

Hopping in the Eden Valley during WW2



Elizabeth Allen remembers...

“During WW2 it was mainly older men involved in the hop-picking and they would be the pole pullers with long sticks to release the hop bines at the top. I remember one occasion when a German plane came down nearby and the pilot came staggering through the hedge. The pole pullers were pointing their sticks at him saying to keep back, but one of the women said, “look, it could be one of our boys over there, get him a cup of tea ...”

All of the photographs on this panel were donated by Mrs D. Gribble of Lockskinners Farm, Chiddingstone and were probably taken at Chiddingstone Hoath.



Measuring the hops and filling the poke in an Eden Valley hop garden, c.1939-45. Image: P2004.1287



Group of men, women and children in an Eden Valley hop garden, c.1939-45. Image: P2004.1285

The Blitz lasted from 7th September 1940 to 11th May 1941 and hop-pickers would have witnessed dog-fights taking place in the air over Kent, as well as planes, both friendly and enemy, crashing down into fields near them.



Family hop-picking in an Eden Valley hop garden, c.1939-45. Image: P2004.1288



Women and children in an Eden Valley hop garden, c.1939-45. Image: P2004.1286

During the Blitz

Nelson Cannon of Mark Beech writing on 8th September 1940. Nelson Cannon lived with his father at Gardener's Cottage, Falconhurst, Mark Beech.

“... only 25% of usual London pickers turned up, owing to raids, bombs etc., many of these have gone back. Appeals are being made locally, Tun. Wells, etc., for anyone to go picking whenever they can, evenings, Sats & Suns. Fear crop, a good one, will be lost, owing to lack of pickers. ... Jerry has missed the 4, 5, & 6 o'clock raids, wonder if he's having a rest tonight, will wait and see if he comes later on before I close this, it seems strange to be quiet. Lord Haw Haw says 1,000's of planes were used, I agree with this. Jerry started his “bus service” at 10 to 8, its now 9 and the service is still going strong, over the Park due N & S, not over this house to the S.E. A different airdrome in France I expect.

Cheerio Nelson “