

Transcript of Edward Aylward Audio Clip

The old road I lived in – in one of the gardens at the back of a shop was an old sort of outhouse, for the want of a word, which to be perfectly honest if someone would have said ‘Dang!’ it would have collapsed. That’s how old it was. And we kept our stirrup pumps and our sand in this place ready at hand. Basically we used to stand, about five of us, on the street corner looking generally to see these incendiary bombs, which me brother and I, we had one bounced off the roof of our own house – and well you never seen the amount of earth like it. We threw so much earth on it, it looked like a mountain. [Laughs]

Interviewer: And did that work?

Edward: Yeah, the [unclear] part about an incendiary bomb was that when you disturbed it, it would still be alight if you know what I mean. It’s sort of – you move the earth around and trying to get more earth on it. And suddenly you’d see whisks of smoke coming out and you think the damned thing is still alight and that’s an incendiary bomb and that was a pain in the butt really.

Interviewer: So you were trying to – what you were trying to do was to get to the bombs and extinguish them before they started a fire.

Edward: That’s basically what we would call fire watching. Sounds a silly title to give people but there you go.

Interviewer: So you’d be out when the raids were on?

Edward: Yeah, yeah. Literally, I mean, when I was in the ARP all I had was a tin helmet and a whistle. And that was my safe guard.

Interviewer: And how did you feel about that though? Going in from a normal sort of peaceful life to being out with your helmet and your whistle and putting –

Edward: I think it’s because I used to visit the air raid shelters to see if other people were ok that was an active life. What you had to be very careful about is when the anti-aircraft guns hurtled their shells skywards. It was the bits of metal that dropped that was more dangerous to people who were just walking the streets.