

EAST BRIDGFORD in WARTIME

World War 1 1914-1918

With the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand of Austria in the city of Sarajevo on 28th June 1914, Europe was plunged into the world's first great war, the so-called war to end all wars. From towns and villages from all corners of the land, young men rushed to join the colours. As the war progressed and the stalemate of trench warfare took its toll, a poster campaign to raise troops for the western front read thus: "*Your Country Needs You!*"

On the home front in East Bridgford the reality of the War was experienced when many men from the Parish left their families to join the fight. The East Bridgford Magazine brought monthly news of the wounded or the sad loss of someone killed in action.

"The sad news has reached us of the death of Herbert Richards, Sapper R.E. He was with the forces in the Dardanelles, and died of wounds received during the performance of some very important operations on May 25th. He was 23 years old and leaves a widow."

Sometimes better news was reported.

"The welcome news has been received that Second Lieutenant Richard Milward, reported missing on February 17th and believed to be killed, is now alive and safe. He was buried in a trench for some hours and eventually taken out and made a prisoner by the Germans, who, we are glad to learn, behaved very kindly to him."

Meanwhile, women were drafted onto the farms to help fill the gaps left by the men going to fight. Food was rationed on a voluntary basis in March 1917. This was the first conflict in which ordinary people were to be caught up in the war. In March 1916, the Parish Council put out the following notice, which should be attended to by all inhabitants:

1. *All householders are earnestly requested to have no lights outside, and to shade all lights in their houses for the present, owing to the possibility of visits from Zeppelins.*
2. *In the event of Zeppelins coming near again the Council will endeavour to give warning by ringing the School Bell. Every householder must then at once put out all lights, and no flash lights must be seen on the streets.*
3. *The above Regulations for Private Houses apply also to all Public Buildings.*

There was a Zeppelin raid over the Midlands on January 31st "*but our county fortunately escaped the dastardly outrages from which other parts of the Midlands suffered.*" The Zeppelins that passed over this area were recorded in the book of Burials by the Rector of St. Mary's Church, Bingham.

Another account in the Magazine of September 1916 brought the dangers of War-time very near to East Bridgford. "*On Sunday, August 13th many inhabitants of East Bridgford were eye-witnesses of an awful accident. Second Lieutenant Charles Ivan Carryer, aged 19, of the East Yorkshire Regiment, attached to the Royal Flying Corps., descended in his bi-plane in a meadow to inquire his way*

home to Leicester. On resuming his flight, he crossed the river, and his machine struck the roof of a building, and falling to the ground, burst into flames. He was severely burnt, and died from his injuries in the Nottingham Hospital that evening."

Throughout the course of the War, the names of those men from the Parish who had fallen were recorded on the Roll of Honour in the Magazine. There were also lists of the names of those who had voluntarily offered their services in Navy or Army.

Feast Week, June 1916, was obviously not the time for the usual festivities.

"No Flower Show is to be held in Feast Week this year. Let this Feast Sunday be a time of remembrance of absent friends, and of prayer for their safety and support, and for the restoration of peace to our land."

Feast Week celebrations did not re-commence until June 1919.

As one would expect, the most direct way all East Bridgford people were affected by the war was through food shortages and the need to be extra thrifty. The following extracts from the Magazine give examples of this.

"Fruit Bottling without sugar-

The Board of Agriculture and the National Patriotic Association have issued instructions for fruit bottling which should be useful to smallholders, now that the difficulty in obtaining sugar is so great. Mrs Hill will be glad to supply suitable bottles with covers for 2½d to any who apply to her at the Rectory."

May 1917 *"Short Rations*

Everybody ought to try to understand the present economic situation in our country and the urgent necessity for less consumption of bread and flour during the months between this and the next harvest. This is what we are called upon to do. Let everyone resolve to eat 2 ounces of bread a day less than in normal times. It is not a great sacrifice to ask, but if it is done by all, there would be no food problems."

'War Travelling Vans' would travel around giving demonstrations and explanations about Food Production and Food Economy.

"One of the vans will visit East Bridgford on the 20th, 21st, 22nd of August (1917) It will stand in Butt Close and demonstrations will be given in the adjoining School, as well as talks from the van on such subjects as:- Fruit bottling and drying, War-time cookery, Allotment gardening, Insect pests, Potato spraying and Health in the home."

Following on from this at a later date, "Mr G Wilson FRHS addressed a good audience on Co-operative Gardening, a subject which East Bridgford producers should certainly take up and find profit by it."

May 1916 *"A National Egg Collection*

A National Egg Collection for wounded soldiers and sailors is being made with the full approval of the War Office and 700,000 fresh eggs are needed every week. Miss Sharp is the organiser for East Bridgford, and we have, since May 4th 1915 sent up 4,657 eggs."

October 1917. An interesting entry in this month's Magazine read as follows:-

"Since the War began Women's Institutes have been formed in many places in England and Wales, under the Agricultural Organization Society. War-time has sharpened our faculties and has helped us to see what a great force is at our disposal in Co-operation and Organisation. Many ways of economising and saving, carrying out important efforts in improving the home-life, national health and morals, and of raising the standard of living, may in this way be promoted."

At a meeting in the King Edward Club on Oct. 23rd there was a unanimous vote in favour of the establishment of a Women's Institute. The first meeting was on December 12th. Members discussed wartime Christmas dinners and had an exhibition and sale of Christmas dishes.

Amongst correspondence at the August meeting in 1918, there was a request that all fruit stones and nutshells should be saved, as they are of great value in making gas masks.

School children also did what they could to help. *"Blackberries have been gathered by the School children, and 270 lbs have by this means been sent to the Jam Manufacturers, as requested by the Food Controller, for the purpose of utilizing the fruit for the national advantage."*

On February 25th 1918, *"a successful 'Women Land Workers Rally' was held in the Temperance Hall, under the Presidency of Mr. J Wilkinson. Mr. FJ Perry explained the seriousness of the food situation and the need for female labour."*

The end of the War –

Happily we come to the end of World War 1. The following exciting news was reported in the Magazine of December 1918:-

"The great event of the past month has been the ceasing of hostilities at 11 am on November 11th. The news of the signing of the Armistice reached us on Monday morning, so that we were aware of what had happened at the moment the last shot was being fired."

It was fitting that we should at once give humble and reverent thanks to Almighty God for his great deliverance, and on Tuesday at 1 pm a service was held in Church with that object, attended by a large congregation. A service was also held in the Wesleyan Chapel on Monday evening. The Village blossomed out with flags as soon as the news was known, and the new St. George's ensign was hoisted on the Church tower and the bells rang out for the service of Thanksgiving."

At services the following Sunday, the congregation, besides giving thanks, was reminded of the sadness that the 4¼ years of war had brought to so many homes, whose bereavement could not be forgotten in the midst of a nation's joy, for it had touched them all.

Belgian refugees, who had lived in East Bridgford, were able to return home.

"Madame Pelgrims and her family, after having spent more than 4 years among us in East Bridgford, have at length been able to return to their own home in Antwerp. They left with many pleasant recollections of their stay in England."

Life in the village gradually returned to normal – *"the lighting restrictions have now been re-*

moved and we are no longer obliged to keep the windows obscured. We are glad to hear the Church clock strike at night, and to have no restrictions upon the Church bells.

But we must still exercise self-restraint and economy, and continue to help the country by War Savings and to support Red Cross Funds and War Charities to the utmost of our ability."

The Memorial Cross

"A Public Meeting was held on Monday 20th January, 1919 to consider in what way a Memorial to those who have fallen in the Great War might be suitably provided in our Village."

There were five original suggestions, but that of the Rector, Arthur Du Boulay Hill was eventually chosen. The Magazine of May 1919 reported: -

"It is intended to erect in our Churchyard, a memorial cross, as our first duty to those East Bridgford men who have fallen. The scheme is in course of preparation, and contributions towards the cost will be received by the Rector."

By November 1919 preparations were advanced; *"The Memorial Cross which is to be erected in memory of those men of East Bridgford who have fallen in the Great War 1914-1918, will be placed in a beautiful situation, at the corner of the Churchyard facing the main village street and the Kneeton road. A rough sketch of the design may be seen in the Church porch."*

By June 1920 the Memorial was completed, and a Service of Dedication took place on Feast Sunday, June 27th at 3pm. *"A large concourse was gathered in the road at the Church-yard corner, in front of which was drawn up a contingent of over 50 ex-service men, under the command of Lt. F Goldston."*

After singing the hymn "When I survey the wondrous cross," the Archdeacon of Nottingham unveiled the Memorial Cross and offered a prayer of Dedication.

It was a fitting conclusion to the end of the old millennium in 1999, that torchlight processions of villagers from Main Street and Kneeton Road should converge at that same Cross for a short service led by the Rector, Canon Alan Haydock, to celebrate the start of a new era.



World War II 1939-1945

With RAF bases nearby at Syerston and Newton, East Bridgford witnessed various wartime activities. RAF families rented properties in the village, so uniformed airmen were a familiar sight, as were the flights of planes off on their bombing raids from Syerston and Newton. Sometimes the sky would be black with them, and keen observers would attempt to count them out, and then count them back home again safely. Damage inflicted by the enemy was often visible. Sounds and sightings of German planes were also reported. There was a genuine fear of bombs being dropped by enemy planes returning from their attacks on Sheffield. One pouring wet October afternoon is vividly recalled by a villager who was darning socks, when the sound of a Junkers 88 was heard machine-gunning RAF Newton. No serious damage was reported.

There does not appear to be much evidence of a great deal of enemy activity in this area. There were land mines dropped on the way between East Bridgford and Kneeton on two occasions. Windows of the nearest houses were broken including the East window of St. Peter's Church, opaque at the time but replaced with clear glass.

These land mines weighing anything up to 2000 lbs would float down by parachute and explode on the way down so as to flatten a large area. Another raid on RAF Newton, led to a number of incendiaries falling in the fields along the A46 Fosse Way; these were put out by the Auxiliary Fire Service (AFS) with nothing more than dustbin lids. After a landmine was dropped near Kneeton Mill, Mrs Ellis, who lived at 'Highfield', was fond of saying, "*You never could open the front door until after the landmine dropped!*"

RAF Newton had opened in 1936 with only grass runways, and did not become operational until July 1940 as part of No.1 Group, Bomber Command, flying Fairy Battle light day bombers of Nos. 103 and 150 Squadrons.

Pill boxes were erected at major road junctions to defend important installations. These were built of brick and/or concrete. One was situated at the bottom of the Toll Bar near the A46, and another up Kneeton Road. Search light sites were set up locally at Malkin Hill above Shelford and on the east side of the Trent Hills, Kneeton.

Air-raid sirens were positioned on the roof of the guardhouse at RAF Newton, and also on the roof of Bingham Rural District Council (RDC) in the Market Square (the latter hand operated). On the approach of the enemy aircraft an 'ALERT' was signalled by a minutes wail of fluctuating notes, whilst the 'ALL CLEAR' was announced by a one minute continuous note.

When the 'ALERT' siren was sounded, East Bridgford families took cover in Air Raid Shelters if they had one, otherwise under the stairs, in cellars or in a brick shelter in the back yard if you lived in Teapot Row. Surface shelters built of brick with a concrete roof were mainly used in the village. Air Raid Shelters were erected in the school grounds where lessons continued by candle and torchlight until the 'ALL CLEAR' sounded.

Conscription

December 3rd. 1939 saw the start of conscription for males of between 19 and 41, and women between 20 and 30 for war work, defence jobs or in auxiliary services.

Home Guard

In May 1940 the Home Guard was formed. Shelford Home Guard was part of the East Bridgford Unit, which was on duty one in every four nights from 10pm until 6pm. The River Trent boat patrol, part of the Home Guard, was formed at a meeting at the Anchor Hotel, Gunthorpe in 1940. Based at a former café at Gunthorpe, its duties were to guard Gunthorpe Bridge and cover the waterways from the River Humber to Sawley. Two members died when they were accidentally shot and two others drowned.

Civil Defence

Bingham District Council was responsible for civil defence in East Bridgford during the war. There were 191 wardens to man 56 posts with three trained squads of the Auxiliary Fire Service (AFS) based at Tollerton, Radcliffe and Bingham.

Air Raid Precaution Wardens

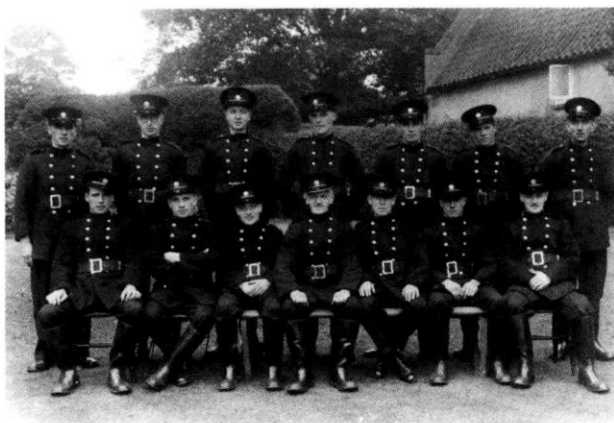
In East Bridgford there were at least 3 women with a number of male A.R.P. Wardens, whose duties were the prevention of panic, giving first aid, fighting small fires and calling for help with larger ones. They were also involved with directing traffic and services where necessary, and with the issuing and disinfecting of gas masks.

East Bridgford Fire Service

Fire Guards were recruited from men between the ages of 18 and 60. Compulsory Fire Watching was provided for under various regulations. Fire prevention duties included:

- *Keeping watch for incendiary bombs*
- *Taking such measures that are practicable for restricting and extinguishing fires caused by incendiary bombs*
- *Summoning any assistance when required*

The East Bridgford AFS in 1940 at their base behind the pea factory.



Fighting fires at Home

Houses in the village were provided with buckets of sand and stirrup pumps to extinguish small fires. Neglect of proper fire precautions was deemed criminal negligence.

Advice when tackling an incendiary bomb was to never throw a bucket of water onto the bomb, as this would cause a violent eruption spreading the fire alarmingly. Instead, use the spray from the stirrup pump to extinguish the fire or alternatively use the bucket of sand.

First Aid in the Home

Advice was given on first aid in the home. In school older children were taught bandaging, temperature taking, splinting of fractures and other relevant first aid. Recommendations were given to all families on the contents of a first aid container made from a clean biscuit tin with a tight fitting lid. Old linen or cotton sheets well boiled could be made into bandages and then sterilised in the oven for 30 minutes. Other items recommended for a first aid box were:

- A new pair of scissors
- A generous supply of safety pins
- Broad tape
- Anti-gas ointment No2
- A bottle of iodine
- A bottle of Sal Volatile
- A bottle of smelling salts
- Self-adhesive bandages
- Vaseline or petroleum jelly
- Aspirin tablets

War Effort

Besides their first aid lessons, school children spent time during the day knitting for the War Effort. Ex-pupils recall knitting comforts for the troops – socks, scarves, mittens, balaclava helmets, and sea-boot socks knitted in a special oil-based wool, all in either air force blue or khaki. They would take this knitting around with them and continue to knit away at the Girls Friendly Society (GFS.) One of the knitters recalled Miss Millington's horsehair sofa and how it irritated her legs.

East Bridgford Knitters included members of the Women's Institute (W.I.), the GFS and many others. In August 1943 the following letter was received by Miss Fox from the County Organiser of the WVS:

'Once again it is our pleasant task to write and thank you and your helpers for your great assistance in making garments for the British Red Cross, Notts. Services and Prisoners of War Comforts Fund and Comforts Fund for the Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS.) We are full of admiration for the noble way you go on sewing and knitting – answering every call we make on your precious time.'

On December 20th 1944, a Diploma of Merit was received by Miss Fox and Miss Hand on behalf of the East Bridgford Knitters from His Grace the Duke of Portland.

Besides being busy knitting, there were jobs for volunteers at the Jam Centre... *"they are needed to help with the many jobs besides the cooking, such as preparing the fruit and washing jars during the morning or tying down jars the next day. In the WI report of October 1944, 'hard working voluntary helpers at the Jam Centre have ended their labours for this year, having made 535 lbs of jam, all passed as being of first class quality.'"*

October was also the month when school children aged twelve and over were given a two-week holiday to help with the potato harvest... *"off we would go in pairs, whatever the weather with a picnic lunch to the farm we had been allocated. We went to certain rows where the potatoes had already been dug up using a spinner. Buckets and sacks were filled in readiness for collection by horse and cart or tractor. Sometimes a few spuds would find their way into our lunch bags for taking home. We were paid around 4d/hour (from 9am – 4pm) which certainly helped supplement the 1/2d a week pocket money."*

Fund Raising Activities

There were many Village collections and fund raising events for the War Effort. By 1940 the war was costing between £6 and £7 million a day. The Magazine regularly reported fund raising events;-

East Bridgford and District Comforts Fund

A concert was arranged by Miss Winifred Pitt and her artiste friends. The Chair was taken by Major L Owen-Taylor- Proceeds £13 3s 6d

On October 28th 1944, a concert was given by Batchelor's employees in the form of a Musical Hold-up and was very much enjoyed. The proceeds were £46 18s 6d.

Other fund raising events were dances, whist drives, jumble sales, collecting boxes, tennis tournaments etc. and regular proceeds from Salvage Drives.

Salvage

During the war the salvage of all kinds of materials was extremely important. The Church magazine (April 1942) urged the utilization of every bit of material that can possibly be saved at home.

Paper and cardboard – East Bridgford has already done very remarkably well in this respect, but the fact that it is now an offence punishable by fine or imprisonment to waste card and paper, should make every one realise how urgent the matter is, and should at the same time prevent the disgrace of abominable litter in our streets and lanes!

There were special salvage weeks in the village when waste paper was collected to raise funds for the battleship HMS Snapdragon.

Rubber scraps were also valuable – old gum boots, mats, leaky hot water bottles etc.

"Please look out all the old rubber you have and send it to the Old Hall, where Mr Farmer has kindly offered the use of a loft for storage.

Rags are in great demand, but cotton and woollen rags should be kept separately, as they are wanted for different purposes. (Used for gun wadding, tyres, maps and balloons.)

Metals – old iron should be sent to the dump behind Mr F. O. Green's house. Articles of copper, brass or aluminium can be sent to Miss Fox for storage. Every kind of metal is wanted for munitions."

Bones too were important for making glycerine for high explosives, for providing fats for soap and candles, also glue etc. *"In short they are invaluable, and moreover, the dog may have them first!"*

"Kitchen waste can always be used for pigs and poultry and must not be burnt or thrown away."

MORAL – "Starve the bonfires and feed the Nations effort. Everyone can help."

It was reported in the Church Magazine (November 1943): *Mr Bates' talk on Paper Salvage at the October meeting of the WI was really thrilling and he brought a marvellous show of things essential for the War Effort, made from the paper, cardboard and books saved.*

The Women's Land Army

Land Army Girls were drafted into farming communities to help run the farms after labourers had been called up or volunteered for the armed forces. Work on the farm entailed ploughing, weeding, hoeing, muck spreading and harvesting.

A Land Girl based at Jim Neale's farm, Kneeton, fondly recalled many jobs she did, from feeding the livestock, to milking by hand, de-horning cattle and even castrating lambs.... *"The working day was from 7am – 9am with a pause for breakfast, continuing until 5.30pm or longer during harvesting time. It was meant to be a 48 hour week for 48 shilling out of which £1 was taken for board and lodging and 1 shilling for insurance."*

She had vivid memories of working alongside itinerant Irish labourers and Italian Prisoners of War (who filled the air with Italian arias) and remembered the problems caused when steering a tractor through fields where upright poles had been positioned to prevent German planes landing. This happened in fields larger than five acres. Wooden stakes were also driven into the flat ground beside the River Trent.



Pies made from hares, rabbits, pheasants, pigeons and even rooks were sometimes seen on the farm kitchen table. Mention was also made of lambs' tail pie!

Food Rationing

Food rationing started in 1940, when ration books were issued and every one had by law to register with their local shops. Butter, bacon, sugar and ham were the first foods to be rationed in January, with meat following in March and margarine in July. Many more food items were rationed as the war continued. The Ministry of Health made sure that all children received a daily supply of milk, cod-liver oil and orange juice. Free or cheap milk was available to mothers.

Because East Bridgford was a rural farming community where families already grew their own produce or bought locally from farms and market gardeners, hardships were not experienced on the same scale as other areas. More poultry were kept, fed on a mash of potato peelings mixed with a special poultry spice intended to increase their laying capacity. It was uncommon to kill and eat chicken on a regular basis; maybe just once a year at Christmas or on special occasions. Rationing allowed just one fresh egg per coupon per week. From 1942, packets of dried egg powder were made available, suitable for making puddings that looked like linoleum and omelettes like rubber! Fresh eggs, however, could be preserved in a circular lidded pot called a pancheon, terracotta on the outside and glazed yellow inside. A preparation known as isinglass formed a semi-transparent gel suitable for preserving eggs for cooking purposes.

Pig keeping increased in the village. In one instance a pig was bought well in advance of a twenty first birthday party. This ensured that there would be plenty of ham cobs available for the occasion held in the W.I. Hut. *'Everything on the pig is for use except its squeal'* was a well known saying borne out by the popularity of pigs brawn, pigs fry, haslet, pork pie, black pudding, pigs trotters, sausages, etc.

As rationing continued after the war, the government allowed people to trade in a year's bacon ration for a pig. This was a popular thing to do in the Village.

More rabbits were kept and wild rabbits snared. Jointed rabbit made a tasty rabbit pie or stew. Shredded suet was available from the butcher for steamed suet puddings, both savoury and sweet. Pastry was often made using liquid paraffin as other fats were rationed. A recipe for Rabbit and Bacon Pudding contained these ingredients:-

6 ozs. shredded suet, 1 lb. flour, 1 jointed rabbit, 4 ozs bacon, seasoning, ½ gill stock

Supplies of imported foods ceased during the war and villagers missed citrus fruits and bananas. Sugar was in short supply and the substitute saccharin had to be used.



Land Army girls got their own uniform—modelled above.

Clothes Rationing

Clothes rationing started in June 1941. To save cloth, men's trousers were made without turnings, and women's skirts were short and straight, and known as 'utility' clothing. The people of East Bridgford, as elsewhere became more resourceful. If parachute material could be obtained it was used to make a variety of underwear, especially petticoats. Blankets were dyed and made into coats. One villager recalls a coat she wore made from a blanket dyed black, the reason for her always having a dirty neck after wearing it! Fully-fashioned stockings with the seam up the back, American tan shade, were a rarity and used up three clothing coupons. The ingenious alternative idea was to artificially tan your legs with gravy browning and a friend draw the back seam as straight as possible with an eyebrow pencil. This was fine until it rained!

Fuel Rationing

Fuel, especially coal, was rationed in 1941, due to a drop in production as miners were called up for war service. Households were limited to 1 cwt a week. As the fire in the kitchen range was essential for cooking and heating, families would supplement their fuel supplies by going 'sticking'. Trent Lane, Springdale Lane and Cross Lane were good places to go after a gale had blown down branches from the many more trees there were around the village then. 'Sticking' became a family outing, when the pram would be seen (not with the baby) but filled with firewood, or a big log, if you were lucky.

Blackout Restrictions

As soon as Germany invaded Poland on 1st September 1939 blackout restrictions began. At first all street lights were switched off, but as East Bridgford had none it made no difference. However the beam from a bicycle light was restricted by sticking tape across the lamp, and car headlights had special ARP masks, allowing only a narrow horizontal slit of light. Premises had to be blacked out and shop windows were shuttered. Mr Sharman, the undertaker made shutters for Mr Pick's shop, the Universal Stores, fixed in place with iron bars and bolts. (Incidentally shutters would be closed, as would curtains, as a mark of respect when a funeral passed by.)

Windows and doors were blacked out using various materials: blankets, old rags, carpets and special blackout material. Broad bands of sticky tape were stuck across window panes to avoid glass shattering everywhere. Householders were supposed to check their premises every night for any light that might be showing; '*Put out that light*' was a phrase often heard as the ARP warden patrolled to enforce lighting restrictions around the village.

Evacuees

As early as September 1939 evacuees were being sent from high-risk city areas, and later from invasion areas to safe places. Here in East Bridgford evacuees came from Sheffield,

Great Yarmouth and Littlehampton. The section on War Years in the chapter on Education refers to evacuees in more detail, but the following letter from a Sheffield evacuee is a vivid description of life in the village through her eyes.

Wartime Memories from Lorraine Patchett

"I was evacuated at the age of five to East Bridgford from Sheffield in September 1939 and remained there for five years. I stayed with Mr F and Mrs G Downs whom I called Uncle Fred and Aunt Glad although they were not related to me.

The house was situated on Straws Lane, there was no electricity or gas, the water was from a pump on the sink, the cooking was done by a coal-fired oven. There was a cellar, kitchen, living room and front room downstairs, upstairs were two bedrooms and a loft, in the middle of the stairs was a small room off to the right as you ascended. The loft was a good storage area and excellent for drying fruit (e.g. apple rings.) The cellar was used for salting vegetables and home fed salted pork as it had stone slabs all the way round.

Outside was a coal-house where the tin bath hung on the back of the door and also the toilet which was at the side of the house and seemed to be a mile walk away. The toilet was a wooden board with two holes in which had to be emptied every so often. Uncle Fred cycled to Newton aerodrome where he worked on the Spitfires (maintenance I think.)

Aunt Glad had an allotment where she kept pigs, poultry and grew vegetables. She also worked at home in the evening picking peas. This was getting a sack of dried peas from which she picked out the bad ones, I also helped occasionally. I don't know how much she was paid by Batchelors for picking their peas. When a pig was slaughtered one of my jobs was chopping up a big block of salt so that pork and the vegetables could be preserved with it. Another task of mine was to fetch milk from the local farm for which I took a small white enamel bucket.

There was a blacksmiths shop at the end of Straws Lane, the blacksmith was called Bob Marshall and I was frightened of him because he always seemed to have a black face, he also had an artificial leg which we children threw pebbles at just to hear the ping as the little stones hit metal; then he would pretend to chase us.

I attended the village school for the five years I was there. I seem to remember there were three classrooms, one being divided by a curtain and one had a fireplace at one end. In winter we had our school milk warming by the fire which was a treat after walking across the snow covered fields to reach school.

The village hall held dances occasionally and I remember trying to do some dances such as the Palais Glide, the Veleta and the Waltz etc.

When I look back on my wartime memories they are very happy ones, good people I was evacuated to, the best food I have ever eaten – home fed pork, home-made pork pies, home grown vegetables and fruits, new laid eggs (the eggs I had when I returned to Sheffield tasted different because they weren't fresh.) I consider myself very lucky, as many were not so fortunate."

Entertainment

There was some light relief provided by the cinema. People fortunate enough to be able to travel to Nottingham could join queues to watch the latest film such as 'Gone with the Wind', 'In which we serve' (Noel Coward 1942), 'Henry Vth'. (Lawrence Olivier 1944) and 'Snow White', to name a few.

At local dances, couples would be enjoying the Foxtrot, Waltz, the Jitterbug and the Lambeth Walk, besides others.

Comics, namely Boy's Own, Rover, Skipper and the Beano provided light reading for the children, whilst on the BBC Home Service programmes such as Children's Hour, ITMA, Worker's Playtime and Jairmany Calling, were the source of lighter listening, alongside information on the progress of the war.



Couples attempting the 'jitterbug' in 1940s costume during a "Wartime Weekend".

Enemy Action

East Bridgford was fortunate not to suffer direct attack, but villagers reported observing enemy action over Nottingham from the top of Haycroft Way. The following account gives some indication of how the village narrowly avoided being affected.

"On the night of 8/9 May 1941, fifty plus German aircraft were heard droning their way towards Nottingham. The air-raid sirens had wailed their warning of approaching enemy aircraft. Decoy fires (Starfish Sites) were lit in the Vale of Belvoir to confuse German aircrews into thinking that they were bombing a built-up area. 92 bombs were dropped around Granby and Sutton whilst another bomber jettisoned 4 bombs over Shelford, without injury.

At around 00-37, flares were seen in the North West from the Boots Island St. control centre. About 50 planes flying at about 10,000ft. with some as low as 1,500ft. began their attack on Nottingham with the loss of 159 people and hundreds injured. This was one of the last heavy raids mounted by the Luftwaffe on this country."

Guy Gibson VC who was stationed at RAF Syerston for part of the war, refers to the people of East Bridgford in his book *Enemy Coast Ahead*.

"Many people of East Bridgford can remember the night when a Lancaster of 106 Squadron exploded while waiting to take off from RAF Syerston. The Lancaster was taxiing around the perimeter

track when a few incendiaries dropped out of the gaping bomb doors . There was an explosion causing the deaths of the crew and their Lancaster."

The End of the War

Once again the Church bells could be heard. During the War they were only to be rung as a sign of invasion, with the exception of signalling victory at El Alamein.

In the Church Magazine, June 1945, the Parish Notes read thus:

"The month of May has seen world-shaking events, and we in this quiet spot have been sharing in the great nation-wide chorus of thanksgiving to Almighty God for deliverance and victory. At the service on VE Day, there was hardly a seat vacant in Church and again on Thanksgiving Sunday when every organisation in the village paraded, the Church was full to capacity.

A hearty welcome home has been given to two prisoners-of-war, James Falconbridge and Edward Bateman, and we congratulate their families on their safe and happy return."

There were of course those men from the Parish who sadly did not return, but whom we remember every year as we gather for the Service of Remembrance for those who gave their lives in both World Wars. It is a moving sight to see the Rector, the Choir and members of the British Legion supported by other uniformed organisations; in turn followed by parishioners as they assemble by the War Memorial

The reveille sounds out and we are reminded that-----

At the going down of the sun and in the morning, we will remember them.

We will remember them.