



Grandma's Memories of VE Day by Luisa Besien

How old were you on VE day?

I was 11 years old and living in Blackburn Lancashire.

What do you remember?

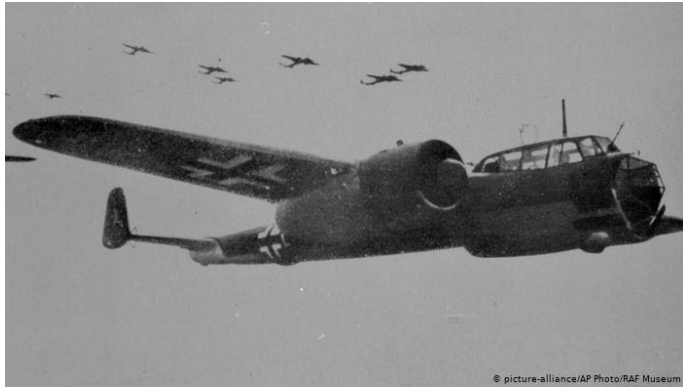
We lived on a main road so there was no street party near me, but I remember my friends getting ready for their street parties. We listened to Churchill on the radio or wireless as we used to call it. I mainly remember the songs that were sung. Especially by Vera Lyn. I had enjoyed listening and learning all the music from that time, Glen Miller was a favourite of mine. There were Union Jack's everywhere and there was a huge sense of relief for people and hope that things would get better. A barrage balloon that was always in the sky and visible from our dining room window suddenly vanished.



Do you have any memories from the War?

I remember my school was moved from town centre to the outskirts just before I went there. It moved to a very big house called "Troy". I consider myself to be very fortunate that I went there, it was surrounded by green fields and farmland and the house had very extensive grounds. So much so when break came we had a job to hear the bell calling us back in class. The air was lovely at Billinge End compared to town with the smog which

was awful in the town centre. The downside was the tin chemical toilets which were emptied once a week. In summer it was worse! I hardly ever used them. Instead I ran uphill about 15 mins to the bus stop to go home for lunch. Dashing out of school at 12noon I had to be back by 1.15pm, I had half an hour in the house and if I missed the bus, which happened at least once a week, I had 20 mins. However, I walked to school and back home every day across the park from East Park road to West Park road. It was a huge park and a lovely one too, Bowling Green, tennis courts, Italian Garden, sweeping dells, conservatory, play area. We were lucky to live where we did. My Uncle Charles and Auntie Emily lived in London with their son David and they were evacuated to New Brighton, which was a bit funny being so close to Liverpool! Blackburn wasn't bombed but I soon got used to telling the difference between the sound of the British planes and the German planes flying over to bomb Liverpool and Manchester.



I recall one day I was walking along the Broad Walk in the park on my own when suddenly I heard an aeroplane's engine failing and realised it was crashing close by. I set off running towards that direction and arrived to see it crashed. The police quickly arrived and cordoned the area off and I never found out who or what plane it was, it seemed all hushed up. I remember having to go around in the dark with just a torch, our curtains had to be blackout as showing even a chink of light was forbidden. I also remember that we didn't have much due to rationing. My older sister, who was 18, went to be a land girl in Westmorland and Cumberland (now Cumbria). She got married to the farmers son and never came home.

