

Written by Betty Jarvis

Some Wartime Memories

I was not yet a teenager, being about 12 years old, when War broke out.

I can clearly remember Mr. Churchill's speech, stating that we would be at War with Germany, if they had not replied by a certain – 11 o'clock a.m. I believe – I clearly remember this time passing, and almost immediately after the Air Raid Siren sounded. I rushed for my Gas Mask, thinking, erroneously, I had to wear it whilst a raid was in progress.

All our windows in the house were blacked out – black material stretched over wooden frames, fitted in the window frame, so no lights were visible to aircraft through the nights.

Each evening, at dusk, we descended to our Air Raid Shelter, with 2 maiden ladies, to spend the evening and night there. We were very lucky as our shelter was erected under a large Lean-to shed, so kept fairly dry – many were filled with about 2 feet of water. My father had run electricity down to the shelter, so we were very lucky, and could have a light for reading, electric fire to keep us warm, and we also had the luxury of toast and toasted crumpets, if we had a little butter left from our rations. What we never knew was the damage we would wake up to, to our house each morning.

We would sit in bed – during each night – and listen to the bombs exploding – the Land Mines causing so much damage on impact, and the Doodle Bugs approaching – the engines cutting out – then them falling quite close with a loud BANG. We would get up in the morning – check our house for broken windows etc., then walk up and down the road to see the extent of the damage to our neighbours properties and their occupants, which noises we had heard during the night of breaking, crashing glass, And destruction.

We seldom had a good nights sleep in those days.