

Transcript of Audio Clip with Frederick Wayne

The schools were evacuated in late August of '39. I decided, and my parents agreed with me, not to go. I'd just passed what was then the 11 exam. I got a place in a trade school which was evacuated to Suss – Cornwall. I just didn't want to go. I had a fear frankly and I can still remember that fear. The fear of being left in Cornwall and me parents being killed. So I didn't want to go and I wanted to stay if whatever happened it happened to us all. For the first – and it is difficult to remember actually how many months that was but for the first several months there was no schooling but most of my friends had obviously gone so you was at lose end. I spent most of the time riding around the streets on my bicycle. The bombing started in September in earnest and from then on we were in an Anderson shelter every night. We didn't have any nights out. We didn't go out of the Anderson shelter. We slept in it. We made our coffee or cocoa as it was in the evening on a mess stove. Camping mess stove. We sat there with candle light and you listened to the bombs falling, which was pretty often. During the day one of the things I used to do was to go around collecting shrapnel. Which for the few children that was around shrapnel collecting and swapping was the in-thing of the day. And you used to get a lot of shrapnel which was mainly shell bits and as Miriam said we did have the mobile Bofors guns around on the streets though they didn't last too long. I think they realised they were causing more damage than good.

In late September of '40 my aunt and uncle who lived not too far away in Lothian Road were bombed. They had a big Victorian house, got a direct hit, absolutely flattened. They were in an Anderson shelter again at the bottom of the garden. It wasn't a particularly big garden. The people that were in the house next door were killed. It was just a pile of bricks. They came to us and they moved in with us. As was the thing in those days. You helped people out. Uncle Charlie and aunt Em and cousin Norah came to live with us and at first shared our shelter at night which was to say at least was a bit cramped cos it was head to foot and there was 6 – 5 adults and a child, well, and a young lad in there. And you were there all night as I say. Toilet arrangements were blow out the candle and pass the bucket around [laughs]. So things were quite primitive if you - we shared that shelter and after a time we managed to go and get uncle Charlie's shelter out but his had been concreted in and it became very difficult to get it out. So it took us quite some time. We got it out and we put it in our garden. Now just as luck would have it we had a very long garden in the road were we lived in, Denmark Road. And at the bottom of the garden it was banked some nearly 3 feet so our shelter was in that area which really wasn't below ground level to such an extent so the guys who was in the shelter next door drew all the water so we was all bone dry. Which was one of the things with Anderson shelters, they filled with water. That was the problem with them.