



HAMPSHIRE RECORD OFFICE

Archive Education Service

Home Front: Second World War

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VICTORY CELEBRATIONS

Introduction

Hampshire's role in the defence of the realm during wartime dates back to the thirteenth century when French troops landed in the county, laying siege to Odiham Castle. The county's coast was subsequently protected by fortresses like Southsea and Hurst Castles and the ring of Palmerston Forts. From Portsmouth and Southampton the Royal Navy with military support disembarked for campaigns around the world. During WW2 Hampshire once again played its part in supplying troops, ships and aircraft to help the war effort.

The impact of the war on the home front in Hampshire is the focus of this resource pack. The topics covered include air raids, evacuation, civil defence, war work and victory celebrations, complementing the visual images on our DVDs **Their Past Your Future aka Home Front**.

The heaviest bombing of Britain took place in 1940 and 1941. Industrial and military targets around the coast received much attention from German planes, which meant that Portsmouth and Southampton suffered more than most other Hampshire towns. Numerous air raid shelters were built across the county; public and private. Public shelters were generally used by residents in multi-storey buildings, schoolchildren and day workers. Many households built their own shelters such as the indoor Morrison Shelter designed in 1941, or outdoor Anderson shelters.

A major fear for civilians apart from deadly bombs was the threat of gas attacks from the air. Although mustard and other gases had been used, and condemned as evil, in the First World War, the Germans were believed to be developing highly poisonous gases to drop on towns from aeroplanes. The Government decided to issue everyone with a gas mask, including babies and children. Gas masks had to be carried at all times, and were kept in a cardboard box with a strap made of string.

The Government knew that many towns and cities near strategic sites would be bombed, and possibly gassed. In order to protect young children from such attacks it was decided to evacuate as many at risk as possible to the countryside. In Hampshire many children from Portsmouth and Southampton were sent to inland towns such as Winchester, Romsey and Andover. Many evacuees had never been away from home, or in some cases out of the cities in which they lived. New towns and faces may have proved exciting to some, but frightening to many youngsters.

For those who stayed in Hampshire's towns and cities facing the ever-present threat of air raids, precautions such as blacking out car, street and house lights became essential. Ordinary curtains showed light through them, so people had to mask their windows with tape and put up dark, heavy curtain material.

By May 1940 it became increasingly clear that the Germans had the upper hand over Britain's troops and that an invasion seemed possible. The Government called upon men between the ages of 17 and 65 to become Local Defence Volunteers, to provide a 'home guard' against invasion. The trade of certain members of Home Guard units could be identified by the weapons they carried and the clothes they wore before they received their official uniforms and weapons. Farmers often carried pitchforks, miners carried crowbars and carpenters carried hammers.

One problem shared by many during the war was a lack of regular, wholesome food due to food shortages. Britain was unable to maintain herself with sufficient home produced food and had to rely on other countries selling their surpluses to the Government. Many ships carrying food and supplies were sunk by the Germans which led to food shortages and a system of rationing or sharing out of food across the country. The first foods to be rationed in 1940 were bacon, sugar and butter. People were issued with ration books which allowed them to buy set amounts of food, clothes and petrol. The Ministry of Food urged people to be careful about the amount of food and other

consumables they used. Special recipes were issued to maximise the little food available.

A number of schemes were devised by the Government as well as local authorities to encourage people to grow their own food and collect salvage for the manufacture of planes and tanks. A Dig for Victory campaign encouraged vegetable growing, whilst Wings for Victory and other similar campaigns collected scrap metal, paper, bones and wool. Groups of women such as the Women's Voluntary Service (WVS) and the Women's Land Army spearheaded such campaigns, as well as substituting for male workers in factories and docks around the country. Despite the everyday hardships life was lived by many to the full. Many forms of public entertainment, such as professional football matches and horse racing were banned during the hostilities. The most popular forms of entertainment were listening to the wireless (radio), going to dances, and the cinema.

When the war finally ended in 1945 there was much to celebrate and special Victory events were organised such as street parties and fetes.

To help you plan your lessons we have selected some websites containing material on the Second World War (Please note Hampshire Record Office is not responsible for the content nor availability of the following websites which were 'active' in Autumn 2007). In the event of any problems please contact the site's web-keeper

Westalls War is a superb website put together by Tyne & Wear Archive Service. It focuses on the events surrounding a disastrous bombing incident which killed 103 people who were in an air raid shelter on Tyneside in May 1941. The site incorporates extracts from Robert Westall's award-winning book *The Machine Gunners*. Westall was himself a schoolboy at the time of the bombing, and his father was an ARP warden.

www.westallswar.org.uk

Other local websites which focus on the home front include **Civvy Street in World War 2**, an account of wartime life in Bristol at www.macksites.com/menu.html also a similar site can be found relating to **Plymouth Blitz and Air Raid Shelters** at <http://web.ukonline.co.uk/stephen.johnson/blitz/>

There is lots about ARP and civil defence to be found at **The Midnight Watch**. However, this site automatically downloads many annoying advertising sites, so please supervise children using this site.
<http://fortunecity.co.uk/meltingpot/oxford/330/mwindex.html>

The 1940s Society site contains a number of articles and book reviews of interest www.1940.co.uk/index.shtml

Then there are the biggies like the **BBC, the Imperial War Museum and Channel 4's 1940s house**. You can find these at the following:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/>

www.iwm.org.uk

www.channel4.com/history/microsites/0-9/1940house/home_text/episode6.htm

Some ideas for books:

- The Home Guard, David Carroll, Sutton Publishing Ltd, ISBN 0-7509-1823-3
 - Put That Light Out: Britain's civil defence services at war, Mike Brown, Sutton Publishing Ltd, ISBN 0-7509-2210-9
 - The Home Front, Guy de la Bedoyere, Shire, ISBN 0-7478-0528-8
 - The Victory Cookbook, Margueritte Patten, Hamlyn, ISBN 0-6006-0254-0
 - The Women's Land Army, Bob Powell & Nigel Westacott, Sutton Publishing Ltd, ISBN 0-7509-1672-9
 - Harry's Battle of Britain, Andrew Donkin, Macdonald Young Books, ISBN 0-7500-2674-X
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Some suggested activities

1. Split the class into groups and give each group the task of finding out about one of the following and report back to the whole class:

- Evacuation
- Women workers
- Women's Land Army
- Air Raids and ARP
- Home Guard
- Civil Defence and Royal Observer Corps
- Military hospitals and V.A.D.s

Use information from this pack as well as websites, CD ROMs and videos, and library books.

2. Research your own locality (fieldwork) for clues about the home front, checking the following:
 - Local library (local history section)
 - Local museum for artefacts, posters etc.
 - War memorials, including those in churches
 - Talking to local people about their wartime experiences

3. Ask the children to write one of the following:
 - A short diary
 - A letter
 - A postcard

These could be written from a choice of perspectives such as an **evacuee** writing to their parents; a **land girl** writing to her parents or friends; someone in the **army, navy or airforce** writing home; a **woman war worker** etc.

4. Design a wartime poster on a particular theme, such as:
 - Saving fuel e.g. petrol, electricity, gas
 - Saving food e.g. rationing or suggested recipes
 - Volunteering e.g. home guard, V.A.D., land army
 5. Organise a street party using WW2 style recipes which can be found in books or the internet.
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Evacuation

Facts:

- Evacuation began on 1 September 1939, two days before war was declared. About 1.5 million people including children were evacuated under the government scheme (see the copy of the evacuation form in the booklet).
- A total of 2,664 children were evacuated overseas but this stopped when the ship *City of Benares* was torpedoed and sunk on 19 September 1940: 73 evacuees were drowned.
- By March 1940 1.2 million mothers and children had returned home as the expected bombing of towns and cities such as London, Birmingham, Liverpool, Southampton and Portsmouth had not taken place. This was known as the 'phoney war'. However, in June 1940 a second evacuation took place.
- A third evacuation involving mainly children from London and the South of England took place in 1944 when the Germans sent V1 'doodlebug' missiles across the English Channel.
- During evacuation many children did not know where they were going or for how long.
- In Reception areas billeting officers had the job of seeing that all children had somewhere to live, but foster parents would 'pick and choose' children to look after.
- Strong healthy looking boys were often chosen by farmers to help out on the land, and older girls to help with housework.
- Local schools in the countryside took evacuees into their classes.

An account of the reception of Evacuees in Winchester from a local newspaper

"So far as the civil population is concerned the biggest event of last week-end and of the present week has been the reception, billeting and settling down of evacuees from the vulnerable areas. Winchester City has received or will receive approximately 1,000 people.

On Friday, September 1st, the Northern Secondary School was evacuated in two parties to Winchester. In the morning the 400 girls and 150 boys with the staff and helpers left, and in the evening the balance of 300 boys and the remaining staff and helpers. Travelling arrangements by Corporation buses and the Southern Railway were excellent and not a single casualty was reported. At Winchester extensive arrangements for the reception of the children had been made by the billeting committee composed of prominent citizens, acting as voluntary workers, under the chairmanship of Major Pinsent (chairman of the Winchester Education Committee). Everything possible has been done to place the Portsmouth secondary children in good homes and no pains or trouble have been spared to ensure this end. Certain adjustments of billets have been made since the arrival of the children in Winchester with the aim of ensuring greater comfort and happiness of the scholars.

Winchester has been divided into a large number of billeting areas with a master in charge of each. By such an arrangement each scholar is periodically visited by his area master and close contact is maintained between the householders and staff. Until the beginning of the Autumn term, every effort is being made to keep the boys occupied and happy by walks, visits, swimming and useful tasks. The response of the boys has been excellent. Many Winchester citizens have been struck by the cheerful attitude and willingness to help of the boys."

CITY OF WINCHESTER	
RECORD OF PARTICULARS OF EVACUEE	
6/ N ^o 1500	
1. SURNAME (BLOCK LETTERS)	
Christian Names	
2. Age	Sex Male Female
3. Address from which Evacuated	
4. Next of Kin NAME	
Address	
5. Any infectious disease or contact ?	
6. Occupation	
FOR USE OF RECEPTION OFFICER:	
Billeted at:—	
6/ N ^o 1500	
YOU ARE BILLETED AT:—	

An evacuee card
HRO: W/C20



Clifford Stark an evacuee
HRO: 80M92/5

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

DISPERSAL OF CIVILIAN POPULATION

COUNCIL

The Government have announced that the voluntary dispersal of the following classes of persons from this area* to reception areas in other parts of the country shall be put into effect immediately.

1. CHILDREN UNDER 15

Children of this age must be taken by their mothers, or by another responsible adult if their mother cannot go. Only in most exceptional circumstances will children be allowed to go on their own. (EXAMPLE: if neither of their parents can go because of illness and there is no one else to take them.)

2. CHILDREN BETWEEN 15 AND 18 STILL AT SCHOOL FULL-TIME

Children in this class may either go with their mothers or on their own. In exceptional circumstances they may go with another responsible adult. (EXAMPLE: a handicapped child whose mother is too ill to go.)

3. CHILDREN BETWEEN 15 AND 18 WHO HAVE LEFT SCHOOL

Children in this class should go on their own. Only in exceptional circumstances may they be accompanied. (EXAMPLE: if they are handicapped, or if the mother is taking younger children.)

4. EXPECTANT MOTHERS

5. BLIND, CRIPPLED OR AGED AND INFIRM PEOPLE only if they are dependent on the care of a person who is a member of the classes mentioned above and who is travelling under the scheme.

Special arrangements are being made for the dispersal of children under the age of 18 who are resident at boarding schools, homes or other similar establishments. Parents who do not wish their children to take part in such arrangements should immediately contact the establishments.

Children in the care of a local authority who are living with fosterparents are included in the above classes. If their fosterparents are unable to go with them the Child Care Authority should be informed at once.

Anyone living in the area of.....who comes within the above priority classes and wishes to take part in the scheme should go immediately to.....where they will be given further instructions.

CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

*If only part of the area is within the dispersal scheme, the districts affected are shown below:

B0827-2) W/L 39945/6387 50H 1/64 Hw.

Government poster HRO: 97M72/DDC61

Home news and women at war

Women in War

In wartime women worked in both industry and agriculture as well as providing support for local civil defence services. In December 1941 unmarried women aged 19 to 30 found themselves conscripted and were joined by many more married women who volunteered. They often replaced men who had joined the Services, or provided additional labour in important areas such as munitions manufacture, ship and aircraft building, and farming. They drove buses, fire-engines and ambulances. Some joined the Women's Auxiliary Forces (WAF) often serving on R.A.F bases and the Women's Land Army (see chapter 3).

Much of the evidence we have for events and wartime conditions come from letters sent to and from friends and relatives by those engaged in war work, as well as the often detailed diaries that people kept at the time. The following are examples of the above which show what it was like for Hampshire's people during the air raids and their grit and determination to rebuild their homes, factories, shops and lives.



Women doping aircraft wings
HRO: 217M84/61

News from the Home Front

Below is a draft letter from Miss Johanna Walsh to an unknown person, possibly American, written in August 1940. From 1910-1917 Miss Walsh worked as a shorthand typist in the Great Western Railway Company. In 1917 she became clerk to the engineer of the Winchester Water and Gas Company. When the City Council took over this undertaking, in 1936, Miss Walsh transferred to the City Accountant's Department and became the Housing Welfare Officer until her retirement in 1953. During the war Miss Walsh helped out at the American Information Bureau in Winchester.

Winchester, August 1940

"When your letter arrived on Saturday afternoon I was having a nice lazy time in my garden. It was a beautiful day – not too hot – and I was taking advantage of the sunshine, as I do each Saturday and Sunday afternoon. I put my deck chair out and get myself comfortable with the day's paper, read the news, have some sleep, and just feel that it would be a wonderful world for me if there were no war. Aeroplanes are constantly overhead, but of course we had that in peace time, and the sound of planes does not disturb me as it does some people.

When I read your letter I felt how I wished you could see us in Winchester, and realise that we are taking the war in our stride and making the best of circumstances which could be so much worse. There is a sense of unity and a feeling that we have got to win this war – not as the poor French people: they seemed to be overwhelmed with despair. Our English Channel has given us a breathing space, and the courage and daring of our Air Force has saved us from much destruction from the air.

This week we have experienced a few less air raid warnings than last week. The first daylight warning was on Tuesday, 13th August, and I was visiting on one of our housing estates and spent a few anxious moments as there was considerable fighting overhead. Anyhow, the tenant in whose house I was sheltering was much more concerned about getting on with her housework. She washed up the dishes from the mid-day meal, and told me a lot of her family troubles, and remarked 'It's no good me worrying about the war, I can't help it !!!'

Two days later when the warning came I was with Agnes and went to the cellar at 25 St Thomas Street, which has been specially strengthened and is open to the general public to take shelter. Agnes

is the official warden, and the occupants of the nearby house come along, and there is a good deal of gossiping, but certainly not any panic. At the time of the next warning, last Friday, we were having our mid-day meal, and as a precaution we sat inside the cupboard under the stairs, a position considered to be safe, as when a house collapses, very seldom does the stairway collapse. On my way back to the office another alarm went, so I had my first experience of the office shelter, which is in the main building. All the females are now coming prepared with knitting. My next was on Sunday after church. I usually walk along with Agnes to St Thomas Street, and walk round the garden – just now picking up the fallen fruit – and was on my way home when the warning screamed. It is a rather alarming sound and upsets some people very much, and young children are terrified of it. I made my way back to Agnes and her safe shelter.

So far no damage has been done in the City. The countryside around has had some bombs, and four German planes and one English have been brought down on the outskirts of Winchester. Many have been to examine the wreckage, but that does not appeal to me.

I had a very charming letter from one of my dining table companions on the Normandie, a Mr Smith, to say that his mother and father are very anxious to take two English children to look after them for the duration of the war, and would be glad to take any two that I care to nominate. Under the government scheme I understand it rests with the American authorities as to the homes to which children are sent. Those children who are now arriving in New York are sponsored by various organisations who have paid the passages, and the official scheme has yet to be worked out when the American ships are available to carry large numbers of children. I have, therefore, passed the offer on to the Reception in London, who are collecting the records of all children willing to go overseas. It is awfully hard for parents to have to make up their minds on the matter, but in the interests of the future generation it is a wise move to have them away from the danger of war."

Johanna Young Walsh
HRO: 65M90W/110



Bomb damaged buildings by the railway line at Southampton
HRO: 139M86/15/2

**Extracts from a letter from Portsea Island Co-operative
Society's President to employees, September 1942**

"Dear Friend,

This is intended as a 'Christmas' letter, but as we write that festive season seems a long way off. There are, however, signs of the approaching winter, the falling leaf, the autumnal tints of the trees, and the longer hours of black-out, and it would appear that we are to spend a fourth Christmas at war.

It has been thought that many of you to whom this letter and enclosure are being sent, would welcome an account of the progress of the Society which we serve. As President of the Society, I was asked by the Employee's Welfare Committee, to write this survey, and I gladly undertake the task, not only because I occupy the position which I do, but because during the last war I performed a limited amount of service as a private soldier, and more especially because my son has been a prisoner of war since June 1941.

The Grocery Department with Mr Winn and Mr Chambers still at the helm is showing good weekly increases and most of the branches, especially those outside the city boundaries, are doing extraordinarily well, despite the fact that their staffs are constantly being depleted

and other changes are taking place. Which shows two things doesn't it? First, that the Society is serving its members to their satisfaction, and secondly that Hitler hasn't starved us out yet.

The butchery department, under the very successful direction of Mr Batts, is doing remarkably well. It is astonishing that in spite of the very limited amount of meat that we are allowed to purchase, the takings of the butchery department are greater than they were before the war. Nearly two-thirds of the original staff are now serving in the Forces, and temporary employees are very difficult to obtain, so that you will gather that a hard job is being done well.

We are proud of the Bakery. In just on two years ago now, we had nothing left, but by sheer grit, determination and enthusiasm, Mr Bourne and Mr Fogden, most ably supported by the staff have almost recovered the pre 1941 position. An excellent loaf is being produced, so good in fact, that PIMCO was awarded the first prize for National Bread in competition with about four hundred co-operative bakeries in the South of England.

The Dairy has had, I believe, a higher proportion of the staff called for National Service than any other department. The gallonage of milk sold when rationing is not in progress is most satisfactory and bears comparison with the sales before the war started. There are of course no manufactures of cream, ice cream or butter. The many women now employed by this department are doing very well indeed.

What are usually known as the dry goods departments are severely restricted in their trade by lack of supplies. The staff has undergone many changes, many of the young women of the drapery department especially having left us for various kinds of national service.

Large sections of the Office have been evacuated to a country district, and I am told, so appreciative are the staff of their surroundings, that they have no wish to return to Fratton Road. Very many of the skilled staff have left us, and substitution is not easy. But up to the present by dint of hard work the Society has not been let down in this important aspect of its business. Some things have had to be discontinued, but the most important items have been kept going in a most praiseworthy manner.

The Works Department is, as you may imagine, dealing with many unaccustomed tasks. No big building schemes of course, are in operation, but the members of staff are called occasionally at unexpected hours to deal with urgent cases. The workers who are left are fully occupied, but it requires no big stretch of vision to see

H O M E F R O N T - S E C O N D W O R L D W A R

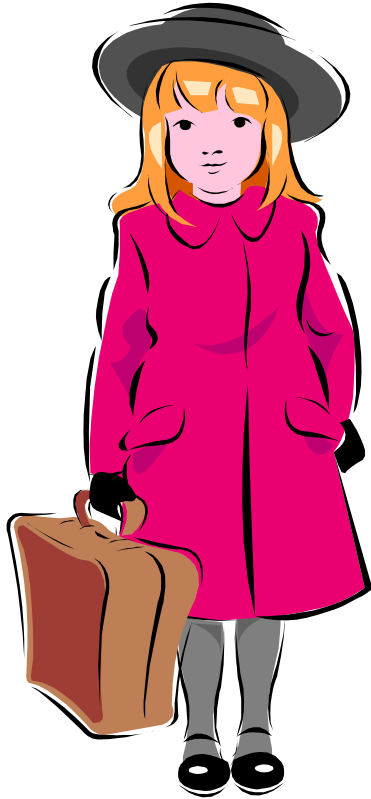
that when peace comes Mr Wilding and his men will be very busy indeed.

The garage staff still persevere. There are no new cars, spare parts are almost impossible to obtain, and deliveries are very severely restricted. But it may be said with truth, that in spite of all hindrances and the vehicles getting older, the cars are being kept well.

I hope that I shall have the opportunity in the not too distant future of greeting you all on your return. May happier days be in store for us all".

H. Roper,
President
HRO: 112M98/1/7/4

HOME FRONT - SECOND WORLD WAR



Blouse = 3 coupons

Jumper = 3 coupons

Coat = 11 coupons

Gloves = 2 coupons

Skirt = 5 coupons

Shoes = 3 coupons



Scarf = 2 coupons

Jacket = 8 coupons

SHIRT = 4
COUPONS

PULLOVER = 3
COUPONS

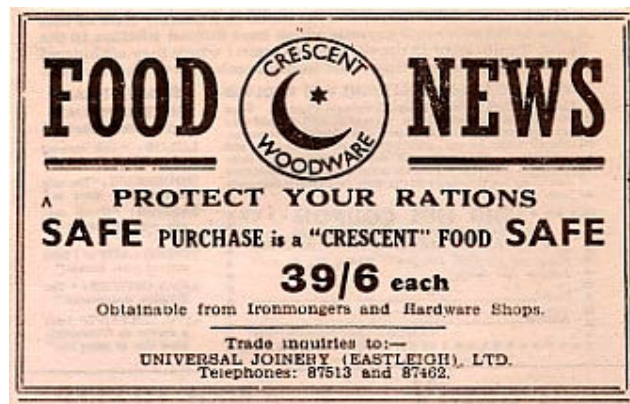
Trousers = 6 coupons

Socks = 1 coupon

The number of coupons needed to exchange for children's clothes.

Food rationing per person per week during the war

Bacon or ham	4-8 ounces
Cheese	1-8 ounces
Butter	1-8 ounces
Eggs	half to 4
Milk	half to 2 pints
Tea	2-4 ounces
Sugar	8-16 ounces
Sweets and chocolate	2-4 ounces
	National dried milk
	1 tin (= 4 pints) every 4 weeks
Dried eggs	1 packet (= 12 eggs) every 8 weeks



A newspaper advertisement for a food safe

Home Front letter sent from Gosport, New Year, 1941

"Dearest Lourdes

Please do not think too unkindly of me. I fully intended to ask you to come here one day during Poore's hols but the bitterly cold weather stopped all or nearly all my pleasures. I spent Xmas Day with Aggie & family. You remember she married Alfred Poore. They have one son unmarried. They are house decorators; but Aggie's husband is doing ARP or Ambulance work for the duration. Alfie is carrying on & very busy mending roofs damaged by blasts. I was pleased to see you that day, only I've been ashamed ever since at the miserable tea I gave you as I had lots of good 'eats' in the larder. I hope to have a decent spread next time dear.

You would not think I was very brave the other night. I was about to go to bed when the guns started. I grabbed a coat, handbag, slung hat over arm by elastic shoes under arm & was going next door. When I found their door closed I went back up to bed. We have had them over several times and we are just beginning to feel the pinch as regards food. There was no meat yesterday at my butchers. No bacon last week at grocers. On Xmas morn I felt like a million dollars. Had a surprise parcel. It contained 1 pound of sugar, 4 pounds of tea, 2 pound of butter, half a pound lard, half a pound of marg, a Xmas card, letter & doggie brooch from the people who here during the summer. The lady is French & she does not drink much tea. They have two small children so she saved Derek's and Jacqueline's rations for Auntie Mullins & New Years Day I had some eggs from Mrs Barrett. Little boy from next door brought in a fine savoy this morning & on Tuesday I may get a couple of onions. This time last year we could get plenty of meat but no veg; now we are told to make the most of a jolly old carrot. Good for our eyes & complexions!

From your friend as always, Mary" (surname unknown)

HRO: 68M95/1

Extracts from Miss Felicite Hardcastle's War Diary

November 1940

"The second winter of the war has now begun. One doesn't like to think of what it means for the occupied countries or our own prisoners of war. Letters are now going through the post to them and I take care to give a specially good date-stamp to all such (they go post free). Just a sort of 'personal touch' from Burley which no other place can give that letter.

Still no news of Philip's whereabouts – possibly his wounded leg has kept him in hospital in France.

The gales have begun and so there have been few air raids – but a couple of big HEs fell on Friday 8th in Burley Hollow – no damage of course.

Saturday 9th. The little angels from Southampton have gone home again!

Their father's visit not their mother's we feel sure. A great pity for their sakes, but certainly a relief within house! They were certainly the two nicest boys in Burley.

Bill home on leave, and so the christening of Michael William took place just before the very crowded Armistice Service on Sunday 10th afternoon. Violet also on 'leave', neither Bill nor Mr Clare have heard anything more of their commissions, these things take such an age.

Marion has been put in command of the Instructional Production Section, usually an active service mans' job, so I gather it's in the nature of promotion. Sold poppies all this afternoon in pouring rain. Total came to £78, more than ever.

Thursday 14-15th Bad all night raid on Bournemouth & Poole districts, 4 HEs fell on Burley Lawn. Nights have, up till November, been much quieter. Red [lights] usually on 8-12pm, but the planes pass on to West-Midlands etc.

Sunday 17-18th Another all night raid on Bournemouth, mostly land mines dropped. Some say they are our own left in France, hence their devastating efficiency! Anyhow there was plenty of damage done with Westbourne area, & Burley got the odd one as usual, 6-9 'oil-cans' and Molotov baskets and half a dozen HEs on Burley Lodge, near the cottages, but no damage. Altogether a very noisy night.

Saturday 23-24th Poor old Southampton caught it again, very badly. I could see the glow of the ship they set on fire as I went home. Some bombs whistled over the house and mother informed the ARP but they weren't found till Sunday morning. Actually they fell in front of Burbush between the house and the railway, small HE type. 6 more fell between the Lawn and Burley Rocks. Mimi and her twins have arrived safely in South Africa from Egypt. I don't suppose any of us will see them till they are almost young men and we ourselves much older.

Wednesday 27th Isobel home on 7 days [leave], Netley [Hospital] has had a bomb or two in the grounds and near the building, but mercifully no damage. Got a thoroughly well deserved ticking off today for charging 3d instead of 4d for RV, not only on the ticket, but actually telling the calling so. Heaven knows what I was thinking about, not thinking at all is near the truth probably, and poor old H is to suffer for my sins, which is rotten.

Sunday 1 December Last night another very bad on Southampton. Huge fires started round the docks, the glare reflected from the low cloud almost lit me

home. These concentrated attacks on single towns are certainly causing great havoc and one wonders just how the out-put and morale will stand up to it.

Monday 2nd Poor old Southampton, again last night even worse. We gather there's not much left of the centre of the town, everything from the bottom of the Avenue to the docks is just flat, excepting the good old Bargate! What will the morale of Southampton be after this! It wasn't too good before! We hear there is neither water, light, gas or drainage now."

HRO: 110M89/330/1



Bomb damaged shops, including W H Smith, in Southampton
139M86/12/1

Women's Land Army

The concept of the Women's Land Army was started during the First World War and introduced again in 1939. By 1943 there were some 90,000 young women, called 'land girls', working on farms and large estates throughout Britain. Work on the farms was very hard. Long hours were worked, especially during harvest-time. Some women specialised as rat catchers! This was considered a very useful job as a rat could eat about 50kg of food in a year.

Information for the use of W.L.A. (Women's Land Army) Representatives

The main work of representatives is of four kinds:-

1. Interviewing girls applying for enrolment.
2. Reporting on farms and billets.
3. Looking after the welfare of the girls.
4. Special work which may occur, e.g. in connection with recruiting.

Interviewing

Five forms must be completed, with fullest possible details, to ensure that the volunteer is suitably placed.

Health and Physique

Girls should be strong, able to undertake strenuous work, heavy lifting, and an outdoor life in all weathers. They should be asked whether they have a tendency to rheumatism or catch cold very easily.

Height

Short stature is a definite disadvantage and needs to be compensated by sturdiness.

References

Names of people of some standing and independence of judgment should be given. Next door neighbours without other qualification are not acceptable.

Undertaking

Volunteers should understand quite clearly that they must be fully mobile, that no promise of being able to work with a friend can be given, and that they are expected quite honestly to undertake to stick to the work for the duration of

the war. The signing of the form of undertaking should be made as solemn as possible.

Family ties

Great care should be taken to make sure that volunteers are not likely to have to return home to look after relatives.

Working conditions

All the hardships and difficulties of country life should be thoroughly explained to the volunteer: Loneliness, lack of time off, primitive sanitation etc.

Age

No volunteer under 18 can be accepted unless she is exceptional in physique and mentality. It should be pointed out that there is no Land Army wage for girls under 18 and the county rate is very low.

Women's Land Army Hostels

House rules

- Volunteers are asked to be punctual both in their own interest and to help the staff.
- Intoxicating drinks may not be brought into the hostel.
- No food may be taken into the dormitory at any time.
- Volunteers who use cocoa mugs at night must wash them up and return them to the kitchen.

Leave and Hostel hours

- "Lights out" is at 11.00pm and volunteers must be in the hostel by 10.30pm.
- Two late passes are allowed during the week, one until 11.00pm (lights out 11.30) and the second, which will be on Saturdays or Sundays, until 12.00 midnight. The House Committee will decide in the first place which are to be the late nights and these will be the same each week.
- Volunteers must inform the warden when they intend to spend the night away from the hostel or to be absent from a meal.

Health and Safety

- Smoking in dormitories cannot be allowed, nor any candles used.
- Volunteers suffering from any indisposition including heat rash or any other skin trouble, should report to the warden.

General

- A House Committee shall be elected by the volunteers resident in the hostel and shall consist of five members, one member retiring every six months. The Committee shall meet at least once a week.
 - Volunteers are asked to remember that a Land Army Hostel arouses interest in the neighbourhood and that noisy behaviour, lingering round
-

the entrance and acts of thoughtlessness cause general condemnation (which is certainly undeserved by the majority) both of the hostel in particular and the Women's Land Army in general.

- The right is reserved to terminate the residence of any volunteer at the hostel.



Members of the Women's Land Army shown during a Victory Parade in Southampton
HRO: 17M81/58/1

Women's Land Army VE Day

An account by Wanda Goolden of the London Victory Parade,
8 May 1945

"I had the great honour of being chosen to represent Hampshire in the London Victory Parade, and it is a day I shall never forget.

I travelled by train up to London on Friday afternoon, and had to stand owing to the crowds. The Victory Land Girls were all invited to a wonderful tea at the Land Army Club, where Mrs Jenkins gave us a very nice welcome. Although none of us knew each other, we soon made friends.

We were all billeted at the Royal Palace Hotel, Kensington, where the Civil Defence Workers were also staying. They had with them three famous Alsations which have done such marvellous work during the war, two of which were in the procession.

That evening we had marching practice, and the sergeant in charge was not used to instructing land girls, so we had a few rude remarks shouted at us! We were allowed to be out till ten, then another land girl and I went for a walk

in Kensington Gardens where a lot of troops were camped. Although we had supper in the hotel, being typical land army girls we still felt hungry, so we found a nice little restaurant where we enjoyed an excellent meal.

Saturday morning we had breakfast at 6.30 and had nothing to do but talk in our rooms till about 9, when we had to form in our lines of twelve abreast outside the hotel. We were taken by bus to Hyde Park where we had to wait for some time, but there was plenty for us to watch. The most exciting sight to my mind being the Household Cavalry trotting by looking superb with their accoutrements shining like silver and their beautifully groomed horses. We marched on behind the Women's Voluntary Service through the Park, and halted just before Marble Arch to have tea and buns. There we had the men of our Colonial Empire just beside us, and they did not seem to mind a lot of interested land girls gazing at them.

We started marching down Oxford Street at 10.45, where we seemed to get more cheering than anywhere. The columns had to divide in half most of the march because of the lamp posts in the middle of the streets, so the noise from the crowds seemed greater. People banged gongs, whirled ear-splitting rattles and shouted apt remarks as we passed by. The noise was terrific, and sometimes it was difficult to hear the band playing behind us. The streets looked very gay with flags hanging everywhere, and a mass of cheering people.

We halted just before Whitehall, and I have never seen so many people faint as during the twenty minutes we halted. It was a great thrill seeing all the important people at the saluting base, especially the Royal Family who looked charming.

By the time we got back to Hyde Park, we all felt we had done enough marching for a bit, but would not have missed it for anything. It just started to rain at the end, and we were thankful to have buses to take us back to our hotel.

I finished up a most memorable day by watching the firework display near Westminster Bridge, and got to bed in the very early hours of Sunday morning!"

Wanda Goolden

The Civil Defence Service

Training in civil defence began before the outbreak of war in preparation of an air attack. A newspaper report on the Basingstoke District Civil Defence Service reflects the admiration of local people for those who volunteered to help assist local communities during the war. A Civil Defence Training Ground was established at Claylands near Bishops Waltham, which included buildings with names such as Bleak House, Heartbreak House and Vodka Villas. The following are examples of how civil defence was organised in Basingstoke.

At any one time the number of people involved in the Civil Defence Service totalled 813. These were made up of:

- 336 people in the Air Raid Wardens service (ARP)
- 120 people in rescue parties
- 81 people at Report Centres
- 21 people in decontamination squads
- 54 people in the messenger service
- 44 people in the ambulance service
- 14 people in mobile units
- 75 people at First Aid posts
- 30 people at gas cleansing stations
- 6 people at Worting first aid point
- 32 people in food treatment squads

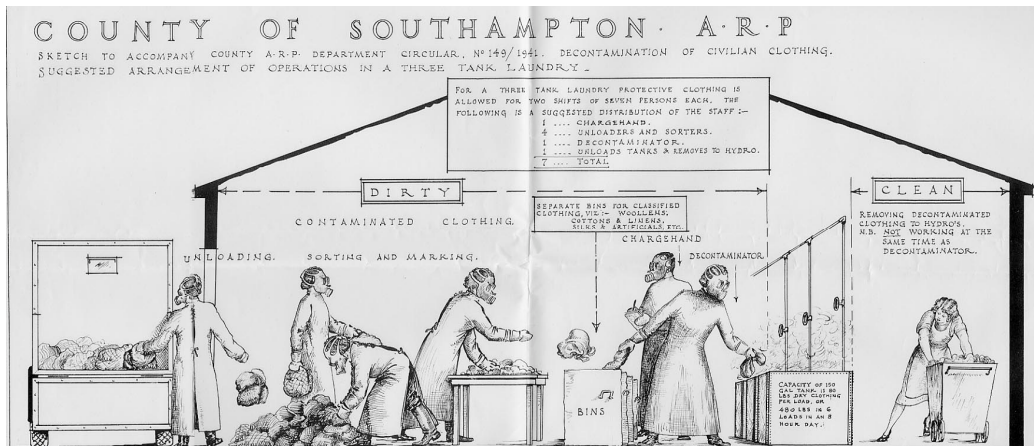
The maximum number of full time paid persons was 29. There were seven rescue parties and two decontamination squads. In addition, 17 doctors were called in to do Civil Defence work. Two road repair gangs, one gas, one water and one electricity repair parties were available.

The Basingstoke Hospital and Park Prewett Hospital were available for receiving air raid casualties. The Report Centre was “continuously manned from the commencement of the war by parties of very loyal ladies, who put in very many hours at their post”. The outlying rural district was also served with a warden service in each village, and four rescue parties, one ambulance and three sitting-case cars situated at Old Basing, Monk Sherbourne and Oakley.

HOME FRONT - SECOND WORLD WAR



Basingstoke ARP Officers and Report Centre Workers
HRO: 7M90/1



Poster showing the decontamination of civilian clothing, 1941
HRO: 12M75/DDC542

HOME FRONT - SECOND WORLD WAR



Southern Railways emergency ambulance crews on stand-by duty at Southampton Docks
HRO: 139M86/8/2



Southampton Docks emergency fire fighting team wearing gas masks during a training exercise
HRO: 139M86/65/2

Local Defence Volunteers (Home Guard)

When the newly-appointed Secretary of State, Anthony Eden, appealed to the British people help defend their country as part of the Local Defence Volunteers he could not have foreseen the rush that would take place throughout the country to sign up for the LDV.

In his book covering Southampton's war Bernard Knowles wrote:
"Patriotic fervour rose to feverish heights. Local civil defence organisations were swamped by the rush of recruits. On 22 May, an appeal for recruits to the Local Defence Volunteers (later the Home Guard) met with a staggering response. Despite the fact that only those trained in the use of arms could be accepted, 800 men were enrolled within forty-eight hours. Five days later the number had grown to a thousand. A fortnight later still the figure had not only reached the 2,500 mark but was daily increasing. About the same time an appeal by the Mayor of Southampton for 300 stretcher-bearers was met within a few hours". (B Knowles, Southampton: the English Gateway)

Basingstoke Home Guard

Extracts from a History of the 3rd (Basingstoke) Battalion

"The organisation of the Local Defence Volunteers (LDV) followed generally that of the County Police Force. Early in August 1940 the name was changed to that of Home Guard (HG). On 24th January 1941 the Basingstoke Home Guard became the 3rd (Basingstoke) Battalion Hampshire Home Guard.

When originally formed, the role of the Home Guard was

- The defence of their locality
- The collection of information, and passing this to the regular forces
- The provision of guides for regular forces entering their area
- The closing of roads to the enemy

Because of their very inferior armament, it was obvious that regular defence positions were impossible but ambushes [a form of ambush using barricades]

and concealed blocks, coupled with harassing tactics, and preventing the enemy sleeping or straying away from their main bodies were all duties well within their capabilities.

Parachute landings were watched for by various Watcher Posts all night, a double sentry being always on duty from one hour before dusk to one hour after dawn, these posts were kept up even during harvest conditions as long as they were needed.

The suitable reception of parachutists was continually practiced and the quick co-operation of platoons within a company, communication by bicycle and telephone, was arranged from the Watchers Posts to platoons, and from the platoons to Companies; communication from Company to Battalion was by motor cycle and civil telephone. Communications by radio and visual signalling gradually improved, but was of little practical value.

The guarding of local vital points, such as the Southern railway Station, the Post Office, Thornycroft's Works, Kelvin's Works, and the Power Station was carried out regularly, and these danger points were frequently patrolled.

The night of Saturday 7th 1940, when the invasion alarm caused the church bells to be rung in many parts of the surrounding district, can well be used as an example of the preparedness within the Battalion to deal with enemy invaders. Platoons mustered in from 20 minutes to half an hour. The whole Battalion was at Action Stations in under two hours.

Defence works in the Borough of Basingstoke occupied much time, both in siting and making. Originally, when regular troops were nearby, an inner and outer perimeter were held. Afterwards the outer perimeter was given up and a Tank Island and Keep were formed. The Town, not having ever been designed for defence, and being largely in a hollow did not contribute to the strength of these defences.

In the Summer of 1940 a Tank Ditch was made, stretching across the South and West England for many miles. This ditch was never a formidable obstacle for tanks, its many crossings were often destitute of any adequate garrison. It undoubtedly decreased the supply of food and was an expensive folly, as utterly useless against air attack.

The next phase was based on the formation of various Tank Islands, Basingstoke, Winchester and Andover were so designated, and much work by Royal Engineers was done to endeavour to make a portion of these towns tank proof. Each Island had a Keep as a last resort, in the case of Basingstoke the vicinity of the Southern Railway Station.

During 1944 the Battalion was organised into five mobile Companies, formed by the most fit and active men in each Company, and the less active men undertook the more static roles of local defence, delaying action. The Home Guard performed another and most useful role after conscription was brought in in February 1942 by giving preliminary training to thousands of young men who afterwards joined the Regular Forces. Their training was most valuable to the men themselves and many obtained quick promotion, in some cases to Commissioned Rank.

HOME FRONT - SECOND WORLD WAR

Little time was spent on ceremonial parades but sub-units of the Battalion were constantly asked to take part in parades and 'march pasts' held in honour of the various good causes connected with the War. Local units also paraded on Armistice Day."



Kings Somborne Home Guard
HRO: 40M85/11



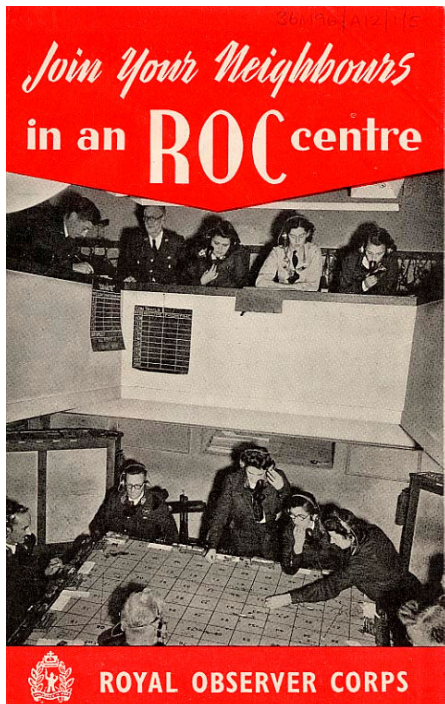
Civilians recruiting into Gosport Home Guard at Privett Park
HRO: HPP41/088

The Royal Observer Corps

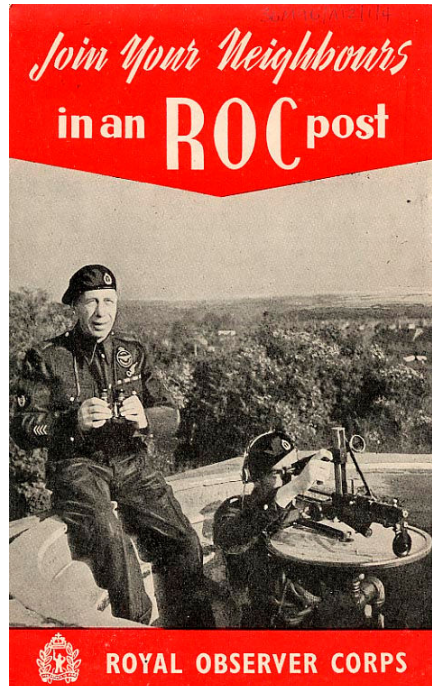
The Royal Observer Corps (ROC) can trace its origins back to the air defence of London during the First World War (1914-18) which was commanded by Major-General Ashmore. After the war, the continued security of the skies over Britain was considered so important by Major-General Ashmore that a network of observation posts became part of Britain's air defences. The first two Observer Corps groups were formed in the counties of Kent and Sussex, and were followed soon after by groups in Hampshire and Essex. In 1929 the Observer Corps came under control of the Air Ministry.

The Observer Corps was called out on 24 August 1939 at the start of war between Britain and Germany. From the beginning new recruits were needed. They came from all walks of life, and included women from September 1941. The main task of observers was to monitor the skies around the clock, spotting and tracking aircraft by sight or sound and reporting to control centres. Control centres then gathered the information and passed it on to Fighter Command. This important work was recognised during the Battle of Britain and the corps received its 'Royal' title in April 1941. Post observers also guided friendly but lost aircraft to safety and some volunteered to join the Seaborne Scheme which placed observers on ships during the D-Day landings.

The ROC was stood down on 12 May 1945 but was re-formed on 1 January 1947 to continue its role in monitoring the skies. However, the increased speed and height of aircraft in the new jet age made recognition of aircraft difficult for observers and in 1953 the ROC was reorganised at all levels, both to improve efficiency and to reflect changes already made at Fighter Command.



ROYAL OBSERVER CORPS



ROYAL OBSERVER CORPS

Promotional leaflets for the Royal Observer Corps (ROC)
HRO: 39M96/12/1



An ROC observation post in action
HRO: 70M88/93

Voluntary Aid Detachments (VADs)

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement started over 135 years ago, inspired by a Swiss businessman, Henry Dunant. He proposed the creation of national relief societies, made up of volunteers, trained in peacetime to provide neutral and impartial help to relieve the suffering in times of war.

The British National Society for Aid to the Sick and Wounded in War was formed and rendered aid and relief to both warring armies during the Franco-Prussian War and in subsequent wars and campaigns during the 19th century under the protection of the red cross emblem. The founding charter of the Red Cross having been drawn up in 1863.

In 1905 the British National Society for Aid to the Sick and Wounded in War was renamed the British Red Cross Society and granted its first Royal Charter by Queen Alexandra who became President of the Society. Following the outbreak of the First World War in August 1914 the British Red Cross Society in co-operation with the Order of St John formed the Joint War Committee to pool their resources and to work together under the protected emblem of the red cross.

Members of the British Red Cross and the Order of St John were organised into Voluntary Aid Detachments (the term VAD later came to be used for an individual member as well as a detachment). All members were trained in first aid and others undertook training in nursing, cookery and hygiene and sanitation.

When war was declared in September 1939 the British Red Cross Society and the Order of St John joined forces, as they had done in for the First World War, and formed the Joint War Organisation to ensure activities were carried out efficiently and under the protection of the red cross emblem. The Society carried out extensive services for the sick and wounded, for prisoners of war and for civilians needing relief as a result of enemy action, at home and abroad.

British Red Cross members worked in hospitals and convalescent homes, nurseries, ambulance units, rest stations and supply depots providing welfare and nursing support. All this work was funded by the Duke of Gloucester's Red Cross and St John Appeal which had raised over £54 million by 1946

The huge numbers of civilians affected by forced migration during the Second World War resulted in serious refugee problems which continued for many years after the end of hostilities. The British Red Cross worked with other elements of the Red Cross Movement to provide relief to displaced people and liberated populations in need of basic supplies. In 1949 the Fourth Geneva Convention made provision to protect civilians caught up in war, especially those who find themselves in the hands of the enemy or occupying power.

Text courtesy of the Red Cross. You can visit their website www.redcross.org.uk and learn more about the organisation's history and origin, as well as finding useful resources in the online Museum & Archives, including a World War Two picture gallery.

Many VAD personnel in Hampshire worked at **Netley Hospital**. Netley was the biggest military hospital ever built. Built at the time of the Crimean War, it stretched for over quarter of a mile along the shore of Southampton Water. Some of the first women nurses at Netley were trained in the principles of nursing set down by Florence Nightingale, although she was herself critical of Netley's original design.



A group of uniformed women including VADs outside Netley Hospital, Southampton
HRO: 92M91/69/4

Extracts from a V.A.D.'s memoirs

"In 1936 I had joined the Red Cross, as I felt if World War Two came, I would prefer to be 'in it' rather than just a stay-at-home. In order to qualify as a V.A.D. we had to pass various exams in First Aid and Home Nursing plus so many hours in local hospitals. I used to bicycle (14 miles) to Lymington twice a month to work in the wards as a probationer. Like most people at that time I never for a moment expected war to be so near. By August 1939 it became apparent that I was wrong – determined not to be left out of it all, I sold the cows and pigs, my sister absorbed the pony into her school, and within 2 weeks of war being declared, I was duly 'called up', and joined Number 4 Company R.A.M.C. at the Royal Victoria Hospital, Netley.

What a dump! The first few weeks at Netley to me, at any rate, gave an insight into a complete new world. We were about 70 V.A.D.s from all walks of life, and ages; some even were resurrected from World War 1, and proved to be real tyrants. We younger ones must have seemed real raw recruits to them but they were quickly given administration jobs at which they proved very efficient. After 2 weeks or even less about 6 of us were put on night duty. The Hospital seemed more dour and uninviting than ever. Anyhow, there we were all eager to do our best for the unfortunate patients, none at that time battle casualties, and all very thankful, or so they said, for our apparent cheerfulness and kindness.

We were on duty from 8am until 8pm continuously with only half an hour to eat our sandwiches, or whatever we were given by the cooks; a ward of anything up to 70 with a staff nurse, one V.A.D. and sometimes an orderly. The unfortunate staff nurse must at times have been distracted at her lack of competent staff; she had recently been called up and although of course fully trained and experienced in the nursing sphere, was trying to cope with the 'Army forms' and ways must have seemed like an endless crossword puzzle – nothing apparently could be done or administered to the patients without filling in everything in triplicate. The lack of equipment was also appalling.

I have said that we came from all walks of life, and for a time we had the Queen Mother's niece, Rosemary Bowes-Lyon, amongst our ranks and she was well liked by all; some of the patients were really thrilled to be nursed by 'Royalty'. We had our quarters in what were old barrack rooms, in fact the men were all sent to live under canvas 2 days prior to our arrival – with no time for the usual 'spit and polish' we had to spend a good few hours of our leisure time scrubbing and dusting. We had two outside lavatories on the balcony, and cold water from the taps with tin basins. After a few days the cookhouse was told to send a churn of hot water up to the balcony for us to use for washing! As breakfast was at 7 sharp, the prospect of having to wash on the cold balcony even using hot water dipped from the churn was not exactly a pleasant undertaking.

One morning we all complained at the greasy hot water and on further investigation, it was found the kitchen had lost a churn of beef tea that morning! To have a bath we had to walk across the barrack square through a

long, draughty corridor to the baths, which the troops had used before us. For the first two weeks only about one bath had a plug! However, within 3 months our very hard working Commandant had prevailed to the powers that be to build us or rather install 6 baths in a disused store under our balcony and these were our first bathrooms and proved a real godsend.

During the 'phoney war' period 1940-1943 I had the urge to take up farming again, as my mother and sister had gone to Cornwall for safety. My sister evacuated her school and ponies to near St Ives. I was allowed to resign from the Red Cross and joined the Land Army instead. Hence I could live with my mother and had work on a big general farm in Lelant. Even this was far from mechanised and we milled by hand. Myself, and one of the farmer's sons and the wife of the carter did all the milking and dairy work. I was given the use of a strong working colt 'Albert', and he and I spent many happy hours together mostly cutting and carting broccoli leaves and taking the cows out every day. After several months on this farm, I was changed to a dairy farm with a milk round. This was in the days before milk bottles, and the milk was put into 'pitchers' and ladled out into the customer's jugs at the door. A second delivery was necessary to ensure a fresh supply."

Victory Celebrations

Tuesday 8th May 1945 was Victory in Europe Day (VE Day), and it marked the formal end of Hitler's war in Europe. People reacted to the end of the war in different ways, some celebrated with street parties, others reflected quietly on what had happened during the war, and others were busy rebuilding Britain and their own lives.

In London there were mass celebrations, where over a million people enjoyed a carnival atmosphere fuelled by relief that the war was over, though rationing of food and clothing was to continue for a number of years after. The Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, began his victory speech with the following words:

My dear friends, this is your hour. This is not victory of a party or of any class. It's a victory of the great British nation as a whole. We were the first, in this ancient island, to draw the sword against tyranny. After a while we were left all alone against the most tremendous military power that has been seen. We were all alone for a whole year.



People enjoying a street party in Gosport to celebrate the end of the Second World War
HPP41/091
