

Jean Wallington

I spent the war years (June 42-May 45) in the NFS at 28 Stepney Grove, Scarborough, despite the fact that I had volunteered age 17 and a half for the WRENS because I wanted to travel. I spent the time doing secretarial work for the administration officer, D.O.Elvidge, and sharing a room with the secretary of the divisional officer, Mr Arthur Robinson. We mainly typed letters and reports of fires, always done in triplicate!

We also had half an hour's drill every morning up Stepney Grove and into Stepney Drive, past Lady Cockerline's house and back to the Grove. L/Fireman Metcalfe was our drill sergeant and my friend Daphne could never get the hand of marching, trying to move her left arm and foot together.

I also had to go one day per week down to the fire station in North Marine Road to help Mr Read (later of Read's Hotel) to count the coupons collected for the firemen's meals and work out the menus for the week. The admin staff also had to do one night per week on operational duties meaning that we had to work the telephone; the old fashioned sort with cords, and take messages. After our shift we slept upstairs in bunk beds.

One memorable time was when the NFS band came down from Newcastle and played for a week at all the stations in the area, Pickering, Kirbymoorside, Malton, Whitby etc. All the firewomen went with them and had a jolly good time. I can never hear "Don't fence me in" without thinking of those dances we attended. All the girls kept in touch after the war but I think there are only four of us left now in Scarborough.

I was born in Castle Place (below Longwestgate) in 1923. My father owned the bakery at the end of the row and the four houses. He later sold the shop to Mrs Coyne and brought 20 Eastborough which had a dairy shop and my mother ran the house as a guest house. It had 9 bedrooms and at first she did apartments then full board. She was a good cook and fed the visitors well.