

## Home Front Film Croydon

Residents of the London Borough of Croydon remember their childhoods during WW2.

<https://vimeo.com/341812932>

### Memories of growing up during WW2 - 1939 - 1945

**Male voice:** When the war started on the 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1939, I was 6 years and 8 months old and we were playing out in the street with friends and the siren went and my father came and found me and took me indoors and we just sat and waited for the all clear to go.

**Female voice:** I was 6 when the war started and I lived at 15 Mardell Road, Long Lane, Croydon. I can remember the first day of the war on a Sunday when the sirens went and Mum was very frightened and kept us all in.

**Female Voice:** I lived at home with my brother and a sister. My Dad was at war – but he was taken prisoner of war quite early and my mother. We were evacuated in Lanivet on a farm – she was working there and she had us with her.

**Female voice:** I was born in 1931 and at the start of the war we lived in Shirley and on the day after the war began, we were evacuated – my little sister and I.

**Male voice:** I was living at 18 John Street South Norwood at the start of the war. The bombing was so bad we decided to move to Trispen which is just outside Truro in Cornwall.

### Day to day Life during the War

**Female voice:** Every week in school we were encouraged to buy National Savings Stamps – the philosophy was that you did all you could to further the war effort. This was part of it.

**Male voice:** There was a time when we used the trams and I cycled as well, and getting my cycle wheel caught in the middle hole where the electric current was.

**Female voice:** We used to get on the bus and had to go to Brixton and things – I don't know I always used to say I want to get off – I feel sick. And we'd paid our fares and my mother was never very pleased.

**Female voice:** Well we went on the tram from South Norwood into Croydon and we used to go to the market and there was Kennard's and there was Kennard's Arcade where there was donkey you could have rides on – if you behaved properly. The High Street of Croydon I remember very well you could always tell what was going on. If there was a queue outside a shop it meant that something unrationed had arrived. It might be something as mundane as broken biscuits.

**Female voice:** My sister and I was always the ones to go and get the rationing – and probably we were hungry because on the way home we would nibble the cheese and that or something or break a bit off the bread.

**Female voice:** I can remember going to the market in Croydon and that and I can remember shopping for Mum – you went with a list. You took your ration book – you waited – and they did all the little butter pats and the weighing the sugar separately and everything.

**Female voice:** We had a lot of freedom in a way. During the day, we didn't go out at night though – Yes – we used to play hopscotch and marbles and the boys used to like playing cards, with flicking the cards up against the wall. We did skipping – a lot of skipping.

**Female voice:** I remember playing in the street. We had a whip and top and of course there were no cars so a bit later I had skates so that we could skate up and down and that.

**Male voice:** Working on the farm at harvest time we would go and help with the harvest – we didn't get paid much but we got rabbits as payment.

**Female voice:** Dad had chickens in the corner and grew all veggies or whatever he could around the shelter and on the shelter.

**Female voice:** Gran grew – definitely grew – lots of runner beans, rhubarb.

**Female voice:** We grew things in the garden – oh we kept chickens and then we collected the eggs.

**Male voice:** My father decided to keep chickens and he would grow tomatoes and things like this. Yes he'd dig for victory very much. Round about November to December one of our chickens would become ill and we would have to get rid of it. But it came in very handy on Christmas Day.

**Female voice:** Waste food being saved. Waste paper being saved – I mean nowadays it's not the beginning of recycling.

### **Living in London during the Blitz**

**Male voice:** I can remember then the barrage balloons were being erected. So although the war hadn't started everybody knew there was going to be a war – practices of being invaded and being a patient and being treated in an ambulance and that sort of thing but that was all in a sense 'fun' – obviously to my parents it wasn't fun at all.

**Male voice:** We had the roof blown off our scullery. My Mother had laid the cups and saucers for tea in the morning. I can remember my father having to push the door open rather violently – and we went in and not one of the cups was broken – but they were covered in dust and dirt.

**Female voice:** Where we lived it was near Denmark Road – it was one of the largest bombs in Croydon that was dropped there. We was in a brick air raid shelter probably about two or 300, well 200 yards along the road, where there was about another 10 families in there and I can remember mainly putting my head under the blankets that were in there. The doors must have been blown in and the smell in there with this brown dust.

### **Celebrating the end of the War – VE and VJ Day 1945**

**Male voice:** We had a street party and people dressed up and yes made a lot of noise and a bonfire – because you weren't allowed bonfires during the war. People were relieved and happy but of course there weren't many men there because they were in the forces.

**Male voice:** Tables and chairs out in the street and flags and balloons and all that.

**Female voice:** Kids all dressing up. I think we won two or three prizes did us lot, our brothers and that – I was the Queen of Hearts, me brother was one of the nursery rhymes.

**Male voice:** VJ Day, there was a bit of an argument over that. The street gave a party and because we hadn't lived there, we weren't invited to the party. So me grandmother – she's a very feisty

woman – she went ballistic because she paid all the war – paid into the party fund – cause we never ever thought we'd lose the war – we was going to win it no matter what.

**Female voice:** They had banners across the road. There was a public house in the middle which I know they had a platform and I can remember the microphone and singing and that – we had fancy dress type things. My brother and I were Bistro Kids.

**What was it like to grow up during WW2?**

**Male voice:** Being a child we didn't realise how serious it was. Lots of it was games but you realise that your parents are trying to shelter you. But you just thank the Lord that you came through it and you just don't want other people to experience what our generation did.

**Female voice:** But we had to grow up quite quickly. But we were lucky – we were alive.

**Project credits**

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