

7 BUBBLES

We were lucky we able to celebrate Christmas together as a family not like a lot people who had someone away overseas in the Forces. On the 26th December we were all asleep in the shelter when Dad came and woke Jean up. She got up at once and left with him. I thought this was strange, Jean getting up without making a fuss Anyway she came back to bed and didn't say a word. It was late the next morning before Jean woke Peter and I up. She had cooked breakfast and told us that Mum had been taken into hospital to have the baby and Dad was with her. He came in later and told us that we had a baby sister and that Mum and the baby were alright. We were all going to see them. I was to say that I was thirteen as this was the age you had to be to visit anyone in Hospital. Mum stayed in hospital for two weeks. When she came home we all made a fuss of the new baby and of course Mum. The new baby was called Patricia Edwina Wardonian., but we all called her Bubbles and did we spoil her (but she was worth it).

All the house revolved around Pat. 'Is she warm enough?' 'Bob go and see that she is alright' ' yes Mum she is still asleep.' Jean worshipped her. So did I. Nothing was too good for our Bubbles. 'Peter go and make Pat a bottle' 'let Bob do it I'm doing something.' 'Bob take Pat for a walk in her pram to stop her crying. Don't go too far in case there's an air raid, Bob go and play with Pat. We had a christening party and everyone made a fuss of her,

Peter had left school and he was working at 'Doust' as an apprentice boilermaker. It's a dirty job but he still came home from work nice and clean.

Amy Johnson the famous aviator who made history with her solo 10,000 mile flight from Gravesend to Australia in 1931 has been killed flying aircraft for Air Transport Command to an air base in Essex. The engine of the aircraft she was flying cut out over the Thames Estuary and crashed into the sea. She bailed out and landed in the water. They tried to rescue her but failed. Her body has never been recovered.

The Blitz carried on day in day out, night after night. It was cold sleeping in the air raid shelter and Bubbles always had a cold so Mum and Dad decided to move all the beds in the house down stairs and the arm chairs and settee upstairs and only to use the shelter if the raids were very heavy.

Dad bought some cows. They were kept in the barn of a night because of the air raids and for milking, and taken to the marsh on my way to school. I had to learn to milk them and what a job that was. The cow would kick the bucket over and they didn't like it if your hands were cold. You never stood behind one or you would get more than milk all over you. Petrol was rationed to collect the pig swill. Dad got hold of a bike with a large carrier on the front and I had to collect the swill on my way home from school. All the girls and lads would call me 'Piggy Paternoster'. But everyone had to do their bit. for the war effort collecting waste paper, scrap iron, anything that could be salvaged for making munitions.

Everyone helped one another. If you were at the bus stop waiting for a bus to town a car would stop and give you a lift and if someone came home on leave neighbours and friends would make sure they had a good time. The first words they would ask them would be when are you going back. If someone had bad news everybody rallied round to help and if there was a wedding someone would make the refreshments. Homemade wine would appear.