

# Wardens, Welfare & Victory:

## The Unbroken Spirit of the Hull Blitz



An introduction to sources held at The Hull History Centre

# Introduction

**Despite being the heaviest bombed city for its size in the country, Hull was rarely referred to by name during the Second World War. Instead, reports of raids were said to have taken place in a 'north-east coast town' in an attempt to protect the identity of the city. Because of this, attacks on Hull have often been overlooked and the large part played by what has been termed 'the civilian fourth arm of defence' ignored.**

Civil Defence in Hull was co-ordinated by the Air Raid Precaution (A.R.P.) Controller whilst Hull's Air Raid Welfare, which it is believed was the first of its kind to be submitted to the Ministry of Health, was managed by the Town Clerk.

That the Prime Minister, members and officials of the Government and representatives from the Dominions and Colonies all visited the city and expressed their admiration at the way the city was carrying on, and the cheerfulness and high morale of the citizens, bears testimony to the success of the schemes in place and the high regard in which the men and women of the fourth arm were held.

Visit of Prime Minister Winston Churchill to Franklin Street, November 1941 [C TSP3.438.13]







## Further Information

Almost all records held at the History Centre dating from the years 1939-1945 contain information relating to the war. This guide refers to records which were created as a direct result of the conflict.

### Maps

C TSY/2/2A

A set of 12 maps of the Hull area (scale 5.5 inch = 1 Mile) indicating the type and position of each bomb falling on Hull in specific raids during the Second World War.

C TSY/2/3

A set of 1928 edition Ordnance Survey maps of the Hull area (scale 1:2500) indicating war damaged properties.

### Photographs

Photographs and negatives at C TSP include preparations for war, and the damage caused by aerial bombardment. In addition they contain photographs of shelters, report centres, A.R.P. training and temporary houses.

Bomb position map [C TSY/2/2/1]



© Hull History Centre

# Civil Defence & Welfare Service

**The Home Office established the Civil Defence Service in 1935 but the responsibility for its organisation was left to local authorities.**

Hull's Civil Defence was the responsibility of the Emergency Committee and was co-ordinated by the A.R.P. Controller, Councillor Leonard Speight. Alderman Leonard Shultz, who also served as Lord Mayor 1942-1943, was appointed his deputy and Mr. R. G. Tarran offered his services in the honorary position of Chief Air Raid Warden.

They were responsible for the following services:

**Wardens** - Reported incidents, and gave assistance until other services arrived

**Rescue Parties** – Worked on the sites of bombed out buildings retrieving the injured and recovering bodies

**First Aid & Ambulance** - Included first aid parties who provided on the spot medical assistance. More serious injuries were passed to first aid posts by stretcher parties and to local hospitals by ambulance personnel.

**Gas Decontamination Teams** - Trained to deal with any gas attack, decontaminate buildings, and aid individuals suffering after an attack

**Report and Control** – Managed all information generated during a raid and directed the relevant services to the scene of an incident

**Fire Watchers** – Also known as 'Spotters', were responsible for one building or area and monitored the dropping of bombs and any resulting fires

**Cyclist Messengers** – Young people usually aged between 16 and 18 who conveyed information around the city during raids and when communication links were down

**Hull's Air Raid Welfare Service gained national recognition for its unique approach to welfare control. Under the scheme, Air Raid Welfare was regarded as distinct from Civil Defence and came under the direction of the Town Clerk, Alexander Pickard who was responsible for preparing the scheme.**

Originally managed by the Public Assistance Committee, in 1940 its relevant functions were delegated to a small committee which came to be known as The Air Raids (Welfare) Committee. As well as officials of the corporation, the committee comprised of representatives from the W.V.S., the Assistance Board, the Information Committee and National Services Hostels Corporation Ltd. Close links were maintained between the Air Raids (Welfare) Committee and the Emergency Committee which was responsible for Civil Defence.

The scheme, which was flexible and capable of rapid expansion, was concerned with the following areas:

**Reception or Rest Centres**

**Feeding**

**District Offices or Information Centres**

**After care work, including the provision of hostels**

© Hull History Centre



Faraday Street, 19 July 1940 [C TSP/3/300/14]

# AIR R

## WHAT YOU

ARRANGE NOW to go and see this arrangement and also of any later changes



© Hull History Centre



## Further Information

# AIR RAID WELFARE

**SHOULD DO. PLAN AHEAD**

Stay with friends or relatives in case you are made homeless. In your own interests tell your Wardens of the plan. Billeting allowances will be paid for a time.

Representatives of Hull Civil Defence and Welfare services in  
Queens Gardens, 3 December 1942 [C TSP/3/481/8]

C TCM

Council minutes recording debates and decisions made in Council relating to Civil Defence.

C TCR

Reports to accompany council minutes.

C TLW/W

Records of the Air Raid Welfare Information Office.

C TSCD

City Engineer's Department, Civil Defence records

C TYA

ARP/CD Control and report services.

C TYR

Registration of personnel for Civil Defence Service.

C TYW

Warden Service Records.



# Warden Service

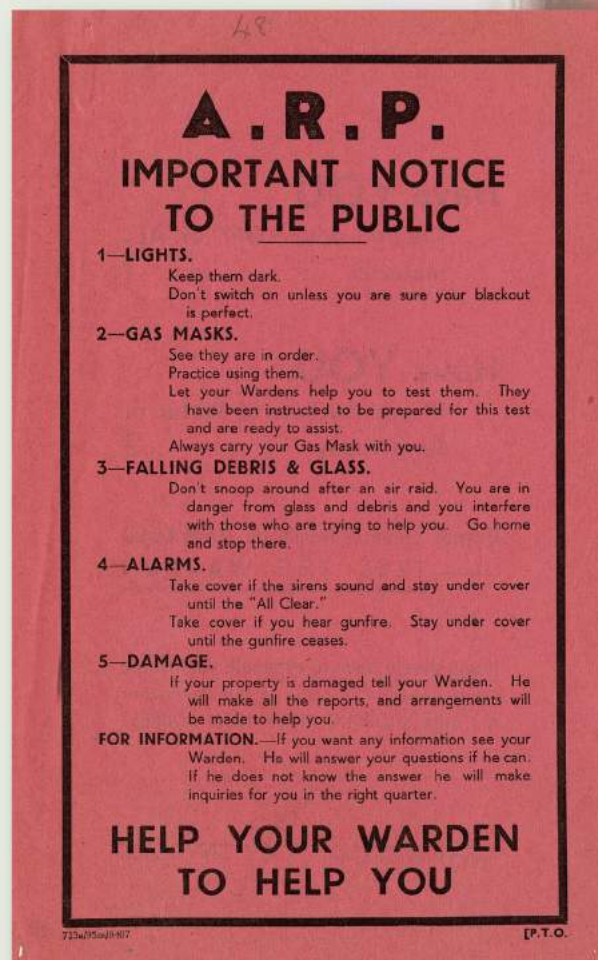
**In the summer of 1938 the Kingston upon Hull Civil Defence Warden Service was set up under the guidance of Robert G. Tarran. He was appointed Chief Warden in October 1938, a post he held throughout the war.**

Exercises started early in 1939 and carried on through the spring and summer. By the end of August 1939 3,622 men and women had enrolled in the service. By the time war was declared, 2,620 personnel were fully trained and allocated to a district ready for duty, the rest in the course of training.

A central headquarters housing senior administrative and training staff was established at Staff House, Ferensway. The service split the city into four divisions comprising twenty-nine Districts, each Division and District having a headquarters. Each District was then sub-divided into sectors with a total of 750 sectors across the city.

One of the first duties undertaken by wardens was a census of the residents of the city. Initially this was for the issue of respirators, but it soon developed into a full record of every resident of the city and became known as a Family Record Card. As well as details of the family it also contained information such as who the family could stay with in an emergency and whether special assistance would be required.

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Flyer issued by the A.R.P. Controller advising what to do in the event of an air raid [C TSU]



## Further Information

### Have YOU

Cleared your LOFT of ALL  
material . . . . . ?

### Have YOU

Placed buckets of Water or  
Sand ready . . . . . ?

IF your premises should be DAMAGED  
TELL THE WARDEN

If you should have to evacuate your Home  
ask the warden to place at the front door  
A CARD SHOWING YOUR NEW ADDRESS

ISSUED BY THE HULL A.R.P. CONTROLLER

[P.T.O.]

- |             |  |
|-------------|--|
| C TYW/1/1/1 | Administrative file of Chief Warden, Mr. Robert G. Tarran,<br>17 Nov 1938-21 Jul 1947  |
| C TYR       | 91,615 Index cards, and registers forming a record of<br>persons registered for services of the Civil Defence Service,<br>searchable by name on the on line catalogue: |
| C TYR/1     | Warden Service personnel cards   |
| C TYR/2     | Control and Report Centre personnel cards  |
| C TYR/3     | Cyclist Messenger Corps personnel cards  |
| C TYR/4     | Fire Guard Section personnel cards   |
| C TYR/4/1   | Fire Guard Section - Men   |
| C TYR/4/2   | Fire Guard Section - Women   |
| C TYR/5     | Ambulance Driver personnel cards   |
| C TYR/6     | First Aid Service personnel cards  |
| C TYR/7     | First Aid Attendant personnel cards  |
| C TYR/8     | Decontamination of Personnel personnel cards   |
| C TYR/9     | Rescue Party personnel cards   |
| C TYR/10    | Highways personnel cards   |
| C TYR/11    | Transport Driver personnel cards   |
| C TYR/12    | Messenger personnel cards  |
| C TYR/13    | Clerk personnel cards  |
| C TYR/14    | Office personnel cards   |
| C TYR/15    | Storekeeper personnel cards  |
| C TYR/16    | Sewers personnel cards   |
| C TYR/17    | Dresser personnel cards  |
| C TYR/18    | Fire Watchers (Business Premises) personnel cards  |
| C TYR/19    | Registers of Personnel for Civil Defence Service   |
| C TYR/20    | Post-war Civil Defence Corps personnel cards   |

MRS KIRBY

117

EXETER

GROVE

PRESTON

ROAD



# Warden Service

**The primary work of the Warden was to report incidents, and give assistance until other services arrived. The civilian census enabled the Wardens to develop valuable knowledge of their area and the people they were responsible for.**

Each unit within the Warden Service was able to operate independently in case communication links with other Districts was lost. Wardens at every level were therefore trained for such an eventuality and many had to put their training into practice over the war years.

On 31 March 1941 the administrative headquarters was destroyed and the service relocated to a number of temporary venues before moving to premises in Queens Gardens in February 1942.

## Trekking

It was the Warden's role to record the names and addresses of people 'trekking' out of the city at night. After the raids of July 1941 the numbers of trekkers increased, not so much to avoid bombs, but to try and get a good night's sleep. Eventually the system of Trekking was properly organised and points were set up where trekkers were checked by the wardens and taken in buses to shelters on the outskirts of the city.

## Fire Prevention

Fire prevention duties were carried out by wardens who had received intensive training in Incendiary Bomb Control and were prepared to deal with Fire Bombs. As the war progressed the need for Fire Guard Wardens increased and the Chief Warden opened a Fire Guard Training School at which people from business and government premises were trained.

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Their Majesties, King George VI and Queen Elizabeth meet the Wardens on their visit to Hull, 6 August 1941 [L9.7085]



The Divisional women wardens with the senior woman warden Miss D. B. Mason [Humbreside Libraries]

Left to right – Mrs J A Spilman, Northern Division; Mrs A T Barrett, South-Western Division; Miss D B Mason, Senior Woman Warden; Miss E B Davis, Eastern Division; Mrs T Newlove, Central Division



## Further Information

### Homes for the Homeless Scheme

**Following the early raids during the summer of 1940 the Chief Warden, Robert Tarran became aware that there were people who had no one to turn to after being bombed out of their homes. Although it had been possible to find some empty properties for them, this was not an ideal situation.**

As a result of this Tarran requisitioned 21 houses and furnished them with essentials such as furniture, coal, cleaning materials and tea and sugar in order that families who might find it difficult to re-house in other ways could find refuge in what became known as a Warden's Furnished House.

By the end of 1940 the Ministry of Health, appreciating the benefits of such a scheme, sanctioned it to be officially recognised and gave permission for the provision of 200 houses. A grant from the Government covered bare essentials and after Tarran in his capacity of Sheriff of the City of Hull launched an appeal for furniture all the houses were well furnished and ready for occupation.

After a raid, furnished houses in the vicinity of the incident would be opened, and once people had passed through the Reception Centres and the District Offices, they would be taken to one of them where the Wardens would have lit a fire and prepared tea for them.

Large families, families with children with contagious diseases such as Chicken Pox or Measles, and expectant mothers, all found refuge in the houses which were kept clean and maintained by the Wardens.

C DEBK	Records of Kingston High School, 1895-2004. Includes correspondence, circulars, fire watching rotas, etc relating to fire watching duties at Kingston High School.
C DIIP/1/3/2	Records relating to the Hull Information Committee, 1939-1945. Includes hand-drawn diagrams showing lines of communication between district offices, public services and the public.
C TLW/W	Series of records concerning the District Offices of the Air Raid Welfare Information Service, 1941-1942. Includes information on the revised scheme for the evacuation of the homeless, and a copy of Scheme for the Evacuation of the Homeless by R.C. Moore.
C TSCD	City Engineer's Department, Civil Defence records, 1935-1971. Includes files on ARP Volunteers, Fire Prevention Orders 1941, Protection of Corporation property and "Blitz" Scheme for the Homeless, public shelters and the Trekkers, and files relating to ARP Wardens' Posts.
C TYA	ARP/CD Control and report services 1940-1946. Includes correspondence relating to Trekkers transport.
C TYA/TH	City Architect's files relating to temporary housing 1944-1945.
C TYR/4	Fire Watchers (Business Premises) personnel cards - Hull Corporation, c. 1938-1947.
C TYW	Warden Service Records, 1938-1952. Includes organisational files, material relating to a specific Warden Post and index cards relating to firewatching and air raid shelters and posts. A file concerning the cleaning and maintenance of Wardens' Furnished Houses includes lists of the houses giving when occupied and by whom.

Wardens and Rescue teams at the scene of an incident at Waterloo Street, 14 March 1941 [C TSP/357/14]



# Women's Voluntary Services

**In 1938 Lady Stella Reading founded the Women's Voluntary Services (W.V.S.) for Air Raid Precautions to encourage women to enlist into the A.R.P. movement. Lady Reading's vision of a body of volunteers who would help and assist civilians during and after air raids quickly became a reality and the service soon became an invaluable part of the war effort.**

The Hull branch opened their office on Ferensway on the 6th March 1939 and by the end of that month 463 women had enrolled with the Service. Their work was vast and varied, ranging from the preparation of Reception Centres for use after raids to organising a salvage campaign on behalf of the Public Cleansing Department.

On the 31 March 1941 the W.V.S. offices on Ferensway were destroyed in a raid and the Services moved temporarily to Room 82 of the Guildhall. In September 1941 they were re-housed in the Ferens Art Gallery, after it was made sufficiently habitable for them to operate from following damage incurred by an incendiary bomb in December 1940.

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H.R.H. The Princess Royal wearing the W.V.S. uniform on a visit to Hull to open the new Hostel for Sailors, 8 April 1941 [L9.0785]

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In April 1940 the W.V.S. agreed to take over the administration of the Blood Transfusion Service in connection with the calling up and testing of blood, a service they continued throughout the War. Here, Lord Mayor, Sydney Smith signs on for the Campaign for volunteer blood donors, 10 March 1941 [L9.0785]



**As the war progressed the ladies of the W.V.S. were called upon whenever skills of an organisational, welfare or educational nature were required. The following list indicates the capacities in which the 3,801 members of the Service were engaged in March 1943.**

<b>Centre staff (executive posts)</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Office staff</b>	<b>141</b>
<b>Billeting</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Homelessness (Rest Centres etc.)</b>	<b>2,103</b>
<b>Information Bureaux</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>British Restaurants</b>	<b>129</b>
<b>Queens Messengers and Mobile Canteens</b>	<b>79</b>
<b>Static Emergency feeding</b>	<b>150</b>
<b>Forces Canteens</b>	<b>466</b>
<b>Home Guard Canteens</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Hospital work</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Work Parties</b>	<b>515</b>
<b>Drivers</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Messengers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>National Savings collectors</b>	<b>68</b>
<b>Clerical outwork</b>	<b>3</b>

The W.V.S. adopted the role of educator early in the conflict and provided emergency cooking and Make Do and Mend demonstrations and classes each month which attracted upwards of 200 attendees on occasions. In addition they repaired clothes, darned socks and knitted woollen comforts for the Forces, assisted with flag days and other activities to raise funds for a number of causes including the Mother Humber Fund.

In 1941 The Town Clerk, in his article, *After The Raid*, said "The City of Hull owes a great deal to the thousands of W.V.S. volunteers, whose devoted services has contributed to a large extent to the successful working of all phases of the Air Raid Welfare Scheme."

"The WVS continues its work today in Hull and across Great Britain as the Royal Voluntary Service. It is now a charity supporting older people through volunteers who give time and practical help to assist them get the best from life.

You can find out more by visiting [www.royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk](http://www.royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk)."

© Hull History Centre



Ladies from the Women's Voluntary Services march past the Civic Party outside Ferens Art Gallery on V.E. Day, 12 May 1945 [C TCVC/2/9]

# Control & Reporting

**The Control Centre was the nerve centre of all local A.R.P. operations. A situation map recorded all bombing incidents which allowed staff to watch over any developing situation, and transfer services from one area to another as required.**

The Centre was based at the Shell Mex House on Ferensway until the 31 March 1941 when a raid destroyed the building and the service moved to Queens Gardens. In addition there were four Report Centres around the city; north west at University College, south west at Gordon Street Police Station, central at Central Police Station and eastern at Crowle Street Police Station.

The staff within the Control Room consisted of:

- The Controller and The Chief Operations Officer, who directed operations
- Two assistant Operations Officers, one reporting unexploded bombs, and one who provided divisional assistance
- Three map plotters: two plotting the position of aircraft and one plotting incidents
- Six telephonists, each having their own responsibilities:
  - Phones – Alarm to Leeds and York
  - Indoor messengers
  - North West Report Centre direct line
  - Eastern Report Centre direct line
  - South Western Report Centre direct line
  - Central Report Centre direct line
  - A filing clerk filing incidents
  - A messenger running between Control and W.V.S
  - A W.V.S representative, dealing with Reception Centres and Care of the Homeless matters
  - Four motor cyclist messengers

The adjacent Services Room consisted of representatives of the utility services, and a number of personnel concerned with First Aid and medical provision, including Dr. Diamond, the Deputy Medical Officer of Health, who lost his life in the raid of the 31 March 1941

## CONTROL AND REPORT CENTRES.

At work in the Map Room at Control Centre, Queens Gardens,  
8 December 1944 [C TSP/3/525/32]





## Further Information

© Hull History Centre



Ferensway air raid damage, 3 April 1941 [C TSP/3/372/3]



© Hull History Centre

CONTROL AND REPORT CENTRES.																									
Surname: <b>EDWARDS</b>		Christian Names: <b>ERIC</b>		Married: <b>No</b>		Identity No.: <b>CTYR 2/458</b>		Record No.: <b>33</b>																	
Enrolment Date: <b>Aug 1936</b>	Age: <b>33</b>	Date of Birth: <b>12.11.09</b>		Tel. No.	Division	District	Sector	Warden Service Tel. No.	Nearest Post.																
Postal Address: <b>M.B.E. ALAA: ARPS: L.F.G.I. S.O.S. J. FT. 10.</b>				7294																					
Business Address: <b>109 Bricknell Avenue, Hull.</b>				33900																					
Usual Occupation: <b>Wife</b>				Full Name: <b>Elfrida Meud</b>																					
Next of Kin: <b>Wife</b>				Postal Address: <b>109 Bricknell Avenue, Hull.</b>																					
Duty Status: <b>Paid or Unpaid</b>				Re'd for: <b>8/26</b>		Appointed to: <b>6/25</b>		Termination Date:																	
M/Labour Classification—Part or Full-time Service: <b>Remarks</b>																									
Transport Available: <b>P/Cycle</b>				Available for Training: <b>Remarks</b>																					
M/Car				Available for Duty: <b>Remarks</b>																					
M/Cycle																									
Training Record:				<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Anti-Gas</th> <th>G.C.</th> <th>First-Aid</th> <th>Communications and Organisation</th> <th>Duties</th> <th>I.S.</th> <th>H.E.B.</th> <th>Training Completed</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>						Anti-Gas	G.C.	First-Aid	Communications and Organisation	Duties	I.S.	H.E.B.	Training Completed								
Anti-Gas	G.C.	First-Aid	Communications and Organisation	Duties	I.S.	H.E.B.	Training Completed																		
Remarks:																									
Badge Issued: <b>15/5/40</b>				Returned: <b>15/5/40</b>		C/D Respirator (size): <b>6</b>		Date Issued: <b>15/5/40</b>		Returned: <b>15/5/40</b>															
Appt. Card Issued: <b>27/4/40</b>				Returned: <b>27/4/40</b>		Steel Helmet (size): <b>6</b>		Date Issued: <b>27/4/40</b>		Returned: <b>27/4/40</b>															
Armslet Issued: <b>27/4/40</b>				Returned: <b>27/4/40</b>																					

Personnel card for Eric Edwards, Chief Operations Officer in the Control Room of Control Centre. Mr Edwards was awarded an M.B.E. for his services to the City during war time. [C TYR/2/458]

# Cyclists Messengers

## The Hull Air Raid Precautions Cyclist Messenger Service Corps

**Vital in maintaining communication links between services when other means failed, the Cyclist Messengers were generally youths, men and women, of pre call up age between 16 and 18.**

Initially Boy Scouts were attached to District Headquarters on an ad hoc basis to provide support as messengers when required. However, the Government soon decreed that no one under the age of 16 should be employed on A.R.P. service and despite repeated requests to the Regional Commissioner, permission was not granted to employ messengers for the Air Raid Warden Service or to recruit volunteers under the age of 16.

Local cyclist organisations came to the rescue and by April 1940, 145 messengers had enrolled and the Cyclists' Messenger Corps was in a position to start training.

Managed by Honorary Commandant Alderman Frederick Holmes, the constitution of the Hull A.R.P. Messenger Service Corps laid down the name of the service, the titles of officers, the equipment allowance and whose control the messengers came under. In this regard they came under the control of the A.R.P. Cyclist Messenger Corps for administrative purposes but once on duty, after an alert, they reported to the head of whichever service they had been allocated to. Personnel cards held at the Hull History Centre reveal that some of the messengers were as young as 15, despite Government regulations. A total of over 2,000 enrolled in the service during the conflict, and many went on to serve in the armed forces.

© Hull History Centre



Parade of Civil Defence personnel, Hull, Haltemprice & District, Warship Week, 28 February 1942 [L9.7085]



# Fire Watchers

## Further Information

**Under the Fire Prevention (Business Premises) Order, 1941 factories and businesses were required to appoint employees to watch out for incendiary bombs dropping outside of work hours and to call for help.**

Fire watching was not a popular job as it could be tedious and boring and those involved could spend as much as seventy two hours a week on duty. It was an essential part of Civil Defence, especially in Hull where so many bombs were dropped indiscriminately.

It was considered the duty of anyone working at premises between the ages of 16 and 60 to take turns at fire watching, whilst the Corporation called for a pool of fire watchers, known as The Town Pool to protect their buildings. However, those already involved in Civil Defence could claim exemption from fire watching which reduced the available personnel considerably and 'Firebomb Fritz' became part of a national campaign to encourage volunteers to sign up for the service.

Fire Watchers on top of Guildhall,  
21 November 1941 [C TSP/3/325/5]

C DEBK

Records of Kingston High School, 1895-2004. Includes a file containing a list of cyclist messengers recruited from the higher education institutions in Hull.

C TYW

Warden Service Records , 1938-1952. Includes a file concerning the Cyclist Messenger Corps.

C TYR

Registration of personnel for Civil Defence Service, 1935-1947. Includes personnel Cards for the Cyclist Messenger Corps, Fire Guard Section & Fire Watchers (Business Premises).

© Hull History Centre



Poster issued by the Ministry of Home Security

# Rescue & Detection

**The Rescue Service consisted of highly trained Wardens expert in searching through the ruins of bombed buildings to find survivors. Experts in construction, demolition and the shoring up of buildings to prevent them from collapsing, they were equipped with lorries which contained all the necessary tools and equipment to aid their task. Often using their bare hands to dig out individuals, they were trained in where to search for survivors and on occasions used dogs to help.**

When Brigadier Mosley, the Regional Training Officer inspected the Service in June 1942, his general remarks included the following:

“One can fully realise that after the many raids in Hull, the Rescue work in the units would be of a high standard, but I was agreeably surprised to find that the standard of efficiency is not limited to rescue work but to every branch connected with the training of the personnel. I was very struck with the standard of individual training, the good team work and splendid leadership. I do not hesitate to say that these Rescue Parties are the best I have yet seen in the Region...”

Many of the Rescue Party personnel were commended for their bravery and thirteen members of the service received awards for gallantry and meritorious service in Civil Defence.

© Hull History Centre



Arrival of mobile unit, August 1942 [C TSP/3/469/32]

Searching through the Alexandra Theatre site during a training exercise, August 1942 [C TSP/3/469/27]



© Hull History Centre



**Training continued throughout the conflict to ensure that all services operated to the highest standards. This could take the form of demonstrations and classes at training schools, or exercises across the city.**

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Training on the use of a Derrick, a lifting device, at the Anti-Gas training school at Perrot Street, 26 April 1939 [C TSP/3/231/6]



## Further Information

C TCY/1/5/10

Town Clerk's Records relating to World War Two, 1940-1960. Includes a file relating to the rescue service.

C TSCD

City Engineer's Department, Civil Defence records, 1935-1971. Includes files on ARP Interchange of Rescue Parties and tools for Rescue Parties.

C TYG

Recommendations for acknowledgements and Gallantry awards, 1941-1944. Series of records containing a number of recommendations for acknowledgements and gallantry awards for members of the rescue parties.

C TYR

Registration of personnel for Civil Defence Service, 1935-1947. Includes personnel cards relating to members of the Rescue Service and Rescue Party.

C TYW

Warden Service Records, 1938-1952. Includes files concerning the work and training of the Rescue Service and a report on City Engineer's rescue, demolition and repair services following severe enemy air attack 7/8 and 9 May 1941.

Rescue parties training at Grindall Street, 1 August 1942 [C TSP/3/467/5]



© Hull History Centre

# First Aid & Ambulance

**At the start of the war it was hoped that responsibility for First Aid would be fulfilled by the St. John's Ambulance Brigade. However it quickly became apparent that they were unable to adequately staff the service resulting in a recruitment campaign to attract volunteers. Between December 1940 and June 1941, 2,456 volunteers successfully obtained their Certificate in First Aid from the St. John's Ambulance Association.**

On every alert the Medical Officer of Health or the Deputy Medical Officer of Health attended at the Control Centre whilst Doctors from the Public Health Department attended at the local Report Centres and often went out to help at incidents.

Stationed at First Aid Depots a first aid party consisted of five men who were ferried to the scene of an incident by car or ambulance, usually by a female driver from the Ambulance Service. They would render immediate first aid to the injured and endeavour to remove them to safety and further treatment if necessary as soon as possible.

At the start of 1941 there were twenty-one First Aid Depots but three were destroyed during one night of the May blitz. Another depot in Garden Village was ready to open when it was completely destroyed, and its replacement in Morrill Street only lasted three weeks before it too was destroyed.

On the 1 March 1944 the First Aid Party Service and the Rescue Service amalgamated on the instructions of the Government with the intention of sharing manpower.



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Award to Miss Ada Hartley, headmistress of Hessle Church of England Primary School, in recognition of her devoted service in the St. John's Ambulance Brigade during The Second World War [C DIMH/1/2/1]

Council First Aid vehicle, c.1941 [L images-C]



© Hull History Centre



# Decontamination

## Further Information

**Experiences of gas attacks during the First World War had led the authorities to fear that poison gas would be unleashed on the civilian population once war was declared. In view of this, decontamination became one of the A.R.P. essential services. Everyone, including children and babies were issued with gas masks, guidelines were published, and training exercises carried out to protect the public from such an attack.**

It was anticipated that most people exposed to blister gas could carry out the recommended process of removing their clothing and thoroughly washing their bodies with soap and water at home. Further help was also provided via Cleansing Stations operated by the Casualty Service set up at First Aid Posts across the city. These were based at:

Ellerburn Avenue  
Park Avenue  
Beverley Road  
Victoria Children's Hospital  
Regent Street  
Anlaby Road  
Boothferry Road

Hull Royal Infirmary  
Sutton  
Hedon Road  
Morrill Street  
Sykes Street  
Reckitts

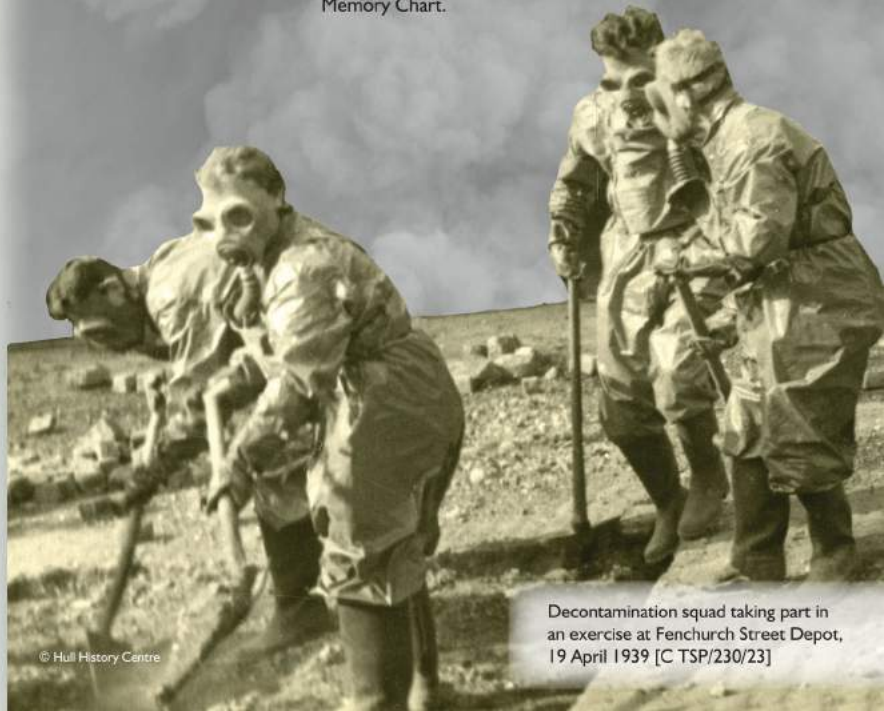
It was estimated they could deal with a total of 3225 cases per hour.

There were Special Cleansing Centres at 51 Market Place, Paragon Station and Madeley Street Baths and eight Mobile Cleansing Units with a capacity to deal with a total of 1,200 cases per hour.

Procedures were set up to collect contaminated clothing for boiling at one of the nominated baths or washhouses, and returned to their owner. Thankfully none of these services were ever called upon.



- C DEBK Records of Kingston High School, 1895-2004. Includes a register of ARP First Aid Volunteers.
- C DCE The Records of the Hull (East) Circuit of the Methodist Church, 1810-2012. Includes an inventory of furniture, in connection with the use of Barsnley Street Mission as a first aid post.
- C DIIP Records relating to the Hull Information Committee, 1891-1945. Includes diagrams and references to First Aid Depots.
- C TAA Architectural drawings, c.1860-c.1987. Includes architectural drawings for various first aid posts and the Decontamination Centre Relief Office, in Hull.
- C TAH Records of the City Architect's Department - Housing Section, c.1880-1984. Includes the construction of trench shelters and a first aid room, at Castle Howard Farm School.
- C TCY Town Clerk's Records relating to World War Two, 1940-1960. Includes files relating to the closing of First Aid Party Depots and the Restoration of School Premises.
- C TLW/W Records of the Town Clerk's Department concerning Air Raid Welfare, 1939-1952. Includes notices concerning the City Architect's Depots open for the supply of first aid materials.
- C TSCD City Engineer's Department, Civil Defence records, 1935-1971. Includes files relating to ARP First Aid Posts, and the amalgamation of Rescue and First Aid Party Services.
- C TYR Registration of personnel for Civil Defence Service, 1935-1947. First Aid Service personnel cards, and Decontamination of Personnel personnel cards.
- C TYW Warden Service Records, 1938-1952. Includes various files concerning first aid supplies, training, badges, and a First Aid Memory Chart.



Decontamination squad taking part in an exercise at Fenchurch Street Depot, 19 April 1939 [C TSP/230/23]

# After the Raid - Air Raid Welfare

**Once the 'raiders passed' signal had been sounded the well oiled machinery of the welfare scheme moved into action providing support, encouragement and assistance to those in need.**

The scheme assumed that:

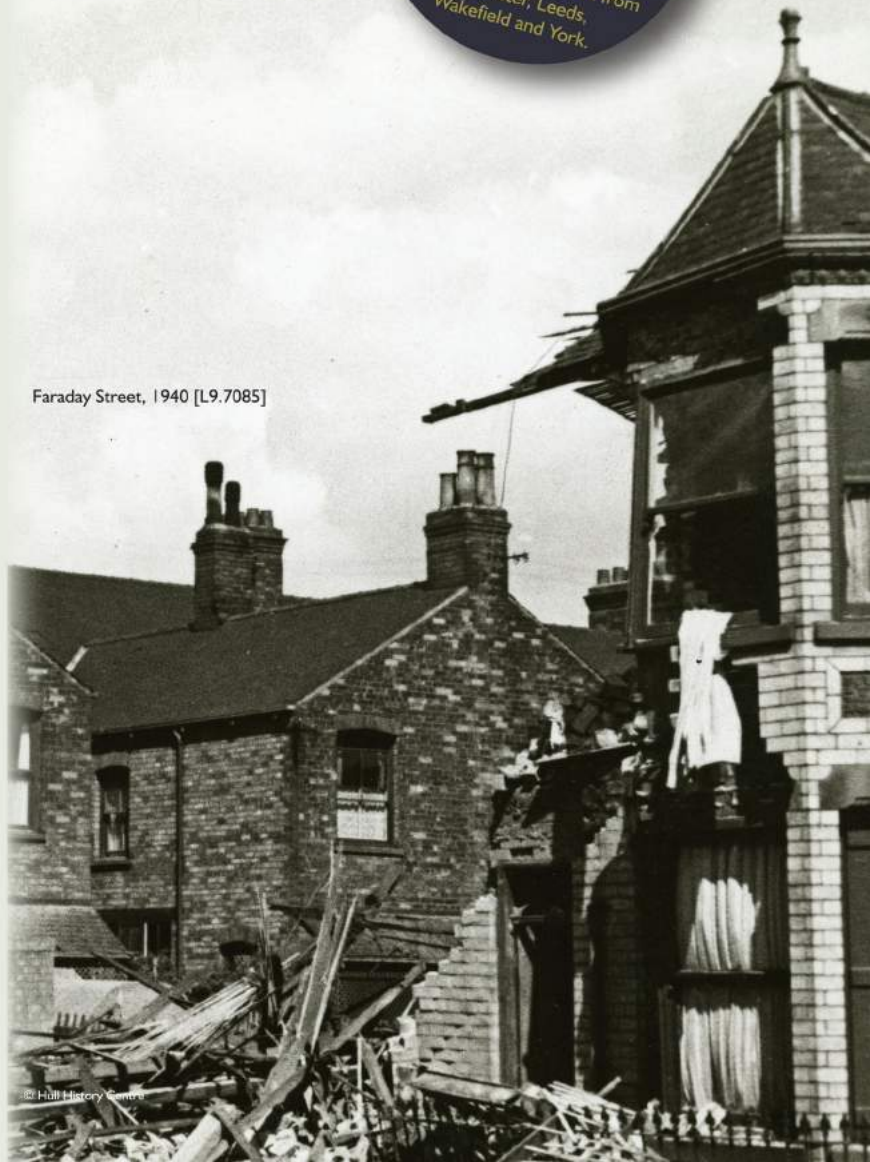
- People would remain the responsibility of the Warden Service and not be moved to Reception Centres until the all clear had been sounded
- Rest or Reception Centres would be needed for the immediate care, feeding and clothing of bombed out people
- People suffering from grief, shock, physical and emotional distress would be in need of individual care

Information relating to Welfare Services was issued by pamphlet, leaflet and poster. However, to help those suffering from the traumatic after effects of a raid it was imperative that accurate information was immediately relayed verbally by police, wardens and welfare officers and loud speaker vans were often deployed to this effect.

The messages highlighted where the nearest Reception Centre was to be found, where District Offices were to be opened and the types of assistance that could be given and to whom.



Faraday Street, 1940 [L9.7085]





# AIR RAID WELFARE

## WHAT YOU SHOULD DO. PLAN AHEAD

ARRANGE NOW to go and stay with friends or relatives in case you are made homeless. In your own interests tell your Wardens of this arrangement and also of any later change of plan. Billeting allowances will be paid for a time.

### RECEPTION CENTRES.

If you are made homeless and you cannot get to friends GO AT ONCE TO A RECEPTION CENTRE. There you will get Food, Shelter, Clothes, and advice on what to do next. Ask your Wardens or the Police to tell you the way.

**For Rest, Food, Shelter.**

### DISTRICT OFFICES.

The morning after a raid District Offices will open, and people in Reception Centres will be transported there and given further help. If you have suffered Air Raid Damage and have not been to a Reception Centre GO AT ONCE TO THE NEAREST DISTRICT OFFICE. The Police or the Wardens will tell you where it is. At a District office you can get the following kinds of assistance:-

**For New Homes, Care of Furniture, Advice.**

Accommodation in Bilets, or at a Furnished House, or Hostel. Salvage, Removal, and Storage of your furniture.

Emergency Food Ration Cards.

Free Bath Tickets.

Travel Vouchers (in certain cases).

All manner of information and advice on your difficulties.

(Read now the next paragraph headed ASSISTANCE BOARD.)

### ASSISTANCE BOARD.

**Money for Urgent Needs.**

Advances of compensation will be paid to persons in immediate need to enable them to replace essential clothing, furniture, tools of trade, certain retailers stocks and items of personal use, lost or damaged as a result of enemy action.

In certain circumstances financial assistance may also be given for the purchase of food.

The Assistance Board Officers attend at District Offices and at War Damage Centres.

Ask your Warden or the Police where to go.

### LORD MAYOR'S AIR RAID DISTRESS FUND.

**Additional Financial Help.**

This Fund meets certain emergencies for which there is no Government provision, and makes compassionate allowances of many kinds. You should apply to a District Office; the Central Office for Air Raid Welfare Districts, Ferens Art Gallery; or to the Guildhall.

### INJURED PERSONS.

**Medical Attention, Allowances, Pensions.**

Allowances for people temporarily disabled in air raids are granted by the Assistance Board.

Pensions and family Allowances for long-term disablement, and Funeral Grants and pensions to dependent Widows and Children of people killed in air raids are granted by the Ministry of Pensions.

Information on these matters can be had at the Central Library, Albion Street, or at any District Office.

### EMERGENCY FEEDING.

**Restaurants, Mobile Canteens, etc.**

If Gas, Water, or Electricity breaks down, or food distribution in your District is impeded, you will be served by Mobile Canteens, or you will be able to obtain food at British Restaurants, Outsales Food Departments, or Emergency Feeding Centres which will be opened in your neighbourhood.

### HOUSE REPAIRS.

**Help Yourself.**

If your house can be made fit to live in with a few simple repairs, the City Architect will arrange for it to be done, but how quickly he can do this depends on local conditions. Meanwhile, if you wish to carry out your own first aid repairs, you can get materials free of charge from depots. A list of depots can be seen at the Central Library, Albion Street, or at any District Office after a raid.

### EVACUATION.

**Keep Children Safe.**

Enquiries regarding Evacuation can be made at the Evacuation Centre, Union Street (Albion Street), the Central Library, Albion Street, or at any District Office.

### INFORMATION.

**Tracing Friends and Relatives, etc.**

At each District Office there is a special Information Section, which records Casualties, collects new addresses, traces friends and relatives, and gives advice on all matters from Allowances to War Time Debts, and from Adoption of Children to Lost Widows' Pension Books.

In times of grave emergency, special announcements will be made daily by Bulletin, Loud Speaker, and Wireless Services.

FOR INFORMATION AND ADVICE ON ALL AIR RAID WELFARE MATTERS, GO TO THE CENTRAL LIBRARY, ALBION STREET, THE FERENS ART GALLERY, OR TO ANY DISTRICT OFFICE THEN OPEN.

H. HARRLAND & SON, LTD., Printers, Manor Street.

Issued by the Air Raid Welfare Committee.

## Further Information

- C DIIP Records relating to the Hull Information Committee, 1939-1945. Includes a Report of Air Raids Welfare Office and Enquiry Service.
- C TCO/7/1/2 Additional minutes and papers of Hull City Council Committees and Sub-committees, 1926-1966. Includes the minutes of Hull City Council Air-raids (Welfare) Committee.
- C TCY Town Clerk's Records relating to World War Two, 1940-1960. The minutes of the Air Raids (Welfare) Committee includes memoranda regarding plane crashes, and a list of Homeless Reception Centres.
- C TLW/W Series of records concerning the Town Clerk's Second World War Records, Air Raid Welfare, 1939-1952.
- C TYW Warden Service Records, 1938-1952. Series of files concerning the Warden Service Welfare records. Includes the welfare of air raid victims, welfare and social events for wardens and fundraising for charities.

© Hull History Centre

CITY AND COUNTY OF KINGSTON UPON HULL.

## URGENT VITAL

### WHAT TO DO IF YOUR HOME IS DAMAGED IN AN AIR RAID

By carefully reading this sheet you will be saved a lot of worry if your House is rendered unsafe or destroyed in an Air Raid!

#### DO THIS FIRST!

Consult your Warden, who will direct you to the nearest Reception Centre in the District. You will be cared for there until other arrangements can be made if you prefer to go to friends, neighbours or relatives, even for a short time, you must report your temporary address to the nearest Warden or to the Reception Centre.

#### WHERE TO GO.

1. (a) The central office for dealing with distress after raids is the Women's Voluntary Services Office in Pensgrove.  
(b) Heralds are heavy, district offices will be opened and particulars will be obtainable from the Reception Centres.

#### LOST IDENTITY CARDS, RATION BOOKS, Etc.

2. Advice will also be given if you have lost your Identity Card, if you change permanently your address, if your Ration Books are lost or missing, or you lose Pension or N.H.I. Books. Keep with your Identity Card, the name, number, Regiment and address of relatives in the Forces.

#### THE CONTENTS OF YOUR HOME ATTENDED TO.

3. Advice and assistance will be given in the question of re-housing, removal of furniture, claims for compensation in respect of war damage to (a) houses (b) furniture (c) outbuildings. These are Government responsibilities, but immediate cash allowances can be made by the Assistance Board for furniture, clothing and tools.

#### YOUR HOUSE—WHAT TO DO.

4. Your house will be inspected by an Architect as soon as possible to see whether or not it can be repaired.

#### CARE OF LETTERS, POSTAL, Etc.

5. Letters which cannot be delivered to the old address and which the postman is unable to deliver locally, will be sent to the Women's Voluntary Services Office, Pensgrove, until the Post Office has received the new address. Forms notifying the new address may be obtained at Reception Centres and at the Women's Voluntary Services Office. If the form is filled in and returned to the Post Office letters will be delivered even to a temporary address.

#### NEWS OF YOUR FRIENDS.

6. Information about friends and relatives injured or missing will be given at the Casualty Bureau, Forewerry Arcade, Forewerry. It is particularly requested that enquiries shall not be made at Hospitals or First Aid Posts.

#### HOW TO MAKE YOUR CLAIMS.

7. Claims as a result of personal injuries or death should be made to the Ministry of Pensions. Claim forms and all information may be obtained at the Casualty Bureau, Forewerry Arcade, Forewerry.

In short, either get to the nearest Reception Centre or see that they are informed of where you are, after which if they know where you are you will be communicated with and told which Office to attend, whether central or district office, and every assistance will be given to see that you are re-established as quickly as possible.

Guildhall, Hull, October, 1940.

R. BIGHARDSON (Hull) Ltd., Printer, Forewerry, 15 Chapel Lane.



# Community Feeding

**Hull had a comprehensive feeding scheme in operation through its Municipal Restaurant Department before the Ministry of Food set up British Restaurants and Emergency Feeding Centres. However, once the British Restaurant Scheme was in place, the Corporation felt that they should co-ordinate the task of community feeding after an air raid.**

The British Restaurants were run as non-profit making canteens with all meals being ration free. Meat, game, poultry, fish, eggs and cheese were restricted and you couldn't have two items from this list at the same meal.

The Corporation operated large kitchens which served a number of centres. All food for Reception Centres, Hostels, British Restaurant Departments, Emergency Feeding Centres and works canteens was prepared under the control of the Municipal Kitchens.

As well as providing food for those rendered homeless by a raid, provision also had to be made for:

- Those who were unable to use their kitchens due to the presence of soot, dust, glass and plaster
- Civil Defence personnel
- Industry workers, many of whom had lost their homes

This was achieved by a combination of Emergency Feeding Centres, mobile canteens and collaboration between Industry and the Corporation who provided forty works canteens with food from the Municipal Restaurant Department.

The Ministry of Food delivered food and equipment to the city on 7 May 1941. The stocks were sorted and packed for distribution but unfortunately were completely destroyed during the bombing of the same night. On the morning of the 9 May Emergency Feeding Centres with a seating capacity of over 6,000 were destroyed but despite the devastation an estimated 40,000 meals were served on that one day and 350,000 meals were supplied in the five days following the blitz.

© Hull History Centre



Lord Mayor, Sydney Smith and Sherrif Robert Tarran accept a Mobile Kitchen donated by the citizens of Guelph in Ontario, 13th August 1941 [L9.7085]





# Reception/Rest Centres

## Further Information

**Sited across the City, the Corporation's original scheme made provision for 63 Reception Centres, and Church and mission halls were identified for this purpose. Run by the Women's Voluntary Services (WVS) the centres were equipped with essentials which allowed them to make those in need of their services warm and comfortable.**

As raids intensified it became necessary to open more centres and at the height of the Blitz there were 92 in operation. Of these, 19 were either destroyed or badly damaged by enemy action and by the end of 1941 there remained 73 centres equipped and ready for use.

One of the strengths of the Hull Welfare Scheme was its flexibility and although only 15 key centres were opened on the 'Alert', further centres would be opened as and when they were required so that there was always somewhere for people to go. Although some particulars were recorded on arrival, it was recognised that information would be more forthcoming once people had settled in to the Centre.

### Provisions at the Reception Centres

- Hot drinks
- Light refreshments
- Hot water for washing
- Clothing
- Sleeping accommodation, although most would prefer to talk of their experiences than sleep
- Breakfasts, which were provided by the Municipal Restaurants

C DIIP	Records relating to the Hull Information Committee, 1939-1945. Diagrams including references to Reception Centres.
C SRL/R	Publications, Booklets and Research Material, 1938-2011. Includes <i>The History of the Corporation Restaurants from 1903</i> .
C TLW/W	Records of the Town Clerk's Department concerning Air Raid Welfare, 1939-1952. Includes information on Reception Centres and emergency feeding.
C TCR	Hull City Council reports for Committees, 1839-1998. Includes reports on the Municipal Restaurants.
C TAY/CP	Record of damage and first aid repairs to individual properties owned by the Corporation, 1939-1945. Details Reception Centres in need of repair following enemy action.
C TCY	Town Clerk's Records relating to World War, 1940-1960. Includes a list of Homeless Reception Centres.
C TLW/W	Records of the Town Clerk's Department concerning Air Raid Welfare, 1939-1952. Includes Reception Centre statistics, and a list of Reception Centres used in connection with evacuation.
C TYW	Warden Service Records, 1938-1952. Includes lists of reception centres around the city.

### Permanent Reception Centres

Following the heavy raids of 1941 accommodation became a premium and following discussions with the Ministry of Health it was agreed that 12 permanently staffed Reception Centres should be set up and run by a few paid workers and volunteers.

Four church premises in heavily populated areas were the first centres to be established and later a series of huts were erected on school sites on the outskirts of the city; Newland Homes being requisitioned by the Corporation once they were evacuated.

As well as providing accommodation for the people of Hull, the permanent centres were used to host:

- French, Norwegian, African and other marine services
- Russian sailors
- Essential war workers
- Evacuees from London in the flying bomb emergency of 1944

Centres would be cleared as soon as possible the day after a raid, and after breakfasts had been served arrangements were made for one member of a family to visit a District Office for further help and assistance.

# The Childrens' War & Evacuation

At the outbreak of war it was considered safer to move children out of harms way and a large scale evacuation programme was undertaken. Areas around the city were identified as 'Priority Evacuatable Areas' and schools within those areas encouraged to move their pupils to areas thought to be less at risk from bombing raids. Many parents arranged for their children to stay with relatives or friends in areas considered safe, and some moved their entire families so they could stay together.

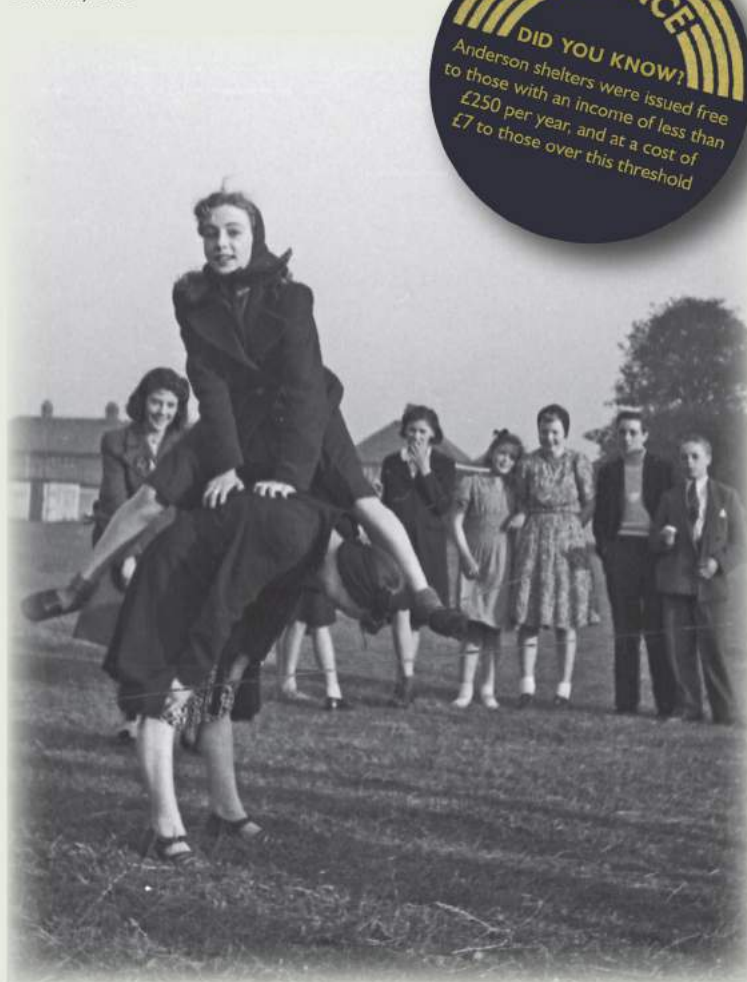
However, when the expected bombings did not occur in the first few months of the War, children and families started drifting back and by the beginning of 1940 most evacuees were back in Hull.

When France fell in May 1940 and cities around the United Kingdom began to suffer from heavy raids, evacuation was once more seen as a viable prospect and children were on the move again. Many schools had two establishments, one in Hull for those who did not wish to evacuate and one in the evacuated area.

By the end of 1942, many had returned home once more having been in relative safety whilst Hull suffered from the heavy bombing raids inflicted on it during the Blitz of May 1941.

In February 1942, following a request from the Ministry of Home Security, children who had remained in Hull were asked to write essays about their experiences in air raids. These essays are a poignant reminder of how children were affected by the relentless bombing inflicted on the City during 1941 and the early part of 1942.

© Hull History Centre



Outdoor amusements at 5th Avenue School,  
June 1942 [C TSP/3/465/28]





## Further Information

DEX/24/14

Alwyn Hornsby. 9. 2. 42.

What happened to me in  
the air raids

One ~~wednesday~~ <sup>wednesday</sup> night the sirens  
went and we went into the air  
raid shelter. Nothing for  
a bit happened and then  
the guns went and fire  
bombs ~~were~~ <sup>were</sup> dropping.  
One ~~dropped~~ <sup>dropped</sup> out side the wall  
of the shelter another ~~dropped~~ <sup>dropped</sup>  
into the ~~bedroom~~ <sup>bedroom</sup> next door.  
My father helped. It ~~lasted~~ <sup>lasted</sup>  
they got the furniture out  
and then we got the  
stirrup-pump. Then it  
went out ~~very~~ <sup>very</sup> quickly and  
they ~~dropped~~ <sup>dropped</sup> some fire bombs  
on ~~Birmingham~~ <sup>Birmingham</sup>. All people got  
out. And then they ~~dropped~~ <sup>dropped</sup>  
explosives. After the ~~all clear~~ <sup>all clear</sup>  
went we went home and  
we ~~hadn't~~ <sup>hadn't</sup> ~~minors~~ <sup>minors</sup> damaged.  
My mother went to see my  
sister ~~up~~ <sup>up</sup> she was all right.  
The ~~at~~ <sup>at</sup> night we went to ~~Antony~~ <sup>Antony</sup>  
~~banishment~~ <sup>banishment</sup> to some one we  
knew lived there. We heard  
the sirens again and  
the guns went ~~we~~ <sup>we</sup> got into  
the shelter.

Essay written by Alwyn Hornsby in 1942 on her experience in an air raid.

My father was at home  
fixing watching. We heard  
the guns. We heard a bomb  
drop then the all clear went.  
We went home and another  
bomb dropped at the other side  
of the road. My mother  
stopped down stairs and I went  
to bed. Next morning I help  
my mother. I swept glass  
up.

All clear  
dropped  
stopped

new paragraphs //

- C DE\* A number of school records make mention of evacuation including C DEBK, Kingston High School; C DEBN, Hull Boulevard Nautical School and C DEHG, Hull Grammar School. Names are not included in many cases.
- L DEX/24 Essays written in February 1942 by children in Hull detailing how they were affected by the relentless bombing inflicted on the city during 1941 and early 1942.
- C DING The Times of My Life, Norman Grundy's reminiscences of Hull during World War Two and his evacuation to Batley, West Yorkshire.
- C DIPN Programme for the party held at the Corn Exchange, Bourne for Hull children evacuated to that part of Lincolnshire, 1940
- C DMX/242 File of letters, diary extracts and poems containing reminiscences of Hull in the blitz including evacuation, 1939-1942
- C SRL/R Publications, Booklets and Research Material, 1938-2011. Home for Christmas: A story about the evacuation of Pamela Townsend and her brother, Robin, during the Second World War.
- C TED/I Hull City Council's Education Department Administrative records, 1864-1983. There are separate files for each authority. Some contain a list of children, giving in some instances, their names, Hull address, Hull school and school in the evacuation area, 1939-1947
- C TSCD/17 ARP Corporation Scheme, Evacuation, Education & Departmental, 29 Sep 1938-25 May 1940
- C TYA ARP/CD Control and report services, 1940-45. Includes a supplementary evacuation plan, Nov 1941-Jun 1942
- C TYW Warden Service Records, 1938-1952. Includes a file concerning three Government Evacuation Schemes (1939, 1940 and 1941) and the Hull Scheme for the Evacuation of the Homeless.
- L9.7085 Evacuation from Hull, 1939-1941, Information Pack
- Lp.372 MER Evacuation from Mersey Street School to Helmsley, 1939



# District Offices

**Developed as one-stop shops in September 1940, the District Office enabled bombed-out people to access a variety of services under one roof. These temporary offices were opened early in the morning following a raid, were sited within easy reach of an incident and remained open as long as support was required.**

Schools were the preferred choice of building as their layout afforded the opportunity to use the large assembly halls to allow people to pass seamlessly from one section to the other, whilst the classrooms could be used as waiting rooms. A record card was given to each person as they entered the office which was marked by each section with action taken. The card was collected at the end of the process.

There were no permanent staff at District Offices but instead personnel from a number of departments were called upon at short notice to man the offices and had to be ready to take furniture and stationery with them.

## **Staff for District Offices comprised of:**

Town Clerk's representative (in charge)  
2 or 3 billeting officers  
1 Warden's representative  
1 Housing Department representative  
1 City Engineer's Department representative  
2 Food Officers representatives  
5 Assistance Board representatives  
2 Messengers  
2 or 3 Information Service representatives  
7 W.V.S. assisting the Town Clerk's representative, filling in record cards, typing statistical records, filing, providing transport. The number of W.V.S. could vary depending on requirements.

A Ministry of Pensions representative was often present.

## INFORMATION

**District Offices provided help with the following:**

- Billeting
- Travel warrants
- Removals and storage of furniture
- Emergency ration cards
- Soap and bath tickets
- Bus tickets
- Meal tickets
- Assistance Board cash
- Clothing coupons
- Compensation claim forms
- Pensions instructions
- Enquiries re friends and relatives
- Evacuation
- Help from Lord Mayor's Air Raid Distress Fund



© Hull History Centre



People gather at 5th Avenue School, 20 June 1942 [C TSP/3/465/24]



# Billeting

**Forged under the Scheme for the Care of the Homeless, the City Treasurer and his staff were originally responsible for billeting; the temporary housing of people after an air raid. In September 1940 responsibility passed to the Town Clerk in order that all elements of Care of the Homeless Scheme came under his control.**

The Scheme coped until the heavy raids of May 1941 when teachers, school attendance officers and other members of the Public Assistance team were drafted in to help. It became apparent that a part-time service was not adequate and following approval by the Ministry of Health, 24 full time Emergency Billeting Officers were appointed in July 1941.

Head Office was based at the Corporation Offices, 181-191 George Street and four smaller offices were opened at Endike Lane, Wheeler Street, Regent Street and Fern Street.

At no point was compulsory billeting power exercised in Hull and the Register of Billets was only used on a few occasions. Instead, vast numbers of the population made mutual arrangements with relatives or friends that they would accommodate each other if either were made homeless.

One consequence of the May 1941 Blitz was the unorganised and unofficial movement of people from Hull to the surrounding areas who came to be known as 'Trekking'. They would leave the city in the early evening and return in the morning in order to miss night time raids.



## Further Information

- C DIIP Hull Information Committee, 1939-1945. Hand-drawn diagrams showing lines of communication between district offices, public services and the public, and correspondence regarding staffing of district offices, 5-7.
- C TLW/W Air Raid Welfare, 1939-1952. A series of items concerning the District Offices of the Air Raid Welfare Information Service, including their location, opening and staffing, situation updates of District Offices open after raids and the Scheme for the Care of the Homeless, 1941-1942.
- C TYW Warden Service Records, 1938-1952. Includes procedures for billeting with list of names and contact information for the billeting officers and a list of empty houses known as the Wardens' Furnished Houses available for billeting.

As well ensuring that the civilian population of Hull were safely housed, the Billeting Officers were also tasked with finding accommodation for the thousands of workers drafted in to the city such as builders for the repair of property, and dockers. It was imperative that lists of available properties were kept up to date and although the workers were accompanied or directed to their billets, they had to make their own arrangements with the occupier as to board and lodging.

Looking for information on a notice board on Holderness Road, 1 September 1941 [C TSP/3/427/37]





# Aftercare and Hostels

**The psychological effects of being involved in an air raid and losing family, friends and possessions, continued long after the initial shock wore off. It was therefore essential that after-care provisions were established which recognised there would be psychological and practical requirements after the District Offices had closed.**

The Women's Voluntary Services established such a service and provided staff who helped with re-housing, removals, storage of furniture, and the submission of claims and grants. They also visited people when necessary and aided those discharged from hospital.

It was recognised that there would be instances where some individuals and families could not be billeted immediately and for these people Hostels were established under the control of the City Treasurer.

The main beneficiaries of such accommodation were:

- Large families
- Families with a number of small children
- Those in need of temporary accommodation whilst evacuation arrangements were finalised
- Elderly people in need of more specialised accommodation

Fourteen Hostels were opened in total and properties included two of the Corporation's Childrens' Homes at Hessle High Road and in Harley Street. Mr. J. H. Fisher, J.P. of 'Ivanhoe' on Beverley High Road and Mrs Bentham Robinson of 99 Westbourne Avenue both generously made their homes available for Hostels for the Aged. The remainder were private houses which had been requisitioned.

## The repair of war damaged housing

During the war the local authority was made responsible for housing the people within its boundaries and to enable it to fulfil this duty it was given powers to repair and make habitable houses which had been damaged by enemy action. The City Architect was responsible for assessing and supervising the execution of the repairs required.

For each property damaged a printed form was completed giving details of the property, the damage sustained and first aid repair work carried out [C TAY/AR]. A separate series details the same information for war damaged corporation property including first aid posts, police boxes and various other properties used by the Corporation during the war [C TAY/CP].

In addition we have lists of houses damaged by enemy action [C TAY/C], applications for repair to war damaged property made to the Architect for consideration by the Emergency Works Committee [C TAY/EW], Indexes of war damaged property [C TAY/I], returns of labour engaged in the repair of war damaged housing giving the name of each contractor alphabetically by company name. They also give the total number of men employed by each contractor, their names, home town, age (not in all cases) and trade. Foremen and apprentices are identified in all of the returns as well as the ages of youths and apprentices, [C TAY/L], files on individual housing issues [C TAY/M], property returns made after each raid and sent to the District Valuer and Minister of Health [C TAY/PR], a record of requisitioned and subsequently de-requisitioned properties [C TAY/RP], and records of the costs of repairs to war damaged properties [C TAY/S].

© Hull History Centre



People try to rescue items buried under the remains of their homes at 220-224 James Reckitt Avenue, 1 September 1941 [C TSP/3/427/26]





## Further Information



- C TLW/W Air Raid Welfare, 1939-1952. Includes Ministry of Information Bulletins which include details on furniture removals.
- C TSWD City Engineer's Department, war damage records, 1939-1968. Details ARP War damage and furniture removal.
- C TYW Warden Service Records, 1938-1952. Records relating to Homeless - Furniture and sale of furniture from Houses for the Homeless.
- C TCO Minutes of Hull City Council Re-housing (Air-raids) Committee, 12 Nov 1940-4th Nov 1941.





# Preparing for War at the University College Hull



**In September 1938 staff and students answered the Principal's call for volunteers to dig trenches at the College and the Halls of Residence. Over 200 yards of trenches with duck-board flooring and a seat on one side were constructed. The Ministry of Labour asked the College to continue the Adult Education talks as these provided "relief from the strain of exceptional conditions".**

By March 1939 there were some very visible signs of preparation for war including the establishment of a Report Centre in the Arts building whilst the Chemistry labs became a gas detection centre. Notices were prepared, though not dispatched, to each student to advise them not to return to College unless instructed.

In May 1939 a detailed plan 'Precautions in connection with National Emergency or War' was produced. This looked at the possible requisition of its buildings and how teaching could continue despite uncertainty about courses, students and staff. It also considered how to protect staff and students from air raids, gas attacks and incendiary bombs. The report also highlighted other work in progress "lists have been made of certain scientific equipment, library books and papers which should be taken to the safe in the Arts building".

Although many of the options were precautionary, in September 1939 the College did relocate to Cottingham to allow the City Clerks and Treasury departments to occupy the Arts and Science buildings. The move proved to be temporary and three weeks later everybody moved back.

The archives, including those of Principal Dr John Henry Nicholson, reflect the huge administrative effort to collect and collate information on a range of issues including whether staff had volunteered with the local civil defence units. Many staff were assigned roles similar to their day job, for example both the Registrar and the Librarian were assigned roles in the Report Centre at the College.

With declining student numbers and rising costs the difficult decision was made in August 1940 to let some staff go. The College just managed to stay afloat because of the expansion of the aeronautics course.

© University of Hull



'Digging trenches at the College, September 1938' [Ref U PHO]



# Firewatchers at the University



## Further Information

Equipment for dealing with incendiary bombs was ordered in 1938 and a staff fire-fighting squad was established in May 1939. However, a system for fire-watching and ensuring that blackout regulations were being adhered to was not put in place until February 1941, with 75 staff and students volunteering.

Rotas were established, several of which still survive, and shifts were set, with normal duty being from 6pm to 9am. Four fire-watchers were on duty each night and posts were set up in the Science and Arts Buildings.

The difficulties faced by volunteers and details of raids were noted in the report books. The books record the time of the watch, the watchers' names, notes regarding faulty equipment and the timing of air raid alerts, as well as other comments and even attempts at poetry. Details of the fires seen over Hull, the sound of anti-aircraft guns and planes passing overhead were also noted during the Blitz of May 1941:

"Continuous heavy gunfire"

"Oil bombs, I.B.s and H.E.s over city centre and East End"

"Orange glow – dense white and black smoke hung like a pall"

The initial enthusiasm for volunteering had, however, worn off by late 1942 with the reports revealing watchers turning up late, or not at all. Despite this, fire-watching continued at the College until March 1945. College buildings survived largely intact, although some damage was sustained. The Science and Arts buildings sustained roof and window damage, and it was reported on 17th August 1941 that "we have two craters in the sports fields".

The following series of records will be useful if you wish to find out more about the experience of university staff and students during WWII:

- U UA Vice-chancellors papers including correspondence, administration and subject files.
- U PHR Personnel files relating to academic staff.
- U PHO University Photographers' records consisting of photographs of university staff, students, buildings and events.
- U ORP Official reports including annual reports and calendars.
- U REG Registrars records including proceedings of committee meetings and administration files.

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DATE	TIME	WATCHERS	EQUIPMENT	REPORT	COMMENTS
Mon. 14	10.00	P. Bannister		OK	Alert 10.15 - 10.17 More visible than 10.15 - 10.17 No fire seen 10.17
Tue. 15	10.00	P. Bannister H. B. Bannister		OK	Alert 10.15 - 10.17 More visible than 10.15 - 10.17 No fire seen 10.17
Wed. 16	10.00	P. Bannister H. B. Bannister		OK	Alert 10.15 - 10.17 More visible than 10.15 - 10.17 No fire seen 10.17
Thurs. 17	10.00	P. Bannister H. B. Bannister		OK	Alert 10.15 - 10.17 More visible than 10.15 - 10.17 No fire seen 10.17
Friday 18	10.00	P. Bannister H. B. Bannister		OK	Alert 10.15 - 10.17 More visible than 10.15 - 10.17 No fire seen 10.17
Sat. 19	10.00	P. Bannister H. B. Bannister		OK	Alert 10.15 - 10.17 More visible than 10.15 - 10.17 No fire seen 10.17
Sun. 20	10.00	P. Bannister H. B. Bannister		OK	Alert 10.15 - 10.17 More visible than 10.15 - 10.17 No fire seen 10.17
Mon. 21	10.00	P. Bannister H. B. Bannister		OK	Alert 10.15 - 10.17 More visible than 10.15 - 10.17 No fire seen 10.17
Tue. 22	10.00	P. Bannister H. B. Bannister		OK	Alert 10.15 - 10.17 More visible than 10.15 - 10.17 No fire seen 10.17
Wed. 23	10.00	P. Bannister H. B. Bannister		OK	Alert 10.15 - 10.17 More visible than 10.15 - 10.17 No fire seen 10.17
Thurs. 24	10.00	P. Bannister H. B. Bannister		OK	Alert 10.15 - 10.17 More visible than 10.15 - 10.17 No fire seen 10.17
Friday 25	10.00	P. Bannister H. B. Bannister		OK	Alert 10.15 - 10.17 More visible than 10.15 - 10.17 No fire seen 10.17
Sat. 26	10.00	P. Bannister H. B. Bannister		OK	Alert 10.15 - 10.17 More visible than 10.15 - 10.17 No fire seen 10.17
Sun. 27	10.00	P. Bannister H. B. Bannister		OK	Alert 10.15 - 10.17 More visible than 10.15 - 10.17 No fire seen 10.17
Mon. 28	10.00	P. Bannister H. B. Bannister		OK	Alert 10.15 - 10.17 More visible than 10.15 - 10.17 No fire seen 10.17
Tue. 29	10.00	P. Bannister H. B. Bannister		OK	Alert 10.15 - 10.17 More visible than 10.15 - 10.17 No fire seen 10.17
Wed. 30	10.00	P. Bannister H. B. Bannister		OK	Alert 10.15 - 10.17 More visible than 10.15 - 10.17 No fire seen 10.17
Thurs. 31	10.00	P. Bannister H. B. Bannister		OK	Alert 10.15 - 10.17 More visible than 10.15 - 10.17 No fire seen 10.17

Firewatchers Report Book 19 Mar 1941-5 Aug 1942 [Ref UA]

# Students on the Home Front



**Students experienced the war along with the rest of the city. When preparations were being made in 1938, students helped dig trenches for air raid shelters in the College grounds and at their halls of residence. They also helped dig the fields behind the College for use as vegetable plots.**

Society and Union events continued, despite the blackout regulations, often in conjunction with Hull Municipal Training College and the Hull College of Art and Crafts. The events raised money for Hull Royal Infirmary, the Red Cross, refugee work and local forces. Students donated blood, undertook fire watching, home guard duties and air raid precaution work. Some students went to fight, some returned after the war to resume their studies, but sadly some did not.

Although lectures continued and exams were taken, the demands of war and the evacuation of the Education Department to Cambridge meant student numbers dwindled. Those who were left saw the closure of Westfield and Thwaite Halls of residence and the creation of mixed accommodation at Needler Hall.

In spite of shortages in materials and contributions, issues of the student journal 'Torch' appeared, as usual, three times per academic year. Sports teams carried on playing when numbers allowed, and matches were arranged with other teams in the city. When the College sports pitch was bombed, the Cricket Club made an agreement with a Hull club to use their ground.

As much as possible, the student experience of the war was one of 'just carry on'.

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## ROLL OF SERVICE

We have received with deep regret the following news of students of the College :

*Killed in action, May 1940—*

J. F. Cockin (2nd Lieutenant, 1st East Riding Yeomanry).

*Missing—believed killed in action, September 1941—*

B. L. Thomas.

*Reported Missing—*

I. M. Strachan (Royal Air Force).

*Prisoners of War :*

H. N. Baxter (Sergeant Pilot in the Royal Air Force).

E. G. Mellars (Royal Army Service Corps).

A. R. Darlow (Captain in the Royal Armoured Corps).

C. P. Simpson (Sub-Lieutenant in the Fleet Air Arm).

We regret that owing to lack of adequate space in this issue we are unable to publish a complete list of students now serving in the forces.—(Ed.)

'Roll of Service', list of Hull students thought to be captured, missing or killed in action  
[Torch, Vol.4 No.2, Dec 1941]

Students from the Drama Society keeping spirits up during the war [Ref U PHO]





# Hull's Aeronauts



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## Further Information

**After WWI, enthusiasm for aviation was widespread. The success of Amy Johnson in the following years raised interests in Hull even further. It was in this environment that the University College of Hull established a Faculty of Aeronautics, in partnership with Hull Technical College.**

Teaching for the Diploma commenced in 1934 with the two year course designed for students who had served an apprenticeship with the Blackburn Aeroplane & Motor Company, which had been established in Brough in 1916. Classes included aspects of mathematics, physics and engineering.

Head of the department W J Duncan's 1943 Memorandum on the Future of the Department of Aeronautics at the University College of Hull asserted that 'Hull should become the recognised centre of aeronautical education for the whole of the Northern part of England'. In 1945 when talking of the Battle of Britain, Lord Sempill wrote that the aeronautical knowledge of those who had taken a course in aeronautics at Hull University "helped make possible this victory".

Sadly, when the University Grants Committee added Hull to their grant list they did not endorse aeronautics. Minutes from a meeting of the Senate held on 16th October 1946 record their 'regret' that the course would not continue. In 1994, those awarded the Diploma in Aeronautics at Hull were awarded BSc degrees. Referred to as 'The Magnificent 57', many led highly successful careers in the aircraft industry, contributing to the development of Concorde, Harrier, Tornado, and many others.



Front cover of the Diploma in Aeronautics prospectus

The following series of records will be useful if you wish to find out more about the experience of university staff and students during WWII:

- U ORP Official reports including annual reports and calendars.
- U REG Registrars records including proceedings of committee meetings and administration files.
- U ADM Student administration records including registers and lists.
- U SUH Student Union records including publications such as Torch.
- U DX238 Small collection of material relating to Aeronautics Training (1938-1996).

1st year Aeronauts, 1942-1943 [Ref U PHO]



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# V.E. Day

At 3pm on Tuesday 8th May 1945, Winston Churchill made the speech which announced the end of The Second World War in Europe. Careful to point out that the war in Japan was still to be won, he stated in his radio broadcast that the people of Great Britain

**"May allow ourselves a brief period of rejoicing."**

Following an address by the Lord Mayor and the Sheriff in Queens Gardens at 4.30pm, there was a flurry of activity across the City, and those who benefited from a paid holiday on the day of the announcement and the following day were able to enjoy the entertainments laid on for them.

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Telegram from Dwight D. Eisenhower, Commanding General of the victorious forces in Europe, thanking the City of Hull for their message of congratulations, 14 May 1945 [C TCVC/1]



Crowds gather in Queen Victoria Square ready to cheer on the men and women taking part in the Victory Parade, 12 May 1945 [C TCVC/2/1]

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