**Wellington**

I was on holiday with my parents in [Llandudno](http://www.lancsngfl.ac.uk/curriculum/literacy/lit_site/html/non_fiction/war/wellington/glossary.htm#llandudno) when War was [declared](http://www.lancsngfl.ac.uk/curriculum/literacy/lit_site/html/non_fiction/war/wellington/glossary.htm#declared). Being nearly five I knew something important was happening from the [concern](http://www.lancsngfl.ac.uk/curriculum/literacy/lit_site/html/non_fiction/war/wellington/glossary.htm#concern) shown by all the adults. We went to the [Prom](http://www.lancsngfl.ac.uk/curriculum/literacy/lit_site/html/non_fiction/war/wellington/glossary.htm#prom) and looked out to sea where there was a large [tanker](http://www.lancsngfl.ac.uk/curriculum/literacy/lit_site/html/non_fiction/war/wellington/glossary.htm#tanker) and I remember my father telling me that there would be many more ships soon.
The smell of the gas mask remains with me. The gas mask was contained in a brown cardboard box which was carried everywhere and I also remember [vividly](http://www.lancsngfl.ac.uk/curriculum/literacy/lit_site/html/non_fiction/war/wellington/glossary.htm#vividly) the air-raid drill of walking from school into horrible [dank](http://www.lancsngfl.ac.uk/curriculum/literacy/lit_site/html/non_fiction/war/wellington/glossary.htm#dank) underground shelters where often frogs would be hopping around.
On hearing a [siren](http://www.lancsngfl.ac.uk/curriculum/literacy/lit_site/html/non_fiction/war/wellington/glossary.htm#siren) today my mind turns to the times when we heard them over Wellington (Shropshire) especially at night time. The bombers used to fly over us on their way to Liverpool and bombs were dropped, probably accidentally. If I was staying with my grandparents the cellar with its earthy smell was our [refuge](http://www.lancsngfl.ac.uk/curriculum/literacy/lit_site/html/non_fiction/war/wellington/glossary.htm#refuge) and I remember one night especially when we were woken up by the whole house being shaken and a terrible noise. My uncle, who was on leave, tried to [pacify](http://www.lancsngfl.ac.uk/curriculum/literacy/lit_site/html/non_fiction/war/wellington/glossary.htm#pacify) me by pretending to be [Hitler](http://www.lancsngfl.ac.uk/curriculum/literacy/lit_site/html/non_fiction/war/wellington/glossary.htm#hitler) with a moustache which he stuck to his upper lip. When I was at home we also had a cellar but ours was cold, very cold and just Mum and my three sisters would trail down there with [eiderdowns](http://www.lancsngfl.ac.uk/curriculum/literacy/lit_site/html/non_fiction/war/wellington/glossary.htm#eiderdowns). Dad was on [ARP](http://www.lancsngfl.ac.uk/curriculum/literacy/lit_site/html/non_fiction/war/wellington/glossary.htm#apr) duty.
I seem to remember staying with another aunt in Walsall the night Coventry was bombed. At that time we had to go outside to an [Anderson Shelter](http://www.lancsngfl.ac.uk/curriculum/literacy/lit_site/html/non_fiction/war/wellington/glossary.htm#anderson) in the garden.
At school everything was in short supply. We had to write between lines and on the covers of our books. The excitement of getting a new workbook remains with me and generally the shortages of my childhood years still affect me today - saving paper, washing plastic bags, making something from nothing etc. We had ink in inkwells and no biros of course. We had sufficient food as my grandfather had a shop and food from the country was exchanged for other goods in short supply. We kept ducks in our back garden and my grandfather kept pigs and hens in the back yard. He also had a garden full of vegetables. My sisters and I used to quarrel though over queuing for a pound of sausages every Saturday morning. The queue stretched out of the shop and down the road. The first bananas after the war were WONDERFUL. Our diet was plain and simple but, knowing nothing of [exotic](http://www.lancsngfl.ac.uk/curriculum/literacy/lit_site/html/non_fiction/war/wellington/glossary.htm#exotic) foods, didn't really bother us.
Clothes were in short supply and the market, together with a friend who was a dressmaker, enabled my mother to clothe us but I can remember my grandmother and aunt supplying coupons from time to time. Generally ration books were a part of life and carried everywhere.
[VJ](http://www.lancsngfl.ac.uk/curriculum/literacy/lit_site/html/non_fiction/war/wellington/glossary.htm#vj) Day was a day to remember. Everyone was gathered in the Square in Wellington. Fireworks were being thrown and one landed in the pocket of my aunt's coat and we smelt burning!
My main overall recollection was the pitch-blackness of night-time and of having to carry a torch when walking.