

## BACKGROUND

On the morning of 1st February 1916 news filters through at Francis Stores on Runcorn Road from eye witnesses of the zeppelin raid over the previous night.

Birmingham has endured difficult blackout conditions intended to prevent her from being a target. The wisdom of this policy is now to be seen, in light of what has happened in nearby towns.



**GRIMSLEY (postman):** (*enters*) Bill have you heard about last night? The bombing?

**BILL (Francis - shop owner):** Yes Elizabeth told me, got it off Joe the milkman. Zeppelins bombed Wednesbury and Walsall she heard.

**GRIMSLEY:** Tipton and Dudley too so my cousin says.

**BILL:** Has anyone been hurt you know?

**GRIMSLEY:** it will be a miracle if there wasn't. It was a lovely clear night – perfect for the stars and perfect for ... well it doesn't bear thinking about.

**ELIZABETH (Bill's wife):** (*comes in*) Hello Fred. Have you heard the news?

**GRIMSLEY:** We were just talking about it, yes. Shocking it really is.

**VICTORIA (Bill's mother in law):** What are you talking about? I can't hear what you're saying.

**ELIZABETH:** Joe said there were people in town thought they saw it.

**GRIMSLEY:** My cousin said it looked bad. Walsall was lit up like a Christmas tree. Reckons that's what drew the zeppelin to attack.

**VICTORIA:** Christmas tree? It must be too early for a Christmas tree?

**MRS EDWARDS (neighbour):** (*comes in*) Here you will never believe this. I was nearly killed last night.

**ELIZABETH:** Oh my goodness, you weren't in Walsall were you?

**MRS EDWARDS:** Walsall – why would I be in Walsall? I was coming back from seeing my sister Floss in Highgate and I nearly fell down the trap door outside the New Inn – the dozy so and so had left it open. I couldn't see it for looking because of this blackout. Lord knows how I didn't break something or worse.... What is it? What are you looking at me like that for?

**ELIZABETH:** There was an air raid last night Jane over Walsall way. Those Zeppelins. There's been fires and people might be dead.

**MRS EDWARDS:** Oh. Oh I see. That is awful. People actually dead and here am I complaining about a trap door!

**ELIZABETH:** Yes. Seems like Mr Chamberlain was right, after all.

**MRS EDWARDS:** I suppose so.... By the way, Liz, could I borrow a cup of sugar?

**GRIMSLEY:** Sugar? At a time like this! People are getting killed and all you can think about is sugar. The war isn't just abroad now. It's here.