

Subject: WW11
From: P KEEN (jandpk@btinternet.com)
To: dmacdonald@virginmedia.com;
Date: Thursday, 12 June 2014, 20:23

Dear Scotty, for some reason your
Email address was rejected.

Dear Scotty, You may have made a request that will result in a deluge of reminiscence, so I will try to be as brief as possible. My brother Roy (1947-52) and I were never officially evacuated and spent from 1939 to early 44 between London and relatives and friends in Wiltshire. We started attending the ad hoc rump of St Georges Cathedral school before the main body of the children evacuated to Bradford Abbas in Devon returned in early 1944. I must have taken "11 plus" or "scholarship" examinations in both Wiltshire and London as in addition to a Grammar school offer in London I was also offered a Place at the Bishops Grammar school in Salisbury. My parents opted for the Xaverian brothers where my older cousin John A Keen was already a pupil and my lifelong friends Bernard Scammel and the late Gerald Lee were among a large contingent of St Georges boys who started in September of 1945. Gerald and my main war memory was of one of the very last V1 bombers to reach South London. We were making our way from my home just off the Kennington Rd to his in Lambeth Walk when the Alert sounded. By this time of the war it usually meant a false alarm but as we actually heard the V1 we were called into the deep entrance of an HGV depot and not long after heard and felt the explosion. After the all clear we ran back to reassure my Mother and then went to do the same for Mrs Lee. The V1 had struck the yard where most of the market stalls for the Lambeth Walk street market were stored, between the Walk and Lambeth Rd. An area already laid waste by earlier bombing.

We shared a more tragic incident, a friend and classmate of ours who walked home with us daily was killed when a V2 struck the victorian mansion flats opposite the bombed wreckage of the Lambeth Baths. Had he lived he was destined for Clapham College too.

As someone who took a degree in history in later life with a special interest in London and the Blitz I have researched and talked to many of my parents and grandparents friends collecting their reminiscences of South London in the war with particular emphasis on our Cathedral but none actually relate to any school other than The Cathedral

Hope this might be of some interest. Regards Peter Keen.

