

Bomb raid turned cinema fantasy into harsh reality

An article in last month's Surrey Comet about the devastating German air raid on New Malden on August 16, 1940, at the start of the Battle of Britain, has stirred up memories of that terrible day for a number of readers. Yvonne Matts tells Shirin Aguiar how a trip to the cinema almost ended in tragedy.

Yvonne Matts, 75, of Alric Avenue, New Malden, was watching Wings of Morning with her sister ~~Elfi~~ at the Granada Cinema in Kingston on August 16, 1940, when a German bomb fell outside the family home and blasted their mother, Elfi, out of the kitchen into the hall.

On discovering the bombing raid after emerging from the cinema, the girls were desperate to get home but with transport disrupted, they managed to get a bus to Kingston Road and then walked along The Cut.

A friend they met told them that their mother had been taken to

hospital.

Miss Matts said: "I was terrified and rooted to the spot. I needed my parents. To think of life without them, it just wasn't possible."

Their mother had been taken to hospital after the blast in which an elderly woman across the road died from her injuries.

Miss Matts said: "We were lucky. My mother spent the night in Kingston hospital."

"She was only suffering from shock. People were groaning."

"For a month afterwards she was taking bits of glasses from her skin." ** few days*

The Matts' front door took 17 ma-

chine gun bullet holes, with Miss Matts' bedroom taking shrapnel which went through her wardrobe into her clothes. The lucky summer trilby hat on a stand in the hall was peppered with machine gun bullet holes.

The Evening Standard featured a photograph of it in their August 17 edition.

In a letter to the Comet this week, Mrs C Lindsey of Consfield Avenue, who also survived the raid, said: "I can well remember running down the garden to the Anderson shelter, looking up and seeing the black planes, with the swastika, almost on the roof and



Yvonne Matts, 75, of Alric Avenue, New Malden, with the Evening Standard cutting featuring a photograph of the hat which was damaged during the August 16, 1940 bombing raid over New Malden. Miss Matts' mother narrowly escaped death during the raid.

the pilots in their black helmets." Beryl Bryan of Drumaline Ridge, Worcester Park, said: "I well remember the afternoon when New Malden was bombed."

"I boarded a 604 trolleybus, which didn't go further than South Lane because there

were unexploded bombs and damage to property further along Kingston Road."

For letters about the raid, see page 15, and on page 17 RAF survivors who fought in the Battle of Britain tell their stories.