NLCS

I interviewed Leon Ungar, he is 84 years old. He was 9 when World War Two ended. I am 9. So, I was really interested in finding out what it was like being a 9-year-old then and how different it is from being a 9-year-old today. As I explored deeper with my interview questions, I thought I would feel lucky not to have lived through that but actually I ended up puzzled about how we do things today.

In World War Two food was not easy to get. You could buy food, but you wouldn’t be allowed to purchase a large amount of it. This was called rationing. One thing that there was a shortage of was bananas, there were no bananas! Once the war had ended, they started being available again and for children who had only read about them in books it was quite fun to actually eat one.

One of Leon’s nice memories, once rationing had ended, was going into a sweetshop and he told me “it was nice to able to go into a sweetshop and pick anything you wanted”. Yes, that was right, sweets were rationed too! Imagine only having a few sweets a week.

Even after the war ended food was still rationed so people learnt to appreciate what they had. Children had to eat what they were given or go hungry, no picky eaters allowed!

We waste so much food and we have so much of it, maybe people are taking advantage by taking more than they need because they are worried that we won’t have any again in the future?

Children in World War Two would go to school just like we do but sometimes the German pilots could come in the middle of a school day. During the lesson you would go down into an underground shelter to wait until the raid had finished but you would still be having a lesson. Imagine that…

This made me see that education was so important, not even a German raid could stop the learning!

I think today we would have been sent straight home or not even be sent to school at all. Teachers are very overprotective and maybe we should be taught to be braver and just get on with it?

I asked Leon what he thought was the most important thing for children to do today and his reply was “be more independent, try harder to solve problems yourself, use less electronic devices and help each other more”. He thinks people don’t look out for each other as much as they did back then.

Leon is a pharmacist and at 84 he still works part time serving his community. Leon is also my grandfather.

These were just some of the stories that my grandfather told me. Yes, it made me think about food and bravery but the best lesson I learnt from all of this is that I should be asking him more about his childhood when I go and visit!