

La Lettre Jersiaise {English Translation}

Good morning everyone. It's François who has the pleasure of presenting the Lettre this morning, Saturday 17 April 2021. The

76th Anniversary of the Liberation will soon be here, so I thought I would pass on some of my memories of the Occupation when I was a kid.

My first memory is of my going from the property known as Florida Villa, in St. Ouën, near Portinfer, usually the gate at the road was shut, but, on that day, my parents had left it open and, being curious, off I went down the road to visit my Auntie Vine and Papa Philippe at their farm at the Portinfer crossroads. But, I wasn't walking, I was in my little tricycle airplane which had RAF roundels painted on the wings and on the fuselage. When I arrived at the crossroads, there were two German soldiers chatting in the middle of road. Suddenly, one of them burst out laughing and pointed at me. I didn't understand why he was laughing, but it was no doubt at this little chap who was going to shoot all the Germans with his RAF plane. When I arrived in my Aunt's yard, I asked them why they were laughing but they made out it was nothing and it was many years later that I discovered why.

And then, when we were living at La Frontiere, St. Mary, I remember 'Douard and I were asleep upstairs in our bedroom when we were woken by the sound of fireworks. We both got up to see what was going on as there were no curtains in the window and we could see the sky from our beds. The sky was illuminated. We were both amazed! We were both at the window to find out what was happening. It was like fireworks all over the sky. We didn't know then, but it was the Germans firing on an Allied plane from their Ack-Ack nest in St. Lawrence. It was exciting for us two kids, but all of a sudden, my Dad grabbed us both by the scruff of the neck and told us to get into bed immediately and not go back to the window. The next morning, he showed us the pieces of metal from the shells which had exploded in the sky the night before. Shrapnel! Terrible!

Another time thing that I recall was that we had two armchairs in the kitchen at St. Mary, one each side of the range. There were mats under the chairs and if you lifted the mat under the armchair to the right of the fireplace, there was a trapdoor and when you lifted that up, there was a cavity with a small radio hidden there. That is how my parents, like so many others, heard the news about the war and England.

That's it for now. I will tell you more another time. Have a good week and stay safe and well. À bi!