

WAR IS COMING - BERWICK BE PREPARED!

In the Spring of 1938, Mr Dodds, a prominent grocer and tea merchant, warned members of the Guild of Commerce that war was coming and Berwick had to be prepared! But few of Berwick's 12,000 inhabitants were ready to heed the warning.

When the Northumberland County Air Raid Precautions Officer addressed a sparsely-attended meeting in Berwick in June 1938, he declared: *"People are not serious now, like funking rats. Dissension among councillors and wardens caused by favouritism, jealousies or prejudice must stop"*.

Despite the general mood of apathy, there were some in the town who *had* heeded the call. The entire staff of Woolworth's store had volunteered for A.R.P. duties and twelve members of the Border Wheelers Cycling Club offered their services to act as messengers in the event of emergency.

However, in the early months of 1938 Berwick was busy with more mundane matters. New council estates were springing up at Highfields, Tweedmouth and Spittal: high-standard housing for people being moved from the recently-cleared slums in the older parts of the Borough, offering a more comfortable life for the families of the men who worked in the Tweedmouth locomotive sheds and goods yards of the L.N.E.R., at Scremerston Main Colliery or the chemical and manure works on Spittal Point, in Allan Brothers' Sawmills and Black's Spade Factory in Spittal.

The proprietors of the shops in Marygate, the Soda Fountain in Hide Hill and the Venetian Pavilion on Spittal Promenade were preparing for a busy summer season. Fortes' fleet of ice cream vans were being given a fresh polish.

But, as the summer passed, storm clouds gathered over the Continent of Europe. The Crisis came to a head in September, when meetings took place between the Prime Minister, Mr. Chamberlain and Chancellor Hitler.

While the Munich Conference was being held, Air Raid Precautions work was being pushed forward at a feverish pace. Late into the evenings, work-parties dug trenches on Brass Bastion and cleared the passages through the Elizabethan ramparts to act as shelters for the civilian population. Volunteers helped to fit and distribute gas-masks. On Sunday September 25th, a public meeting held on the Town Hall steps, addressed by the Mayor, the Chief Air Raid Warden and the District A.R.P. Officer, brought 222 new volunteers for A.R.P. duties.

A major national campaign for Air Raid Precautions was planned for the first week in October, and arrangements were made to display posters and dummies equipped with respirators in the window of the Boots Pure Drug Co. shop in Marygate.

On September 28th, the proprietor of the *Berwick Journal* wrote to the Town Clerk asking for details of the Borough's Air Raid Precautions which he could publish for his readers, because of the fear of outbreak of war *"at the weekend"*. All the while, people hoped that catastrophe would be avoided by a last minute settlement.

The hoped-for news came in the early hours of September 29th. Mr. Chamberlain returned from Munich and announced from the window of No. 10 Downing Street: *"I believe it is peace for our time.... and now I recommend you to go home and sleep quietly in your beds."*

Later that day, the order came to return all A.R.P. training equipment to County Hall in Newcastle.

Within two months the trenches on the Walls had been filled in and the threat of war seemed to have receded.

BERWICK IS PREPARED

The lull did not last long and by January 1939 a detailed Air Raid Precautions Scheme for the Berwick District was being put into effect.

The Anglo-American Oil Co. installation, the K.O.S.B. Depot, Tweedmouth Railway Station and Docks, Scremerston Colliery, Spittal Gas Works and Berwick's road and rail bridges were all identified as potential targets for enemy bombers.

The Town was divided into 10 sectors: four inside the Ramparts, three to the north, two in Tweedmouth and one in Spittal. A.R.P. Control Centre was in the Municipal Buildings.

The Infirmary would receive wounded casualties from first-aid posts set up in Wallace Green Hall and at Spittal Council School, while gassed cases would be taken to the Public Assistance Institution in Brucegate.

Auxiliary fire stations were established at Whillis's Garage, Coxon's Lane, and Sanderson's Garage in Main Street, Tweedmouth.

The scheme required an establishment of 210 air raid wardens; 40 men for first-aid parties; 12 men and 69 women in the two first-aid posts; 10 men to drive cars for "sitting casualties"; 30 women drivers and attendants for ambulances;

There were 14 men allocated to the two rescue parties, based at Wallace Green Hall and Spittal Council School, and 14 to the two decontamination squads operating from the Old Brewery Yard behind the Governor's House and from Spittal School.

11 men and 14 women were to operate the report centres, and 22 messengers would carry communications by motor-cycle, bicycle or on foot.

Commercial and private vehicles were earmarked for ambulance, rescue or fire service.

Lambs Laundry was to provide two vans, J. Bryson three vans and Walter Willson one lorry to act as ambulances. J. Dodds, Coal Merchant, would supply a 30 cwt lorry for the rescue squad; Elder & Sons two lorries, Buglass & Son, Fish Merchant, and J. Flannigan one small lorry each for the Auxiliary Fire Service; Tweedmouth Co-op 2 two-ton lorries for the repair squad; a two-ton lorry from W.D. Anderson & Co. and a 30 cwt lorry from T.Bell & Son would serve the decontamination parties; two lorries from McCreath & Sons Manure Works were to support the water squads; A & B Garage and T. Dirk of Sunnyside supplied cars for first-aid parties.

Transport headquarters was at the United Bus Station.

“THE FUSCHIA OF NORHAM”

A major A.R.P. exercise was held on the evening of May 18th. The scenario involved the issuing of an ultimatum by the "*Fuschia of Norham*", threatening air attacks on the Free City of Berwick in retaliation for its support of the State of Glendale.

The start of the exercise was signalled by the firing of red rockets from Meg's Mount and the sounding of the hooters at Black's Spadeworks and Allan Bros. Woodyard.

The town did not, as yet, possess an air-raid siren.

A score of vehicles marked by small yellow flags raced about the district representing ambulances, rescue squads and fire-pumps.

The exercise was observed solemnly by umpires in vehicles displaying Union Jacks.

When the long-expected war finally came, in September, 1939, the Town Council was informed "*Berwick is prepared*".

BERWICK'S I.T.C. AND TROOP MOVEMENTS

During the summer of 1939, several thousand militiamen had arrived for training in Berwick and Territorial Army reservists soon began streaming into the Depot of the King's Own Scottish Borderers.

Various buildings in the town were commandeered by the Army, including St. Aidan's Church Hall, the old Corporation Academy building and the Kings Arms Hotel Assembly Rooms. The Venetian Pavilion on Spittal Promenade was requisitioned for use by the NAAFI. Officers were billeted on private houses.

Huts were erected on The Parade in front of the Barracks, and a huge camp began to spring up on the northern part of Magdalene Fields. The new camp was formed into an Infantry Training Centre for the Royal Scots, the Royal Scots Fusiliers and the King's Own Scottish Borderers. Berwick had never seen so many troops, even during the 18th century heyday of the Barracks.

The soldiers set up barbed-wire entanglements along the Quayside, the cliffs and foreshore, and slit trenches were dug on the ramparts and bastions. Trenches were dug on the Magdalene Fields Golf Course, to prevent landings by enemy invasion aircraft. Large poles were erected on The Shad near the Royal Border Bridge and huge concrete blocks were placed near the three bridges.

THE FIRST SIREN

As war came closer, Northumberland County Council was making plans for the provision of air raid shelters.

The Royal Observer Corps was mobilised on August 24th, 1939, ten days before the war began. The first Observer Corps post was situated on Brass Bastion, but it was later moved onto Halidon Hill. Volunteers kept continuous watch for 24 hours a day until they were "stood down" on May 12th, 1945.

Berwick was designated as Category C, a "Safe Zone".

The Town Council obtained permission from H.M. Office of Works to press into service 11 passages in the Elizabethan Walls to act as shelters. Additional protection for a proportion of the town's population would be afforded by trenches being dug near the Isolation Hospital, Berwick Bowling Green and close to Tweedmouth School in Billendean Road.

Instructions were given about Air Raid Precautions in schools

On August 31st, under the auspices of the Parade C. of E. Junior School, a meeting for parents was held in the Parochial Hall, at which the Vicar, the Rev. W. B. Hicks M.A., presided, accompanied by Miss Richardson (headmistress). Miss Richardson pointed out that the Parade School was situated in Berwick A zone, and stressed that the following rules had been decided upon in the event of an emergency:-

1. School will be closed for one week on the declaration of war, thereafter will resume.
2. In the event of war the school will be dismissed before an air raid occurs if possible.
3. If there is warning of an air raid before school starts, then there will be no school that day.
4. If there is warning of an air raid while pupils are on their way to school, they are to go either straight back home or proceed to school, whichever is nearer.
5. If pupils are already at school, they must remain at school, parents are not to come for their children at that time, but to stay indoors.

Miss Richardson also said that the local education authority was planning to construct A.R.P. shelters in the schoolyard, capable of accommodating 200 children.

EVACUATION OF CHILDREN

Several months before the war began the government began planning the evacuation of children from the great conurbations to so-called "safe" areas. An evacuation survey was carried out in the Borough to assess the number of evacuees that could be accommodated in the event of emergency. Although Berwick-upon-Tweed had suffered Zeppelin attacks in the First World War, and lay on the exposed North-East coast, it was designated 'Category C', an area of lowest risk of air attack.

On Friday September 1st, 800 children and their helpers from North Heaton and Heaton Park Road Schools, and La Sagesse Convent in Newcastle arrived in Berwick. The children alighted at the platforms of the stations at Berwick and Tweedmouth and were taken in private cars to various schools, where they waited for buses to take them to their foster-homes throughout the district. Householders were paid 10s 6d for a child per week, or 8s 6d per child if they were looking after more than one boy or girl.

When the predicted massive air-raids on Tyneside failed to materialise, the evacuees soon began to drift homewards. La Sagesse Convent returned to Newcastle within three weeks of their arrival in Berwick.

A year later, there were just 50 evacuees left in the area.

LOOK OUT IN THE BLACK-OUT

The lighting restrictions regulations, commonly called the "*black-out*", began at sunset on September 1st, 1939, two days before the war started.

No light was allowed to show from commercial or private premises during "*black-out*" hours. Shops and cinemas closed earlier, to allow staff and customers to get home while light lasted.

Vehicle lights were fitted with covers pierced with a one inch diameter hole, allowing a beam with a range of no more than 30 yards. Cars had to crawl along at a maximum speed of 20 miles per hour, so as to avoid hitting other vehicles or pedestrians.

Visitors to Berwick were said to have commented it was one of the "*blackest*" places in the country at night.

Some local shops offered some helpful advice:

ENJOY YOUR BLACK-OUT EVENINGS INDOORS

Games For Grown-ups

MONOPOLY, TOTOPOLY, INVASION, BEETLE GAME, NEWMARKET, KAN-U-GO, TABLE TENNIS, BAGATELLE.

For The Youngsters

Many exciting and novel games

LOTTO, SNAP, HAPPY FAMILY, LUDO, SNAKES AND LADDERS, DOMINOES, SOLITAIRE, TIDDLY-WINKS, PAINTS.

AN INTERESTING AND INTELLIGENT HOBBY

Use the dark nights in putting your STAMP COLLECTION in order.

If you do not already collect stamps - START NOW, and spend many pleasant hours.

We have a large selection of Packets for beginners.

Packets from 1d - 2/6

A LIFETIME OF INTEREST!

BORDER SERIES, HIDE HILL, BERWICK-UPON-TWEED

WAR IS DECLARED

Sunday September 3rd dawned fine and sunny. The church bells summoned the people of the Borough to worship, though many chose to stay at home close to their wireless sets, listening for the latest news.

The announcement came over the air waves at 11.15 a.m. Within minutes, the wail of the siren on the Municipal Buildings could be heard across the town. From pulpits, ministers announced that a state of war now existed and their congregations dispersed. A.R.P. and Civil Defence workers hurried to their posts and people rushed into the streets, running for the shelters.

It was merely a practice alarm, but the reality of the situation was dramatically brought home to the inhabitants of Berwick. For the rest of the day, people went about their business and children played near their homes with gas masks slung on their backs.

Early on the morning of September 4th, residents in the Greenses were roused from their beds by a roar and glare of flames in the street. Fearing incendiary bombs had fallen, they rushed into the streets to discover the flames were erupting from a faulty gas light. The alarm was ended by a hefty blow that staved in the leaking pipe.

Because of the confusion resulting from the first alerts, the Chief Warden requested members of the public to visit their local shelters on Sunday, September 10th and talk with the wardens in their sector.

The first aid posts were also opened for inspection, and the fire services, rescue and decontamination squads manned their posts.

SAVE FUEL FOR BATTLE

The War Effort created heavy demands for all types of fuel.

A Fuel Overseer for the Borough had been appointed by the Town Council as early as 6th September, 1939.

Consumers were urged to cut down their use of gas and electricity. The slogan "*Less Gas - More Ships*", accompanied by an illustration of a torpedoed collier, appeared in the local newspapers, drawing attention to the fact that most gas-works and power stations were coal-fired.

Unnecessary travel was discouraged. Railway advertisements advised people to take their holidays at home, as no extra trains would be laid on in the summer or at Christmas-time. Though most stretches of beach in the Borough were closed to public access for most of the War, the Town Council organised activities and events to encourage local people to spend their holidays in the district. The programme included a military boxing tournament and children's sports on the Pier Field, a cricket match between Berwick and the Infantry Training Centre, football on the Stanks and open air dancing to gramophone records in Flagstaff Park.

Petrol rationing led many people to lay up their private cars for the duration of the war. Coupons for petrol were issued only to businessmen, and there was an Order that all motor vehicles must be immobilised when not in use. In 1940, the Exchequer estimated £4,000,000 had been lost from motorists who had not renewed their licences for the year. However, the cycle shops in Berwick benefited from a brisk upturn in business.

BERWICK BRIDGES WERE "DEMOLISHED"

At about 6.30 on the morning of Wednesday, 31st January, 1940, Berwickers were wakened by an explosion that rocked many houses. A mine had drifted into a cave in the cliffs to the north of the town, struck rocks and exploded. Some 200 tons of rock were dislodged from the cliffside and collapsed into the sea.

Later that day, two more mines were washed ashore close by the slipway on the Quayside, but these were safely dealt with by bomb disposal experts. Another mine had beached near Spittal Gas Works on the previous day. The mines had probably broken loose from their moorings during a fierce gale a few days earlier.

On Friday of the same week, the 700 ton Norwegian steamship "Tempo", of Oslo, was sunk by Heinkel bombers off the coast near Berwick. The 14 crew members escaped in two open lifeboats. Several hours later, one of the boats drifted close to the shore in Meadow Haven but capsized in the breakers within sight of the beach, hurling its six occupants into the icy waves. Coastguards and police waded out through the freezing water in an attempt to rescue the hapless sailors. Despite their brave efforts, only two men were brought ashore alive, one of whom died soon after. The Berwick lifeboat and R.A.F. air-sea rescue vessel were alerted and combed the area until they found the other boat with eight more of the crew. The Norwegian survivors spent some time convalescing in Berwick, and were well looked after by the local community.

BERWICK AWAITED GAS ATTACK IN VAIN

The greatest fear was the likelihood of gas attack. Many ex-servicemen living in Berwick had been exposed to phosgene or mustard gas in the trenches during the First World War and it was commonly believed that the Nazis would not hesitate to drop gas-bombs on defenceless civilians.

People were told to carry gas masks at all times. The manager of the cinema in Berwick warned that customers would not be allowed into performances without their respirators.

In the early hours of Wednesday, February 7th, 1940, it appeared that the fears of gas attack were about to be fulfilled. Reports had reached Berwick that Nazi balloons filled with poisonous gas had been released from a ship to drift towards the coast. Civil Defence personnel scanned the horizon for signs of the "*gas carrying*" balloons and the A.R.P. headquarters was besieged by people who had still not been issued with gas masks.

It was a false alarm caused by a harmless weather-observation balloon, released from a meteorological station. As the war progressed, respirators were carried less routinely.

A.R.P. EXERCISE

Within a few weeks of these first real experiences of the effects of the war, Berwick's Civil Defence services held their first full-scale A.R.P. exercise.

Sixteen incidents were staged in various parts of the Borough, and conditions were made more difficult for the emergency services by the "destruction" of the three bridges across the Tweed, severing transport and other communications between the communities to the north and south of the river.

The derelict Spittal Hall Farm was supposed to have been set on fire by incendiary bombs, and a dummy was placed inside the ruined building to represent a trapped victim. Unfortunately, because of delays in communications the house blazed away furiously for about 20 minutes before the Auxiliary Fire Brigade arrived from the Tweedmouth Corporation Depot. By the time the rescue squad entered the building there was no sign of the "casualty", who was therefore presumed to have perished.

A Lewisite blister gas bomb was reported to have fallen in Blakewell Gardens, Tweedmouth. The decontamination squad carried out their work efficiently until they tried to wash away the "gas" from the roadway. The hose was fitted to the hydrant but it was then discovered that a special key was required to turn the water on!

The exercise had revealed some fundamental faults in the system, but lessons were learned that would serve the town well when the real bombs began to fall.

SALVAGE

We may think "*recycling*" is a modern concept, but salvage of waste materials was vital to ensure the most efficient use of raw materials and a reduction in imported goods.

In February, 1940, the Town Council resolved to begin collection of waste paper from households in the Borough.

In July, the salvage scheme was extended to metals, textiles, bottles and household bones and, on August 1st, the *Berwick Journal* announced that Berwick housewives were being asked to concentrate on the collection of food waste. It was explained that 1,000 houses could be expected to provide one ton of edible kitchen waste each week and that this would be sufficient to feed 40 pigs.

Women, schoolchildren, Boy Scouts and Girl Guides in the Borough also helped by collecting a variety of natural products from the local hedgerows: foxglove, coltsfoot and nettle leaves, rose-hips and horse-chestnuts were all required by the Northumberland County Herb Committee for the manufacture of drugs and medicines.

Metals such as aluminium, copper, iron and lead were essential to the production of war materials. Salvage of old pots and pans, tins and other redundant household goods met part of the need but, in the late summer of 1940, the Order came to remove all non-essential iron railings from public and private properties.

Fences were taken away from the public parks and cemeteries, and from outside municipal buildings and private houses.

At the same time the Town Council determined to scrap the old guns that had stood on the Walls for decades. Only one, the Russian gun captured in the Crimean War, was to be kept.

The fact that the Russian cannon still keeps guard on the Walls today is despite the objection of one councillor at the time: "*Why single only one gun out?*" he asked, "*Why should any exception be made between the Russian gun and our own? Let no matter of sentiment enter. Why retain this eyesore in the way of a Russian piece? Sentiment, baa! Scrap the lot, I say.*"

But it was saved and the other twelve guns sent for salvage fetched £59 towards the national War Effort.

THE LDV AND THE HOME GUARD - BERWICK MEN RUSH TO JOIN DEFENCE CORPS

On the evening of Tuesday, 14th May, 1940 the War Office called for the formation of the Local Defence Volunteers, to counter the potential threat from enemy parachute troops. 18 Berwick men came forward to join the new force on the first night, and the number had risen to 220 within a week.

The L.D.V. became the Home Guard in July, 1940.

Smart observation by a Home Guard lieutenant led to the recapture of an Italian prisoner of war at West Ord, on Sunday, 11th April, 1941. The man had escaped from a farm near Duns and made his way to Berwick. Although he was wearing clothing that clearly identified him as a prisoner of war, no-one had noticed him until the lieutenant spotted him sitting on a seat by the road. The police were summoned and the prisoner, a sailor of the Italian Navy, was questioned with the help of a naturalised Italian living in Berwick.

Two weeks later, the Home Guard took part in their first St. George's Day parade to Berwick Parish Church, filling the role traditionally played by the local battalion of the Royal Northumberland Fusiliers. The smartness of the Home Guard men was widely commented upon as they marched down Marygate after the service, with red and white roses fixed in their forage caps.

Later in the War, the R.A.F. had a presence in Berwick too. In March 1941, huts were erected on the Carr Rock to act as a base for two air-sea rescue boats. The vessels took part in several missions to search for crews of aircraft ditched in the waters off Berwick and Spittal. These included at least two Beaufighters, a Mosquito and an American Flying Fortress.

In 1942, the town's unique geographical situation resulted in the Infantry Training Centre being moved from the control of Scottish Command into the hands of Northern Command. The lowland Scottish regiments were replaced by northern English troops of the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, Lancashire Fusiliers and West Yorks Regiment.

New fears of invasion in 1942 led to further additions to the town's defences. A gun emplacement was built at the end of Spittal Promenade and a boom was constructed at the Old Bridge to prevent small enemy craft passing through.

In the summer of 1943, two privates of the district's Home Guard were commended by the G.O.C. Northern Command for risking their lives in dragging an R.A.F. pilot from his blazing aircraft, which had crashed near Beal.

In the months before D-Day, new units arrived including the Glasgow Highlanders, Royal Welch Fusiliers, Somerset Light Infantry and the Devonshire Regiment.

On June 4th, 1944, a number of specially trained Berwick Home Guard commandoes travelled to the Isle of Wight, under secret orders to help guard against enemy attempts to disrupt preparations for the Normandy Invasion.

The Home Guard was "stood down" in the autumn of 1944. On Sunday November 26th, 800 members of the 1st Battalion, Northumberland Home Guard attended a short service in Berwick Parish Church, then marched in their final parade through the town to the Corn Exchange, led by the Military Band of the I.T.C.

MAKE DO AND MEND - RUSH TO BUY SILK STOCKINGS

To cut down on the use of limited production resources and raw materials, the government was anxious to encourage an attitude of "*make do and mend*". The local papers were full of useful advice:

- With so many of the new styles featuring two distinct colours in their make-up, here is a good means of turning two shabby frocks into a smart new one. Use contrasting colours, making a skirt of shaped panels in the alternate colours, then use sleeves of one kind, with the rest of the bodice of another. This will give you a smart new frock.
- It is rumoured that high heels will have to go out of fashion. These heels are mostly of wood, and this is not to be allowed to the makers for this purpose. So, it follows that more "serviceable" heels will have to be the order of the day.
- If you have several toothbrushes, it is a good plan to use them alternately. And, when the weather is fine, it is a good plan to lay all the toothbrushes you can find about in the sun for the best part of the day. You will find that, if this can be done at least once a week, the toothbrushes will last almost twice as long.
- Should you wish to dim an electric light bulb and have a balloon handy, you will find this very effective. The top of the balloon can be cut off, the balloon itself drawn tightly over the lamp bulb, and secured in place with a small elastic or rubber band. This will dim the light most effectively.

Queues were the order of the day. People learned to queue for virtually everything. By the end of the war, a local press correspondent remarked, "*queueitis*" had become a widespread malady: As soon as news spread of the arrival of new stocks of goods, or imminent shortages of others, queues began to form. It was even suggested that some people queued without even knowing what they were queuing for! The correspondent joined one queue of four people waiting for cigarettes. Within 10 minutes the queue had grown to 18 persons, and 35 minutes later it had increased to 46. One man in the queue informed the correspondent: "*These here women start queues simply to gossip!*"

Rationing of most clothing and footwear, and the general shortages of material, resulted in changes in fashion. "*Utility garments*" were introduced for men and women, cut to styles that required a minimum amount of cloth, ornamentation and stitching work. James Park, a local shoe retailer, was advising customers to "*Save Points - Buy Clogs!*"

Rationing did not come to an end with the cessation of hostilities. Into the early 1950s, the United Kingdom continued to suffer shortages of many goods, and Ration Books and Coupons disappeared.

HOW TO EAT WISELY IN WARTIME

To promote national self-sufficiency, Rationing was rapidly introduced for many food and other items. Householders had to register with food retailers, Ration Books were issued, and sale of most foodstuffs was governed by a system of Coupons or "*Points*".

As early as February, 1940, Berwick experienced a shortage of beef and pork. Only eight cattle had been allocated for Berwick that month and butchers agreed to close their shops every Monday. Official meat rationing was introduced on March 11th, 1940. Adults were to be allowed 1s 10d worth and children 11d worth per week.

A year later, in April 1941, The Ministry of Food required a reduction of one seventh in the consumption of liquid milk, in order that supplies could be diverted to the manufacture of cheese and condensed milk. In many towns a "*milkless day*" was introduced. There was no fixed "*milkless day*" in Berwick: each dairyman arranged their own to suit themselves and their customers. Children taking milk in school, patients in hospitals, nursing mothers and persons requiring milk for special diets were exempted from the new restrictions. The Berwick "*milkless day*" scheme was abandoned after only a few weeks' operation, because crafty householders took advantage of a "loop-hole" in the regulations, under which deliveries of one pint or less per day were not affected. Instead of taking all their milk from one dairyman, therefore coming under the rationing order, many Berwickers ordered one pint each day from two or more milkmen. Far from reducing consumption, deliveries of milk in the Berwick district actually increased! Rationing of milk and sugar led, in September 1942, to the banning of the manufacture of ice-cream. This was a blow for several businesses in the traditional holiday resorts.

Today, we take for granted the easy availability of fruits and vegetables from all, over the worlds, whatever the time of year. Even before the War, and for two decades afterwards, availability was determined by season. In the 1940s, however, the situation was much worse. Those who had no access to home-produce were at the mercy of the fluctuations of supply and demand. In June, 1941, for instance, the price of tomatoes had grown to as much as 7s. a pound (*35p*). A controlled price of 1s 5d a pound (*approximately 7p*) was introduced on Monday, June 23rd, and greengrocers' shops were besieged by housewives anxious to buy before stocks were exhausted. There were struggles in some shops, and one fruiterer had to clear his shop and close the door.

With fuel and materials for the War Effort being given priority on the beleaguered Atlantic convoys, imported fruit such as oranges and bananas were rarely to be seen. At a charity auction held in Berwick in April, 1943, four oranges, four bananas and a lemon were sold for the grand sum of £6 10s. The purchaser said he had made the successful bid so his 3-year-old daughter could see a banana for the first time.

The Ministry of Food produced a wealth of helpful suggestions on how to make the most of what food was available. Housewives were encouraged to make use of "*precious crusts*" and not to throw away the vegetable water. "*Potato Pete*", "*Clara Carrot*" and other cartoon characters appeared in advertisements to promote home-produced foods.

Nationally-known brands disappeared temporarily from the grocers' shelves in some areas, as a zoning system was introduced for some products. "*Soon I'll Return!*" announced the advertisement for Shredded Wheat, in the same issue of the *Berwick Journal* where it was proclaimed that "*Total War demands the withdrawal of Golden Shred.*"

GROW BEANS AND SAVE POINTS

From the very beginning of the war, there was an urgent need for the country to become self-sufficient in food production. The English have always been known for their love of gardening, and the government intended to turn this into a practical tool for the war effort. "*Dig For Victory*" was one wartime phrase that became established in the English language.

Many of Berwick's inhabitants were Corporation tenants in the newly-built housing estates on the outskirts of the town. One of the first actions of the Town Council under wartime conditions was to relax the restrictions on what their tenants could do on their property. In October, 1939, consent was given for the front gardens of Council houses to be cultivated for food production. Tenants who did not properly manage their gardens were sent warning letters: if they would not cultivate the land, their gardens would be given to others who would.

In July, 1940, Council tenants were given permission to keep pigs, poultry and rabbits on their property, subject to health and hygiene considerations.

With the Atlantic convoys suffering terribly from U-Boat attack, it became even more necessary to produce food at home. In January, 1941, the Town Council called a meeting to form an Allotments Society in the Borough. A list was drawn up of suitable areas that could be turned over to cultivation, including the old Bowling Green in front of the Governor's House and parts of the Council's recreation grounds. The Corporation Gardener was instructed to cultivate a model allotment garden to be open for inspection by allotment holders.

In March, 1941, a Certificate of Merit was introduced to be awarded for the best-kept gardens and allotments in the Borough.

BREAK

NAZI DAY RAIDER SNEAKS IN FROM SEA

Berwick-upon-Tweed can claim to have been one of the first towns in England to suffer an air raid in the Second World War.

Early on the morning of Saturday July 20th, 1940, a lone German bomber dived from a great height above Berwick, flattened out and headed for the Barracks. The raider dropped a stick of four bombs before making his escape, pursued by two R.A.F. Spitfires.

Fortunately, the bombs landed harmlessly on the Magdalene Fields and the Stanks, outside the ramparts. Inquisitive children and grown-ups soon arrived on the spot to claim shrapnel fragments as souvenirs.

In August, 300 German aircraft set course for a rendezvous point off the Farne Islands. This large force, the Luftwaffe's only attempted mass raid on the North East of England, was dispersed by R.A.F. fighters before they reached the coast.

Over the next few months, construction began of new public shelters in Berwick. Existing arrangements included the use of old icehouses and cellars in various parts of the town, as well as concrete-lined trenches on the Magdalene Fields, Billendean Road and Meadow Fields, Tweedmouth. More shelters were now being built, two at the Railway station and two at the Cattle Market, each to hold up to 50 persons.

Some companies, such as Boots Pure Drug Co. and Ralph Dodds & Son, sought permission to install bomb-proof rooms for their staff on their own premises. The Town Council, too, proposed to construct a shelter behind the Municipal Buildings to protect their employees.

BERWICK'S FIRST AIR RAID CASUALTIES

In April, 1941, the Town Council was planning to add baffle walls to strengthen the sculleries in Council houses, and to build domestic shelters on the Billendean, Highfields and Tweedmouth housing estates.

On April 28th, before any action had been taken, a Junkers 88 flew in from the sea past Berwick Lighthouse, almost skimming the waves. The pilot rose over Spittal and shut off his engines before raking the streets with machine-gun fire and then dropping a number of bombs on houses and commercial premises at the north end of the village.

The North East War Diary recorded:

15.43.. Northumberland.. Spittal.. Aircraft machine-gunned gun site of 310 Coastal Battery, Royal Artillery. Four HE dropped. Two in sea. One exploded in the Mill of Johnson and Darling Ltd after passing through four gas-chambers in the North of England Chemical Works, Sandstell Road, Spittal. Fourth bomb on common between East Street and Main Street. One person seriously injured, fifteen suffered shock and cuts; all treated at Spittal First Aid Post. Nine taken to and detained at Berwick Infirmary. Damage to North of England Chemical Works, Johnson and Darling's Manure Works, J.J. Cunningham's Manure Works. Nine dwelling houses badly damaged, seventy houses and seventeen shops with window and roof damage, nineteen other buildings damaged. Three windows broken at Spittal Police Station

The bomb that landed on Johnson and Darling's chemical works exploded a few feet from where four men were working on a gangway some 30 feet above the ground. The gangway collapsed and the men were flung in all directions, fortunately sustaining only minor injuries.

The other bomb landed close to a garage in Main Street where a mechanic was working beneath a car. He was unhurt, but a car nearby was riddled with machine-gun bullets.

Most of the windows of St. Paul's Church were blown out by the force of the explosions.

The raider sped up Billendean Road towards Askew Crescent, still firing his guns, before disappearing out to sea as quickly as he had come, under cover of low cloud.

"FIREBOMB FRITZ " WILL COME AGAIN

Eight days later it was Berwick's turn.

In the moonlit hours before dawn on May 6th, 1941, a single German bomber approached the sleeping town and released a rain of high explosive and incendiary bombs over the area from Church Street to Pier Road. One high explosive bomb smashed into a field behind Castle Terrace, causing little damage, but it was the lower part of the town that suffered worst.

A police sergeant used sand to extinguish the first incendiary, which had fallen in the police station yard. Another set light to the upper floor of T. C. Smith & Sons, Solicitors, on the opposite side of Church Street, but the fire was quickly extinguished.

More fire-bombs fell in the backyards of houses in Woolmarket and Ravensdowne, and civilians worked alongside the fire, police and A.R.P. services to fight the many small fires that sprang up.

One couple living in Woolmarket failed to be woken by the noise and confusion, and went into their yard later in the morning to find a burned out incendiary.

A bomb that landed in an awkward position on the roof of the school-house in Palace Street was removed by a fireman using his bare hands.

The worst threat, however, was caused by half a dozen incendiaries that set light to the roofs of some lock-up garages in Ness Street. Local residents used stirrup pumps to prevent the flames from spreading until the auxiliary firemen arrived and extinguished the fire.

The efficient co-operation between the public and Civil Defence services in tackling the emergency prompted the Chief Constable of Northumberland to congratulate the citizens of Berwick for their actions.

NAZI BOMBS FELL ON HOUSING ESTATE

Eleven people were to lose their lives during the next visit by a lone Nazi raider. The attack came early on the morning of Tuesday, June 3rd, 1941:

02.30.. Northumberland.. Four HEs Sunnyside Crescent, Spittal. Early reports say seven children trapped in house. Twenty men of the King's Own Scottish Borderers sent by Lt Col Anderson to assist - not asked for but accepted. 1st bomb - direct hit on 7/9 Sunnyside Crescent. 2nd bomb - roadway outside 11/13 Sunnyside Crescent. 3rd bomb - direct hit on 40/42 Sunnyside Crescent. 4th bomb - gardens in front of 44/46 Sunnyside Crescent. Final figures eleven dead, ten injured and treated at Berwick First Aid Post, two of them sent to Berwick Infirmary. Five houses demolished, seven uninhabitable and evacuated, one hundred houses slightly damaged, some with roof and ceiling damage, others windows only. Report of final body recovered at 10.50.

The 'plane flew so low that the noise of the engines shook the houses beneath.

The intended target may have been the railway junction and the viaducts in Tweedmouth, but the bombs fell on the recently-built houses in Billendean.

Several properties were reduced to rubble, killing eleven people and injuring many more.

The rescue squads told of many examples of individuals' courage as they worked to extricate trapped victims.

A 67 year old man was one of the first people on the scene to help. A pet budgerigar was saved from the wreckage of one property. A short distance away, an 11 year old boy calmly comforted his mother as they both lay covered with debris in the ruins of their home. Both were rescued but, in the adjoining house, the woman's mother, father and uncle were all killed.

In another bombed house, a mother flung herself over her 5 year old son, saving his life though her own was lost.

The worst damage was inflicted on Farne Road and Sunnyside Crescent. Some families lost everything, while others had to leave their homes until repairs were carried out to make them habitable again. People picked about in the rubble, hoping to salvage pieces of furniture and personal effects.

That week's Berwick Advertiser described the attack:

NIGHT VISIT OF ENEMY PLANE. FATAL CASUALTIES IN NORTH EAST COAST TOWN. MAGNIFICENT WORK BY SERVICES

In the early hours of Tuesday a North East Coast town had a surprise visit from a lone enemy raider who dropped some bombs right in the middle of a housing site, demolishing several of the houses and damaging others. There were several casualties, including some fatal ones and one whole family was wiped out. There were many miraculous escapes and a pet budgerigar was got out of the ruins of one house safe and sound in his cage, apparently none the worse for the experience. It was still dark at the time of the visit of the raider. The ARP Services were, however, early on the scene and their work was magnificent and within a few hours the fatal casualties were extricated, the minor casualties and shock cases had been taken to the First Aid Posts for attention, the Rest and Feeding Centre for the area had been opened and children were put to bed waiting for their breakfast.

The wrecked houses were just a mass of rubble and broken timber, the craters telling their own tale of the havoc wrought by the enemy. Neighbours were all anxious to help and thankful at their own good fortune to be alive. Normal activities were carried on, meals prepared and soon the morning delivery of rolls from a nearby bakery was welcomed as just a matter of daily routine.....

The raid caused much damage, baths, beds and furniture of all kinds being scattered all over the place.

A WVS Mobile Canteen was soon on the spot supplying people with snacks. Hot tea supplied by householders was gratefully accepted by the men of the Rescue squads.

Much sympathy was felt for those who had been rendered homeless and to the relatives of those who had been killed.

Mr J.W. Wood whose house was only a few yards from where one of the bombs fell told a Press representative : "There was the sound of an enemy plane overhead. Shortly after I heard bombs screaming down. When they exploded the blast blew me completely over. I went out as quickly as I could and was on the scene rescuing the inhabitants of the nearby houses within three minutes "

The hero of the raid was a 67 year old man, Thomas Drummond, who was one of the first on the scene. He did a lot to get various people out from under the debris. He was assisted by Mr P.Lough...

A young lad, Frank Patterson, whose house was also badly damaged, was lying in bed at the time but slept through the whole incident. The first he knew of the raid was when his mother came and wakened him.

Mr J. Patterson who is 80 years old, heard the plane coming over very low. He heard the swish of the bombs as they fell and saw the flash as they struck the ground. The next thing he knew was that part of the ceiling and part of the roof had fallen. Two large bricks were lying near him and glass was scattered all over the floor.

Mrs Patterson and her daughter, who were lying in a box bed downstairs when the bombs dropped, were saved from injury from splinters and shrapnel by the box sides of the bed.

Mr J. Wilson said that everything happened so quickly that no one knew exactly what was happening. He said that he heard the bombs falling. He lay down and hoped for the best.

Mr & Mrs Frank Anderson heard the enemy plane coming so low that the sound of the engines shook the house. They heard the bombs falling and jumped. When the bombs fell part of the ceiling of their house fell in and their daughter who was in the next room screamed. On looking into the room, they found a large part of the roof had been carried away and a large coping stone was lying on the floor quite near her.

For the third time in less than six weeks, enemy bombs had been dropped without any warning being sounded. It was also being realised that almost all the air raid shelters were situated in the old parts of the town, while nearly half the population was now living in the new estates on the northern and southern outskirts. These brick-built houses afforded little protection for their occupants.

To make matters worse, the national authorities refused to supply free indoor Morrison table shelters to low-waged households in category 'C' areas, even though Berwick was proving far from being a "safe zone".

On July 11th, the Town Clerk received a letter from the Vice-President of the Business and Professional Women's Club complaining: *"We have little or no protection against air attack - can nothing be done? Could our mayor not go forth and to plead our cause? We have no anti-aircraft gun. I believe we have three Spitfires to our name, but what of that if there is nothing to protect us when 'Jerry' comes along?"*

The Mayor fully appreciated the situation, but the Borough would suffer more casualties before the seriousness of the threat was understood by higher authorities.

Raids were also taking place on several places in the neighbouring district. For instance, one night in September, 1941, anti-personnel bombs rained down on Norham. A six year old evacuee from Wallsend had a narrow escape when a piece of shrapnel came through the roof of the room where he was sleeping, pierced his pillow and lodged itself in the floor.

On November 21st, 1941, a Berwick-bound train was strafed and bombed as it stood in Goswick Station. Several people were injured and six families were made homeless as nearby houses were wrecked.

FATAL CASUALTIES IN RAID ON N.E. COASTAL TOWN

The next attack came in the early hours of Bank Holiday Monday, August 4th, 1941. Again a 'plane swooped in low from the sea without any warning being given, then flew round over Spittal for several minutes before dropping its lethal load.

Sunday, 3rd/Monday, 4th August 1941 N701

00.28.. Northumberland.. Two HEs Main Street, Spittal [NU005519]. Six dead (two men, three women and one boy). Two bodies thrown over 100 yards. Three seriously injured (one man, two women) (two severe shock and one compound fracture of the leg) to Berwick Infirmary. Eight others (four men, three women and one boy) attended Spittal First Aid Post. 9 and 9A Main Street demolished, three others to be demolished, twelve dwelling houses temporarily uninhabitable, one hundred dwelling houses damaged. Three Public Houses damaged (Red Lion severely damaged). Severe damage to Allan's Garage. Windows and doors of St Paul's Presbyterian Church blown in. Doors blown off mills of Johnson and Darling, East Street, Spittal. Roofs of J.J. Cunningham, East Street damaged by blast. The siren had not sounded, which was causing concern among a number of people. Report of UXB in Gibsons Row – large evacuation - report later discredited.

The destruction was greatest in Main Street, Middle Street and Sandstell Road. Six people were killed on this occasion, including a 70 year old man and his 12 year old son.

8th AUGUST 1941

There was to be little respite. Four days later, Spittal was revisited by a lone bomber, whose actual target may again have been the railway line.

Friday, 8th August 1941

03.40.. Northumberland.. Two HEs Askew Crescent, Tweedmouth. (Junction Billendean Road/North Road). A fourteen year old girl, killed (head injuries), two slightly injured (one man, one woman). All persons accounted for.

04.15.. Northumberland.. Tweedmouth.. One house destroyed, one badly damaged, thirty damaged. Gas, water, electricity supplies damaged. Billendean Road blocked. Two Naval Patrol boats in Tweedmouth Dock opened fire with machine-guns at an enemy plane, which then attempted to bomb the boats.

The Station Cottages and nearby sawmills and school suffered substantial damage. Other bombs fell in Sunnyside Crescent and Askew Crescent, where a 14 year old schoolgirl received fatal injuries when a direct hit demolished the gable end of her home.

Other residents of the area were more fortunate. One blinded veteran of the First World War was shielded from the blast by his wife. Within a few hours he was fit enough to return to his work shed in the garden.

Another man had a lucky escape because he had decided to change bedrooms after having a presentiment that "*something was going to happen*". He escaped unscathed from his wrecked home, though his usual room was totally destroyed.

On August 16th, a consignment of bricks arrived from Scremerston Colliery Brickworks for the long-promised shelters and baffle walls to protect the residents on the Billendean, Tweedmouth and Highfields estates.

At last the authorities were ready to acknowledge the danger faced by the citizens of Berwick, and it was re-categorised as a "*sensitive area*" on September 3rd, 1941.

A further raid took place on November 10th, when bombs were dropped on Marshall Meadows, a little to the north of the army camp. Some damage was caused to a farm and a country house being used as an isolation hospital.

Perhaps this prompted Northumberland County Council to propose plans for twelve new 50-person brick and concrete shelters in the Borough, to be situated at Highfields, Low Greens, Blakewell Gardens Osborne Crescent, West End, and at Askew Crescent and Albion Place, Spittal.

MACHINE-GUN AND BOMB ATTACKS ON N.E. TOWN

The New Year began badly for Berwick. On 4th January 1942, a daylight raider took advantage of low cloud to make a sustained attack on several parts of the town.

Sunday, 4th January 1942 D855

10.50.. Tweedmouth.. Four died, five injured, one seriously at Station Cottages, Tweedmouth during a daylight attack with HE and machine-guns. Railway lines were damaged and water, gas and electricity supplies affected.

The 'plane flew in slowly from the coast, low enough for the Swastika markings to be clearly seen from the ground.

People making their way to church dived for cover as machine-gun bullets spattered the streets in the northern suburbs of Berwick and some houses in Highfields suffered minor damage.

Passengers on a bus were saved from serious injury by the prompt action of the driver. As the raider came overhead, firing spasmodic bursts from his machine-guns, the bus driver stopped his vehicle and warned his passengers to take shelter under the seats. Bullets raked the road on either side of the stationary bus.

Then the raider turned to the west, circling to renew the attack from a different angle. Bombs scored a direct hit on Station Cottages, completely demolishing one house and killing four people, including a school attendance officer.

The railway station buildings, Tweedmouth School, Allan Brothers' woodyard, the fire station and other properties in the Northumberland Road, Shielfield and Mount Road area suffered considerable damage.

Traffic on the railway line was diverted for some time while repairs were made.

Spittal was targeted again around noon on Tuesday, 20th January.

Tuesday, 20th January 1942 D871

12.05.. Northumberland.. Berwick.. Bombs at Spittal wrecking two houses and damaging twenty others, six of them badly. Damage was done to gas, water mains and telephone wires. The chemical works of Johnston and Darling suffered considerably. There were six casualties, three of them fatal.

The raider approached Spittal at very low level, so quickly that few people realised the raid was taking place until it was all over.

It flew in almost level with the house-tops, and one man who did see the whole incident remarked: *"A good rifle shot could have put paid to him once and for all."*

The 'plane strafed the streets with machine-gun fire, then banked sharply to the right before releasing its stick of bombs on houses at the north end of Main Street, Sandstell Road and the chemical works. Two houses in Sandstell Road were demolished and two women and a man were killed.

The last raid on the Borough took place on the evening of Tuesday, 10th February, 1942.

**Tuesday, 10th/Wednesday, 11th February 1942 N892
Tweedmouth.. One enemy plane penetrated inland in Northumberland where bombs were dropped at Tweedmouth. Some houses were damaged and three people injured. There was also a temporary suspension of traffic on the LNER line.**

Silhouetted against a starry sky, a single bomber flew in from the sea to make a swift hit-and-run attack on the Tweedmouth railway yards.

Two bombs fell harmlessly in a field, though the explosions caused some damage to the station workshops and some houses in Billendean Road, Tower Road and Kiln Hill.

A third bomb made a sizeable crater in the road, disrupting traffic for a while.

Several people had narrow escapes from injury. One girl was knocked from her chair by the blast and a bracelet was blown from her arm, but she escaped unscathed. An air raid warden was blinded temporarily by a blast of hot air and blown backwards along a passage into the street. Splinters and shrapnel were blown through the door and windows of a nearby house and buried themselves in the walls, though no-one inside was hurt.

The following month, construction of the twelve new air-raid shelters was begun, and they were ready for use, at last, in June, 1942. But there were to be no more raids on Berwick.

The Borough had endured eleven attacks in all. 25 people had been killed and 47 wounded: 25 houses were demolished and almost 1,000 damaged.

In comparison with many English towns more noted for having suffered from enemy action, the casualties and damage inflicted on Berwick was probably among the highest in terms of percentage of population and property.

FOOD SUPPLIES FOR VE DAY

The Ministry of Food is confident that food traders, having served the public well throughout the war years, will provide a service during the V Holiday that will enable the public to obtain their essential minimum food supplies.

The Ministry makes the following suggestions to food retailers and housewives:-

GROCERS should remain open on VE-Day for at least one hour after the Victory announcement has been made and, if possible, two hours. If VE Day is a Friday grocers should open on Saturday and close on Monday, but grocers selling bread and milk should act also in according with the following paragraphs.

DAIRYMEN are expected to deliver milk on both VE Days just as they normally do on Good Friday or a Bank Holiday.

BAKERS should make arrangements in advance to ensure that after the announcement bread will be made and delivered to private houses and retail shops in sufficient quantities to provide at least for normal requirements.

Wherever possible bakers should in addition make bread as usual for sale on VE + 1 Day and on this day to open their shops for one hour or possible two hours for the sale of bread only.

SHOPS SELLING PERISHABLE GOODS should remain open on VE Day long enough after the official announcement to ensure that perishable goods are not wasted..

RESTAURANTS AND CAFES are expected to be open on both VE Days.

BERWICK ADVERTISER May 17 1945

VE-DAY IN THE DISTRICT

Church Services and Other Celebrations

HOW BERWICK CELEBRATED

Residents of Kiln Hill held a party in the Mitchell Memorial Hall, on Tuesday, and residents of Osborne Road had a party in St. Bartholemew's Church Hall on Wednesday, and residents of Mill Strand also had a party.

A bonfire was lit on the green at Middle Street, Spittal, on VE Day.

Residents of Farne Road and Sunnyside Crescent, Tweedmouth, had a fancy dress party in Tweedmouth Modern School hall on Wednesday.

The evening service at Berwick Parish Church on VE Day was well attended, among the congregation being the Mayor and Sheriff, members of the Town Council and Borough Officials.

On VE plus 1 night a party was held in West Street, Berwick, when young people joined in with the older people in the celebrations. One veteran of the last war told a "Journal" Reporter that the celebrations of the last war did not touch the revelry on this occasion.

There was dancing in the Highfields Estate and an open-air concert and dancing in Blakewell Gardens, Tweedmouth.

There was dancing in Berwick High Street on VE Day night and also on Wednesday night, to music by Stott's radio.

A visitor to Berwick from Edinburgh said that taking everything into consideration, Berwick was better decorated than that city.

Some youths got possession of some fireworks and let them off in the street.

A specially fine patriotic display was to be seen in the windows of the residence of Major A. Tower Robertson, D.L, in Ravensdowne and one window bore the words: "*Bravo to our brave Seamen, Soldiers and Airmen - Hurrah.*"

Silver Street had a particularly fine display of streamers. There was a fine display of the flags of the different nations at the Coastguard Station.

After midnight on Wednesday while the dancers were enjoying themselves in front of the Town Hall, the peal of bells was rung.

VE Day was celebrated in many ways. Several householders observed the day to dismantle their indoor table shelters. One Tweedmouth family toasted the end of the war in Europe as their shelter was dismantled. They had used it every night until that day.

BERWICK ADVERTISER August 23 1945

NORTH NORTHUMBERLAND CELEBRATES THE END OF THE WAR

The long awaited end of the war was celebrated on Wednesday with the universal manifestations of rejoicing and deep-seated feelings of relief. The war cloud had lifted and there was everywhere an indication of the realisation of the fact. The end of suspense and the re-emergence of hopefulness and assurance after the strain and stress of the war years, were shown in a variety of ways, according to age and temperament. There was a considerable amount of demonstration, largely on the part of the more youthful members of the population, but the immediate re-action to the great news was one of sober satisfaction and relief.

At Berwick quite a number of people sat up on Tuesday night to hear the midnight news in anticipation of Japan's surrender being made then, and they were not disappointed. Immediately after rockets were fired off at Berwick and Tweedmouth.

Rang Victory Peal

Among those listening in to midnight news was the Mayor (Coun. F. Stott). Along with his son, Mr F. Stott, Jun., he went and wakened Mr C. Manderston, Berwick's bellringer, and his wife, and with their aid rang the Victory peal of bells from the Town Hall. Soon there was cheering and singing in the streets and people wakened from their sleep got up and partly dressed and gathered with the large crowd already in the High Street. A number of women were only clad in night attire and coats. Some could be seen with their curlers still in their hair.

Music, Dancing, Bonfire

Music supplied by the amplifier of Messrs F. Stott and Son, was soon started and many in the crowd joined in dancing.

A fire was lit in front of the Town Hall, and amid cheering and singing, the repeated bangs of fireworks were heard. A number of rockets were also set off in front of the Town Hall, and these thrilled the many youngsters, who had never seen rockets before.

The premises of the "*Berwick Journal*" and the "*Berwickshire News*" in Hide Hill were floodlit, and the letter "V" in front of the premises, was lit up with coloured electric bulbs. Together with the many flags, the whole presented a fine spectacle, and was much admired.

Housewives Out Early

The celebrations in the High Street continued until 3 a.m. but until about 4.30 parties of young people paraded the streets singing and setting off fireworks.

Early on VJ Day the streets were crowded with people, and had the usual holiday appearance. There were queues at bakers' shops and grocery stores, and also at shops selling flags and fireworks. Housewives had not had the same warning as at the end of the European War, and there was some little anxiety in making domestic provision against two days of suspension of business.

Weather Breaks Down

A curious effect of weather made its own contribution to a very remarkable day. Shortly after midday, the sky suddenly darkened, and heavy rain began to fall. It was almost as if nature had sought to enforce a reminder of the darker aspect of the experience through which the world had passed.

SAVINGS SCHEMES - STAMP YOUR WAY TO VICTORY

Berwickers had played their part in the War Effort, at home and abroad

More than £2,000,000 in War Savings was raised by the Berwick local Savings Committee from the inception of the savings campaign in March, 1939, to VE Day in May, 1945.

Various themes were exploited during the War Savings campaign, such as "*War Weapons Week*", "*Wings for Victory*". "*Tanks for Attack*", "*Salute the Soldiers Week*" and "*Warship Week*".

In August, 1941, Berwick was visited by a column of Matilda and Covenanter tanks as part of the "*Speed the Tanks*" campaign. The crews were given a civic reception in front of the Town Hall and the public were invited to inspect the tanks before they proceeded on a tour of the town, accompanied by the Fire Service, Air Raid Wardens and St. John Ambulance Brigade, and led by a pipe band.

During "*Warship Week*" in February, 1942, the people of Berwick invested over £83,000. This was more than sufficient to meet the cost of an armed trawler-minesweeper, H.M.T. Hazel. The Hazel, a 515 ton trawler of the Tree Class, had been built in 1940 and had a complement of four officers and 25 men of the Royal Naval Reserve. The vessel visited the Port of Berwick later in the War.

Berwick also raised funds to pay for a squadron of 12 bombers, several Spitfires and a destroyer.

Smaller contributions collected by Street Savings Groups had a part to play, too.

BERWICK ADVERTISER July 29 1943

Six Sons In The Services

Berwick Family's Proud Record

The Army, Air Force and Royal Navy are represented in the family of Mr and the late Mrs Andrew Purves, 29 East Street, Berwick, whose six sons are all on service.

John, the eldest son, is a Corporal in the R.N.F. Educated at Berwick British School, he joined the R.N.F. shortly after leaving school. He served for a number of years as instructor in a Military School in India. On leaving the Army he was employed as a porter in a block of London flats. On the outbreak of this war he rejoined his old regiment. A keen footballer, he has taken part in many matches with various clubs. He is married, and his wife belongs to Newcastle.

The next son, Alex. is serving as a Sapper in the Royal Engineers. After leaving school, he joined the Royal Engineers and served for seven years with them. On the completion of service he returned to Berwick, and was employed as a painter with the Berwick Corporation. At outbreak of war he rejoined his former regiment, and is at present on service in the Middle East. His wife belongs to Ford, and he has one son.

Farmed In Canada

Andrew joined the Cameron Highlanders on the outbreak of war, and saw service in India. He was discharged some time ago, on medical grounds, and is now a full-time Home Guard. Educated in Berwick he left shortly after for Canada, where he farmed for 16 years. He is married, and has a family of two sons. After completing seven years' service, he returned to Berwick, where he was employed as a conductor with the United Bus Company.

James is a Corporal in the R.A.F. He was educated at the British School, like his brothers, and joined the R.A.F. when quite young.

Royal Navy Represented

The Royal Navy is represented by Henry, who joined six years before the war broke out. He has seen service in China, Africa, and in the Mediterranean. He went to the Bell Tower Senior School, and was a prominent member of the Church Lads' Brigade of Berwick Parish Church. Married, his wife is a native of Chirnside.

The youngest son, Douglas, aged 19, is serving with the R.A.F. Air Sea Rescue Service. He joined up two years ago. After leaving Bell Tower Senior School, he was employed as a messenger with the United Bus Company at Berwick. Before joining the R.A.F. he was a member of Berwick Air Training Corps (1016) Squadron.