

A DESPERATE ATTEMPT

The last time I saw Andre was on Sunday, the twelfth of November nineteen- forty-four. It is a date which I shall never forget.

Andre was one of the sons of a family which lived at St Saviour. They were a large family and very well known on the island. We saw him often. He used to come to the farm, regularly, in the hope that we might have a little food to spare. Sometimes his mother or one of his brothers or sisters would be with him but more often than not Andre would come by himself. We would usually find something to give him. Eggs, potatoes, a couple of swedes - sometimes a few tomatoes. Anything, in fact, that would help the family along.

I say give because in the country we used to trade in kind most of the time. In the shops in town it was different and money was regularly used - the Reichs Mark. The Germans had abolished the Jersey pound. With Andre, who worked at Sampsons' barbers shop, it was a case of him cutting Guy's, my son, hair for him in return for any food that we were able to spare. Similarly, when we needed the services of the plumber or the electrician, most tradesmen in fact, we would usually settle up with them in the same way. We all helped each other. Whatever you had you shared and if we could help to feed Andre and his brothers and sisters we were more than happy to do it.

Andre was a thoroughly nice young man but he was a bit of a tearaway, particularly where the Germans were concerned, and everyone could see him getting himself into real trouble one day.

Sunday, the ¹²~~11~~ of November, was a thoroughly unpleasant day. Windy with heavy showers and a damp cold which seemed to get right into your bones.

I was in the barn, making up the cattle feed, when I heard Andre calling from the yard.

I shouted: 'In the barn, Andre!'

He appeared in the doorway and leant against it.

Andre was not much above medium height but quite stockily built. He had fair, wavy, hair parted in the middle and brushed straight back off his face. He was always smartly turned out. That day he was wearing grey trousers, a tweed jacket and sporting a red tie. Andre always wore a red tie. Nothing to do with politics - it was just his favourite colour.

'Hello, Mrs Le Sueur' he said cheerily. 'Not very nice is it?'

It's absolutely horrible' I replied, 'come for some eggs?'

He smiled shyly 'Only if you've some to spare.'

'Oh! I think we might find a few,' I said 'would a couple of pints of milk help as well?'

He grinned 'I should say so - you really are good to us you know.'

'Only too glad to help when we can. Give me a moment then we'll go and see what we can find.'

'O.K..... thanks.' he said.

He stayed leaning against the doorway idly glancing around the inside of the barn while I finished making up the feed.

His eyes moved across to where the tractor was parked and fell on the petrol can standing beside it. He walked across and picked it up. Shaking it gently, he looked over to where I was and said wonderingly: 'It's nearly full - you've got petrol!'

'Of course.' I said, 'We get an allowance - got to have petrol to start the tractor!' All farms had an allocation of petrol, small though it was, so that the land could be cultivated as best as possible to provide the food necessary to both islanders and the occupying forces.

Andre crossed over to me, still holding the petrol can. He put his free hand on my arm and said quietly 'Please, Mrs Le Sueur, let me have it.'

I said, quickly, 'Don't be silly Andre. We need that petrol for the farm. What would you want it for anyway?'

His face became very serious, 'To escape.' he said simply.

I said, 'To escape - and how do you intend to do that?'

It was a silly question. There was only one way off the island - by boat.

The Allies had, by now, driven the Germans out of most of France and were only some fourteen miles away from the coast of Jersey.

Already there had been a number of attempted escapes from the island, some successful - some not, by people willing to take the risk of trying to get across the narrow stretch of water which lay between.

The trouble was that it was a highly dangerous crossing.

The coastline of Jersey is surrounded by rocks and many would be escapers, having little knowledge of the sea, had fallen foul of them.

The Germans had, until recently, gone out and rescued them when they had got into trouble.

Not any more!

There had been a notice in the the paper, only that week, saying that anyone attempting to escape in the future, and getting into trouble, would be left to their fate. Not only would the Germans make no attempt to save them but they would actively discourage anyone else from doing so - and they meant it!

Andre said excitedly, 'We've a boat hidden at Bouley Bay!'

I looked at him and sighed, 'So you have a boat. What do you know about boats Andre?'

He became more serious. 'Very little - but we have a Frenchman going with us who has plenty of experience,' he said.

'We? How many of you are going?'

'Five of us.'

'Five of you - do I know anyone else apart from you?'

'I don't think so. There's a young married couple, another Jersey boy I don't know and the Frenchman - he's called Lucienne - he's organised it all!'

I shook my head at him.

'You must all be mad.' I said 'And when do you intend embarking on this crazy scheme?'

He looked around, making sure nobody else was in hearing distance, and whispered - 'Tonight!'

'Tonight!' I cried, 'In this weather- don't be so stupid Andre!'

With the wind blowing, as it was, the sea would be rough and the heavy showers would affect visibility badly.

This was bound to make the handling and navigation of any boat very difficult, particularly a small one.

He shrugged, 'Lucienne says it will be alright. It's only fourteen miles and, provided we have enough petrol, we'll be O.K..... then I shall join the army and help to finish the Germans,' he added, bravely.

He went on, a sense of urgency creeping into his voice: 'If I don't get away and be able to fight I just know I'll do something foolish and get into really serious trouble here..... I've got to get away, Mrs Le Sueur.'

I shook my head again and said 'That's as maybe, Andre, but I am not giving you the petrol. If I do and you get caught and they find out where you got it from - what happens to me - I could be shot. No! It's too much to ask.'

He looked at me and said, very quietly, 'If I do get caught there is no way I would tell the Germans where I got the petrol from - no way I would give you away. I'd rather be shot myself!'

I could see that he meant every word he was saying but I was not going to budge. 'And what if something happens to you - do you want me to have that on my conscience?'

His voice became desperate, 'We've been planning this for months. Now we've got a good boat but we must get away before they discover where it's hidden. Their patrols are out on the coast all the time. All we need is that extra drop of petrol to make sure of making it to the other side. We don't want to risk our lives unnecessarily. Please, Mrs Le Sueur, please.'

His voice broke and he slumped down onto the steps of the barn and burst into tears. His shoulders shook and looking at me with his eyes pleading through the tears he mouthed the words: 'Please.....please.....'

It suddenly became all too much for me and I shouted at him: 'Oh, for God's sake, take the damned petrol!'

Andre looked at me, for a moment, as though unable to believe his ears.

Then his face lit up and he jumped to his feet - tears forgotten.

Throwing his arms round me and hugging me he cried:

'Thank you! Oh thank you so much! You'll never know what this means to me.'

I pushed him away gently.

'Well lets just hope it brings you good fortune and doesn't end in disaster,' I said grimly.

'Everything is going to be just fine - I know it is.' he laughed - his mood totally changed - from the depths of despair one minute to utter elation the next.

'Now,' I said, 'having been daft enough to give you the petrol, we must make sure that you get it away safely.'

I found an old sack and put the petrol can in it, making sure that the cap was tightly screwed on. Then I tied the neck of the sack up with a piece of string and handed it to him.

'Right,' I said briskly, 'Now let's go and find what you came for in the first place!'

We went into the house and after I had put a dozen eggs into a bag and poured a couple of pints of milk into a can for him we sat down and had a cup of tea.

We decided that, as he had the petrol, the best way Andre could get back to his house was to walk across the fields. That way he could keep totally off the roads and away from prying eyes and enquiring minds. Even if he was seen, the sight of someone in the fields with a sack over his shoulder would not excite suspicion. The only road he had to cross was the one outside our farm.

We finished our tea and Andre got up and said: 'Well I'd better be going I suppose.' He looked at me and said, very quietly with his shy smile:

'I shall never forget what you've done for me.'

He bent down and picked up the petrol and the food.

As we reached the door he paused: ' Seems funny to think that I shan't see you all again until after the war is over,' he said wistfully.

'Let's hope that's very soon,' I said, ' we shall miss you Andre.'

'I shall miss you too,' he said, 'I'll get a message through to Mum and Dad somehow to tell them where I am - they'll let you know.'

'I'm sure they will.' I said.

We walked out to the road, where Andre had to cross. I went out and made sure all was clear.

Nobody was about.

I gave his arm a squeeze and said: 'Off you go. Good luck be with all of you.

Just make good use of that petrol and be sure you get to France in one piece!'

He laughed. 'You can bet on it!' Then more seriously, 'Thanks again, Mrs Le Sueuer - from all of us.'

'That's alright Andre,' I said, 'but don't forget that if you get into trouble out there the Germans won't help you.'

'I know - but we'll be fine. Don't you worry about us... France here we come!' he shouted.

Still laughing, he ran across the road and started over the fields.

I watched him go. He turned and waved. I waved back.

Andre disappeared from view and I turned and went back into the barn.

Although I now felt good about letting him have the petrol - the feeling was tempered by a sense of unease. Had I done the right thing or hadn't I. If he hadn't become so emotional I would probably not have given him the petrol. Then, again, if I had refused and they had failed to reach the French coast for lack of fuel.....?

I went back to my chores. It was then that it struck me - I was going to have to explain to my husband what I had done with his precious petrol. I had a strong feeling that he was not going to be best pleased!

When Jack came in from the fields he was wet, cold and not in a particularly good mood. It was such a miserable day. As he sat at the kitchen table, with his hands cupped round a steaming mug of home made soup, I told him about Andre and what I had done.

He looked at me in exasperation. 'You didn't give him the petrol?' he said.

'I did.'

'But you knew that I needed it for the farm.'

'I know,' I said, 'but what was I to do? There was poor Andre crying his heart out. At first I felt sorry for him. Then, I suppose, I must have lost my temper. If I'd been holding the petrol can, myself, I'd probably have thrown it at him. Anyway he's got it!'

'And what if the Germans catch him with it and they force him to say where he got it? Good God, Eileen, we could be in really serious trouble - you could get us both shot!' 'It won't come to that,' I said, 'I honestly believe that, whatever they did, Andre would never tell them where he got the petrol from.'

Jack grunted. 'Well all I can say is I hope you're right!'

The following morning a letter arrived, first delivery. It was from Andre and must have been written and posted during the short time between his leaving our place and his escape attempt later that night. It was quite short:

Dear Mr and Mrs Le Sueur,

*Just a line, before I try and get away, to thank you for all the good you have done for me and my family. I appreciate it from the bottom of my heart. I wish you luck in the future and I hope everything will turn out alright for you. I am sorry in a way to leave but we are all fed up with the life we have to put up with. If we are lucky enough to get across I shall be more than delighted. If not we shall land in *Gloucester Street Mansion but our spirit will not be broken, but I pray and with God's blessing I hope we shall be alright. So I will end my short letter and say not Goodbye but Au Revoir.*

From one of your devoted friends

Andre

Thank you once again

P.S. Give my love to Guy

As I read the letter I marvelled at the fact that Andre, with so much on his mind, had made the time to write it.

I put the letter on the kitchen table for Jack to read, when he came in, and went off to do my chores about the house and the farm.

It was later in the morning when the first rumours started coming in that there had been some trouble off the North Coast during the night.

The baker's boy was the first to mention it and then one of our neighbours, who had been into St Helier that morning and was passing by, stopped to tell me. It appeared that the rumours originated with a gang of workers, constructing the New North Road and working at night. They were made up from a mixture of local people and Russian prisoners, Word was coming from them that they had heard screams for help coming

from the sea close to where they were working.

The Germans had heard the cries also but had refused to give any assistance.

When volunteers came forward, from the roadworkers, to go and help they were forcibly restrained by the Germans.

They had no option but to listen - horrified - unable to do anything, to the frantic cries which came from the sea. They stood, huddled together and utterly helpless, until the screams gradually weakened and finally ceased altogether.

The rumours terrified me. All I could think of was Andre and his friends struggling for their lives in the cold dark waters.

Panic stricken I rushed to find Jack. I found him working in the barn.

I poured out the story to him, choking back the sobs.

He tried to calm my fears saying: 'It's not necessarily them. There are a lot of escape attempts going on..... it could be anyone.'

I didn't think so. I had this terrible sense of foreboding.

All sorts of rumours were flying about during that day but there was no reliable news at all.

We waited and waited, dreading what we might be going to hear.

By night time there was still no news. In spite of making numerous telephone calls we had not been able to find out anything. It was late when we finally gave up and went up to bed.

I had a restless night. Andre's happy face, as he left with the can of petrol, kept appearing before me. It gave me a bad feeling. Eventually my eyes closed and I slept - but when I wakened the next morning the bad feeling was still with me.

It was in the middle of the ^{week} ~~morning~~ when the telephone call came.

I was alone in the house. Jack was, as usual, somewhere out on the farm.

The sudden ringing of the phone set every nerve in my body jangling.

I just stood there looking at it - letting it ring.

I did not want to answer it.

The ringing became more insistent.

I knew I had to pick it up.

Slowly I lifted the receiver.

'Yes,' I said.

'Eileen?..... Eddie O'Connor here!'

I recognised the voice at once. We knew Eddie well. He worked at the hospital.

Without waiting for me to reply he went on:

'You know that kid who used to come up to you for eggs and stuff.....the one who always wore a red tie.'

Andre!

'Yes,' I said, feeling sick.

'Well he's here..... in the mortuary!'

I couldn't speak. I mumbled something and hung up.

Crossing to the kitchen table I pulled out a chair, sat down, put my head on my arms and wept.

I was still there when Jack came in for lunch two hours later.

Andre had drowned together with the young married couple and the Frenchman, called Lucienne.

The screams for help that the road workers had heard were those of Andre and his friends as they fought for, and lost, their lives in the seas which they had hoped to cross to France and freedom.

They could have been rescued but the Germans, true to their promise, had ensured that no help was given. They were left to die as a dreadful warning to others who might be tempted to try to escape the same way.

The fifth member of the party had not been with them.

It came out later that he had been getting a few things together in his room, ready to go, when his father walked in and asked what he was doing.

He told his father of the plan and that he, together with his friends, was going to escape to France that night by boat.

His father thought the plan foolhardy.

With the Allies, by now, advancing into Germany it could not be long before the war was over.

He forbade his son to go!

Nobody knew the reason for what had happened.

Maybe the engine had failed. They could well have misjudged their position and, thinking that they were past the reefs, put the boat at full speed and then hit a rock or they could have been struck by a large wave, the sea was rough, and been capsized. The wreckage of the boat was washed ashore but the damage to it was so great that there was no way of telling what its fate had been.

It was a mystery that was never solved.

When Andre died he was just nineteen years old.

The Channel Islands were liberated six months later!

* Gloucester Street Mansion (German Prison)

MIRACLES STILL HAPPEN

A FEW DAYS

~~The day~~ after Andre had drowned I went to see his mother.

I was very distressed by what had happened but I knew that my pain over the tragedy, hard to bear as it was, could never match the agony she had to be suffering.

I felt utterly useless but knew that I needed to try to do something which might help, if only a little, to lessen the desolation which had so suddenly entered her life and the lives of Andre's family. My conscience was troubling me as well. It was I who had given him the petrol.

I rode over on my bike. Pedalling slowly I tried to compose my thoughts, wondering how to cope with the situation. Mere words never seem to be adequate in such circumstances.

I arrived at the house, still feeling far from certain as to what to say. In the event it was not I who opened the conversation.

Leaning my bike against the wall I walked across the yard and knocked on the kitchen door.

Andre's mother opened it. Her face was very pale and her eyes were red.

She tried, bravely, to smile as she motioned for me to go in.

As she closed the door she turned and, before I could say anything, pointed her finger at me and said: 'Was it you - you who gave him the petrol?' Her voice was surprisingly gentle.

I couldn't speak - I was too upset. I just nodded dumbly as the tears welled up and ran down my cheeks.

She took my arm and led me to a chair 'Sit down,' she said, kindly.

We sat at the kitchen table. There was silence for a few moments.

Then, nodding her head slowly, she said: 'I knew it - I knew it was you. I saw him writing a letter before he left. It was addressed to you.'

I said simply, in a shaky voice; 'Yes. It was me. I'm so so sorry.'

I burst into tears again.

After I had managed to pull myself together I told her everything that had happened. How Andre had pleaded with me for the petrol. How, at first, I had refused to give it to him. His despair when told he could not have it. His elation when I changed my mind.

I told her of the guilt I felt because I was sure that if I had not given the petrol to him he, and his three friends, would still be alive and not lying in the town mortuary.

I ended by telling her that I wished, with all my heart, that he had never come anywhere near our place on that fateful day.

Andre's mother put her hand over mine.

'My dear,' she said, 'the petrol you gave him was not the cause of Andre's death. He, and his friends, would have gone anyway. They were utterly determined to escape and totally oblivious to the dangers involved. The petrol you gave them was just a bonus.

You musn't blame yourself. There is no way that anyone could have stopped them.

What you did for Andre was out of the kindness of your heart.'

Then she looked at me and said: 'What you must not do is to tell anyone - anyone at all - of this. The fewer people who know about it the better. If the Germans came to hear of it.....well it doesn't bear thinking about.'

She was right. Jack and I had already agreed that there must be no hint that I had had anything to do with helping in the escape attempt.

By the time I left I was feeling much better. The kind and sympathetic words of Andre's mother had helped me a lot. At the same time I felt somewhat deflated. I had gone there with the intention of trying to comfort her and things had somehow got turned around the other way. But I took comfort in the thought that because we had talked, at length, about Andre it had probably helped her as much as it had me.

The funeral did not take place for over two weeks.

It was necessary first for an inquest to take place to establish the cause of death and there were all sorts of rules and regulations to comply with before the authorities would release the body for burial.

The result of the inquest was predictable. 'Death By Misadventure'.

Those of us, who knew the facts, felt that a murder verdict against those who had denied help for the victims should have been brought in but the Germans were hardly going to allow that. They stated, bluntly, that the victims had been breaking the law and that the consequences they suffered were no fault of the occupying forces.

Feelings on the island, particularly among the younger people, were running very high over the incident. Andre and his friends had been very popular. The fact that they were the first, after the 'Warning' had been issued, to be left to drown without any attempt at rescue by the Germans heightened the tension. Not only had there been no attempt at rescue by the Germans but they had forcibly stopped the group of road workers, who had heard the cries for help, from going to their aid..

It was believed that the victims had been abandoned to their fate, intentionally, as a ~~dreadful~~ deterrent to other would be escapees. They might just as well have been dragged from their boat and shot.

The Germans were aware of this undercurrent of feeling, amongst the islanders, and had decreed that only the immediate family and two invited friends could attend the funeral as official mourners. Others, wishing to pay their last respects, would be allowed to be present at the church; provided that they were in their places by eight o'clock in the morning. The funeral service would commence at ten and when it was over only the 'official' party would be allowed at the graveside. There was no way that our rulers were going to allow Andre's funeral to spark a mass demonstration.

Imagine how I felt when I received a letter, from Andre's family, asking me to attend the funeral as one of the two friends of the family.

I was still terribly upset and kept breaking down and crying whenever I thought about what had happened - which was often.

I showed the letter to Jack and said, simply: 'I can't go!'

He said: 'I don't see how you can refuse. How can you not go without hurting their feelings? They've asked you as a special friend.'

'I know,' I said, 'but I'm not going to go. I know I shall burst into tears all the time and make an utter fool of myself. What will people think? They'll be wondering why I am so upset won't they? Someone is going to put two and two together.'

Jack looked puzzled: 'Why should they. Nobody knows about your part in it - except the family - and they're not going to broadcast it.'

'Maybe not,' I said, 'but I'm still not going!'

Jack shook his head: 'I think you're wrong,' he said 'Anyway, how are you going to get out of it?'

I said, firmly, 'I'm just going to have to tell them I can't go.'

As the words left my mouth the telephone rang. Jack got up from his chair and answered it. I heard him say: 'Hold on a moment.'

Then he held the receiver out to me and said, with a wry smile: 'It's for you. Croad wants to speak to you!'

I didn't believe it. Croad was the local undertaker.

I took the phone and put it to my ear: 'Yes, Mr Croad,' I said, 'how can I help you?'

'It's about young Andre's funeral, Mrs Le Sueur. We shall be picking up Mr Sampson just before nine and should be with you about twenty minutes later. That will give us plenty of time to get you to the church before the arrival of the hearse.'

I said, slowly, 'Mr Croad, I'm not sure that I shall be going to the funeral.'

He was totally taken aback: 'But I was given to understand that you would definitely be attending, he said.'

'I don't know who told you that,' I replied, 'it certainly didn't come from me.'

'Well perhaps you would be good enough to let me know your decision as soon as possible,' he said, stiffly.

'I will indeed,' I said, 'goodbye Mr Croad.' I hung up and turned to Jack.

'I just can't go,' I wailed.

He shrugged: 'I still think you're wrong,' he said, 'think about it!'

I spent the next few days, before the funeral, thinking of practically nothing else and wrestling with my conscience. Although I knew that I should be there I was still sure that I would break down and somehow give away my part in the affair. That would bring down the wrath of the Third Reich not only on my own head but on my family as well. As it happened the decision was going to be much simpler than I could have imagined.

Jack had already become involved as he had been asked, by Andre's family, to go to their house, with his horse drawn van, to collect the flowers that had been delivered there for the funeral. He was to take them to the church so that they could be arranged before the service. He went off very early on the morning the funeral was to take place to make sure that all was done in good time.

The amount of wreaths and sheafs of flowers was unbelievable. People from all over the island had sent tributes.

After Jack had left I cleared away the breakfast things, washed up, got into my normal farm clothes and went out to start work.

I was feeling dreadful. I had not contacted either Andre's family or Mr Croad to tell them that I was not going to the funeral.

I had been busy pottering about the farmyard for sometime when I suddenly heard the

clip clop of horses hooves coming along the road. For a moment I thought that it was Jack returning from the church but then I realised that there was more than one horse coming down the lane. As I looked towards the gateway a coach, drawn by a pair of matching jet black horses, swung into the yard.

For some unknown reason my immediate reaction was to look at my watch. It was nine-fifteen. Croad had sent his coach for me!

The driver reined in and looked down at me. He eyed my clothes, curiously:

'Mrs Le Sueur?' he asked *rather*

'Yes.' I replied, feeling ~~somewhat~~ foolish.

'I've come to collect you to take you to the funeral.' he said

I started to say 'I don't think I'm going.....' my voice tailed off as he ~~went on~~ *interrupted*

'But this coach is for the official mourners - you and Mr Sampson. It has been specially sent for you. You are expected, Mrs Le Sueur. You can't let them down.'

I could see Mr Sampson leaning forward inside the coach. He looked at me, through the window, and raised his hand in greeting.

Suddenly my mind cleared. I knew what I had to do.

Shouting at the coachman that I would only be a couple of minutes I turned and ran into the house.

I went up the stairs to the bedroom two at a time, throwing off my working clothes as I went. In five minutes flat I had washed, brushed my hair, changed into a formal dress and shoes, put on a hat, thrown my best coat around my shoulders and was walking sedately out to where the coach awaited.

The coachman, eyebrows raised, opened the door for me. I climbed in and sat down opposite Mr Sampson trying not to look as though I was out of breath - which I was. He looked at me, quizzically, but refrained from commenting on - what must have seemed to both him and the driver - my somewhat strange behaviour

As we drove to the church we noticed that the Germans were noticeably absent from the roads. Usually there were plenty to be seen.. The Authorities were obviously worried about the possibility of trouble and had ordered their troops to keep clear of the route that the funeral was to take. They had instructed the local police to escort the hearse to the church, however, and the escort was to be of sufficient force to be able to deal with any possible upset. As the police were Jersey men they would be much more effective than the Germans, who would only incense any difficult situation that might arise.

The police still had a very difficult job. They felt as strongly about the deaths of Andre and his friends, as did the rest of the islanders, but they were the only body which would be able to defuse any ugly incidents which might break out. They were respected and would be listened to. It was in everybody's interest that any possibility of violence should be avoided.

I had been chatting to Mr Sampson as we drove along, trying to appear perfectly calm, but feeling sick with apprehension at the ordeal I now had to face. Then, all too quickly, the horses slowed and the coach drew up outside the main door of the church. The coachman climbed down from his seat and went to the horses heads. Someone opened the door from the outside.

I stepped down and, as I did so, something incredible happened. Suddenly I felt totally calm. The emotions which I had expected to well up within me did not materialise. Instead I felt a complete sense of serenity come over me. It was as though an invisible cloak had been placed around my shoulders to protect me. It was at that moment my life became totally different and I became a true believer in God.

I had always thought, before that day of revelation, that there must be some reason for our existence but the idea of an omnipotent being I had never really been able to accept. God was some ethereal being, somewhere up there in the sky, to whom you sent up a quick prayer, when you needed a favour or were in trouble. You didn't expect anything really to happen - yet you still did it.

I had been brought up to go to church like most children of my time. I knew most hymns by heart and I had regularly attended Sunday School. Following tradition, I suppose, I took my son to Sunday School regularly and sometimes to church but it had never had any real meaning for me.

That is until I arrived at the church for Andre's funeral.

Then everything changed. I knew that, after all, miracles did happen.

The church was not just full - it was packed. People were standing in the side aisles and those who could not get in were crowded outside around the doors.

I was amazed. I had truly expected that there would only be the family, Mr Sampson and me.

The family was Roman Catholic and there was a full Requiem Mass. The coffin, covered in flowers, stood on trestles before the altar. It was such a pathetic sight. In it lay the remains of a young man who had held such high hopes of things to come but whose life had been cut so tragically short.

All through the Mass I continued to feel absolutely calm. I had no sudden desire to burst into tears as I had felt I would.

At last the service was over and I followed behind the family as the coffin was carried from the church to the graveside and Andre was laid in his last resting place. After the interment was over I went back to where most of the congregation had gathered, in the roadway, outside the church.

There was no sign of any trouble. Word had been passed around that this was the last thing that Andre's grieving family would wish to happen. People stood about, in groups, talking quietly amongst themselves.

I spent some time chatting to friends and locals who knew Jack and me.

All of them said that they realised exactly why I had been invited - because we had helped Andre and his family with food. There was no suspicion of anything other possible motive..

Again I sent my thanks to God for ~~taking care of me~~ ^{being there} and creating a little miracle just for me.

It wasn't until I got home that the days events caught up with me - and then I had Jack's shoulder to cry on!

Eileen
Edwards