In the early summer of 1940 I awoke one night and I could see a terrifying apparition in the sky. I went down stairs feeling really frightened. It turned out to be a barrage balloon with the moonlight shining on it! Of course, I was to be quite familiar with this sight in the coming months but this was my first sight of one. Another sight to be seen at night were the searchlights. These were very powerful lights that used to sweep the sky, looking out for German aeroplanes. In the last couple of weeks of August I was down at Nan’s with the family. Grandpap was playing with David on his knee. He always nick-named him Snowy, as his hair was very blonde. I tripped over the rag rug that Nan had made and put my left elbow in the fire and burned it rather badly. Someone grabbed me and pulled me up and they cleaned it up and smothered it in Tannifax jelly that I loved the smell of, then bandaged it up. A few nights later, on 25th August, Mum was “doing” my arm when Uncle Frank and Auntie Kath walked in. They’d been out somewhere in the town and they told us that during an air raid, the Rex cinema received a direct hit and was literally “ Gone With the Wind ” which was the name of the film the were going to show the next day. This had quite eerie repercussions as every major cinema for the next few months that was showing this particular film was bombed so the film became a jinx.

It became routine for Mum to get us into our siren suits and tuck us up into the bunk in the shelter each night. In October and November I don’t think we slept in our own beds. We went straight into our bunks and after listening to the bangs and whistles for a while, we would hear the continuous shreik of the All Clear and drop off to sleep. Young as I was, there was always a feeling of relief and reassurance the next morning to realise that our house was still standing. Then as the raids wore on and houses were being bombed and tiles blown off the roof and windows shattered, I began to feel a bit left out because our house was relatively unscathed and most people had at least a broken window!