

place. It was arranged that they would pick me up at the gate at 10 o'clock in the morning. All three girls in the back seat waved to me as they drove away.

Before I went to sleep I thought what a lovely family they were, not a bit false, and very nice to know. Not many parents would drive almost 300 miles out of their way so that their daughter could meet with her friend who was, of all things, a prisoner of war and a former enemy. More than anything, I liked the way they treated me with respect.

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I had a very restful night. I hoped it was going to be a nice day, because I had no idea where to go if the weather changed and the picnic had to be canceled.

Promptly at 10 o'clock the Vauxhall pulled up in front of my place and Sue got out, looking beautiful in a sporty outfit. Everyone greeted me with a warm good morning.

Sue's mother asked if we could first look for a kettle. I understood that they wanted to see cattle and assured her that I knew where to go. So off we drove. I remembered where I had seen cows grazing in a field and led them there, while Sue's mother was wondering why I was taking them out into the fields to buy a kettle, and I was wondering why they wanted to see cattle if they lived in the country.

Before long I pointed to some cows grazing in a field and the misunderstanding came to light. Sue's father stopped the car so he could laugh his heart out. We all ended up doing the same while her mother explained that she needed a kettle to boil water. I felt a bit of a fool and

apologized.

We drove into Connington and found a shop that sold exactly what Sue's mother was looking for. They had brought a camping stove with them, but forgotten to bring the kettle to boil water for tea.

It turned out to be a beautiful hot day. The sun was out and the clouds we had seen earlier in the morning had disappeared. We set off for the nice quiet spot near the small brook. As we were driving along, Sue burst out laughing every so often at the thought of me, leading them into the fields to buy a kettle. Her giggling set off both her sisters. After a while I said, "OK girls, one day you may learn German, and then it will be me who is doing the giggling."

It was a perfect place for a picnic. The air was filled with the smell of fresh hay, which the farmer had not taken into the barn yet.

We all helped with the unloading. First came the blankets, which Sue's father and I spread out on the ground to sit on. Mother and the girls unloaded the picnic basket, drinks and food while he got the little stove going to boil the water for tea. They had brought two bottles of water with them from the place where they stayed.

Sue and her mother made sandwiches for us all. There was quite a variety including corned beef, cheddar cheese, and Bovril. For dessert we had scones and biscuits. I had a wonderful time and felt so grateful to Sue's parents for the way they made me feel like one of them.

After eating we sat and talked for a long time. This was the first opportunity Sue's parents had to find out more about me and my family. They wanted to know about my profession and what I intended to do after my repatriation. They were very interested in the things I told them about my homeland and about how I came to be taken prisoner.

After some time Daisy became bored and wanted to play. I got the idea of building a make-believe horse and carriage. I made the carriage out of hay and asked the little one to sit in it. Then I went in front of it and pretended to be the horse. We both had a great time.

Afterwards I showed them some of the acrobatics I used to do when I was in my late teens. I did cartwheels, handstands, headstands, and what we called flick-flacks, when you leap backwards in the air onto your hands, and then back again onto your feet, several times.

In the early afternoon Sue's mother and the two girls were gathering flowers. Her father was taking a little nap on the blanket. Now was our

chance to sneak off for a while. I pressed Sue's hand a little tighter and said, "Would you like to go for a walk?" She nodded quickly and got up to go.

By now the sun was very hot. I had taken my jacket off and rolled up my shirtsleeves. Sue was in a light sundress, which made her look more beautiful than ever. She called out to her mother to let her know that we were taking a walk. Arm in arm we walked towards some haystacks. Sue said, "This must be one of the most beautiful days of my life."

We sat down on the hay and kissed, and kissed, and kissed.

Time stood still for us, until we heard Daisy call out, "Sue, where are you? We are all getting hungry and Daddy wants to leave soon."

Sue answered, "Here we are Daisy."

I watched to see which side of the haystack she was coming from, then just as she was asking where I was, I sneaked up behind her and lifted her up in the air and said, "Here I am little Daisy."

She laughed and said, "Let's play airplane." I asked her to hold firmly onto my hand. With my other hand I held her ankle and whirled her round like an airplane, until we were both out of breath. Now Pat came looking for us.

When we got back, Sue's mother remarked what a beautiful day it had been. I said it went by far too fast for me. Everyone helped to load the picnic basket, stove, and blankets into the trunk of the car. Sue's mother must have sensed my sadness because she said, "I know Karl, that you would like us to stay longer, but it will take us a whole day to get to Bridlington, where we had planned to spend our vacation."

We drove towards Peterborough and found a pub, which served fish and chips, something I had never eaten before. The girls tried to convince me that it was very good.

We got a table to ourselves in a corner. Sue's father said he was going to have a beer and asked if I wanted one. I told him that I hadn't had a beer for so long I had probably forgotten what it tastes like. When the beer came, Sue's mother whispered to me, "Just drink it slowly Karl". Since I hadn't had any alcohol for such a long time, I thought that was good advice.

Mother ordered fish and chips for everyone and hot tea for the rest of the family. We had very little fish back home in Germany and I was surprised how delicious it tasted. I was very hungry too. After we were

all finished eating, Sue's father suggested we drive back to the camp and go for a walk together while it was still daylight. I thought that was a splendid idea and mentioned that we could take Struppie with us.

Back at the Nissen hut, Struppie was waiting for us. I let him out and then fed him before we all set out on our walk. Daisy took Struppie's lead. She told me that they had a black labrador at home called Sally, who was being looked after by their neighbor.

Our walk was enjoyable. Daisy ran ahead, having fun with Struppie. I walked with Sue's parents so that we could talk. Sue's mother promised to send parcels to my family if I told her what they needed most.

When we came to the small pond, the girls and Struppie were fascinated by the dragonflies. Since it was Sunday evening there was no one else around. We sat down on the grass and watched the midges and dragonflies dancing in the warm evening sun. Sue sat next to me and squeezed my hand every so often. I leaned over and gave her a kiss on the cheeks.

In the distance a farmer was making hay. I just loved the smell of hay mixed with all the fragrances of flowers around us. There were buttercups and daisies growing around the edge of the pond. Behind us was a hedge of blooming wild roses mixed with white hawthorn. At the edge of the path I noticed some larkspur and, just barely above the ground, some milkweed that looked like a white blanket. Everything was growing in profusion. I asked Pat and Daisy to pick some wild flowers for me to put in a glass jar and remind me of their visit. They soon came back with a handful of flowers.

The sun was much lower by now and we could feel an evening breeze blowing. As everyone was getting up to walk back to my place, Sue's grip tightened around my arm. We waited till the family had walked ahead some distance and then, under the cover of the wildrose hedge, we embraced and kissed each other passionately. I put my hands around her face, looked into her beautiful eyes, and said, "I know, Darling, that the day will come when we will not have to part any more. I promise that I will remain true to you until that day."

Tears were rolling down her face as she said, "I love you so much Karl and there will never be any one else besides you."

I kissed the tears from her face and assured her that our love would see us through. Daisy came running along the path towards us with

Struppie pulling her behind him, and we rejoined the others. As usual, Sue made sure that I had no lipstick showing on my face before we got there.

It was time to say goodbye. Sue's mother said it had been wonderful meeting me and that I had a lot to look forward to, meeting my family after so many years. She gave me a hug and said, "Don't worry my dear, time will sort everything out."

Mr. Ridgway wished me all the best and hoped we would meet again. He added, "It was a pleasure meeting you Karl." Pat and Daisy also gave me a hug and they all got in the car.

My heart was heavy as I turned to Sue. She was choking back the tears as she told me that she would wait for me. Then she took out her handkerchief to wave to me until they were out of sight.