“Dad built an Anderson shelter in the garden; he made a right mess of it. Dad used to do a job and he’d say that it was temporary but nothing he did ever became permanent, nothing ever got finished. We only went in the shelter once. After that we said if we are going to die well we might as well die in bed. Mum would say she would get us up if it got too bad. I think you got very blasé about the bombing. All you used think was “oh gosh they’re here again.” We went into the pantry under the stairs the first time the bombs came down, but after that we stayed in bed. You knew they were German bombers because their engines made that “whum-whum” sound. And you could always hear the anti-aircraft guns starting up. A bomb did drop just beyond Kings Norton railway station but nothing round the houses near us. You just thanked God it wasn’t you. That’s how you thought about the bombing really”.

Mrs Newton, Watford Road, Cotteridge
“Does anyone know the fate of the German Bomber and Crew which flew very low over Billesley, Kings Heath and Cotteridge in 1943?

The undercarriage of the plane was of clear perspex type material and all who saw the plane could see the crew clearly. I remember the crew in light khaki looking down, one holding a clip board type document holder: obviously a flight plan of sorts. The main raids had finished by then and the Luftwaffe were rarely seen over Britain by then. This plane came in without cover (it sent a few bursts of ammo up Stirchley High St) and it could not help to be intercepted.”

Mr Hornsby
“When war started Frank and I were evacuated to Headless Cross at Redditch. Because Mum wanted us to stick together as brother and sister we went with the junior school, but they were only children and Frank and I were 13. So, we had no companions really – I think it’d been better if we were separated and went with the seniors. We went on the train and they put these labels on you and they took us to what looked like a school house and women came in and they just picked who they wanted. At the end there was Frank and I left, plus another girl. You felt like a spare part. So, then they walked us round the roads in Headless Cross and started knocking on the doors asking “will you take these children...” It was really that haphazard. Anyway, we got to this one house and this lady answered the door, her name was Mrs Moseley and she said “well I only want one but because you are brother and sister I will take you both in.”

Mrs Newton, lived as a child in Watford Road, Cotteridge
Attended Cotteridge Junior and Infant School
“I remember the plane that came low over Cotteridge School looking for the Triplex factory, you could see the pilot and the swastika on the side of the plane. Then I remember we heard a German plane was shooting at people in the street. Mum was beside herself as she had sent Frank out on an errand. When he eventually came back Mum was so relieved. But Frank had got the sense to shelter in someone’s entrance.”

Mrs Newton, lived as a child in Watford Road, Cotteridge
Attended Cotteridge Junior and Infant School
“My father in law told me of a night when he was walking home. He took the short cut through the Worthing tunnel to get to Allens Croft; the tunnel was used as an air raid shelter with wooden bunks lining the walls. As he came through the Allens croft end a bomb fell near the Worthing entrance. 16 people were killed that night, he and his companions were blown to the ground by the blast. This is all I remember, and Dad's not around to tell me more.”

Stirchley The Way Forward
http://stirchley.co.uk/onlineforum/index.php?topic=27.0

“Eight people died at The Worthing/Fawley Grove Tunnel on 09/04/1941. There are also 2 more people who died in the tunnel shelter, but the date has been transcribed as 09/04/1940.” Lynne
http://stirchley.co.uk/onlineforum/index.php?topic=27.0

“The bridge known as Horseshoe Tunnel off The Worthing was used as a shelter and suffered a direct hit, tragically killing ten people.”

Memories of Stirchley publication
“I grew up in Stirchley and as a child was held up on kitchen sink to see the bombs dropping in the city. I remember being evacuated from our home to a house top of Cartland road because a bomb was thought to have landed in our grove. My school was Selly Park Girls School (now called).”

Hazeleyes, [http://stirchley.co.uk/onlineforum/index.php?topic=27.0](http://stirchley.co.uk/onlineforum/index.php?topic=27.0)
“I went to Cotteridge Infant and Junior School until 1945. [There was one day when a] German bomber came over the school roof, just missing the bell tower, twice, and the pilot had the cheek to wave to us kids standing by Fleetwood’s yard in Breedon Road”

“I also well remember getting told off by our teachers for being late into school because we had been watching the firemen putting out the fire at the wood-yard in Frances Rd. For once the bomber was accurate in only hitting the wood-yard and none of the houses, although if he was aiming for the railway yard then his aim was lousy. I remember watching very early in the war when a bomber was very low over Bournville being shot at with shells bursting all round him and my thought was for the men on board the plane not being able to do anything about their fate, but I soon learned to have different feelings though.”

Mr James

Attended Cotteridge Junior and Infant School
WW2 bomb shrapnel in Stirchley loft

The piece of shrapnel that was found in Brenda Thomas’s loft in the early 1970s:

Committee member Brenda Thomas brought along a piece of bomb shrapnel that was found in her loft in the 1970s to the community hub meeting on Monday.

The bomb landed near the junction of Elm Tree Road and Charlotte Road during the Second World War and destroyed a number of properties.

Brenda’s property was about 50 feet away – and a piece of the bomb remained in her loft for three decades before it was discovered.
“My father lived in Stirchley as a young boy during the war years. He told me of the bomb that hit the bridge on Bournville Lane. Apparently, the target was the railway because of its vital transport link for the war effort but the bomb hit the canal instead and the result was a flooded Bournville Lane and surrounding area.”

He also told me that he saw a number of houses bombed on the Pineapple estate, you can actually see odd spaces where houses should be but were lost to bombs. He also told me of collecting pieces from barrage balloons that were located over the area to protect from the bombers. I can imagine as a child my father didn't really appreciate the extreme danger that every resident was in!”

Ade0905 [http://stirchley.co.uk/onlineforum/index.php?topic=27.0](http://stirchley.co.uk/onlineforum/index.php?topic=27.0)
“Yes there was a lot of damage around Stirchley as has been said jerry put one through the bridge in Bournville Lane. Water ran down Oxford Street... We went down Bournville Lane all the shop windows were blown out all you could see all around was fire.”

RupertBRI  http://stirchley.co.uk/onlineforum/index.php?topic=27.0
“We were bundled into our dressing gowns, chivvied downstairs and into the garden with "Go to the shelter - I'll fetch Mom." I still seemed in a trance, and while Michael my brother scurried round the corner to the Anderson shelter I stopped in the middle of the grass patch to stare up into a sky that was blindingly lit by many coloured flashes; I was buffeted by freak bursts of hot, reeking air and as my father emerged from the house, I began to sway and pirouette to the heady cacophony of explosions and ack-ack gunfire.

Once in the shelter a disappointed boy kept asking why his brother was crying, and asking to go out and see the bombs again.”

David Warner, Stirchley, BBC, WW2 People’s War
“During the War my sister and I were evacuated way from home to a safer place. In all we had four different places we were sent too, St Leonards on Sea Bedford being just two of them. We found it very hard at first to get to know the people that we were billeted on. We had of course many different attitudes from the people concerned. I remember even now the feeling of being home sick, Carrying our gas mask and enough sandwiches for the unknown journey. On our arrival the fear of possible rejection, how glad we were when it turned out to be a cup of cocoa, which we finished off with our fish paste sandwiches. I remember with kindness and affection to this day the Mrs Bird and her neighbour they treated my sister and I like daughters.”

_Daphne of Fourth Ave, Selly Park_
“The children vividly remember carrying gas masks and practising Air Raid Precautions. The auxiliary Fire Service was based in the Billiard Hall near the Three Horse Shoes. The Home Guard Rifle Range was the bottom of the Cadbury tip. When there was an air raid and houses in Elm Tree Road were hit the children went shrapnel hunting and collected a good bounty. A popular game at school was to run across the playground and empty it as all the children tried to crowd between the blast wall and the door.”

*Memories of Stirchley publication*
“On VE (Victory for Europe) day Miss Whitehead, the headmistress at Cotteridge School had all of us girls in the school hall. She was crying, she was happy. She told us about the beginning of the Battle of Britain when they thought England was going down and she said.

“We had the flags out in school and we had all the girls dancing. Every day we had a party because we were going down fighting, we were going down happy. Then the Battle of Britain went our way and we had to do school work again.”

Memories of Stirchley publication
“There were VE and VJ (Victory over Japan) day parties in Regent Street. There were tables all down the middle of the road. In the evening we had a bonfire, well, we had Hitler on top of a bonfire! I was about six when War broke out. My Dad had to go to War. I can remember the blackouts at night. Everyone had to put up blackouts. I can remember the Zeppelins coming over. There were searchlights in the sky. When they heard the Zeppelins a man would yell “all lights out, all lights out!” and the searchlights would go from the sky. You never forget the noise of the Zeppelins. When they came over they would shine lights all round. The Zeppelins would circle slowly and they would drop the bombs. Quite a few houses were damaged I think, and some children were buried in the rubble in the crater of their house.”

*Memories of Stirchley publication*
“Yes, I remember when my dad came home from the War and I was only little. We were all stood at the bottom of the opening, with little white dresses and red, white and blue ribbons in our hair. The soldiers used to get off the train at New Street Station and they used to march up the Pershore Road to Stirchley. Each soldier that came to his destination where he lived, used to drop out and there used to be singing and a band playing ‘Take Me Back To Dear Old Blighty’ and ‘It’s A Long Way To Tipperary.’ I remember when my dad came home and they said ‘here they are, they’re coming.” Some crippled, some on sticks and some that could hardly walk. My dad was a very tall man and when he dropped out they said, “see you in the next war Jimmy.” The place was all decorated with red, white and blue flags, all up the building and on the houses, everywhere was decorated up, with parties all out in the streets, it was marvellous”.

*Memories of Stirchley Publication*
“We assembled in Stirchley School Playground and we were marched two by two up the village. All the people came out of the shops and the mothers were crying. There were about twenty of us from Stirchley School. We got the train at Lifford Station in Lifford Lane. We had to change trains. It was like a cattle market, hundreds of children from different schools. I was looked after by my big sister. We each had Paddington Bear tags with our names on. When we were going round this market they gave us brown paper bags each, with tins of food and a big slab of chocolate. We thought we were going to keep it but we had to hand it over and had it doled out to us a couple of squares each night. Children from the same school were put in the same village. We were lucky, we stayed in a lovely house. They’d got a cook, maid, two gardeners and four acres. The house was called Four Acres.”

*Memories of Stirchley publication*
“By then we had given up using the shelter. My mother had realised that the doorways and under the stairs were the safest places to be. When the bomb fell on the bridge my mother was on the settee and was thrown to the floor with a newspaper over her face. It was as well that we weren’t in the shelter for the water came rushing down the street, quite a few feet deep and some people had to be rescued from the flood. Someone closed the locks on the canal so it was soon over. There wasn’t much structural damage to the houses in Regent Street but the blast had blown out the middle big pane in the front windows all down the road. The workmen came the next day to board them up. The kids were out the next day and collected a good hail of shrapnel.”

*Memories of Stirchley publication*
“If you were at the pictures then you got the warning come up on the screen if they thought there was a raid. I remember being at the Savoy [cinema in Cotteridge] watching “The Last Days of Pompeii” when the sirens sounded. Elsie wouldn’t let me stay to watch the end. I never did see what happened at the end – until it was shown on telly a few years ago. 65 years later and I finally got to see the end! But I always remember Elsie dragging me out the Savoy because of the air raid warning – I could’ve killed her!”

Mrs Newton, lived as a child in Watford Road, Cotteridge

Attended Cotteridge Junior and Infant School
“Was I scared? Not really. I suppose we were but most of the time we found it exciting. We used to play I-Spy in the shelter and the neighbours came in. We used to listen to the planes and we would say “Oh, we’re all right, that’s one of ours”. You could hear the Germans, they sounded heavier and they used to drone. I can hear them now, it was a different sound.

The only times we were scared was if there was a daylight raid. I was waiting outside the British Oak for the tram to Cotteridge School when a plane came over and machine gunned. It wasn’t very close but it seemed so.

We were kept in at Stirchley School because a raid was on. Pop had heard what was going on, he had just come off duty from the trams and he came to pick me up. As we walked along Lea House Road a plane came over and he pushed us down on the road. We had our own shelter in the garden and never went to the public institute.”

Memories of Stirchley publication
How Cadbury kept up spirits during the war

Cadbury continued to produce chocolate during the Blitz as it was considered a luxury which could lift the spirits of the Home Guard.

The Bournville based firm brought out “misery vans” which delivered hot cocoa to stricken Blitz victims.

Chocolate’s importance as a morale-boosting treat was not lost on the War Office which intervened to ration consumption to 3oz a week from 1942.

Its production slowed as much of Cadbury was turned over to the war effort and because imported sugar and cocoa was so scarce.

Historian Carl Chinn explained: “Parts of Cadbury went over to a new company – Bournville Utilities Limited.

“It made mini machines, rifles and special parts for Lucas. The chocolate molding department switched to making cases for aeroplane flares and a host of other things.”
As in most factories, Cadbury workers were retrained and allocated war-related duties.

Carl added: “Employees were trained as roof spotters to look out for planes.

“There was also a Home Guard unit, fire watchers and special constables.”

The closest Cadbury came to being hit was in December 1940 when a bomb destroyed a nearby canal bridge.

“By that stage the Germans diverted their attention to central areas where factories were close to back to back houses.”
“My mother worked at Cadbury’s during WW2, apart from working on the factory floor, she was an auxiliary nurse who along with her chums helped to rehabilitate shell shocked soldiers who were taken to Cadbury’s canteen once a week where the girls would work with them doing art/craft work and also singing and dancing with them. The girls also worked on the packing line sending vitaminised chocolates to the troops as emergency rations. My mother decided it would be great fun to put letters in the tins before they were sealed (Cadbury management / Dame Elizabeth were totally unaware of this) and in time the girls got replies back from the men along with face powder, lipstick and stockings. Mom kept the soldier’s replies and I found them amongst her personal effects when she died two years ago.”

Alison Smith
**Eccles Caravans:** Believed to be the first purpose built caravan factory of its kind in the World it was fitted with the latest high tech woodwork machinery. It was here that 'overrun brake systems' were invented and these are still fitted on caravans produced today. During World War II orders for caravans virtually stopped however the Eccles factory survived by adapting to the war situation. Commissioned by the British Military Authorities the Eccles factory still produced caravan bodies but these were used as portable workshops and radio offices. The factory also built ambulances and search light vehicles.

*Wikipedia*

When war broke out in 1939, Guest Keen and Nettlefold again made a full contribution. The Hadley Works produced Spitfires, Lysaghts assembled a specialised tank for the D-Day landings and the company produced steel, forgings and fasteners for tanks and aircraft, as well as millions of steel helmets. *GKN website*
Bombs found in city garden

UNEXPLODED World War II bombs discovered in a Birmingham garden were destroyed in controlled explosions at the weekend.

Police were called when the owner of a home in Regent Street, Stirchley, found a foot-long bomb as he worked in his back garden just after 4pm on Friday.

Army bomb disposal experts sent to the scene then found more devices. They were unable to remove them last night and were due to return to the garden today to remove and destroy them in controlled explosions.

Residents were not evacuated but were advised to stay indoors. Regent Street and nearby Oxford Street and Bond Street were sealed off during the early stages of the excavation operation.

Neighbours said they thought it was a joke when they heard a bomb had been found in the garden of the home, which has recently undergone extensive renovation.

Sue Flint, aged 51, who has lived in Regent Street for 30 years, said: "Some young lads were shouting about a bomb having been found. I thought they were joking but then police told us to stay indoors."

Another neighbour, Co-op worker Sumita Das, 42, said the discovery came as a total surprise.

"I came home from work at about 2.45pm. I didn't know anything about it until I saw the police lights flashing outside," she said.
Birmingham in the Blitz: Where the bombs fell

The following parts of Birmingham were hit (by raid number, date and areas affected):

1, 9/8/1940 - Gravelly Hill, Short Heath

2, 13+14/8 - Yardley, Wood End, Short Heath, Gravelly Hill, Fort Dunlop

3, 16/8 - Hay Mills, Little Bromwich, Small Heath, Saltley, Gravelly Hill, Yardley, Stechford

4, 17+18/8 - Castle Bromwich, Shard End, Buckland End, Hodge Hill

5, 19/8 - Sutton Coldfield

6, 20+21/8 - Shirley, Yardley, Castle Vale

7, 23+24/8 - Erdington, Ward End, Bromford, Castle Vale, Pype Hayes, Yardley

8, 25+26/8 - Acocks Green, Pype Hayes, Castle Bromwich, Rednal, Longbridge, Highter's Heath, Hall Green, Aston, Nechells, Lozells, Perry Barr, Kingstanding, Short Heath

9, 26+27/8 - Hall Green, Balsall Heath, Moseley, Sparkbrook, South Yardley, Hay Mills, Stechford, Hodge Hill, Bordesley, Small Heath, Gosta Green, Ladywood

10, 27+28/8 - Gravelly Hill, Erdington, Bromford, Ward End

11, 28+29/8 - Kings Norton

12, 31/8/1/9 - Shirley, Streetly

13, 2+3/9 - Walmley, Pype Hayes, Hodge Hill, Tyburn, Yardley

14, 12+13/9 - Tyseley

15, 14+15/9 - Tanworth-in-Arden

16, 15+17/9 - Shirley, Yardley Wood, Moor Green, Edgbaston

17, 27/9 - Castle Bromwich, Edgbaston

18, 15+16/10 - City centre, Northfield, Kings Heath, Moseley, Acocks Green, Sparkhill, Balsall Heath, Bordesley, Bordesley Green, Aston, Gravelly Hill, Bromford, Witton, Perry Common, Kingstanding, Wyde Green

19, 16/10 - City centre, Witton, Stockland Green, New Oscott

20, 17+17/10 - Acocks Green, Hall Green, Springfield, Greet, Sparkbrook, Small Heath, Bordesley, Bordesley Green, Stechford, Saltley, Gravelly Hill, Witton

21, 18/10 - Balsall Heath, Sparkbrook, Bordesley

22, 20/10 - Hall Green, Cannon Hill, Stockland Green, Aston

23, 21/10 - Aston

24, 22/10 - Yardley and Hagley Road

25, 24/10 - City centre, Hockley, Lee Bank, Kings Heath, Moor Green

26, 25/10 - Acocks Green, Sparkbrook, Edgbaston, Aston, Smethwick, Balsall Heath, Digbeth, Aston, Saltley

27, 26/10 - Moseley, Selly Park, Balsall Heath, Bordesley, Lee Bank, Ladywood, Hockley, Handsworth, Aston

28, 28/10 - Handsworth

29, 28+29/10 - Kings Heath, Selly Park, Balsall Heath, Edgbaston, Harborne, Aston, Handsworth, Bordesley Green, city centre, Lee Bank, Handsworth, Aston

30, 29/10 - Kings Heath, Moseley, Balsall Heath, Ladywood, Bordesley, Aston, New Oscott, Sutton Coldfield

31, 31/10 - Bordesley, Gosta Green, Nechells
n 32, 1/11 - Aston, Perry Barr
n 33, 4/11 (daytime) - Kings Norton
n 34, 4/11 (night) - Edgbaston, Moseley
n 35, 5/11 - Small Heath
n 36, 6/11 - Ladywood, Bearwood, Wylde Green
n 37, 7/11 - Springfield, Tyseley
n 38, 8/11 - Balsall Heath, Aston
n 39, 9/11 (daytime) - Cotteridge, Sheldon
n 40, 9/11 (night) - Solihull Lodge, Over Green near Minworth
n 41, 13/11 - Barnt Green
n 42, 14+15/11 - Stechford, South Yardley, Kings Heath, Castle Bromwich
n 43, 15/11 - Hamstead, Selly Park, Harborne
n 44, 18+19/11 - Sparkhill, Bordesley, Digbeth, Bearwood, Smethwick, Handsworth
n 45, 19+20/11 - Widespread across Birmingham, Smethwick, Solihull
n 46, 20+21/11 - Stechford, Acocks Green, Tyseley, Hall Green, Balsall Heath, Digbeth, Spring Hill, Aston
n 47, 21/11 - Marston Green
n 48, 22+23/11 - Widespread across Birmingham
n 49, 28/11 - Moneyhull, Sheldon, Handsworth, Kingstanding
n 50, 3/12 - City centre, Bordesley, Duddeston, Aston, Perry Barr, Washwood Heath
n 51, 4/12 - City centre, Ladywood, Witton, Aston, Perry Barr, Washwood Heath
n 52, 5/12 - Malvern Hall, Lapworth
n 53, 11/12 - Widespread across Birmingham, Bordesley, Duddeston, Solihull, Harborne, Kings Norton, Handsworth
n 54, 12/12 - Yardley
n 55, 16/12 - Solihull Lodge
n 56, 21/12 - Gravelly Hill, Walmley, Minworth
n 57, 1+2/1/1941 - Sparkbrook, Ward End
n 58, 4+5/1 - Acocks Green, Highter's Heath
n 59, 11/2 - Wylde Green, Erdington, Perry Common, Hamstead, Handsworth, Griffs Hill, South Yardley
n 60, 7+8/4 - Kings Heath, Longbridge
n 61, 9/4 - Widespread across Birmingham
n 62, 10/4 - Widespread across Smethwick, Winson Green, Handsworth, Gravelly Hill, Castle Bromwich, Sheldon, Birmingham Airport, Solihull Lodge
n 63, 17/5 - Witton, Aston, Nechells, Gravelly Hill, Saltley, Stechford, Wylde Green, Yardley, Shirley, Yardley Wood
n 64, 4+5/6 - Stockland Green, Boldmere, Ward End, Nechells
n 65, 12/6 - Gravelly Hill
n 66, 5/7 - Wake Green, Kings Heath, Yardley Wood, Hay Mills, Chester Road
n 67, 9/7 - Cotteridge, Weoley Castle
n 68, 27/7/1942 - City centre, Ladywood, Edgbaston, Kings Norton, Harborne, Quinton, Small Heath, Winson Green, Spring Hill, Handsworth, Nechells, Bordesley Green
n 69, 28/7 - Solihull
n 70, 30/7 - Widespread in north Birmingham, city centre, Bordesley, Little Bromwich, Sparkbrook, Greet
n 71, 31/7 - Yardley, Hay Mills, Hall Green, Little Bromwich
and
n 72, 23+24/4/1943 - Bordesley Green (the last bomb dropped on Birmingham)
Pictures courtesy of Birmingham Heritage and Archives Service