter Taylor's party 4.30 to
Con 6 9.30. I went to Bank for Bill, and
Ted 6✓ spent rest of the day at home.
David 6✓

21 Palm Sunday - nice but dull

David & Red went to Jack Adam's party to-day, had nice time. Bill & I went over to Con & Geoff's, but they were out. Thinking that they might be here we hurried home but they had not been here. Left Con's gloves for her. David went to SS before going to party. Quiet evening.

22 Monday

Don't know how to start washing as I haven't much soap. It is a trial. Bill will ring me sometime to-day. Bill rang up at 5.p.m to say all is well. In all evening. Bill going away maybe tomorrow. Couldn't do much washing, but doesn't matter.

¹ Mrs Wagland who was ill was Peggy's landlady in Merton, Wimbledon.

² Mr Scarglund is the Swedish owner of the company that employed Bill

23 Tuesday

Wanted to get ironing done to-day but didn't. First went to see Mrs Slader³ and paid David's school fee. Fee gone up to £4 next term. Got home ¼ to 12. Bill in at 12.30 going to Birmingham, awful hurry to get him off to catch train at ½ past 2. Had to go to bank South Harrow, for Bill, so went on to Hammersmith and got socks for boys and material for Ted's cricket shorts. Also called at Con's home at 5.30. Quiet evening.

24 Wednesday

Didn't get up early to-day. Did a little shopping to-day, got dinner then went to Mrs Taylor's and cut Ted's shorts, mended my striped dress, left Mrs Taylor's at 5, and Mrs Page saw me passing her house, and I had to go in and have a talk with her. I was there till 6.30. She was pleased to see me. Tacked Ted's shorts and tried them, think they will do fine. Bill still away.

25 Thursday

Did most of my shopping for holiday to-day. Funeral of the twins to-day. The mother most upset, I don't know how she managed to go. Been busy all day for holiday, finished pullover for David. Bill got home at 5.30 from Birmingham. He doesn't like that place at all. Brought ice cream home. Ted, David, Peter, John.

These twin boys were aged about 8, and lived almost opposite. Daredevils, they had gone to South Harrow Park, alongside which runs the Piccadilly line of the London Underground. Although properly fenced along its entire length, it was quite easy for active boys to climb over and run onto the line if they wanted to. (We all knew that the underground was very dangerous, and almost never went there. Both conductor rails were high, and it was really scary to jump over them. The British Rail track was another issue!). Each track had two electrified rails, one in the middle and the second outside the rails for the wheels. One twin stood on a wheel rail, and pee'ed onto the conductor rail. The direct current passed up the urine and killed him, and he collapsed across the rails. The second boy tried to pull him off, but the current went through him to 'ground', and he died also.

26 Good Friday

Bill & David worked all day on garden. Have pulled down chicken⁴ run, and done lots of little jobs. I have moved some little trees and hope they are apple,

³ Owner and principal of Maybank School, for infants to which David went. This started in the St Barnabas Church Hall opposite 59 The Fairway, but later moved to another church hall in Sudbury Hill

⁴ Peggy kept chickens through the war. See first chapter.

March, 1948

found them growing near the fence. Ted went to play football with Peter Taylor in afternoon.

27 Saturday

Bill 1-7½✓ Didn't get up early. Bill boys & I did
Peg 1-7½✓ shop for the holiday. Had lunch and
Con 6½ then all got ready for the Boat Race¹.
Ted 6½✓ Left here at 2pm and got there in
David 6½✓ plenty of time. Mr Edmonds had
saved a nice place for boys and Bill, Mr Edmonds
and I had a fine view. Lovely eats. Went on to Con's
for tea and evening, had a nice time.
Got my needlework box back from Stan Jones. He's
done it beautifully, it works a treat. Brought it back
Sunday 21. I'm very pleased and must find out how
much I owe him. 10/-² is all he'll take.

This was a factory by the Thames up from Hammersmith bridge. Our place was on the roof where we could see the Boat Race very well. Whether it was this year or not, I remember several stories. I was running among the grown ups, and saw a trestle table with glasses lined up containing what I thought was orange juice. Before the woman behind the table could stop me, I grabbed a glass and downed half. It was gin and orange. Horrified, I rushed off to find my dad. He downed the remainder, and he and his friends had a good laugh.

One year, when Mum wasn't with us, dad had a skinful. The drive home was in record time and not without its moments. He turned the car into the back alley, and swung into the garage in one fine sweep. That was the *only* time ever that he got the car into the garage in one go without having to shuffle back and forwards at least once.

28 Easter Sunday - fine day

Bill Ted and David all busy on the garden. It is beginning to look nice now. David went to Sunday school. Went into Mrs Taylor's for a game of cards. Had a nice evening, and got home about 1.pm

29 Monday - cool day

More work in the garden to-day. We have planned it very well. all stopped at dinner time, Con & Geoff & Peter came at 3.30 for tea and evening. Played table tennis, but they had to go at 8.30, Peter gets so tired, but we had a nice time.

30 Tuesday

Did an awful lot of washing to-day. Must get ready for Aunty Annie and Eva & Mum coming. Felt very

tired at 8 to-night and had a head ache. Rang Betty up to find out when Aunty and Eva are coming to us. Betty says it will be Friday, so I'll have to get going. Mrs Taylor came in and we had a talk. did ironing in the evening. Had a bad head all day.

Con at ease in the front room



¹ Oxford and Cambridge race on the Thames.

² Ten shillings - half a pound - 50p

April, 1948

April, 1948

1 Thursday

Started work to-day on the house. Did all the rooms and got the bedroom ready for visitors. It looks very nice and cosy. Ted and David went to Con's with Peter Taylor, that helped me a lot. Have got all ready for them now. Went to bed early.

2 Friday

Did my shopping and was ready at 12 to meet mum and Eva and auntie Annie at Victoria coach station. Met Con & Peter there and met them all on time from Notts. Mum looks very tired, aunty just as I remember her, and Eva I'd never seen before. All came back for tea at 5.0 Aunty brought me quite a lot of things. She is very nice, so is Eva. We talked all night nearly. Geoff came for Peter & Con & left around 8.30.

3 Saturday

Bill 1-9✓ Bill had to call at factory to-day but
Peg 1-9✓ got home at 12.0, then we had dinner
Con 7 altogether, and after went out to
Ted 7✓ London. Took them all over. They
David 7✓ were very pleased and we took some
snapshots in James Palace and Victoria monument.
Had an awful dinner in Lyons Corner house ST
(never again), got home about 10pm all very tired.
Tried Eva's dresses on but all very big.

The following was written by Eva in the year 2000:
"Eva's Trip to England 1948, Although mother got letters from England saying all was well she wanted to see for herself. So, along with a trunk of cloths that we left plus a ham, we were on our way (we paid the steward to put the ham in the fridge). Mother and I were pictured in Edna's backyard ready for our boat train to Halifax. As there was a dock strike in Liverpool our ship was cancelled, and we had to take the Ascania (it was still a troop ship). There was 10 adults and 2 kids in our cabin, a lot of war brides going home to mother. We came back in style on the Empress of Canada. On April 26th we decided to go to the show "Something in the Wind". When we got up to leave it was that rough. It was an awful sensation to know you are going down stairs and your body says you are going up. The next day we heard we had hit and ice flow. We went on to Montreal with no other problem."

4 Low Sunday

Bill took Aunty & Eva in the car to Greenford factory. We didn't have breakfast early, so I didn't rush dinner. David Sunday school, and we all got ready to go to Con's for tea. Got there about 5.30 and had a lovely tea and very nice evening. Left about 10.30 all tired.

5 Monday

Went to Tower of London to-day, took David as well, Ted stayed at home. Went to Hammersmith for lunch, then onto Tower via London Bridge and Billingsgate.
Got a guide in the Tower, and saw Crown Jewels - they are wonderful. Left Tower at 5. and went to Tussauds but were too late so came home after seeing Strand and convent Garden. Got home at 8pm had late tea and talked till bedtime.

6 Tuesday

Breakfast about 9. Aunty and Eva left about 11am with Ted to go to people in Harrow for a day or two. Ted got them a taxi and they went quite happy. Mum went to Con's for afternoon and I got a chance to do a little washing and cleaning. Con & Geoff and Mum got home here about 8.30. Con & Geoff staying for a chat and leaving at 10.

7 Wednesday

Mum had a rest in bed then Mum and I went to South Harrow for films and prints. Had a cup of tea in British rest. and sorted snaps out, and took some back for more prints to Parkers. Came home for lunch and then went by bus for a ride to Hampstead and decided to call at Victoria for coach tickets for Sat: but after waiting 35 minutes couldn't get them and went home, and stayed in for rest of day.

8 Thursday

Aunty & Eva coming back from Harrow to-day. Did a little tidying up. Left mum in bed until 11am and then straightening up bedroom. Con & peter arrived at 3.30, Aunty & Eva at 5pm, Geoff at 6pm, Bill at 6.30pm. Strawberry flan and ice-cream for tea, lovely. Aunty not had a nice time in Harrow, glad to be back. Con & Geoff home at 8.30. We all talked till late. Bill gave Aunty present: she was delighted.

April, 1948



Aunty Annie and Eva pictured in Canada just before their departure to England

Together again with Uncle Ted and two of his children and grand children in Nottingham



Peggy, Annie, Eva, and Lizzie pictured at the base of the monument in front of Buckingham Palace



Bill, Aunty Annie, and Peggy



Aunty Annie, Peggy, and another



April, 1948

9 Friday

Aunty & Eva left at 11am for train to Southampton after a late breakfast. Mum and I tried to get Victoria coach station to book seats to Liverpool for mum next. Got them from A.W.Travel bureaux Harrow. Eva on phone at 7pm to say not coming back till Sat lunch time. Mum and I at South Harrow to get snaps. I did lot of baking for the weekend. Quiet evening, much needed a little rest.

10 Saturday

Bill 1-10½✓ Bill at work again to-day. Mum not up early I finished shopping and then
Peg 1-10½✓ Mum Bill boys I had lunch. Aunty
Con 1-3½ and Eva came in at 2pm from
Ted 7½✓ Southampton. they had had a nice
David 7½✓ time there. After lunch Bill took them to see the
factory and mum and I went to South Harrow to pick
up the coach tickets for Tuesday next. Bill back first,
Kettle on for tea when I got back. All had tea
together and listened to radio in evening. All tired
and going to bed. they are all having a lovely time.

11 Sunday

Didn't get up too early to-day. Got breakfast over and Bill had to go to factory again. Ted took Aunty to old Northolt village and showed her the old church. back for lunch. All had lunch and then off to Hampton Court. Took quite a lot of snaps and had a good look round. Home at 8pm all hungry. Ted and David stayed home, Eva did washing in the morning

12 Monday

Last day for Aunty and Eva. Up early and out by 9.15. David at school to-day. went to see Royal family at FDR statue. Saw them come and then went to Palace and waited them to see them all come back. Aunty & Eva & Mum had fine view, all very pleased. Went to lunch to Crystals and had walk along Regent Street. Eva bought ring in Ciro's, went to view statue of FDR and then home. All tired but very excited. Had a lovely day, telling Bill all about it. Made scones for tomorrow.

13 Tuesday

We were all up early, had operator call up at 6.am. Got breakfast quick and all out at 7.30. Eva saying she would like to stay. Both aunty & Eva had had a lovely time here, and aunty has thanked Bill and I for a lovely holiday. I have tried to make it happy and pleasant for them. Both Ted and David have been awfully good. Called at Hammersmith on way home and spent rest of day quiet. Pictures with Bill

14 Wednesday

I started on the bedrooms to-day to put us back to normal again. didn't finish till 5.pm Eva left a box of Lux and piece of soap for which I am thankful. Ted went to Ealing swim baths, home in time for tea.

15 Thursday - fine day

Got busy on the dining and sitting rooms. they haven't been touched for two weeks and they were dirty. Ted back at school to-day, got cricket shirt 9/5, very nice too, I also started Ted's pullover in white quick knit. Very tired about 9pm, but washed my hair before going to bed.

What energy! If you missed it or have forgotten my too brief notes about the weekly washing, then take a second look. Then follow in your mind Peggy's work load as she battles through the days before, during and after her Aunt's visit. To the washing and house cleaning (both before they arrive and after they have left - without a vacuum cleaner or electric iron!), add catering and going out on trips, and marvel at her stamina. Whenever I read these weeks and come to the last entry, I, too, feel tired - and go off and put the kettle on.

16 Friday - fine day

did shopping, then went to Con's. Had a talk about Aunty & Eva, and walk along Broadway. Met Mr Page coming home. Rang Betty up to see how Harry's dad is. He is just about the same. Betty busy at home with them all there, says she would like a few days with me later on, as mum has been such a lot.

17 Saturday

Bill 2-0✓ Bill at work again to-day. Very busy
Peg 2-0✓ moving machines. Come home to
Con 1-4 diner. but went back again and didn't
Ted 8✓ get in to tea till 5.30. I had a quiet
David 8✓ day for a Sat. Radio in the evening.
We need a quiet time after last two weeks. I got very tired, but I enjoyed it. Bought off Eva before she left 3 pairs of panties, 3 slips, Aunty gave me a pair of nylons, they are lovely stockings.

In recent years, I have traveled to meet relatives from a poor country where we were expected to take gifts. Although the details and circumstances are different, the principle problem is the same: how do you help the disadvantaged relatives without causing strife? At aged 8, I was totally unaware of any atmosphere - my parents were particularly skilled at keeping all 'grown up' worries from the boys. Yet, knowing the jealousy and atmosphere between Peggy and her sisters, I'm sure that there mutterings between Peg and Bill over the things that were left behind. One clue is the clothes worn by Betty In one of the photos. Peggy had

April, 1948

declined Eva's clothes as they were too big. But one aunt is photographed wearing a suite from Eva, which looks ill fitting. Clearly, every woman had to strike a balance between what was available and what they could afford. At that time in her life, she obviously felt that a brand new beautiful woolen suit of a quality unavailable in Britain was well worth having, even if it needed taking in a bit later.

18 Sunday

Bill has had to go in again to-day. He left for work at 10am with Mr Eddie Allan. Eddie may take a job at Alka. Bill home to lunch then out till tea time. David SS. Ted went with a friend Walmsley to bird watch at 10am and didn't get back till 4pm. Had dinner and Terry not well after. Had to get sister to meet him at 8.30.

19 Monday

Had a lot of washing to do to-day, but got through it OK, made me feel tired. was glad of a quiet evening.

20 Tuesday

Con & Peter came for day Peter had a lovely time playing with coal, we had to wash his hair. they left at 4.30. Bill rang up for me to meet him at Odeon, went to see an awful film "Lady at Shanghai"

21 Wednesday

did some shopping this morning, then ironed all afternoon. Had a lot to do.

22 Thursday

Had a nice quiet day to-day. cut out new night-dress in afternoon and did some sewing to it in the evening. Ted very tired to-day, so he went to bed early

23 Friday

Went to Con's to-day. Had talk about Con & Geoff talking about a flat or house. Seems very difficult. We went walk to Acton, not a bad shopping centre. Went after flat, but it had gone. Left Con's at 4 to get home in time for tea. Quiet evening sewing.

24 Saturday

Bill 2-1½✓ Bill working again, but says he will
Peg 2-1½✓ soon have it all straight now. I cut
Con 1-5grass back and front, it looks quit
Ted 8½✓ nice now
David 8½✓

25 Sunday

Bill went to factory again, but was home to dinner and David and I went along to how the factory looks now. It certainly looks better and cleaner. David went to Sunday school. Ted was out to tea at Perry Harrow.

26 Monday

Ted has ½ day today. David all day. Ted played cricket in south Harrow park and lost his cricket ball, could not find it. I did washing today.

27 Tuesday

Did ironing and a bit of straightening up, was busy all day. Bill rang up to tell me Geoff was at his factory and he was taking him home, so I went to Con's and met him there. Talked about them leaving London, but I don't think they will. Got home about 11 pm.

28 Wednesday

Had a lovely quiet day. Smudge had her kittens today. Three. Two black and white, one nearly all black and tortoiseshell. They were all born before 10.15 in the morning. Smudge is very proud of them and Jose¹ mothers them as well. The boys were very pleased with them. Pictures with Bill to see "This happy breed" and "The Carnival". Two very good films.

29 Thursday

Had to fetch Mr Page's mother today, Mrs Page was taken ill again. Phone for Mr Page to come home from work. Was in Mrs Taylor's all afternoon making Ted's white trousers on her machine. Had a quiet evening sewing and radio.

30 Friday

Went to Con's today and had a walk along to West Ealing, did a little shopping. Got home at 5.30. Did sewing to Ted's cricket shorts, seem quite a good job. Wash my hair.

¹ Jose was a short haired terrier, black ink colour bitch

May, 1948

May, 1948

1 Saturday

Bill 2-3✓
Peg 2-3✓
Con 1-6
Ted 9✓
David 9✓

First week end off for Bill for ages. Started getting base ready for garden shed. Smudge and her kittens are fine.

2 Rogation Sunday - lovely day

Bill and Ted did work outside on the base for shed. Ted worked hard all day. David Sunday school. I had quiet day.

3 Monday

Did washing, and spent rest of day quietly. Went to pictures with Bill in evening.

4 Tuesday

Spent day at home busy in house and garden.

5 Wednesday

Spent quiet day at home. Knitted Peter's new cardigan. Not a very nice day.

6 Thursday

I went to con's to-day. Bill may go to B'ham tomorrow, but I left case ready in case he went to-day. Went out round Ealing with Con, otherwise quiet day.

7 Friday

Ted quite excited to-day, his new bike came. It is very nice and just what he wanted. Bill and I went up to Greenwood¹, first time for ages.

8 Saturday

Bill 2-4½✓
Peg 2-4½✓
Con 1-7promised
Ted 9½✓
David 9½✓

Bill home all day. Helped Charles² to do his concrete to-day, and he has promised to help us to do ours tomorrow.

9 Sunday

Bill and Ted worked all day doing the concrete base of the new shed. David went to Sunday school and then came home and helped. All getting sun burnt, a lovely warm day. Ted and Bill very tired.

10 Monday

Did washing. quite a lovely day. I did a lot in the garden, the weeds grow so quick you have to go round it every day if you can. transplanted some snapdragons that Ted grew, I hope they take.

11 Tuesday - a nice day

Stayed in all day and did housework and ironing.

12 Wednesday

Didn't do anything in particular to-day. Had a nice lazy day, quite unusual for me to have nothing to do.

13 Thursday

Went to Con's to-day. Stayed in all day, talked and did knitting. Had a headache.

14 Friday

Did shopping and went to South Harrow, got piece of leather for my shoes, went to bank for Bill.

15 Saturday - nice day

Bill 2-6✓
Peg 2-6✓
Con 1-8
Ted 10✓
David ✓

Bill heeled my black shoes. Con & Geoff & Peter came to have tea and spend evening with us. Quite sure he is going back to Liverpool now. All tried out Ted's new bike. Had a nice evening.

16 Whit Sunday - a lovely day

Bill Ted David & I all working on new shed. they have got both sides ready now. It will be nice size, and I will be glad when it is done. All worked till late and all very tired.

17 Monday - another lovely day

Bill, Ted and David did more work on the shed. we have got the main part done now. Ted went out on his bike for a run, he loves it. We had a nice evening at home. All plants transplanted last week have taken.

18 Tuesday

Did washing, quite a nice day. Had quite a bit of shopping to do, and had a job getting some soap.

19 Wednesday

Went over to Con's to-day, took fish for dinner. Con & Geoff are going back to Liverpool. Geoff has got a job there quite good ... We are talking about it all.

20 Thursday

Spent the day doing housework. Did quite a bit in the garden. Will have to buy a lawn mower when the new shed is built, I can keep the garden nice then.

21 Friday

Did shopping, and spent rest of day at home. Did quite a lot of things left over from yesterday. The wireless has gone off. I do hope it isn't going to be long getting it put right. Ted has been to school all week on his bike and has managed fine.

¹ Public house on Whitton Ave, the main road.

² Charles Jones, friend on neighbouring street

May, 1948

22 Saturday - a lovely day

Bill 2-7½✓ Bill out all day at works outing to
Peg 2-7½✓ Southend, had a nice time. Ted David
Con 1-9 & I went to Ealing Baths¹, and then
Ted 10½ to Con's for tea then after tea we all
David 10½✓ went to the park, Gunnersbury
Avenue for the at home day, fair side shows, and
stayed for the fireworks they were lovely. When we
got home Bill was in about ½ hour before us. We
were all very tired. This week has been beautiful all
week, very warm for the time of year.

There were three sets of swimming baths near us that we could reach by bus, although none were exactly easy. Harrow Town baths were more expensive to get in, but had a grassed area which was very pleasant for people who liked such things. Sudbury Town baths were all concrete except for a tiered set of decking along one side for the sun worshippers. Generally, the water was a degree or two colder at Harrow. The third set of baths, Ealing, were indoors only. We would visit there rarely in the winter, and I was taken there later with the grammar as part of the school curriculum.

23 Trinity Sunday

Had a lazy day today. It was a bit cold and wet so couldn't do anything in the garden. David went to Sunday school

24 Monday

Bill went to Birmingham today and is likely to be away a few days. I did washing and transplanted lettuce plants 40 in all just the right kind of day. Quiet evening. Ted went to school today on his bike for first time, and likes it.

25 Tuesday

Only went to top² today. Got all ironing done and some housework. Find I miss the wireless a lot. Hope we get it put right soon. Rang mum up, wanted to speak to Betty but could not, she was out. Everyone OK at home. Betty's birthday tomorrow.

26 Wednesday

Went to Con's today. Have finished making a cardigan for Peter, it is lovely. Helped Con to cut out 5 suits for Peter. I brought wool home to make trousers for Peter. Bill back from Birmingham tonight. We went to pictures.

27 Thursday

Spent day doing housework. Kittens are growing up fine. Bill and I spent a quiet evening, lights went off

for about 1 hour from approximately nine till ten. We do miss our wireless set.

28 Friday

Did shopping and a little tidy up. Con arrived with Peter at 9.30, so borrowed Nellie's pushchair and went into South Harrow for a walk. I found some grey wool and some sewing cottons in Geoff's. Con left at ¼ to 5. We had a quiet evening.

29 Saturday - a very wet day

Bill 2-9✓ an awful day for sat. Very wet, only
Peg 2-9✓ went out to top to shop. Bill home all
Con 1-10 day. David took flowers for Sunday
Ted 11✓ school Ted not well all day, had Dr.
David 11✓ Sweet, slight attack of food poison.
Got Canadian papers from Aunty, have read them all,
they make us think

30 Sunday

Ted much better to-day, got up this afternoon, doesn't want to miss cricket tomorrow. Bill has been busy in the garden. David went to Sunday school. Quite a nice day, but a bit dull.

31 Monday

Ted home from school to-day. He isn't right yet at all, I didn't think he would be. I did washing and was in all day. Went to pictures with Bill, and David stayed in with Ted. He said he'd look after him. Started to paint larder out to-day. Vicar called and also Mrs Needle. Was I browned off.³

¹ Public indoor swimming pool, Turkish baths etc.

² The shops at the 'top' of the road.

³ Obviously a nice quiet day with little to do! No wonder she was browned off with visitors who needed attention.

June 1948

1 Tuesday

Have let Ted have another day away from school. He is a lot better but not quite ready yet. Stayed in all day and painted larder out. Looks quite nice and clean now, but its an awful job to do. Spent quiet evening.

2 Wednesday

Went to Con's to-day, got there early and cooked dinner. Con had a fire lit, at her house its always cold because the room's so big. Talked about her going back to Liverpool next week. Stayed in evening.

3 Thursday

Cleaned out and painted white the kitchen cabinet to-day. Another nasty job, but it needed doing, and I'm glad I've done it. I feel tired now. Bill and I called at Con's tonight and had a good laugh got home about 11, very tired.

4 Friday

Did shopping and cleaning up to-day, had quite a lot to do. Painting looks nice and has dried very well. Bill and I cut front hedge and tidied garden up, looks a lot better.

5 Saturday

Bill 2-10½✓ Had Con & Peter here all day to-day
Peg 2-10½✓ as Geoff was on the firms outing to
Con 1-11 Southend. Peter was playing with
Ted 11½✓ David in the garden and after we all
David 11½✓ had tea we went a ride in the car for
the first time since the basic stopped us¹. We went
out to Twickenham, and Hampton Court, it was very
nice and Con enjoyed it. We took Con home at 11.
with Peter and Geoff had just got home full of
cockles & muscles and beer so he said. We all had a
jolly good time to-day. Ted went to stay at Perry to-
day till Monday

6 Sunday

David and I went to Fenstanton with Bill to a dairy. We had a lovely run out and back, and have to go again in 3 or 4 weeks for strawberries. Didn't get back till 8.30, and I cooked dinner as we were all hungry. Had a nice day but the weather wasn't very good.

I remember this trip for two reasons: it was so unusual to go out for a drive because of the petrol rationing; and secondly because of an incident about petrol. We arrived at a dairy where dad did some work, and spoke to the people there. He noticed that they had a petrol

pump in the yard, and found out that this was for their delivery and milk collection lorries. Seeing an opportunity, he asked if he could have some petrol for his car, and after some argee bargee, it was agreed. Dad filled the car from the pump, and determined to make the most of it, filled it right to the very top. Suddenly, he smelt petrol. He had over filled it, and the excess was spilling from a tiny pipe out onto the concrete yard. "Damn" thought dad, still never mind it will stop in a minute. But it didn't stop. Through a design fault, the pipe went down inside the tank, and once it had started siphoning the petrol out, it continued until the level of petrol inside the tank fell below the end of the pipe. Dad stood by helplessly as gallons slowly drained out, leaving the tank virtually empty. He had lost all the 'black market' petrol, and what was in the tank from his ration that was to get us back home. The dairy let him have a gallon or two more to see us home, but were generally very un sympathetic. But there was a second problem. The drains were now full of petrol, and until this had drained away and the fumes dispersed, the situation was very dangerous. True to form, I caused a lot of head scratching and worry. For some reason I cannot fathom, I had a box of matches – the non-safety kind – and insisted on playing around the back of the car near the filler pipe and the yard drain. Mum was deeply frightened that I would strike a match and send up both the car and dairy up in smoke, and furious with Bill – who took a very laid back approach. "He's old enough to know that fire is dangerous, and that all of us will be in trouble if he does strike a match, but especially him". These words did little to defuse the situation, and although I put them away back into my pocket, the return journey passed in loud screaming silence.

7 Monday

Did washing. Cut some grass in back garden but it's hard going. Bill & I called at Con's for bag of coal and have still more to get, brought some things back that Con wants to get rid of. Ted has had a very nice weekend, but he seems very tired, must go to bed early to make up his sleep.

8 Tuesday

Went to Con's to-day to help her get things ready for Carter Paterson to move. Did some sewing and got dinner ready and kept an eye on Peter while Con did washing, also took kittens, they have both got good homes. Had quiet evening at home.

Strange, the kittens were exactly 6 weeks old. In later years, she would insist that they should be minimum of 8, and preferred 10 weeks old before they were homed.

¹ Reference to an easing of the 'basic' petrol rationing

9 Wednesday

Had work to do at home to-day, and was busy all day. Bill went to his meeting for supervisors, so I went to the Old Time dancing with Bunty Taylor. Had a good laugh and nice time, and quite enjoyed it. Would like to go again some time. Bill didn't get home till 11.30, so I was glad I went out.

10 Thursday

Had to take David to Dr. Sweet. He has a nasty abscess in his mouth, and may have to have tooth taken out. It doesn't hurt him much. Did tidying up to-day and went to pictures with Bill at night. Called at Connie's to finish off sewing I was doing for her, in the afternoon with David.

11 Friday

Did shopping and got ready for Con & Peter coming in afternoon for the last time. Geoff came for tea. We all had nice tea and were out in the garden till 8. when Peter was put to sleep in David's bed, and Ted & David minded him while Con Geoff Bill & I went up to Greenwood for our last drinks there together. We went on to Byron Hotel and had all sorts to drink. Coming home we found fair, and all went on until at 11.30. All had a fine time, home at 12.30.

12 Saturday

Bill 3-0✓ Bill bought new valve for radio to-day. We all went to watch cricket to-day at Ted's school, and Ted's team won, came home for tea at 5.30 and Ted 1-0✓ took the boys to the fair we found last night. They had a fine time and spent all their money. Ted bought new fountain pen. Took David to Drs. but we have to wait till Tuesday now, but its a little better.

13 Sunday

Up early to take Con & Geoff to station for Liverpool. Got there early and they had nice seat. Hope they will get on all right in Liverpool. Geoff says they will be back here again sometime. Going to live with Geoff's mum. Bill has done more work on garden shed. David missed Sunday school to-day. Had blackcurrant and redcurrant pies, fruit from garden.

59 The Fairway was on the corner, and the plot of land was almost twice the normal width, but with a long lazy corner at the front. This meant that the side garden was really quite large. This had been stocked with masses of fruit trees and bushes. It started with cooking and eating apples, and a cherry tree. Then there were rows of currant bushes: red, white; and black. Next, there was a jungle of raspberry canes, with loganberries along the fence. Gooseberries

completed the rectangle. Neither Bill nor Peggy were gardeners, though Peggy had 'aspirations' that were often foiled by the boys playing football etc. The fruit crop was always spectacular despite the fact that the only time my parents went into their midst was to pick the crop once a year! Forget pruning and worrying about whether they cropped on this year's growth or earlier, and ignore all weeds and bugs. It was the habit to ask relatives and friends to the house for a Sunday to pick the fruit, and Mum would bottle every thing that she could. It always took two or three weekends, and the meals were finished off with pies made from the day's pickings. We would have a fruit pie every Sunday throughout the year from these bottles, and in particular, it was a blackcurrant pie in Boxing day. The area was especially loved by the local cats, where they had shade and could hide. Whenever I or Ted could get our hands on the water hose, we would aim it over the fruit. Out would pop two or three moggies – often not ours – hugging the ground and fleeing with ears pinned back in anger.

14 Monday

Washed to-day, but not a very nice day. David home to-day. Went with Bill in car to pick up cot & things from where Con lived, must try and get rid of cot now. Stayed talking for 1 hour to Miss Cook & Miss Dubridge. I have got to go back for coal yet.

15 Tuesday

Bill bought new valve for radio, we tried it and it goes beautiful. Nice to hear it again. Took David to dentist but have to return tomorrow. Called to tell Mrs Slader and stayed to dinner at David's school. Had a lovely dinner and got home about 2.30. did a lot of ironing. Went to pictures to see "Good Time Girl", very good.

16 Wednesday

Went to dentist with David. He had to have tooth out. We had to wait an hour for Dr. Sweet to come. David was very good, he didn't mind it at all. charged me 15/-. We came home and had dinner. David played trains all afternoon. Bill and I and Mr Grey to Hayes in evening.

The doctor was needed as I had gas. I remember being still dopey on the trip home in Dr Sweet's car, and emptied my bladder over his leather seat.

17 Thursday

Got more papers from aunty Annie to-day. The adverts make you think. In all day to-day. Bill late home.

18 Friday

Picked 1½ pounds of blackcurrants to-day and made 3lbs jam. Bill called at Mr Hawkins about radio. Mr

June 1948

H very sorry. Bill changing condenser in set to take away the hum. Got airmail letter from aunty Annie to-day in which she says that a parcel is coming. Boys are very excited waiting for it.

19 Saturday

Bill 3-1½✓ Spent the day quiet for a Saturday.
Peg 3-1½✓ Auntie's parcel hasn't come to-day.
Con 2-1 Nothing unusual happened
Ted 1-0½✓
David 1-0½✓

20 Sunday

Bill out at work all day. David at Sunday school, not a nice day at all for June. Hope it brightens up soon. Must find out when Mabel is coming.

21 Monday

Washed to-day and did all chair covers, they were dirty. I must get curtains done when I can. Went to pictures with Bill.

22 Tuesday

Been doing housework all day to-day, feel tired. Got parcel from aunty Annie to-day, tinned food and suit for Peter, collars for Bill and fancy covers for me. Gun for the boys, quite a nice parcel and I'm glad of the food. Must send Peter's suit off to Liverpool.

23 Wednesday

Ironed chair covers and put them on.. takes quite a time doing them.

24 Thursday

Spent quiet day sewing and mending. Weather is awful, not a bit like summer. We are not having a holiday this year, I am not sorry if we are going to get this kind of weather. Bill late home.

25 Friday

Shopping to-day. Have put card about baby cot in Ellington's to-day¹. Hope it goes soon.

26 Saturday

Bill 3-3 Bill at work till 2pm Stayed in all
Peg 3-3✓ day and listened to radio. Not a nice
Con 2-2day, raining
Ted 1-1✓
David 1-1✓

27 Sunday

Bill at factory to-day, David at Sunday school. An awfully wet day.

28 Monday

Did washing, not a very nice day. Sent off Peter's suit to Connie

29 Tuesday

Decided to see if Mrs Walker needed any help, she was very glad to see me and I have brought home sewing to do. Did ironing and tidied up. Went to pictures with Bill

30 Wednesday

Rang Mabel up tonight, and she is coming Friday, so I'll have to buck up tomorrow and get her room ready. Have got everything ready downstairs, haven't done any sewing to-day for Mrs Walker.

¹ Card, items for sale in the local newsagents

July, 1948

July, 1948

1 Friday

Took all net curtains down to-day and washed them. They were very dirty and do look nice. It takes a long time to do all the windows, and has kept me busy all day. Still I won't be busy next week with Mabel

2 Friday

Did my shopping early to-day and left here at 12 to meet Mabel at 2.30 at station. Had lunch in Express Dairy near station, train 20 minutes late. Met Mabel alright and went straight to ROSE SHOW, a really lovely show. Have seen some lovely roses and found out the name of the sellers, will try and get some for my garden.

3 Saturday

Bill 3-4½ Bill at work in the morning, home at lunch, and Mabel Bill and I went run in car to Windsor Castle in the evening. Mabel quite enjoyed it, David 1-1½✓ Stayed up late talking

4 Sunday

Didn't get up late, David Sunday school. Mabel Bill and I went to factory to show Mabel around. It does look nice now. Car trouble on way home, good job it was to-day and not tomorrow for Bill at work.

5 Monday

Went to Tower with Mabel, saw Crown Jewels and everything of interest. Mabel hasn't been before to the Tower. We had lunch at Hammersmith and got home about 7.30. Quite a nice day.

6 Tuesday

Went shopping to-day with Mabel for curtains. Got some lovely material at Walisses in Oxford Street. Had lunch in Hammersmith again Tea in Flemings Oxford Street. Home at 6.30 and went to pictures with Bill. A nice day

7 Wednesday

Mabel and I stayed in all day to-day. Spent it quietly. Bill was late in, 10.30. He was at a meeting. We spent a nice quite day.

8 Thursday

Have been to Hampton Court to-day, got there at 2pm it took 2 hours and 5 minutes to go round the state apartments. It was 5 past 4 when we got out. Got home again at 6.30 Mabel quite enjoyed it.

9 Friday

Had to call at Wembley station to-day about Mabel's luggage. did some shopping there, and then went up to Mrs Walker and did some sewing for her. Bill

Mabel and I went up to the rehearsal of the play, it's quite good.

10 Saturday

Bill 3-6 Mabel went home to-day. Said she had a nice week but it wasn't long enough. Bill ran her to Euston Station and we shopped on the way home in Wembley, only 6d of meat again this week each. I spent day quietly, did sewing, costumes.

An example of rationing that continued after the war, the butcher had only 6 penny worth of meat for each customer's ration book. A week's ration was 14 penny worth, one shilling and tuppence.

11 Sunday

Not a very nice day. David Sunday school. Ted went for a ride and I did sewing.

12 Monday

Did washing, and had a lot to do this week. Bit of tidying up as well, didn't do any last week with Mabel here. went to pictures with Bill to see "Day Break", quite good.

Inevitably, I got into trouble. At the back of the hall were two large metal cabinets which were used to heat food for the kitchen/dining room, and which stood about three feet high. Me and two or three other children were helped up to sit on these to see the play. But, the sides boomed very satisfactorily when tapped with heel of a swinging leg, and we were stared at by several very annoyed grown ups in the audience. Chased out by one of the teachers, the other boys were all hit about the legs to teach them a lesson. I got away with "Because he was from another school", much to the disgust of the other two.

13 Tuesday

Have been sewing all day to-day. First night of play. Boys went into hall to see it, I was making the boys up for the stage. Over a 100 to do. Play very good, went off fine. Made 5 costumes. Bill stayed home all night.

14 Wednesday

Have promised Mrs Walker I will go up and make some of the boys up for the play. Been ironing to-day and have felt ill all day. Bill came up to school with me and was given the job Bill of the stage lights. I was making boys up all night. Mr Henton very pleased to see us, also his grandson. Play went off very well. Ran Miss Ford home

July, 1948

15 Thursday

Feel much better to-day, did bedrooms. Bill and I stayed at school play again, Bill doing lights I was making boys up. Play better than ever tonight. Mrs Walker very pleased. Ran Miss Ford Home. Coffee and sandwiches with everybody.

16 Friday

Ted half day to-day. Shopping and work all day. Bill and I doing lights and makeup again. Last night tonight, so I went in to see it. The play is very good and I quite enjoyed it. Mr Henton and Mrs Walker thanked us very much for our help. Mrs W. said she may not have a play next year. Coffee and sandwiches.

17 Saturday

Bill 3-7½ Spent a quiet Saturday, I needed it.
Peg 3-7½ Stayed in and listened to radio.
Con 2-5 Bill at work till 2.
Ted 1-2½✓
David 1-2½✓

18 Sunday

Rained a little. David Sunday school. Bill worked on car. Its looking fine now, a nice quiet day.

19 Monday

Did washing and had a lot to do all day. Went to pictures with Bill. Bill came home from work as he felt awful, he had a nasty cold.

20 Tuesday

Worked at home all day. House needed tidying up after all my sewing and as the children will be on holiday soon must get the work done. Bill home all day but feels better

21 Wednesday

Bill at work to-day so much better, and I've had the house to my self. did a lot of mending and ironing.

22 Thursday

David finished school to-day, goes back to school September 14th. I think its too long a holiday.

23 Friday

Been shopping to-day, trying to get summer pants for David. Will have to try again. A nice day and very warm.

24 Saturday

Bill 3-9 Rained a little to-day. Went to
Peg 3-9 pictures to see "Three Sisters", quite
Con 2-6 good.
Ted 1-3✓
David 1-3✓

25 Sunday - temperature high

Had a nice day, quiet. Bill worked on garden, we cut grass, must have a lawn mower next year.

26 Monday - temp 85

Did washing and finished about 12. David wanted to go to baths, so we went to Sudbury Town baths. It was lovely, my first time in this year.

27 Tuesday - temp 93

Went up to Woodend School as I said that I'd help Mrs Walker at 10.30. Had lunch at Kings Head Harrow, very nice place, with Mrs Walker, Mrs A.. and Mrs Cox. All very nice. Packed school play costumes away and finished at 5. Bill home late.

28 Wednesday - temp 90

Stayed in all day to-day. did a lot of housework and ironing, it was very hot. Bill took a nice run in the evening to keep cool.

29 Thursday

Ted finished school to-day so we went to Sudbury town pool, it was very warm and the water was lovely. Home at 5.30. In all evening. Saw Olympic Games torch run along Whitton Avenue at 3.0pm. The avenue was packed with people. Sent Aunty Annie Olympic stamps by airmail.

The London Olympics were a major national event that had every one talking. Bill and Ted were keen to go to one or more of the events, but at 8 years old, I was considered too young, or perhaps they thought that I'd just throw up on every body. I know that Ted and dad went to at least one hockey game, and I still think that I can see them in a photo published in the Teach Yourself Hockey book. Dad also went to a soccer game.

At Mrs Sladers school, we all talked about the games. In a special memory, I recall seeing the runner who carried the torch. Being a dry summer, it was dusty, and the prints were quite clear along the Whitton Avenue. Going to school the next morning, I was impressed with the thought that the flame had come all the way from Greece and man who carried it had passed my house. There were even a double line of footprints as the relay runners handed the torch from one to another. This blew my mind, as no one had told me about the relay. I thought the same chap had picked up the torch in Greece and was still running – but then, I still believed in Father Christmas until I was eleven.

30 Friday - temp 93

Did shopping and then took Ted David and Peter Taylor to open air baths at Harrow. When we got there, Mrs Martin, and Brenda and Jean were there and we had a lovely day. Ted can swim a little. We

July, 1948

went at 12 and stayed till 5. L day. Have promised to go on Tuesday next all being well. Stayed in Friday night, except to call at factory with B. Bill at Olympics Wembley.

31 Saturday - lovely day, temp 93

Bill 3-10½ Had a nice day to-day. Went out with

Peg 3-10½ Bill and bought navy sandals from Con 2-7Dolcis. Stayed home rest of day and

Ted 1-3½✓ listened to wireless

David 1-3½✓

Costumes made by Peggy for Mrs Walker of Woodend School



Above, Ted is on the left

Below, most of the costumes were made by Peggy from whatever could be scrounged from other mothers and whatever the war had left over



August, 1948

August, 1948

1 Sunday

A beautiful day. David missed Sunday school and we went to Chorley Woods taking Colin and John Leigh with us. Bill took a tent and put it up, the boys were thrilled. Mrs Walker rang up to see if I could help her Tuesday next, said I would.

2 Monday

Started to be a nice day but a bit cloudy. Afternoon was nice so we all went to Harrow baths with B, lovely at first but started to rain at 4.30 so we came home. Had tea and Bill and I went to Odeon South Harrow.

3 Tuesday

Didn't go to baths, but went to help Mrs Walker again. Was raining nearly all day. Lost my silk square. We had lunch at Oldfield Hotel, quite nice. Have promised to help her again if she wants me. Got home about 5.30 tired. Stayed in rest of day. Boys were I all day and played Totopoly.

4 Wednesday

Another nasty wet day boys stayed in all day. Ted and John played Totopoly at John's, Colin in with David. It cleared up at tea time, and Bill came home and took Ted to see the hockey semi finals Indians v. Argentines, India won 4-0. Ted had fine time.

5 Thursday

Bill went to Wembley again to-day. Was there all afternoon. Had a fine time but it was raining nearly all day.

6 Friday

Another nasty wet day. the boys and I went to the British Museum and the war Museum taking Colin¹ with us. David got his finger stuck in the tube door, but wasn't hurt². Bill and I went to pictures.

This must have been the forerunner of the regular weekly trip to London during the Summer holidays. Generally, Londoners never went to the sights of London (and still don't), but being an outsider, Peggy really enjoyed visiting the museums, the Tower, Madame Tussauds etc. So it was that she began to take Ted and I to see one or other of the great sights. We were allowed to take friends with us, but she made sure that they had permission from their mothers, and

¹ Colin Brown

² The automatic door had not fully opened, and I placed my hand on it. The extra pressure moved the door, carrying my hand with it. My little finger was caught between the door and it's frame where a blob of old paint took off the nail.

had enough money with them for the entry fees, and a packed lunch each. They also needed a rain coat in case the weather looked like turning. They were always told "Be here by 9,15 because I'm leaving at 9.30 and if your not here, then I won't wait". Then we marched off with her carrying every thing in a basket. We all looked forward to these trips, specially the Christmas day trip to Gamleys in Regent Street; but I could write a book about them.

7 Saturday

Bill 4-0 Bill called at factory.
Peg 4-0✓
Con 2-8
Ted 1-4✓
David 1-4✓

8 Sunday

David had Colin in early to-day, and Mr Martin called before we were up. David to Sunday school.

9 Monday

Had an awful day to-day. Did washing then started to clean the walls in the kitchen. It was an awful job, and in the middle of the afternoon, Bill came home for a bag as he was going to Portsmouth but won't be back for tomorrow night. I managed to get all finished by eight o'clock and then had an hour to myself before bed.

10 Tuesday

Went to Harrow baths with Ted, David and Colin. Had a lovely day but was cloudy. Came home for tea and Bill rang up at 8.30. He was at Wembley, he'd got home in time to go to the match at Wembley with the Edmonds. Made his cake for Friday.

11 Wednesday

Stayed in all day and cleaned up. Bill late home, Boys out playing.

12 Thursday

Stayed in all day and finished Bill's cake for tomorrow. We have done our garden on it, its not bad³. Sent his cards off to the factory. He'll get a shock when he gets them at work tomorrow. We had to show him his cake tonight as David asked if he could have the marzipan that was left over in front of Bill. Bill says we've taken a (micky)⁴ out of him.

13 Friday

Bill's birthday to-day. He got cards OK. Ted bought him Pears, David matches, and I his seat for the finals of the Olympic football to-night between Sweden &

³ decorated the top with icing in design and shape of the garden.

⁴ Can't read it.

August, 1948

?. Bill enjoyed it, he got home about 9.30. Martin came in to see cake. I took boys to Science museum with Colin Brown. Not a nice day, raining.

14 August - a nice day

Bill 4-1½ Bill called at factory, home to lunch, and we all went and
Peg 4-1½✓ picked blackberries at the western Avenue, Uxbridge. Bill
Con 2-9 took us in the car. We got about 3lbs.
Bill was bitten by
Ted 1-4½✓ something and has started to swell.
Home to tea.
David 1-4½✓

15 Sunday

Went with Bill and Mr Carlstein to Fen Stenton, had a lovely day. Started out at 8am and met Eric at Ealing at 8.30 Got to Fen Stanton at 11.30. Bill busy, so Mr Carlstein and I had morning tea, all had lunch at 1. and came home via Cambridge, went to King's College. Mr Carlstein very impressed with it. Home at 8. Boys been quite good, had Colin & John.

16 Monday

Did washing and spent rest of day quietly. Ted went on a bike ride, but it rained all day. He got very wet. Bill and I pictures again.

17 Tuesday

Mrs Brown took David with them to some nice place named Churfield. David had a fine day. A parcel came from Auntie with cream and jam. the boys were pleased. Ted and I went to pictures to see Shaggy. Ted enjoyed it.

18 Wednesday.

The boys spent day at home, it wasn't very good, cloudy and wet.

19 Thursday

David Ted and I went to get blackberries at Uxbridge. bottling fruit all night till 10.30. Bill went and had drink with Martin.

It was a bit of an expedition involving changing trains and a walk of about a mile at both ends. It also meant taking sandwiches and drinks as the best place for the fruit was a mile from any shops, and we were there for nearly the whole day. We discovered that a tomato sandwich is superb when carried in a bag and squashed for a few hours. The juices make the bread moist and help alleviate the need for so much liquid to drink and carry. Still a picnic favourite. The stretch of road still exists. It's the A40 dual carriage way running from the Uxbridge Roundabout towards Oxford, the stretch that is a viaduct running down hill in a straight line.

20 Friday

Did shopping and I spent day at home. Bill and I went to Harrow Coliseum to see Mountain Air. It was quite good and I enjoyed it a lot.

21 Saturday

Bill 4-3 Bill went to factory till lunch time.
Peg 4-3 Took the boys to the match Harrow
Con 2-10 County Met Police. Boys enjoyed it
Ted 1-5✓ a lot. We stayed in all evening and
David 1-5✓ listened to radio. A good play.

22 Sunday

Bill started to dig out base for garage. Went into Martin's and had look at new valve for toilet. David, Sunday school, Ted helped Bill a little. A nice day.

23 Monday

Did washing, boys played around. A nice day but not very sunny and a bit chilly. Spent rest of day quietly. Bill getting a little late getting home.

24 Tuesday.

Mrs Brown asked if we would like to go with her to pick blackberries. We went to Uxbridge Circus. Mrs Brown, Colin, Beryl David and I left home at 12 and got back at 5. Got 3lb fruit. Mrs B got about the same. Ted went to Harrow Baths all afternoon, had a nice time. Bill was home early and we went to pictures to see "I Remember Mama". very good.

25 Wednesday

John Leigh, Colin Brown the boys and I went to the Model Ex. at Horticultural Hall. It was a fine show and we all enjoyed it. Got there at quarter to twelve and left at 4.30 still not seeing everything. the model ships were fine. I would like one. We got home at 6.30 all very tired, and the boys happy.

The Schoolboys Own Exhibition was magic. Talk about boys toys, it was a dream world with radio controlled boats sailing round a lagoon; and a circular stage with planes, cars and boats sharing the honours as they raced around – driven by either jet engines, or with real internal combustion engines. We couldn't believe our eyes. There would be a train layout; and hundreds of stands with magic, or printing press outfits, or secret writing, guns etc. etc. One year, I went on my own. As the queue to get in got closer to the door, a man walked along the line and approached me. "Can I come in with you?" he asked. Adults and girls were only allowed into this exhibition if they were accompanied by a boy. How wonderful, the boot is on the other foot; the number of times we would try to get into the pictures with a strange grown up. I said "Yes", but as we got to the window, I announced "My uncles paying for me", and of course he had no

August, 1948

choice. Great news as the entrance money was valuable extra cash to spend inside.

26 Thursday

David in bed all day to-day. He has a nasty headache and is very hot. Don't think there is anything really wrong. In all day, did cleaning and pressed quite a few things. Ted seems tired as well to-day. I think the enjoyed themselves too much yesterday. Bill and I in all evening.

27 Friday

David just about the same to-day. His head is still aching badly and he's fed up, but he looks a little better. Ted just played all day. A quiet day will do him good once in a while. I did shopping and sent papers to Canada, and a letter and 2/6 for soap to Con. Stayed in all night.

28 Saturday

Bill 4.4½ It has been a lovely day to-day. Bill
Peg 4.4½✓ was up early and out. He had to go to
Ted 1-5½✓ the factory till 12. Home at 12 and he
David 1.5½✓ and I went to Co-op at Burnt Oak to
get Bill a new Mac and brown shoes. It is the first
time I've been there and it's a lovely shop, I shall go
again. Home at ¼ to 3 and Ted and John Leigh & Bill
went to football match at Harrow. They all enjoyed
it, but said it wasn't as good as last week. We all had
tea at 5.30. Bill and I went a run in the car at 8. Quite
a nice day. David much better to-day, up at 10.

29 Sunday

A beautiful day.
Bill has been busy in the garden all day. David went
to Sunday school, and Ted went to Ruislip Lido with
John Leigh (Ed. By bike), got home at 7.30 very
hungry. I sat in garden all afternoon. Home all day.

30 Monday

Another nice day. Did my washing early and went to
Harrow Baths at 1.30 with Rene Martin, Brenda, Jean
and the boys. The water was cold but it was nice, left
at 4.30. Bill late home, he went to see Mr. Dormer in
the hospital. Quite a nice day. Ted can swim half way
across the bath, it is 25 yards across and 55 long. All
went to see "Unconquered". Very good with Bill on ?
day & night.

31 Tuesday

Ted and Malcolm Souter went to Windsor today (*Ed.
by bike*). Left here at 9.30, and got home again at 6
p.m. Had a very nice day. I did ironing and cleaned
up at home and David and Colin Brown had a tent up
in the garden and had tea out there.

September, 1948

September, 1948

1 Wednesday

Not a very nice day, wet. The boys just played around and I had a quiet day. Mrs. Taylor is upset about Peter and tells me Teddy is to blame for Peter's state of health which I do not agree with. It will all work itself out in time. Bill and I went a walk to-night after talking to Mr and Mrs. Taylor. Mr T went a car ride with Bill.

2 Thursday

Not a very nice day again. I stayed in all day. I felt quite chilly. Bill was late home again. Ted & Peter Taylor played chess and Billiards all afternoon, and David was in and out all day. Did quite a lot of crochet work.

3 Friday

Did all my shopping, and had dinner early. Ted & I went to pick blackberries, and David Stayed with Colin Brown. We were late getting home and I thought Bill would be in, but he wasn't. He'd taken Mr. Edmunds home and he had a lovely bunch of Dahlias for me and is going to get some tubers for next year. We went a car ride to-night

4 Saturday

Bill 4.6 Raining a little today. Went to Bank
Peg 4.6 and bought Ted a pair of plimsolls
Con 3.0 for school and David new socks. T &
Ted 1-6✓ D & Bill went to the football match
David 1-6✓ at Harrow, back at tea time hungry.
Mrs. Taylor called in at teatime and left at 7.30. Bill
and I stayed in all evening.

5 Sunday

Bill busy in the garden again. David went to Sunday school. We all spent a quiet day. Ted was busy on his model aeroplane

6 Monday

Did washing again. Boys just played around. It was a lovely day. Ted worked on his models.

7 Tuesday

A lovely day again. The boys and I went to Sudbury Town baths. I took some snaps of them. Hope they come out good. The water was cold but it wasn't too bad. Home for tea, all hungry. Stayed in all evening. Ted went to Bill's factory and had his lunch there. He quite enjoyed it.

8 Wednesday

Another nice day. The boys are spending it at home. Ted is working on his models for school. I went to pictures with Bill.

9 Thursday

Mrs. Taylor came in to-day and asked me to go to the Old Time dancing. I managed to get Bill to come. He had a lovely time and I think he will come again. I quite enjoy it. The boys have been busy getting ready for school next week.

10 Friday

Did shopping and then took David to South Harrow to buy ruler and school bag & pencils for school. The boys spent more than I should have done. Still they had to have them.

11 Saturday

Bill 4-7½
Peg 4-7½
Con 3-1
Ted 1-6½
David 1-6½✓

12 Sunday

13 Monday

Audrey Williams came to-day just as I started to wash. She didn't mind so I carried on. We all had lunch and then went to Ted's school to get his new blazer and football shirt. Couldn't get a cap. Audrey came with us, but went home from Harrow. I went to pictures with Bill.

14 Tuesday

David back at school to-day. Ted got all his things ready, and then we went to see "Hold that Ghost" with Peter Taylor. They quite enjoyed it. Bill late home.

15 Wednesday

Had a quiet day to-day. Ted started school again. I think he was glad to be going back again. The house will seem empty now. Still I have a lot of needlework to do, and must get on with it.
Mr. & Mrs. Parfitt called tonight. We were surprised to see them. They want to come back next door, but can't. We were late getting to our dancing.

16 Thursday

Did a lot of housework to-day in case Bill starts his holidays this week. Bill late home again. I felt tired tonight.

17 Friday

Did shopping and was wondering if Bill would start his holidays to-day, when he came home he said he was. So now there'll be a lot of work done outside in the garden.

18 Saturday

Bill 4-9 Bill went to bank, and in the
Peg 4-9 afternoon took the boys to Harrow
Con 3-2Town football match. Back for tea
Ted 1-7 all very hungry.
David 1-7

19 Sunday

Phone rang at 9 this morning and it was Audrey to say her mother was coming over to-day. T & D went to Sunday school, and I got a nice tea ready. Fanny Williams arrived and we had tea. Talked all evening. Bill ran her home about 10 and we met Florrie's young man, also Audrey's.

20 Monday

Bill worked on garden again. I did washing and then helped Bill a little. We spent rest of the day quietly listening to wireless. A rest will do Bill good.

21 Tuesday

Bill promised David a new fountain pen, and we were going to meet him at school, but we met him at the top of the road. He wasn't well and was on his way home, so we took him to get his pen and then brought him home and put him to bed. He's too excited that's what it is.

22 Wednesday

Worked on garage base again to-day. Did quite a lot, but it is tiring work. David was home in bed nearly all morning, he's better to-day but still upset and tired. Bill and I went to pictures, Ted came with us. David stayed with Colin B(rown).

23 Thursday

Bill worked on garden again. I helped a little. There is an awful lot to do. We went to Old time dancing again, I quite enjoyed it.

24 Friday

Bill did quite a lot of work in the garden. After lunch we went to bank and went on into Harrow. I bought a nice cake at a shop there, so we are going again tomorrow for another one.

25 Saturday

Bill 4-100½ Bill ran me to Harrow again. Got a
Peg 4-10½ nice cake and did some
Con 3-3 shopping. Bill took T & D to football
Ted 1-7½ match. Home to tea. Mrs. Taylor
David 1-7½ asked us in for a game of cards to-
night.

26 Sunday

Bill started concrete to-day. Mr. Martin and Mr. Cloud helped him and they were just finishing a portion of it when Mr. & Mrs. Edmunds came to tea. We all had a nice tea, and Bill and Mr. Edmunds played Billiards rest of evening. Mr. E won, left for home about 11.15.

I remember that all the concrete had to be mixed by hand – a job I have learnt is very hard on the back and hands. While the 'men', who had made several loads with Peggy's help, were taking a break for lunch, Peggy mixed a complete load on her own, and then made the Sunday meal.

27 Monday

Bill couldn't do any work outside to-day, he's waiting for sand and shingle. We had a run around after dinner, and bought him hinges for front gate. Went to pictures.

28 Tuesday

Sand and shingle delivered in the rain at 11am. Still we were glad it came. Had lunch and started at 2. at least Bill did while I went down to see Mrs. Slader and got back at 4.30. Bill had done very well. He was tired and had a bath after tea. Stayed in all evening. Mrs. Martin had lunch with us to-day.

29 Wednesday

After breakfast I did the shopping and put dinner on, and then went out at 10.30 to help Bill. We worked till 1/ and then had lunch with Mr. Martin. Went Old time dancing in the evening.

30 Thursday

Helped Bill again with concrete. There is only one more portion to do now. Mr. M. to lunch again, and Bill had a rush to get to the bank before it closed. Bill and I went to pictures and had a drink in the Greenwood.

October, 1948

October, 1948

1 Friday

Started last portion of the garage base to-day and got it finished at 1.30. It was larger and more awkward to do. Mr. Martin helped and then we had lunch. Bill and I went for a run in the car as far as the Devils Punch Bowl. It was very nice and quite a change for me. We got home at 8. and then took the boys to a fair at Northolt for an hour.

2 Saturday

Bill 5-0 Last day of Bill's holiday. He's gone with Mr. Martin and 2 friends to the car racing at Silverstone race course.
Peg 5-0
Con 3-4
Ted 1-8 Had a lovely time. I took T & D to see Wealdstone & Harrow Town play cup match. Wealdstone won 2.1. Spent rest of day quietly.

3 Sunday

Bill worked on car all morning. Ted & David went to Sunday school, then we all went to Edmunds for tea. Had quite a nice time. Mr. Batchelor gave me a lovely bunch of chrysanthemums and has promised Bill some cuttings for our garden. Home at 10. Have promised to dress 2 dolls.

4 Monday

Bill back at work to-day. He hasn't had much of a holiday, still he's done a good job. I had a lot of washing to do to-day, and felt tired after I'd done it. A nice wireless program to-night. It rained to-day. Must keep Jose¹ in now for next 3 weeks. Ted got a cold.

5 Tuesday

A nice day. I finished getting washing done and dry, and did the bedrooms. Bill rang up to say he's going to Liverpool to-morrow, and so we went to the pictures to-night. He may be going to Ireland. The boys are pleased.

6 Wednesday

Bill off early this morning to call at the factory and then on to L'pool. Ted got new fountain (pen) to-day. I spent a quiet day, did ironing and knitting. Spent evening with Mrs. Taylor. Bill rang up from L'pool to say he's staying at his mothers, and he's seen my mother, all well.

7 Thursday

Spent the day quietly. Did a lot of knitting. Ted's cold a little better but still quite nasty. Didn't go to dancing to-night. I had a headache. Bill home to-morrow.

8 Friday

Did all my shopping, and had a quiet day. Bill won't be back to-day. I told him to stay till Sunday but he won't, says he'll be back to-morrow. Have had a nasty head all day.

9 Saturday

Bill 5-1½ The boys and I went to meet Bill at
Peg 5-1½ 4.pm. They didn't go to the football
Con 3-5 match. Met Bill OK. He had quite a
Ted 1-8½ lot of parcels and when we got home
David 1-8½ he started giving us presents. A lovely new Pyrex dish for me and a nice bowl of bulbs from Bob, and Margaret gave me a very nice sponge bag. The dish was from Bill's Mum. They are all for my birthday next week. Bill has had a nice time and seen everyone. All are quite well and send us their love. Barbara says I must enter a knitting competition.

10 Sunday

Bill busy fixing side gate to fasten, and worked on the car. Ted and David went to Sunday school. I had an awful headache all day. Have been reading all about the competition Barbara sent me and have decided to send in an entry.

11 Monday

I do not feel any better to-day. I have an awful headache. Haven't done a thing all day. I have got the sweep coming tomorrow. Can't put him off.

12 Tuesday

Feel a bit better to-day. Had to take David for new shoes in a hurry. He had a day off. The sweep came about 1.30 and left 2.15. He did 2 rooms. I had an awful lot to do but was just getting a bath when Bill came in. I was very dirty.

The old fashioned chimney sweeps used to leave a huge amount of work behind. No vacuum cleaners then. They had a sheet thing which covered the opening and which with a sleeve through which they pushed the rods up and down. All the soot fell into the fire grate, and despite his efforts, more than enough escaped round the side of the sheet into the room where it hung in a cloud choking the throat and leaving a fine film on all the surfaces.

13 Wednesday

Did all the washing to-day and I had a lot to do. Bill has promised to put my new posts up for a clothes line. I could do with it. It's my birthday to-morrow. Went to Old time dancing.

¹ The family female dog.

October, 1948

14 Thursday

Bill Ted & David and Bill's Mum sent me cards to-day. Ted also had a present for me. And I'm getting nylons off Bill on Saturday. Audrey Williams was here all day. We had a nasty shock concerning my opal ring to-day. I was very annoyed¹. Bill and I went to the pictures.

15 Friday

Did shopping and housework. Mrs. Taylor leaving next week. I am trying to get a little job as I haven't enough to do here all day. Have decided to enter comp. Barbara sent me, knitting a matinee coat.

In her own words, she has not enough to do.
Extraordinary!

16 Saturday

Bill 5-3 Up early and went with Bill to Acton
Peg 5-3 Market for nylons. Got a pair, and
Con 3-6 had a look round. Home to dinner
Ted 1-9 and I decided to go to the football
David 1-9 match with Bill and the boys at
Harrow Town football ground. They all enjoyed it, I
don't quite understand it all yet. All home to tea and
stayed in Sat. night.

17 Sunday

We were late up to-day. Bill did the garden fence and Ted and David went to Sunday school. I was in a rush all day through getting up late. Mustn't do it again. I didn't wake up till ¼ to 10

18 Monday

Washing and changed the beds. A quiet day. Went to pictures with Bill, "Blind Goddess", very good. Bill decided to have grey suit off Mr. Taylor. It is new but the trousers don't fit Mr. T. It fits Bill perfectly. I like it.

19 Tuesday

Called to see Mrs. Taylor, they are leaving Friday next. I gave her a hand washing curtains, she was very pleased. I had her cheese ration this week. It was very handy as I never have enough cheese. Started dressing Dolls for Mrs. E. to-night.

20 Wednesday

Finished one doll for Mrs. E. it was lovely. I've written after home knitting of ladies jumpers², it sounds alright, if it is worth it. Bill and I went Old time dancing, had a nice time.

¹ I remember that the opal had a chip but don't know how this happened, but this must have been the day.

² I presume this is a job

21 Thursday

Went and helped Mrs. Taylor roll her carpets up. Did the rooms, and some cleaning up. Mr. and Mrs. Taylor called in later to-day and as Bill was very late stayed to have a chat, and see Bill. They leave for Bath next week.

22 Friday

Did shopping, and had Mrs. Taylor leave a big trunk in our house until Sat. morn. Bill late for a Friday night. He's busy getting (ready) for the Dairy Show next week.

23 Saturday

Bill 5-4½ The boys are busy collecting rubbish
Peg 5-4½ for their bonfire Sat. next. Ted made
Con 3-7 the Guy to-day. Bill and the boys
Ted 1-9½ went to football match, I went too.
David 1-9½ Stayed in the evening. Ted went to
stay at Walmsleys till to-morrow afternoon

24 Sunday

Bill took me and David to Olympia to look around this morning. It's a great show and I hope everything goes alright when it opens to-morrow. We came home to dinner, and Ted arrived home again at tea time. He'd had a nice time.

25 Monday

Did washing and have been getting things ready for Bill for Dairy Show. Bought him a new tie and socks for his new grey suit. It was 1.30am when Bill got home from Olympia. He was dead tired, and has to be on the stand at 8.30 to-morrow morning. I have been busy to-day and have hand sewn Bill's new jacket. It is worth it.

26 Tuesday

Have received a request to-day for a sample jumper. I'll get the wool and make one but must first finish my other knitting. Bill has had a nice day for the first of Olympia. He's very tired and was glad to get to bed. I've been busy pressing clothes for him.

27 Wednesday

Everything went well again for Bill to-day, and he met Mr. Leonard Gee. Mr. Gee was awfully glad to see Bill, and was very pleased to see how Bill has got on since he worked at Gee's³. I'm glad Bill met him like that. I've had a quiet day myself.

28 Thursday

The King and Queen went to the Dairy Show to-day, and we made Bill tell us all about it when he came

³ Bill served his toolmaker's apprenticeship at E.T. Gee & Sons Ltd. (Metal Box) in Liverpool from 1929 to 1933

October, 1948

home. Did bedrooms and got little room ready for Mrs. Taylor who is staying the night with us tomorrow.

29 Friday

Finished and sent in my entry for the knitting competition., so here hoping and you never know. Did ironing I should have done earlier this week. Bill and I went up to the Greenwood for a last drink with Taylor's and then Mr. Taylor spent the night with us. It was the last day of the dairy show, and I'm glad.

30 Saturday

Bill 5-6 Bill had rest in bed this morning. I
Peg 5-6 got up and Mr. Taylor had the van
Con 3-8 call for his trunk at 9. He had his
Ted 1-10 breakfast and then went with the van.
David 1-10 I went to South Harrow with Bill and
to the football match with Bill and the boys.

31 Sunday

Bill was at Olympia at 9. Tommy Williams didn't put his clock back and he was at our house an hour earlier than he should have been to go with Bill. Bill was home for dinner, and the boys went to Sunday school.

Bill explains a point



The Dairy Show at Olympia

Bill with Mr. Gee



November, 1948

November, 1948

1 Monday

Did the washing, then made Ted's birthday cake for next Sat. Did quite a lot of knitting, I want to get the jumper finished and sent off before Ted's birthday. Didn't go to the pics. to-night, I felt tired. Bill didn't mind.

2 Tuesday

Did some work to-day and some knitting. Must take the boys out shopping soon. Went to pictures with Bill. He expects to be late this week each night getting ready to go away.

3 Wednesday

Bill went to his monthly meeting to-night. I didn't go dancing, I had a nasty headache.

4 Thursday

Bill has his photo taken to-day for his passport. He's calling for them to-morrow. I've been baking to-day for Ted's party. There's a lot to do yet.

5 Friday

Did shopping, then finished the jumper and sent it off. Hope I get some more orders. (Seed?) cakes and birthday cake for Ted's birthday to-morrow. I think I've got everything ready now. Ted got a P.O. from Gran Worsley and he's quite excited about to-morrow. I hope it's a nice day.

6 Saturday

Bill 5-7½ Today is Ted's birthday. We have
Peg 5-7½ got everything ready for the party
Con 3-9 and Ted is quite excited about it. The
Ted 1-10½ party went off fine. The boys had a
David 1-10½ buffet tea and ½ gallon ice cream.
The bonfire and fireworks were lovely, and they all
played murder after the fireworks. Party started at
4.30 and finished at 9.30. All had a lovely time, and
all were tired out when they went home. Bill and I
had a nice quiet cup of tea at 10.p.m. – and did we
need it.
Ted was 13 to-day.

As Ted's birthday was the day after Guy Fawkes, it soon became normal to celebrate both at our house with a boy's party. Ted and I would be invited to a fire work party at one of our friends (each going to different parties), and then having a second party on Ted's birthday. We all enjoyed it year after year, but Ted eventually complained that his present didn't measure up, since most of the money went on the fire works.

7 Sunday

Ted, David and Ted's friend Terry were all tired to-day after the party yesterday. Terry went home after dinner, and T & D went to Sunday school. Early to bed is the order to-night. I did a bit of tidying up, but will finish it to-morrow.

8 Monday

David had the day off school, half term. I've done washing. A really lovely day. Bill and I went to the pictures to-night, quite good. Bill got his new passport through to-day.

How times have changed. He only collected his passport photos on Friday, and the passport arrives on Monday! Or did he go and collect it? I know that he had been to the Passport office at Petit France – it's such an unusual name.

9 Tuesday

Have been busy all day getting all Bill's things ready for his flying trip to Ireland. I've done a pile of ironing and feel tired. Bill is tired, and I think a bit worried. He hasn't had much rest this past week. Received 15/- for jumper knitted and order for another one, also my Co-op divi £2.7.0.

10 Wednesday

Bill left this morning for Ireland. He isn't keen on flying, but I expect he'll like it when he goes. Northolt Airport is on strike but as he hasn't come home he must have gone. Mr. Genner rang up to say he had our train set ready for us, so I'll have to go and leave a deposit on it till Bill comes back. Bill got a very worrying letter just before leaving to-day. He will be worried now. Went to Old time dance.

11 Thursday

Finished the doll for Mrs. Edmunds this morning, and got ready to go to Mrs.E. with them, but called first at Genners in South Harrow to leave a deposit on the train set for David for Xmas, and then went on to Mrs.E's. She was very pleased with the dolls, and I had a nice afternoon.

12 Friday

Did quite a lot of cleaning to-day, and then shopping. Felt tired. Ted went to his table tennis, and was back at 8.30. I think he enjoys it. I wonder how Bill is getting on in Ireland.

13 Saturday

Bill 5-9 Didn't get up very early. Finished
my shopping, and after dinner Ted and I
Peg 5-9 went to the football match. Quite a
Con 3-10 good game and we enjoyed it. Back.
Ted 1-11

November, 1948

David 1-11 to tea and after that listened to the radio.

14 Sunday

Spent to-day very quietly. Ted and David went to Sunday school. Did quite a lot of knitting.

15 Monday

Did the washing. Not a nice day. Ted had ½day away from school to celebrate the prince's birth. We all had cards from Bill to-day., he's very busy in Ireland. I wrote to mum and Betty all the news. Have been knitting and listening to the radio.

16 Tuesday

Expect Bill will be home to-morrow. Did as much ironing as I could to-day.

17 Wednesday

Bill got home at tea time, and brought me stockings and fruit and cheese, and sweets for the boys. He got shirts and shoes in Ireland and he has been making our mouths water telling us about ice cream and steaks. We all want to go now. He was talking all evening. He had an exciting time coming home, very rough in the plane over water. I don't want to fly. Bill also brought a lovely piece of meat.

We should remember that there was a marked contrast in 1948 between Ireland, which had not been at war, and England that had. Lights blazing in the street, plenty of food available in the shops and the restaurants, Ireland was a heaven to an English visitor who had spent the duration of the war on decreasing rations. I recall the story of this return to England. Bill had the meat in his suitcase, and of course, it was forbidden to bring meat into the country. His Irish contact had assured him that everything would be fine, and that he was to make himself known to a particular Customs official when he landed at Northolt. With knees trembling, and watching other peoples cases being opened by the Customs men on duty, he made contact with the man. "Come this way" and he led dad to the end of the table. "This is the man" he said to officer there, who asked dad "Anything to declare?" With his legs almost failing him, he replied "No", upon which the official chalked his bag and motioned him off. My dad the smuggler was shaking when he got into the cab.

18 Thursday

Bill went in to work as usual to-day. Home early and we went to the dance. Had a nice time. I felt tired all day to-day. We all had a lovely feed to-night. Roast Lamb, and it was like the old days, I did enjoy it. I have a piece left yet.

19 Friday

Did shopping, and went to pictures with Bill in evening. Told Bill about train set, and we will call for it next week. David will be pleased. The cheese Bill brought is lovely. I wish we could get it here.

20 Saturday

Bill 5-10½ We all went to football match. I
Peg 5-10½ enjoyed it. Stayed in this evening.
Con 3-11 Bill went into work this morning.
Ted 1-11½
David 1-11½

21 Sunday

Bill was in Mr. Martin's garage to-day telling him all about Ireland. T&D went to S. School

22 Monday

Did washing, not a nice day. Sent newspapers to aunty. Went to pictures with Bill. We always seem to go on Monday.

23 Tuesday

24 Wednesday

Didn't go to dance to-night, didn't feel like it. I have a headache.

25 Thursday

26 Friday

27 Saturday

Bill 6-0 Boys and Bill went to football
Peg 6-0 match. I stayed at home to do
Con 4-0ironing, and I made some cakes for
Ted 2-0 tea.
David 2-0

28 Sunday

Spent day at home, wet and nasty. T & D went to S. school.

29 Monday

Did washing and went to pictures with Bill.

30 Tuesday

December, 1948

December, 1948

1 Wednesday

Christmas won't be long now. I'm trying to get all I want but it's a job Bill these days. Don't know what to get everyone at home.

2 Thursday

Was busy all day to-day, and forgot that it was the dance to-night, but I went and quite enjoyed it.

3 Friday

We all opened the club Bill to-night instead of waiting until next week. The boys have each £2.10.0 and Bill and I will get David's train with ours. Did shopping to-day, not much about for Christmas.

4 Saturday

T&D had to go and spend their cash to-day so Bill took them to Genners. They got skates for David and a fountain pen, and a dart board for Ted and darts, also a table tennis bat. They are both very pleased. Bill and I called for David's train set later on and it's lovely. He will have a fit when he sees it. It was £8.15.0 altogether. Bill had it running to-night after they had gone to bed. It is fine. Bill will get more fun out of it than David.

Whilst this was obviously David's first train set, it was Bill's also. There was no money in his childhood for such things, and when Ted was eight, the war was raging. From now to Xmas, Bill seemed to be spending most of his spare time on the train.

What a wonderful conspiracy! Dad had got a large piece of plywood that was painted green, like a table tennis table. It was too large, and he had me sitting on it on the dining room table to hold it down while he and Mr. Martin cut it down to size with a saw. I remember it well. Everyone was in such high spirits, with much laughing and joking. Obviously everyone else knew why it was being cut but me, I was just happy at being included in Dad's activity. Seeing my happy and innocent face just added to the occasion as anticipation of the Christmas surprise grew.

5 Sunday

T&D went to Sunday School. Bill and I talking about Christmas to-day. I'm glad no one is coming from Liverpool. We couldn't afford it this year.

6 Monday

7 Tuesday

8 Wednesday

9 Thursday

10 Friday

11 Saturday

12 Sunday

In all day. Bill in Martins garage with train set. Martin quite taken up with it. They have taken the board out of our bedroom to screw lines down on. David doesn't know, and I've had some explaining to do as Ted has been out with them as well. Ted and David went to Sunday school.

13 Monday

Did washing to-day, but didn't have a lot of soap. Will have to do a lot next week. Can't make my cake yet, can't get syrup. Hope we get a turkey. I don't think we'll get anything from the butcher. Boys looking forward to Xmas. Bill and I went to pictures.

14 Tuesday

Went out to-day to do Xmas shopping. Got quite nice things to send to L'pool. I hope the gloves fit mother and Bill's mum. Didn't get home until 5.30. Bill was in just after and seems happy with what I've got.

15 Wednesday

Did some baking to-day to take to David's breaking up to-morrow. Did some parcelling of presents to-day.

16 Thursday

Had to go to David's school to-day, this morning and watch his play and the children do their bits and pieces. Took some small cakes along and they all said they were nice.

17 Friday

David came out shopping with me to-day and we did quite a lot. Mrs Kiley let me have some syrup to make my cake with, I can't get any. Bill came in to-night with a dynamo for Ted, and some model kits to make for David's train, also a set of drawing instruments for Ted. They will be pleased on Xmas morning. T finished school this morning.

18 Saturday

Rather cold to-day. Bill went to the factory and was home to dinner. I took T&D to South Harrow and we bought Xmas crackers and cards and Dad's Xmas present. We all went to the football game, and then

December, 1948

home to tea. I spent rest of the day indoors listening to the wireless. When we got back from football, there was a parcel from Canada for us. We all have very nice presents from Auntie Annie and Eva. Bill socks, Ted a lovely leather ringed folder for papers, and David two lovely books, I have a white pair of moccasins. There was a cake, and tinned fruit, candies, meat and cream. A very nice parcel.

The cake was the star, nobody had seen anything of the like. Well, I hadn't. To picture it, look to the Tennessee Cake that can be bought to-day by mail order from America – a hollow ring with loads of fruit, like candied peel & cherries etc, and topped with pecan nuts. Very rich to-day, this cake was doubly rich to our war palettes, and we were all restricted by mum to thin slices on special occasions. It became something of a celebrity as it was wondered over and smelt by neighbours and friends. Contrast this with the cake Peggy made from her rations.

19 Sunday

Bill was in Martin's garage till dinner time, then all afternoon till tea time. I don't know who this train is really for. They are now making sheds. Ted and David went to Sunday school, and I got a nice calendar and day diary off their teachers. I made my cake to-day & mincemeat. I should have made it earlier but I didn't have the stuff.

20 Monday

Did my last wash of the year, I hope. I have washed covers, and the big chair covers, and everything. Ted did some shopping for me, and David was good all day. Bill was home early and spent the night making models for the Dublo Train. David will have a fit when he see his presents. Got turkey from Ireland. Lovely.

21 Tuesday

I had the boys to help me to-day and we gave the bedrooms a jolly good do. We were all tired at 6.p.m. and ready for our teas. Bill got home about 8.30 and after tea he heeled my black court shoes. Ted and David have been a real help all day. Sent off all my cards for Xmas.

22 Wednesday

The boys have been busy getting their presents ready for Xmas. I'm not supposed to know. I don't know how David is keeping it to himself. Went to pictures with Bill. Fishmonger cleaned the turkey for me.

23 Thursday

Have been busy getting everything ready for Bill for his dinner to-night. Hope he gets on OK. He's a bit worried about making a speech. I may not wait up. T

& D & I put up decorations to-day. They look quite nice. I'm sorry we haven't any lights. Did Xmas shopping to-day for meat and such like.

24 Friday

Bill got on very well at his dinner last night. He made quite a nice speech, and had a lovely dinner with plenty to eat and drink. He sat next to Mr. Scarglund and Mr. Miller. I have got everything ready for to-morrow now. I've filled a stocking for the boys. Made mince pies and have everything under control. Bill home at lunch time, and ready for a rest for a few days. Didn't get to bed till 1.30.

25 Saturday

Ted and David up at 7. David wild with excitement about his train. Ted very pleased with his dynamo and drawing instruments, saved all our parcels till this morning that came from L'pool. and we had a lovely time opening them. We got quite a lot of nice things, and had a parcel from everyone. Ted & David bought me fruit dishes, and I'm very pleased. We had an invitation to Clouds, and we went to tea there. We had a lovely time and did nothing but eat. Ted was tired about 11, but David went right off to sleep. So we came home and so to bed. A very nice day. Turkey was superb and pud.

26 Sunday

Didn't get up early. Had dinner of roast lamb about 2.30. David hasn't left his train alone. Mr. Martin and Bill put the dynamo on Ted's bike. Rene and Brenda and Mrs. Martin all came in to tea. All enjoyed it specially the nice fire and cosy chairs, and something to drink and plenty to eat. Quite a nice evening. To bed about 1.30

27 Monday

Up late to-again, but it doesn't matter. On our own to-day. Bill taking it easy all day. Cold turkey at lunch, very nice. David won't leave his train alone. Listened to wireless, some good shows. We've had a nice Xmas. Better than last year.

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