



Basement of the Council House, College Green.

Tony
 "At the outbreak of war they had built the Council House up to the first floor".

Margaret
 "You could get Pom, which was powdered potato, corned beef and beetroot. I went into a British Restaurant one day and they were advertising savoury sandwiches so we ordered them. It turned out to be fish paste".

Designed in the 1930s by E.Vincent-Harris, the building was not complete when war broke out. It wasn't completed until 1952. The basement of the building was used to house a British Restaurant during the war years. The building is of a neo-Georgian style and is constructed from muted brown Blockley Gloucester bricks.



Esme
 "Park Street was classy".

Rhoda
 "It's gone back to being the same as it was. It's all shops. It doesn't look much different because they built it all up again".

John
 "There was a famous pub there called the Mauretania. It wasn't bombed."

Rhoda
 "They'd used part of the Mauretania's (the ship) panelling on the walls."

Over half the shops and buildings on Park Street were damaged or destroyed by bombing. They were rebuilt during the 1950s. The City Architect, Nelson Meredith, ensured they were designed in a sympathetic and similar style, so the skyline and character remained fairly unchanged.



Browns Restaurant, Park Street

Tony
 "After the Blitz I went up Cabot Tower to look over the city. I looked in the direction of the Museum and all I

could see was a stuffed giraffe head sticking up from the rubble and derelict, smouldering buildings".

The former Museum and Library were housed in the current Browns Restaurant site. This building was bombed in 1940 and the remaining collections were then transferred to the current Museum and Art Gallery site. The exterior of the building, with a Venetian Gothic façade, remained intact. It was the interior and roof which received bomb damage.



Olive
 "It was a high day and holiday when you took the children there".

Rhoda
 "It was like the Hippodrome but posher. The Coliseum was opposite the Prince's Theatre. It was also bombed. It had ice skating and dancing".

Park Row housed these two very popular entertainment venues, both of which were severely damaged during bombing raids. A section of the Coliseum building remains as part of the University of Bristol - University Gate. The Coliseum building was built in 1910 and was used as a skating rink and cinema. Prince's Theatre opened in 1867 and was a 2,000 seat theatre.



Electricity House and the Evening World

Tony
 "On the left hand side going out from the centre was where they used to print the Evening World. You could stand in the road and see the papers being printed on these big rollers".

"There was an air raid shelter or fire watchers station opposite Electricity House".

On a raid on Good Friday, Demerara House, the Bristol Corporation Electricity House and John Wright's printing works were destroyed. The offices of the Evening World newspaper, based on Colston Avenue, were also seriously damaged. Air raid shelters could be found on what is now the pedestrian island in the centre of the road system.



Peter
 "Castle Street just before Christmas was just like fairyland. All the barrow boys had flares on their barrows. They'd all be trying to get rid of their stock before Christmas

because they had no way of storing it".

Before the severe bombing, this area of parkland was densely populated with 17th century houses and formed the major shopping district of the city. The churches of St Mary-le-Port and St Peter's and the fine timber framed Tudor building that served as St Peter's Hospital (built 1612), stood amid the narrow streets, until they were all destroyed during the Blitz.



Mabel
 "It was a very upmarket department store. The Dutch House was out of my pocket".

Terry
 "It was believed the Dutch House could have been saved".

Peter
 "They tried to pull it down manually with ropes. It started to creak but nothing happened.

Then an American lorry came along and they used that".

The Dutch House, built in 1676, was a fine five-storey timber framed building. It stood on the corner of the High Street, where the current Royal Bank of Scotland stands. It was Bristol's best known landmark before the Blitz and over time it housed banks, a goldsmiths, a hatter and an Irish linen store.



Esme
 "There was a footbridge going over it for the public to use. I think it possibly joined the shops. The buildings were so close you could shake hands with someone in a building across the street".

The remains of St Mary-le-Port church can be found behind the post war buildings on High Street. Many of the visible remains

are of English Gothic style from the late 14th to early 16th century. The church porch on the north side would have led out onto St Mary-le-Port Street, through narrow 17th century houses, which were also destroyed during the bombing.



Rhoda
 "That was where the first flare came down. There was an ice cream parlour nearby, Verrechia's".

Doris
 "That was the best ice cream I ever tasted".

By the 19th century the area around St Peter's church was the main shopping district of the city. After the heavy bombing the main shopping area was relocated to Broadmead and in the 1970s the area was landscaped to create Castle Park. The church is made of pennant sandstone rubble, which varies a lot in colour.



Esme
 "It was known as Hap'penny Bridge. It had a tramway depot right next to it. That night was the end of the trams in Bristol".

St Philip's Bridge was built in 1841, replacing a ferry

across the water. It stopped being a toll paying bridge in 1875. It was directly hit by bombing on 11th April 1941 (the Good Friday raid). The raid severed the power cables of the tramways which ran across the bridge. This signalled the end of the tramway system in Bristol, as services did not resume after the war.



Rhoda
 "We were having coffee. I saw a parachute thing all alight coming down. There were some soldiers in the café, they told us to get to a shelter. They'd been in the Blitz in Coventry two days

before. We went to a shelter. We looked out and it was like an inferno".

This picture, taken from the still standing Odeon cinema, shows the bomb damage in Union Street and the Castle Street area. Much of the old narrow shopping streets were destroyed. The modern Galleries shopping centre was built at the top of the hill in the early 1990's.

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