

I arrived in Frankfurt am Main in late March 1944, it was known as a Strossgefängnis. I was there until March 1945 and you had to work very hard to produce your quota, otherwise, no work no food. I lost a considerable amount of weight in the period.

Late March 1945 we force marched to a railway siding in Frankfurt, our escort were prison warders and dogs. We were ordered into a goods wagon which was filled to capacity. Throughout our journey we had to remain standing, if you fell, you were crushed. This journey lasted four days and nights with no light, no air, no food, and no water. We reached a town named Wurtzburg about 2 am and in the railway sidings we disembarked. To get to the prison, being dark, it was very difficult to negotiate the railway lines. We were informed that any prisoner that fell on the track would be shot. Quite a few shots were heard. We walked to the prison and were forced to kneel down until dawn. Small groups of prisoners were taken into large prison cells, naked. Our clothes had to be left outside to be fumigated. We were packed inside and some sort of gas was let into the cell which almost stifled us. The smell did ease fortunately. We were given water to drink and a very watery soup.

Next day we were escorted to open wagons which were open to wind and rain. It took us about three days to reach our next stop which was Strasburg.

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Returned, my sentence was reduced to twelve months, to be served in Germany.

I thanked the court for their consideration. I was then removed back to my prison cell, this was about ten minutes away.

The weather was very mild for February, but there was a slight drizzle and by the time I reached the prison my clothes were somewhat damp. I was then allowed to dry out in the boiler room. Before leaving me my guard was most amused when I shook hands with him. He was a Stratsfeldwebel named Kohn.

This is jumping the gun somewhat, let us go to the commencement of this offensive against the German Reich.

We go back to February 1944, things like food in particular were getting very short, bartering was very prominent, that is if you had anything to barter. The black marketers were having a field day.

It was late in the day, I was standing in the doorway of my father's cycle shop in Bordage, St Peter Port. Two French Algerians approached me and asked if I would like some butter. No amount was mentioned so I said yes.

It was agreed that these two fellows would bring the butter to the Strand on the Tuesday evening, our house was in Hauteval. Our sloping rear garden had a door which opened on to the Strand.

At the appointed time I waited for them to arrive. I must have waited for about an hour but no-one arrived.

The next day during shop hours I saw these two fellows outside the shop on the footpath. I approached them and they apologised, saying that the evening they were due with the butter the moon was shining so they were unable to procure the butter. Arrangements were made for a future date which I agreed to.

I thought 'what has the moon to do with their delivery of the butter?' I assumed that they had to get the butter from a member of the crew of one of the ships in the harbour, but that it had to be on a dark night.

On the next night mentioned, I waited by our back door to the Strand. In the distance I could see them coming and when they were close enough to me I could see that they had a sack each on their backs. "Whatever is in those sacks?" I asked. "Coffee-beans" they replied. My immediate response to him was "I don't want coffee beans". Their only reply was that because they were so heavy "we want to put them down somewhere, we can't take them". I told them to follow me. They were glad to follow and put them in our glasshouse.

They left immediately without asking me for payment, in any case I would have refused to pay them, coffee beans were the last things I wanted, each sack weighted 100 kilos.

I said nothing to my family about this and wondered to myself where these beans came from.

Now things change completely. There was a German soldier who was very kind to me, he would bring me bread when he was able, and the occasional cigarette, I was unable to give him anything for his kindness.

He came in the shop once saying the colonel he was batman for, had asked him to try and get some coffee beans which he would send to his wife in Germany prior to his leave. I mentioned the different barter shops and black marketeers, to which his reply was that he had tried everywhere, but with no luck. At that particular moment I did not connect his needs with the coffee beans I had at home.

Suddenly it dawned on me that I could help him in his quest. "I'll try and help you, call in next time you are in this area", he said he would.

I returned home after work and went to the sacks of coffee beans, made a little hole larger and extracted about ½ lb plus of beans. I took them to the shop the next day. Up to this time I had not heard anything from the two Algerians. Now later on in the day the soldier came in, he was delighted that I was able to accommodate him with a few beans, he asked me how much he owed me, but I refused to charge him.

The following day he came in the shop to extend the thanks of his colonel who was going to post the beans to his wife in Germany.

After a few days I was contacted by the Felgendarmerie at their headquarters in Queens Road. They explained to me that the Feldpost had been intercepted the package and traced it to the colonel who, in turn explained that his batman had got the beans for him. Upon questioning the batman explained he obtained them from me. I was asked if this was correct to which I replied in the affirmative. I had to tell them that I got them from two Algerians, their reply was, 'find the two Algerians and you will be immune from charges, meanwhile we will collect the beans that are in your possession'. This they did the same time advising me about finding the two Algerians.

I visited many of the pubs in the St Peters Port asking the barman if he had come across the two Algerians, each time the answer was always in the negative.

The next I heard from the Politzei was that I was required to attend their headquarters in Queens Road at 6am the next morning regardless of the curfew, which was 10pm to 7am.

This I did, they then took me in their car to a Bouet house where some of the foreign labourers were sleeping. They were kicked awake by the Feldgendarmerie who asked me if my two Algerians were amongst the sleepers. I told them none of the foreign labourers were known to me.

We then motored to a hospital, so called, in the Ville au Rue Estate to see if the Algerians were there. They were not there, because I had seen them in the Rouette Broge as we approached the hospital.

My escort said nothing about these two and neither did I. At this stage I was taken back to the headquarters, where I was really grilled, I was told that my story was a pack of lies, I was told that my sister who was in prison had told them a different story. I remonstrated with them that I knew what they had told me was untrue, whereupon my chief interrogator picked me up by my jacket and just threw me across the room. What could I do? His name was Statsfeldwebel Kuhn, he was a big fellow, about fifteen stone; he was wicked.

They then took me to the Guernsey Prison where I was put in the German quarters.

Between the main outer wall and the prison building was a small path. Along this path were two cells, they were usually used for drunks in the

night, by morning they were sober. They unlocked the door of the cell and just pushed me in. I could not see a thing, the only light came from a very small window in the door. A voice said "welcome" but I could not see who welcomed me until, after a while, my eyes grew accustomed to the very poor light, and then I recognised who my cell mate was. He was one of my customers named Cyril. He was pleased to see me for he had been alone in that cell for about three weeks.

The cell was very small about ten feet by eight, two thirds of this area was taken up by a wooden bench which was covered by straw, it was just large enough for two people to sleep.

In the corner was a tin container as a toilet. There were no washing facilities at all, also you were not permitted to take a walk in the fresh air. Conditions were really terrible, Cyril said that if he stayed in that cell much longer he would go crazy, I couldn't have agreed more, the amount of light coming through the small window in the door was so bad that you couldn't read a book. The warder, a very simple German soldier, came in with our three daily meals, breakfast, lunch and an evening meal, but it was really a starvation diet.

My father, not knowing where I was, approached the German Commandant, and the result was my immediate release. I was really sorry to have to leave Cyril behind but was most grateful to be free.

For me, it was a return to work as usual. I had no idea of the impending situation which was to put me back into prison for thirteen months until to the end of World War II.

I was cycling in the Parish of St Sampson, ahead of me on the footpath were the two Algerians, they were walking towards the building that was a soup kitchen for foreign workers. As I passed them slowly I told them the German police were looking for them, also that I was not going to betray them to the Germans, and that they had to take great care not to get caught.

I received no reply from them although I spoke using the French language. I also new some German, and this was to enable me to be that little more comfortable when I was in Germany.

Different times of working were imposed by the German Commandant, this was to allow more people to work on the land to produce food. Shop hours were from ten o'clock in the morning until half past twelve, the afternoon session was from two to four o'clock. Workshops were allowed to work until half past five.

Sometimes I would take the afternoon off to dig the ground at home ready for planting. One day I was in the garden when I was informed that the Feldgendarmerie wanted to see me at the O.T. prison. I must explain that this prison was an old building on the south esplanade and it was used solely for the incarceration of all slave workers. I went down to the prison which was quite close to our rear entrance in the strand, in fact a slight upward incline and on the left side of the strand at the bottom of the cliff could be seen the prison courtyard.

The moment I entered the prison, I was confronted by the two Algerians. The German Kuhn asked me if these were the two Algerians that had brought me the coffee-beans, I was certainly not prepared for this situation, my hand automatically went to my pocket to get my cigarette papers and tried to make a cigarette out of the dust in my pocket. My answer was negative, no, I did not recognise these two, I was then told I could go home, which I was very pleased to do.

Back in the garden once more I commenced digging. I had not been digging for very long, when I heard shouts and yells coming from the prison, this did not bother me because I often heard the cries of these slave workers.

About half an our later this fellow Kuhn came to our house, picked me up and took me down to this OT prison and I was flung into a cell. They were really not cells, but a series of small rooms on the first floor. Mine was at the top of the stairs, it consisted of a large long window just below the ceiling, a wooden bed and a tin container for the toilet. There was a blanket on the bed, it smelt awful, I don't think that it had ever been cleaned. Fortunately the cell was heated by a boiler in the courtyard. I was the sole occupant, but the cell was much better than the previous one I was in.

We were allowed out early to empty our tin and have a wash and shave. My razor, towel and facecloth were brought in by my father, I could see him from my window if I stood on my bed. He could see me from the strand, but we were unable to talk to each other.

After two days, the prison chief gave us the freedom of the prison. Because he wore OT uniform and was also a member of the SS it surprised me that he gave me the freedom of the prison ...?..... This of course made life that little bit more bearable.

The weather was extremely warm for the time of the year. Usually it is quite cold, yet we were sunbathing on the roof in front of the prison.

With me were two other local men, two Frenchmen, Paul Ann(?) from Calvados and Henri Creshin from...?... There were two Russian slave workers, whose crime was killing their foreman at work. That did not seem to worry them although they knew that they would both lose their lives when they were sent to Germany. Their names were Gregori and Koupropafa. I was able to leave my cell after the evening meal to go into their cell and play cards to about eleven o'clock and then I would carefully let myself into my cell. They were very heavy smokers, I don't know how they obtained their cigarettes.

I asked the chief if I could get my father to come and give me a haircut. In the 1920s my father was a hairdresser by trade. The chief said he could come and cut my hair and cut his also. This did occur to the benefit of all, my father could come and visit me at any time. I had the unenviable job of collecting the mid-day meal soup. We used a long wooden tray to carry the urns of soup, at each end of which were shafts which we held with a rope harness around our shoulders, I was put in the front which made me too prominent to my liking. Fortunately there was always too much soup and ample bread.

The chief told my father to come one evening with a container to take some soup home for the family. This was very welcome and sometimes I was able to send some of my bread to my family.

The chief called me aside one morning to explain why I was arrested. The cries that I heard while I was in the garden came from the two Algerians. The chief, who could also speak French, heard these two having an argument. One was telling the other that they were not in prison for stealing the beans, but because they would not work. The chief heard this and knocked hell out of them, it was then they admitted that I was the recipient of the beans.

It appeared that the beans had come from the German food stores in collusion with the Feldwebel who was in charge of the store. He was sent to Germany for sentencing. The next I heard was that I had to appear before a German War Court in two days time. My father brought me my one and only suit and a clean shirt. I thought that looking clean and respectable I might show my respect for the court and might help to lessen my sentence, I never did know if it made any difference.

You will remember that after sentencing, I was brought back to the O.T. Prison. A few days later I was taken to the civil side of the prison, and after another two days I was transferred to the German side of the prison. There were four others in this cell, which was quite large. The next morning we, together with a guard, left the prison to work and this certainly did relieve us of the monotony of remaining in our cell the whole day long. We were

taken to Granveile Mount barrack to prepare a large dining room for officers for a meeting and afterwards for a buffet. Really our job was to help in building an air raid shelter in the garden of a house across the road from Granville House. It was very hard work moving large granite lintels it took six of us to move each lintel into position, we never finished the job because we were directed to Government House in Queens Road to beat large carpets with sticks, a much easier and lighter job than the previous one.

The German corporal in charge of us was named Hardtkoph, he was clean shaven, but very solemn looking, he came from Solingen and his father owned a factory which made razors and razor blades etc. We actually sold razor blades of his make before the war, this of course opened up to a quite interesting chat.

In 1946 I was on holiday. Walking through Regents Park going to the Zoo, I saw a prisoner of war taking some freshly painted seats on a hand truck to position them in the park, it was this Hardtkoph. I did not stop to tell him who I was, as there were a number of people about and I did not know the attitude of the public towards a German prisoner of war, I'm sorry now that I did not make myself known to him.

It was on a Friday I was taken to the prison office and told 'tomorrow you will be sent to a German prison in Frankfort-am-main, you will be given the day to go home and settle your affairs you must be back by six pm'. This pleased me no end that I was to see my family.

On my way home I went to see my uncle and aunt in Little St John's Street, they gave me a wonderful welcome, gave me a few potatoes for my lunch and a carrot cake to take with me, I wished them goodbye then made my way home to Hauteville where my family were so pleased to see me. The potatoes I had been given were turned into chips and fried with linseed oil, the predominant taste of course was the linseed oil, but it filled a gap in my stomach. I collected a few items to take with me, some soap, a little sugar and my carrot cake in my briefcase, a change of underwear and my overcoat. I said a reluctant goodbye to my family and popped into the shop to say goodbye to the staff and then made my way back to the prison. Two Oberfeldwebers came to collect me. They were both going to leave to Berlin and were to drop me off at Frankfort. At about 10pm we left the prison for the docks and boarded a small boat on our way to St Malo.

The boat had no accommodation for passengers, she was purely a cargo vessel, I was on the deck trying to sleep, there were other vessels with us, one of which was towing a collier. The sea was quite calm with a very slight swell, clouds shot across the moon at times. We had no problems

and reached St Malo at about eight o'clock on the Sunday morning. My guard explained to me that there was no train to Parish until Monday, so I would have to spend my time at a prison named 'Esperane' in the outskirts of St Malo – St Servan. Well I missed my breakfast, but enjoyed my lunch which was soup. I rested without any visit from the French warders except for them bringing my evening meal, soup again, and I had a good night's sleep which I really needed.

My two guards came for me about nine o'clock on the Monday morning, Then it was a walk to 'La Gare', the railway station, the streets were quite busy with people on bicycles and people walking, it was quite a walk.

We arrived at he station but there was no train waiting for us, this being war time trains were few and far between and hardly ever punctual, during my walk to the station I saw no signs of any of the bombing, that was to come later.

Eventually our train did arrive, in about twenty minutes we were on our way. Our first stop was at Rennes, where we were welcomed with a large cup of soup and a large chunk of bread by German women in an unusual uniform. In twenty minutes we were on the move once more. Our next stop was Le Mans, where we were offered more bread and soup. I refused this because I had my carrot cake, this I shared with my two guards who

were extremely kind to me. I was not handcuffed and had a fair amount of freedom. I gave them my word, that of a Guernseyman, that I would not attempt to escape for I knew that if I did escape another member of my family would have to bear my sentence. Up to now my journey from Guernsey had been quite enjoyable, it was a sense of freedom, I was young, and had no worries at all. I had no idea what confronted me in the very near future.

Our next stop a very short one was at Chartres then Versailles then Paris, arriving about 7.30pm at Gare Montparnass. We took the Paris Metro to Gare de l'est. Still staying underground we went to a Soldatenheim, this was for the benefit of German personnel travelling. Again soup and bread was plentiful, toilets and washrooms were also available. I was using a washroom stripped to the waist. There was a German airman next to me who asked me where I was from in German, I answered him in English telling him that I was an RAF pilot that had been shot down. He said I was very lucky to be alive, but that I would be well looked after in a POW camp, he left quickly so nothing more was said.

My two guards said they would like to do a little shopping to take some gifts to their wives, would I look after their baggage until they returned, I agreed I would, what a golden opportunity to escape, but I kept my promise to them. Early morning we boarded a mainline train to Germany. We

passed through many stations, I am unable to remember their names, eventually we met up with the river Rhine. We travelled north following the Rhine which was a very beautiful river, the countryside I had never seen the likes of. During the journey to Frankfurt the train stopped many times to avoid bombing. In some cases the engine left the train, it was assumed that allied aircraft would only bomb a train if the engine was attached.

I gave my guards a scare, the train was stopped and they were dozing. I left the compartment to go to the toilet on my way back to my seat, I saw them coming towards me. They thought that I had escaped and were very relieved to find me. It was now about 11pm, no lights could be seen but in the distance one could see the effects of many searchlights in the sky, very weird.

We at last reached Frankfurt, everything seemed dead, no lights, no traffic and no people. My guard explained to me that I would stay at a military Prison that night, in the morning I would go to the prison destined for me.

We entered this prison to be confronted by a short cocky little Obergefreiter. I shook hands with my two guards and asked them, when they returned to Guernsey to tell my father that I had arrived safely. The moment my two guards left, this Obergefreiter handcuffed my arms behind me and beckoned me to follow him to a prison cell which was poorly lit

and with just a wooden bench for a bed, no bed covering at all. I was pushed into this cell with the door immediately closed behind me. This sudden change of treatment turned my stomach so that I needed to use the toilet. There was no toilet in the cell, but I did see a red button by the door that the occupant of the cell had to press for attention. As my hands were handcuffed behind my back, I could not reach to button so I, with difficulty, had to use my nose. It was some time before anyone came to my cell. It was a different soldier this time and when he asked me what I wanted, all I could say was 'toilet, toilet'. He then went off to get a bucket for me, also a piece of newspaper, no toilet roll, he refused to release my handcuffs. Now I was in a predicament, how could I manage. Well, I did manage to undo my braces at the back, but it was very difficult to make use of the newspaper. I was unable to raise my trousers, so I sat on the bed for the remainder of the night, I could not lie down in any position, it was much too painful.

Early next morning I was given a mug of coffee and a small piece of dried bread. They removed the handcuffs to let me dress, then re-handcuffed me, in the front this time so I was now able to eat my meagre breakfast. Shortly after I was removed from my cell to the prison office where I was to meet the warden who was to escort me to my final destination.

The type of handcuffs they used would tighten at the slightest movement, with this in mind the prison officers simply pushed my briefcase in my

handcuffed hands which caused great pain. This I had to contend with until I reached this "Strafgefängnis" in an area called Preurigesheim.

We boarded a bus for my final destination. My warden compelled two passengers to give up their seats to us. This was not welcomed by them at all. They knew I was a prisoner and when they realized I was an English prisoner, all types of words were used against me, some even spitting on me. This attitude I did not appreciate, as you can well understand, but my main worry was the tightness of my handcuffs. They were now so tight that they had broken through the skin drawing blood and though my warden could see this he however did nothing to help me.

After a while we got off the bus, we walked a fair distance before we arrived at the prison I was to stay in for just over twelve months, it was Strafgefängnis, 112 Homburgerland Strasse, Preungesheim.

We approached two very large doors, my warden pressed a little button and eventually a warden opened the door to allow us admission. After passing the doorway on the right hand side was a sort of office, Now the entrance turned into a large courtyard, we crossed this area which led us to a door, the ground floor entrance to the prison. We walked up the passage to a door on the left marked reception in German. My Warden knocked on the door and a voice said 'hierein' in which meant 'enter' which we did. My

warden took off my handcuffs at long last, my wrists were a bit of a bloody mess by now. The German sitting on a chair at his desk, was a higher ranking warder to the one who brought me here, he was known as the Hausevaterie which translated to English means House Father. He was responsible for the official entry of all prospective prisoners. He asked my name, address and religion, roaring at me to stand to attention, which I naturally did, he then spoke to me quite reasonably about my home town, he then asked me to disrobe. When I was naked his demeanour changed completely and he used a few ill-chosen words referring to England, and Churchill particularly. He then told me to have a quick shower. At this intake there were four other prisoners and when we had dried ourselves and were instructed to go to another room to be fitted out with prison clothes. There was no choice whatever. I was given underpants and a shirt which were a reasonable fit, my socks reached just past my heels and trousers that finished just below the knees. The jacket was a very tight fit and my sabots were far too small. I was just told to sort things out with the other prisoners. The only items that I could change to my advantage were my sabots. Thus fitted out I was taken for the usual interview with the prison Governor. He seemed a very reasonable man who told me that I would be put to work and things would go in my favour if I behaved myself: I told him I would. He spoke to me in very good English.

I was then taken to a cell in which were the other four new intakes, they were all French nationals, each with his own story to tell. we were not in this cell long before we were called out for our first working session.

In a different courtyard a lorry had unloaded quite a large amount of coal for heating and cooking purposes. This coal was unloaded alongside a trapdoor through which the coal was shovelled and I was put inside the prison to distribute the coal as it came through the trapdoor. By the time we had finished this detail, we were black with coal dust, our clothes were filthy. This necessitated the return to the shower room and clean clothes. When we had returned to our cell it was time for our evening meal. This consisted of ersatz coffee, a small piece of bread and a piece of German sausage.

You will remember earlier on that I took some sugar and soap with me, I was permitted to take this to my cell. I was now able to have sugar with my coffee and real soap to wash with. It was now lights out. We were awoken at six o'clock the next morning and after breakfast a number of prisoners were let out of their cells to assemble in the centre of the prison on the second floor. There were whispers of Francais?, Francais? As soon as I said 'Non, Anglais from Guernsey' two voices came across to me saying 'we are English also, from Guernsey.' They were called Walter and Norman and they proved to be wonderful friends the whole of the time in

Germany, we only separated when we arrived in England.. I was taken to a workroom which was situated in a courtyard. This room contained electric grinding machines we had to clean the surface of castellated nuts. These were of all sizes and cleaning the small nuts was very painful because our finger ends often touched the emery wheel which took off a layer of skin but you just had to carry one. Our foreman was also a prisoner. He was quite reasonable and caused no problems. On the left hand side of the room was an arch partitioned off with wire. It contained a large number of metal chamber pots, why, I shall never know. There were six of us working these machines, one particular fellow suffered with epilepsy, he was restrained by the foreman and put in the area with the chamber pots until he returned to normal. Our room was above a carpenter workroom. To get to our room we had to climb stairs. With each machine was a strong electric light so we were able to see our work very clearly. Some engineering workers had connected the electrics to a light at the bottom of the stairs so that when our warder came up the stairs the light by one of the machines would flicker. This was of great advantage to us as you will appreciate. It was wonderful to have a Guernsey man to talk to. I knew Walter, but I had never met Norman, we used to talk about our times in Guernsey. Walter at one time was a bus driver and Norman worked for the Guernsey Press.

At twelve o'clock the warder took us to our cells for our midday meal. I found that I had been given a single cell, known as A238 which was cell no

38 on A Block, on the second story, I had hardly entered my cell when the meal was brought to the cell door which was unlocked by our warder. I presented my bowl to the prisoner who was on duty to serve the soup, which was in a large urn which at the beginning was extremely heavy. Each prisoner had two ladles full, and if any soup was left over it meant that they started at No 1 again. On each door was a card marked 'nachtsleyer' that told the warder where to start with a second round of soup if any was left over. I never received a second helping so I asked the warder 'why?' He did not answer, I said 'is it because I'm British?' He refused to reply but simply closed the door. His name was Warder Ritting and he spoke English quite well. His duty was sometime taken over by Warder Hildebran, we got on quite well until he found out that I was English. Then I was scum.

To refer to my cell, A2 38, it was reasonably large with a bed which folded up against the wall when not in use, a table and chair, a small cupboard, in which you kept your dish, a mug and a knife and fork which was made of aluminium. To the right of the door as you entered was a large container which you used as a toilet.

My lunch that day was a soup made with sauerkraut which to me was so unappetizing that I threw it into my toilet. On returning to work Norman asked me how I had enjoyed my soup, I told him it was terrible and that I had thrown it away. He said "you'll soon get used to it. In the meantime

bring it out to me in your mug.” I did this for a very short while but hunger made me eat anything I was given, with the exception of Caraway Seeds. The prison was shaped like a cross and four storeys high with four courtyards. Our courtyard held the pig sties, the carpenters and above ourselves. Opposite was a covered area containing all types of scrap, paper, metal, clothing, all to be sorted by the prisoners, sometimes outside and sometimes in their cells. In the centre of the courtyard was a Frenchman who was heavily tattooed whose job was to sort out large pieces of electric cable which was blown up by consistent bombing and separate the various strands of the cables. The lead was melted by a huge fire, this took place in any weather except of course, heavy rain. In Germany at this time nothing was wasted. Beyond this area was the entrance to the cookhouse and on the right hand side was the bakery and an outside toilet which was exactly opposite the bakery, the toilet had no door so the bakers, if they were looking through their windows, could see you performing! The window frames were glazed with narrow pieces of glass, about three inches wide and fitted vertically. A piece of this glass was very cunningly cut about six inches in length, when removed they could pass out bread for anyone with cigarettes. The chief baker was a prisoner named Maurice who often gave me a piece of bread even though I had no cigarettes to give him.

To return to the prison itself, the chief warder, who looked very smart in his uniform, had his office in the exact centre of the prison from which he could see the whole interior of the prison. He would press a button for a bell to ring and a warder would appear ready for instruction. Each arm of the prison had a warder, fourteen in all, they all did shift work, the night staff was about four warders.

Day in, day out, we would be at work with very little news. Sometimes Frenchmen working outside the prison would have some news which eventually reached us. There was the occasional air raid warning but the bombing was not in our area.

The prison was exceptionally clean, had its rules which were a bit severe. If you behaved yourself you were simply ignored by the warders, but if you misbehaved in any way punishment was swift. Arrest cell, wooden bed, bread and water for three days. Each morning we passed these cells, they were always occupied, one morning as we left the prison for our workroom, outside on the left was a greasy mound with a large tree. I recognised three Guernsey men, Frank, Cyril and Ernie, they had been sent to our prison to dig an air raid shelter for the benefit. Little could be said because their warder was always with them.

We went back to our machines and started work. We had a quota each day which we had to achieve, if we didn't reach our quota you were treated as a saboteur which meant at least three days in the arrest cells which was not pleasant. One thing that really annoyed us was

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saboteur which meant at least three days in the arrest cells which was not pleasant. One thing that really annoyed us was

Turning right at the top of the stairs was another room

In this room two Frenchmen were making the covering for the German?...., one was very short and stout, the other was a cripple, tall and very slim, they received a ration of cigarettes but we did not in spite of asking our warder who was named Schroder, he said the firm they worked for allowed them so many cigarettes per week but ours did not. We worked for a firm called Gelbruck Heino from Offenbach. At six o'clock we returned to our cells, then came the evening meal all the cells were now full those prisoners working for outside factories, having finished, we lowered our bed and went to sleep. I slept very well and was loathe to get up at 6 o'clock in the morning. Another day for work, at lunch time the prisoners who served the soup, left their empty cans at the assembly area, when the bell rang, our door was opened for us to leave for work, if you were quick enough, you assembled before the soup came so you were able to take the urn back to the cookhouse and were able to scrape the bottom of the urn, you always kept your spoon in case you couldn't. One of the cooks was Stephen, he was from Lithuania, he always put a mug of soup behind the door for me on my way to work, always had a mug to exchange for next time. The time was approaching April, the air was getting warmer, and at times we took off our coat and shirts. Very little happened and we finished our work at 1pm each Saturday. We had our lunch and afterwards we went for our weekly shower. This was in a large cell comprising four showers. A barber was there to give everyone a haircut. If the warder named?..... was in charge, he was a devil. He had a cruel disposition he would regulate the flow and the heat of the

water as you would enter the shower the warder, Hildabrand, would alter the flow to cold, then suddenly he would turn on to very hot.. We jumped out of the shower if he was near you he would hit you in the kidneys. When this was completed we went to the housevater to change our dirty clothes. This time we were now allowed to choose our own. They thought I was a German because I could speak the language, and said I would be given a pair of slippers which I could wear ...?.. my feet in my sabot, to me, this was quite a change of heart by the warder. We then went back to our cells to await our evening meal, the rest of the day, Sunday, we were all in our cells for the full day. This day was very monotonous since I cleaned my floor, scrubbed my table had a little light exercise.

On my wall scraped my families names and crossed off the days on the wall beside my cupboard. The only way I could see through the window to let me look down on courtyard which was used for prisoners taking their daily walk was

There was no prison dress or uniform, the clothing we wore was very nondescript. These clothes were made of patches, blue being the predominant colour. Some of these trousers had little pockets sewn on the inside leg, this enabled prisoners to bring in various vegetables such as leeks etc, these were the agricultural workers, they were hardly ever found out. Quite frequently the guards would make a search and sometimes they were reported, sometimes not.

I can remember one day during a spot search the warder found an earphone which had been turned into a crystal set. The warder, who was one of the most

reasonable of the bunch, simply threw the earphone against the wall where it was shattered to pieces, nothing more was done, but the prisoners had a quick ticking off. Sometimes on our way to work we would pass a large door which separated our courtyard with the main entry. Nothing particular about this you would think but sometimes we would hear very odd noises. On making enquiries of another inmate, I was told that that was the guillotine in operation and the noise we heard was the blade doing the chopping. As we left our cells to work we would pass cells in a certain block C2. We would see clothes neatly packed outside certain cells, we then realized that the inmate was due for the guillotine. We once found ourselves down by these doors, peeping through a slit in the door we could see two warders with a prisoner dressed in a white robe, no handcuffs, being led toward the guillotine room, I would imagine that he was well drugged, we saw him disappear and shortly heard the guillotine knife drop. This was a daily routine, it would appear that these condemned prisoners could not be dispatched at their own prisons because of the advance of the allies. They were moved back to the nearest prison that could accommodate them. The two French drivers of the prison truck would take these bodies and ...?..... away from the prison, where, I never did find out.

Working at my machine one day I had the misfortune to get a steel splinter in my left eye, I explained my problem to my warder who said not to worry, and that my eye would soon be clear. All night I suffered and in the morning reported sick, but no help was offered me. As soon as I arrived at work, my warder took me to the prison infirmary. While waiting to see the doctors a prisoner working in the infirmary put drops in my eye and immediately I felt relief. Unfortunately when I

was able to see the doctor the deadening had worn off. By this time I got to see him my eye was in great pain. He came towards me with an arm extended and spoke to me in English. I thought he wanted to shake hands, I didn't know what gave me that idea, but I received a terrific punch in the chest almost knocking me to the ground. He examined my eye with the lid closed, I told him that the deadening had worn off but to no avail. It was with great difficulty that he removed the splinter and great pain for my eye. It took about three days to recover, during which time I was made to work. The infirmary by the way was situated above the ...?.. entrance in the main courtyards. In front was a veranda which made it look most imposing.

In the morning, after the roll, call prisoners would gather to explain their reason for not going to work but no matter what your problem was you would be given an aspirin. One inmate had had toothache due to a decaying tooth, the tooth should have been extracted, but he like others had to make do with an aspirin. The worst case I saw was a fellow who complained about his haemorrhoids. He was told to drop his trousers, on exposing his rear portion you could see the haemorrhoids far beyond his body, the remedy for this was one aspirin, a kick in his haemorrhoids and being sent back to his cell. The pain was so great that he yelled on his way back to his cell. It was very unfortunate for him because his was a sitting down job making and fitting buckles to straps.

Fortunately for me, I did not suffer the way others did, with the exception of the problem with my eye, although one day when roll call sounded, I remained in bed, I felt too rotten to go to work. I had been unable to eat the previous day's meals. The warder came to get to the assembly point. I explained to the chief

warder that I felt quite ill. my warder butted in to tell the chief that I had a ...?..... on my table, the reply to my effort was "you are fit enough for work". Half way through the morning I almost collapsed, I lay on the floor awaiting the arrival of my warder, when he saw me on the floor he said I must go back to my cell, I told him that the chief warder had said that I had to go to work, his reply was I will take you back to your cell and I'll talk to the chief warder, which he did. I was allowed to remain in my cell for three days. without an aspirin!! The days passed by, very monotonously at times with little to talk about.

One day my warder took me to a downstairs workroom, there were about six machines in operation. They were machines for cutting the castellations. in nuts. All sizes of nuts were processed, you had to attain a quota, if not – trouble. I was on night shift which meant I was given an extra meal at midnight.. It was always soup, it varied slightly, carrot soup, sauerkraut soup, bread soup and sometimes a meat soup without meat. The other soup was made with plums or peaches. When we had it for our midnight meals it was always sour, but we still had to eat it.

One Friday night in August, Frankfurt was very heavily bombed, it was one big fire, it could be seen for miles. Here in Preungesthem on the outskirts of the city. I could read a book. Almost opposite my cell was the prison library, I always had difficulty on getting of book. the first one I had was by W H Thackeray it was called Vanity Fair, The second one was called 'The Archimandrake??. There were very few English books in the library, which was rational enough I suppose. A German prisoner was in charge of he library, but you could only use it if a warder condescended to take you. My third and last book was a book of pictures of the

USA. It made me think of the Americans living a life of luxury while Europe was starving. On entering the prison for our midday meal, I was beckoned to a cell by a prisoner name Bos. It was a punishable offence to be found in a cell other than your own. This fellow Bos used to repair radios for the warders, and he tuned in to America, and we heard Grace More singing 'One Night of Love' which almost brought tears to my eyes. It was very nice to get the English news sometimes from him.

On 'C' Block which was the workers entrance, occasionally we would see an inmate giving us a wave. I did not know him, so I asked Walter who he was, and he told me that the prisoner was Cannon Cotin ?.... from Jersey In passing his cell one day he beckoned me over to him. He explained that he had served his sentence and was due to be transported to an internment camp, he was overjoyed. I shook hands with him, wished him good luck and went to my cell. The unfortunate part of this was that he never survived. This happened to quite a few Jerseymen, they never made it. I knew them all by name at the time but, after fifty years, I am unable to remember their names now.

Sometimes I would feel sad and a little homesick. I would sing my London songs 'Maybe It's Because I'm a Londoner', 'Old Father Thames', 'My Old Man'. This did give me a feeling of confidence, but could not be heard above the noise of the machines working. I was the only English-speaking prisoner to speak our language: the others spoke French or Dutch.

Sometimes a lorry would arrive with coal for the bakery and the kitchen. We would leave our machinery and unload the lorry to be given a quarter of a German loaf. The weight of the sacks was about a hundredweight which we managed without difficulty. Other times a bigger lorry would arrive with sacks of flour each sack weighed 100 kilos, these were somewhat heavy to lift considering the meagre meals, but meant $\frac{3}{4}$ of a German loaf.

The base of the lorry was fairly high; the sacks simply fell on your shoulder and back. The temptation of carrying these sacks was the thought of receiving the bread, these German loaves were quite large, were brown, and had a much different texture to what we were accustomed to the loaf that we made in Guernsey.

My first attempt at carrying a sack ended in disaster. I managed to get the sack in the correct position climbed the three steps into the bakery, I was then directed up a flight of steps about twelve in all, this was too much for me. Half way up the steps I simply collapsed with the sack of flour on top of me. Others had to get the sack off me and take it up to the first floor, one of the bakers said to me, look, hide behind the sacks on the ground floor, next time just carry one sack downstairs and stay put. In future that is exactly what I did and was given my piece of bread.

I remember one instance when I brushed off the flour on my coat, the warden refused to give me my piece of bread. Everyone else was covered in flour and that taught me a lesson for the future.

Outside, in the roof guttering was a birds nest I kept an eye on it until the chicks and mother had flown away, I used to say to myself, how wonderful to be free.

The latest news was that Walter had served his time. He told Norman and I that he was being sent to an internment camp for the duration of the war. Later when we did catch up with him he said he had been sent to a military prison instead, he suffered quite a bit.

The air raid siren was going off quite a lot lately, getting closer to our prison.

One night, Friday it was, about two o'clock in the morning, full alarm sounded. A warder came to unlock our door and take us to shelter and we were just making an entry into the prison when a bomb struck our workroom, it was blown to pieces. We were very lucky to escape with our lives, fortunately nobody was injured. We were taken back to our cells until the morning. Next morning we were taken down to our workroom, alas, just rubble. We were told to make a long bench so that the rubble could be sorted out. We had to go through all this mess to find every bolt, then sort out the different sizes. This took us about three weeks. Fortunately the outer wall of the prison had not been breached. This happened in August when it was almost too warm. I lost my jacket in the explosion and when I asked for another one I was greeted with quite a amount of abuse that I wished that I had not asked. Every scrap of dirt had to be sieved which was a very monotonous job. The clearing of the debris was followed by the erection of new workrooms. I now had to be found something else to do. I was told to clean the passage way of A Block which consisted of sweeping the corridor and polishing a leather carpet strip, also helping in the delivery of soup

during meal times. The Chief Warder would ring his bell and call but 'Essenhaben', which means those who had to fetch the soup, paraded by his office to await for a warder to appear to take them to the kitchen.

There is something I should have mentioned earlier that on Block A. was a cell with five Canadian airmen awaiting transport to a POW camp. They were provided with a food issue exactly half of what we were getting which for them would be a starvation diet, they were allowed outside each day for about ten minutes, not walking, but at the double.

While our workrooms were being rebuilt I was put to cleaning the block and serving meals, when on my knees cleaning the leather strip I stopped as long as I dare talking to them. They had been shot down a few days earlier they all came from Canada. I asked them for one of their names, and their address in Canada so that I could inform high authority when I would eventually be released? .

The system used by the warders was to open up three or four cell doors, by the time you made the third door, he would retrace his steps but when we arrived at the cell with the five Canadians, he would wait to see that I served them half portions. They appeared to be fairly fit, their treatment had not yet affected them.

I should have mentioned earlier how I made a friend of a young French lad named Armand who came from a little town near Rettreil ? in Northern France. He arrived a week or so after me. He had been involved in killing a German soldier with two other Frenchmen, they were sentenced to death, but in view of Armand's

age he had a long prison sentence meted out to him. He would laugh when his sentence was mentioned, he always said that this war would be over long before he had served his time. He was a very cheerful individual, making the best of all situations.

One morning he turned up for work, he worked a machine similar to mine, he was in agony with a boil on his left arm near the elbow. He had reported sick, and had his Aspirin like everyone else. You will remember that I was allowed to keep my soap and a little sugar. My father had always impressed upon me that making a pomade of soap and sugar in equal parts would have a quick affect on the boil, relieving the pain fairly quick. I made this pomade for Armand during my midday meal in my cell, and gave it to him on our return to work. I was his friend, we used to correspond after the war. Unfortunately Armand passed away, he was not yet middle aged. He had married and had children, I cannot remember how many.

The erection of the new work building was almost complete. It was not long before I was back on a machine, they were old machines always giving trouble. The machine had a jaw into which a nut would be fitted, it could take any sized nut. The jaw would be locked tight then a lever would be moved by the right hand and this allowed a cutting wheel to engage the nut, cutting into it each side. This formed the castellation. These cutting wheels did not last very long before they needed resharpening. There was always a flow of liquid running over the nut to keep the entire process cool, in Germany it was called bohroel, I believe in English it was called mistic or mystic. The foreman from Gebrude Heyne for

whom we worked did not attend any more, his place was taken by a prisoner named Adolph Muelber, he was now responsible for looking after the machinery. To each batch of nuts was a docket so when eventually using the nut if anything was wrong with the nut like problem could be traced right back to the cutter. The small nuts were used in aircraft engines, in vital spots like the carburettor, what I did sometimes was to cut more out of the groove of the nut, sometimes less, hoping that my attempt would upset 'the works' and the plane might even crash, if this did happen I would never know. After the castellation of these nuts, they were sent upstairs to Walter and Norman's workroom for the edges of the nuts to be cleaned on the emery wheel.

As soon as I arrived back in England I mentioned the plight of the Canadians when I returned to Guernsey. I received a letter from the Judge Advocate Gesselal that they had all survived which was great news.

Back in June, we had heard through the pipeline that the allies had landed in Normandy. This we took with a piece of salt because so many items of news had proved false, later on, evidence proved this news was correct. The French worker reckoned that the war would be over before Christmas 1944.

There was a lot of air bombardment in our area mainly the city of Frankfurt, the suburbs were quite quiet.

The next news we heard was that Bar la Duc and Calmar had been overrun by the allies.

In November we had our first light fall of snow which was apparently was very early.

The cold weather had now reached us, and the only water pipe on the courtyard, the one that we used, was frozen.

We used a small amount of bohroil in a bucket then filled it with water to cool the cutting wheel on our machines. The warder explained to us that we would have to go and get the water from next door when the pigs were kept. In this pig House was a few hundredweight of potatoes for pig food. This was a golden opportunity for whoever went to fetch the water would put some potatoes in the bucket and bring them to our workroom. There they would be placed in the embers of our fires to cook. So many workers went for water every day that the pigman noticed that his pile of potatoes was being reduced.

He mentioned to our warder what was happening. The warder detailed me, and me only to get the bucket of water, and, above all, only when it was necessary. I did help myself to potatoes but it amounted to one twice a day. I was expected to share with the other workers.

Christmas was now approaching. The allies were not advancing as quickly as we expected so the Frenchmen were not correct in assuming that the war would be over by Christmas. We now had a winter in front of us, a very cold winter with temperatures well below freezing. Fortunately it was a dry cold not at all like the snow we have in Guernsey. Happily we seldom have snow.

It's Christmas Eve, we've finished work early not for our benefit but so that the warders can have a reasonable Christmas holiday. We are now back in our cells

awaiting our midday meal, after which we queued for a shower. Someone is talking in the queue and has been noticed by the head warder, he leaves his office, comes down to where we are all waiting, goes to the prisoner who was talking, pushed him face against the wall and kept punching the back of his head, drawing blood from his forehead. When finished the warder went back to his office the prisoner was reeling with pain. The warder's name was Eisenkopf, his official name in German and to which he was referred to by everybody was Hauptwachtmeister Eisenkopf, he was one to be avoided at any cost. I once had approached him with regard to a letter which was in my jacket pocket housed with the rest of my clothes. I walked through a narrow walkway to his office. I stood at attention and took off my cap, which I always had to wear. I asked him if I could have the assistance of a German prisoner named Johan to interpret for me, I had to ask him in German because my knowledge was very poor, this was not quite true but I had to be sure he understood. He told me to get this man which I did, he was easy to find because all day he would be cleaning inside the prison. I found him and told him exactly what I wanted him to do and that the chief had given me his permission. I told this Johan exactly word for word in English he then translated to the chief, it was to have access to a letter with my belongings which was given to me by the German War Court at my trial, could I please have this letter to be able to show the prison governor whom I met when I first entered the prison. He asked what the letter contained, I said it made provision for me to apply for a reduction of my sentence if I had behaved myself in every way. I said that I had caused no trouble in the nine months that I had been imprisoned his reply was 'Go back to your cell' he would not even permit me to speak to the Governor. I often did see the governor, but you dare not approach him without

going through the normal channels, very similar to army regulations. All hope of an early release had faded, I realised that I would have to complete the full term. Never mind I thought to myself, the war cannot last for very much longer. Up to now my health had been pretty good. I was a little thinner than normal, but under the circumstances that was expected.

Well, it's Christmas day tomorrow, in the assembly area was a Christmas Tree, not a large one, but quite big enough for you to realize the time of year it was. There were no gifts on the tree, but it had fairy lights and in the background somewhere came the sound of Christmas Carols. The warders seemed to realize that it was Christmas. They seemed a little more friendly, you know having considered what time of the year it was.

The great day has arrived. We were woken at the same time as usual, our breakfast was brought to us, a mug of ersatz Coffee and a larger piece of bread than usual. Our lunch was soup as usual but with four potatoes, which had been boiled. These were in a net, which was made easier to distribute. For our evening meal there was a larger piece of bread than usual. German sausage and, believe it or not, a piece of plain cake. This was a repetition of what we received in April, Hitler's Birthday. This was most unexpected but very welcome, and overcome the boredom of being in a cell on your own. The cells were never occupied by two prisoners, either one or three, sometimes more. Next day it was back to normal at our machines. We were now looking forward to the New Year, hoping that it would soon see the end of the war. Well, as we now know we had another four months to wait.

A few days into January, Adolph Mueler who was in charge of our workroom, called me over to tell me that he was leaving tomorrow, not that he had served his time, but he had been called up to join the Luftwaffe. His age? 68. I thought that's a very good omen, Germany must be getting short of men.

His leaving was no advantage to me because my warder put me in charge of the whole workroom which consisted of French and Dutch prisoners. They thought that his was a good idea, because being an ally I would be able to ease their labours. I did my best for them, there was no animosity between us at all.

We are now approaching March, and it was during this month that leaflets were dropped by the allies and signed by General Eisenhower. They said that bombing was to be imminent and that the death or injury of any of the allies in prisons or in camps would be responsibility of our German masters who would face severe punishment after the war.

Two or three days after these leaflets had been dropped we were removed from our work room into the prison church. Our belongings were given to us and we were told we were to leave prison at once. I thought that it would be a good idea to change into my civilian clothes. Many others did not change their clothes including Norman. The walk to the railway seemed to take quite a while. We had to negotiate an area which was reduced to rubble, there were a few ruins and just a small pathway in centre of each street, I had never seen the result of continual bombing on such a large scale. A few people were living in these ruins and smoke was wending its way slowly upwards. The survivors were attempting

to light fires to be able to cook. It made me feel very sorry for the average German for at this time I had not really realized that towns in England had suffered just as much, perhaps more. We crossed over a bridge and finally reached the railway station. We were directed to the railway sidings where, ahead of us, we could see covered railway wagons. We were directed to these wagons and told to get in them. We were pushed into it until it was crammed full with only room for standing. Being the last one in I was near the door which was then slammed closed and was locked. Being by the door I did have a little more air than the others because the doors did not fit together very well. It was quite pitch dark in the wagon and prisoners were calling out different names to find out if any of their friends were there. It was through this way that I found out that Armand was with us. How everybody passed the first night standing up was unknown to us, this was the first of four nights. In the morning I said 'Bon jour Armand' but received no answer from him. One of the prisoners told me that he had escaped during the night. Apparently on one side of the wagon, near the ...?... were some boards which had been used to cover a hole. Armand and three others had knocked these boards away and departed during the night, this did help in giving us a little more room to move. I exchanged a little tobacco I had found in my jacket pocket with a Frenchman for a tin of meat. I was unable to open it but he did, how I will never know. It was really out of this world to have something like a tin of meat to eat in these days. It was rather unfortunate that the meat was rather salty, the thirst I developed I had to endure for another three days. Another occurrence was one of the prisoners came to urinate through the gap on the door, but he missed the gap the result was that my head was covered in urine before I moved. I was like this until the first part of our journey ended. It was a terrible

journey for the next four days, to a point I was able to realize how the Jews travelled to concentration camps far worse than us. After the fourth day, in the evening, we found ourselves at a railway station. It was Bamberg. We were ordered out of the wagon on to the station platform and to go down on our knees. Because I was not correctly behind the man in front of me one of the soldiers hit me quite hard on my right ankle. Apparently there were quite a large number of soldiers awaiting a train to taken them somewhere, they were in a great hurry, then we turned up, blocking the line. Some of the soldiers were all for taking us out of the station, they were told to shut up by the officer in charge. The warders that were with us throughout the journey from Frankfurt, told us to get up and prepare to move. Being nighttime it was very dark and there was no moon.

We then left the station and walked through a siding which seemed to have a mass of rails which were very difficult to walk over in the darkness. We were told that if anyone hung behind or fell over the rails he would immediately be shot.

I was walking very slowly due to my swollen ankle. Norman was great, he helped all the while. Some Frenchmen told us that there were two English prisoners with us and it was at this stage we found Walter and another fellow named Sydney. Now there were four of us to help each other. Singly, I do not think any of us would have survived. We walked for a considerable while. We walked up a street which had an upward incline. I was walking on the right side of the street near the footpath, it was amazing to see the number of prisoners who just stepped out of the column onto the footpath and walked on just a little faster than us. As they were in civilian dress, they were not noticed. I thought better because I knew that if I had been caught I would immediately have been shot.

We continued walking until we reached the prison at Bamberg where we were led into the prison courtyard and told to sit down. We were given a drink but no food, we remained like this until the dawn appeared. We were then led into the prison proper where we were told to strip and leave our clothes in neat piles outside the cell we were to enter. A number of us were pushed in the cell, it had no windows but a small electric light in the ceiling. Suddenly there was a noise like steam escaping, in actual fact we were receiving an indication of some sort of gas which was to dispose our bodies of lice, but we four had no lice. We were then allowed to have a shower then dress ourselves. we were then taken to a large house with a certain number of inmates to each room. To begin with we were put in a large room, in the middle there was a large metal container with a lid, just like an oil barrel, this was for us to use as a toilet. It soon filled, and was not long before it was knocked over spilling urine all over the floor. Fortunately we were well away from this happening. Soon after this happened a certain number of us were taken to a room with a door leading to the street. The door had been removed and concrete blocks were used to fill up the doorway. When finished and before the cement holding the blocks together had hardened one of the prisoners was able to push away the concrete blocks, then he removed three blocks and went out into the road. He was a foreman who supervised the work for us in Frankfurt but unfortunately for him he was soon caught and soon brought back to the room where we were. It was a comfortable room, fairly warm, and there were straw mattresses on the floor in which we lay. The food we were given was reasonably good. I had a satchel on my shoulder, it contained my soap from the days at Frankfurt, someone slashed the strap with a sharp knife. After a

while we were taken to a riding centre. This building had mirrors on the walls and seats on each end rising up to the roof of the building. The floor was filthy dirty with rubble and horse manure. We were given a so called meal of dried bits of boiled parsnips, which was thrown on this filthy floor surface and we had to pick it out from the dirt.

Our warders just looked at us and laughed comparing us to animals. After this we were told to face the sidewall, and sit on our haunches. they were standing behind us warning us that if anyone moved they would be shot. Stefan who was in the kitchen whispered to me to keep still. In Lithuania, where he came from, they did the same thing and ended up by shooting all the prisoners. Little by little we eased our positions and sat down, nothing happened. After a while we turned round facing our warders, again nothing happened. We used opposite sides of the room as a toilet, the place smelt awful. Those prisoners who were about the die would go over to this side by themselves down amongst all this mess, they were ready for the end. We were given no water and nothing to eat. A warder called out that ten people were required to help in farms, assuring them that they would be well fed and looked after. Stefan advised us not to volunteer; he said we would only be taken away to be shot. Ten prisoners came forward to go to do farm work. Later prisoners were invited to go and help to clear the streets which had been bombed. Other offers were made. Each time prisoners were taken away so the number of prisoners in this hellhole was somewhat diminished. We never did find out what happened. Stefan said they were probably shot. After a few more days there we began to move out, just before we moved I swapped my last

amount of tobacco with a Russian for bread, I gobbled down this bread, then the Russian said the tobacco was not strong enough and wanted his food returned.

The stench was horrible to say the least, bodies were piling up on the opposite side to where we were, even the warders stopped out of the building. Eventually to our great joy, the warder came in to say we had to move. The fresh air was wonderful, it made us feel that we had a chance to survive. We were very weak, having been without food for days and we had to walk to the railway sidings to empty goods wagons. These were open, and were not filled with prisoners as the closed ones were. Unfortunately it was extremely cold but I still had my overcoat and Norman had his Macintosh. Walter had very little on to keep him warm.

We boarded these wagons in Bamberg and were due to go the Straubing, I believe however that at one time we did get on the wrong line and went into Austria by mistake. That gave us another day in the wagon. There was a long seat on one side of the train, I managed to get behind the legs of those sitting on it and that gave me the advantage of being able to lie down full length, but seeing all those legs of those sitting on the seat made me feel too closed in, sort of claustrophobic if you like. I did not stay there for long. With us was Sydney who had joined us earlier on with Walter. He was sitting on the seat blue with the cold and extremely thin. On we went very slowly. There was an elderly prisoner there and he was suffering bad diarrhoea. All one could do was to prop him up on top of the wagon by two prisoners and let nature do the rest. No paper of any sort was available; you can imagine his predicament.

We came to a halt on the next day for quite a while because allied aircraft were flying overhead. Our engine had left us, here was time now for every prisoner to obey the calls of nature. There was farm nearby so our warder detailed one of us to go to the farm to get some milk for him, the lucky fellow was able to get a drink of water for himself. From the floor of the wagon to the ground is quite a height, I managed to get in because I am fairly tall, Norman who was shorter had great difficulty in getting into the wagon. The Warder went forward and pulled him in, but to Norman's dismay the buttons of his raincoat were torn off. He waved his hands and swore in English at the warder who in turn threatened to do him bodily harm. I spoke to the warder and told him politely to be very careful what he did, because Norman was English and so was I, also that the war would soon be over. He said he was sorry and gave us a little of his tobacco to roll a cigarette and tried to impress upon us that he wasn't really a German. He was French and lived in Alsace and when the Germans took over they made him join the German Army. We sort of had him granting us favours until the end of our journey by train, which ended at Straubing. Well here we are arriving at the prison in Straubing it seemed quite a bit larger than the prison at Frankfurt.

As we approached the prison two large doors were opened and our complete train went into the prison compound. We were told to get out of the wagons and form a queue, this we did at the same time wondering what was about to happen.

We were given a piece of bread each, not very large and were told to dip it in a bath as we passed. In the bath was a reddish coloured water, it was a container of liquid jam that had been poured into this bath of water, no goodness in it at all, it

might as well have been water except for the taste. We were talking amongst ourselves in English when a SS Guard caught two of us by the collar and just pushed us back in the queue to get a second helping. All this from a SS person.

From the compound we were taken into the prison proper to have a shower. It was the quickest shower I have ever had. I just got myself wet then it was out helped by a piece of wood to my backside. No towel to dry myself with, "just dress" I was told. I notice that my overcoat, which had a fur lining, was missing. We were then asked what our sentence was for, some said political, and were ushered away, Sydney and Walter said political, I don't know why. When asked I said stealing and so did Norman, he followed what I had said. We were taken to a different area to the politicals. I never saw Sydney again, sadly. He never returned to Guernsey, but Walter was more fortunate. We were put five to a cell in our block. Most of the cells on this block were for the workers who worked outside the prison. In our cell were Norman and I, a German Baker, a Veterinary surgeon from Czechoslovakia, and a nondescript Pole whose socks were literally moving with lice. After a day we found we had lice in the armpits and crutch and each morning we would try and delouse ourselves. There was one bed, Norman and I used it, and we slept head to toe. Unfortunately, me being tall, my feet were almost in Norman's face, he used to get mad with me. Inside the door on the left was the toilet, a proper toilet which automatically flushed itself when the cover was put down.

The warder came to our cell and asked for two men to get the soup for our block. He took us down to a part of the prison which housed the kitchens, it seemed

quite a way from our cell. We had to take a large urn full of soup each, back to our cell. A strap went round our neck, which took all the weight of the urn, and in walking we had to stir the soup to prevent it spilling. The system was the same as Frankfurt, opening three or four doors at a time, then closing the doors after the soup had been served. This gave us a chance to fill every receptacle that was in the cell, soup bowl, mugs. Whilst we were in this prison we did quite well. The German baker with us was always sucking his pipe with tobacco in the bowl, I was lucky to have my comb with me, it was a good comb, it was made of celluloid. In my pocket, amongst the dust, I found a flint which came from a cigarette lighter. What we did was to scrape the comb with the knife in our cell cupboard, into little pieces in some tissue paper, I don't know where this came from, however we scraped the flint with the knife alongside the comb filings and they immediately caught fire which lighted the tissue paper. We then made a newspaper spill with which we were able to light our cigarettes and the German's pipe. We passed the cigarette around for everyone to have a 'puff', but we declined to 'suck' at the pipes.

I was able to look out of the window, much greenery, fields etc but only two large buildings were in sight. On the left a large military barracks and on the right was a brickworks. One day the American Air Force came over our area on a bombing mission, they missed the barracks and hit the brickworks. We found that the RAF night bombers were far more accurate than the USAF bombing in the daytime.

Our time in Straubing was soon to be terminated; we were to go on a long march, about 4,500 prisoners. We were told to prepare for leaving the prison and to take a blanket with us, which we did.

We started out early that morning and walked all day, resting on two occasions only. The column was really stretched out because of the stragglers in the rear. To bring us into a close column once again, as we were when we first started off, the warders in front turned us down the lane, so that everyone who walked the lane were eventually caught up with the stragglers. Those in front had a little time to rest but the moment the stragglers arrived it was a case of about turn. The stragglers then became the leaders of the column until, that is, the original leaders passed them. At this stage we were all advised that in future the stragglers would be shot. Still a few fell behind and we heard rifle shots which warned us to keep ahead. On our journey through the countryside we passed clumps of mangel wurzels and potatoes, the latter I could just not eat hungry as I was. Some of us raided the clumps containing the mangel wurzels, which although edible were so sweet they were bitter to the taste and made us quite thirsty. If we were unfortunate enough to be caught the warders they vented their spite on us with their rifle butts but by good fortune I was not caught.

At one village we passed through some one had placed an oblong bath for us to drink from. Those prisoners without mugs or cans simply put their faces in the water. By the time my turn came the water was filthy, nobody seemed to be worried because we were all so very thirsty, that bath must have been filled many times. A little further on we were passing a house, and a prisoner left the column, ran down a short distance, opened the front door and ran through the hall and out of the back door into the back garden in which was a very large stone. It seemed like granite. He ran to the stone and hid behind it, one of the warders had spotted

him and started firing his rifle. He then told the prisoner to come back to the columns or they would shoot to kill. He obeyed them, coming out from behind the stone and they shot him dead and left him there.

Plodding on towards our first stop at Landshut it was getting dark and raining and we were all soaking wet and cold. The warders led us into an open field and told us to sleep here. What with the rain, wet grass and almost freezing temperatures, who could possibly go to sleep, but with sheer tiredness some of us did.

The next morning we were told to get up and start walking with nothing to eat or drink. Fortunately we passed alongside a stream, I had a good drink of water which tasted so clean and good. On the sides of the stream were huge snails, these were a probable meal for me anyway so I took the shell off one, washed it in the stream and put it in my mouth. It was very chewy but edible so I chewed one or two, it seemed to reduce my hunger. Walk, walk, walk, ones feet seemed to be almost robotic, one foot following the other. We were passing through the countryside which was really beautiful. We saw some young deer and some prisoners thought that if they could catch one they could kill it and eat the raw meat, but in the state we were in that would have been impossible. We now knew our next stop was to 4

After a while we could see Moosburg in the distance. It seemed ever so far away at the pace we were walking. A little farther on we saw a lorry in the distance coming towards us, nothing unusual about this, the lorry was going very slow, sometimes stopping because we were all over the place, and this was not a road, only a lane. The lorry was followed by a German car with a guard, because the

lorry was carrying British POWs. It stopped alongside of me, and hearing voices in English made me talk to them I could not say much except to tell them my nationality, and where we were going. One of them threw me a packet of Player's cigarettes which was most welcome. The problem sadly was to light the cigarettes, only the warders with us had cigarette lighters but tempted with a real cigarette compared to what they had been used to in Germany, they readily obliged. Eventually we reached the outskirts of the town of Moosburg and some of us were told to go through the gates of a farm and sort ourselves out. Norman and I went through the gate first Walter was outside. However he did ask a warder if he could join us, the warder opened the gate and let him through. The owner of the farm must have been told to accept us because he and his family brought out roast potatoes to us and gave us water to drink. It was only one potato, but it was fairly large. What happened to the prisoners outside the farm, I do not know, they were sent off somewhere else.

After our 'light' meal we were told we could sleep on the farm. Entering the barn we found that it housed the local fire engine, here were prisoners already sitting in the front seats, all the spare hay had been used up. We noticed a ...?...ladder lead into an upper loft, Walter said he would climb the ladder to see if there was any hay up in the loft but when his head reached to floor of the loft a boot was aimed at his head. It caught him in the mouth knocking him off the ladder on to the floor narrowly missing the upturned tines of what I call a kicker, it is a machine which is attached to a tractor, the tines turning over the hay. We found out it was three Russian prisoners with whom I had changed my tobacco.

We did manage to find a place to lay down, it was under the fire engine with a small amount of hay. Dawn came, and after being given water to drink, but no food, we assembled for the next stage of our journey to a town named Freising. By now we found the going was very difficult, we were now unable to keep up with the leaders. We drifted further behind, Walter stopped and leaned against the hedge, the moment he was in that position another prisoner attacked him and tried to take off his shoes. The warden chased him away and told us to help Walter with us. Walter pleaded with us to leave him there, he said he could not manage another step. The warden then reminded us that if we left him there he would be shot. It was with a great effort that we got Walter to his feet, one each side of him, and plodded on.

At this stage I can say that if we had not kept together, none of us would have survived. When I was hit on the right ankle by the soldier with the butt of his rifle, Walter and Norman were a great help to me. My ankle was swollen to such a degree that I could only just walk. During that period we were issued with a bowl of so-called soup, neither Norman nor Walter could get it for me, I had to get it myself so with one of them each side of me I managed.

Eventually we arrived at Freising. As at Landshut we had to sleep in a field. We slept under a large tree hoping it would afford us a little shelter, whether it did or not I don't know because it was almost freezing. This meant a day and a night nothing to eat or drink. I still wonder how we survived.

The morning came, we were to assemble, then we were to be off on the next part of our journey. Where were we heading for this time was Dachau. We had to pass just north of Munich to reach our destination. We knew it was a concentration camp but were ignorant of the atrocities that were committed there. We were following a small track alongside a railway line and came across a train, completely burned out. We were not close enough to see if anyone was left on the train.

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The lane converged on to a small tarmac road. We were still in a long column and in the distance was a German Flak battery firing away when suddenly it blew to pieces. An American fighter had attacked this battery with complete success. It flew alongside our column two or three times, its markings clearly visible. On our left on a grass verge was a stationary lorry with a trailer attached to it. This American fighter came along again to machine-gun the lorry and, seeing this was about to happen, we all scrambled in a ditch on the opposite side of the road to the lorry. The lorry and its trailer were blown to pieces; they had been carrying ammunition. Fortunately, as far as I could gather, no prisoners suffered any injury.

We could at times hear heavy gunfire, which meant that the American Army was not far away from us and this gave us renewed spirit at this stage. The warden told us to retrace our steps. We went back through the town of Friesing to a little village called Auisch just east of Moosberg. It was dark at the time and we were told to sort ourselves out and go to sleep. We did not sleep too well because of the noise of the guns, and we were hoping that would soon be freed by the oncoming American troops. The following morning, while it was still dark, we

were ordered to assemble ourselves for the start of another journey, going eastwards. It was at this time we decided to make our escape. We went off quickly in the morning mist to a gateway in the field that led us to a lane. Walter had a very soiled white handkerchief which he had ready to wear if we met any undesirable person. Going down this lane we came to a small farm holding and, seeing the farmer, we told him who we were and could he help us with a little food. He replied that all he had was a few potatoes that he was going to give to his pigs, but we were welcome to them. Actually they were dark in colour and were rotten yet, starving as we were, we were very grateful to him. After a drink of water we went on our way. The potatoes in no way eased our hunger.

Going on a little way we came to a cottage, not large enough to call a house, but it was a fairly large cottage. We decided to knock on the door, which we did, a shortish man came to the door. We told him who we were and he really welcomed us and said 'come in'. We were shown into their living room where he introduced us to his wife and two children. One was a girl about fifteen years of age, the other a boy of about eleven years. He really made us feel at home and told his wife, whom he called Mutti, to prepare us a meal. It was a very plain meal, but did we enjoy it. It was mashed potatoes and fried eggs, as much as we could manage, washed down with a cup of coffee. This man, who was named Andreas Meyer, loaned us his razor to clear our beard and hot water to wash with; after this I felt a different man. Andreas told us he was not a Nazi but a communist. He had a book with the inside pages neatly cut out to a shape which would take a photograph. There was a photograph in it of Lenin. He was quite proud of this. We spent most of the day with the family resting and talking. It

was really wonderful to feel free, but we had to remember that we were still behind enemy lines.

Whilst we were talking there was a knock on the front door. Andreas went to answer it. He opened the door and was confronted by an S.S Officer who told him to prepare room to billet German soldiers that night as his German division was on the retreat. We all held our breath, and were very relieved when the officer left. If this officer had known that these little German farmers were harbouring three escaped prisoners, we would all have been shot out of hand. Andreas was very sorry that he could not let us stay with him; we agreed that we would leave immediately. We left through the door at the rear of the building, we found ourselves in a hollow which was below the river. This was a diversion of the River Isal, which worked the electrical machinery before rejoining the Isar, which eventually joined the Danube. Upon reaching this hollow we met up with a Frenchman who knew a little English, and spoke better German than I could. We found a place in this hollow knowing that we were quite safe from the retreating Germans. We heard them pass us during the night. We learned later that the Germans did not billet anyone in the little village of Aisch. They were in too much of a hurry to get as far as possible from the advancing American forces. As we now felt we were quite safe being in no man's land as it were, we decided to go forward in the direction of the American forces, but we had to cross a bridge. To our dismay we noticed that German soldiers guarding the bridge; they had to destroy the bridge while the Americans were crossing. It was decided that our new companion would approach these two soldiers who were guarding the bridge with a view to us crossing the bridge. They refused, saying that we should be able

to warn the Americans. We no retraced our steps going towards a large house and farm building in the front garden of which were two elderly ladies. We exchanged greetings and told them who we were. They told us to come inside and prepared a meal for us, mashed potatoes and small pieces of fried pork which was most acceptable. We were in the process of talking after the meal when we heard the sound of machine gun firing. Our host did not know what was happening and thought that for everyone's safety we should hide in the barns. We entered the barn and climbed up a ladder to the top floor and made our way through the hay to the back of the barn, separating the hay a little so that we could see as far as the ladder. We were in the barn for about an hour, then suddenly we heard a lot of shouting outside the barn and heard keys going into the lock. Our first thought was that Germans were outside and were coming in. We had visions of hay forks being poked into the hay. We were preparing ourselves for this possibility when the door was opened and we heard an American saying to us "you can come down now, you are quite safe now". We made our way towards the ladder then went down it. Waiting for us was an American Officer and two men; we shook hands and thanked them for freeing us. The officer offered us a Chesterfield cigarette, which we gladly accepted. The moment I took a good puff of it I felt as if I was going to collapse not having a real cigarette since I parted from Guernsey. We were taken into the house and met the family Kathi, Anna and Barbara Winkler. They had a half brother in the German forces but they had not heard from him for quite a while, so they presumed he had died on the Russian front. The good food we had given us proved too rich for my stomach anyway, giving me dysentery. We all slept in the lounge on the settee and I was well looked after by Barbara who seemed to be the maid to the other two sisters. I

was constantly using the bucket by the settee. It was always emptied by Barbara. She also insisted on washing and tending to our feet which were very sore and raw in places. She also said that arrowroot would have been very useful to help my dysentery. She had a small radio which we were able to use to receive the BBC. Upstairs housed a man and his wife also a single woman. In the downstairs room in the front of the house was a woman with two children. Her husband was fighting on the eastern front and she was worried because in the room on the opposite side of the hall were four or five American soldiers who were billeted there. They tried to force their way into the woman's room but she kept the door locked. She told this to me, I replied if they try again bang on the wall, I will hear you and come to your aid. I did not realize at the time that I was not in a fit state to help her or myself so it was fortunate that she was not disturbed.

The Winkler family were strict Catholics and really put themselves out to help us. We were unable to help them in any way. The soldiers that were billeted with us suddenly left and a fresh lot came in. They appeared to be very strict, they took me to search the house. I don't know what they expected to find. We went upstairs they just opened the door without knocking. We found a man and his wife in bed, it was early morning and they had not yet dressed. As I could speak some German, the American Officer asked me to interpret for him, which I did. Apparently the husband was a journalist, he produced a typewriter and he explained that he was a war correspondent and he had been caught up the wrong side of the lines. After the room was thoroughly searched and nothing found, two soldiers took him away. The next room we entered was occupied by a middle-aged lady, good looking and well dressed. Nothing was found in her room. We

now came to the room with the woman with her two children. After looking through the room, nothing was found: what they were looking for I'll never know. Back in the Winkler room was a coal stove, which projected into the room for about three feet, plus a smoke pipe which went through the wall to the chimney. This was ideal heating for the winter and it was also used for cooking. They made their own bread, quite large loaves, about twelve inches diameter, although not made with white flour. To us it tasted very nice, better than the bread we had in prison (*)

After staying with them for a few more days we decided it was time for us to move on; my health had improved. We thanked the sisters from our hearts, no one could have been kinder, I believe they were sorry to let us part. However, we did write a note 'to whom it may concern' as to who we were and what the sisters had done for us, and that if they could be helped in any way, it would be greatly appreciated by us. This we had already done for Andreas, Meyer and his family.

We said goodbye to them and walked over to the bridge which had not been destroyed, we passed advancing soldiers who were resting on the way. We stopped to talk to them, telling them how grateful we were for our release. We also mentioned that we had lost two nights sleep because of the noise of heavy vehicles. One soldier told us that that was the Third Command division under General Patton passing through the village: it took three days and nights apparently. We were walking towards Moosberg, and turned into a small lane to rest. There was a short row of houses and in the front garden of one were some

young boys playing. When they saw us they started to throw stones; in my best German I told them what we would do if they continued, they soon stopped.

Getting back on the main road again, we hitched a ride of one of the American lorries going back to base. We cadged a lift from them to their compound where, on asking for instructions, we were advised to go to the POW Camp Stalag 7A. This we did and at the entrance we met a POW who introduced himself as Colonel Cantan. He was a very nice man and we told him the predicament we were in. When he knew we were from Guernsey and that we had been in the RSM in the thirties he was very pleased to tell us that there were two other prisoners in this Stalag: Lieutenant D Mullholland and Lieutenant B Porfins. He regretted that he was not allowed to let us in to the inner perimeter; he told us that when the Americans overran the POW Camp all hell was let loose. The inmates were composed of various nationals and when let loose they simply wrecked part of the town so orders were to keep them in the inner perimeter under a heavy guard. He said he would try and make contact with the two Guernsey officers. He could only find Lt Mullholland. It was most fortunate that he came to see us because he was our platoon commander when we were in the RGM. He did not recognise us because we were so very thin but as soon as we explained who we were and made reference to other officers by name RGM and CSM he knew that we were genuine. We chatted for quite a while, talking about Guernsey and how we fared during the occupation. He said he would go and type a letter explaining who we were and that we were known to him in the pre war days and asked that any reader of this letter should help us to get back to Guernsey.

He was so pleased the war was over because he was taken prisoner early in the war. Whilst he could not help us in his present position, he suggested that we go and see the town mayor which was an American Captain. We shook hands and left him to find the town mayor: we eventually found him. Outside the house where he had his office was a guard, a big individual, black in colour. He would not let us go in to see the town mayor and he threatened us with his revolver. We showed him the letter we had from Lt Mullholland but to no avail. It was while we were arguing with this guard that a French officer who was going to see the town mayor asked what the trouble was. We gave him our explanation of what was happening, and showed him our letter for Lt Mullholland. That did the trick and the officer said he would be responsible for us. The guard relented and we went in to see the mayor. He made us very welcome and offered us tea, white bread and cherry jam, this we were very grateful for. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon and he was concerned about where we were to stay. He looked at a list of possible places where we could stay and found a suitable house not far away. It was a cobblers shop, closed of course, and it was occupied by one Joseph Gebhardt and his wife who was an epileptic. Also living with them was a lady whose address was Munich, here to avoid the bombing.

The town mayor gave us some American Army 'K' rations, and told us to keep in touch with him if we need anything at all, he also gave us a letter to show this German family that they had to give us accommodation.

On our way to our new abode, we had occasion to pass through a square in the centre of which were a pile of pistols, rifles, swords, cameras. The population of

Moosburg were made to give up all weapons of any kind; the Germans did the same just a few days after their occupation of Guernsey.

On reaching the house we knocked on the door and the lady from Munich answered our knock. We showed her the letter the town mayor had given us, she let us in and introduced us to the owners, Joseph and Frau Gebhardt. They must have been in their middle sixties; they were very slow in their movements. We found them very amenable, and they were very good to us. They showed us the room where we were to sleep where there were only two beds available, so one of us would have to sleep on the floor. We had our meals with them, sharing the food we had, when they made tea for us they saved our tea and boiled it up to use again.

Up to now, there was no sign of us returning home. We did realize that we would have to get to England first, but how? In the meantime we thought we would go back to the little village of Aisch and visit the two families that did so much for us. Quite close by was a bridge leading to the village, not the one that we had crossed previously, this one had been blown up. Despite the difficulty of crossing it people were using it and it was almost a direct route to Aisch. First we called on Andreas, Mayer and his family. They were delighted to see us again, but they had some bad news for us, which we thought was terrible when we heard it. Some of the advancing troops had stopped on that area for a rest, Andreas said that three black American soldiers had forced their way in the house, locked Andreas, his wife and son in an upstairs room and, in spite of the letter note we had left him, they then raped his daughter. They were very distraught and couldn't understand why such as the American army could do such a thing. We conveyed our extreme

sympathy to him telling him not to judge one nation for the unruly lot that you would find in any army: it was very difficult for us to console him. After a little chat over a cup of coffee we bade him farewell and left for the Winkler's house which was just up the road. They were very pleased to see us telling us that they were pleased that we wrote the letter because some troops billeted with them wanted to confiscate their radio but when they were shown the little note we had written they relented.

It must have been about four in the afternoon when we decided to return to our lodgings in Bamberg. While we were in this town we did not return again to Aisch. We did go for short walks, very short actually because we were still very tired. We kept in touch with the town mayor hoping that he would have some good news for us, well the time did come when he informed us that we were at last able to commence our return journey. He directed us to a large building not far away, which was occupied with French prisoners awaiting their journey to France. In charge was the French Officer who had been able to get us passed the guard to initially see the town mayor; we were welcomed by his officer who informed us that in another week we would all be on our way home. This was wonderful news to us.

We were issued with French Red Cross parcels but the trouble with these parcels was that they were composed mainly of raw foods that had to be cooked. Some of the prisoners had managed to obtain a calf and were busy cutting it up after skinning it. They made it into a soup which lasted until we were tired of it.

Then came the day when we were told to prepare for the first stage of our journey home. There was a large American truck waiting for us. This truck had a crate each side and on top. Three prisoners who were with us were from Holland and their heads had recently been shaved. Yes you've guessed, they should have been guillotined, but they were never in one prison long enough, having been forced eastwards by the advancing American forces. They were so happy to be free and on their journey home, having escaped the guillotine, they sat on the top crate of the vehicle. I would liked to have joined them but the floor of the lorry was uncomfortable enough. We were followed by two American staff cars, and we found out that we were bound for Wurtzberg.

We were travelling on the Autobahn and it seemed to me that we were going at quite some speed. We could not concentrate on any particular area as everything seemed to rush past so quickly. After a while, we noticed that our truck seemed to be slowing down, in fact it was. We were slowing down to change over to what I would call a 'B' road on our left hand side. There was a little traffic on the autobahn at this time so the manoeuvre was made without any bother. Our speed was much slower than before and we could at last appreciate the countryside with very few buildings of any sort. Carrying on our way we passed through an area of trees, an avenue, and we suddenly passed a tree with a low-lying branch. As we approached it the branch caught the necks of the three Dutchmen that were sitting on the top of the crate. In a second the three were on the ground behind us, two had broken necks the third had his head severed. It was a godsend that neither of them felt any pain it all happened so suddenly. After banging on the rear of the driver's cab we came to a halt. The two cars managed to stop in time. This was a

great sock to everyone on the truck. It was so ironic they had been moved from prison to prison and finally attained freedom. Their spirits were very high, you felt that you could feel the freedom just like they felt, they had escaped death and were now on their way home and this happened to them. It affected us all on the truck and the two cars that were following us saw it all happen. They put the bodies in the boot of the car and went back towards Moosburg. This was an occasion the thought of which remained with us for quite a while.

This unfortunate happening over, we continued on our way in the direction of Bumlez arriving there about five o'clock in the afternoon. We dismounted ourselves from the lorry, feeling very stiff indeed, and were led towards a long table on trestles that was loaded with German bread, sausages etc and a man was helping to serve us with this meal. It was Armand who had escaped from the train the first night after leaving Frankfurt. He was delighted to see Norman, Walter and myself and he gave me his address, which was Seul par Rethel near to Rheims.

We found that we were in army barracks, Adolph Hitler's Barracks to be precise and we examined the rooms to find a place to stay. We found rooms which were used as offices where paper, typewriters etc had been thrown everywhere and excrement also: it was shocking, however we did eventually find a clean room to sleep in. There was a large room just inside the entrance and in it were chairs and a piano. I had a go on the piano, playing typical wartime music in my own way. I can tell you it was not appreciated. There were two guards at the entrance to these barracks and no one was allowed entrance and we were not allowed out.

Well, this was a stage further in our journey home. We remained here a few more days but Armand must have moved on because we did not see him again. One morning we had our orders to board a train which was just outside the barracks; there were sixty trucks pulled by two enormous engines and the whole train was in the charge of an American officer. These trucks were open trucks, which in turn was filled with French Prisoners, now free! We were walking towards the train talking amongst ourselves and standing by the guards wagon was an American sergeant who, hearing the talking in English, made himself known, he was from Muncis...? Indiana and said his name was Gene. He suggested that we travel with him in the guards wagon, as I would be much more comfortable than travelling in the open wagons as they were rather crowded. We were very happy to travel in the guard's wagon. It had ample seating accommodation, a coal store, and however long our journey was we would be very comfortable. I even had managed to obtain a few 'C' rations, which proved to be very acceptable and lasted the whole journey.

The complete train moved very slowly throughout our journey and often halted quite a number of times, sometimes for two or three hours. This proved to be an asset to us as you will realize In the following chapters. All our possessions were a bowl each that we had managed to keep from our Strausling days.

They proved most useful to us, we could cook in one bowl, eat in another, and the third we washed up in. We had a nice warm stove which we could cook on, and plenty of hot water. Every time the train halted Gene would go back down the line and put a detonator on the rail to warn the train behind us that the train in

front of them had stopped, and we found out when we stopped for water that there were sixteen trains ahead of us. We did not know at what French railway station we were to arrive at, nor when. There were four of us to feed, Norman, Walter, Gene and myself. At the first stop we made, I walked to the front of the train to talk to the American officer in charge. I suggested that we cook him a meal when we have ours. He thought this was a very good idea and it worked very well indeed. Shortly before his meal was ready, we would give two jerks on the emergency cord and the whole train would shudder but would not stop. This was the signal for him to get off the engine and to wait until we caught up with him. When he had finished his meal and had a chat with us, it was time for him to get back to the engine, two jerks on the emergency cord and the driver ahead in the engine would reduce speed so that he could walk back to the front of the train. This happened three times each day, breakfast, midday, and the evening meal and it all worked perfectly, except that the food was almost the same for each meal: still we were far better off than in the prison.

We managed to sleep fairly well and the next morning we halted alongside a wide stream. I think everyone had the same idea as we did, have a good wash. We had soap with our 'K' rations. I looked at our surroundings, the dawn was just breaking, and there was a heavy mist over the mountains with a slight mist over the stream. I stripped to the waist and went to the bank of the stream and started to soap myself until the soap promptly slipped out of my hand into the stream. Some of the Frenchmen stripped completely, the women also; the women went just past the guards van and the men close to the engine. At this stage I should mention how we started off again. Although we had two engines the number of

trucks they had to pull was far too heavy and to just pull away, what happened was that the engines first went in reverse, so that when it did pull the wagons the couplings of the wagons tightened one by one. As we heard and saw the train on reverse it was time to get aboard. This happened while we were washing ourselves, immediately the occupants of the wagon ran to their respective wagon. The women past the guards van had to run to catch up with the wagon, all managed except one young French girl who could not keep up with the train even though it was going very slowly, Gene the American Sergeant ran back to fetch her, she had not enough time to dress so Gene picked her up and eventually reached us with this naked girl in his arms. She dressed at once and waited for the train to stop so that she could reach her wagon.

We were never short of coal for our stove when ever we approached a siding or marshalling yard we would look for coal which was not difficult as there were great piles of the stuff. Two of us would leave our guards van and walk quickly to the nearest pile of coal and take as much as we were able, place the coal alongside the track and await the arrival of our guards van and then throw it in. I remember us halting at a marshalling yard where piles of softboard were stacked. The Frenchmen raced to these piles to help themselves to the softboard to line the floor of their wagons which would make it more comfortable and softer to lay down on. Another occasion when we stopped for water for our two engines, this was out in the wilds nowhere near any station, a number of American Soldiers were there and we approached them asking for some 'K' rations. They gave us two cases each containing thirty-six rations making seventy-two in all which would have lasted us for another seventy-two days if we had kept all of them. I

believe we kept twelve of them and decided to give the rest to the Frenchmen. We managed to get them into a line and intended for them to pass us picking up a packet of 'K' rations. When the women saw this they rushed towards us. Seeing what was happening I said to them "women first" and they queued up but we were not able to supply them all because there were far too many; in the end the men were unlucky and they had none. Our next stop was at a large marshalling yard where there were passenger cars, open wagons, closed wagons and coal wagons, but no signs of an engine. We were well into the yard, slowing down, and whilst we were slowing down before stopping a number Frenchmen were leaving their wagons passing our Guards van and I also heard rifle shots. It would appear that before we had come to a halt we had passed a goods train and one of the wagons was opened revealing various wooden containers and packages. This appeared to be a goods train captured by the Americans and, in the wagon which was open, the cases inside were full of cigarettes and tobacco. The Frenchmen were helping themselves to what ever was going, the rifle shots came from the Americans which was a warning to the Frenchmen to leave well alone. By the time we got there the Frenchmen had returned to their wagons. There were two American guards and when we spoke to them and told them who we were they simply said 'help yourselves'. We took a few cigarettes, some packets of tobacco and some Hillaby youth Stockings and seeing this some of the Frenchmen returned and helped themselves but by this time we were back in our wagon. At this time the train made a reverse move then went off, those last Frenchmen had their arms full of tobacco and as the train moved they had to run to catch up with the wagon, losing much of what they were carrying before they reached their wagon.

Well, we had cigarettes and tobacco, these were German made by the way, to smoke and Hilly youth stocks to wear in the winter months, they fitted well above the knee. We passed many trains carrying American soldiers going in the opposite direction.

We at last crossed the border into northern France, we had no idea at which French town we were to stop at. This part of the journey was very pleasant; the countryside was beautiful, passing a few houses. We noticed quite a number of farms, and the atmosphere was decidedly warmer. We eventually reached our destination; we had arrived at Charlesville railway station, which was a very busy station. Gene our train guard gave us some German money and arranged for us to go by passenger train to Rheims. We said goodbye to him and thanked him for all his kindness to us during the whole of our journey by train. He finally said that when we arrived at Rheims to wait outside the station and we would be picked up by a jeep, which would take us to a repatriating camp, where we would be sorted out before our flight to England. We boarded this train and entered the compartment in which was one occupant, a lady, who looked to be about thirty-five years of age: she looked very smart, well dressed, lipstick, powder and a perfume which filled the compartment. We three sat opposite her exclaiming what a good looker she was, in every respect, we were talking about her and wished we could entertain her for an evening!!! We had stopped talking, looking out of the window admiring the countryside and she started to open conversation with us in almost perfect English; we all felt somewhat embarrassed after talking about her not realising she could speak English. We had a little chat with her

during the journey, she seemed very interested in our time in prison, but we mentioned to her that we came from Guernsey in the Channel Islands she, to my great surprise, had never heard of the Channel Islands: this we came across quite frequently, it was really the war that put us on the map. I can recall the days when I was in the RGM. I was one of twenty-five chosen to represent the Military at the crowning of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth and we were lining both sides of Oxford Street opposite John Lewis. Our regiment badges on one shoulder mentioned Guernsey and we were asked by many of the spectators where Guernsey was: this was in 1937.

Our train journey to Rheims had come to an end, we said goodbye to Mademoiselle, walked out of the station and sat on a seat watching people pass while we awaited our jeep. I noticed a Frenchman about to pass us, his clothing looked much the worse for wear, he looked thin, you could see that the war had had some effect on him. I stopped him, offering him my blue overcoat, which had been given to me when I stayed with the French ex-prisoner in Moosberg. I knew I would now have no further use for it, and that he was very welcome to it. I conveyed this to him speaking French. He took it from me, put it on thanking me very much for my kindness, said goodbye and walked on. He had only walked a few yards when he stopped and turned round to face us, he retraced his steps and offered us a glass of wine in a pub across the road. We thanked him and crossed over the road and had a glass of wine with him. This was most acceptable to us not having touched wine for over twelve months. We had scarcely finished our wine when our jeep arrived opposite, after another thank you to the Frenchman we crossed the road, climbed into the jeep and off we went. It wasn't long before

we reached our destination. It was termed a RAMP (Repatriation of Allied Military Prisoners). It was quite a large camp with many tents; apparently all the repatriations were effected from here.

Well we drove into this camp and the moment we got out of the jeep we were ushered to a large tent where we had to strip off all our clothes which, except our shoes, were to be burnt. We were then led along a pathway to a large vehicle equipped with showers, at this stage I would add that on the left hand side of the path was a wire fence the other side of this fence was the public footway, so our journey from the tent to the showers along this path was made in the nude while pedestrians were using the footpath, nobody seemed to take any notice of us, but we were rather embarrassed climbing up steps. We were given soap then had our showers for which we were so grateful. We had not had a good wash down since we were at Frankfort prison, which was a few weeks back. After the shower we took a towel from a pile, dried ourselves, walked down the steps into a tent. This tent contained all the clothing we would need, first singlet, underpants, shirt, socks, trousers and a jacket and a hat and shaving gear. All this was American forces dress, no provision was made for civilians. We were now dressed as American soldiers. We were told that next morning a shop would open for us to take advantage of. There were cameras and films, cigarettes, and many other items. This shop would open at 9.30am next morning. The proviso being please do not take for the sake of taking – remember the thousands of other POWs that will follow you. We were not able to take advantage of this offer because we left for the airport at 8am. We left this RAMP camp for the airport at Rheims. It did not take us long to get there. We had to form up in 25s and we went to our plane which was one of many Lancasters on the airfield. We boarded the plane, our kit

bags were put in the bomb bay. After we were all in and the door was closed there was only room to sit on the floor. We were told that we could go to the three gun turrets, one in the front of the aircraft, one in the centre and one at the rear, but we must take it in turns. We were also told of the red cord which ran the length of the aircraft. We were warned not to touch this cord if we lost our balance because it released the rubber dinghys, which would immediately inflate and get caught up with the tail taking part of it away. The result making the plane uncontrollable and it would be the end for plane and all those aboard. The Lancaster had no portholes with which one could see through being a night bomber so I was told. The plane was meant for crew only, no passengers, so with twenty-five of us aboard, there was absolutely no room to move, one or two managed to reach the gun turrets, but not we three. We heard the roaring of the four engines as we took off, but the take-off was so smooth that we felt very little movement. We were travelling along at a steady 180 miles per hour, it took us one and a half hours to reach our airport which was?..... North of London. The landing like the take-off was so smooth that we had no feeling of having touched ground, it was a wonderful journey, the very first time that any of we three had travelled by air. I can remember asking one of the crew when we embarked, where the parachutes were, he replied that there weren't any, and in any case we would have no idea how to handle them. The door was opened and we started to embark to be met by two ATS or WRENS. I just can't remember, it was some 66 years ago. We had one of each either side of us, telling us how glad they were to see us, and thanking us for our part in the war. This embarrassed us because we did nothing towards the war effort in any way whatsoever.

Before we were ushered into a large dining hall we were all de-loused. There was a long counter with a large assortment of food; we were in time for breakfast and were given double portions.

We enjoyed our second breakfast having eaten at the RAMP some three hours earlier and after we had finished eating we were told to prepare for our journey by car to Biscester where we were given a thorough check over by an air force doctor. Afterwards we were interrogated by officials and we had to explain everything to them from the time we left Guernsey over twelve months ago.

We were then asked about the prison in Frankfurt they were very keen to find out the names of the warders, the discipline, etc, we mentioned to them about the Canadian airmen who were incarcerated in Frankfurt. I remember the name of one which I gave them also informing them that in all five of them were incarcerated in a cell meant for one prisoner only, also they were given half the normal prison rations and that they were allowed out in the fresh air once a day for fifteen minutes at the double; then after about two weeks they were removed from Frankfurt, presumably to a POW camp. This we never found out but sometime during the year 1946 we had a communication from the Judge Advocate General stating that these five Canadian airmen had been traced, they had all survived the war and were now back in their homes in Canada. We stayed that day in Biscester, being well fed and were found sleeping quarters. After breakfast next morning we were taken by official car driven by a good-looking WAFF junior officer. We were taken to Bovington airport which was used by the USAF. We felt quite happy to be there and were well looked after by the

Americans. Nothing much happened because most of the time we were left to ourselves. We were so tired with all the forced marching in Germany, and the travelling which was to get us to England that all we felt like was sleeping.(food trays)

On the next day we were driven to the London Reception Centre at Henryport Lane, Canons Park, This was a camp where all civilians had to pass through before being transferred to permanent came. We were told that the nearest camp was Glasgow unless we could find any family that would take us on which would be closer than Glasgow.

We were given civilian clothes in exchange for the American uniform we were wearing. I always regretted leaving the uniform behind. Just after midday we were given a cooked meal, after which we could help pay for our keep by weeding the gardens. We had to explain to them that we were not fit enough to do this easy job, all we wanted was to go to bed for a good long sleep. There was a snag however, the sleeping quarters were kept locked and would not be opened until seven o'clock in the evening, however we pleaded with them. I could see that they understood our condition and relented by opening up our quarters, we were most grateful for this and after a prayer of thanks for our freedom once again we just jumped on to our beds, fully clothed and had a good sleep. We were awoken at 6pm for our evening meal. The staff were very kind to us, doing whatever they could to make us feel as comfortable as they possibly could. Now came the time for us to leave. After a few telephone calls, we all found somewhere to stay until we were able to return to Guernsey. Norman found relations in Wise Road, East London who would be pleased to take him in for as

long as was necessary. Walter found friends in Andover who would help him by looking after him until it was possible for him to leave. As for me, I found a representative of one of the firms we dealt with before the war; he was very happy for he and his wife to accommodate me, but it was not possible for me to stay with them for a lengthy period.

In the year 1940, many schools if not all the schools were evacuated, this happened shortly before the Germans invaded the Channel Islands. My sister Phyllis was one of those who had no idea where their destination was. Some Red Cross letters had come through but none from my sister but after many attempts by the office staff of the Reception Centre they managed, through the Red Cross, to trace my sister and the family with whom she was living. They were living in Haysmith Road, Barton on Irwell which was just outside the Manchester area. My original move was to my representative's house and the very first day I arrived I was able to write a letter to my sister telling her that I was at the time of writing in London at Grange Park, Winchmore Hill, North London, and that I had to find another place to live. A reply came to me very quickly in this letter stating that the family she was living with would be delighted to take me for as long as necessary. This was good news for me. I now had to obtain a ration book and an identity card. I was advised to go to Enfield by trolleybus from a pub named 'The Green Dragon'. The money I was using had been given was part of a handout given to the three of us at the reception centre to help us to travel to our destinations. I also had some German marks given to me by Gene, the guard of the train on which we had travelled from Germany to France.

Arriving in Enfield I went to our English Bank the branch of which I used in Guernsey. The teller was rather suspicious until I told him how I was in possession of German marks, but my reply seemed to satisfy him. I am unable to remember the value of the English money I received from the bank. My next stop was to obtain a Ration Book and an Identity Card. Both these offices were on the Southby Road, Enfield near the Savoy Cinema. I went to the officer concerning the Ration Books, after explaining my predicament I was advised to get an identity card first then the Ration Book would be issued to me. Arriving at the Identity Card officer I was simply told to get a Ration Card first then they could issue and Identity Card. I explained my dilemma stating that I had just come from the Ration Book office. Three times I travelled between the two offices then at long last I was granted an identity card which automatically gave me access to a Ration Book – what a waste of time but without these two necessities I would have got nowhere. I had a look around the town, which I found very interesting particularly the Church of St Andrew. Little did I know that eight years hence that I would be married in that same church. After I had seen enough I had a cooked meal at a Lyons Restaurant, then made my way back to my friends at Winchmore Hill.

Whilst staying with the family I went with him on business trips to Rayleigh and Canvey Island, Walton on Thames and South West London. While the representative was calling on various .?. dealers, I would have a walk round the area. Barrage balloons were still in the air: I enjoyed these trips.

The following day I went to Kings Cross mainline station in London to check on the movement of trains to Manchester. I found one that would take me to

Piccadilly Station. I would arrive at about 2.30pm. For me this was ideal so I bought a single to Piccadilly for four days later. I informed my sister of the time and station I would arrive at.

The day that I said goodbye to my friends the wife insisted that I put a few odd tins in my bag. She gave me tins of sardines and tins of meat, which I thought was exceedingly kind of her considering the rationing. Looking through Enfield as I did I was amazed to see how well the food shops were filled even fish and chips were easily available. I wished them goodbye and caught the train from Winchmore Hill to Kings Cross. I sorted myself out, awaited an oncoming train and when the passengers had disembarked I found myself a coach which was empty but before the train left it had filled up.

Conversation was almost nil, except for those with partners or such but I was quite contented to admire the beautiful countryside. To me, after being incarcerated for so long in a German prison, this was really wonderful. It was quite a long journey, it took about 3 ½ hours and there were few stops on the way. Eventually we arrived in Manchester, but not Piccadilly as I had told my sister, but at Exchange Station. I was now in a quandary. Would they await me at Piccadilly or walk to Exchange, which was not very far away? I thought the best thing I could do was to go to Piccadilly, but their minds were the same as mine as I found out later. Well we must have passed each other, I had told my sister that I would have this American Army kit bag over my shoulder but they couldn't have seen me. I waited for quite a while so I thought I would return to Exchange Station. On my return I passed a man and woman and young girl, the man and woman had unfamiliar faces and as for the young girl with them she certainly did

not look at all like my sister. A few steps after we had passed each other I stopped and turned around, they did the same, and we both realized that we were the people who were looking for each other; it hadn't occurred to me that I had not seen my sister for about five years.

I gave her a big hug and a kiss, it was so wonderful meeting her after such a long time. She introduced me to the two people she was staying with, Mr and Mrs Carter, two very nice people I was to find out later. It was suggested that we all went for a cup of tea. This we did and together talked things over. It was a laugh to think that we both had the same thought in mind regarding our meeting between the two stations. The Carters explained that we would have to take two buses to reach their home which was just outside Manchester, first a bus to... then the second bus to Barton on Irwell, then a short walk to their house. I found the journey very pleasant and the weather was fine: we were now in the last week of May. Soon after our arrival their son and daughter arrived home from work. A very nice meal was made for all of us to enjoy and our conversations centered mostly about the war in their area which was very close to Trafford Park which contained many factories making various items for the war effort, particularly the making of aircraft engines of which we heard the noise all day long while the engines were being tested; a noise which everyone seemed to be accustomed to. It was quite a lovely area, I spent many days lying on the banks of the Manchester Ship Canal watching the big American freighters sailing into Manchester. To get to Manchester, Barton Bridge had to be opened; nearby was the aqueduct of the River Irwell hence the name Barton on Irwell. Mr and Mrs Carter enjoyed a cigarette, and I still had some German tobacco left, some with a proper cigarette

paper instead of newspaper we all had a good smoke although the German tobacco did not have such a nice taste as its English equivalent. Unfortunately my supply did not last very long, we were then on to English cigarettes which were not easy to obtain. After a day or so at my latest address I received a letter from home, they were so relieved to receive my letter and to learn that I had arrived safely and that I was living with sister Phyllis. My father stated that the last year of the war they were suffering from the lack of everything, mainly food but thanks to the arrival of the Red Cross ship 'Vega' many lives were saved. I answered the letter saying that Phyllis and I were very happy to be together and that the Carters were extremely nice folk, but I had to add that there was no sign of when we could return home.

I had a visit from a representative to sort me out money-wise. Mrs Carter, bless her, would not accept more than thirty-five shillings per week for my lodgings, which I thought was far too little. I was given quite a few clothing coupons, and then I was placed on the dole. I cannot remember how much I received but it did help quite a bit. I collected this money each Friday and had to report each Wednesday, presumably to show that I was not working. They were ever so polite at the office where I drew the dole. I was offered some work but I explained that I was not fit enough.

I spent many a happy hour on the canal bank watching the various ships going to and fro, quite a large percentage were American cargo vessels of all sizes. To see some of them you could not think the canal was deep enough to take such large ships. They travelled so slowly there was very little wash when they approached

Barton Bridge, then the bridge opened for them, but that was a little way out of my sight. Sitting there watching all the massive traffic passing by, reminded me of the 1930s when we saw the large warships of the British Navy visiting Guernsey. I remember the 'Nelson', which was a large battle cruiser. HMS Hood, Thesius the aircraft carrier and the?..... battleship Fylgia. These ships were open for inspection and for a 6d return fare local boats would take you to these ships which were anchored off the harbour, there were no births large enough to take the large ships, but there, I digress again. One of the captured German 'U' boats had travelled up the canal to the docks in Manchester where she lay for quite a while and was open for inspection. I went to Manchester with the Castle family to look over this 'U' boat. We all thought it most interesting. In the early 1930s I had inspected two RN Subs named L22 and L23 so I knew what to expect. Though the 'U' boat was far more modern, there was still very little space to manoeuvre, all wording was of course in German language, but it did bring back memories for me. After having a light meal in Manchester we returned home by bus. On another occasion we had an organised tour of the small town of West Lymme, it was great to be out in the green countryside after being in a built up area for such along time. At about one o'clock we were ushered into the dining room of a small hotel, there were no menus available, but what was obtainable was given to us by the waitress. It was amazing what was offered to us, it was like pre-war days, but why no menu? The price was most reasonable, I mentioned this to Mr Carter his reply was 'look out of the window lad' I did, and what did I see? An American lorry unloading all types of food stuff - enough said!!

I had no news as to when we are able to return to Guernsey, in a letter recently received from my father he informs me that at the moment only certain people are allowed back; those people who are able to get the island back into a position to receive some twenty thousand people.

The Germans had occupied quite a number of houses, which were left empty by the island refugees in 1940. In many cases skirting boards, doors anything in the house that would burn was used to keep warm and to cook by during the winter of 1944. All these houses had to be repaired and put in a condition that people could again live in, and this would take quite a time. Those wishing to return would have to fill in a form, the main question being 'were you an evacuee and did you have accommodation if you were permitted to return'? If your answers were correct you would be sent a permit allowing you to travel, however these permits did not arrive quickly. As usual, Tuesdays to report to the labour office, and Fridays to draw my dole money. I made good friends with the next-door neighbours, a Mr and Mrs Williams, he was a train driver working locally and she worked in a factory I believe, they were very kind to me.

My sister Phyllis brought me the news that there was to be a large gathering of Guernsey refugees at Belle Vue in Manchester next Thursday. The idea being that she and I would stay at the Rolls, whose daughter Betty was Phyllis's friend, on the Wednesday evening and next morning we would all go to Belle Vue. Thursday turned out to be a beautifully sunny day. Belle Vue was crowded, I saw quite a number of people I had known in Guernsey and was very surprised to see them at Belle Vue. I was most surprised to hear that one fellow that I saw had

reached England before me was Frank Falls, he was with us for a short while in Frankfurt. We were so pleased to see one another, he like me was very thin, he was unable to use his false teeth and remarked how fortunate we were to have ended our time in Germany and in June 1945 were able to meet each other, he, like all of us was most eager to return to Guernsey as soon as we could but he was unable to offer much hope for a quick return. After a wonderful day, but a tiring day, at Belle Vue we made our way back to Barton on Irwell, my sister and I, to be back with the Carter family.

In the next road lived Mrs Carter's sister, Mrs Hadfield. I would visit her frequently to have a chat and play her piano. I'm not a good player by any sense and how she put up with me I will never know. Sunday was a day off for everyone. After putting the beef in the oven at about 12.30pm, we would all go down to the Dutton which was the 'local' for our district. It was wonderful how very kind the people were to me. I was always involved in a round of drinks, it never seemed my turn to pay for a round not that I would have been able to. I believe they were aware of my financial position. We always had a game of darts, the licensee of the pub was an extremely nice person, because she was so bandy legged they called her ...?.... Furniture. Approaching 3 o'clock we would make our way back home to a Sunday roast already for serving. Next day I would find myself down on the canal bank and I wished I had had a camera to photograph the many types of ships passing through to the docks at Manchester. In my mind I would have wondered when we would be able to travel, but came to no conclusion as to how or when this would be possible. Sometime I would go for short walks but I would get very tired. I kept wondering if I should take a change with my sister and go to London and sort things out there.

Out of the blue came our permits to enter Guernsey. We were overjoyed to receive these permits but what we were ignorant of was that we had no permits to travel. I went with my sister to buy a dress for our mother and this we accomplished. I went to the labour office on the Tuesday. to clock in as it were. and mentioned to the clerk that I would be leaving for home on Thursday so I would not see them on Friday. I extended my appreciation to him and the staff for being so kind to us in every respect. He asked to wait a few minutes, he then disappeared and returned to tell me that he had spoken to his chief who kindly decided to give me that week's dole which I greatly appreciated, this was a great help to our finances. I made the round of saying my goodbyes to all the people in the district that I had met. Mrs Williams, from next door had managed to obtain about twenty bars of soap from her fellow workers for me to take home with me. All, yes all, the people I had met were so very kind to my sister and I.

We said our good byes to the Carters and left by bus for Manchester Exchange railway station. There we boarded a train bound for Kings Cross Station London. Arriving in London early in the afternoon, we made our way to Waterloo. We approached the booking office after leaving the train with the object of obtaining two tickets on that night's boat to Guernsey. We were told very politely that we could do very little about getting back to Guernsey unless we had a special permit which then allowed us to purchase boat tickets. When I asked where we could obtain these tickets we were advised to go to either Caseton House or Caxton Hall, I can't remember which one. We did arrive at the correct place but not having made an appointment we had to join quite a large queue. After ten

minutes or so, to our surprise out walked Frank Falla, having recognised us he came over and after realising our plight he told us to wait a few moments. He retraced his steps to the office he had come out of and called us over. To our surprise he produced two tickets for Guernsey and two of the necessary passes. We were most grateful for his help to us, we would leave the following night and were accommodated at the London reception centre which was close to the Union Jack Club which was behind Waterloo station. There was a reception area for men and women and, after giving Frank our thanks, we made our way to this reception centre. I recognised many people who were, like me, on the way home. After a very nice evening meal my sister and I retired for the night.

Next morning after breakfast we assembled to prepare for our journey back to Guernsey, actually we did not leave our rest home?? until the afternoon when we made our way towards Waterloo Station. We boarded a special train, which was to take us into Southampton docks almost alongside the ship which was to take us to Guernsey. She was the 'Hantorie' which I remembered from pre-war days. We left Southampton about 10.30pm on our journey but approached Guernsey harbour from south of the island travelling down the west coast as the normal route was heavily mined. It was a wonderful journey and I stayed on deck throughout the voyage. As this was the third week in July it was naturally quite warm. We arrived in Guernsey about 6.30 to 7am. The sun was shining on the whole of the town from the shops on the esplanade to the S. Army Hall and the houses in Saumarez Street.

A most welcoming scene at the end of our journey home.