

LILY MCNICHOL

#### Play

We used to sling a rope around a lamppost and swing round on it, we would play with a wooden and hopscotch (itchy bay). We played on the common with the mud, we used to play shops, slicing the mud up.

#### The time of my life.

I had the time of my life through the war, going to the dances seven nights a week and there were more places to dance than there were days in the week. My best friend Kathy Peters who just lived up the road, her dad ran the local chocolate shop, and he used to give us loads of chocolate, which no one else could get because it was on ration. We got so sick of looking at it that we used to swap it for carrots. Me mam used to take the sugar to the shop on the corner called Taffy Turners and for a penny or tuppence he would turn the sugar into toffee for you. It was a really good time!

I had an aunty who lived over on Fletcher Street, just near the Town Hall who worked in the Leeds Hotel and she had just left her shift when it got bombed, she was very lucky. It wouldn't have bothered me if the war had gone on, they were the good times.

#### War is declared

I was nine the day war broke out, and it was exciting, very exciting. I had the best time of my life. I was sat at home with me dad and mam, but we had been told in advance that the war was coming and that it was going to be bad but it just didn't sink in that it was going to be that bad.

#### When Cannon Street got bombed

When the war started we lived in Cooper Street between the Tees Bridge and the gas works and when the air raid warning went off we had to go into the brick shelters that were in the middle of the street. My mam and the other neighbours but bunk beds and mattresses in them to make them a bit more comfy, because we sometimes spent all night in there. I had a younger sister and she was a right lazy one, she would never get out of bed, she was only five. Anyway this night the sirens went off and we all ran down to the shelter but Alwin wouldn't go and my mam literally had to drag her out which was a good job because that night we were bombed. The Germans were aiming for the gas tanks.

When we came out from the shelter the street was devastated, the bomb had dropped about ten doors up from our house and there were quite a few folk killed. There was no roof on our house but those at the bottom of the street were flattened. Because we couldn't go back to our house's we were all put up in Ayresome School, we stayed there for about six months. All of Cooper Street were in there apart from those would could stay with family or friends. It was terrible, we laid on horrible mattresses that had been stuffed with just about anything and they were only a couple of inches deep, I think they were issued by the Red Cross. Because all we had were the clothes we stood in we were eligible to be given some new clothes to wear, but every thing that was given to us came with a little hole punched in it, even the shoes. When my mam asked why that was, she was told it was to stop us from pawning them!

#### Lunch hour

When I started work at the G E C I used to have to bike home in my dinner hour, cook my little sister something and then bike back, but it kept you fit.

#### Women's work

My mam went to work in the munitions factory and when you did what they called war work they issued you with a card that enabled you to walk to the front of any queue. Well, I used to go to Newbold's or the cake shop and even the fruit shop if they had anything in and there was always a queue, but my mam used to

say to me "take the card and don't forget to walk straight to the front, especially Newbold's". So I used to walk straight to the front, I was only a slip of a thing but I wasn't frightened of all the other women because I had the card and I could walk to the front of any queue, and I did because it was first come first served and there was always a queue especially if the food wasn't rationed, like the meat.

#### Salvation Army

I was in the Salvation Army on Cannon Street during the war, but we only went there because we got a cup of tea and a cake, I finished up going round the street banging the drums, but it was only for a cup of tea and a cake.