



Oral history audio transcription

Memories of a school bombing

In this interview conducted in March 2020, Helen talks about two occasions when her school was bombed, and students helped to clear up.

The interview was conducted in March 2020, as part of Elmbridge Museum's 'Memories of War' project. To find out more about the project, visit Elmbridge Museum's [Elmbridge At War](#) online exhibition.

Audio Transcription: Part 1

Helen: The population of the school halved, and we were all sort of very much in it together. And the senior girls used to fire watch – used to stay the night on a camp bed and fire watch. At sixteen, fire watching, up on the roof.

Interviewer: Were there any teachers with you that would stay?

Helen: Yes. And the school was bombed. I mean, not purposely bombed, it was bombed with a stick of bombs, you know, and we stayed and helped clear up. Camaraderie was great, you know. One of the bombs – this stick that they dropped, they weren't very big bombs – dropped on a shed, in an area that had a shed in it where they stored all the surplus chemicals. Well, it must've made a lovely – you know, it was all during the night – must've looked beautiful, mustn't it? Can you imagine! [laughter]

Interviewer: Fireworks?

Helen: Yes! [laughter] So we had to clear all that up, we had shelters in the grounds, and there was great camaraderie there, yes, with the teachers and that.

Audio Transcription: Part 2

Helen: We got off the train, walked up – Wimbledon High School is just at the bottom of Wimbledon Hill, just up from the station, so we got off the train, walked up the hill and there was an awful lot of glass around, and people putting boards up on the windows. And this had been – whether they were, you know, I don't know that they were deliberately bombing, but they'd just get rid of the bombs, you know – a big stick of them. So we wondered what we were going to meet when we got up to school. And yes, the school had been – not the whole of it, it was the science labs got it, and because we were trained people, we stayed, had dusters round our heads and we helped clear up.