

1940s IN SOUTHMEAD

WAR

When the war ended, the American soldiers and some of the girls emptied all the scraps out on to the road in a big 'V' – for victory! We had a street party with bunting and music. We didn't really have party food, but I think we had fish paste sandwiches –
Muriel Harding

I remember when the Americans joined the war. Where the Greystoke Avenue shops are now, there was a big US army camp, so there were a lot of American soldiers around Pen Park, before they were shipped to Dunkirk. We called it the New Estate – Muriel Harding



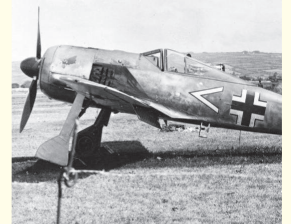
Greystoke Ave – once a US army base

My aunty put the shopping in the baby's pram and when she got home she found that the baby had eaten the whole week's ration of cheese (2 ounces)! – Muriel Harding

RATIONING

WAR

My dad was very interested in television, as yet no one had ever seen one. So dad bought all the necessary bits: valves, condensers and a 9" green tube, and installed this into an old radiogram. We had a very tall H shape aerial in the back garden, taller than our house roof. This was to try and get a picture from Birmingham – Joan Clifford



A German fighter plane.

TECHNOLOGY

One night a bomb fell in Old Market, and my dad (who worked in the fire service) went to rescue someone trapped in a bus. As he pulled a man out from the wreckage, his leg came off! My dad was horrified, but was then relieved when he discovered it was a wooden leg! – Muriel Harding

My late husband, Keith, lived in Charfield Road and one afternoon, when he was going home after school (Doncaster Road), a lone German fighter plane shot at the children as they left, and carried on shooting all the way along Charfield Road. Their mothers stood at garden gates urging them to run. The plane must have been on a Filton daylight raid – Muriel Harding

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They were young men called 'spivs' who could get stuff for you on the black market. They were noisy and our neighbour used to get annoyed and throw buckets of water at them! They would tease her by singing 'Cool Clear Water', and then run away when she came out with her bucket – Muriel Harding

NEIGHBOURHOOD

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RADIO

Evenings were spent listening to a large brown radio, which was put on for the news at 6 o'clock. I particularly enjoyed listening to 'Saturday Night Theatre' which a man called Valentine Dyall would introduce and say 'This is your storyteller, the Man in Black' and it would always send shivers down my spine – Pearl Rodd

HOME

Central heating wasn't around then, it was all coal fires. The coalman would come once a week to put as much as we could afford and we'd buy bundles of firewood at the local shops. Our only fire was in the sitting room. The fireplace had little black hobs each side which mum black-leaded each morning, then she'd put newspaper in and a few sticks of wood ready to be lit in the evening – Pearl Rodd

CHRISTMAS

The war didn't stop us enjoying ourselves at Christmas. When Mum had made all her Christmas puddings, she would fill the boiler in the kitchen half way up and lay 4 puddings on the bottom and on the top and steam them, so all in all that boiler served us well – Pearl Rodd

My dad put soil on top of the air raid shelter and planted potatoes. We had to grow as much food as we could of the rationing. The lady next door kept chickens and we used to give her our potato skins to feed them. At Christmas she'd let us choose a chicken for our dinner and then she'd chase it round the garden with a hatchet! When the done was done we had to pluck all the feathers out, it was horrible – Muriel Harding



Christmas pudding was cooked in the kitchen boiler!

RATIONING

The older girls used to ask the Americans for nylon stockings. We didn't have new clothes, you couldn't get them because of rationing. We had to 'make do and mend'. When I was about 12, Pam and I had shorts made out of parachute silk! – Muriel Harding

FASHION

My earliest memory of the Blitz is when an air raid siren sounded and we made our way to this brick shelter in the garden. When we came out we found all the windows in our house were gone and all the doors were blown open – even though the bomb had exploded a couple of streets away. Another bomb was in our garden, but it hadn't exploded. The bomb police took me, my mum and my baby sister Pam out into the streets and we had to wait their while they checked the garden. My mum kept saying, 'but all the baby's nappies are on the line, I have to get them!' But they wouldn't let her to go back – Muriel Harding

WAR

Another lad and I were sent to QEH when we were 14 years old to sit the entrance exam there. We were up against all the grammar school kids. We saw all the QEH boys in their yellow socks and long black gowns. It was all very fancy and when I opened the folder it was full of questions I didn't understand. I'd never heard of algebra - Brian Harding