

## Letter written by May Hannagan

I was 23 years when I married in 1940 – my Husband obviously having been ‘called up’ so I was still at my parents house living at the Crystal Palace area it was a big old house spacious rooms our bedrooms were at the top floor (very tempting to lie on the bed hoping there would be no siren) – but alas we had to make a dash for the Anderson shelter. Bombs as usual were dropping everywhere & one night a few yards from us one lifted a huge big Oak tree in the garden which left a huge crater & at the same time a large chicken house vanished in midair. No sign of anything – the Anderson was shaken & slightly went on one side – but we were all still safe. The sirens usually, started about 6 in the evening till roughly 6 in the morning although they were going during the day – the point being if you relied on the buses & bombs had dropped into the roads you had to walk!! Of course I had to walk to Brixton where I worked & managed to get there by 9am (about 5 miles) the Boss asked me how I got here – I told him I walked – ‘good’ he said in other words you’ve got a job. That’s it! I was then in my early teens!

In those days you were not allowed to make a mistake – everything had to be worked out in your head! I eventually took a couple of rooms in a little house in Brixton & was quite happy there – of course I had to take my turn in putting out the incendiaries in your road. The atmosphere everywhere was different from today’s life – I think we laughed here & there, made the most of the days – maybe we felt we’re in the same boat. Of course food was scarce – I don’t know what we had to eat some days. One lunch time I was lucky in my lunch hour looking for food I saw steak & chips no Ration Book – I stared until someone said ‘come in’ of course I had a lovely dinner – told everyone in the office – someone said I know the fellow keeps his horse in the garden!! I was lucky. When I think of my life – it probably gave me a feeling of thinking how lucky I am & what it was like all those years ago. People find it hard to appreciate what they have got these days.