

**Interviewee: Audrey Daniels**

**Interviewer: Malin Lundin**

**Date: 08.03.2011**

**Location: Telephone Interview**

Summary of Interview with Audrey

Audrey, who was 9 years in 1939, was living in Weedon, Northamptonshire with her family in the married quarters of the barracks belonging to the Weedon Equestrian School at the outbreak of war. The family remained at the establishment, where her father served as a trainer for the Royal Horse Artillery, until it closed down in 1940. Whilst in Weedon, Audrey remembers seeing troops returning from Dunkirk recuperating at the Weedon Army Hospital. The troops, she recalls, were spotted convalescing on the hospital lawn while her and some friends were playing on a nearby field.

At the outbreak of war Audrey was visiting an aunt in Kent. Recollections of the first day of war evoke memories of sitting in her aunt's garden. Bringing the news, her aunt suggested it would be best if she returned home.

Leaving Weedon, the family relocated to Hove in Kent. Audrey's father had at this stage left the country and was not to return until five years later. The family remained in Hove only for a short time as the area was near the coast and not considered safe. As the owner of the village shop in Ightham, Kent, Audrey's aunt, managed to arrange a flat in the village for the family to settle down. Remaining in the village until 1944, Audrey recalls how she had merely started her first term at Maidstone Technical when the V1s started and she was evacuated. Although the school evacuated to Wales, Audrey went with her family to Devon. Settling down in Hill Village, the family stayed for six months and later returned to Maidstone.

Overall, the education Audrey received during the war she considers to have been sufficient. She took it as it came. The school building, Audrey recalls, was shared with a London school. Leaving school at 16, she became a shorthand typist.

Although not having much direct experience of air raids, Audrey remembers during the first months of the war planes coming over the military base in Weedon and having to take shelter. She also recalls how planes came over on their way to Coventry and the subsequent red glow from the fires. After her move to Kent, the main experience of air raids was a doodlebug that came down in the village of Ightham.

In terms of rationing, Audrey believes that she was well looked after. Her mother always managed to put food on the table, she cannot remember ever being left hungry. As her aunt owned the village shop it is possible that she passed on vegetables to Audrey's mother.

VE-day evokes memories of celebrations and a bonfire in a field. The celebrations were, nevertheless, put short when a group of local lads let off smoke bombs among the celebrating parties with the subsequent result of the dispersing of celebrations. VJ-day took place while Audrey and her sister spent the weekend with an aunt in Brighton. Audrey recalls attending a street party but losing her sister in the crowds. When eventually finding her sister, Audrey returned to her aunt having lost the mood to celebrate. The end of war was a great relief but everything was still scarce. Rationing was still in place for her wedding in 1953. It proved to be an awful job finding a house and not much furniture was around once the couple eventually found a place to live.

Audrey believes the war affected her much in terms of not wanting to waste. Even to this day when baking, Audrey always scrapes all the butter of the wrappers and save these to use when lining a cake tin. This is something her mother used to do. The will not to waste has stayed with her.

Considering her war experience, Audrey believes herself to have been very fortunate as being a child/teenager life went on much the same. She used to watch the lads play cricket and go to the village dance. Life went on much like normal and she didn't lose any family. Only one lad in the village was lost.