

## **Early Memories Aged 0-5**

### **Whitworth Street & Christchurch Way**

#### **Written by Geoffrey Turner**

My parents were both deaf and my brother & I, aged 1-5 and 5-10 were able to warn our parents of the Air Raid warnings and any other dangers. We were evacuated to Tunbridge Wells, but that did not work, so we returned to Greenwich to face quite severe risks from bombing raids. Initially we took shelter under the stairs or table during air raids, I do not remember being frightened or distressed, so our parents must have been quite comforting.

The Parachute Mine which landed in Blackwall Lane, 500 yards East blew in the back window & my Mother had head wounds from flying glass, then my brother & I were in the garden when a V2 Flying Bomb came over, brother said OK till the engine stops, it did & it landed 500 yards West wrecking our front door and destroying shops on Trafalgar Road. On another occasion we were playing in the street & brother was left tied to a lamppost during a raid.

My father dug out a pit and erected an Anderson Shelter, then covered it with earth, four wooden bunks, quite smelly & damp, but safer. After the war he dismantled it to make a shed. My Grandmother in Christchurch Way also took us to the big shelters in Greenwich Park, protected by huge barrage balloons. My father was a skilled shoemaker and brought Army boots home to repair over the weekend.

My Grandmother did a great job cooking supper & cocoa for the firefighters at 'Rangers Lodge' in the Park. Grandfather had served in the First War, survived the trenches & worked loading coal for the new Power Station on the river. A prime target for Bombers.

Mother was a skilled dressmaker & managed to make nice clothes from scrap materials. Clothing rations were very limited. Food was basic, but OK. We kept rabbits for wholesome stews, a neighbour was adept at killing our caged rabbits for food, we accepted this as normal.

The VE day street party was attended by all, a bonfire made from Christchurch School fence (Police not happy) and an effigy of Hitler hung in the flames, music - banjo etc till the early hours. We played in the derelict buildings for years, dangerous but fun. The scrap metal merchant's yards by the river were full of rats and machine gun belts, some live ammunition, if you had sharp eyes.