

ERIC CROW'S WAR

AS ASSEMBLED BY IAIN CROW

On Saturday 17th he fixed some leave, but the following day a posting came in for him to go to Stornoway on the following Wednesday, 21st. He tried to contact Stornoway regarding his leave, but on the Thursday, 22nd, having arrived in Huddersfield got a telegram saying "report Stornoway immediately". By Saturday 24th he had arrived at Kyle of Lochalsh, and then a boat to Stornoway, arriving at 10.30 pm but at this point D. was no longer with him.

Having started work on the Monday he got accommodation at Mrs Mackenzies, 55 Bayhead St, Stornoway, and wrote to D. in the evening.

It is noticeable that at this time it was possible to be moved around quite often, and at short notice. No sooner have they got settled in accommodation in South-West Wales than he has to be up on the Isle of Lewes in North-West Scotland within a few days.

Aug For the first week it was "Work all day, wrote D., stayed in Mess". Then on Saturday 7th set off on leave, arriving at Market Drayton on Sunday evening, but not stopping for long, catching an 11.40 pm train for London, arriving 6.0 am on Monday morning, and going to the Passport Office for D.'s permit, then back to M.D.

During the week he paid visits to Ternhill and Sheffield to see old friends, ending up in Huddersfield at the end of the week.

By Tuesday the following week, 17th, he was back up in Stornoway and work. On Thursday, 28th he mentions "Cycled with D to camp to see ENSA show in NAAFI", and on the Saturday they went shopping together, so it appears that Dorothy had now joined him in Stornoway [perhaps linked to getting the permit?].

Sep On the 2nd and 3rd he had a 48 hour pass and went to Uig, calling to see the Callanish Stones on the way back to Stornoway.

On Wednesday, 15th he found he was to be posted to Tiree, a small island off the west coast of Scotland. The next few days that week were spent packing and clearing up, and then on Monday, 20th they went via Inverness to Stirling and the following day to Oban, where they had time to look around before Thursday 23:

Up 5.30. Boarded "Hebrides" at 6.45. Sailed 7.45. Call Tobermory, Killchoan, Coll. Arrive Tiree 5.0 pm. To Brown's Hotel.

The following day he reported to work and D. found a permanent place to stay, moving in to new digs the following Monday, with Mrs Anderson at Scarinish.

Oct They struck up a relationship with the next door neighbours, Mr & Mrs Matheson, and quite often spent the evenings with them.

Nov Working and going to the Mathesons, plus a few other social activities, such as a film or a dance, but nothing like it used to be in previous diaries.

Dec On Wednesday 1st They caught the boat to Oban, stayed over night and the following day went back to Tiree via Tobermory, and he was then ill with a chill for the rest of the week, going back to work the following Monday. After that it was back to the routine of work and going to the Mathesons some evenings. Other RAF friends are also mentioned.

They tried to get away from Tiree by air on Saturday 18th, but the weather was too bad to fly. On the Sunday they got on the boat, staying on it over night, and sailing via Killchoan to Oban, and from there to Stirling and Carlisle in the early hours of Tuesday morning. Thence to Leeds and Huddersfield, where his mother was taken ill, so Dorothy did the cooking.

There was quite a bit of meeting up with people over Christmas, and then on 28th they went to Sheffield to G&S for the day.

The following day they went to Market Drayton, where more social catching up continued, and a New Year's Eve party at home with various members of the Garratt family.

So 1943 was quite a significant year for Eric personally (regardless of what was happening in the war). Having got married in April, he then went on a training course in the North-West, followed by a posting to South-West Wales, and then another posting to the most westerly isle of the Inner Hebrides.



Tiree 1943
Eric is Front Row, second from right