

It is the 4 May 2025 and this is Thea interviewing Derek Price about the experiences of the Second World War and VE day.

What year were you born and where? I was born in 1930 in Leicester.

Is this where you spent the war? No, we moved various places and we ended up in Box for the war.

Who were you living with during the war and what occupations were they doing? I was only 9 when the war started, so I was obviously living with my family. My father was running a rubber company, doing war work, making tyres, remoulding tyres for the post office and the army.

What can you remember about the war? Oh, lots of things, remember, I was only 9 and ten when it started. So yeah, Bath being bombed, and bombs being dropped around, between Box and Colerne, airplanes crashing around Box.

Did you wear gas masks? When they issued them, yes. We all had gas masks. **Did you take them to school?** Initially, but after a year or so, we used to put fruit in them (the boxes) from the garden, leave the gas mask at home. I remember about that. We also had a national number. Mine was WSDO 526. How about that?! After all these years.

What was rationing like? I didn't really notice it. We had our garden. We grew vegetables and kept chickens, and ducks. **Did you eat sweets?** I think you had something like two ounces a month or something like that. But it just wasn't questioned. It was more could you afford them in those days.

You told me there were camps in Box, who were at the camps? Up the road from Ashley, there was a camp opposite the Northey Arms, and we used to go to pictures there, a picture once a week. It was great fun for kids, for wartime and then there was Hawthorn up the road, two miles away, that was full of workers for digging underground. There was the RAF at Rudloe and there were camps all around Box and Corsham and Chippenham and Colerne, of course, it was an RAF Aerodrome. We saw lots of planes, and when we walked up to Colerne and walk around the edge of the airfield, see the planes all parked, scattered around so they couldn't all be bombed up once. Because I was at that age, you didn't really think about the war, it's more excitement, in a way.

Did any people evacuate from the cities and live with you? Not with us because we were four in the house, so three, and Anne came along later during the war. I remember them (the evacuees) arriving in the playground at Box School, and they were allocated all over Box. I mean at that time, I think we were at the age we were just getting interested about girls, and we used to walk them home, over a mile away. There was no such things as buses and parents didn't pick children up. They all made their own way to and from school but there were times when we'd all walk, walk a girl home.

Do you remember the announcement at the end of the war? I did. I was living in Bath then, and we built big bonfires on bombed sites in the streets, anywhere. We went to

bed at middle of the night, two, three or four o'clock in the morning. Celebrations - street parties, we had, but as teenagers, we wandered around Bath from one bonfire to another, really, until then we finally decided to go to bed.