

The Blitz

At the beginning of WW2 the German air force (Luftwaffe) attacked the British air force and these battles were known as 'The Battle of Britain', but soon the Luftwaffe changed their plan and started to drop bombs on our cities.

Attacks

It was very dangerous living in big cities during WW2 as cities were often targeted during night bombing raids by the Luftwaffe. These attacks were called air raids and destroyed many buildings and lives.

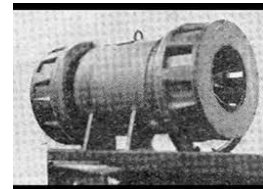


From September 1940 – May 1941 the German bombers attacked cities, ports and other industrial areas. At one point in London the bombers had attacked every night for 11 weeks, apart from 1 day. These heavy air strikes were known as the Blitz and began on 7th September 1940. The word Blitz was taken from the German word Blitzkrieg which, when interpreted, means lightening war.

London was not the only city that was bombed, other cities included Birmingham, Bristol, Cardiff, Coventry, Liverpool, Plymouth, Southampton and Swansea.

Sirens

People were warned to run for safety from possible air raid strikes by an air raid siren. The sirens were very loud, the warning sound pitch would rise and then fall. The all clear would be given later by the same machine but this time it was a loud, continuous sound.



People who died.

32,000 people were killed during the Blitz and many thousands more were injured.

What it was like to live in the cities?

It was very scary to live in large towns or cities at this time and people had to try to keep themselves safe. To do this many people slept in shelters in their homes or gardens (see shelters sheet) or slept in the underground every night rather than having to move and get out of bed when or if a siren sounded.

It would have been hard to move around at night time anyway because it was dark due to the blackouts.

Many children were evacuated during the war to keep them safe which we will be thinking about later in our topic.

The Blackout

During the war, everyone had to cover their windows and doors at night with heavy black curtains, cardboard or paint. They did this to prevent any light from their home escaping and giving the enemy clues about where to bomb. Even the street lights were switched off, dimmed or covered!

The blackout affected people's lives. Thousands died in road accidents and people were injured because they could not see in the dark which caused them to trip, fall down steps and even bump into things!



Kent

Our county of Kent was also in danger as German bombers had to fly over Kent to reach their London target and on their return would often just get rid of any bombs left over Kent. This area was known as 'bomb alley'

How did we try to protect our cities?



The Government tried to keep our cities safer by using barrage balloons. These balloons flew high in the sky and forced the German planes to fly higher than they wanted to, making it harder for them to be accurate with their target.

When did the Blitz end?

The Blitz ended in mid- May 1941.