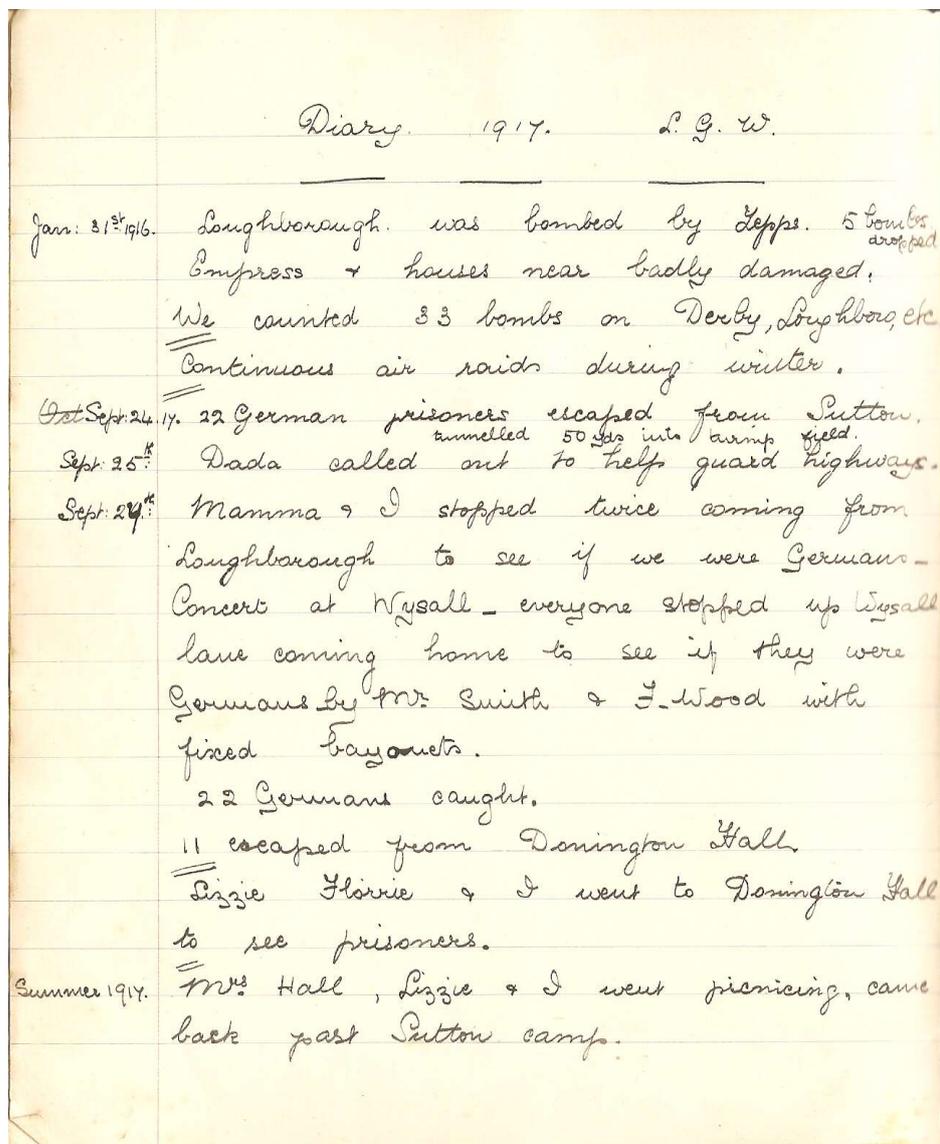


Lily Brown's First World War Diary



Lily Georgina Brown (née Watson, 1902–73) was twelve years old when the First World War started. While she would be all-too aware of the changes this brought about, like most people in England the war itself seemed far away. This changed dramatically the night the Zeppelins bombed Loughborough and Derby – the war was now part of their lives too.

Such was the concern that the next day Lily started to keep a diary. The first entry is reproduced on the following page. It is very much a 'war diary' as the subsequent entry is not for another eight months, when she reports that '22 German prisoners

escaped from Sutton [Bonington] tunnelled 50 yards into turnip field.' A few days later she reports that she and her mother were stopped twice on the way back from Loughborough to 'see if we were Germans'.

Lily was born in Northampton but her family moved to Barn Farm, Wymeswold, between 1903 and 1907. She married Tom Brown, the second son of Philip Brown on 22nd April 1920.

Chris Brown, Lily's grandson, generously donated a digital copy of the diary to the Wolds Historical Organisation. The entries have kindly been transcribed by Patricia Baker.

Lily Brown's Diary L.G.W.

Jan 31st 1916

Loughborough was bombed by Zepps 5 Bombs dropped. Empress and houses near badly damaged. We counted 33 bombs on Derby, Loughboro etc. Continuous air raid all winter.

Sept 24th '17

22 German prisoners escaped from Sutton. Tunnelled 50 yards into turnip field.

Sept 25th

Dada called out to help guard highways.

Sept 29th?

Mamma and I stopped twice coming from Loughborough to see if we were Germans. Concert at Wysall– everyone stopped up Wysall Lane coming home to see if the[re] were Germans by Mr Smith and Mr Wood with fixed bayonets. 22 Germans caught. 11 escaped from Donington Hall. Lizzie Florrie and I went to Donington Hall to see the prisoners.

Summer 1917

Mrs Hall, Lizzie and I went picnicking came back past Sutton Camp.

Bank Holiday '17

Auntie Sallie, Uncle Wilson, Tom , Mr and Mrs Kitchen and Pater motored through on Sunday, took us for a drive about 40 or 50 miles on Monday morning.

Oct. 6th

Made green frock-coats.

Oct 6th

Mamma, dada and Daisy went to Heather with Ginger for the weekend.

Oct 8th

Dada and Uncle Tom came home-arrived here about 12 pm after we had gone to bed. Lizzie and I came downstairs and got them some supper and went back to bed about 12.30 pm.

Oct 9th

Dada and Uncle Tom went to Mrs Monks sale. Mamma and Daisy came home.

Aug '17

Lizzie and I went to John's Wood and Crossleys for our holidays in E. Collington's car. Mr Collington, Mr Burrows, Uncle Joe and Dada went with us. Went on Sunday morning, the men came back on Sunday night and brought Irene with them.

We stayed a fortnight and two days and came back on Tuesday with Uncle Wilson and auntie and Pearle - uncle drove 'Spider" through.

Pearle, Lizzie and myself borrowed Arthur's soldier clothes, Tom's band clothes and George's civilian clothes and dressed up in them and had our photographs taken.

Sept.

Florrie, Pearle, Lizzie, May Watson and myself went to the Wild West Circus with 'Ginger' and got stopped by an old man who thought Ginger was running away because George Tom and Arthur started shouting 'wo' when we passed them.

Harry started to go to the Grammar School

Went to the dairy to keep May company as Connie had gone to Harby. May jumped up onto the edge of a drainer and over balanced backwards into it. Lizzie and I were sitting in the lids on the drainer and Lizzie started to laugh at her and leaned forward and the lid tipped her onto the floor.

May came up several nights.

Oct 2nd.

May went home to Granby Oct. 2nd

Oct 2nd

May and I went to the Barn to be weighed. May weighed 9 st 5 lbs. I weighed 9 st 4 lbs.

Oct 9th.

Connie came up to tea and supper. singing songs all night.

Sept 15th

Arthur Daft married Miss Haure [?Hause]

Sept.

I cut my thumb badly cutting bacon and cut a piece out.

Ed. Mills stack-yard caught fire, practically all burnt down only a little hay saved.

[presumably these two entries were added retrospectively, i.e. after October 9th]

Oct 16th

Mr and Mrs Giles, Bert, Freddie and T. Brown came up

Oct 20th

Red Cross Flag Day – all dressed as Red Cross Nurses

Oct 21st

Lizzie and I went to Charley Knoll bought some pears and walnuts back.

Oct 25th

Mamma and dada went to Charley with 'Ginger' for pears, walnuts and apples.

Oct 27th

Phil Brown home for weekend. Came from Catrick camp to work on a farm at Lockington . Lost 1 puttee on way from Lobro?.

Oct 21st

Ralph Bailey home on leave.

Oct 29th

Meeting to decide what to do about sending Christmas parcels to soldiers. Mamma went. Whist drive arranged for following Tuesday.

Oct 21st

Last Sunday for us to do Altar tasks

Oct 29th

Killed a pig. Cut up at night.

Oct 22nd

Mrs Allsop died

Oct 25th

Mrs Allsop buried. Florrie went to funeral, Lizzie and I went to Brown's

Oct 26th

Lizzie and I bottled peas.

Nov 2nd

Whist Drive at Rempston. Mamma and dada went with Mr Burrows in the car. Lizzie and I walked. First Whist Drive we had been to.

Oct [spoilt date]

Lizzie and i went round lodges collecting for soldiers and got 26/-. We sold tickets to a value of 35/-.

Nov 5th

Florrie Watson came. Henry came for the weekend.

Nov 6th

Mary and Lily came for Whist Drive and went back on the 7th.

Nov 7th

Florrie left and went to Mrs Clarke's.

Nov 21st

I went to Brown's to tea. Lizzie went to meeting at Mr Hicks'.

Nov 8th

Florrie W went away. Uncle Tom came.

Nov 9th

Connie Watson came up also Mr T Brown, Tom and Connie.

Nov 10th

W Bailey came home on leave.

Nov 11th

W Bailey played organ both services.

Nov 12th

Meeting to decide what to pay for boiler in church. Social decided upon. Lizzie on games committee.

Nov 10th Sat.

Dada and Uncle Tom went to Nottingham with E. Collington. Row between S and E Morris, G and T Braine, T Tyler and A Gardiner. Morris summoned about 50/- with costs. Tyler and Gardiner's case dismissed.

Nov 12th Mon.

Florrie took her case to Broughton Station with Jack and the trap.

Nov 13th Tues

Lizzie had neuralgia all day, a little better towards night, Florrie went to Uncle Wilson's. C Wilson went away from dairy

Nov 14th Wed.

Mamma, Lizzie and I went to Nottingham. Got back 4o'clock. I went to Choir Practice George came home from school bad.

Nov 15th

Meeting of Games Committee for Social. Lizzie to make sultana cake to guess

how many sultanas in. 271 sultanas (all our ages added together) I went to Mrs Brown's and took Connie who had been up at our house. Lizzie called for me after meeting.

Nov 16th Frid

Daisy went to Mrs Brown's for tea. Mrs Hall and mamma went up to Braines' for Jack's address in the afternoon . Mrs Hall stayed until 4 o'clock. Lizzie did some cooking.

Harry came home from school bad.

Nov 18th

I went to Mrs Brown's for tea.

Nov 19th.

Doctor came to see Harry. Bad throat bordering on quinsy.

Nov 21st

Choir practice.

Nov 22nd

Went to Brown's for evening. E and I

Nov 23rd

E and I went collecting for refreshments for social. Daisy ill.

Nov 24th

Finished collecting.

Nov 25th

Mrs Brown, Tom and W. Taylor came up after tea. Afterwards Mr Brown Tom and W. Taylor came up.

Nov 26th

Lizzie and I went to Loughboro- got new slippers. Did cooking for social at night.

Nov 27th

Social at Wymeswold towards boiler. Mamma won ladies nail-hammering prize – Pork Pie. Lizzie won jar of lump sugar, (117 lumps) Tom Brown won Pork Pie for guessing weight. 2/6 for guessing no. in envelope, note case for lighting candles. Realised £23/1/9d

Wed Nov 28th

Mrs J Peel's daughter born.

Sat 1st

Florrie came over for weekend with Henry. I had bad throat.

Sun Dec 2nd.

F and Mrs Clarke came up for tea, also Uncles and Tom. F and H went home at night. W and R. Bailey, P and M. Brown, E and B. Hames, B Giles and K. Hubbard home on leave.

Madge Henry at Mrs Hall's.

Mon 3rd

Killed 2 pigs. I was knocked up with bad throat and quinsy. Mrs Hallam had a son.

4th

Cut pigs up. Sent some pork to John's Wood

7th

Mrs Hall came up at night.

Sat 8th

Tom Brown and A. Bennett came up with groceries at night. Lizzie and mamma busy in daytime with pig. Parson ill in bed.

Sun 9th

Lizzie went to Sunday School instead of me. no morning service.

10th

George ,Harry and Daisy started school. E Giles and F Tyler came up and stayed till 8.30.

11th

Carting chips from fallen trees.

16th

I went to Mrs Brown's to tea.

17th.

Little snow and keen frost. G and H away from school.

18th.

George and Harry had holiday for Christmas

19th

Fred Bailey came home on leave.

20th

Fred Bailey, Lizzie and I went to Brown's for evening.

21st

Daisy got holiday from school.

22nd

Fred. B. and Tom brought groceries and stayed til 12 o'clock.

23rd

I went to church in the morning. Went Turnpost Farm at night. F and T skating.

24th

W. Bailey came round for Christmas. Ringers and Tom and Phil Brown came up stayed till after 1 o'clock Christmas Eve.

25th Christmas Day

Lizzie and I went to Holy Communion at 7.30. F, T and P were there. Went across to Brown's for letters. Had a cup of coffee. Boys came up to practise football. I cooked dinner. Mamma and dada and G and H went to church. Football match in the afternoon.

Lizzie, Daisy and I went to Brown's for tea in the afternoon. Mamma and dada went to E. Collington's for supper. G and H came down to Brown's. We came home about 11.45. F and T came up with us. Had to light fire and get children to bed. F and T stayed a short time. Had a good time. Mamma and dada came home 12.15. Henry came with them stayed till after 2 o'clock. tipsy.

Dec 26th Wed Boxing Day.

Social and dance at 6.30. We all went. Realised about £17 for Boiler. Had a very nice evening. Mamma , dada, Daisy and boys came home before finish. F and T came up with us. Social and dance broke up about 12.30

27th

Mamma and Daisy went to Brown's to tea. Lizzie , dada and I went down for the evening. Mrs Clarke and the two children stayed with Harry and George. We came hone about 7.30. Tom , Phil, John Peel, Arthur Bennett, K. Howitt and Lizzie Spiby stayed up all night after social so were very tired on the 27th evening.

28th

C. Brown came up to tea, Tom, W. Taylor and Mrs [Mr?] Brown came up for her. Mrs Walker came with butter.

Sat 29th

Mamma and Daisy went to Loughborough. Came home about 4 o'clock. Lizzie went to Mrs Hall's with ticket money. Lizzie and I took grocery order to Brown's.

May 1918

Sat. May 4th

Fred Bailey home on leave. F and T came up St. night with groceries.

5th Sun.

Uncle Joe, Lily and John came over for day

May 17th

Whitsun Lizzie and I went to St. John's Wood for Whitsun. Dada took us to the station with young pony. Auntie and Florrie met us in Stamford.

Friday 17th

Auntie, Florrie , Lizzie and I went to gather lilies.

Sat 18th

Went to Cliffe with auntie. At night we went to Wansford, Yarwell and Nassington, to Preston's Manor House.

Sun 19th

Had cup of tea in bed at 7a.m. Had breakfast at 10.30 a.m. Went shepherding with Uncle Wilson to West Hay. went to Cross-Leys for a walk to No. 1 Aerodrome with Florrie and cousin Tom. Uncle Harry came to meet us. went back though the wood.

Mon 20th

Went to take lunch to Uncle's sheep-washing. Lizzie tried to kick it in the brook. Went home for lunch . Mollie was at uncles. She stayed till 8 o'clock and E Flo and I walked most of way back with her to Yarwell.

Tues 21st

Went for drive around aerodrome after tea. sewing all morning. All nationalities working at aerodrome, Chinese, Japanese Irishmen, Germans, Yankees etc.

Wed.

22nd

Aeroplane came down in field against house and just managed to rise over our heads. Went to Cross-Leys 10.30 a.m . stayed until 10.30 pm. Went for a walk to No 5 ([?]tipo) aerodrome with Ana and Lily. Had a fine time. Ana, Pearl and Lily went across to John's Wood with us. Thundering and lightning very badly. Auntie, uncle and Florrie had gone to bed.

Thur. 23rd

Went to Cliffe with auntie. rainy most of day. Colonel Ross Hume came up in afternoon also Dolly Bliss who stayed for tea.

Fri. 24th

E and I went liltng – got quite a nice few. Went to Stamford with auntie and Florrie after dinner. Went up town for a little while and then to station to catch 4.5 train to Broughton.

Bought Daisy , F, T, and C.B Stamford Crests. Auntie gave us embroidered voile for shirts also Lizzie striped dress, me a blouse length and George and Harry a Flemish Giant Rabbit. Dada and Tom met us at Broughton with young pony. Saw Fred and Phil when we came up. Fred and Tom came up.

Sat .

F and T came up. F came shooting about 7 o/c and T came with groceries. I was cooking all night E was —— with —— . Both stayed for supper.

Sun.

I went to Sunday School and church. E and I and F and T went down Marsh for a walk. I went to Mrs Brown's to tea. Phil at home. Went to church at night P.O. after. E went for a walk with F. ,Mrs Bailey and Mrs Hall.

Mon.

E went Loughboro in morning with F. F and T came up for tea, F took some snapshots on lawn. F and T, E and I went for a walk up Badlands. arr. back 9.00 pm. Had supper F and T went home about 11.00 o/c.

Tues. 28th

Mrs Burrows died. Mr Edmunds went for holiday. Fred came up after dinner to say goodbye. Went away by 2.30 train. T came up shooting. Mrs Hall came up.

Wed. I was ironing nearly all day. Mr Burrows and T came up in car for me to go to Lobro with them to meet Mrs Brown, Mrs Burrows and the 3 children who had been to Leicester.

Thur.

Mamma and dada went to Loughborough are home 7.30. I went to P.O

Frid.

E and I went Lobro in morning arr home 2 pm. T came up at night shooting I wrote 5 letters , 1 to Arnold and 1 to Kathleen and sent photos.

Sat. 1st June

May Watson came up at night. Went for a walk down Marsh brook then round by Dairy and Clay Street. E and Y went down with May 9 p.m. Saw Connie. Mrs Hall came up here when we came back. T came up.

Sun. 2nd

No morning service. Mamma and E went H.C 8 a.m.. I stayed at home and got breakfast ready. E went for a walk with Mrs Hal. I cooked dinner in wash-house.

Afternoon service 3 p.m. taken by Mr Pym of Hoton. Mamma, E and Daisy and I went to church. I went P.O. to tea after.

Went for a walk at night.

Mon. June 3

New postage Rate in force. Letters 1½ d P.C's 1d

[Few teenagers would consider changes to the postage rates a fitting topic for their diaries – but bear in mind that Lily's family ran the Post Office in Wymeswold so this – the first time postage rates had increased – would have been an event which would have caused considerable discussion.]