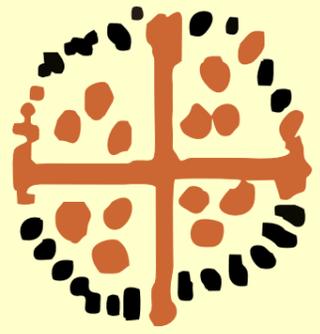


75

BISHOP'S WALTHAM MUSEUM

1945 to 2020

Commemorating: 75 years of "Peace in Our Time"

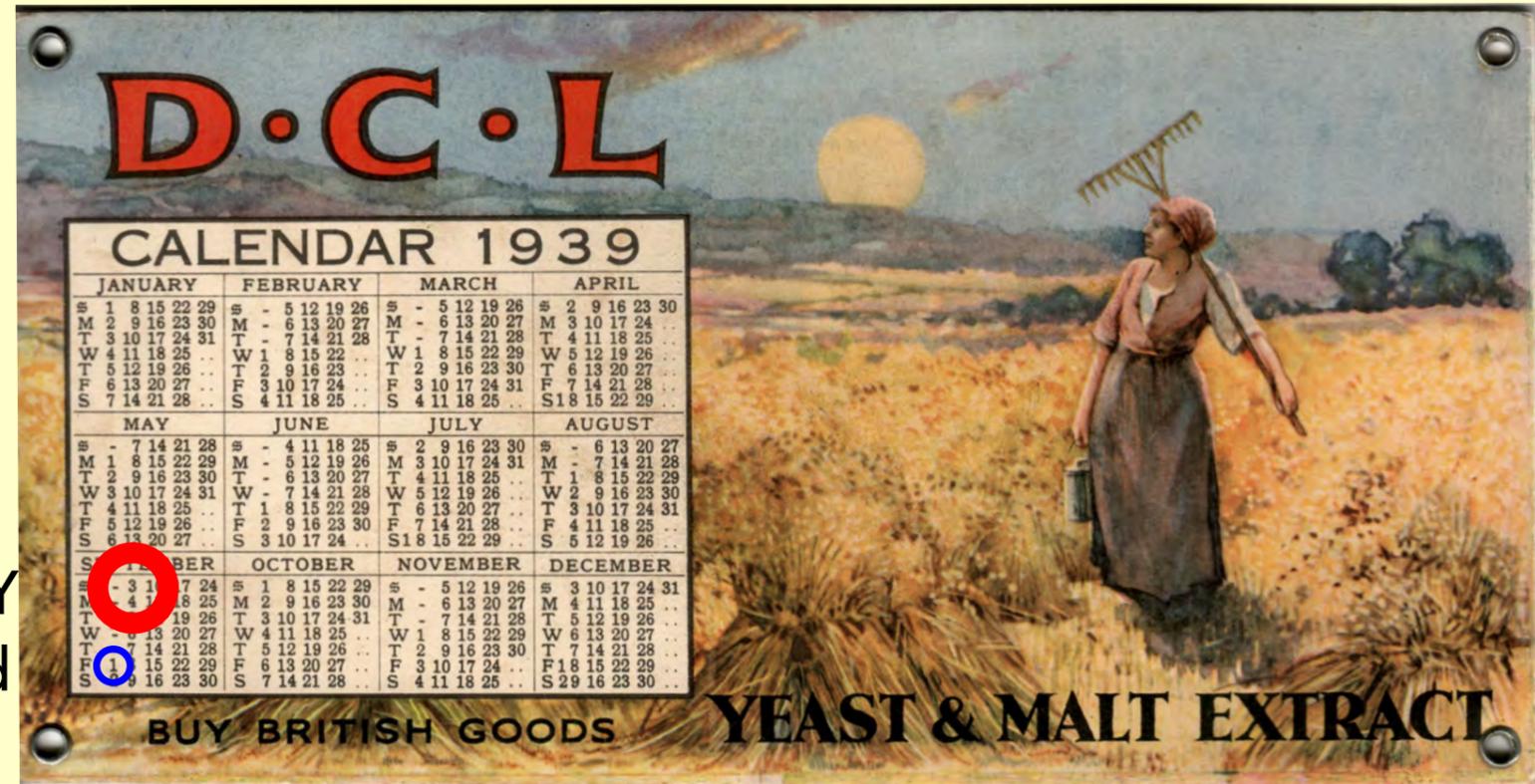


VE & VJ DAY

Bishop's Waltham is a small town in the heart of rural southern Hampshire that suffered and celebrated the Second World War in common with the rest of Britain. This online exhibition will hopefully show some of the effects of this conflict on the people of the town through our collection. For more general information on World War II, please see our events page or visit Bishop's Waltham Society's website: www.bishopswalthamsociety.org.uk for the companion booklet on the progress of the war.

1939

GREAT BRITAIN DECLARES WAR ON GERMANY Germany invades Poland



This had originally been intended as a pop-up exhibition in the Jubilee Hall, Bishop's Waltham, but due to Coronavirus, we have made it into an online exhibition. Every effort has been made to keep our facts accurate, but we currently have no access to libraries...

BWMMMT:2012.10.1



In Person: Bishop's Waltham Palace, Bishop's Waltham, Hampshire SO32 1DH

Website: www.bishopswalthammuseum.com
Email: bishopswalthammuseum@gmail.com



Soldiers: Ours, Theirs, and Friends



Meanwhile, one man knew nothing of the amassing troops, the tanks, and all the tools of invasion, the object of all the high-level secret planning in a Droxford railway siding, although he was only a couple of miles away. Carmello was a Prisoner of War, who, together with about 70 other PoWs worked on the land and in the kitchens of local big houses, returning at night to their Nissen hut lodgings on the outskirts of Bishop's Waltham, opposite the bottom of Ashton Lane on the Winchester Road. He was taken captive in November 1942 in Africa, after 8 months in the desert. (General Montgomery wrote in his diary on Monday 2nd November, "At 1 a.m. Supercharge began ... It was a success ... By dusk we had taken 1,500 prisoners.") He was to spend the rest of the war in the Waltham camp. Treatment was not at all bad, he remembers: Bishop's Waltham was no Colditz. Because they went out to work each day, there was no need to dig tunnels or devise other complex escape plans. Tea and coffee was supplied in huge drums, but since coffee, not tea was the staple drink of the inmates, the coffee ration had to be eked out while the tea-leaves were used to fertilize the local ditches.

For him the June day was memorable because of the two flying bombs that landed near Curdridge. One, he remembers, hit an army tent and killed several soldiers, the other blew up Pink's pig farm on Curdridge Lane, destroying the barn and its porcine occupants.



Dear Sir/Madam,

ANTI-AIRCRAFT TRAINING SUB-SECTOR No.
SEARCHLIGHT SITE No.

With reference to the call upon you by the Assistant Land Agent asking permission for a searchlight of the Anti-Aircraft Battalions to be erected and operated on your land and for the necessary telephone communication to be installed.

This letter is to confirm the arrangements made verbally to the effect that you are prepared (subject to the concurrence of your landlord) to allow a detachment of the unit concerned to enter upon your land during the annual training (usually late July or early August) and occasionally at week-ends throughout the year, at the agreed place, as shown on the attached plan, and to erect and operate there temporarily an Anti-Aircraft Station. The detachment will consist approximately of ten men, under a responsible Non-Commissioned Officer, and they will erect three tents for their accommodation in the vicinity of the searchlight position, and camp there during the period of their training.

It is understood that you have no objection to this, or to the digging by them of small trench latrines, refuse pits, and cooking trenches as necessary, provided that these are properly filled in and the ground duly restored at the conclusion of the training or week-end occupation. Each detachment will arrive by motor lorry, and for its maintenance a motor lorry and various other motor cars will be required to visit the site daily. It is understood that you will have no objection to the use for this purpose of the normal means of access to the selected sites and to our improving same where necessary.

In order that any particular requirements (as e.g., temporary fencing of certain of the sites, etc., etc.) may be carried out to your satisfaction an officer of each unit concerned will, upon each occasion, call upon you immediately before the proposed occupation. This officer will advise you immediately before the detachment has evacuated the site, and will advise you of any opportunity of satisfaction.

20th May 1939

RA/MA

P. M. Hall, Esq.,
Messrs. Hall Pain & Foster,
57, Commercial Road,
Portsmouth.

Dear Sir,

Searchlight Site - Hill Farm, Durley.

We are much obliged for your letter of the 17th instant.

On behalf of the Landlord, we hold the view that in times of emergency, whereas an area such as you are applying for would be an un-noticed farm; directly military works are installed, such as a Searchlight Station it immediately becomes an attraction and attention is drawn to it from the fact that the Searchlight is in place.

This means consequent risk of damage by enemy aircraft to the adjacent farm buildings, and this involves a very big risk of loss to the Landlord, hence his application for some compensation to be made.

Yours faithfully,



The "Cat and Cabbage" insignia of the Hampshire Regiment, given the title "Royal" in 1946, due to exceptional service.

The Austin and Wyatt archive sheds a lot of light (sorry!) on life close to the south coast during World War II, including these preparations made well in advance of its declaration.

TELEGRAMS:- SOUTHERN.
TELEPHONE NO 74441-2.

57, Commercial Road,
Portsmouth,
and at Fareham & Petersfield.

May 22nd 1939.

Messrs. Richard Austin & Wyatt,
BISHOPS WALTHAM, Hants.

SECRET

Dear Sirs,

SEARCHLIGHT SITE, HILL FARM, DURLEY.

I am obliged to you for your letter of the 20th May in which you refer to the installation of "military works". The only building to be erected is a small wooden hut 21ft. x 16ft. which will be placed close to the farm buildings, and from the air would be indistinguishable from them. The searchlight itself is not permanently in position but when in use is run out into the field to a point approximately 300 yards from the buildings. If your Client's buildings should be damaged in the event of war he would, no doubt, receive compensation, but the question of compensation does not arise until the loss is sustained.

Yours faithfully,

Richard Hall
Registered Surveyor for the
Hants. Command Land Agent.

This article about Carmello Iacobucci comes from the D-Day Commemoration leaflet of 1994 from Our Lady of Apostles Catholic Church, BW. BWMMT:2011.37



These items used by the US military were found in and near Wold Cottage, Lower Upham by Sylvia Pain



HONOURS AND AWARDS

War Office, 3rd August, 1944

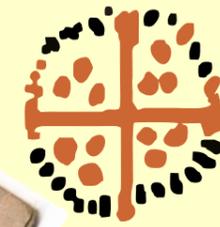
THE KING has been graciously pleased to approve the following awards in recognition of gallant and distinguished services in Italy :-

BAR TO THE DISTINGUISHED SERVICE ORDER

Major (temporary Lieutenant-Colonel) Brian Wolseley WEBB-CARTER, D.S.O., The Duke of Wellington's Regiment (West Riding) (Bishop's Waltham, Hants).



FOOD! Dominated by rationing...



6 NAMES AND ADDRESSES OF RETAILERS

	IF COUPONS DEPOSITED RETAILER ENTERS "D"	FOR FOOD OFFICE USE ONLY
MEAT	CHARLES EVANS HIGH ST. BISHOPS WALTHAM.	
EGGS	HARRIS & Co. BISHOPS WALTHAM.	D
FATS	G. ASKEW, BISHOPS WALTHAM.	
CHEESE	G. ASKEW, BISHOPS WALTHAM.	
BACON	HARRIS & Co. BISHOPS WALTHAM.	D
SUGAR	G. ASKEW, BISHOPS WALTHAM.	

1944

ON HIS MAJESTY'S SERVICE

Your Ration Book

Issued to safeguard your food supply

HOLDER'S NAME AND REGISTERED ADDRESS

Surname ASKEW
Other Names George James
Address Bank Street,
Bishop's Waltham.

NAT. REG. NO. EEFU 122

Date of Issue 7 JUL 1941

If found, please return to
CHORFORD RURAL DISTRICT,
FOOD OFFICE.

COMPARE WITH YOUR IDENTITY CARD AND REPORT ANY DIFFERENCE TO YOUR FOOD OFFICE. DO NOT ALTER.

OFFICIAL PAID

SPARE	SPARE
14	8
SPARE	SPARE
15	9
SPARE	SPARE
16	10

S33. R.B. 1001

REMOVAL—Notify your food office.

HOLIDAYS—Take your ration book.

DON'T FORGET YOUR DEPOSITED PAGES.

YOUR FOOD OFFICE WILL HELP YOU.

AIR RAIDS—Always have ready:—
Outdoor Clothing.
Gas Mask.
Identity Card.
Ration Book.



WRITE THE NAMES AND ADDRESSES OF YOUR PRESENT RETAILERS HERE

RETAIL BUTCHER. (Pages 7, 8, 9 & 10.)
Name E.V.C.M.S.
Address H.I.G.A.S.T.

COOKING FATS RETAILER. (Pages 11 & 12.)
Name G.S.HOPS. WALTHAM.
Address BISHOPS WALTHAM.

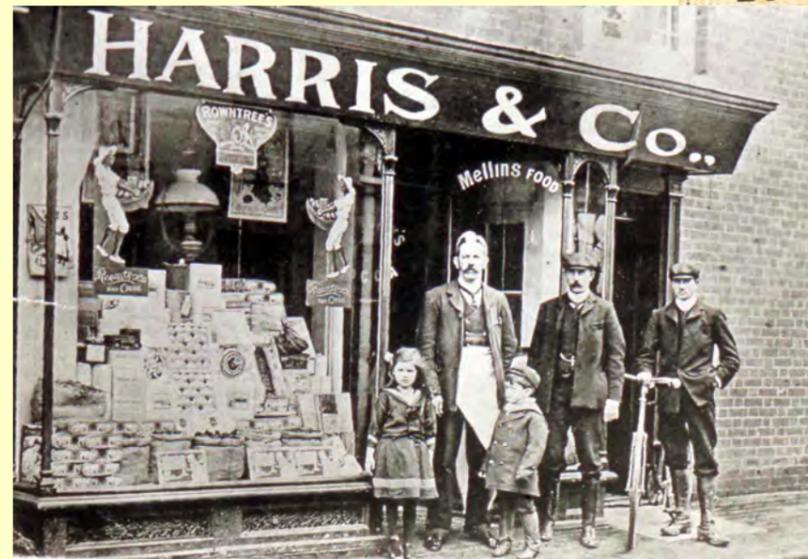
BUTTER & MARGARINE RETAILER. (Pages 13 & 14.)
Name G. ASKEW.
Address BISHOPS WALTHAM.

BACON RETAILER. (Pages 15 & 16.)
Name HARRIS & Co.
Address H.I.G.A.S.T.

SUGAR RETAILER. (Pages 17 & 18.)
Name G. ASKEW.
Address BISHOPS WALTHAM.

How to use your Ration Book

- As soon as you receive this Ration Book (a) Write your name and present home address in the top portion (part A) of the book. Do not write anything in the middle portion (part B) of the reference leaf until told to do so. (b) Write the names and addresses of the retailers with whom you are at present registered on page 2 and on page 28 also if pages of spare coupons are in use.
- Every time you buy rationed food in at the shop at which you and the shopkeeper will cancel the correct coupon.
- You may permit the shopkeeper to take a whole page of coupons. If you do so you must first write your name and address in the space provided on the page of coupons and the shopkeeper must write the word "Yes" in the column provided on page 28 if any page of spare coupons is in use and you do not have a whole page taken out if you expect to go away from home on holiday or business.
- You may buy two weeks' rations in a week by using the current unused coupons and either previous week's or the coupons for the next week.
- If you live in an hotel, hostel or boarding-house, it is not necessary for you to register with a retailer and you should not take your book to a shop yourself—but if you are a responsible manager, or the manager of a boarding-house, you may return the book to the appropriate person for the time when you leave with the appropriate coupons cancelled.
- Whenever you leave home on business or holiday always take your ration book and any pages of coupons you may have handed to your retailers. (1) If staying at an hotel, boarding-house, etc., hand your ration book to the management when you arrive. (2) If, when away from home, you are going to do your own shopping take the book and any pages of coupons collected from your retailers either to the Food Office in the area in which you reside or to the Food Office of the district in which you are going to stay. You will then be given an emergency card.



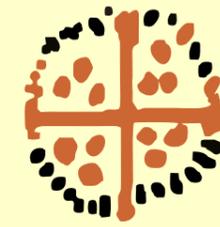
Harris & Co.
Early C20.
BW00700623



George Askew's ration book for 1941. Bacon, butter and sugar were rationed first in 1940, but more items were added in 1941. To avoid the black market, you had to state where you would buy your rationed food. Note that George lists himself as supplying butter and sugar. Askews ran the shop on the corner of St. Peter's Street and Bank Street. By 1942 eggs had been added, and most items were rationed by the end of the war. The ration books contained SPARE coupons to allow for items coming in at short notice.



Land Army in a Rural Area



Hampshire Women's Land Army published a newsletter every month which gives us a fascinating snapshot of life for the women. Some truly embraced the farming life, acquiring skills in agriculture, tractor driving and animal husbandry. Others, not so much...

A working week was 48 hours in winter and 50 in a very long summer - Summer started on 6th March and ended on 5th November (March 1944). June 1944 reports that Easter Monday and Boxing Day were no longer holidays in Hampshire so overtime could not be claimed! However, there were also benevolent funds, rest houses for holidays, bicycles for hire, cheaper cosmetics and clothes, and socials if you could get to them.

April 1944

MARRIAGES.
February 5th, Phyllis Barker, 67394 to W.Moulard of Old Burghclere. The marriage took place at the Parish Church, Old Burghclere and the reception was given at the house of the Parish Representative. Members of the Burghclere W.L.A. Club made a guard of honour with rakes and pitchforks.

Excerpts below from May 1944 - bear in mind that clothes were rationed, and June 1944 was going to be pretty exciting...

"Land girls" in farmyard at Brownwich land. BW01102367



Restricted Whitsun Holiday Travel
1944.
The Whitsun period 26th May to 30th May inclusive will be a period of restricted travel when no government free leave warrants may be issued. The County Office, therefore cannot issue any free rail warrant which will permit the outward journey (from the place of employment) to be taken during the restricted period.

Wedding Bells.
The W.L.A. has received a gift of ten wedding dresses from well-wishers in the United States. Application should be made to the County Office at least six weeks before the wedding is due to take place. To cover the cost of cleaning and despatch a cost of 15/-d will be made to each volunteer who uses a dress. No guarantee can be given that dresses will be available, but the volunteer will be notified immediately her application has been received, and if a dress can be provided she will be asked to send the hiring charge to Headquarters.



Joyce Ford (Nee Crosswell), a land girl at the Hermitage, in her "best" clothes. BW01102370

The Women's Land Army at Curdrige Hostel. BWMMT: 2016.48



Proficiency Tests.
Only the Field Work Tests are left now and these will be held early in June. Begin looking out in the News Letter for requests for entries for next season.

Tractor Drivers. Mr. Durbin, County Machinery Instructor, who judged the Tractor Driving Tests, has offered to train volunteers in the handling of implements. Any volunteer who would like a lesson from him may write to the office for particulars.

Outdoor Gardening and Glasshouse Work Tests. Of 32 entrants all passed, 15 with distinction. The highest marks, 96% were gained by Miss Eperon.

Fruit Work. 2 candidates entered, both passed, one with distinction.

Poultry Work. 3 candidates entered, 2 passed, Miss Ham passing with distinction. Our thanks are due to Mr. Ibbett and Mr. Grimes for so kindly acting as judges.

Boot Repairs.
To make newly soled boots or shoes last longer, have them studded with nails.



Bombs

According to daily intelligence reports of enemy action (National Archives and www.warstateandsociety.com/Bombing-Britain), at least 13 bombs were dropped on BW between 1940 and 1944, but casualties were very few. As listed, only one person died and two were injured. However, if you look closer at the reports, on the night of the 11th July 1944, "some service casualties" occurred. Local legend has it that this was a V1 bomb landing at Chase Mill and killing 17 servicemen. That same night Curdridge, Exton, Shedfield and Upham were all hit.



BWMMT: 2014.2.10

This large chunk of shrapnel (26cm long) in our archives is probably from Claylands



Claylands brick factory was bombed in 1940, and the damage is visible in this photo. By 1941 it was part of the Spitfire Shadow factories as all brickmaking had ceased, only to resume in 1946. BW01002132, T. Pitman 1977 Newtown & Clay



BW00901863

Symes shop and garage with bomb damage from the Clayland blast. One of the shop windows has been boarded up with an odd selection of planks. They were lucky - those are petrol pumps at the front...



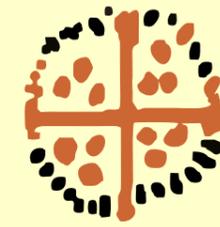
BWMMT:2014.148

Not only did BW have a large factory as an obvious target, but Durley had a "Permanent Starfish" bombing decoy built in 1941, designed to attract bombing instead of Southampton. Between 1942 and 1943, Durley also had a "QL" decoy, simulating marshalling yards and loco glows to draw fire from Eastleigh Railway Yards. In August 1943, Operation Starkey constructed an assault "QL" (ASQL) on the site. ASQLs were lighting displays giving the illusion of troops massing for an invasion. More information can be found on Pastcape [HERE](#). It is probably no surprise then that Durley had four attacks, including suffering 11 casualties, five fatal, on the 22nd June 1941.



Wearing your War Effort on your Sleeve...

One of the ways you could help was by knitting for the troops. Many women joined knitting circles to knit together, forming both life long friendships and some snappy knitwear for the elegant man about barracks.



Wool was rationed, but was also supplied to schools, Womens Institutes and other organisations for making into clothes for troops and prisoners of war. IWM.

Clothes rationing was imposed on 1st June 1941 to safeguard raw materials, production lines and staffing for the war effort. Initially given 66 coupons a year, by 1945 only three a month were issued. "Utility" clothing was introduced in 1942, affordable to all. You could also apply for more coupons for work clothes like George Askew did. IWM

Knitting was not only the preserve of housewives, it was also used by spies to pass coded messages in occupied territories during both the World Wars I and II... Find more information [HERE](#)



NUMBER OF COUPONS REQUIRED

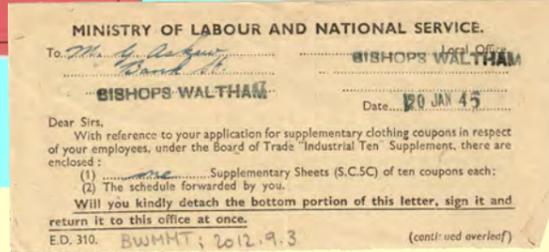
	Adults	Children
Unlined mackintosh or cape	3	7
Other mackintosh, raincoat, overcoat	16	11
Coat, jacket, blazer and like garments	13	8
Waistcoat, pull-over, cardigan, jersey	5	3
Trousers (other than fustian or corduroy)	5	3
Fustian or corduroy trousers	8	4
Shorts	8	4
Overalls, dungarees and like garments	5	3
Dressing-gown, bathing-gown, or pair of pyjamas	5	3
Shirt, combinations—woolten	5	3
Shirt, combinations—other material	8	4
Pair of socks or stockings	8	4
Collar, tie, or two handkerchiefs	5	3
Scarf, pair of gloves or mittens	4	2
Pair of slippers or goshes	3	1
Pair of boots or shoes	1	2
Pair of leggings, gaiters or spats	2	3

	Adults	Children
Coat, raincoat, lined mackintosh	14	11
Jacket, short coat	11	8
Dress, gown, frock—woollen	7	5
Dress, gown, frock—other material	8	5
Gym, tunic, girl's skirt with bodice	7	5
Blouse, sports shirt, cardigan, jumper	6	4
Skirt, divided skirt	6	4
Overalls, dungarees and like garments	7	5
Apron, pinafore	6	4
Nightdress	6	4
Petticoat, slip, combinations, cami-knickers	7	5
Pair of stockings	8	4
Pair of socks, collar, tie, or two handkerchiefs	8	4
Scarf, pair of gloves or mittens, muff	6	4
Pair of slippers, boots or shoes	3	2
Cloth.—Coupons needed per yard depend on the width, for example, a yard of woolen cloth 36 ins. wide requires 3 coupons and cotton or other cloth 2 coupons.	3	2
Knitting Wool.—1 coupon is needed for two ounces.	2	3



BWMMT: 2012.9.1, 3
BWMMT: 2014.204, 207

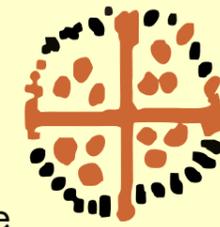
Clothing went "off ration" on 15th March 1949



Admiral Cunningham and Palace house

(from the Austin and Wyatt Archive)

Andrew Browne Cunningham, Vice Admiral, and his wife Nona, bought Palace House in 1935, including the Palace ruins and the Farmhouse now used by Bishop's Waltham Museum. A sailor from 1898, he was knighted in 1939 and became the Commander in Chief of the Mediterranean Fleet in early June 1939. It is at this point that they decided to rent out Palace House, while they were posted to Alexandria, Egypt. Postings later also included Washington in 1942.



Subject to the marginal and other notes we have today checked the foregoing Inventory and find same correct.

29th. June 1939

Richard Austin Wyatt

Valuers, Auctioneers & Chartered Surveyors,
BISHOP'S WALTHAM, Hants.,

Agents for Lady Cunningham.

J. Mea
Surveyors & Auctioneers,
HAYLING ISLAND.

Agents for Mrs. White.



BW01102397

In 1943 Cunningham was given the baronetcy of Bishop's Waltham and promoted to Admiral of the Fleet, later First Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Staff, relinquishing Mediterranean duty. 1943 was also the year that his wife decided to move back in to Palace House. Sir Andrew would live at the Admiralty and "most Saturdays he got down to Bishop's Waltham and gardened vigorously until after lunch on Sundays when he drove back" (Michael Simpson: A Life of Admiral of the Fleet Andrew Cunningham 2004: 261). During the planning of D-Day, Palace House was often visited by Ramsay from Southwick House (HMS Dryad). Viscount Cunningham (1946) retired to Palace House after a very illustrious career.

A.D. 3rd May 1943.
The Palace House, Bishop's Waltham.
Lady Cunningham called with reference to the Inventory of the above as she would like to have it ~~xxx~~. She is staying with Mrs Blackman at Strete End, Ashton but will be at the Palace House to-morrow (Tuesday) about 10 o'clock. She wanted to see you to-day but I said you were at a Sale and would not be back in the Office. She is on the Telephone at Strete End but not at Palace House. Would you please get in touch with her.
C.A.

Palace House, Bishop's Waltham
Schedule of dilapidations found to have accrued during the tenancy of Mrs. White

July 1st 1941

Bedroom over Drawing Room.
✓ 3 Panes of glass cracked

Bedroom over Dining Room.
✓ 2 Panes of glass cracked
Carpet badly spotted by small dog.

Drawing Room
3 Water colours missing.

With regard to the above remarks Mrs. White informed me that the panes of glass were all cracked on the same night by a bomb which fell in the vicinity.

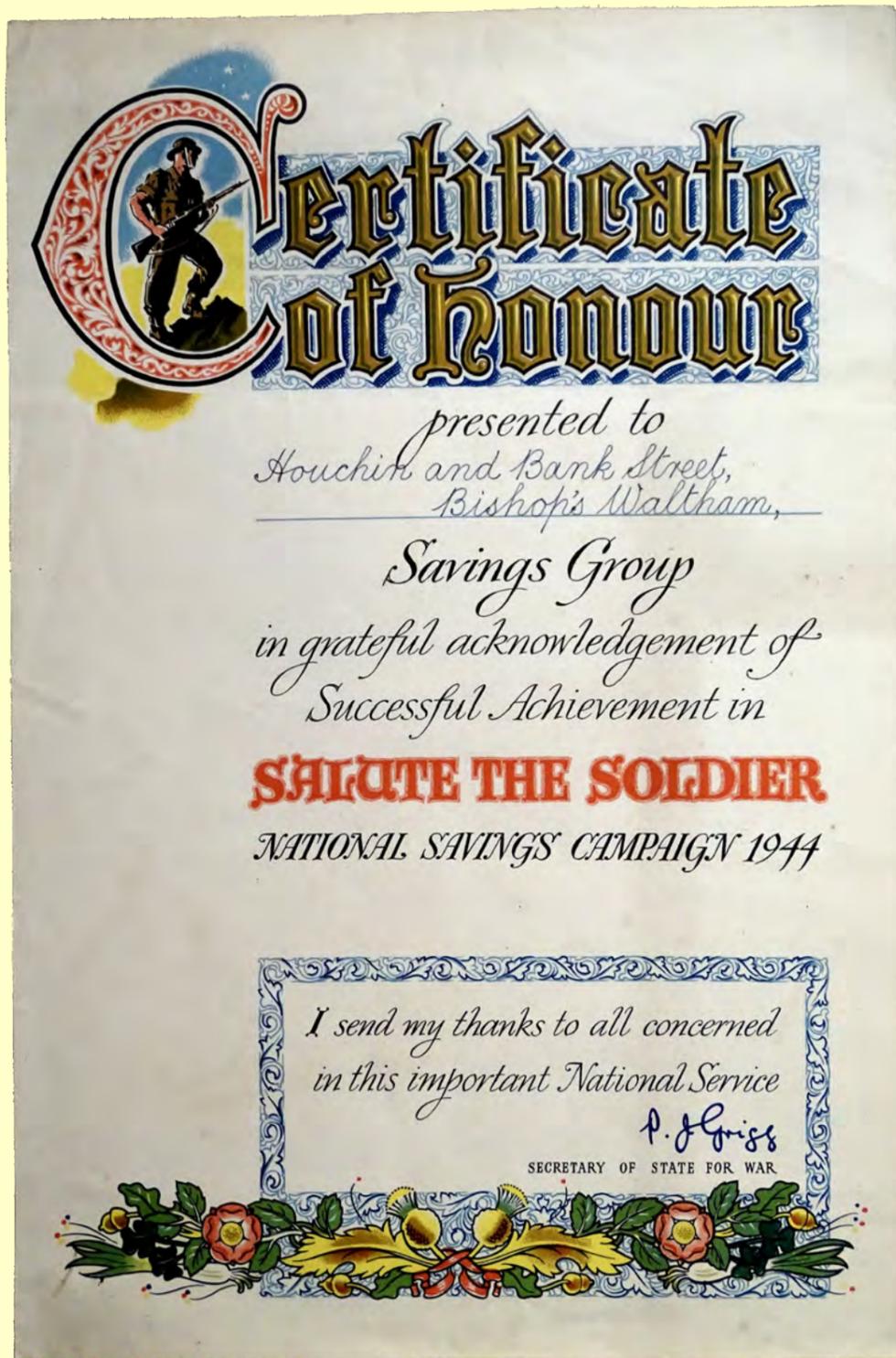
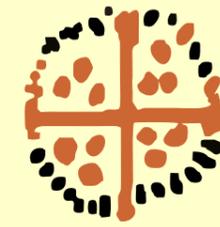
The marks on the carpet were made by Admiral Cunningham's dog which was being taken care of by Mrs. White. Mrs. White thinks that the missing water colours may have been packed with her pictures and she will let us know if this is so.

The house has been left spotlessly clean and ready for immediate occupation by another tenant.

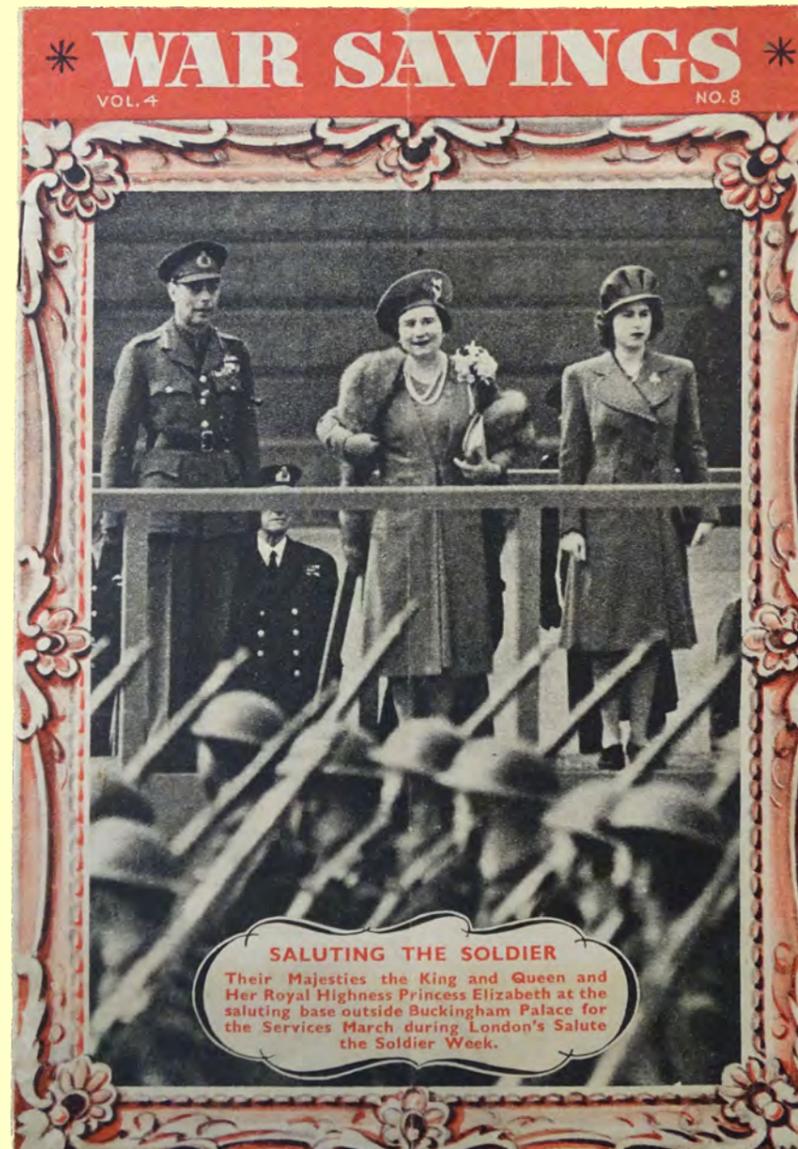
The Palace ruins were placed in the guardianship of the Ministry of Works, now **English Heritage**, in 1952.



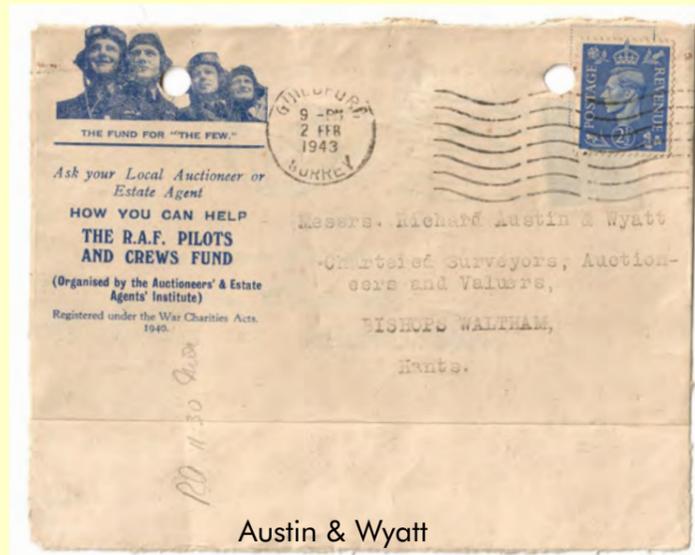
Other Ways to Play a Part: Putting your Money Behind the War Effort



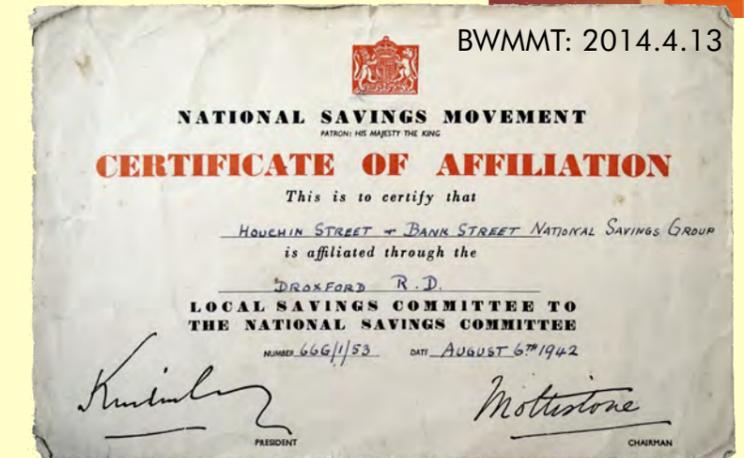
BWMMT:2014.5



BWMMT:2014.4.7



Austin & Wyatt



BWMMT: 2014.4



To Messrs Richard Austin & Wyatt
No. 3 St Peters St.
Bishops Waltham

13th October 1941

Dear Sirs,

Will you please arrange to value a Bull that has fallen into a trench at the south end of HILLIER'S field.

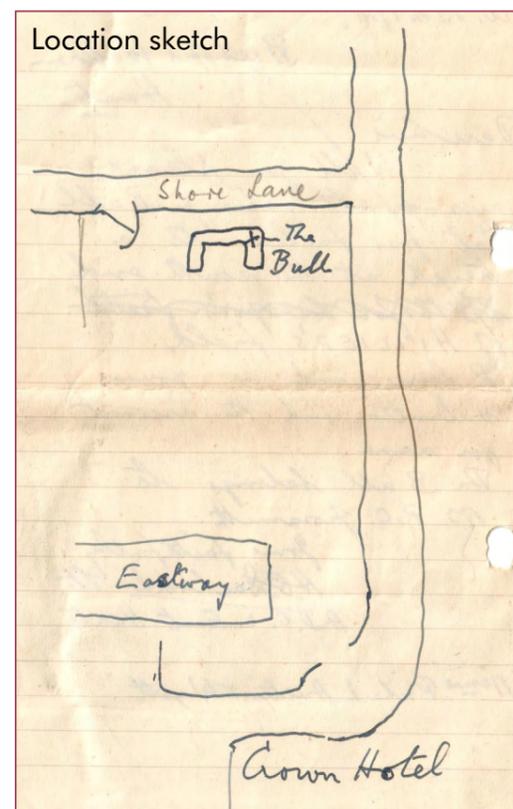
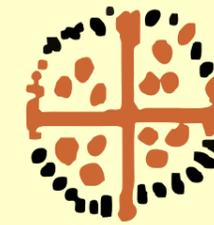
Please send me your valuation and the account for the same.

The Bull belongs to Mr R. C. Grossmith.

Your faithfully
H. C. Dashwood, Lt.
A.D.C.O East Hants.

A Load of Bull:

Humans are not the only casualties...
(From the Austin and Wyatt archives)



Note: 14/10/41
Grossmith's Bull
Military Authorities say they cannot deal with it. I endeavoured to get Wilson to remove it, without success. Phoned W.D. Lands Office who will endeavour to get military aid to remove and bury it. (Mr Banistock dealing with it) (WDLA) Fareham 2212
RA

Note: 14/10/41
Grossmith's Bull
The WDLA Office Fareham phoned to say the RE's [Royal Engineers?] will extricate Bull this afternoon.
RA

Note: 15/10/41
L.T.
War Dept. Land Agents phoned up to say that when they went down to where the Bull was they found it had already been moved. They want to know where it has gone, who moved it and on what authority they moved it...

A pure bred roan short horn, the bull was about 20 months old and purchased from Mr Frampton of Grange Farm, Netley, the breeder, in May 1941 for £15.



A typical cattle sale in field by Bishop Lane c. 1909

BW00300156

Note 15/10/1941

L.T.

Mr Harry Watson phoned and said that it was Mr. Percy Thorn who instructed Mr. Watson to move the bull. He (Mr Watson) was told it was one their bulls, and after he had inspected it and found it did not belong to him, his man reported it to Mr Thorn, and he (Mr Thorn) told him to take it away. Mr Watson said he has the skin if you wanted that, but the rest was in the copper.

M.A.

(The Watson family farmed from Jervis Court Farm, Swanmore)

Much, much more correspondence including the particulars of the bull etc etc...

Austin and Wyatt claimed £20 as they had sold a similar bull at a sale on the 7/11/1941 for £36.

The War Office dragged their feet. Mr Grossmith (of Alexandra House, Netley Abbey), complained that his "heifers were getting behind" and "this will not do with the shortage of cattle" on 31/1/1942. They finally paid up on 9/2/1942.

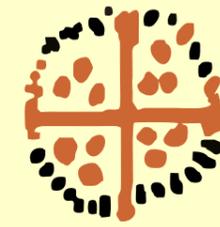


Similar remains of WWII trench in Chalky Lane, 1976.
BW00901600



They also serve...

As the photo below left shows, the number of people who volunteered to protect and serve their community was impressive. A Civil Defence Training Ground was established at Claylands, which included buildings with names such as Bleak House, Heartbreak House and Vodka Villas (HRO Home Front - more information can be found here: <http://www.hants.gov.uk/rh/archives/ww2.pdf>).



High Street parade of Fire Brigade, Women's Voluntary Service, and other services. Sadly we don't have a year for this photo, but the taping of the shop window (in a Union Jack pattern), winter coats and the possible Home Guard suggest it is still war time. BW01102392



Auxiliary Fire Service 1940. BW01102383



OFFICERS-30th DROXFORD BN: HAMPSHIRE HOME GUARD - OCTOBER 1944.

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Droxford Home Guard 1944. BW01102394

Region 6

A.G.O. Miss M. Wardroper, N.F.S., No. 14 Area H.Q., Wintershill Hall, Durley, Bishop's Waltham, Hants.



Child Refugees at Durley

Although the role of Wintershill Hall in Durley is mostly forgotten now, it has had international fame.

From: Knox, K. & Kushner, T. 2012. Refugees in an Age of Genocide:

In autumn 1945 and early 1946, over 700 orphaned children from concentration camps in Germany and Poland were brought over to England for resettlement by the Jewish Refugee Committee, paid for by Jewish refugee organisations. Wintershill Hall in Durley was one of two reception centres, chosen because it was owned by James Montefiore, brother of Leonard Montefiore who was instrumental in arranging the rescue.

The children were flown into Stoney Cross airfield in the New Forest, and then transferred. Although reported as coming from Bergen Belsen, many had never been there, and many were not German or Polish but Hungarian or Czech for example. For many, the experience was marvellous, revelling in the freedom and enjoying the attention, but it also emphasised their marginal status, displacement and isolation. British society in general had difficulty facing what they had been through. Twice weekly football games were arranged between the Durley lads and the refugee children, and the children recalled being the object of much curiosity because they looked different.

In March 1946, an article in the New Yorker magazine described life in the hostel, emphasising the gentle landscape in the tiny hamlet – a total contrast to the Nazi camps or life on the run. The children were apparently surprised that England was not a land of plenty, but everything was rationed and in short supply. They were also surprised by the bomb damage they were shown in Southampton.



Civil and Military Gazette 25/11/1945

Fifty Jewish orphans from Belsen Concentration Camp have been flown to England from Germany in two transport planes. A group of the orphans from Belsen, happily taking the air and playing an accordion, in the grounds of Wintersmill House, Durley, Hants, their new English home.



The BFI has film of the children at Wintershill Hall, although possibly a news reel that was never used (it has no sound). Click here to watch:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mH0BL2_SV9A

The children moved on from Wintershill Hall to other smaller hostels, including Overbury Court near Alton by the end of 1946. In time, more than half of the children made their homes in Britain.



The other reception centre at Windermere has been dramatised in the film: "The Windermere Children" (more information can be found by following this link: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/mediacentre/mediapacks/windermerechildren>).



Photo of the children at Wintershill Hall September 1945. The sign translates as: Blessed be the ones who enter here. See reference [HERE](#)



Looks like cake? TWO Celebrations!

Well, surely the end of the war was worth celebrating twice? "Victory in Europe" was on 8th May 1945, when Germany surrendered to the Allied Expeditionary Force and the Soviet High Command.



Street Parties in the Avenue for VJ Day

BW00901807-8

"Victory in Japan" finally arrived on 15th August 1945!

War was finally OVER... but rationing persisted, refugees had to be housed, and life was never quite the same. By 1957 however, the Prime Minister, Harold Macmillan told everyone "most of our people have never had it so good"...

In Bishop's Waltham, the celebrations included a service in St. George's Square, decorated with flags. At 8pm a service of thanksgiving was held in the church. Bonfires were lit all over the town, and searchlights used for displays. The next day there were street parties and plans made for welcoming home the returning service men and women (From P. Watkins: Bishop's Waltham Parish, Town and Church 2007).

Meanwhile the war continued in the far east and the Pacific...

