



CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT

Welcome to our April newsletter.

Usually at this time we would be in the final stages of planning for the big event; but, as you know, due to the uncertainty of the relaxation of government Covid-19 restrictions, we have once again had to cancel. Please do keep an eye on our social media and website as things will be happening later in the year: a 1940s day in October and a vintage fayre with an evening dance, in a very special venue, in November. We have a date for our AGM, it's June 23rd at the Golden Ball Ironbridge, this is two days after the (hopeful) lifting of restrictions. This meeting is open to all and some committee roles will be available – your chance to play a part in the planning of this major event.

Once again, thanks for your continued support.

Best wishes

Dave





GREAT UNCLE BEN

Hello, Ben Wilkes or as some of you may recognise me Great Uncle Ben (and others).

Back in 2009 I knew nothing about 1940's events but enjoyed going to Whitby and the North Yorkshire Moors Railway. Our trip that year just happened to coincide with the NYMR War Weekend. I must admit wondering if I really had stepped back in time that first morning as we got on the train and saw everyone in period attire.

We enjoyed the event so much, that the particular weekend became a pilgrimage for the next few years and as we travelled home each year we kept saying we should get more involved. In 2014 as we leaving Whitby I just happened to spot a vintage period police uniform for sale online.

As a retired police officer I thought, I could portray that role. By the time we had driven to Scarborough I'd placed a bid and won the uniform.

But I needed something else to wear and a chance discovery that I had a Great Uncle who served in Manchester City Police at the turn of the 1900's gave me the idea for a series of characters. Each with their own 1940's story. A little crazy, but those who know me will probably understand it's quite normal for my ideas. And so The Great Uncles were "born".

We then discovered a homefront re-enactment group, Spirit Of The Homefront and we enjoy attending events throughout the year, the highlight of course being Ironbridge War Weekend. 2019 was of course the year that wasn't but I've managed to add to the wardrobe during the year with promotions for Great Uncle Ben displaying his progress from Pc, Sergeant, Inspector to Superintendent as well as additions for the other 14 Great Uncles!

Look forward to assisting you across the road, or into the Black Maria at an event very soon.

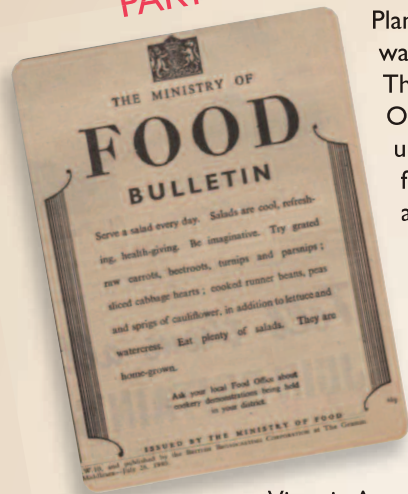
If you'd like to know more about the adventures of The Great Uncles you can follow us on Facebook, just search for The Great Uncles.





HEALTHY WARTIME EATING

PART 1



The Ministry of Food advised and promoted the importance of planning and eating healthily. Planning meals was important for health and despite the shortages an adequate and well-balanced diet was also important for health, in wartime as it is today in our modern lives.

The Ministry of Food produced leaflets and booklets guiding people how to plan and eat healthily. One notable leaflet "Foods for Fitness: An A.B.C. of Choosing Foods", tells the reader the importance of understanding how food plays its part in living healthy and how to plan or design a healthy diet with the foods available. Foods were divided into three main groups, body-building foods, protective foods, and energy foods. Body-building foods to encourage physical growth, muscle tone, and healthy bones and teeth. Calcium and vitamin D foods for healthy strong bones and teeth from milk, cheese and vegetables. The National Loaf had calcium added to it to ensure that everyone consumed calcium. Protein foods would include meats, poultry, fish, cheese, milk and eggs. Vegetables in this group include peas, beans, lentils, cereals and nuts. As we know protein is essential for growth and muscle development and this was an important group of foods for the Government to keep supply sufficient throughout the war.

The next group, protective foods, was encouraged as part of the wartime diet to fight and defend against ill health and disease. This food group is basically the vitamins A, C, D and B Complex.

Vitamin A was sourced from fish oils, liver, butter and dairy, carrots and green leafy vegetables, and was added to margarine. Cod liver oil was given to growing children and expectant mothers.

Vitamin C was consumed through fruit and vegetables (especially green leaf veg), potatoes, tomatoes, rosehip syrup and blackcurrant syrup. Expectant mothers and babies were given orange juice as part of their weekly ration to ensure that they had extra vitamin C. Fish liver oils, fatty fish, butter, the creamy part of milk and egg yolk all contain Vitamin D which works with calcium to in developing growing and healthy strong bones and teeth. People were also encouraged to spend a certain amount of time outdoors in the sun, which provides us with vitamin D through the skin, also known as the "sunshine vitamin".

Vitamin B complex helps maintain a healthy digestive system and a healthy nervous system. It is found in cereal grain, milk, liver, pork, bacon and potatoes. It was also added to the National flour and bread.

We think of the wartime diet as containing a lot of fat, but my experience is that our modern foods can contain more fat than that which was available in wartime. It is also worth noting here that our 1940s counterparts were much more active in their daily lives too. This was also one of the important food stuffs for our final food groups – energy foods. It was needed to give the energy to live and work through the rigours of wartime. Starchy foods and sugar were also high in energy. The Ministry also warned that consuming too much of these energy foods would be stored as fat.

This is just a brief look at nutrition during wartime.

Next time we will use this information to start planning a 1940s menu.



CORNFLOUR MOULD

**This is a nice cold sweet, flavoured to your choice and can be served with fresh fruit.
Ideal for a summers day.**

1 ½ oz of cornflour (you can use custard powder instead)

1 ½ oz sugar

Pinch of salt

1 pint of milk

Flavouring

Mix cornflour, sugar and salt with a little milk to form a smooth paste.

Boil the rest of the milk, then slowly add to blended cornflour.

Return mixture to the pan, add flavouring and bring to the boil, stirring well all the time.

Boil for a further 5 minutes and then pour the mixture into a wetted mould and leave to cool.

When complete set turn out onto serving plate.



OK, this isn't going to be War and Peace! Hopefully, it will be just a hint of what my wife and I found on our first visit to Ironbridge 1940's event.

Our first visit was in 2018 - we were just getting into the 40's events and someone had suggested we visit this "little event" in the place with the bridge made of iron" (luckily I have a road map and a sense of direction).

We parked up, nervously wondering where we were as we had been directed to a car park in a derelict factory site, but as there were lots of other people parking; some dressed vintage; others with cameras, we followed them in the direction of away! Walking down the hill there were some small signs of what was to come; the odd vintage car, the pieces of bunting, a Sentry box. "Is this it do you think" asked my wife Sue. Unsure we carried on walking... and so glad we did. At the bottom of the road, it literally felt like we had stepped back in time, we turned right into Dale End Park and there before us was a sight to behold.

We walked into the park, and happily gave a donation to Pilgrim Bandits, the charity this event was supporting and continued. There were tents set up with displays, tombola, food and drink, but the thing that hit me was everyone was dressed in vintage. That was it, this was Nirvana, Heaven, Shangri La: the thing Sue and I had been looking for! A small, inexpensive hobby, that would not take up much time (oh, how innocent we were!) Then the reality, Ben and Amos and their display with their good ladies, Tony and his Home Guard display, the vintage cars, the military vehicles... fab. But wait! What is this? Another field through the hedge? Full-on military displays, living-history, living in front of us. Yes, there are Germans; yes, they have guns; yes, they fire them. However to work against them Allies; with guns, firing theirs!!

If you have never experienced a 1940's weekend, it's not all about boys and their toys. The people at Ironbridge who were displaying, knew their stuff. They research, they source, they purchase, they get the knowledge. They know about their subjects, from foot powder to Sherman tanks - the details are impressive. Everyone is helpful and happy to talk, even one of the organisers took the time to stop and chat and explain what was going to happen on the day (I am certain I saw his hair turning grey as he spoke to us) but as a host Dave Adams was gracious and informative, as were all his team.

Sue and I explored, we shopped, we were amazed how the town threw itself into supporting the event. We were hooked!! We met people there who have since become friends and "family" in the 1940's world. Ben and Laura (and their fabulous display), Ruth who opened her house to us the following year, Jo and Tony who we consider our soulmates, and so many others.

Please, whenever Ironbridge can throw its doors open again (so to speak) please come and enjoy a fabulous weekend. Shopping, food, living-history, and even on the Saturday night an event that Spike Milligan would have described as "cocking of the leg" It's in aid of charity, it's fun, it's exciting and.... wait for it..... FREE!!! Yes, that is right, free! It got me hooked, so much so that I can't wait for 2022. You will find me now, or perhaps not, at Ironbridge 1940's weekend doing my "thing" or taking photos of the events that the Ironbridge organisers have to raise money to run the event and support the chosen charities.

If you see me, or any living history display, enjoy the experience, talk to people, have fun, and remember the reason that these events happen.

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IRONBRIDGE MEMORIES



THIS MONTH IN WWII.

COVENTRY'S FORGOTTEN BLITZ

This month marks the 80th anniversary of Coventry's forgotten Blitz.

'Blitz', the German word for lightning was used by the British Press to describe the seemingly endless bombing raids made on Britain in the early years of World War II. Their aim was to disrupt manufacturing, wear down morale and generally weaken the British war effort.

Although 'The Blitz' is usually associated with London, it is easy to forget that 'The Blitz' took place across many cities throughout the country. Coventry was one city which suffered much, especially in November 1940 and less remember in April 1941.

The April 1941 attacks are perhaps not as famous as the heavy raids of the previous November, which witnessed the destruction of the city's famous cathedral, however these attacks were no less deadly.

The city's famous cathedral was already in ruins following a direct hit from a Luftwaffe bomb during a raid on 14th November 1940, but the city still continued to be an important cog in keeping Britain in the war. For example, Alvis made armoured cars while Aero manufactured important parts for the RAF. Of course, much of the workforce for these factories lived in the surrounding area, therefore even bombs which didn't hit the factories could have an affect on the outcome of the war.

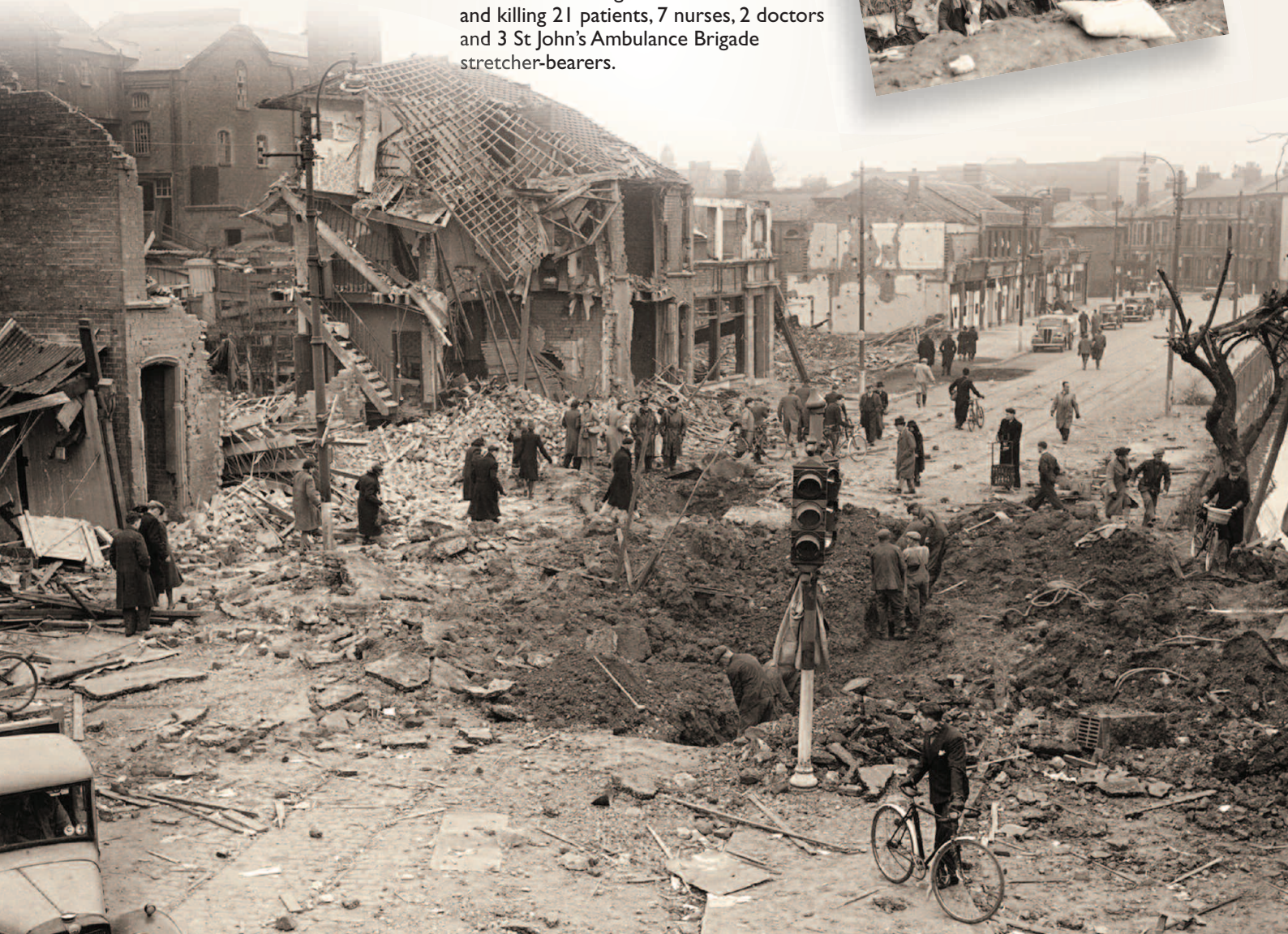
The April raids would kill and injure many more hundreds of people, as well as damage or destroy landmarks which had survived the November raids, such as Christ Church, King Henry VIII School, and the Coventry & Warwickshire Hospital.

On the night of the 8th April the hospital suffered ten direct hits and 25 near misses from incendiary and high explosive bombs, devastating the infrastructure and killing 21 patients, 7 nurses, 2 doctors and 3 St John's Ambulance Brigade stretcher-bearers.

The damage destroyed the gas and water supply, with water having to be taken from the surrounding sources to put out the fire.

Worst was still to come when an unexploded bomb, which was just outside the main entrance, detonated killing dozens of people who had been moved to the basement of the hospital for their safety during the raid the night before.

Six George Medals were earned within the city during the war. Four of them due to actions following these attacks.





READER'S QUESTIONS

Q. Why are German reenactors at The Ironbridge WWII Weekend?

A. Thank you for your question.

Our event is a World War II living-history event, not a Home Front event.

We want to provide a fully rounded experience of the events which shaped the modern world and strongly believe that this can only be done with reenactors who portray Axis forces. We understand that there are people who may not agree with this, therefore we do request that all reenactors who wear Axis uniforms change before they venture into the town.

At each public entrance into the park, we ensure that there are signs informing the public that they will encounter Axis displays. These notify that there may see insignia linked to these and that anyone who will be offended by these are respectfully requested not to enter the event.

PUBLIC NOTICE

You are hereby notified that uniforms, equipment and symbols of all nations (Allied & Axis) from the wartime period between 1939 and 1945 may be on display at this event.

Any persons likely to be offended by historical reenactment displays are respectfully requested not to enter the event.



Radios Of Yesteryear
Ironbridge

Vintage modified radios for the 40s community. Bluetooth, USB, Micro SD and FM equipped.

You can find us on Facebook.

