

**Significant historical
events in the locality**

**Crewe during the
Second World War**

For Teachers: Curriculum Links

This resource has been developed to support the following National Curriculum links.

Key Stage 2

- History: A local history study, a study of an aspect of history or a site dating from a period beyond 1066 that is significant in the locality.
- History: A study of an aspect or theme in British history that extends pupils' chronological knowledge beyond 1066, a significant turning point in British history, for example, the first railways or the Battle of Britain.

Key Stage 3

- History: Challenges for Britain, Europe and the wider world 1901 to the present day, the the Second World War.
- History: A local history study, a depth study linked to one of the British areas of study listed above and a study of an aspect or site in local history dating from a period before 1066

For Teachers: Additional Resources

We already have three resource packs available that focus on Crewe during the the Second World War.

John Bunting

A resource pack investigating the real story of John Bunting, an apprentice fitter in the Rolls Royce factory in Pymms Lane, Crewe during the the Second World War. This is when Rolls Royce were contracted by the government to produce Merlin Aero engines for the Spitfire and Hurricane aircraft that fought during the Battle of Britain.

Daisy Haywood

A resource pack investigating the roles of women in Crewe during the the Second World War. This explores the Land Army, the Rolls Royce factory making Merlin aero engines, railway porters at Crewe Station and air raid wardens.

Remembrance in Crewe

A resource pack investigating how people have remembered those lost in conflict in Crewe.

You can find these here: <https://www.crewetowncouncil.gov.uk/council-services-2/crewe-heritage/heritage-resources/>

You can see how these resources support the curriculum here: <https://www.crewetowncouncil.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Teacher-Curriculum-Links.pdf>

What is included in this resource pack?

This pack will focus on the locality during the Second World War and explore the following enquiry questions.

Enquiry Question 1: How did Crewe contribute to the wider war effort in Britain?

- Introduction
- The First World War recap
- The Second World War: Merlin aero- engines
- The Second World War: Women's roles
- The Second World War: Covenanter tanks
- The Second World War: Uniform manufacturing

Enquiry Question 2: How did the people of Crewe prepare for the Second World War?

- Introduction
- Shelters in Crewe
- Precautions at the Works
- Invasion exercises
- Taking on new roles

Enquiry Question 3: How did the Second World War affect life in Crewe?

- Introduction

- Food and rationing
- Bomb damage
- Scrap railings
- Prisoner of War Camps: Crewe Hall
- Prisoner of War Camps: Weston Village

Enquiry Question 4: What was life like for children in Crewe during the Second World War?

- Introduction
- Toys
- Evacuation
- Memories

Enquiry Question 5: How was Crewe protected from aerial attacks?

- Introduction
- No.949 Crewe Barrage Balloon Squadron
- Blackouts
- Camouflaged walls

Enquiry Question 6: Why was Crewe a target for bombing?

- Introduction: Evidence

Enquiry Question 7: What happened in Crewe when the war was over?

- Introduction: VE Day

Enquiry Question 1

How did Crewe contribute to the wider war effort in Britain?

Enquiry Question 1 Introduction

During the First World War, Crewe Works and different industries in Crewe at the time contributed to the wider war effort through the manufacturing of the Crewe Tractor, armoured trains, munitions and prosthetic limbs.

When the Second World War began, industries within Crewe already knew how to use the skills and expertise in their area to shift manufacturing onto resources needed for the wider war effort.

Let's recap what they manufactured for the First World War and explore what they manufactured in the Second World War.

The First World War recap

The First World War began in 1914. Crewe Works at the time was managed by the London and North Western Railway (LNWR) and they were fully supportive of the war effort, as were most railway manufacturing companies at the time. The LNWR was asked by the British Government to use their locomotive manufacturing skills to develop different resources for the war effort and a majority of this was completed at Crewe Works.

During this period, they were involved in the manufacturing of:

- **The Crewe Tractor:** They used their skills of developing locomotives and adapted 138 different vehicles made by the London and North Western Railway (LNWR) at Crewe Works to develop the Crewe Tractor. This was because there was a lack of powered transport in the trenches in France and Belgium. They developed this from a Ford Model T car so that it could be adapted to a locomotive within one hour. This Crewe Tractor locomotive could transport carts of munitions, weapons and medical equipment to the trenches.
- **Munitions:** They opened a new division within their Works to develop munitions like weapons and explosive shells. It was a dangerous job but was the first time women were encouraged to work at Crewe Works. Read our Daisy Bunting resource pack to find out more.
- **Prosthetic limbs:** Crewe Works also specialised in making prosthetic limbs for employees who had accidents at the Works, like losing their hands, arms or legs. Accidents were common with so much heavy moving machinery in the Works. Crewe Works had a prosthetic limb maker at the Works hospital called Edwin Flockton who helped to make 17,000 prosthetic limbs for staff. When the First World War began in 1914, Crewe Works hospital made bespoke prosthetic limbs for soldiers who had lost a limb.
- **Armoured trains:** They made and equipped two armoured trains in 1915. These were for defending the coastlines in Norfolk and Scotland. They were fitted with guns that could shoot three miles.

**This is the Crewe
Tractor made by
Crewe Works during
the First World War.**



**This is the Crewe
Works munitions
team outside the
General Offices.**



Credit: Cheshire
Archives and Local
Studies

† DAISY HAYWOOD
MUNITION WORKERS AT CREWE
1914-1918.

**This is Edwin
Flockton.**

Credit: British
Newspaper Archive
and Railway Work,
Life and Death Project



MR. E. FLOCKTON, Orfere,
who has retired from Crewe Works.
He was the Railway Company's artificial
limb expert.

Listen to this audio clip where Howard Curran talks about his memories of when Crewe Works helped the war effort:

**At 7:45 you can also
hear about Crewe
Works made
prosthetic limbs.**

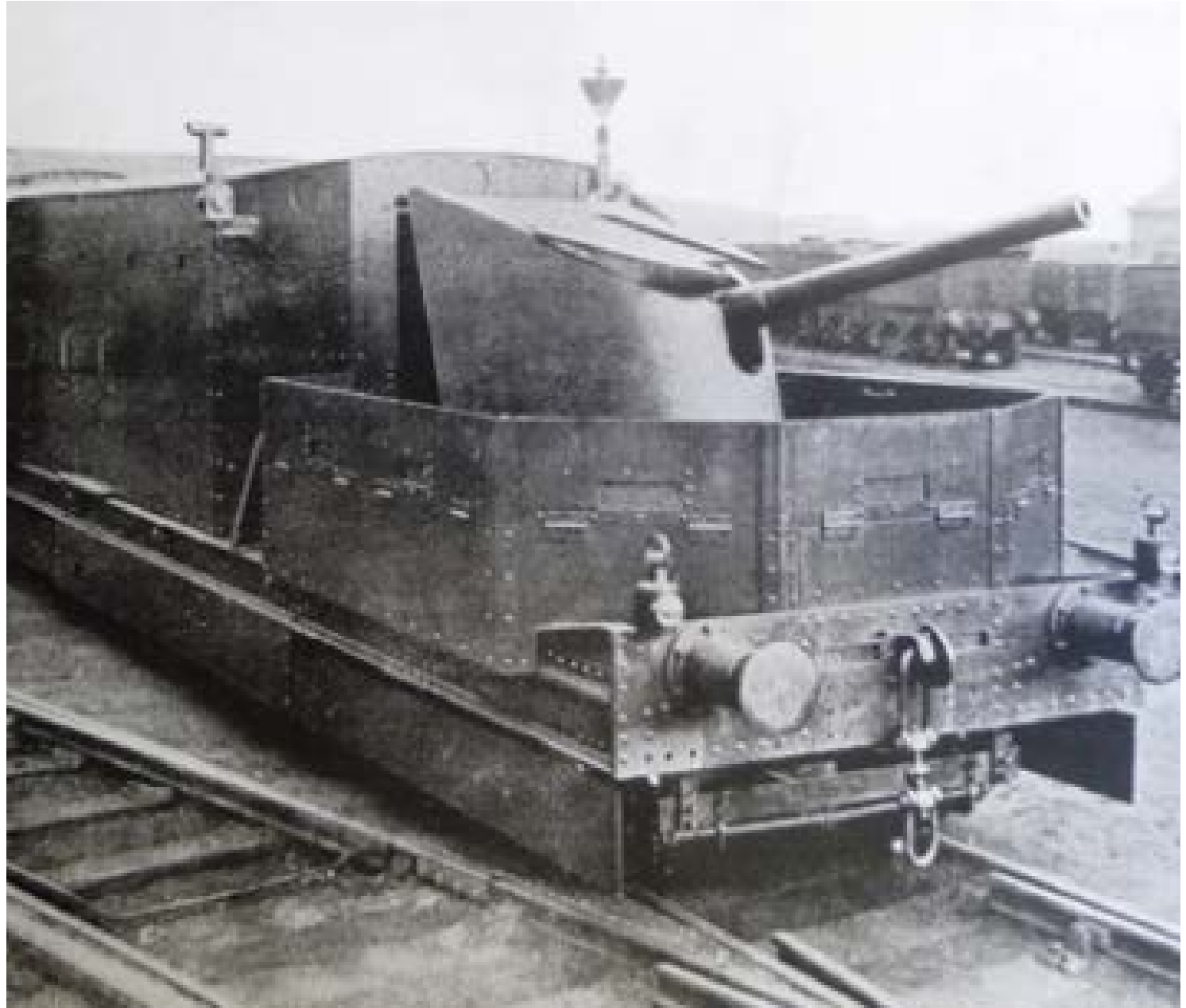
**This is one of the
Crewe Works
manufactured
armoured trains.**

Credit: Imperial War
Museum



**This is another one of
the Crewe Works
manufactured
armoured trains.**

Credit: National
Railway Museum



The Second World War: Merlin aero- engines

In the 1930's, the British Government and Rolls Royce began preparing for war. They began their search for land in July 1938 to build a secret 'shadow' factory for an important challenge, building Merlin aero- engines for Hurricane and Spitfire aircraft. It was these aircraft that would win the Battle of Britain.

- Crewe was chosen due to it being so well connected via the road and railways.
- Construction began on Merrill's farm (now the Bentley factory) and the site opened in 1938, the first Merlin aero-engine was completed just 5 months later.
- During the Second World War, the factory employed around 10,000 people and built houses for their employees.
- The well built, powerful engines made the aircraft travel over 400mph!
- 26,065 Merlin engines were produced by the Crewe factory.
- The factory was camouflaged as housing and streets when viewed from the air and the windows were blacked out to disguise them and make them less likely to be bombed by an enemy plane.
- They did this because they thought Crewe was likely to be bombed as it was a busy railway town and the opposition would have wanted to create transport disruption.
- On Sunday 29th December 1940 at 15:09, two bombs were dropped on the factory, killing seventeen workers.



- **Read our John Bunting resource pack to find out more.**

**This is the factory in
Crewe. Women also
worked at the factory
operating machines
and testing engines.**



Credit: Ann Black

The Second World War: Women's roles

During the Second World War, women were expected to undertake jobs they had not been allowed to do either before the war or since the First World War.

Women in Crewe took up different jobs across Crewe to help out.

- In the munition factories making bullets and bomb shells packed with explosives (During WW1).
- At the Webb Orphanage hospital near Queens Park caring for wounded soldiers (During WW1).
- In the Land Army growing fruit and vegetables for the local area.
- As train porters at Crewe train station, helping with luggage.
- At the Rolls Royce factory testing Merlin aero- engines.
- As Air Raid Wardens, making sure civilians were safe during air raids.
- The role of women in both the First World War and the Second World War was vital to ensuring that life back at home in Britain stayed as normal as can be.



- **Read our Daisy Bunting resource pack to find out more.**

**This shows the railway
porters at Crewe
railway station during
the Second World
War.**



Credit: MirrorPix

The Second World War: Covenanter Tanks

During the Second World War, Crewe Works used this skill to manufacture and refurbish Covenanter Tanks.

Crewe Works at this time was operated by the London, Midland and Scottish Railway Company (LMS) and they were appointed by the government to design and build an improved Covenanter tank.

They were appointed because Britain at the time had a limited capacity to manufacture tanks and so they looked for Works that could quickly use their manufacturing skills to build a better tank than in the past.

During this time, Crewe Works produced around 150 Covenanter tanks for the British Army in just two months. These were built by around 8,000 men and women who were employed specifically to do this job.

Crewe Works began by testing the manufacturing of the tanks before beginning large scale production. However, the tanks had a problem that meant they were never actively used in conflict. The large engine meant there was no internal space for a cooling radiator. A cooling radiator was mounted externally and connected to the engine via pipes but it did not work properly leading to the overheating of the engine and the crew compartment.

After 1941, it was decided that Covenanter tanks would only be used in Britain and only for training purposes.

**You can see the
Covenantor tanks
being made in Crewe
Works.**



**This is the tank in
action.**

Credit: WikiMedia
Commons



The Second World War: Uniform manufacturing

Crewe was also where local industries and manufacturers privately supplied products for the war effort.

One of these industries was Chester Barrie, a clothing company specialising in suits.

The factory was opened in Crewe due to its convenient location near cloth mills in Huddersfield and shipping location to the United States, at the Port of Liverpool.

The factory was opened on Chestnut Grove road in Crewe in 1935. From the beginning of the Second World War, they focused on manufacturing uniforms for the US Army stationed in Europe after the United States became involved in the war following the Pearl Harbour attack.

At the height of the company in Crewe, there were around 1,000 people working here.

**Take a look at these
images inside the
Chester Barrie
clothing factory.**

Credit: Cheshire
Archives and Local
Studies



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Enquiry Question 2

**How did the people of Crewe
prepare for the Second World
War?**

Enquiry Question 2 Introduction

The First World War focused on ground battles which resulted in mainly soldiers being wounded or killed.

By the Second World War, there had been a lot of advancement in technology and weapons.

The use of aircraft, meant that the people of Crewe faced the new threat of aerial bombing.

The local people in Crewe had to adapt the way they lived and worked to protect themselves from this threat.

Shelters in Crewe

Britain began to plan how to keep civilians safe during an air raid attack.

An air raid attack is when a bomb is dropped from aircraft onto a ground target.

The sound of the sirens would warn you that you had a limited time to get to a shelter. Where you went depended on if you were at home or out in the town. Sirens would also sound the all clear when you could leave your shelter. In Crewe, there were different types of shelters. Brick and concrete shelters were built in nearly all side streets in the town centre.

- **Anderson shelters:** You would build these small shelters yourself from corrugated sheets of steel that would be delivered and they were built in your back garden. They could withstand the effects of a 100 pound bomb.
- **Public air raid shelters:** If you were outside in the town you might not have had enough time to get back home before an attack. Public air raid shelters were built in Crewe often with toilet facilities and beds.
- **Basements and cellars:** Many people also sheltered in cellars underneath their home during an attack. Some public places like churches and Webb Orphanage opened up their basement shelters to the public too.
- **Trenches:** In Crewe, many trenches were built next to schools and could fit all the pupils from the school.

Read this story of Betty Balfour from Crewe, who recounts her memories of building their Anderson shelter in Crewe.

Credit: (WW2 People's War is an online archive of wartime memories contributed by members of the public and gathered by the BBC. The archive can be found at bbc.co.uk/ww2peopleswar. Betty Balfour, WW2 People's War.)

"It was on a Friday afternoon in April 1940 that rather a rough-looking man came to the door to tell us he'd left our 'Anderson' shelter on the pavement at the bottom of our steps.

Dad was out at work, so my schoolgirl sister and I dragged and tugged the various parts up to the garden. Mam was ready, as usual, with the directions, "Up a bit at your end." "Now lift your end and turn towards me." "Can't you make less noise?" You know the kind of thing.

There was an assortment of sheets of bright new corrugated iron, long straight pieces, short straight pieces. All the curved ones were long and they were the most awkward to handle. There was a bag made of sacking which held nuts and bolts which should correspond with the holes in the corrugated sheets. No sign of any instruction or diagram.

As soon as Dad had eaten his tea, we made a start. A hole had to be dug in the garden as far as possible from the house. All the soil was piled in heaps ready to be shovelled on top of the shelter when it was fitted inside.

It took all weekend, working hard, to get it finished. We crept inside, one by one, to try it. Neither Dad nor I could stand up straight. The roof was too low. Mam didn't like the idea of walking on bare soil, so Dad had to make a floor of duck boarding. That made it lower still. Then he made four very narrow bunks from the wood and springs of an old mattress, so we perched on these."

This is an Anderson shelter.

Listen to this audio clip to hear what an air raid siren sounded like:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/school-radio/history-ks2-world-war-2-clips-air-raid-siren-sounds-the-warning/zntfbbk>

Credit: Imperial War Museum



**This is a list of cellars
and trenches in
Crewe.**

**Do you recognise the
location of any?**

**Credit: Imperial War
Museum**

Index

Public Trenches

Site	Dia. No.	Site	Dia. No.
North Ward Playground	1	Hospital Street	15
Victoria Avenue (opp. Queen's Pk)	2	West St. bet. Goddard St & West St	16
Gresty Road	3	Hammond St (rear of No. 1)	17
South Ward Playground	4	Martin Street	18
Wistaston Road	5	Arthur Street (rear of Nos 2-16)	19
West Ward Playground	6	Audley St. (near Middlewich St.)	20
Neville Street (corner of Barker St)	7	Lockitt Street & Bank Street	21
St. Mary's Street (Catholic Bank)	8	Spring Grove (off Broad St)	22
Betw. Frank Webb Avenue and Underwood Lane }	9	Adelside St (rear of No 28)	23
		Foundry St (land end of)	24
Delamere Street ('Odeon' car park)	10	Stanley St	25
Underwood Lane	11	Henry Street	26
Denver Avenue	X 12	Castle Street	27
Earle Street	13	Broad St (near Cross Keys Hotel)	28
Victoria Avenue (Corporation Fm)	14	Collins Street	29
Betw. Underwood Lane & Oxford Street.		30	

School Trenches

Bedford Street Girls	1	Minshull New Road	9
Bedford Street Boys	2	Borough Schools	10
Adelaide Street	3	Mill Street	11
Wistaston Road	4	Oxford Street	12
Broad Street	5	St. Mary's R.C.	13
Adelaide Street Infants	6	Edleston Road	14
West Street	7	Ludford Street	15
Glover Street Mission Hall	8	Pedley Street	16

Public Basements

Albert St. (Nos. 8-30)	22
Brooklyn St (Winchester House)	32
Browning St. (Heathfield Methodist Sunday School)	5
Chester Bridge (Messrs. W Eardley, H. Booth, & Shaw Ltd)	10
Earle St. (Euston Restaurant & Messrs Woodhouse)	8
do. (Nos. 35-39)	14
do. (Nos. 104A, 106 & 2 King St)	13

Public Basements (CONTINUED)

Site	Dia. No.
Edleston Rd (No. 168)	29
do. (Nos. 199-205)	30
do. (Nos. 37-39)	40
Flag Lane Corporation Baths	34
Ford Lane Coppenhall Rectory	9
Gresty Road Offices, Cattle Market.	39
Heath Street Castle Buildings	2
do. Corn Exchange	11
Market Street Blue Cap Dog Hotel	1
do. Messrs. Montague Burton	4
do. No. 192 (Rapid Tyre Service)	12
do. Nos. 50-58	16
do. Nos. 112-114	17
do. Co-op. Confectionery Dept	18
Mill Street Royal Oak Hotel	15
do. Nos. 71-73	23
do. Nos. 160-166	28
do. Old Baths	31
Nantwich Road Earle of Crewe Hotel	35
do. Nos. 77-81	36
do. Nos. 108-114	37
do. No. 136	38
Oak Street Pioneer Anglers Club	3
Pym's Lane Ash Bank Hotel	19
Station Street Queen's Hotel	25
do. Messrs Avery Ltd	26
do. Wilson House	27
Stalbridge Rd. St. John's Institute	33
Victoria Street Burton Hotel	6
do. No. 100	41
do. Nos. 27-45	42
Victoria Avenue Webb Orphanage	7
West Street Nos. 7-17	20
do. Nos. 83-115	21
do. St. Barnabas' Vicarage	24

Commercial & Factory Premises.

Messrs. Marks & Spencer Ltd.	Market Street	1
Messrs. F.W. Woolworth & Co Ltd	Market Street	2
Crewe Stationery Co	Frances Street	3
Imperial Chambers	Prince Albert Street	4
Crewe Co-op'tive Clothing Factory	Lord Street	5
Crewe Co-op'tive Stores	Co-operative Street	6

Read more about the
air raids in the Crewe
Chronicle newspaper.

Credit: British
Newspaper Archive

CREWE AIR RAID PROTECTION

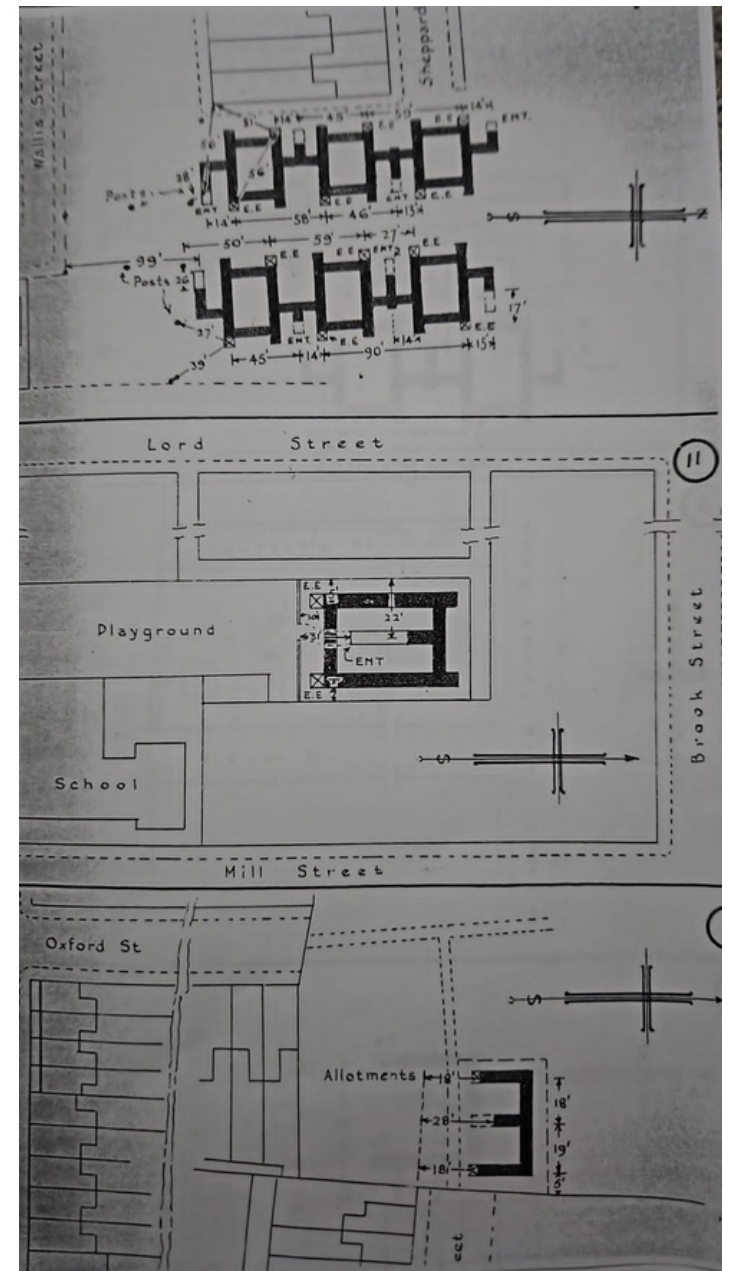
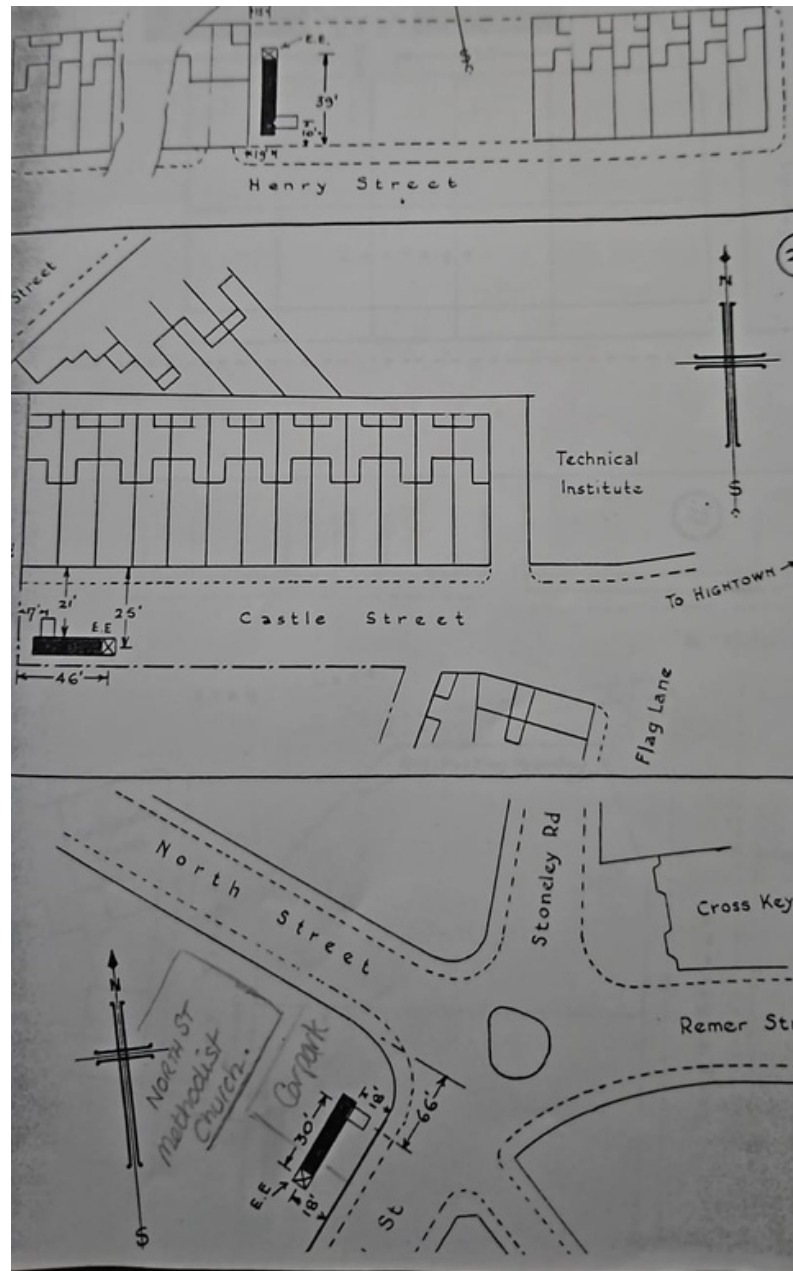
ENORMOUS AMOUNT OF WORK

ROOM IN 5,272 SHELTERS FOR 49,663 PEOPLE

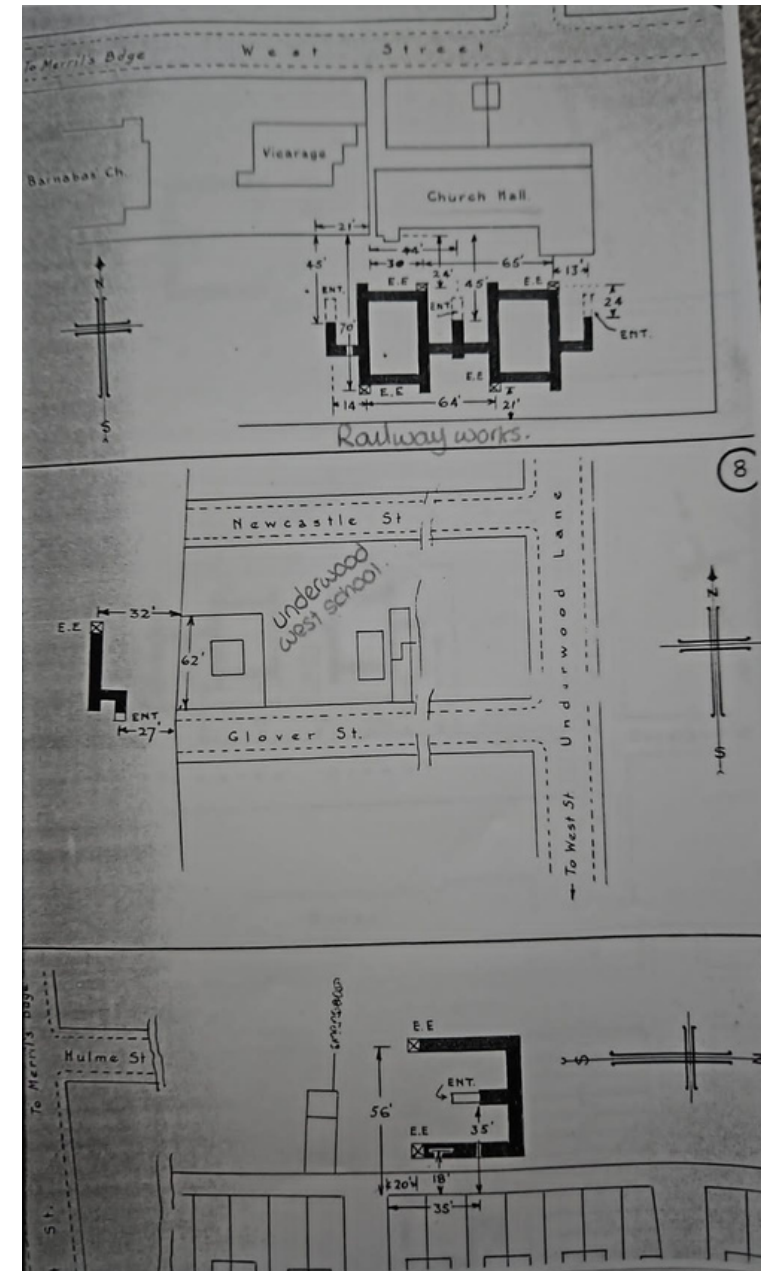
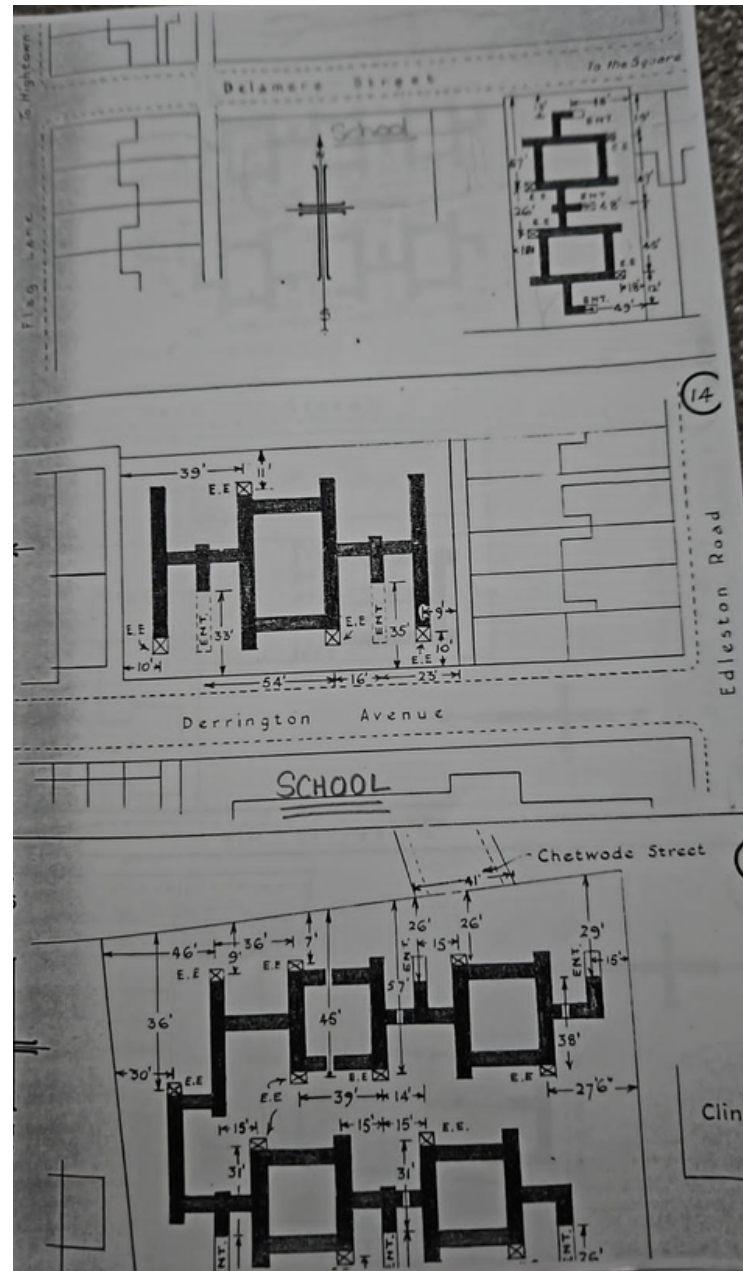
The minutes of the Civil Defence Committee of Crewe Town Council, which were adopted at the Council meeting on Wednesday, referred to a comprehensive report by the Borough Engineer, Mr. L. Reeves, on the provision of air raid shelter. This report covers the whole of the war period.

An enormous amount of work, he said, was carried out in a comparatively short time and under difficult and trying circumstances, not only with regard to labour and materials, but also because of the vacillating policy of Government Departments. Accommodation had been provided for 49,663 people, which meant that in an emergency, and allowing for persons on duty or at work and accommodated there, 100 per cent. of the population could be safely protected from enemy attack. That was no mean achievement, especially as a considerable part of the accommodation was provided for within the first few months, and the whole within three years of the outbreak of war.

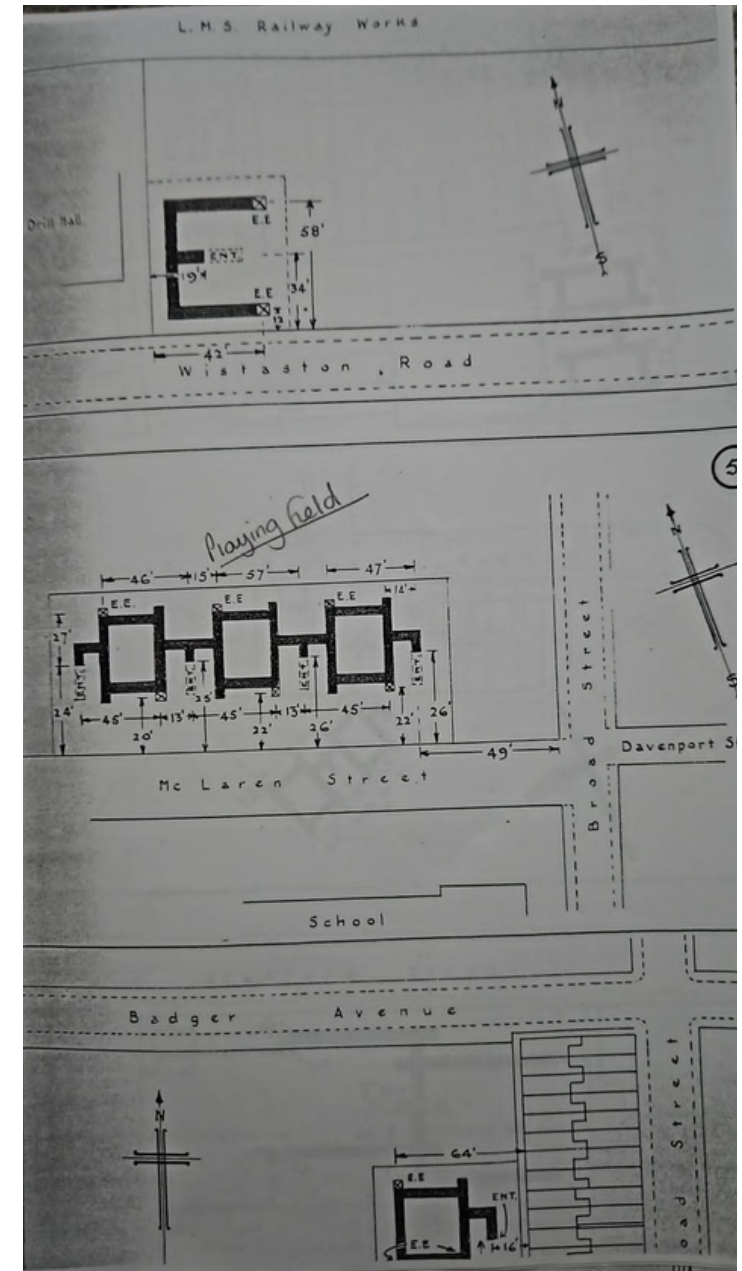
Look at these
illustrations of
trenches built for
schools in Crewe.



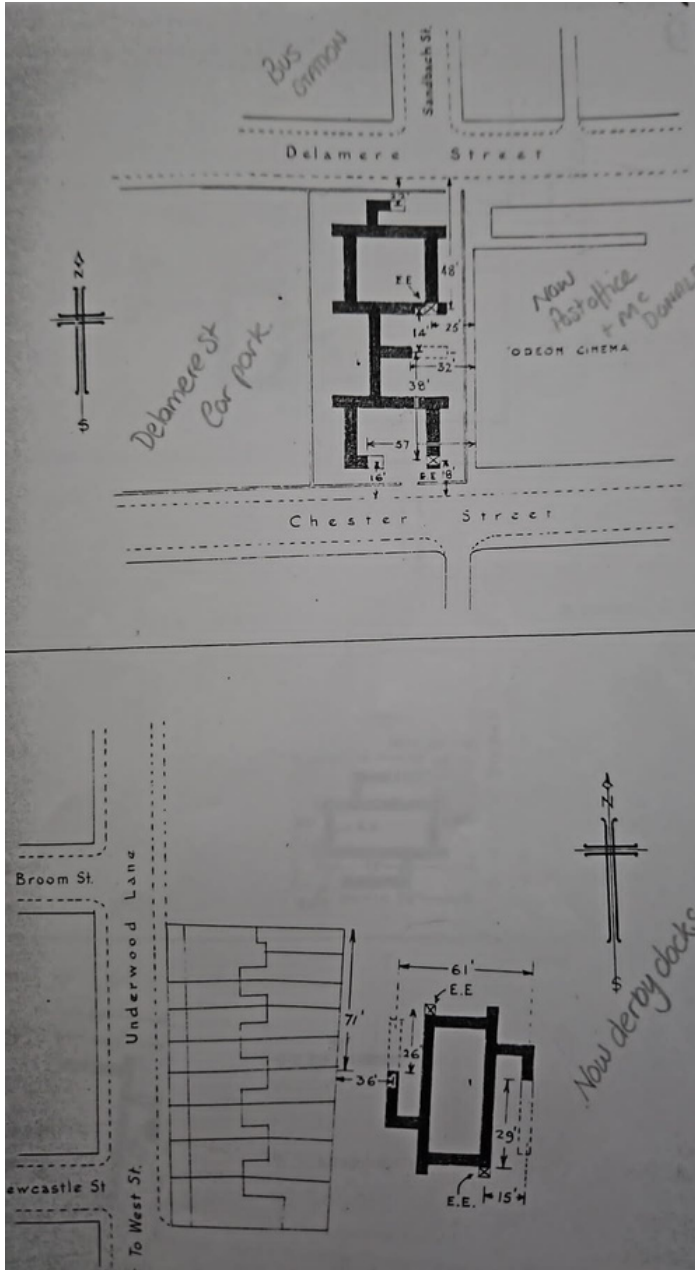
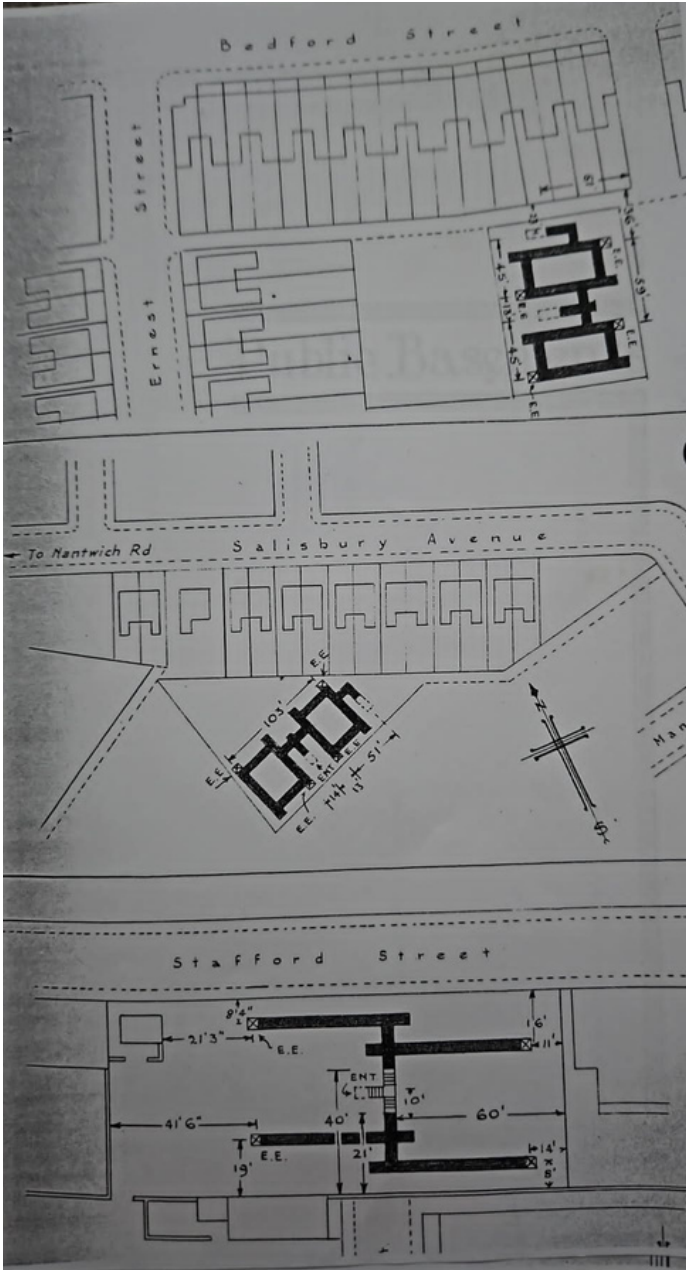
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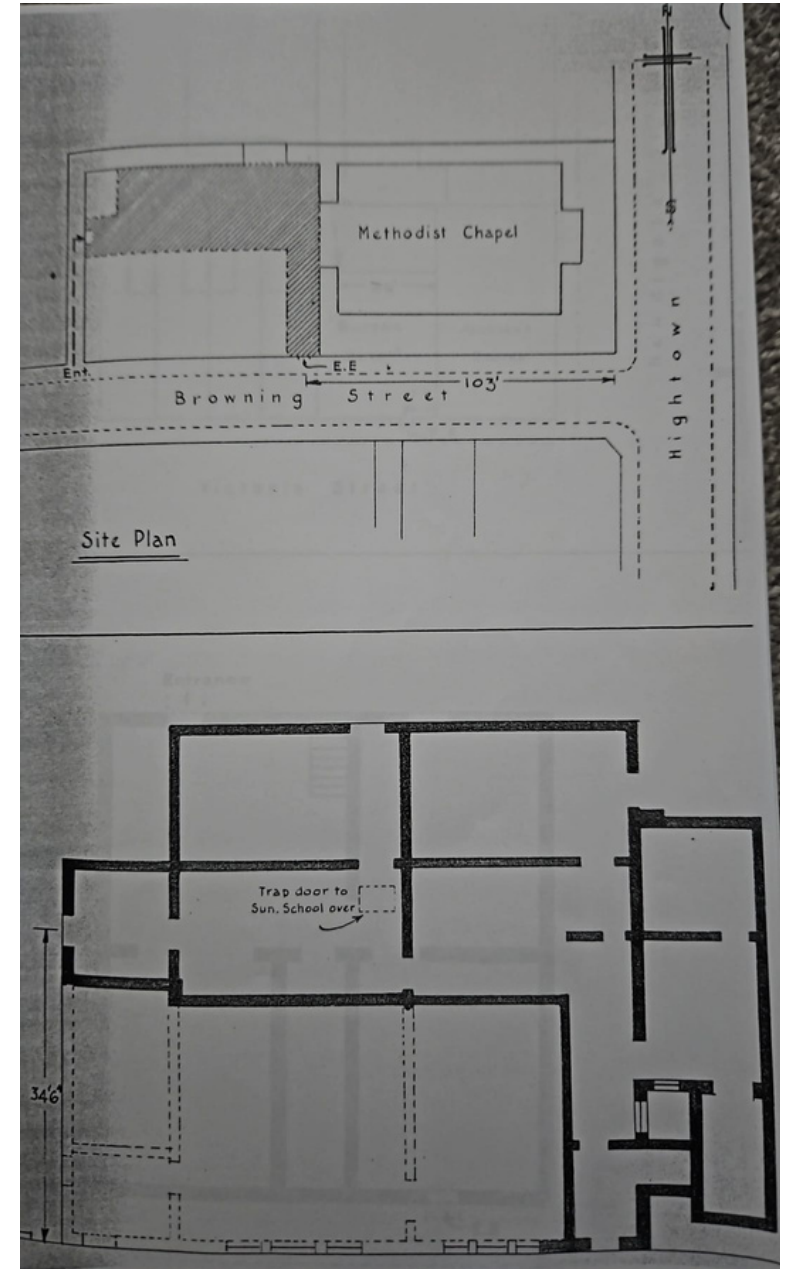
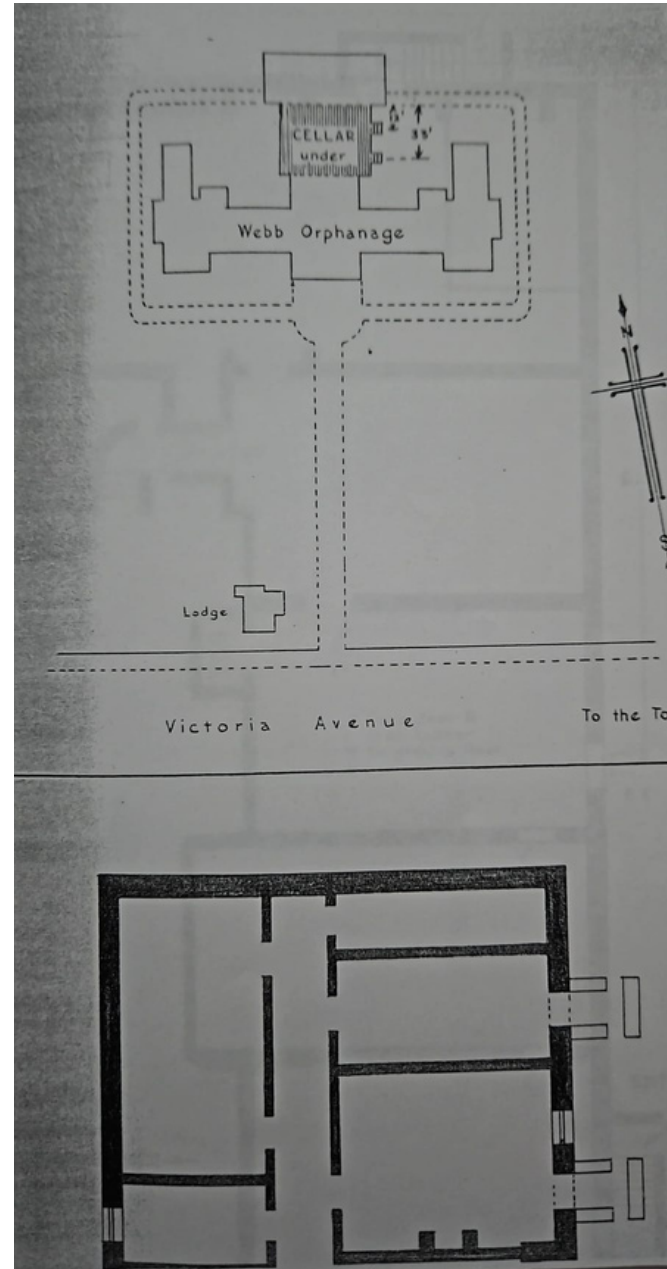
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schools in Crewe.



**Look at these
illustrations of public
basements and cellars
in Crewe.**



Look at these
illustrations of public
basements and cellars
in Crewe.



Precautions on the Railway

With the threat of war in the late 1930's, railway companies needed to begin to plan how they would keep their trains operating even if the railway lines were bombed.

**This is the signal box
along the railway
tracks in Crewe. It was
constructed in 1940.**

**It was built with an Air
Raid Precaution
design.**

**This means that it had
38cm concrete walls
and a 45cm concrete
roof. It is 1 of 45 built
in the country. It was
built to replace an
existing wooden and
brick box that was not
as strong.**

**This signal box still
exists. It can be seen
from Vernon Way.**

Credit: John Tilly 2015



Invasion Exercises

On Sunday September 21st 1941, a fake enemy invasion was performed in Crewe to test the people living there and to see how they would react.

The exercise included:

- A bombing that the Air Raid Precaution (ARP) team needed to respond to.
- Fake invaders fighting against the Home Guard.
- The telephone service being disconnected.

Some of the public didn't take it seriously. They knew that it wasn't real but got a surprise when they didn't realise real gas bombs would be used and they hadn't bothered to bring their gas masks with them!

**What can you see
happening in this
invasion exercise?**

Credit: The Museum
of Policing in Cheshire



**What can you see
happening in this
invasion exercise?**

Credit: The Museum
of Policing in Cheshire



**What can you see
happening in this
invasion exercise?**



Credit: The Museum
of Policing in Cheshire

This Crewe Chronicle article explains the details and importance of the rehearsal.

Credit: British
Newspaper Archive

CREWE'S INVASION REHEARSAL

POINTS PEOPLE SHOULD BEAR IN MIND

Major J. Becke, C.B.E., Chief Constable of Cheshire, has asked Crewe cinemas to exhibit during the last few days of this week a slide in connection with the invasion exercise to be held at Crewe.

The slide is worded, "Do you know what to do? Carry your identification card and your respirator at all times. The authorities rely upon you to conduct yourself as if this invasion were real. Inform the police about anything you see happening of which you are suspicious, and don't let yourself be used by the enemy to transmit rumours, or as a source of information about the dispositions of the military, the police, or the Civil Defence Services in Crewe. It is up to you to make this dress rehearsal for invasion a real success."

"This," states Major Becke, "gives in a few words the role to be played by the civil population in the event of actual invasion. I have every confidence that the citizens of Crewe will co-operate to the full in making this exercise the success it deserves to be. It is a dress rehearsal for the real thing. The military, the R.A.F., the police, and the Civil Defence Services will be fully engaged throughout Saturday night and Sunday morning."

**PUBLIC MUST PLAY THEIR
PART!**

"No matter how efficient these services are, they will be seriously hampered if the public do not play their part. The police particularly depend on the public to reduce their work to the minimum. Therefore, follow that everybody must carry with them their identification card and must be prepared to be stopped and questioned any time between Friday evening and noon on Sunday. If anyone is found without an identification card he or she might be seriously inconvenienced."

"Equally, if any member of the public finds any other person behaving suspiciously, such as trying to get information of the whereabouts of troops, police stations, A.R.P. posts or works, he should immediately inform the police and keep observation on the person suspected so that when the police arrive they can point them out. We are endeavouring to produce the noise of enemy attack as well as fires, smoke and gas. Therefore, the public should not be unduly alarmed if they hear a variety of noises in their streets, unless they have heard the sirens beforehand."

"In the event of sirens sounding during the exercise all A.R.P. services will immediately report back to their depots and stand by. In the event of real bombs being dropped, services will operate as usual under directions from the control room. Be prepared for anything that may happen; act only on the instructions of police or wardens whom you know personally, and always carry your gas mask."

This Crewe Chronicle article discusses how well the rehearsal went.

Summarise what happened during the rehearsal attack.

Did it go as planned?

Credit: British Newspaper Archive

Crewe was a "besieged" town on Sunday and many people were awakened by the explosion of dummy bombs and smoke bombs. Members of the regular Forces were attacking to test the various defences, including the Home Guard and the A.R.P. personnel, and the exercise was an opportunity to test the many schemes planned during the past few months.

Allowance had to be made for the fact that an exercise is more difficult for both defenders and attackers than the real thing. On Sunday roads which had been rendered impassable were later used by troops who were unaware of the earlier actions, and the question who were casualties and who were not was always debatable, more than one man on both sides living to fight a second time after being counted out! The Home Guard did, however, inflict tremendous "casualties" on the invaders. The latter, using some of the latest mechanised equipment, including large tanks, were frequently halted by some simple device.

HOME GUARD CALLED OUT.

The story of the attack began on Saturday night, although for 24 hours before then the police had been vigilantly checking identification cards with a view to frustrating any Fifth Columnists—and there were many of them. On Saturday evening it was reported that paratroops had landed and it was thought they were preparing to attack. The Home Guard was called out at dusk to prevent any infiltration during the night and to stop the enemy from damaging communications. Throughout the night reports reached headquarters of small sorties of prisoners having been captured.

At dawn the town was subjected to a dive-bombing attack which resulted in extensive damage and brought out the A.R.P. services. The enemy were seriously threatening the town and dislocated the telephone service, so that all communication had to be done by messenger. In this emergency the messenger service worked well. Enemy troops were reported in their hundreds at various points on the perimeter of the town and the first line defences of the Crewe Home Guard went into action. They stalked and fought the invaders at every opportunity and left many gaps in their ranks.

ATTACK ON THE STATION.

One of the best actions was fought near the railway station where a body of men were found preparing for an assault on the station from a wood. As soon as the news of the whereabouts of these men was received the Home Guard went into action and the wood was cleared within an hour. The enemy subsequently made another attack on the station, and passengers, unaware of the exercises, were concerned when they alighted from their trains to see "hand-to-hand fighting" on the platforms. Fireworks were used as hand-grenades, and smoke-bombs took the place of gas-bombs, and the

height of the battle was very realistic.

Firemen helped the armed forces to stop the invader. On one occasion the occupants of a Bren gun-carrier had to meet the full force of water from their hosepipes when they got dangerously near the Municipal Buildings. Tanks were captured in various parts of the town, but the enemy did good work in "blowing up three bridges." A power station and several other important points all fell into enemy hands during the morning, but until the report of the umpires is issued it won't be possible to ascertain whether the enemy were left with enough men to hold these points against Home Guard reinforcements.

TIME-BOMB INCIDENT.

A time-bomb outside the control centre headquarters was not moved by the disposal squad in the time specified by the umpires and the building consequently was considered to have been blown up. Before that, however, the presence of the time-bomb had resulted in the evacuation of the building. Headquarters was subjected to a determined attack and the Home Guard defended it to the last man.

The enemy invented some excellent ruses to get into the headquarters before the attack took place. On one occasion two civilians arrived in an agitated state to report that they had had their car stolen with all their belongings inside. They were taken inside, where they produced bombs from their pockets, but they were not given the opportunity to throw them before they were overpowered. Later two Home Guardsmen arrived with two prisoners and said they suspected them of Fifth Column work. All four men were taken inside and they also produced bombs.

The Police, who were responsible for combating Fifth Column activities, reported after the exercise that they were satisfied with the way the public refused information. All the men arrested said they received little assistance from the public. Unfortunately the public did not take the exercise so seriously as those taking part. When troops appeared in a street the public turned out in their hundreds to see "the fun." Very few had their gas-masks, and when a real gas-bomb exploded as happened in several parts of the town, they were caught napping and finished the day with sore eyes.

"CASUALTIES" TREATED.

The Home Guard had their own casualty service, and the A.R.P. services treated 400 "injured" in the many incidents which kept wardens, firemen, rescue and decontamination squads and all other services busy until well into the afternoon. It was the first time the A.R.P. services had operated under invasion conditions and they came out well on top of their work.

At the end of the exercise, which had necessitated many hundreds of men being on duty throughout Saturday night and Sunday without a break, the Mayor (Ald. Mrs. E. Powell) sent the following message:

"I thank you for the ready co-operation in the combined invasion and Civil Defence exercise. I know it has involved long hours of duty for Military and Civil Defence personnel and a certain amount of inconvenience for members of the public, but I feel that it has been well worth while. It is important in these difficult days that we should be prepared."

AT NANTWICH

Nantwich and other outlying districts were also engaged in the weekend's activities. Home Guardsmen and every section of civil defence service were in action for several hours.

The centre of the town was plastered with high explosive, incendiary and gas bombs, and ambulance units were busy bringing in "casualties." Fires were fought by the town's fire service who on more than one occasion worked in gas-masks. Bombs fell in front of the Fire Station, wrecking two pumps and causing casualties, but units stationed in other parts of the district carried on.

Telephonic interruptions were dealt with, messages being delivered by the messenger service.

Taking on new roles

Those who stayed in Crewe during the war would have had the opportunity to get involved in civil defence organisations like the Air Raid Precaution (ARP) unit or the Home Guard either to defend Crewe or the company they were working at.



- Watch this video to see some of these units meet King George VI and Queen Elizabeth at the Crewe Alexandra football stadium: <https://www.britishpathe.com/asset/92100/>

**This is a civil defence
team at the
Cooperative
Wholesale Society
Clothing Factory in
Crewe.**

What do you notice?

Credit: McLean
Collection, Crewe &
District Local History
Association



This is the Home Guard teams in Crewe on a march in Queens Park in 1940.

The Home Guard were set up in 1940 and trained to protect the area in case of invasion as well as to dispose of bombs. In Crewe, there were different Home Guards, including a Home Guard for the Rolls Royce factory and a Home Guard for Crewe Works.

Credit: Friends of
Queens Park



**This is the Home
Guard at Crewe
Works.**



Credit: Crewe &
District Local History
Association

**This is the Home
Guard at the Weston
Lane Post Office.**



Credit: Crewe &
District Local History
Association

**This is the Home
Guard at North Steam
Sheds near Crewe
Station.**



Credit: Crewe &
District Local History
Association

This building was on Stewart Street built as a drill hall for the Railway Battalion Territorial Army.

They would be in charge of running to the nearby Valley Brook to get an emergency water supply in case of a fire caused by a bomb.

Credit: Crewe &
District Local History
Association



Enquiry Question 3

**How did the Second World War
affect life in Crewe?**

Enquiry Question 3 Introduction

The people of Crewe dealt with food shortages, bombings and loss of life.

Lets take a look at how the lives of people living in Crewe would have been affected.

Food and rationing

Rationing was introduced by the government across the whole country to ensure there were fair shares of food.

Ration books with coupons inside were handed out to everyone so that you could buy food.

Not everything was rationed though. Rationed foods included sugar, meat, cheese, biscuits, eggs and milk.

Other rationed items included clothes, petrol and soap!

The government encouraged people to grow their own fruits and vegetables.

Rationing began on
the 8th January 1940.

Take a look at this
advert in the Crewe
Chronicle on Saturday
13 January 1940.

What are the reasons
given by the Ministry
of Food for rationing?

Credit: British
Newspaper Archive

MINISTRY



OF FOOD

REASONS FOR RATIONING

War has meant the re-planning of our food supplies. Half our meat and most of our bacon, butter and sugar come from overseas. Here are four reasons for rationing :—

- 1 RATIONING PREVENTS WASTE OF FOOD** We must not ask our sailors to bring us unnecessary food cargoes at the risk of their lives.
- 2 RATIONING INCREASES OUR WAR EFFORT** Our shipping carries food, and armaments in their raw and finished state, and other essential raw materials for home consumption and the export trade. To reduce our purchases of food abroad is to release ships for bringing us other imports. So we shall strengthen our war effort.
- 3 RATIONING DIVIDES SUPPLIES EQUALLY** There will be ample supplies for our 44½ million people, but we must divide them fairly, everyone being treated alike. No one must be left out.
- 4 RATIONING PREVENTS UNCERTAINTY** Your Ration Book assures you of your fair share. Rationing means that there will be no uncertainty—*and no queues.*

**YOUR RATION BOOK IS YOUR PASSPORT TO EASY
PURCHASING OF BACON & HAM, BUTTER AND SUGAR**

These ration books
belonged to the
Harvey family who
lived at 136 Flag Lane
in Crewe.

Credit: Roger Wakefield

MINISTRY OF FOOD

RATION BOOK

OFFICIAL PAID

HOLDER'S NAME AND REGISTERED ADDRESS

Compare with your Identity Card and report any difference to your Food Office

DO NOT ALTER

ISSUED JULY 1942

If found return to

CREWE

FOOD OFFICE

Surname *HARVEY*

Other Names *Iris D.*

Address *136 Flag Lane*
Crewe

NAT REG No. *LEPC 145*

SERIAL NUMBER OF BOOK

QN 092953

R.B.1 General

Credit: Roger Wakefield

R.B.1

5

DO NOT fill in this space unless you deposit the page.

B

5

MEAT

Surname _____

Initials _____

NAT. REG. No.			
---------------	--	--	--

12	11	10	9
MEAT	MEAT	MEAT	MEAT
12	11	10	9
MEAT	MEAT	MEAT	MEAT

20	19	18	17
MEAT	MEAT	MEAT	MEAT
20	19	18	17
MEAT	MEAT	MEAT	MEAT
16	15	14	13
MEAT	MEAT	MEAT	MEAT
16	15	14	13
MEAT	MEAT	MEAT	MEAT

8	7	6	5
MEAT	MEAT	MEAT	MEAT
8	7	6	5
MEAT	MEAT	MEAT	MEAT
4	3	2	1
MEAT	MEAT	MEAT	MEAT
4	3	2	1
MEAT	MEAT	MEAT	MEAT

47	46	45	44
SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE
47	46	45	44
SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE
41	40	39	38
SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE
41	40	39	38
SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE

33	32	31	30
SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE
33	32	31	30
SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE
29	28	27	26
SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE
29	28	27	26
SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE

[illegible]

What ration coupons
did they have?

R.B.1
5

DO NOT fill in this space unless you deposit the page.

B

CHEESE

Surname _____ Initials _____

NAT. REG. No. _____

20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9
CHEESE	CHEESE	CHEESE	CHEESE	CHEESE	CHEESE	CHEESE	CHEESE	CHEESE	CHEESE	CHEESE	CHEESE
5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5
CHEESE	CHEESE	CHEESE	CHEESE	CHEESE	CHEESE	CHEESE	CHEESE	CHEESE	CHEESE	CHEESE	CHEESE
4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
47	46	45	44	43	42	41	40	39	38	37	36
SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE
11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11
44	43	42	41	40	39	38	37	36	35	34	33
SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE
8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
41	40	39	38	37	36	35	34	33	32	31	30
SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE

R.B.1
5

DO NOT fill in this space unless you deposit the page.

B

EGGS

Surname _____ Initials _____


NAT. REG. No. _____

20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9
EGGS	EGGS	EGGS	EGGS	EGGS	EGGS	EGGS	EGGS	EGGS	EGGS	EGGS	EGGS
5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5
EGGS	EGGS	EGGS	EGGS	EGGS	EGGS	EGGS	EGGS	EGGS	EGGS	EGGS	EGGS
4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
47	46	45	44	43	42	41	40	39	38	37	36
SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE
11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11
44	43	42	41	40	39	38	37	36	35	34	33
SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE
8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
41	40	39	38	37	36	35	34	33	32	31	30
SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE	SPARE ONE

Credit: Roger Wakefield

Credit: Roger Wakefield

CLOTHING BOOK 1946-47
GENERAL CB 1/9



This book must not be used until the holder's name, full postal address and National Registration Number have been written below. Detach this book at once and keep it safely. It is your only means of buying clothing.

HOLDER'S NAME HARVEY METHUEN K.
(in BLOCK letters)

ADDRESS 136 FLAG LANE
(in BLOCK letters)
CREWE
CHESHIRE

HOLDER'S NATIONAL REGISTRATION No. LEPC 124 / 3.

IF FOUND please take this book to
any Food Office or Police Station

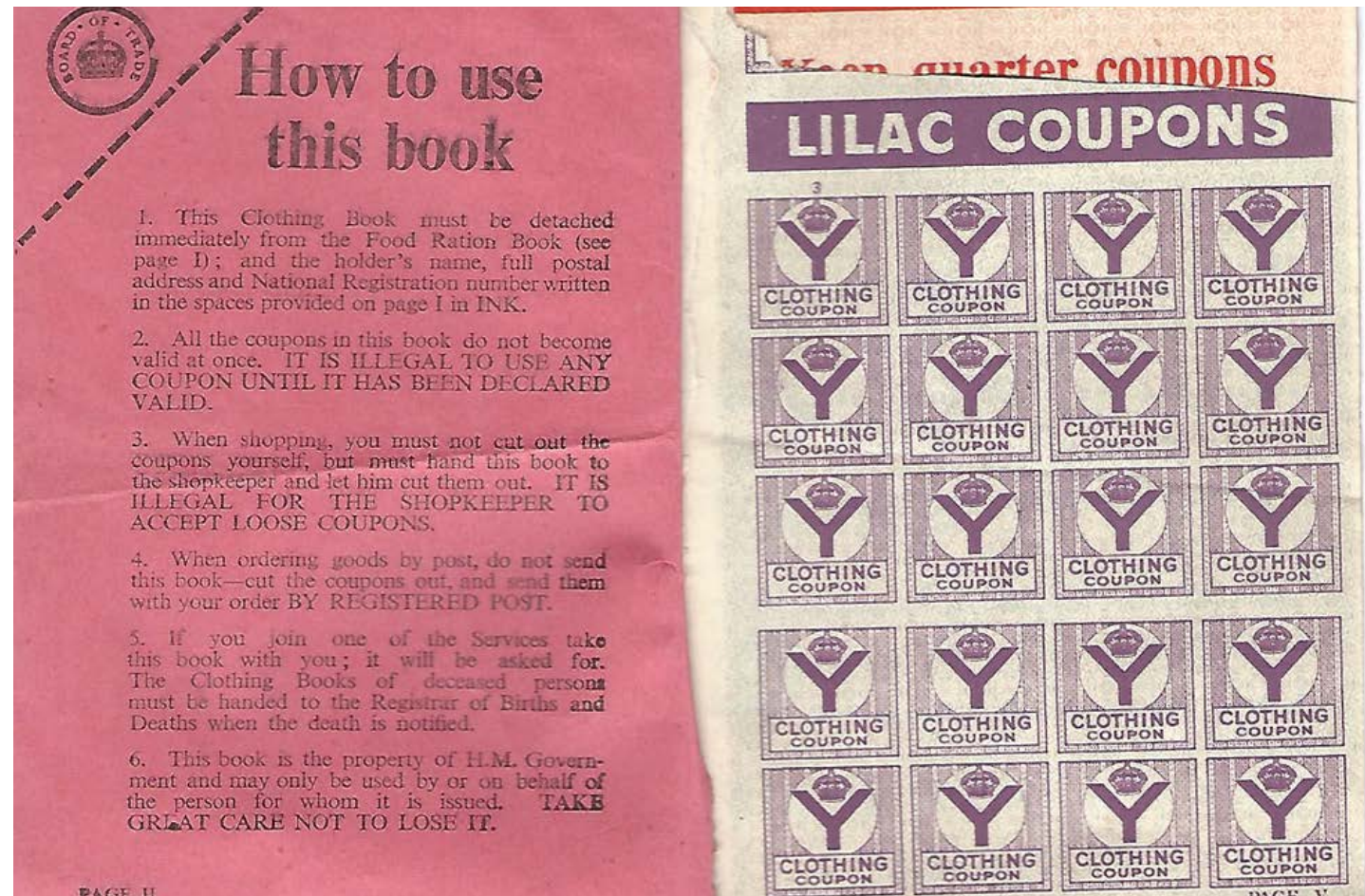
CREWE AND DISTRICT
N.W. 19
FOOD OFFICE

THIS BOOK IS NUMBER
AF 706627

HOLD Pages I-VIII in one hand and
TEAR ALONG THIS LINE

PAGE 1

What ration coupons
did they have?



Credit: Roger Wakefield

Bomb damage

In Crewe, bombs were dropped on both homes as well as the Rolls Royce factory.

- One of the worst cases of bombing in Crewe was on the evening of the 7th April and the morning of the 8th April 1941 on Martin Street and Earle Street. Residents from Earle Street took refuge in St. Peters Church. Many people from Crewe were killed along with Police Constable, Frank Marshall who was 24 years old and ARP warden, Arthur Condliffe who was 18 years old.
- Liverpool was badly damaged during air raids and outside of London was the most heavily bombed area of the country. On the way back home from Liverpool, there are rumours that the bombers would drop any leftover bombs over Nantwich and Crewe. One of these landed in a pond at the back of Leighton Hospital in Crewe. Mostly these bombs never exploded. An unexploded bomb was once found in the Queen's Park lake.

**These images show
bomb damage in
Crewe on Martin
Street, Earle Street
and Bedford Street.**



Credit: The Museum of
Policing in Cheshire

**These images show
bomb damage in
Crewe on Martin
Street, Earle Street
and Bedford Street.**

Credit: The Museum of
Policing in Cheshire



**These images show
bomb damage in
Crewe on Martin
Street, Earle Street
and Bedford Street.**



Credit: The Museum of
Policing in Cheshire

**These images show
bomb damage in
Crewe on Martin
Street, Earle Street
and Bedford Street.**

Credit: The Museum of
Policing in Cheshire



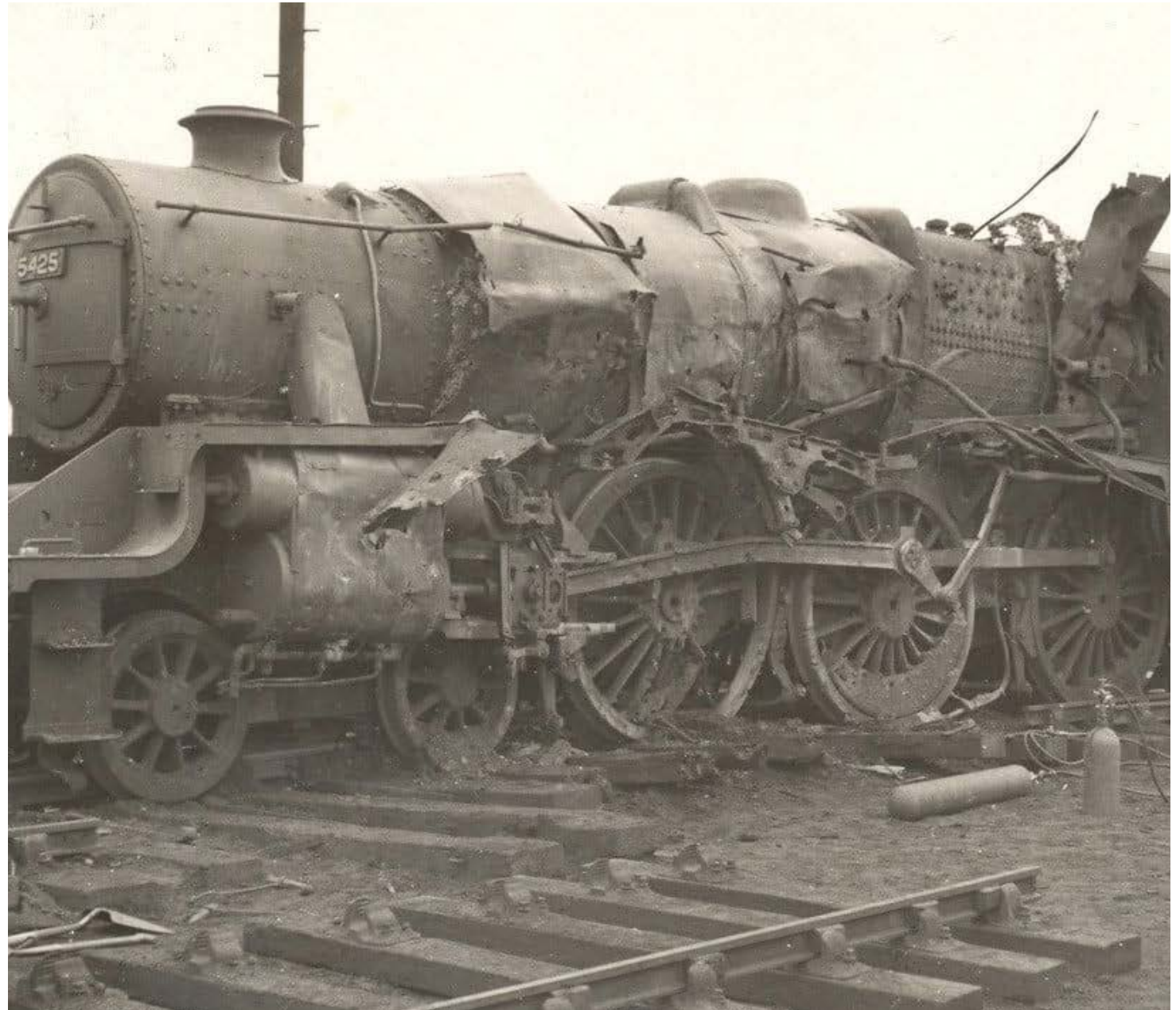
**These images show
bomb damage in
Crewe on Martin
Street, Earle Street
and Bedford Street.**



Credit: The Museum of
Policing in Cheshire

Locomotives at Crewe Works and at Crewe Railway Station were damaged too.

Credit: The Museum of Policing in Cheshire



**This is a picture of PC
Frank Marshall.**

Credit: The Museum of
Policing in Cheshire



This is an unexploded bomb that fell in the front garden of a home in Nantwich Road, Crewe.

Credit: The Museum of Policing in Cheshire



Scrap railings

Everyone was expected to help with the war effort and there was a way for people to contribute even if they couldn't join the army, become a Home Guard or grow vegetables in their garden.

The Government encouraged everyone to contribute their scrap metal throughout the war from their home. In Crewe, people donated pots and pans, farm equipment and children even donated their toys.

This was so it could be melted down and reshaped as ships, planes, engines and weapons needed for the war. This was because the importing of metal could be stopped at any point and the price of importing increased due to the war.

In April 1941, the Ministry of Supply announced there was a shortage “of the particular type of scrap metal which may be obtained from railings.”

In September 1941, local authorities were ordered to survey all unnecessary railings. People only had 2 weeks to appeal against the removal of their railings on artistic, historic or safety grounds.

This included Crewe where railings were taken from outside homes by the council when the shortage was at its worst.

In February 1942, they introduced the role of Salvage Stewards to help with this collection.

Even the railings at Buckingham Palace were removed!

Some of these railways were made from cast metal and some were made from forged metal. Cast metal can be reheated into a liquid to be remoulded but forged metal cannot be reheated.

After all the metal was collected in Britain, it was thrown into a big pile. Then they realised they couldn't work out what was cast or forged so they had to throw it all away!

The Crewe Chronicle
article is from
Saturday 16 May 1942.

What does it say?

Credit: British
Newspaper Archive

DID YOUR HOUSE NUMBER GO WITH YOUR IRON RAILINGS?

Miles of front gardens have lost their iron railings and gates. Because the metal is to be turned into guns and tanks these have been given up willingly, and almost the only person who regrets their disappearance is the postman. On many of the gates was the number of the house, and now postmen are having difficulty in delivering the letters. If your house has lost its number in the metal salvage drive, the Post Office asks you to have another number placed on the door or in any suitable place where it is easily visible.

The Crewe Chronicle
article is from
Saturday 25 April 1942.

What does it say?

Credit: British
Newspaper Archive

What do I do...

to take OFFICIAL part in salvage work?

Offer your services as a Salvage Steward for your street or your neighbourhood.

Apply to the Salvage Officer of your Local Council. A certificate of authority will be issued to you and an area allotted for your work.

Salvage Stewards are also required in factories, shops and offices. You can help by finding out if the Management is willing to make use of your services.

You will find your job, which is voluntary, a vitally important one. Enrol as a Salvage Steward NOW—every day counts.

This article explains the accidents people kept having after the railings had been taken away.

Watch this video "Feed the Furnaces" from 1941, to see an advert encouraging people to give their scrap metal to be recycled.

At 1:45 you can see the railways being removed.

Credit: British Newspaper Archive

CREWE TOWN COUNCIL

ACCIDENTS AFTER THE REMOVAL OF RAILINGS

AN APPEAL TO PROPERTY OWNERS

Reference was made at Crewe Town Council meeting on Wednesday to a number of accidents that had occurred during black-out after the removal of railings from the front of houses.

Coun. A. H. Bricker said that no fewer than four people had met with serious accidents in his district during the past week. He suggested that a part of the walls that had borne the railings should be painted white so that pedestrians could see their way when walking on the footway.

Prisoner of war camps: Crewe Hall

Crewe Hall was used as a prisoner of war camp, housing over 2,000 senior German officers.

Most of the officers took part in an education programme at the prisoner of war camp, learning English and reading books in the library.

Some records show that these prisoners tried to escape through a tunnel.

When the camp commander, Lord Napier, found out about an escape tunnel he said “As your Commandant I must condemn your tunnel; as a Colonel of Pioneers, I must admire its construction.”

This is Crewe Hall.



Credit: Cheshire
Archives and Local
Studies

Prisoner of war camps: Weston village

There was a prisoner of war camp on Snape farm in Weston village that you can still see today.

The farmers at Snape farm were asked to house these prisoners of war on their land. As a reward, they received money and the use of electricity as a payment.

Originally, the farm was intended to be used as an anti- aircraft defence site in 1942. However, by this point they believed that the threat of bombing was gone.

Instead, it became a prisoner of war camp with 38 huts.

There were around 300 German and Italian low risk prisoners that stayed here at one time, to prevent them from returning to fight.

This is the camp now.



Credit: Matthew
Holmes Mercury Press

The prisoners enjoyed a lot of freedom and were given access to Flag Lane Baths at half-price.

This angered a lot of locals who normally paid full price and they wrote to the Crewe Chronicle on September 13th 1947.

Read this article to see what they had to say.

Credit: British Newspaper Archive

GERMAN P.O.W.s IN SWIMMING BATHS

Criticism By Crewe Girls

Crewe Town Council's decision to admit German prisoners of war to the Flag-lane Swimming Baths at the Forces' rate of six-pence has been critically received in some quarters, and girl swimmers are said to be hostile to the idea of the Germans being admitted during public sessions. Here are letters which have been sent to us as a result of the Council's action:

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE CHRONICLE"

Sir,—How many of your readers can there be who were not incensed by the report that German prisoners of war will be admitted to the local Swimming Baths at half price?

It hardly seems just that keen young swimmers like myself should not be afforded the privileges which the Council is pleased to confer upon men who are very far from being our friends.—Yours,

BRENDA J. PICKERING (Miss)

8, Stalbridge-road, Crewe,
6th September, 1947.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE CHRONICLE"

Sir,—As a swimmer, whose home is in Crewe, I must protest against the Council's decision to admit the German prisoners of war to the Swimming Bath at a reduced rate of 6d. There must be many people who feel that the ratepayers at least should have been consulted. If the intention on the part of the Council is merely to encourage the men to swim for their health's sake, the remedy is simple and obvious. They should attend Swimming Bath parades, such parades to be held in the mornings, so as not to inconvenience the British patrons of the Baths.

To my mind no concession whatsoever should be made to Germans—in England or in Germany.—Yours,

DEMOCRAT

Crewe, September 8th.

(When these men return to Germany will it not be better for them to carry home a good impression of the British people's humaneness—even kindness?—Editor.)

Enquiry Question 4

**What was life like for children in
Crewe during the Second World
War?**

Enquiry Question 4 Introduction

Children's lives in Crewe were impacted too.

They may have been separated from one of their parents, dealt with the destruction of their home as well as having to deal with changes to their everyday lives.

Schools were turned into first aid centres so a lot of children had to move schools.

Instead, homes in Crewe and 2 rooms at the Webb Orphanage on Victoria Avenue were used as classrooms.

Children would have made their own toys from recycled materials and had to carry their gas mask with them everywhere.

They would have dealt with food shortages and rationing.

Let's take a closer look at memories people had of growing up as a child in Crewe during the war.

Toys

When the war began, the toy factories, like the locomotive factories at Crewe Works, were used to manufacture munitions and weapons. This resulted in a nationwide shortage of toys, especially those made from rubber and metal which were materials needed for the war.

Children turned to making homemade toys out of paper, card and wood or recycled materials like tin.



- **Children also looked after pets as well.**
- **Watch this video to see a boy and his naughty pet duck in Crewe in 1940!**
- **<https://www.britishpathe.com/asset/80759/>**

Evacuation

Children from cities in Britain were evacuated to the countryside in Cheshire.

Some children from Crewe were also evacuated to the surrounding countryside in Derbyshire and Wales.

**Read this story of
Vanda Hulse from
Crewe, who recounts
her memories of being
evacuated.**

Credit: (WW2 People's War is an online archive of wartime memories contributed by members of the public and gathered by the BBC. The archive can be found at bbc.co.uk/ww2peopleswar. Vanda Hulse, WW2 People's War.)

“It was then decided when I was five months old that it was now time to evacuate part of my family to the peace & tranquillity of Glossop in Derbyshire.

We went on the steam train with my Mother, Brother Ivor & Cousin Jean. My Father & Uncle Fred accompanied us for the journey.

Then they had to return home to work & Guard Duties. My Cousin Jean stayed throughout the Summer Holiday & then had to return to School in Crewe, at this time she was over ten years old.

We returned home to Crewe when my brother became old enough to start School & when it was safe to do so. During this time I distinctively remember owning & carrying my Gas Mask & wearing my identity chain & disc.

Our house faced the Methodist Church at the back of the Church were the Balloon Fields, these were really huge. The Air Raid Shelter was just at the back of our house, there we took refuge until the All Clear Siren sounded.

In the shelter it was cold & we had to be wrapped in blankets, it was dark with only candles or a hand torch to see anything.”

**See children being
evacuated to the
countryside.**



Credit: Imperial War
Museum

Memories

Life was different for children in Crewe.

Read this story of Allison Fincham from Crewe, who recounts her memories of being a child in Crewe during the Second World War.

Credit: (WW2 People's War is an online archive of wartime memories contributed by members of the public and gathered by the BBC. The archive can be found at bbc.co.uk/ww2peopleswar. Allison Fincham, WW2 People's War.)

"I was two and a half when the war started. We lived in Crewe. We had a garden where my dad kept geese and chickens. My first memory is sitting in the pram with my younger sister. I had the 'handles end'. Crewe was a railway town and mum couldn't get around with the pram on the pavement to get to the chemists shop. There were hundreds of soldiers sleeping there on the pavement. They had been rescued from Dunkirk.

The bombers were cheeky. They followed the railway lines. No doubt they were looking to bomb Rolls Royce, where they were making Spitfires. It was well camouflaged, made up to look like an ordinary row of houses. But they did hit it many times. Mum's stepbrother, a young boy apprentice, Cyril, was on fire watch the night the Germans hit Rolls Royce.

There were stick bombs landing in the park. Huge numbers of houses got demolished. Dad was given deferred occupation from the armed forces. We had our own Anderson shelter (God, I hated the stench of that; so dark and dank!), but, if we were near dad's factory, we used their huge shelter.

I can remember the planes overhead and the smoke bombs in our streets billowing out dense clouds of acrid smoke to camouflage us. There was an EWS tank (Emergency Water Storage Tank) on our street. It was huge. There was only just enough space to get a lorry past. I don't ever remember being frightened, despite all the dangers. Somehow we just accepted it as our world."

Read this story of Vanda Hulse from Crewe, who recounts her memories of being a child in Crewe during the Second World War.

Credit: (WW2 People's War is an online archive of wartime memories contributed by members of the public and gathered by the BBC. The archive can be found at bbc.co.uk/ww2peopleswar. Vanda Hulse, WW2 People's War.)

“I was born in the early morning of Sunday 21 January during the bitter cold winter of 1940. This severe weather lasted for weeks. Naturally during this time the Country was at war with Germany. My family Grand Parents, Mum, Dad & older Brother was then in great danger because we lived very close to both the Chester Railway line into Crewe, also the Locomotive Railway Works & Rolls Royce Factory. Who at this time were building Aircraft Parts & Engines.

German bombers did get through on several occasions, it was Rolls Royce which was badly hit on one raid. When the siren was heard we had to go into the Air Raid Shelter at the back of our house. As the war progressed it then became impossible for us to live in Minshull New Road. My dad & Uncle Fred were commandeered to join the Home Guard 'Dads Army' as it became affectionately known.

Whilst my Grand Parents reared chickens and dug for England on their Allotments providing food & sustenance for themselves, friends & neighbours. Bartering became a very popular past time.

Even when I became old enough to go to school at the age of four the sirens screamed out to warn us of an imminent attack. When there had been an Air Raid the previous night all us children were told to down pencils, slates & books & go to sleep to try to compensate on health grounds. Ration Books & Clothing coupons were given to the whole population & were very closely guarded. As the War eventually was drawing to a close Rationing was still very much a burden on all the working classes. There were lots of huge queues in shops & markets.”

Enquiry Question 5

**How was Crewe protected from
aerial attacks?**

Enquiry Question 5 Introduction

During the Second World War, the biggest threat to civilians was enemy aircraft carrying powerful bombs.

Crewe needed to be protected.

There were 48,000 people living here.

There were also Crewe Works and the Rolls Royce Merlin aero- engine factories, both making important weapons, engines and munitions for the war.

Let's take a look at how Crewe was protected.

Blackouts

During the Second World War at night, people were asked to restrict all light sources.

This meant people had to cover up all windows with fabric, sacks or newspaper in their homes.

Street lights were extinguished and cars had to put dimmer caps over their lights.

This was so that the enemy aircraft could not find their targets on the ground.

A lot of people got injured because they couldn't see where they were going at night!

You would also get fined if you were caught by an ARP warden breaking these rules.

Other precautions were taken to make sure Crewe wasn't a target for an attack. Britain began to understand the Luftwaffe's tactics and realised that during blackouts at night when there was a full moon in the sky, the aircraft pilots would look for reflections in water to help guide them to places. This meant that a lot of lakes were dredged of water like the lake at Crewe Hall.

See this notice for
black- out times.

Why do you think the
times are very
specific?

BLACK-OUT TIMES FOR NEXT WEEK			
FRIDAY	.....	7.50	to 6.23
SATURDAY	....	7.47	to 6.24
SUNDAY	.....	7.45	to 6.26
MONDAY	.....	7.42	to 6.28
TUESDAY	.....	7.40	to 6.30
WEDNESDAY	....	7.37	to 6.32
THURSDAY	....	7.35	to 6.34

Credit: British
Newspaper Archive

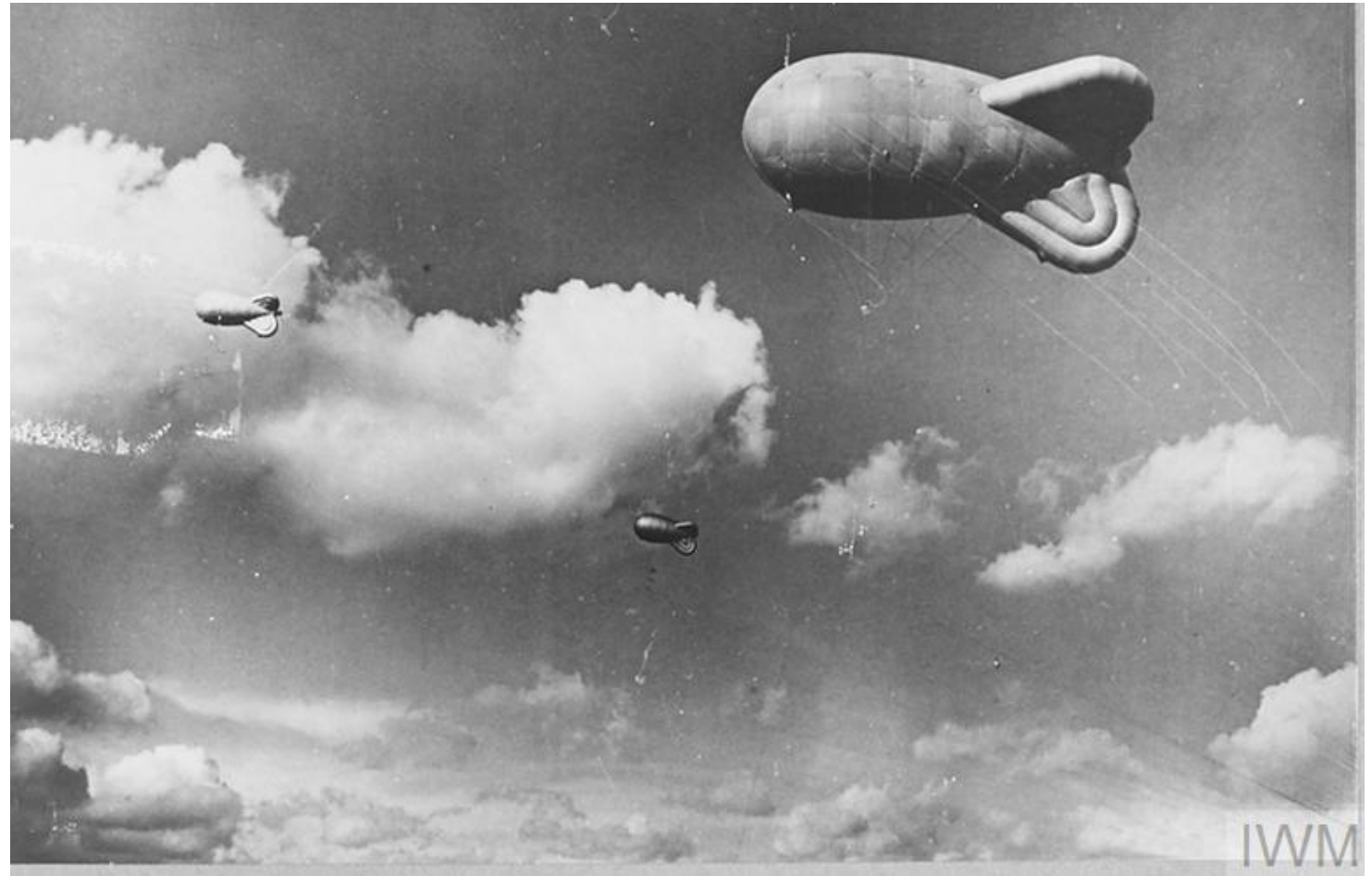
No.949 Crewe Barrage Balloon Squadron

A barrage balloon is a large balloon that stops low flying aircraft from attacking or dropping a bomb. It is usually held to the ground by metal cables that would destroy any attacking aircraft who touched them. Attackers trying to shoot down a balloon could also cause an explosion of the hydrogen used to make them float.

Crewe was said to be covered with barrage balloons. These were managed by the No. 949 Crewe Barrage Balloon Squadron.

On the night of the attacks on the Rolls Royce Merlin aero- engine factory, the barrage balloons were down because of stormy weather in the area so they could not protect the area.

**This is what barrage
balloons looked like.**



Credit: Imperial War
Museum

Credit: Imperial War Museum

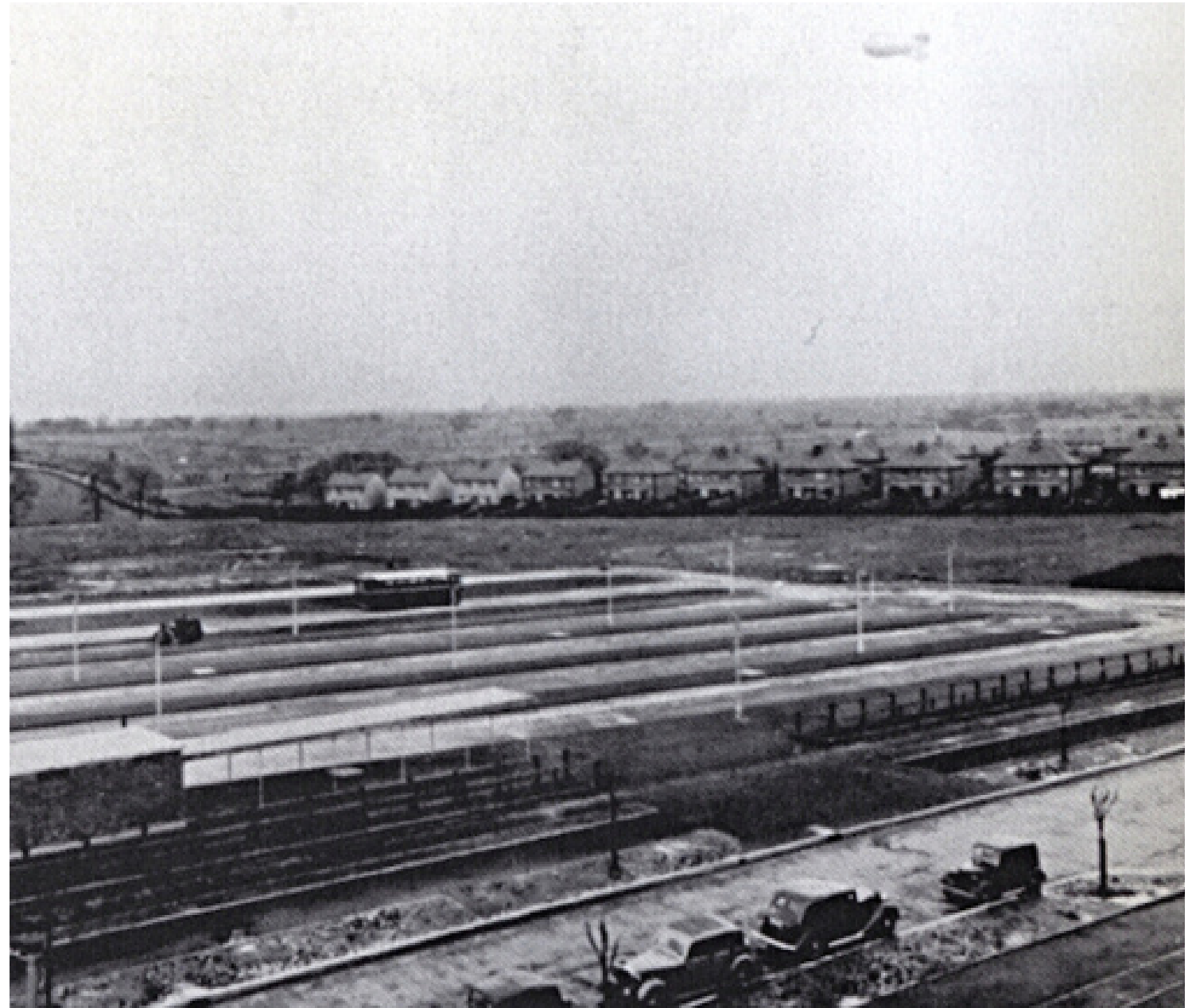
**This is an aerial view
from the Rolls Royce
factory who made
Merlin aero- engines
for the Battle of
Britain aircraft.**

**Can you see the
barrage balloon?**

**Most of the other
barrage balloons in
Crewe were over the
Crewe Works sites
where they
manufactured the
locomotives.**

**Why was this an
important part of
Crewe to protect?**

Credit: Mark Potts



This is the log book of
the No. 949 Crewe
Barrage Balloon
Squadron.

What was logged?

Credit: The National
Archives

Place Date Time (ORIGINAL) APPENDIX I. (Operations Log). Page 1.
949 Squadron. **4**

Crewe 1/7/40	0812	Barrage lowered to 1000 ft.
	1748	Barrage raised to 4,500 ft.
	1757	Air- Raid warning YELLOW from P.O.
	1812	Aircraft reported flying over approx. 1,500-2,000 ft.
	1841	Air-Raid signal White from P.O.
	1940	Site D1 deflated, low purity.
	2213	" D1 inflated.
Crewe 2/7/40	0810	Barrage lowered to 1,000 ft.
	1725	" raised to 4,500 ft.
	2025	" close-hauled.
Crewe 3/7/40	2109	Site C31 deflated, low purity.
	2230	Barrage raised to 1,000 ft.
	2308	Site C31 inflated.
Crewe 4/7/40	0337	Barrage close-hauled.
Crewe 5/7/40	1351	Barrage bedded.
	2200	" close-hauled.
	2320	Very light seen in sky in N.E.
Crewe 6/7/40	0005	Two 'planes reported flying 3000 ft.
	1052	Central anchorage brought into use on Site A6.
Crewe 7/7/40	0001	Barrage raised to 1000 ft.
	0440	" lowered to close-hauled position.
	2010	Site D28 deflated, reason - porosity of envelope.
	2131	" D28 inflated.
Crewe 8/7/40	0014	Barrage raised to 1000 ft.
	0632	" close-hauled.
	2137	" raised to 1000 ft.
	2230	" " 4500 ft.
Crewe 9/7/40	0510	" lowered to 1500 ft.
	0715	" close-hauled. 0843 hrs. Barrage bedded.
	0952	Site A27 deflated, porosity of rip-panel.
	0955	" A23 " , strong wind.
	1017	'Take post' from A.A. Gunroom.
	1053	YELLOW signal from G.P.O.
	1054	Barrage close-hauled.
	1106	White signal from G.P.O.
	1115	Barrage bedded.
	1117	Site B21 casualty, ripped ton-patches.

Camouflaged walls

Sections of the roof and external walls at the Rolls Royce factory were painted to resemble homes and streets when viewed from the air, so that enemy aircraft didn't realise it was a factory that was building important weapons.

They also painted the factory to resemble fields, even having wooden cows standing up!

It was someone's job it was to move the cows everyday so that the attacking aircraft would not get suspicious!

Crewe Works also had a wall that was painted to look like houses on West Street.

What can you see?



Credit: Crewe Heritage
Centre

Enquiry Question 6

Why was Crewe a target for bombing?

Enquiry Question 6 Introduction: Evidence

After the Second World War, evidence was released showing how the Luftwaffe, the German air force, were spying on Crewe. Their reconnaissance data was published which shows what sites they were interested in.

We have already discovered that:

- Crewe is a railway junction where 6 railway lines meet connecting the North, South, East and West of the country.
- Crewe Works supplied some of the strongest locomotives at the time nationally.
- Crewe was chosen as the location for (along with Derby) the manufacturing of Rolls Royce Merlin aero- engines to be used for the Hurricane and Spitfire aircraft used in the Battle of Britain.

Take a look at the following primary source evidence showing the Luftwaffe's interest in both the Rolls Royce Merlin aero-engine factory as well as Crewe Works sites.

The red circles are the "Sperrballone". This means barrage balloon in German.

What else is outlined in red?

Why would these have been a target for the Luftwaffe?

Credit: Imperial War Museum

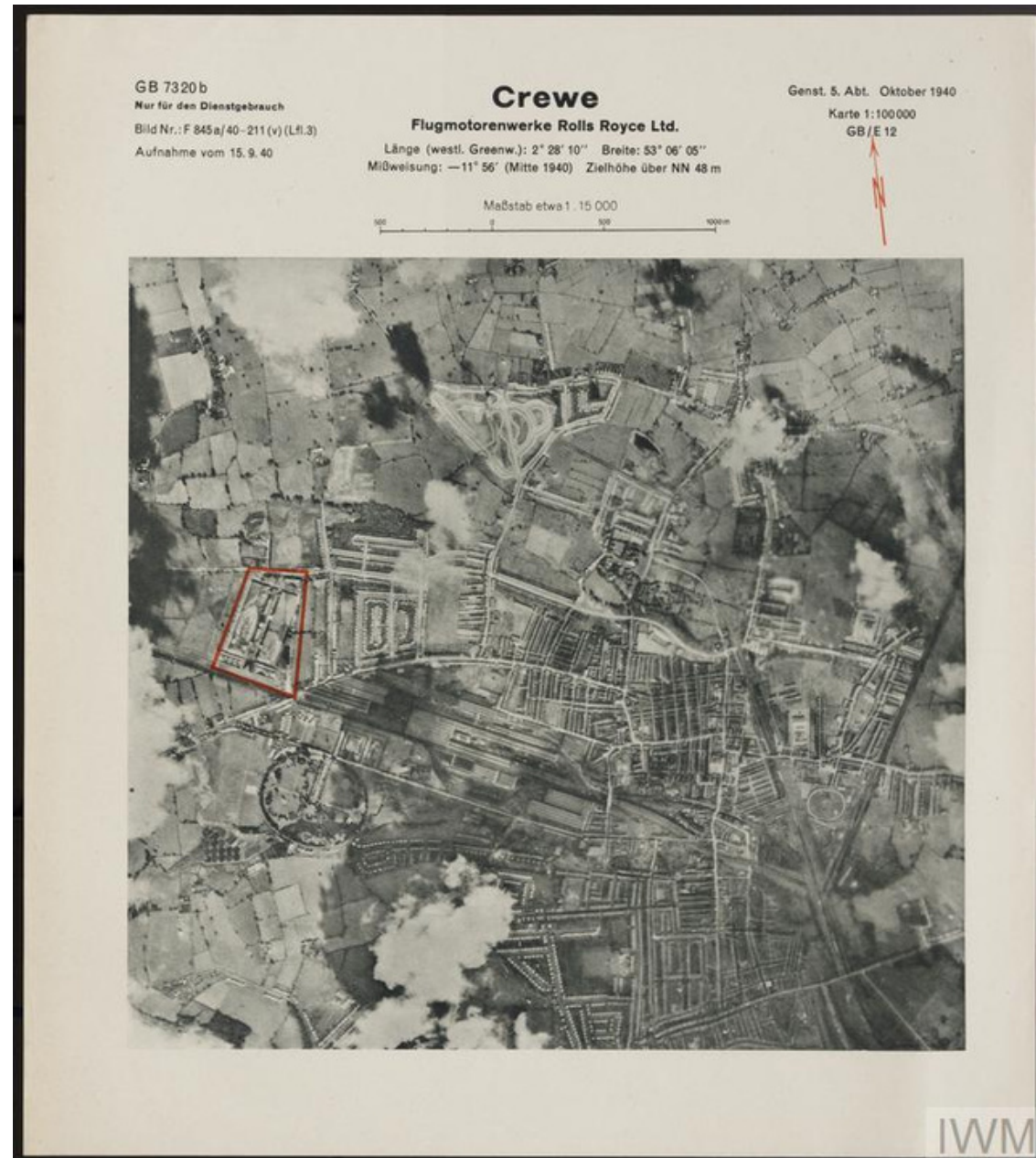


Take a look at the following primary source evidence showing the Luftwaffe's interest in both the Rolls Royce Merlin aero-engine factory as well as Crewe Works sites.

The red outline is the Rolls Royce factory.

What other sites on this map do you recognise from Crewe now?

Credit: Imperial War Museum



Take a look at the following primary source evidence showing the Luftwaffe's interest in both the Rolls Royce Merlin aero-engine factory as well as Crewe Works sites.

What do you think "Lokomotivfabrik" means?

What did sites in Crewe did they intend to spy on?

Credit: Imperial War Museum

Nur für den Dienstgebrauch		Ort: Crewe (Höhen Lage) im NW-Teil der Stadt, etwa 1,5 km nord-westlich des Bahnhofes	Ziel-Nr. GB-82-45
Zielfstammkarte		Geogr. Wurm: 2°27'20" W 53°07'52" N	Kartennr. E12/1:100000
Land: Großbritannien England (Cheshire)			z. B. Nr. E44/1: 63360

1. Bezeichnung des Zieles:
Lokomotivfabrik "L.N.E.R."

Bgl. mit Ziel-Nr. GB 75 20 Flugmotorenwerke "Rolls Royce Ltd." etwa 500 m in NW.

2. Bedeutung:
Hauptlokomotivfabrik der "London Midland & Scottish Railway Co."

3. Beschreibung des Zieles: Höhe über NN: 50 m.

a) Verkehrsanchlüsse: Straßenverbindung, Gleisanschluss. Nächster Bahnhof Crewe (etwa 1,5 km im SO).

b) Ausdehnung insgesamt: etwa 796000 qm
NW-SO etwa 1500 m
SU-NT etwa 450 m.

Gesamte Fläche: etwa 216100 qm.

c) Bauweise, Bauausführung, Luftempfindlichkeit, Brandgefahr:

Die Anlagen erstrecken sich in vorwiegend geschlossener Bauweise von NW nach SO. Etwa in der Mitte des Geländes liegen

1) mehrere Kessel- und Maschinenhäuser, massiv, mit hohen Schornsteinen.

Über das gesamte Gelände verteilt

2) 12 verschieden große massive Werk- und Montagehallen.
Etwa 200 m SO der Kesselhäuser

3) anscheinend Gießerei oder Kesselschmiede, massiv, mit 6 Schornsteinen.

Im N, O und S

4) einige massive Betriebs- und Nebengebäude.

Im N und O

5) Luftschutzanlagen.

Take a look at the following primary source evidence showing the Luftwaffe's interest in both the Rolls Royce Merlin aero-engine factory as well as Crewe Works sites.

What do you think "flugmotorenfabrik" means?

What site did they intend to spy on?

Credit: Imperial War Museum

Nur für den Dienstgebrauch	Ort: Crewe (Nähere Lage): im NE-Teil der Stadt, etwa 1,4 km nordwestlich Bahnhof Crewe. Geogr. Koordin.: $53^{\circ}06'05''$ N $2^{\circ}28'10''$ W	Stabs-Nr. G.B. 75 20 Stabs-Nr. England 12+16 1:100000 G. B. Nr. England 44+52/1:63360
<u>Zielstammkarte (L)</u>		
Land: Großbritannien England (Cheshire)		
1. Bezeichnung des Zieles: Flugmotorenwerke Rolls Royce Ltd.		
Bgl. mit G.B.-Nr.		
2. Bedeutung: Große, besonders wichtige Flugmotorenfabrik.		

Enquiry Question 7

**What happened in Crewe when
the war was over?**

Enquiry Question 7 Introduction: VE Day

VE stands for Victory in Europe.

This day was celebrated on the 8th May 1945 when Germany surrendered in the the Second World War.

People marked this day by partying in the street with eating, dancing and singing. Food was still short and rationed.

This is VE day in Crewe.

What can you see?



Credit: McLean
Collection of Crewe &
District Local History
Association

The Crewe Chronicle on the 19th May 1945 published pictures from the VE day celebrations.

It shows the celebrations in Wood Street.

How did the children in Crewe celebrate on VE day?

Credit: British Newspaper Archive

THE CHRONICLE. SATURDAY, MAY 19, 1945.

CREWE CHILDREN CELEBRATE: VE DAY REJOICINGS



These pictures are typical of the scenes in Crewe last week, when children celebrated victory in the manner that most appeals to them—tea parties and sports. Bedecked in National colours and many wearing fancy costumes, they organised miniature processions in their immediate neighbourhoods. Collections were made, and the proceeds devoted to

festivities. A number of groups availed themselves of Wednesday afternoon's bright sunshine, and tea-tables were erected in side streets.

The majority of the celebrations were held over until Saturday afternoon. The adults joined in enthusiastically, and the youngsters were given a royal time. In some cases the festivities included organised sports events.

**Have a look at the tea
party in Wood Street.**

Credit: British
Newspaper Archive

