



Private Battles: Our Intimate Diaries: How The War Almost Defeated Us

Simon Garfield

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Simon Garfield interweaves the diaries of four ordinary people as they struggle to cope with the reality of life during the Second World War. It's the true story of how ordinary British people won the war. And of how they almost didn't.

Private Battles: Our Intimate Diaries: How The War Almost Defeated Us Details

Date : Published September 6th 2007 by Ebury Press (first published 2006)

ISBN : 9780091910778

Author : Simon Garfield

Format : Paperback 560 pages

Genre : History, Nonfiction, War, World War II, Diary

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Joanne says

Sorry to see it come to an end. I was happy to read about what happened to the writers after the war.

Kathryn says

Didn't enjoy it quite as much as 'Our Hidden Lives' but maybe just because I read it second. Still lots of brilliant moments.

Veronica says

I enjoy reading these Mass-Observation diaries of life during WW2, but I think I may have overdosed on them now. It's still fascinating to see how close and yet how far away from ours these lives are, that people are recognisably the same yet coping with things that are almost unimaginable to us now. In this volume the overwhelming impression is of everyday life going on in spite of the war, of people going about their daily business and grumbling about the inconveniences caused. Pam Ashford notes prosaically on 11 December 1941: "The knowledge that the war cannot spread any further now -- unless the Martians are to come in -- is itself a relief".

It's also notable that after the dark days of 1940 the four diarists here never doubt for a minute that the Allies will be victorious. They vary in their estimates of how long it will take -- from months to years -- but they are sustained by a firm belief that evil cannot prevail.

Ipswichblade says

The third edition of these mass observation diaries. Always interesting to see how people coped with day to day living and their actual views at the time of people like Churchill

Kim says

A good overview of the British public's viewpoint during the Second World War. I felt it could have been strengthened by a mother's voice, both one of small children and one with children away doing the fighting. I also would have enjoyed a closer look at the evolution of meals prepared over the course of the war. Maybe a farmer's viewpoint also, as this volume deals solely with shop bought food.
