The Civil Defence of Kingston upon Thames and its districts during the Second World War

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Abstract

Air Raid Precautions (ARP) for the protection of civilians during the Second World War was a new concept in the history of the defence of Britain. Each local authority was by the ARP Act of 1937 to be responsible for providing an ARP scheme for its residents. The history of ARP has tended to focus on central issues at national level or on London and certain provincial cities. This could suggest that the war experience and contribution at the local level of towns was less significant. For this reason it is important to provide an outer London suburban case study to discover how a small district prepared its civil defence, performed in emergencies and what contributions were made to the defence of the town by the local residents.

The study has focussed on the small suburban towns of Kingston, Surbiton and Malden. Evidence is submitted of the capability of the respective civil defence services. Firstly, by the development and organisation of these resources and the state of readiness at the declaration of war. Secondly, by presenting details that reveal the satisfactory work of the civil defence personnel during emergencies caused by enemy action. Confirmation is given regarding the resilience of the residents of these towns who endured air raids and missile attacks. This includes an analysis of unpublished Home Office Intelligence reports concerning the state of the morale of the people of Surbiton and Malden in the aftermath of the air raids suffered in 1940. My research shows how these suburban towns were defended by their local authority ARP service, the shared dangers experienced by the local residents and the high state of morale of the citizens.

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Abbreviations

AA	Anti-Aircraft guns
AFS	Auxiliary Fire Service
ARP	Air Raid Precautions
CD	Civil Defence
CID	Committee of Imperial Defence
HO	Home Office
IIP	Incident Inquiry Point
KHC	Kingston Heritage Centre
MOI	Ministry of Information
NA[UK]	The National Archive, [UK]
ND	No date
NN	No name
NPN	No page number
NUTG	National Union of Townswomen's Guilds
PC	Personal Communication
SHC	Surrey History Centre
WI	Women's Institute
WLA	Women's Land Army
WVS	Women's Voluntary Service

Chapter One

Introduction

In 1940 the term Air Raid Precautions that was used during the pre-war period was superseded by the title Civil Defence. From that year both words continued to be used and interchanged by Government and local authorities. There were exceptions for example, the title ARP Control Centre continued to be used throughout the war.

A significant difference for people living in Britain during the Second World War was previously when the nation had been involved in a conflict, fighting the enemy had been conducted at a distance. This situation inflicted concern on relatives and friends at home who did not know what was happening, or had happened, a state of affairs that made people feel remote from the battlefield. The rapid development of military aircraft since the First World War had changed that situation. Non-combatants living in Britain during the Second World War were placed in the front line of fighting that blurred the distinction between civilians and combat servicemen. Civilians were exposed to enemy air raids, explosive forces and infernos. They suffered injury, violent death and often had their homes destroyed.

Many of the wartime measures taken on the British Home Front during the Second World War were the responsibility of local council authorities, who implemented Government policy that intruded into peoples lives. Some of these disruptive features are discussed later when considering Air Raid Precautions (ARP). The subject of my thesis referred to on page two was stimulated by my local history studies at Kingston University, and my long-standing interest in activities on the Home Front in Britain during the Second World War. This facet of local history merits enquiry because it occurred at a critical time in the history of the nation. Furthermore, there are few detailed local ARP wartime histories of small suburban communities that have been published. My research is important as it depicts civil defence (CD) in terms of local identity and how the citizens came forward to defend their homes and town from enemy air attack. Many historians have recorded the contributions made by civilians to the war effort to avoid defeat, for example, factory workers (1). But I have shown by my research the vital wartime achievements made by the Kingston and district ARP workers by their service. I have also given examples of the civil defence of London and certain provincial cities to indicate the type of challenges that were met elsewhere.

This chapter is structured into six sections. The first explains the aim of my research concerning Kingston's 'front line services'. This term used by Terence O'Brien, the official

historian of Civil Defence, has associations with the advanced deployment of military forces. who were in the vanguard of confronting the enemy. Section 1.1 explains the rationale for providing ARP, which was a new and untried defence system for the protection of the civilian population and property. To have investigated other areas of Civil Defence, for example, the mass evacuation of civilians and the post raid services would have been an unmanageable task (2). The use of primary sources are evaluated in section 1.2. A description of the methods that were employed in searching for relevant evidence is given in section 1.3. This is followed by a section devoted to 'being a historian of local Civil Defence' written in a style of giving advice to a historian intending to research the Civil Defence history of a community during the Second World War. Section 1.5, analyses the activities and responsibilities of local municipal authorities in wartime.

The notion of self help was a key component of Kingston's Civil Defence. This was introduced by the Government for local authorities to be responsible for the Civil Defence of their Community. Among the themes associated with this form of duty were class, gender and patriotism all which are closely linked to voluntarism and were important influences on the Home Front in the First and Second World War. Published works that refer to these subjects are analysed in the thesis. They are, Matthew Hilton and James Mackay (eds.). The *Ages of Voluntarism, How we got to the Big Society.* This is a collection of essays showing how the voluntary sector's role in British Society changed in the years of the two World Wars and between the wars (3). Colin Rochester, George Cambell Gosling, Alison Penn and Meta Zimmeck (eds.). *Understanding the Roots of Voluntary Action, Historical Perspectives on Current Social Policy.* A text that addresses important aspects of voluntarism including the'moving frontier of voluntary work'(4). Phillip Buckner and R. Douglas Francis (eds.). *Rediscovering the British World.* A collection of essays covering British Imperial history and the Empire that includes a chapter on British women's lives in the First World War (5). Antonia Lant, *Blackout, Reinventing Women for Wartime British Cinema,* a cultural analysis that considers different perspectives of the relation of gender to national identity in British wartime cinema (6).Deborah Thom. *Nice Girls and Rude Girls, Women workers in World War*1. A history of women and work in wartime Britain during the First World War that covers a wide range of issues (7). Janet Watson. *Fighting Different Wars, Experience, Memory and the First World War,* a cultural history of the First World War, the text based on memory and war (8). Any attempt to evaluate the wartime activities of the 250 individual UK local authorities that were responsible for their local civil defence service would have been a formidable challenge (9). I have therefore chosen to use examples of work commonly undertaken by local authorities and some of the problems they were confronted with. The last section is a brief summary of the chapter.

1.0 The aim of the study.

The establishment of an ARP service for civilians in Britain was a new and untried concept in the history of the Home Defence of the United Kingdom. The aim of my research was to present evidence and critically evaluate two important questions. Firstly, what was the state of readiness of the ARP services of Kingston, Surbiton and Malden when war was declared? Secondly, how did the three Civil Defence services perform when on wartime active service? To answer these questions, my plan was first to study Terence O'Brien's official history *Civil Defence* to understand the structure and function of the national organisation. I then constructed a history of the ARP services of Kingston. This enabled me to place in context the role of the local authority ARP services within the National scheme. It was important to identify the scheme-making authority responsible for approving Kingston and its districts local ARP schemes. The power of authorising an ARP scheme was not bestowed on every local authority, although there were exceptions. For example, County Boroughs were able to plan their own ARP scheme (10). The work of other historians who have recorded their local authority ARP have been studied. This included the history of the Civil Defence of the city of Gloucester. This is mentioned as it provides an account of special information not found in the official history of Civil Defence. For example, a detailed description of the organisation of a ARP report and control centre service (11).

A framework based on a chronological order of ARP developments was constructed to investigate how the three suburban services were organised. To help achieve this aim it was important for me to understand the composition of each of the towns studied as they existed during the 1930s. These are analysed in chapter three. Emphasis is focused on Kingston because this was the dominant and most influential town in the area. The study enabled me to appreciate the size of the natural and built features of the towns. It also gave me an insight into the type of community the Civil Defence services would have to defend in time of war. A particular aim was to examine the impact the Government's ARP proposals of 1935 had on the residents of Kingston, at a time when there were many people throughout the nation who advocated peace (12). This was important to know as the success of the ARP depended on the support of the residents.

Obtaining and analysing information on the provision of air raid shelters in Kingston, Surbiton and Malden was essential, as they were central to the Government's Civil Defence policy. According to Terence O'Brien,' air raid shelters overshadowed all other matters concerning

ARP' (13). The subject of shelters is evaluated in chapter five. It is emphasised that air raid shelters were provided not only for the physical protection of people from bomb blast, but to maintain civilian morale. The state of morale had traditionally been regarded as relevant to the fighting forces but had assumed a new importance in ARP planning. The Government had recognised that the threat air raids posed to civilian morale would apply to the entire civilian population. The subject of morale is analysed in chapter Seven.

1.1 Rationale

Primitive air raid precautions had been introduced by some British local authorities during the First World War in an attempt to offer protection for the civilian population against air raids. For example, the ringing of a hand bell by a policeman acted as a local air raid warning (14). The air raids on Britain during the First World War had caused casualties and the destruction of property and panic among certain sections of the population (15). A lesson learned by the Government from these raids was that in the future, if Britain was involved in another European war, aircraft would in all probability be used to attack Britain and large scale destruction of the built- up environment would ensue.

After the First World War there were no civil defence records that could be used to plan a ARP service. The Government had decided to develop a passive defence to protect the civilian population. For the purposes of this thesis, the term 'passive defence' is used as described by Terence O'Brien in his official history. That is, a measure not amounting to actual combat, but as a way of preventing or reducing civilian casualties and damage to property during air attacks. This form of defence included civilian evacuation, the use of air raid shelters, the blackout and the activities of the emergency and rescue services. Civil Defence planning continued to develop based on fears arising from the warning of Stanley Baldwin, who in a speech in the House of Commons in November 1932 stated, 'the bomber will always get through'(16). This could explain why the Government attached great importance in its ARP policy to provide physical protection for the population and property and to maintain public morale. Planners were presented with a formidable task against the predicted threat of heavy continuous raids. Nevertheless there were precautions that could be introduced to help safeguard the lives of people and property during a raid (17). For example, the provision of air raid shelters and the introduction of air raid wardens.

The Home Office ARP department was an organisation whose activities were linked with the Ministry for Co-ordination of Defence, the Committee of Imperial Defence and Local Government authorities. The most obvious duty of ARP was to provide air raid wardens who

provided a vital link between the people and the local authority (18). The role of the warden is evaluated in chapter 4. Other specialised branches of ARP included Casualty Units, Rescue workers and Gas Decontamination Squads. However, the functions of Civil Defence went beyond the immediate duties of helping to directly counter air attacks as they occurred. They included research and development. For example, the design of domestic air raid shelters. A major task of the ARP was to ensure the supply of gas masks for the civilian population. Although there were no gas attacks in Britain during the Second World War, Government plans existed for the provision of wooden hand rattles to warn the public of a local gas attack and the ringing of a hand bell to signify the 'all clear' (19). The use of poisonous gas by the enemy was not considered by the Government to be likely, but the possibility of it being used against civilians could not be ignored.

Very few areas of Britain could be regarded as completely immune from a gas attack in the event of war (20). The Government encouraged householders to prepare a gas proof room. As the Second World War continued, the threat of a gas attack on civilians diminished. Nevertheless the Civil Defence maintained its vigilance to this danger throughout the war. Other defence plans included a national blackout of all property. Its purpose was to make it difficult at night for the enemy bomber crews to identify their location. Planning also included the development of an electric powered public air raid warning system, in order to give to people sufficient time to seek shelter from approaching enemy aircraft (21).

In 1935 the Government ARP policy was first revealed to the public in an official circular that outlined its intentions of introducing local authority air raid precautions through the United Kingdom based on voluntary service. The impact of this circular on Kingston Council and its residents is discussed in chapter four. According to Terence O'Brien, the ARP eventually grew into a large complex organisation as it was involved in planning, administration, training and reorganisation. The introduction of the ARP Act of 1937 included a provision by the Government to repay up to 75% of approved ARP costs, thereby relieving local government authorities of a heavy financial burden. For these authorities to qualify for a grant they were required to produce evidence of an additional financial liability. The remainder of any cost was to be met by the local ratepayer. Air Raid Precautions were not wholly planned as a complete Government function, but as a part 'self help' service in which local authorities and local residents were expected to be closely involved. Without local resident voluntary support ARP could not function. However, later during the war civilians were conscripted into the Civil Defence (22).

During April 1939 twelve nation-wide civil defence regional authorities were established. The London region that included Kingston and its districts, embraced 40 ARP scheme-making authorities protecting nine million people under the control of 95 different local authorities (23). Each of the twelve regional authorities had an appointed commissioner, a regional headquarters and regional staff that were linked to the local authority civil defences of the region. The operational arrangements of the local ARP services were the responsibility of the individual local authorities, supervised by the Ministry of Home Security through the regional departments. The Ministry's responsibilities also included ARP administration, for example, pay and the allocation of manpower (24). After a damaging air raid other ARP departments were involved in post-raid assistance. The Government had adopted a policy of population dispersal that it believed would help reduce air raid casualty rates and maintain civilian morale. The provision of domestic shelters to householders was the spearhead of the dispersal policy. The belief was that this would reduce the congregation of large numbers of people in one confined space (25). Dispersal also included the mass civilian evacuation of children and mothers with young families from the most vulnerable areas in the country, particularly in London. The national evacuation policy and how it was implemented is described in the official history *Problems of Social Policy* (26).

Domestic shelters were distributed to those towns considered most vulnerable to attack (27). From the beginning of the war the Kingston residents were provided with Anderson shelters, although the town was designated a neutral area as part of the official evacuation scheme. Domestic shelters and most public shelters were not bomb proof, but were able to withstand a considerable amount of blast. The Government was adamant that it would not provide deep bomb proof shelters for the public, as it believed this would encourage a 'shelter mentality' by creating dormitories which indicated to the Government a state of low civilian morale (28). As the threat of gas attacks diminished, the menace of fire-raising raids increased with the extensive use by the enemy of incendiary bombs. This resulted in the formation of a new ARP service, 'the Fire Guard', which was a civilian defence force mobilised to counter the threat of fire. This new force was additional to the volunteer fire watchers that had been used to spot and douse incendiary bombs. Fire guard parties were organised throughout Kingston and its districts. This introduction explained the aim of my research, an explanation of 'passive defence' and the rationale for the creation of local authority ARP.

1.2 Primary sources.

Primary sources are fundamental to research, but they do not necessarily convey all that could be said on the subject under investigation. The creator of an archival primary document may have been controlled and limited to what he/she could record. For example, newspaper reports on air raids were restricted to what the censor would allow the editors to be published (29). A primary source, such as a document, may only reveal what the author believed was of sufficient importance to place on record, or thought worth documenting. Deciding what is, or is not worth recording is subjective and will depend upon many factors, for example, a person's knowledge of the subject. Archival records vary in size and some can be difficult to read (30). Primary sources are not confined to their explicit meaning and can be used as a basis for inference (31). Nor are primary sources limited to the written word. Oral evidence, cine film and photographs can be a rich mine of information. Were primary sources concerning the civil defence of a local authority kept with an eye for posterity? If they were, it is arguable that important evidence of a sensitive nature may have been omitted or destroyed. For example, the embarrassing failure of a local council to respond adequately during an air raid. Primary source material may be required to be analysed and interpreted in conjunction with other available evidence, for example comparing a newspaper report that may have been censored with a Ministry of Home Security document of the same subject. The question arises as to how authentic are primary source records? Accepting this form of record at face value can be disastrous as experienced by Professor Trevor Roper who publicly declared that the forged Hitler diaries were genuine when they were proved otherwise (32). According to Marwick, documents found in a record file should show evidence of a signature, an address, or a date, all of which help to confirm the provenance of the record (33). Otherwise, one is bound to question where and why the record originated and the reason for its existence? There are historians who record important information but omit the provenance of the source. An example of this practice is given in the following extract 'The up draught from the fires would cause flying brands of burning material to whirl in the air like autumn leaves in a storm and as the windows would by then be shattered

by the heat or blast, fire might travel down a street as fast as a man could walk'. This original account was written by Sir Aylmer Firebrace, Inspector in Chief of Fire Services recording his personal experience during the Plymouth Blitz of 1941 (34). However, the text has been used without reference to Firebrace by a historian in a description of the bombing of Dresden in February 1945 (35).

Primary sources deposited at the Kingston Heritage centre.

Many of the primary sources of Kingston, Surbiton and Malden Civil Defence are deposited at the Kingston Heritage Centre, which arose from the enlargement of the Borough in 1965 (36). The archive records were important for my research as they hold long uninterrupted full runs of Council and ARP Committee minutes. For example, they contain the minutes of Kingston Council's response and debate regarding the Government's first ARP circular in 1935. The minutes also record details of the local authority applications and the approval and expenditure of every item of ARP equipment.

These primary sources helped me to understand how the ARP services moved from a state of peace to preparedness for war. This evidence also reveals how ARP intruded into people's lives during the Second World War and burdened the local authorities with huge responsibilities on behalf of their community. Copies of the *Surrey Comet* held at the Kingston Heritage Centre include the pre-war and wartime years in a series of uninterrupted weekly editions that constituted a valuable primary source of information. As the *Surrey Comet* was not indexed, it became necessary to learn how to identify news items likely to be of interest to me. This was achieved by noticing that civil defence news was nearly always published on the same page in every edition. The examination of a run of consecutive newspapers beyond a specific date sometimes revealed useful information. For example, the report of an air raid that had been delayed for publication for security reasons.

Primary sources deposited at The National Archive.

Ministry and regional civil defence records concerning Kingston and its districts are deposited at The National Archive. The vast number of Ministry of Home Security files concerning air raid precautions made it necessary for me to understand how and where these records were catalogued (37). One particular problem was identifying The National Archive's group reference and piece numbers that could have been of interest to me.

Other primary source deposits

Primary sources of local civil defence matters are to be found in autobiographies, letters and diaries. These records were usually written by people who had no intention of publishing their accounts. However, the quality of the recorded information was such that their friends or relatives donated these valuable historical records to archives and museums. An example are the wartime letters of Mrs D. Compton of Surbiton, referred to in chapter six.

Primary sources of information require careful scrutiny. For example, Rowan Bentall, Managing Director of Bentalls Ltd, Kingston, states in his autobiography that on the 17th August 1940, the store in Eden Street was hit by a bomb which ruined the complete stock of pianos (38). Whereas Shaan Butters, a Kingston local historian, records that Kingston's first air raid occurred at midnight on Saturday 24 August 1940 (39). Primary source material can also be found by the examination of reference lists from academic published papers and by searching the Internet. The Internet was used to search The American National Archives, Washington. The purpose was to identify the US army units who were stationed at Bushy Park, near Kingston, during the war. My aim, which was not successful, was to try and contact ex-US military personnel who may have had recollections of the time when American soldiers gave assistance to the Civil Defence during the Kingston 1945 V2 incident.

An explanation is given of my use of the primary sources. The importance of vigilance when examining these sources is emphasised with the need of proof of provenance of documents being researched as it is not unusual to find unsigned and undated documents in archival files. However, there is the possibility that this form of document might be useful.

1.3 Methods of enquiry.

A framework was constructed based on the chronology of events, that was a continuous challenge for me in keeping this material in order. A decision was made on what the subjects of my main themes would be. The main archives that I visited and Kingston University had libraries that contained useful sources of information. The essential features of the three towns as they were in the 1930s were studied and evaluated. This particular research yielded a wide

range of information which included population size, types of local employment, the political and social conditions and public transport systems. Certain key landmarks were noted for example, Bentalls store, the Hawker Aircraft factory in Kingston and the 'Art Deco' Surbiton Railway Station. This information was essential and helped me to understand the physical fabric of the towns and the nature of the communities. The Kingston Heritage Centre held photographs and maps, some of which I have used in my thesis. I have ignored, with the exception of the effect that Anti-Aircraft Defences had on civilian morale and the aborted enemy attack on the Hawker Aircraft Factory, wider issues involving the units of the Army and Royal Air Force engaged in the defence of the United Kingdom. Published secondary sources concerning the Civil Defence of the three towns were limited due to the lack of publications, although useful information was obtained from *The Book of Kingston* (40) and *Surbiton Past* (41). Oral evidence from the archives of the Kingston Heritage Centre provided an insight into people's experiences during the war. However studying this form of information has convinced me that oral evidence should be subjected to critical evaluation by a historian before being accepted as an archival record. For example, one oral record of a Kingston man describes seeing dog fights and vapour trails of Spitfire fighter planes attacking Zeppelins (42). The individual had combined his memory of both world wars and had difficulty in discriminating between them.

An explanation is given of my approach to using primary sources dictated by my need to contextualize the role of Kingston and its district's Air Raid Precautions. Details are also given of my use of The National Archives and Kingston Heritage Centre services.

1.4 Being a local historian of Civil Defence.

Few historians in the UK have produced detailed local authority wartime histories, a situation Angus Calder referred to in *The People's War*. Forty years ago Angus Calder wrote,'the literature of the provincial blitz, alas is almost non existent'(43). Since then books have been published on the subject, many of them in the style of popular histories. An author, intent on writing a history of local civil defence should explain why the history is important to the community. It is suggested that before researching, a local historian should have an understanding of what constituted the Home Front, because this would help the author place the role of ARP in context within a local wartime community setting. The first task is to acquire a

knowledge of the place and the people during the 1930s. This includes knowing the physical layout of the place and identifying important landmarks that could have been enemy targets, that may help to indicate how vulnerable the area may have been to air attacks. A local historian should know when and how the local authority ARP was organised and performed during the war. It is important to understand the impact the Munich crisis of 1938 had on the local authority and its residents. For example, the urgent digging of trench shelters and the mass panic evacuation of civilians to Wales in 1938 (44).

A local historian would need to know the position of the community concerning the Government official evacuation scheme, as this was linked to the ARP policy of population dispersal. Was the local authority being studied a designated evacuation area ? An answer to this question may give an indication as to its vulnerability against air attack. If it was an evacuation area, what arrangements had been made by the local authorities and voluntary organisations for the exodus of civilians to a reception area ? Where in Britain were the children evacuated to? Although the historian may have learnt that the community was bombed, confirming the precise dates of attack together with information of casualties and bomb damage requires research at a local heritage centre or The National Archives.

The passing years have made it difficult to detect any physical evidence of air raid damage or a Civil Defence wartime presence in the environment of today. The casual onlooker can be misled into thinking that a given property was untouched by air raids, whereas, in fact, the building had suffered bomb damage, which was subsequently repaired and then been subjected to years of weathering which have hidden any evidence of renovation. The historian researching a place known to have been bombed, may find it useful, assuming images exist, to examine photographic records of air raid damage of the locality. To clarify if a place had been devastated by bombing, the Ministry of Home Security issued an explanation of the term 'devastated area' as one in which all buildings had been destroyed or rendered completely useless embracing the whole site on which the buildings stood and half the width of the street of which the plot had frontage (45).

The researcher should consider using two Ordnance Survey maps for tracing places being researched. One map that shows the pre-war layout and a post-map of the locality. It should be

appreciated that the layout of the streets may have changed over the last 70 years, some streets having disappeared, or their names deleted, or renamed. Many buildings that were bombed were rebuilt or repaired in keeping with the pre-war design. However, there were bombed buildings that were destroyed and never rebuilt. Cities and town centres that were bombed have tended to receive the most study, but the periphery of these communities often suffered bombing too. The local historian may wish to search for surviving evidence of the ARP or bombing. For example, an Anderson air raid shelter that has remained intact in a back garden. Evidence can still be seen of fragments of bomb shrapnel embedded in the rear walls of Surrey County Hall, Kingston.

Air raids over Britain varied in time and intensity. There were places that did not experience raids, but the threat of bombing existed for all communities throughout the war. That meant civil defence was a 'waiting game' and needed to be prepared at all times against raids. The local historian should research the duties and experiences of ARP personnel. This includes the role of the warden's service. Recording the names of air raid wardens and people who served in their local ARP would serve as a noble memorial to them as well as a valuable historical record. The types of air raid shelter, for example, domestic and public shelters that were used and people's experience in sheltering during air raids are important for the local historian to record. This evidence will give future generations knowledge into how people were protected and behaved at a time of national crisis.

Air Raid Precautions were originally planned for the protection of civilians against conventional air raids. This strategy changed in 1944 with the new challenge of 'V' weapons, which were introduced in the form of pilot-less planes and rockets to bombard London and south- east England. A local historian researching a community that came under a missile attack would need to know the nature of the threat and how the civil defence attempted to counter this. For example, the Ministry of Home Security established new definitions of vulnerable areas, and reintroduced civilian evacuation and the provision of deep bombproof public shelters. What impact these weapons had on the morale of the local community should be investigated. Details of where exactly these missiles exploded will require investigation together with the number of casualties and damage sustained. This information is available in the local authority archives or deposited in the records of the Ministry of Home Security at The National Archives.

Details are given of what information a local historian of civil defence would require in researching the ARP history of a local community. This includes studying the place during the 1930s. A knowledge of the local Home Front during the Second World War is essential so as

to place the role of the ARP in context. Information would be needed concerning the provisions of air raid shelters, the status of the community regarding the Government's evacuation scheme, the state of readiness of the ARP at the outbreak of war and the performance of the local civil defence during the war.

1.5 Evaluating wartime local authorities.

Examples of the work and problems of local authorities during wartime are evaluated in this section. The war brought about many changes in municipal affairs, but there were no wartime local council elections because the main political parties had agreed to maintain the *status quo* of local councils as they were at the beginning of the war. The Mayor retained his dignity as being the leading citizen, but the wartime responsibility of a local authority's civil defence service during an air raid was with the ARP controller. Many ARP controllers were employees of their local authority and held senior positions in their community. The responsibilities given to local government authorities in wartime were a formidable task, necessitating a great deal of work particularly for those staff associated with civil defence. The scale and frequency of air raids were a dominant feature in the administrative affairs of local authorities who were also responsible for the post-raid care of homeless people. There is no simple model to analyse how local authorities operated in wartime and how the complex problems that often existed were resolved. Throughout the war the traditional work of the local councils, for example, the collection of rates, refuse and keeping the streets clean continued alongside their ARP tasks. O'Brien refers to twelve main functions in post-raid ARP work that local authorities were required to carry out (46). These included the clearance of bomb debris and the disposal of the dead.

Prior to the war, local authorities staff were overwhelmingly male. As the war progressed and male staff were conscripted into the armed forces, so an increasing number of women were employed by the municipal councils. The co-operation of local councils with the Government and voluntary organisations increased the burden on local authorities. For example, the Ministry of Food encouraged local authorities to establish British Restaurants for the benefit of the public with the Ministry providing the capital in the form of a loan (47). One of these non-profit enterprises was opened at Kingston that was originally a local Women's Voluntary Service (WVS) canteen. Local councils also collaborated with the WVS and other charitable organisations to raise funds for the armed forces. These events were often based on a military

theme and usually lasted one week. For example, at Surbiton in 1941, a sum of money for 'Warship Week' was set as a target for the local population to achieve. Money donated was registered each day and publicly displayed on an indicator board. An opportunity was taken at these events to make this fund raising a community occasion, with a programme of social events, the purpose of which was to maintain the morale of the local population and to disseminate propaganda (48). The Government's 'Holiday at Home' campaign was another responsibility taken on by local authorities. For example, Kingston Council staged a programme of social events during July-August 1943, with the publicity and details of the events displayed at warden's posts throughout the town (49).

Local authorities worked closely with the local voluntary organisations, which made useful contributions on the Home Front, for example, the National Saving groups. The contribution of the WVS is described by Tom Harrison of Mass Observation as outstanding. The WVS had played a major role by co-operating with local authorities prior to the war in organising the mass evacuation of civilians. How did WVS organisations see their local authority partners? James Hinton, states 'relations between the WVS and local authorities were often difficult in the early days of the war as local politicians found it difficult to accept women in responsible roles in public life' (50). He gives an example of how a WVS centre organiser was impatient with the city's council who had to wait for decisions of the Town Clerk before they could act (51). Evidence from the Kingston Council wartime committee minutes suggest that there were no such problems with the WVS, possibly because the local organiser was Mrs Oldfield, a town councillor and wife of the Head Warden. According to Hinton, although the WVS was a voluntary organisation, it existed in wartime to serve the statutory authorities. As a consequence any WVS centre could only undertake work at the request of the local authority or Government department (52). James Hinton, refers to the vigourous style of the WVS who suggested some local authorities needed rousing into taking up their ARP responsibilities (53). The work of the Kingston WVS is explained in chapter 8.

What were the responsibilities of local authorities who were charged with caring for people who had lost their homes by bombing or had to be evacuated because of an unexploded bomb? Kingston residents who had lost their homes by bombing were sent to rest centres provided by the local council. The local authority had the task of finding temporary shelter for its

homeless and feeding them. Subsequently they had the further responsibility of rehousing these people. Angus Calder records that certain London local government authorities emerged discredited from their Blitz experience(54). He cites West Ham Council as an example of local government failure. Whatever criticism could be made against local authorities in their failure to protect or care for their community, this was not a reflection of the overall situation that existed, for there were other borough councils who met the challenge of their post raid social crisis in an exemplary fashion. For example, the east London Borough of Poplar approached their 'Blitz' problems under the resolute leadership of Alderman Charlie Key who was supported by an inspiring superb 'esprit de corps' that united the local community (55).

In the provinces, Liverpool had suffered considerable destruction of its housing stock yet the city's billeting department rehoused people, if only temporarily, at a rate of 40,000 per week (56). Why did some local authorities fail in their duty to provide adequate post raid care and support for their citizens? With reference to the failure of certain local authorities, Mr Willink, the Special Commissioner for the London homeless, told the House of Commons that 'nobody in my office, or myself had ever been asked by any local authority in England for any information about the way London attempted to deal with this problem'(57). Tom Harrison, of Mass Observation, who had personal experience of local authority failures not only in London but in the provinces too, likened such failure to criminal negligence'(58). Professor Titmuss records 'there was a lack of preparation in most provincial cities, there were many glaring inadequacies'(59). One reason this post raid problem continued to exist could have been the decision of Herbert Morrison, the Minister of Home Security, who opposed requests by Regional Commissioners to replace the leaders of inefficient local authorities. Morrison argued that it would discourage local authorities to promote and encourage self help (60).

1.6 Summary

The introduction of this chapter explained how previous wars involving Britain were fought at a distance, but with the rapid development of military aircraft during the First World War the situation changed as non-combatants in the Second World War were directly exposed to enemy activity. The chapter continues by stating the aims of my research. Methods of research are analysed and were used to pursue my study to answer my research questions. The rationale of civil defence that was based on the lessons learned from the First World War air raids on the British civilian population is explained. The importance and use of primary sources includes

examples of the caution that local historians should observe in using this form of material. Mention is made of my study of the official history of *Civil Defence* that made a significant contribution to my understanding of the organisation of passive defence. Explanations are given on my approach to using the archives. A section of the chapter is devoted to the attributes required by a local historian to research the history of a local Civil Defence. An analysis is given of the wartime work of municipal councils who carried the burden of its community's Civil Defence on behalf of the Government. These tasks and a range of other wartime services went well beyond the traditional municipal peacetime services.

Chapter One

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Chapter Two

A Critical Evaluation of Secondary Sources

The first section of this chapter appraises the official history of the Civil Defence. This is followed by a review of twelve secondary source publications regarding local authority civil defence. The books chosen covered accounts of cities, towns and villages. The study was to evaluate whether the authors convey air raid precautions as academic local history or as popular versions of civil defence activities. I have grouped the books according to their regional authority area and indicated their approximate distance from Kingston (part of the London Regional Authority). Information from the twelve places reviewed has been collated and presented under themes. I have also analysed a number of published papers on blitzed communities, an article on the Home Front and historiographical debates concerning civilian morale. British society in the the Second World War and Total War are also evaluated.

2.0 The official history of the Civil Defence

The official history of the *Civil Defence*, written by Terence O'Brien, was published in 1955. It is one ot the Second World War home histories based on official Government sources at The National Archives. O'Brien's work has been used by leading historians including Professor Angus Calder and Professor Titmuss. O'Brien enjoyed a privileged access to the departmental papers of The National Archives. Only a small proportion of the text has been devoted to the descriptions of air attacks (1). Although he was aware of the national history of ARP a great deal of his study was limited to London. He admits he did not personally visit or consult with any other local authorities outside London other than Oxford and Dover. O'Brien does not refer to Kingston, New Malden or Surbiton (2). *Civil Defence* is essential to my understanding of the subject but it limits the history of local authority Civil Defence that as a local historian I needed to know. Civilian evacuation and post-raid Civil Defence is evaluated in a separate official history written by Professor Titmuss (3). It is to be regretted that rural ARP has been neglected by O'Brien, as it would have been an important historic record as to how the civil defence of these small communities responded to air raid incidents.

A difficult challenge for the Imperial War Defence Sub Committee that was responsible for planning ARP was how to combine the lessons learnt from the First World War air raids. In the early 1920s the planners used France as the hypothetical enemy, as it was the only European power with an airforce capable of delivering an air attack on Britain (4). O'Brien devotes the early chapters of *Civil Defence* to planning and organisation, that covers the period 1924-1935. During the 1920s ARP was planned in secret, at a time of the rapid development in military air power, that involved reviews by the Air Council in an attempt to update the predicted scale of attack. This presented difficulties for the ARP planners, not least by having to assess the increasing capability and flying range of other nation's aircraft (5). In July 1935, the first key document on Air Raid Precautions was issued to local authorities and the public. This was a Government invitation for them to form a local civil defence service. It was evident from this circular that there had been a shift away from central planning towards the periphery of local Government authorities (6). The circular explained that each local authority (except parishes) would be responsible for preparing its own ARP scheme. Kingston and its district's response is given in chapter four.

The first practical local authority ARP task, according to O'Brien, was the voluntary recruitment of air raid wardens, who provided a link between the public and the local authority. How the wardens would emerge as an organised body must have been in some doubt, for the Police secured a limitations on some of the duties envisaged for wardens. O'Brien refers to the Warren Fisher Committee (WFC) of 1937 that examined the affairs of Air Raid Precautions. The Chairman, Warren Fisher, was the first appointed Head of the Civil Service. The proposals of the WFC, published in 1938, constituted a landmark in the shaping of ARP, as the Committee defined the aims of the service (7). Simultaneously, the ARP Act of 1937 that came into effect on I January 1938, compelled local authorities to prepare ARP measures (8). O'Brien states, without giving any figures, that at the end of 1938 ARP recruitment nationwide increased to a level beyond that of the combined strength of the three fighting services. This surge in recruitment it is suggested was a direct result of the Munich Crisis, because the public had come to realise that the increasing threat of war was due to Hitler's aggressive foreign policy. The consequences of the Munich Crisis on the preparation of ARP is examined by O'Brien. For example, at the end of 1938 the Government published its shelter policy using the principle of population dispersal (9). O'Brien explained why the Government had refused to provide deep shelters for the public. The Government feared that the public would use the shelters as dormitories, which would result in a lowering of civilian morale. There was also the

consideration of the high costs in deep shelter construction. O'Brien refers to the Committee that was set up in February 1939 under the chairmanship of Lord Hailey, one-time Governor of the Punjab (10). The purpose of the Committee was to consider the problem of air raid shelters and possibly to secure public support for the official shelter policy. The Hailey Report emphasised that shelter protection depended not only on its strength but on its accessibility. This finding was relevant to Kingston, as C.Toyne a regional civil defence engineer referred to in chapter five, had in 1938 been critical of Kingston Council's choice of location for its public shelters in the town.

The Civil Defence of Britain, according to O'Brien, eventually became an organisation of great complexity. For this reason it is surprising that he does not refer to the responsibilities of Wing Commander Sir John Hodsell, the Inspector General of the Civil Defence. O'Brien refers at length to the National Fire Service (NFS) that was formed in 1941. He records that the Minister of Home Security's biggest single problem while a raid was in progress was fire (11). There had been conflagrations that had gone unchecked because of inadequate water supplies. One problem was caused by those communities having their own fire brigade which operated using non-standard equipment. This unsatisfactory situation had existed for years and was used as evidence at the Royal Commission on Fire Services in 1923, but no action had been taken by successive governments to rectify the situation (12). The decision to request fire fighting assistance from an outside brigade was influenced by the burden of costs incurred by the requesting force. Sir Aylmer Firebrace, Chief of the Fire Staff in referring to the newly-formed National Fire Service states ' No longer did a Fire Chief fail to ask for the assistance he needed at a fire lest he be criticised by his local council for incurring unnecessary expenditure. I have actually seen fire allowed to destroy a row of houses rather than help should be requested from the adjacent brigade'(13).

The official history of *Civil Defence* evaluates, with the exception of one chapter, the challenges associated with conventional air raids. In the last chapter O'Brien explains the Civil Defence counter measures used against the missiles attacks on southern England during 1944-45. O'Brien reveals that the impending missile threat was disbelieved by Lord Cherwell, the government's chief scientific advisor (14). These new weapons of destruction resulted in

revised tactics being employed by local ARP authorities; O'Brien refers to the newly formed civil defence 'flying columns'. How did the people withstand the flying bomb attacks? O'Brien quoted a Cabinet Committee report,'civilian morale remained wonderful, but there were signs of weariness, people, although nervous, continued to go about their normal daily tasks with the knowledge that death or injury might come to them any moment'(15). Duncan Sandys, chairman of the Committee of Counter Measures against the German secret weapons, confidently told the press, when the Government believed the V1 attacks had finished, 'except for a few shots, the Battle of London is over'. Seldom can a senior politician's prediction have been so wrong, for on the following evening the first V2 landed in Chiswick (16).

O'Brien's explains in *Civil Defence* how, throughout the years of planning, the national organisation developed and why major policy decisions were made. Many of the chapters refer to the front line services at a time when the nation's resolution was severely tested by bombing. The history of Civil Defence has underpinned my understanding of the fundamental structure and development of the National Service. This has helped me to place in context local authority ARP services.

2.1 The evaluation of secondary sources

Secondary sources of information can become dated and consequently misleading because new evidence becomes available to an author that was not available at the time of a past publication. For example, a recently published book by H Jones, *British civilians in the front line,* offers a new insight into the behaviour of civilians and their reaction to air raids during the Second World War, which challenges the traditional image of civilian shelterers (17). Jones has also used unpublished information about the crucial role of civilian aircraft spotters, describing their work on the roof top of Hawkers factory, Kingston, that I have considered in more detail in chapter six.

The locations of the places mentioned in my review of the secondary sources are shown in table one overleaf. The extent and level of air raids of these communities varied considerably, ranging from the destruction of the city centre of Plymouth, Devon, to a minor raid on the city of Oxford. It had been my intention by studying the secondary sources to learn how these local authorities prepared and organised their Civil Defence and what were the contributions made by the local residents to the defence of their community.

Location	Regional Authority	Miles from Kingston
1. Twickenham , Middlesex	No 5 London	2
2. St Pancras, (LCC) London	No 5 London	13
3. Surrey Heath, Surrey	No12 South Eastern	22
4. Sandhurst, Surrey	No12 South Eastern	30
5. Bromley and District, Kent	No12 South Eastern	22
6. Reading, Berkshire	No 6 Southern	26
7. Oxfordshire	No 6 Southern	60
8. Southampton, Hampshire	No 6 Southern	70
9. Gloucester	No 7 South Western	100
10. Exeter, Devon	No 7 South Western	160
11. Torquay, Devon	No 7 South Western	185
12. Plymouth, Devon	No 7 Southern Western	215

Table one : Secondary source places reviewed : their Regional Authority and approximate distance from Kingston

The history of local authority Civil Defence services are unique, and each warrant a separate study as they were formed according to the local circumstances of the community. For example, the degree of vulnerability as a likely enemy target. This and other factors had been assessed by the planners to determine the establishment of ARP personnel and equipment that would be provided for individual ARP schemes. The scale of local ARP preparation was also linked to the nation's manpower needs and material resources. Not every local council authority had the status of a 'scheme making authority'. In such cases the County Civil Defence Committe was responsible for producing a model scheme for a local authority to submit its own ARP plan (18).

The history of the Civil Defence of Twickenham, a town situated close to Kingston, has been written by the local historian, Paul Barnfield. He describes the preparation of the town's ARP in the mid-1930s and the subsequent activities of the civil defence service during the air raids on the town. Barnfield records that there were raids on Twickenham at the the time of the London Blitz and refers to the flares and incendiary bombs dropped by enemy aircraft in south-east

Kingston. The author does not refer to Bushy Park situated in the Borough of Twickenham, where General Eisenhower, the Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces, had his Headquarters and prepared his plans for D Day. Barnfield makes no reference to this major enemy target as to whether any ARP arrangements were made between Twickenham Council and the American Army to help protect the huge US camp (19). The first seven pages of Barnfield's book covers the town's ARP preparations between 1935-1939. However the core of the text is a detailed account of the bombing incidents of Twickenham and its districts between 1940-1945.

In Charles Newbery's *Wartime St Pancras* the reader is given a wealth of information about the civil defence service of one large metropolitan borough that was heavily bombed. Newbery manages to transmit some wartime atmosphere into the text, possibly because he was an active member of St Pancras ARP during the war (20). This is a publication that should be read by any historian interested in local civil defence because of the useful information it contains. This detailed account of the Civil Defence of St Pancras is entirely different in content from the booklet on the Air Raid Precautions of Surrey Heath, a small local district authority. Unlike the St Pancras publication that explains to the reader the functions of each of the ARP services, the contents of the Surrey Heath booklet is limited to fragments of information about the ARP in the area. For example, a woman's description of her father making 'a beautiful dugout with power run from batteries'. But the editor has failed to include sufficient information to convey to the reader the serious purpose of the local ARP organisation (21). *Sandhurst in the Second World War* is published by the local historical society. It is a diary of the war years of the Berkshire village with a few entries relating to the local ARP. The text suggests there was a lack of ARP organisation within the community (22).

Before the War is a history of Bromley and District, Kent, between 1929 and 1935. Bromley at that period was similar to Surbiton, it was an expanding suburban area of private housing estates. The text is significantly different from the other books reviewed, as it provides the reader with an example of early national ARP planning by describing the annual anti-gas exercises that took place there (23). The book of the wartime history of Reading, written by local historian Stuart Hylton, is based on the reports of *The Chronicle*, the town's local newspaper and evokes the sense of community (24). The author refers to the local ARP, but prefers to provide description, for example the siting of public shelters, rather than an

explanation as to the purpose of civil defence. People's reaction to air raids particularly when they were at work was vital to the prosecution of the war. But one is left wondering what happened in Reading in the day time when the air raid siren sounded? Did everyone stop shopping or working and make for the shelters? Local historian Malcolm Graham attempts to cover the wartime history of Oxfordshire in his book *Oxfordshire at War* (25). A chapter is devoted to civil defence including information about ARP in rural Oxfordshire. Unfortunately Graham omits to describe some of the fundamental challenges confronting those responsible for rural ARP. For example, the scarcity of water mains. to which hoses could be connected, that resulted in the use of extended relays of hose pipes when fighting a burning thatched cottage. This ambitious book is enhanced by each chapter having a source list of references. The Gloucester City Council's publication, *Civil Defence,* is an account explaining the City's Civil Defence organisation. The text states that Gloucester's ARP was administered by a joint scheme shared between the City and County Council. The author claims this was the only case of a joint scheme in England (26). No explanation is given as to how this arrangement worked. The book also commemorates by name many of the people who served in the Civil Defence of Gloucester and acknowledges their loyalty and devotion to duty.

Gloucester although bombed, escaped intensive air raids, whereas Southampton was heavily raided on more than one occasion. Tony Brode, the Literary Editor of the *Southern Evening Echo,* uses the newspaper archives to construct his account of the Southampton Blitz. The main theme of his book is the criticism by the Inspector General of ARP of the failure of the city's Civil Defence. Despite reporting such an important accusation, there is no indication in the book that the author searched the Ministry of Home Security records at the National Archives for collaborative evidence. This is an interesting book, but of limited value as many important questions remain unanswered. The rest of the text is based on testimonies of individual experiences during the raids on Southampton (27). *Exeter Remembers the War* is written by Todd Gray, a local historian who has used the memories of people who lived in the city when it was raided in 1942 (28). This form of evidence in Angus Calder's opinion can be suspect, he states 'memory deteriorates and does not always deliver fact' (29). Gray does not give a history of why and when the city's ARP was formed, but he does provide a considerable amount of information concerning the civil defence activities of the city. The history of Torquay's Civil Defence Wardens Organisation is written by the Chief Warden of the seaside resort. The author describes some ARP practices that were different compared to those of Kingston. These

are referred to in the themes set out below (30). Pat Twyford, a *Western Morning News* reporter and author of *It Came to Our Door,* describes the Plymouth Blitz in a heroic style. He catalogues every city building and business that was damaged or destroyed, but omits the Regional authority's criticism of the failure of the City Council to prepare for raids and the failure of post-raid care that caused so much stress to sections of the population (31).

The information of the books reviewed varied, some omitted the importance of the local civil defence to the community or what contribution the local people made in the defence of their homes. Whatever criticisms are made about some of the secondary sources reviewed, they do provide, however incomplete, a record of some wartime experiences on the home front. It is apparent that many of the authors have not read *Civil Defence*, or researched the local archives records that are available. However, *Wartime St Pancras* conveys to the reader how, with the threat of war developing, the local community was mobilised as a passive defence and how the London Borough prepared and defended itself against air raids.

The section below is presented as themes. The information has been abstracted from the texts of the reviewed sources and published academic papers. The purpose is to present comparative evidence from various ARP schemes and related experiences.

2.2 Air Raid Shelters

Using an Air raid shelter was for many civilians the closest they got to a hostile experience on the Home Front. There were many forms of air raid shelters provided and used. In *Wartime St Pancras,* seven types of shelters are listed that were used in the Borough (32). Most of the secondary sources reviewed refer to the trench shelters that were dug, in response to Home Office advice at the time of the Munich Crisis of 1938. The headmaster of Sandhurst's village school, helped by his pupils, is reported to have dug a trench shelter in a grassy area of the playground so that the children could crowd into during a raid (33). This report is questionable because volunteer adults or council workmen, as happened at Kingston, were usually employed by local councils to dig trench shelters. The distribution of Anderson shelters in the places reviewed began early in 1939. In March 1941 the indoor Morrison Shelter became available to local residents. There were no public shelters provided at Sandhurst. In February 1940, the subject of shelters for the village school was raised at a Sandhurst Parish Council meeting. A possible explanation why shelters had not been built at the village school could be that

Sandhurst had been designated a neutral area as part of the Government's evacuation scheme. Yet the author records that Sandhurst householders had Anderson shelters in their back gardens. According to the author most of the villagers tended to shelter under their stairs or dining room table. No explanation is given for this behaviour, but it is suggested that their Anderson shelters suffered from dampness, a condition also experienced by shelterers of Kingston and Malden. Chobham village in the Surrey Heath area was provided with public shelters but few people bothered to use them. One former pupil recalls his school shelter being, 'cold, damp and dark, where we used to sing, tell stories and pray'(34). For some reason, the local council decided not to provide a public shelter in the main square at Bagshot, which caused public concern (35).

Twickenham Council had problems with supplying domestic shelters. At the start of the war only ten percent of the residents had been provided with some form of shelter protection. The situation improved in 1940, when 6,000 Anderson shelters were delivered for the residents. The local branch of the Communist Party proposed that the Borough should provide deep underground shelters for the town's population, but the local council refused because of the costs that would be incurred. Paul Barnfield, author of *When the bombs fell* uses more description than the other authors. For example, he gives an insight into Anderson shelter life for Mrs Simmons of Teddington, who wrote how :

'remarkably easy one becomes use to things. As soon as supper-of necessity at seven is over-there is a rush to clear and have all at hand for the alarm, which comes regularly at 8.15. Then out we come to our dugout in the garden, equipped with sewing, wireless set, writing or books, plus hot water bottles. We have a wireless and listen if we want, but if the guns are pretty active, I prefer to hear rather than stretch one's ears through another sound, as it is necessary to listen in case incendiaries come. Then we sew, play chess or read until about 11 pm when Leonard puts up his camp bed and lays out my rolled mattress and go to sleep in the hole, which is dry and warm and fairly comfortable apart from not being able to stand upright in it'. My evening garments are now, knickers, pyjamas and a thick dark green siren suit which I change into at six, and Leonard has pyjamas, trousers and a thick sweater. I believe the all clear generally goes about six, but sleep through it, and emerge about 8 o'clock. It is a marvellous saving in laundry and sheets, and I am forgetting how to make proper beds, as ours consist of rugs and pillows covered in gingham for the shelter and are all quickly folded up and stowed away on the bench' (36).

The way this middle class family in Twickenham sheltered is compared with the poor working class people who had taken refuge in communal shelters in Stepney and Poplar, located in London's East End. Here many railway arches and warehouses were used as shelters. Local residents spent many hours in such places. How did the shelterers behave and pass their time in these inhospitable environments? Geoffrey Field, describes in his paper, how some London shelterers lived and coped with the constant stress of a possible disaster, despite people arguing about noise or space, and having to contend with fights and petty thieving. Efforts were made by the local authorities to maintain people's morale, film shows were arranged as were regular visits by concert artistes (37). The London County Council arranged evening classes, for example dressmaking. There was a library scheme with books circulating in the shelters (38). In chapter 5, I have referred to how Kingston Council attempted to improve public shelter life by heating these public spaces to make them more comfortable for the shelterers and by introducing a catering service.

One of the secondary sources reviewed reveal a shelter incident resulting in a high loss of life. This was at a Plymouth underground shelter where a bomb exploded killing 90 shelterers (39). On the 29th April 1942, the city of York suffered a heavy raid. Christopher Price states in his article that although there were communal shelters, very few York householders possessed a domestic shelter. The reason, in his opinion, was 'the British Government's budgetary policy that shaped the country's ARP before the outbreak of war'(40). Price does not mention what the status of York was concerning the vulnerability of the city to air raids. The bombing of York, according to Price, was caused by the absence of anti-aircraft (AA) defences. At the time of the York raid, the city had no AA guns, but did this lack of military defence make a significant difference to the casualty rate and destruction of property that was inflicted on the city? Many published accounts of night raids over England state that the presence of AA guns had little or no effect against the enemy aircraft. The cacophony of the guns served to sustain the local population's morale, who believed the noise of the guns was evidence that the defences were fighting back on their behalf.

Exeter, unlike Kingston, was not considered by its citizens to be an enemy target resulting in a lack of demand for shelters. Many people ignored air raid warnings at night and stayed in bed. This attitude quickly changed after the first major raid on 3-4 May 1942. Thereafter, considerable time passed before requests for shelters subsided (41). Gloucester was

a designated neutral area with a very well organised civil defence. During the Munich Crisis of 1938, trenches had been dug in haste, but difficulties were encountered with subsoil water. However the majority of the population were provided with some form of shelter protection (42). At Oxford men worked throughout the day to complete its trench shelters as the City expected to be bombed at the outbreak of war. Oxford's Civil Defence was well prepared, but it escaped the full trauma of bombing (43).

Evaluating the evidence from the secondary sources, the provision of shelters in the different communities varied considerably, although this may have been due to the designated vulnerability of the particular area. There were Sandhurst families who were supplied with a domestic shelter but did not use them. The accounts of Gloucester and St Pancras Civil Defence services suggest these two local authorities, like Kingston, were well prepared for air raids.

2.3. Civilian Morale.

Tom Harrisson, co-founder of Mass Observation, could not define morale. He became uncertain of his terms of reference, questioning himself as to what he was trying to measure (44). Civilian morale is mentioned in some of the secondary sources, but the authors do not attempt to define the term or explain why the Government believed morale was important. Bevan and Thoms studied the morale of three Blitzed northern cities. They stated, 'going from Liverpool to Manchester was like going from an atmosphere of reasonable cheerfulness into an atmosphere of depression, there was a similar feeling of despair, complete helplessness and resignation when visiting Hull'(45). Bevan and Thoms suggest the morale in these cities depended less on the resilience of the individual populations and more on the sense of identity of the city's remaining infrastructure that facilitated the generation and maintenance for the return to post-raid normal urban life. The Chairman of Sandhurst Parish Council in his New Year Message for 1941 stated, 'he was glad to see the morale is of the very best' implying that there were different levels of morale and that the bad war news had not affected the morale of the people of Sandhurst (46). Tony Brode, the author of *the Southampton Blitz*, refers to the impact that the intensive raids had on the morale of the city's population. He stated 'the city was so obsessed with air raids that it was near neurosis'(47). When Reading was raided on 10 February 1941, sustaining 141 casualties, the author records that there was no panic, but how the townspeople behaved in the aftermath of being bombed is not mentioned in the book (48).

In 2004, two psychiatrists were part of a team who published a paper on the psychological impact bombing had on civilians during the Second World War. They concluded that the mental health of the nation may have improved as civilians proved more resilient than planners had predicted, mainly because the Government had underestimated people's adaptability and resourcefulness'(49). The northern community of Tyneside experienced intensive bombing during 1940-1941. Craig Armstrong has attempted to redress the stories of the 'Blitz' myth. He claims the accounts are biased in favour of a southern perspective. Armstrong suggests that the morale of the Tyneside people was based on calmness, their neighbourly feeling and community spirit (50). Whereas experience proved that morale associated with air raids was maintained by the resilience of the British people to bombing. Armstrong's research is undermined by the fact that the author omits any reference to the London Blitz experience, an important comparative model according to Angus Calder, when studying the civilian morale of heavily bombed provincial cities.

Wartime morale in London is the theme of a paper presented by Amy Bell, of Huron University College, Ontario, based on the narratives of civilians from urban areas that were subjected to constant raids. The author describes London as 'a hidden landscape of fear'. Her constant use of the all embracing term 'London' is misleading (51). The information would have been meaningful if, when referring to the capital city, the author had specified the precise location of the shelters she was writing about, particularly when she mentions the use of tube stations as shelters'. During the war 79 of the London Underground stations that covered a large area of the capital were known to be used by the public as air raid shelters (52).

The Government attached considerable importance to protecting people from bomb blast and maintaining morale by the provision of air raid shelters that is explained in chapter five of this thesis. The timing of the shelter distribution varied according to the vulnerability of the area.

2.4 Air Raid Wardens

At the beginning of the war, wardens were often held in low esteem by the general public, particularly by those people who thought they were a waste of public money as, because of the lack of enemy activity over Britain, they were not fully occupied at work. This was a criticism expressed by some Kingston residents, whose opinion changed when people became aware of the valuable efforts performed by wardens during air raids. Christopher Price states in his paper that York air raid wardens were praised by the public for their very good work under difficult conditions during the raids on the northern city (53). Price does not mention that when bombs were falling in the vicinity, that voluntary wardens risked their lives by venturing out on to the streets in the performance of their duty. There was no strict code of discipline in the warden's service, as there was in the armed forces, where combatants were subject to severe punishment if they did not carry out their orders. Were the problems and duties of wardens in the provinces similar to colleagues in suburban Kingston? The study of the secondary sources indicate there were both similarities and variations. For example, at the outbreak of war there was a shortage of wardens at Plymouth and Kingston. In Twickenham wardens became discontented. The author records 'they complained they were ordered about like half-wits' (54). At Surbiton the warden service experienced serious problems of discipline as explained in chapter 5. At Torquay, there had been no difficulty in recruiting wardens even before the war. This positive response is surprising considering that Torquay at this period was recognised by the Government as a safe area in which to live, away from the threat of possible enemy air attacks. In 1940 Torquay Civil Defence formed a combined 'Warden and Home Guard Unit' in which the wardens were taught to use a rifle, as well as a stirrup pump, to reinforce the local home guard in the event of any attempted invasion. A senior army officer acted as a liaison officer between the wardens and the Home Guard. One difference in the tasks of Torquay wardens compared to Kingston, was that the wardens carried out gas patrols when the wind was blowing in from the sea because these circumstances were judged to be favourable for a cloud gas attack (55).

The author of *Oxfordshire at War* refers to the inactivity of Oxford's Civil Defence personnel when on duty. He describes how the wardens 'waited throughout the night trying to cope with the coldness and the tedious drone of approaching and receding aircraft, it was not surprising people began to evade their duty'(56). At Kingston the duty wardens were provided with an

electric kettle to make a cup of tea. *The Southampton Blitz* gives an account of a novice warden who was on duty on the night of 14 August 1940, in an area where an unexploded bomb had fallen 'I did many foolish good turns like accepting keys and entering houses to fetch and carry things that some of the people had forgotten and needed for their comfort and peace of mind, for example, to feed pets and collect people's Sunday clothes to go to church in' (57).
In *Our Home Front,* Surrey Heath wardens are described as 'Jack of all trades' a description that some ex-wardens may have resented. The text of this book suggests that in this rural area there was either a shortage of equipment or a lack of organisation. For example, at Chobham, a woman remembers that 'the local ARP had no official bicycle or stirrup pump' another local warden recalls 'there was only one tin hat and two pairs of gum boots between seven men' (58). The Gloucester Air Raid Warden's Service is well described by Henry Larcombe, one-time ARP Controller for the city. During the war, the total strength of Gloucester's Warden Service totalled 700, of which 200 were women. When compulsory fire watching was introduced in 1941 because of the anticipated incendiary bomb attacks, Gloucester wardens were given the task of organising the city's fire watching service. Later the fire guards became an independent unit and were detached from the Warden Service. The Gloucester business premises were most difficult to protect, as the buildings were kept locked and the wardens could not obtain access to them.

2.5 Anti-gas precautions

Some of the communities referred to in the secondary sources feared that enemy gas attacks might occur in the early period of the war. Residents had been been provided with a gas mask that they were expected to carry around with them. At Reading, Berkshire, people who went out without their gas mask were admonished by their fellow citizens and the local press (59). Gas mask carrying in Plymouth reached the highest level for any provincial town in the UK, according to Tom Harrisson. Anti-gas precautions were also taken seriously in the rural areas of Oxfordshire. One village resident recalls 'like most people in England it was assumed that we should be bombed incessantly, especially as we were so near to an Aerodrome. Shelters were built by the authorities for many of the exposed cottages and some by private people, not only did we expect bombing, but we also expected to be attacked by gas, so very early we began preparing gas shelters and the wardens were busy fitting gas masks'(60).

In chapter four of this thesis reference is made that Kingston provided a gas chamber for the public to test the efficiency of their masks. At Twickenham the Town Council purchased a trailer gas chamber, where the public were able to test the efficiency of their masks (61). In Reading, as there had been no gas attacks, the Civil Defence decided to hold an exercise in the streets to test the preparedness of the Reading public (62). In 1930, anti-gas exercises, involving civilian volunteers were held at Bromley. This was five years before any official public announcement had been made regarding the Government intentions of introducing Air Raid Precautions to the public. Colonel Sealey, a War Office Inspector, attended this annual exercise. Chislehurst Caves had been fitted out as a gas proof shelter and equipped to treat volunteer victims of mustard gas and phosgene gas poisoning (63). Early in 1939 Torquay wardens began their training in anti-gas precautions, before visiting every household in the town to measure and order gas masks for the residents. A similar exercise had been carried out by the wardens at Kingston and its districts. Torquay introduced an 'anti-gas housewives care service' in conjunction with the WVS. As it was never certain whether gas would be used, decontamination squads were maintained at Gloucester throughout the war. Gloucester's Civil Defence service used the city's laundries as part of the gas decontamination service which were capable of handling 2,000 suits of protective clothing every 24 hours (64). Evidence from the books reviewed indicate much attention, for example training, had been given by local authorities based on the belief of a threatened gas attack.

2.6 Regional Authorities

Information concerning the role of Regional Civil Defence organisations varied in the review of the secondary sources. For example, the Civil Defence history of Gloucester explains in detail how the south-west Region was organised, giving the names of the senior regional officers and how the Regional Authority was linked with the city's CD. There is no mention in the wartime history of Reading of the presence of the Regional Civil Defence Authority, yet this Berkshire town was the Headquarters of the Regional Commissioner for No 6 Region (65). From the time of their appointment in 1939, the Commissioners became progressively more influential in the affairs of local authority CD. A paper published by Robin Woolven, a retired Army officer, describes regional organisational issues rather than operational ones. His paper is of special interest as there are few published studies on regional authorities. Woolven is critical of O'Brien, arguing that in the history of *Civil Defence,* there is less than a complete account of

London's Civil Defence regional experience (66). According to Woolven, the London Region Chief Administrator had the task of co-ordinating the ARP plans of 40 scheme-making authorities. This could explain why this vast undertaking justified the appointment in 1939 of two joint London Regional Commissioners (67). Local Government did not take kindly to the concept of Regional Commissioners, as local authorities saw them as the beginning of direct bureaucratic administration, which would permanently endanger the ancient independence of local councils (68). Although there was no interference by Regional Authorities into local civil affairs, there were disputes between certain ARP local authorities and Regional Officers, as there was concerning the Southampton Blitz, previously mentioned in this chapter.

2.7 Social Change in British Society

According to an official historian, nearly two million people were associated with the Civil Defence. What effect if any, did Civil Defence have on British Society is difficult to estimate. Professor Marwick states that 'the Second World War produced profound changes in British society'(69). Marwick also states that 'these changes were beneficial, as people were living in a better society after the war than the one they had known in the 1930s'. He refers to *The Beveridge Report* that introduced the payment of child allowances, a comprehensive health service and the promise of full employment. Marwick refers to the passing of the *1944 Butler Education Act,* which ensured for the first time that all children would receive some form of secondary education, and asserts that the war was responsible for the narrowing of the gulf between social classes (70). The subject of social change in British Society brought about by war has provokrd controversy, For example, Penny Summerfield in her essay *The levelling of class* warns against the assumption that the war permanently reduced class difference in wartime (71), In considering the levelling of Class in wartime the Civil Defence brought together people of different social class, who in peacetime because of the social conventions of the time would not have acknowledged each other. For example it is suggested this situation was experienced in Malden and Coombe's Civil Defence, particularly with the Fire Guard street parties. Social Class is discussed by Alastair Reid, of the University of Cambridge, who refers back to the impact the First World War had on British Society. He states there was less social

change than had previously been thought (72). This argument is raised as it is an an example of how time can alter our understanding and reshape our views about social processes. Perhaps future historians will view the impact of social change differently to the way attributed to the sociologists of the Second World War. Professor Harold Smith of the University of Houston, Texas, states that 'the war was a turning point in the independence of women that did not stop with the ending of the war'. But he also argued that the war's most important legacy was the strengthening of traditional gender roles rather than the emergence of new ones (73).

2.8 Total War

What is the measure of total war? (74). Could it be the mobilising of a nation's whole economy and manpower to fight an enemy with an intensity to cause the maximum destruction and suffering to an enemy? The well known military battles that occurred between the axis powers and the allied forces caused massive casualties. But Professor Gerhard Weinberg, an internationally recognised authority on Nazi Germany, reminds his readers that the majority of the casualties in the Second World War were civilians (75). An essay by Hew Strachan, of the Oxford University, explains how studying the chronology of the Second War war is important. He described how as the war lengthened, the intensity of successive waves of violence that developed were fuelled by what had gone on before (76). An example, was the increasing intensity of the bombing of civilians. In chapter eight of *A World at Total War* the theme is devoted to British mobilisation in the Second World War, and is concerned with the use of economic resources. Stephen Broadberry, of the University of Warwick, and Peter Howlett, of the London School of Economics, used table statistics to argue that in total war an even greater effort than normal is needed to ensure that all economic sources are mobilised to pursue this policy. They contend the British economy represented a total war economy (77). Jill Stephenson of the University of Edinburgh considered the position of British and German women on the Home Front in Total War. Although the ideologies of these two countries were completely different, she argued that there were certain features in their life style that were common to both British and German women. For example, both Governments faced the same challenge as to what extent their women were involved in the war effort without compromising

prevailing gender roles. The common policy was for women to be deployed so as to meet the country's need wherever necessary, for example the mobilising of women at Kingston to serve in the Civil Defence, ensuring that all combat forces would remain male (78).

The extent to which the term 'total war' can be justified depends on the commitment of resources to the war effort by providing the weapons of destruction. Total war assumes the unwavering determination of the armed forces (including naval and air forces), the mobilising of industry to provide and deliver and the disciplined organisation of civilians including the rationing of essential resources. That Britain in the Second World suffered the ordeal of' total war' meant the total involvement of the nation. This included the important contribution that Kingston, a small suburban community, made to the war effort. That involved the mobilising of the towns' men and women into the armed forces, the Home Guard, Civil Defence and contributing to vital war production. For example, the mass construction of fighter aircraft, the production of ammunition and the building of amphibious craft that were used on D Day. Kingston residents, whose essential food was strictly rationed , participated in the passive defence of the community during air raids on the town. Angus Calder refers to Britain being involved in a 'total war', within the adult memory of those alive who lived through the period of hostilities, but does not attempt to explain his opinion (79).

An important contribution to local history on the Home Front during the Second World War is an article by Sally Sokoloff (80). She distinguishes local wartime history as four separate purposes and assumptions. 1. The character and worthiness of individuals. For example, the awards for bravery to firemen. 2. Every place made a contribution. This must be recognised in terms of the location and impact the war had on a community. 3. Community and War, for example, sharing and caring during and after an air raid, that would include the experience of shared dangers. 4. Women on the Home Front. The contribution of women in factories and public work. Domestic home life according to Sokoloff was a crucial part of the war effort. The main core of her article is the Home Front, in which she refers to the Civil Defence and the reaction to air raids as key subjects because of the complex way in which people, community, local authority services and central government reacted. Sokoloff argues that local historians have emphasised the conservatism of community and overlook the spirit of the Peoples war. Her approach to recording the history of local civil defence goes far beyond the 'stirrup pump and air raid warden ' syndrome commonly used by many local historians.

2.9. Summary

The official history of the Civil Defence chronicles the development of the national organisation from when the ARP subcommittee first met in May 1924 up to the time of its disbandment in 1945. Terence O'Brien concentrates his study on the first line defences of civil defence concerning conventional air raids. The last chapter of the history is devoted to the missile attacks on London and Southern England, that created a new challenge for local civil defence authorities. Local historians interested in the civil defence of the Second World War will find O'Brien's book useful, but they will need to refer to the primary sources of the relevant local authority, County and The National Archives.

The review of the secondary sources are mainly concerned with provincial communities. The information given about ARP services varies in depth and quality. Many of the communities mentioned in the review had expected to be bombed early in the war and were in a state of readiness at the outbreak of war. Only a few of the books mention civilian morale, none discuss the subject. The London Regional Government is the subject of an interesting paper concerning issues of its organisation. Social change during the war is considered, but to what extent such changes were due to the war is debatable, it is argued that some changes may have been started before the outbreak of war. The section on 'total war' acted as a reminder that other than the similarities of war experiences between civilians and the Armed Forces, civilians were also exposed to powerful military forces that affected their lives. That thousands of British Home Front civilians were casualties caused by enemy air raids during the Second World War was not mentioned by the authors of the reviewed books. The study of the official history of Civil Defence by Terence O'Brien has provided me with a broader understanding of how the national Civil Defence was organised and the challenges that were met by the ARP planners during the period of its development. The study also helped me to place local authority civil defence in context within the national organisation. The review of the twelve secondary sources of local authority civil defence and the academic papers extended my knowledge of the civil defence experience.

Chapter Two

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Chapter Three

Kingston and its districts during the 1930s

This chapter evaluates aspects of the topography and socio-economic conditions of Kingston, Surbiton and Malden during the 1930s. How and where the people lived are described and if it is known, the type of local employment. Each of these small towns were different in their layout. There were, for example, the wide concrete roads in areas of Tolworth and Malden that had been laid during the development of the modern housing estates. This modern suburban appearance bore little resemblance to the high density housing of Kingston that was bounded by narrow medieval lanes and thoroughfares that existed in some areas of the town. However the centre of Surbiton retained its Victorian elegance of villas and high street shops. A knowledge of these places prior to the Second World War has given me an insight into their features, amenities and the social fabric of the districts.

3.0 Community and Social Class

Kingston in the 1930s defied the stereotypical image of suburbia, that is described by many historians, as places that were monotonous, featureless and lacked a sense of community. In 1934, the *Surrey Comet* stated that Kingston was the most prosperous town in Surrey. The town had already received national publicity in 1931 when (Sir) Malcolm Campbell, a resident of Kingston Hill broke the world land speed record driving his famous racing car 'Bluebird'. In 1933, the town welcomed the return of the Kingstonian Football Club after winning the FA Amateur Cup.

The most common use of the word 'community' indicates a large group of people living in close proximity. This included Kingston, whose community was composed within a clearly defined territory where the residents may acknowledge their neighbours, but may not necessarily have a knowledge of them. Dennis Mills, a historical geographer, suggests three concepts relevant to community. They are 'the definition of Community', however this can change with time, for example, by the increasing numbers of minority groups and/or the presence of multiculturalism. The 'relationships within communities', that may be affected by economic or social differences, whereas 'relations between communities' may for example be

influenced by cultural or religious differences (1). In time of war, these situations may have been helpful to understand the many social problems that occurred, for example the post raid settlement of people. According to Deacon and Donald, there are difficulties in defining the different kinds of community network, one reason can be the divergent types of organisations that link members of a community (2).

Community identity can be linked to where families lived, worked, social class and status. During the two world wars voluntary associational cultures in British society were deeply class divided that was evident in community life (3). Boundaries of class were blurred, yet descriptions of class were commonly used in speech (4). For the purpose of my study, three categories of class are described that are mentioned below. I have used the model of class concept used by Ross McKibbin because of his simple form of classification (5). The recording of social class can contribute useful evidence for local historians about the type of society that existed at the time of a crucial period of history. Knowledge of social class on the Home Front in suburbia during the Second World War is important as there was no Census in 1941. Class as a social division can be usefully employed, particularly when there is no other evidence available of how sections of a community made their contributions on the Home Front. For example, the major contribution made by the middle-upper class women of the Women's Voluntary Service.

Gender was another cause of division in British Society. It was an issue in the ARP services of Kingston and its districts as mentioned on page 165. According to the historian Janet Watson, In the First World War, gender roles were significantly and fundamentally different, when she refers to women in uniform (6). Watson in her book *Fighting Different Wars,* is an important contribution to wartime history as she basis her argument on memory and war of soldiers, women and non- combatants. Watson argues by getting away from the idea that the First World War was derived primarily from images formed in the trenches in France and Belgium. People she interviewed talked about their war experiences in various ways, concluding that many people were fighting different wars. Her evidence is based on examining similarities and distinctions of wartime experiences across different populations during the war and retrospectively from women , and families where brothers and sisters were active in the war effort. Watson examines the changing nature of memory from the efforts made on behalf of 'King and Country 'during the war years to the post war view that the war was a useless sacrifice of men in the trenches. However, Watson raises the question what role does memory play in historical reconstruction?

Criteria which qualify someone as a member of the upper class are lacking. What constitutes the boundaries of the upper class person is not clear. It is recognised by historians, for example, McKibbin, that the upper class in society of the 1930s was a distinctively privileged class (7). Coombe, a residential area that is part of the Borough of Malden is located to the north of Kingston and was associated with upper class families (8). Here, these families lived in grand Victorian villas and architect-designed houses. The environment of wooded areas, high walls and enclosed gardens allowed the residents to live in complete privacy. One indicator of social class was that the middle class began and the working class ended at a wage of £250 per year (9). The higher level of this income range would exclude most manual workers. The middle class owned, or were buying their house, they spent more on clothes as was considered necessary for their job and social status. According to Shaan Butters, during the 1930s many Surbiton middle class families employed a day servant to assist with household duties (10). No evidence has been found as to what extent the householders on the new estate properties of Malden and Chessington employed servants. Malden and Tolworth (Surbiton) were part of the suburban growth that had overtaken this part of northern Surrey and had attracted thousands of newcomers into the area.

The majority of them had arrived to improve their quality of life by living in a house close to a rural environment. What was the class of people who had relocated themselves to Malden and Tolworth? The houses were bought mainly by members of the middle class. The cheap mortgages that were available also allowed some working class families to buy a home for the first time. A newly arrived housewife who had moved from Brixton, south London to Malden applied her own social class division. She decided who her children would play with. Her decision was based on the type of house the other children lived in (11). During the 1930s, it is suggested that the class of people tended to be associated with the area they resided in. For example, the size and type of property, the address of the road, how a family talked and behaved, the clothes they wore and the type of school that the children attended, all these elements were arguably class indicators. During the 1930s Kingston was not a University town, although it was recognised for the excellence of its secondary schools, notably Kingston Grammar School and the Tiffin Schools.

One of the differences between a working class family and a middle class family referred to on page 44 was income. Lower paid families rented rooms, a flat or local council property. Kingston during the 1930s had many working class families living in the town, for example, the Borough had 1,500 council house tenants (12). There were pockets of poverty in Kingston too. For example, the small community of First World War Italian immigrants who lived in dilapidated property at Asylum Road. Many of these people could not speak English and tended not to associate with the other residents (13). Angus Calder, author of *The People's War,* briefly refers to the plight and living conditions of people during the 1930s, but he does not describe their situation in terms of social class.

3.1 Housing and population during the early 1930s

In England the 1920s are associated with social change and economic problems (14). The last years of that decade were marked by a social revolution in mass entertainment, notably the introduction of talking pictures . In 1928 Alexander Fleming discovered Penicillin, the forerunner of antibiotic therapy, that according to the late W.E.Deedes a respected journalist of *The Times,* defined the decade. The 1930s began by reducing many men to penury, and ended by sending many of them to war (15). The state of the national economy in the 1930s had create created high unemployment that affected people living in the area of Kingston, but not to the same extent that was experienced in certain other areas of the United Kingdom. For example, the high level of unemployment and distress experienced in the coal mining areas of south Wales and the industrial towns of northern England. The increasing number of people out of work in Kingston at the beginning of the decade was a concern of the Town Council, who created jobs for the unemployed. In 1932 nearly one half of the Kingston unemployed were men from the building trade (16). This was surprising considering all the house building going on nearby. As the decade continued, unemployment decreased in Kingston, because of the improvement in the nation's economy and rearmament.

From 1935, Kingston and its districts celebrated the Silver Jubilee of King George V and Queen Mary. This was followed by the death of King George in January 1936 and at the end of

the year the Abdication of King Edward VIII. The Coronation of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth was held on 12 May 1937. These events were followed by the Munich crisis of 1938. The impact of the political situation on the three Boroughs changed the attitude of the local residents from one of indifference towards the possibility of war. This was shown by the increasing numbers of residents who joined the ARP. It is suggested a motive for the increase of ARP personnel at this period could have been due to patriotism, not nationalism, a confusion that Katherine Hall cites in Buckner and Francis collection of essays (17). The procedure of the respective local authorities in introducing ARP within their Borough during peacetime was understated, but not secretive. The threat of war did not halt local civic planning or building activities, Just prior to the war Kingston opened its newly-built Guildhall, and Malden commissioned a new public library. Housing estates continued to be built at Tolworth and Malden.

3.2 Demographic changes in Kingston and its districts

The populations of Kingston and its districts taken from the national census returns of 1921 - 1931 are shown in table 2.

	movement of population			expressed in acres
	1921	1931		
Kingston	39, 479	39, 055	- 424	1,131
Surbiton	19, 547	29,401	+ 9,964	3,049
Malden and Coombe	14, 498	23,405	+ 8,907	3,221

Table 2, Comparative population figures Source: *Surrey Comet* 30.1. 1932.

Table two indicates that Kingston had the largest population of the three communities in the early 1930s, but had the smallest acreage of land. Coombe and Malden with a smaller population according to the 1931 Census was the largest in terms of acreage, being nearly three times as large as Kingston. The *Surrey Comet* stated the reason for the slight fall in the population of Kingston during the decade of the 1920s was due to the increased business activities of the town and the shop owners had decided to move out of town (18). It is suggested that another reason for the almost static Kingston population could have been to the lack of available building land for houses. The districts of Surbiton and Malden over the same period show an increase in population of approximately 50 per cent. This is accounted for by the construction of houses in these two districts, which started in the early 1920's and continued up

Figure 1: A 1932 plan of the centre of Kingston. The high density of housing is shown within the red rectangle

Kingston Heritage Centre.

to the outbreak of the Second World War. The increase in the population of Malden, was according to the town's official guide book in 1938, 'caused by those who seek a residence or dwelling removed from the jaded atmosphere of the Metropolis'(19). By the time of the Second World War the population of Surbiton had significantly increased since the 1920s. The absence of a 1941 census has prevented an understanding of the population movement during the 1930s within the Kingston districts and how the people were employed.

The 1931 census returns record the density of the three towns measured as persons per acre as stated: Kingston 34.5, Surbiton 9.6, Malden 19.3 and Coombe 1.5. This information shows the comparative living space of residents of each respective municipal authority, with the data of Coombe separated from Malden. According to the historian, J.A.Banks, a growth in population of a community is usually accompanied by an increase in the population density (20). Although there had been no significant increase in the population of Kingston between 1921-1931, Kingston had in 1930, except for one non-county borough, the highest population density in England and Wales (21). The high population density of Kingston would appear to suggest overcrowding, but the records of the Medical Officer for Kingston for the 1930s state that 'except for five families there was no overcrowding in the town' (22). This was in complete contrast to the housing conditions prevalent in Plymouth, Devon, where, according to the 1931 census, 20,000 people lived two in a room (23) A 1932 map of Kingston, see figure one, page 48, suggests, as indicated within the red square, that there was high density housing in the centre of the town. It was a statutory regulation that high density housing should be measured according to the number of residential properties and land. Different levels of housing density create significantly divergent suburban environments as shown when comparing Coombe and Malden An analysis of the census of 1931 show a revealing imbalance in the density of the population within the district of Coombe and Malden. According to the 1931 census the number of persons per acre living in the area of Malden is recorded as 19.3. In Coombe, part of the same municipal authority, the density of the population was 1.5 persons per acre. This low level of population density in Coombe is confirmed by the 432 private dwellings that were occupied by 'well off' families. In contrast, the number of houses occupied at Malden was 4,876. Although the variation in density level of Coombe and Malden may not be unique, the contrast in density levels suggests they are linked to the financial status of the residents.

3.3 Kingston during the 1930s

According to Butters, a local historian, Kingston was until the 19th century a flourishing agricultural market town. The town's market served the needs of the local people by channelling most of the buying and selling of the local farmer's produce. Market day was important for the townspeople as much as for the rural people (24). But the economy of Kingston changed from agriculture towards retailing. After 1925, the cattle market was moved from its traditional venue at the market place by the old town hall to the Fairfield, and continued to trade there until the outbreak of the Second World War. During the twentieth century, Kingston became residential in character, although the town still kept some of its industry, for example, brewing. The core of the town in the 1930s remained centred around the market place, where it had retained its recognisable medieval street plan with the irregular square and narrow streets and alleys. Kingston was the garrison town for the East Surrey Regiment, its Barracks were located in a residential area in the north-east of the town. The Kingston by-pass, opened in 1927 was partly responsible for enhancing the economy of the town. The purpose of this new arterial road was to relieve the increasing volume of traffic away from Kingston, but it had the reverse effect, as motorists from out of the area used the by-pass as a fast and direct route to the Kingston shops (25). In the 1930s Kingston became a popular shopping centre as the focus of retail interest for the surrounding districts. It was also an area of industry with factories that included the Hawker Aircraft Factory, Price's Candle Factory and Hodgson's Brewery. Bentalls store had been enlarged and was according to the local historian Butters 'the main pillar of the town's reputation' (26).

The 1930s was a period of revolutionised high street shopping. The 'new consumerism' was a social and economic order based on creating and fostering a desire to purchase goods or services. Consumerism also introduced a new concept which was the protection of the interests of the customer, for example, product guarantees (27). Shopping at Kingston meant for those with a disposable income, buying luxury goods, fashionable clothes, quality furnishing and the newly designed labour saving devices. A middle class shopper might buy a Hoover vacuum cleaner from Southern Electrical Products of Kingston. If the customer was credit worthy the appliance could be purchased by weekly instalments (28). Bentalls offered more than just an extensive range of products and counter services. It encouraged women to shop there by offering them toilet facilities and ladies only rooms where they could sit and relax. There was also the provision of a good restaurant, with an ensemble that played popular light music. By astute marketing this new style of shopping disrupted the Victorian ideology of class and

gender. Anyone, if they so wished could enter the store that encouraged women to stay longer in the shop (29). Bentalls installed escalators in the store, and purchases could be delivered to the customer's home. In 1935 Bentalls had completed its major three year plan to enlarge its store. During 1938, 60,000 persons entered the doors of Bentalls each day, that was 50 per cent more people than the residential population of Kingston (30). People also travelled from outside the area to Kingston during the 1930s to visit the town's market that was held three days each week (31). There were also Kingston shops that sold cheap goods, for example, Woolworth store whose sale policy was 'nothing over sixpence'. This was an important time for the town as it coincided with the first public announcement of Government plans to introduce Air Raid Precautions in the Borough, explained in chapter four.

For local residents the quality of life in the 1930s was enhanced by a choice of nearby open spaces. These were the Royal Parks, for example, Bushy Park, that was freely available for the public to enjoy. The River Thames that bounded the west side of the town was a popular venue for the local boating fraternity. The Thames could have been seen in time of war as a source of water for fighting fires occurring in the industrial buildings that had been built by the Kingston riverside. The river would also have been important if the town's water mains were destroyed by enemy action. Kingston was the centre of entertainment for the district. In 1938 the Kingston Odeon cinema, with its Art Deco designs, had opened. Entering the Odeon cinema was for many people like being transformed into a luxurious comfortable environment. In 1938 there were eight cinemas and a music hall in Kingston, with a total seating capacity of 10,000. At this period of time American films dominated British cinema (32). According to the *Surrey Comet* most of the audiences were from outside Kingston and had travelled there using inexpensive public transport (33). Kingston Council continued its attempts to expand its municipal territory. Unlike Malden, there was no surplus land in Kingston on which to develop its services or build houses, as shown on page 52. Kingston's ambitions of expansion can be traced back to the late nineteenth century when it attempted to control Malden and Coombe. Kingston had wanted to annex the area of Ham, located between Kingston and Richmond, but the Council was thwarted when it was decided in 1932 to allot only 700 acres of land to Kingston and 1,200 acres to Richmond. Kingston had also proposed that it should combine with Malden, but this was opposed by Surrey County Council. During 1932, a Kingston-Malden referendum was held, resulting in a majority of 8,306 votes against amalgamation (34). Whatever remaining ambition Kingston had of encroaching land outside its existing boundaries were stopped when Malden

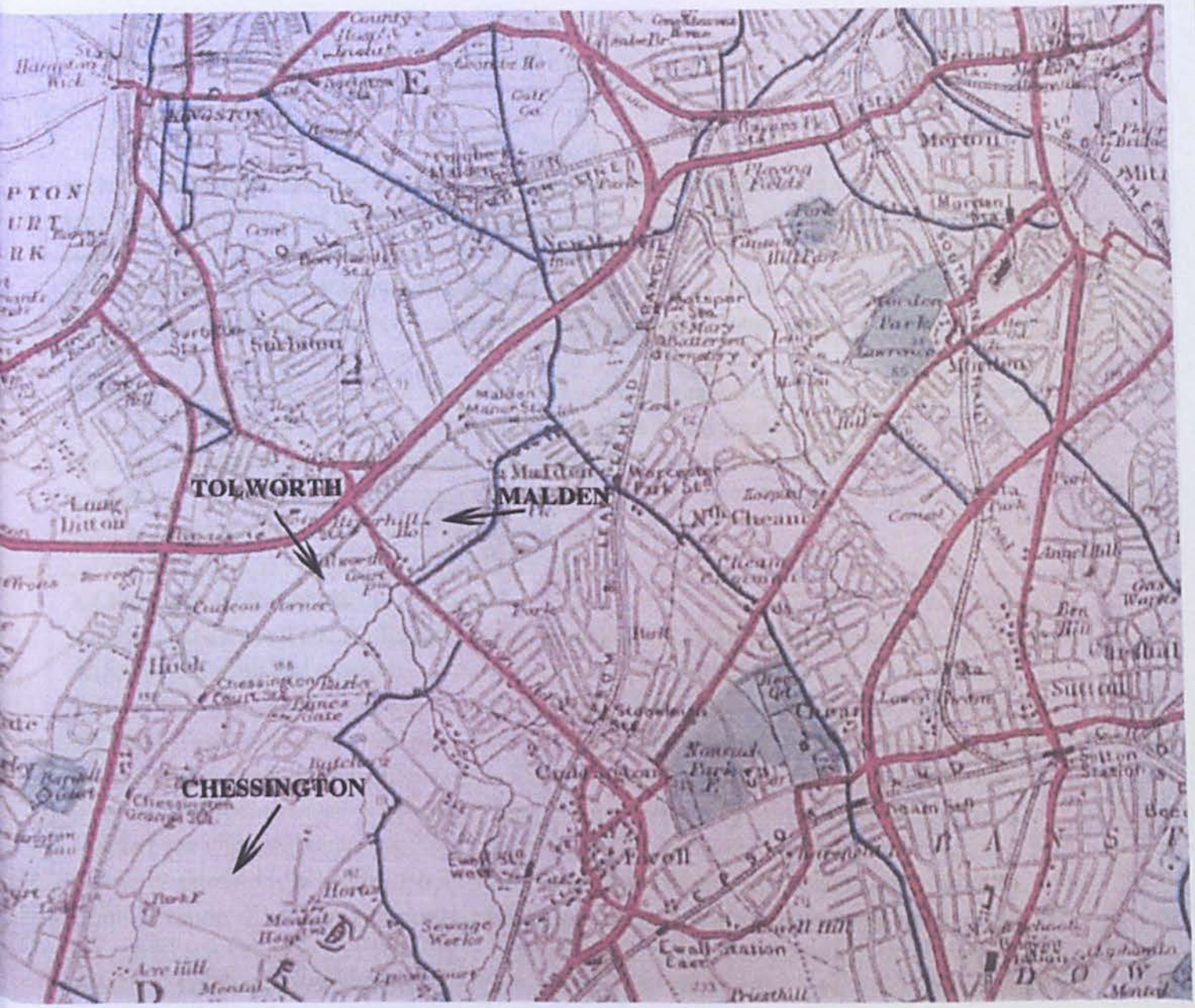

Figure 2 : A section of an early 1930's map of Surrey showing the unbuilt areas around Chessington, Malden and Tolworth before the land was built on for private housing estates.

Surrey History Centre, Woking (M/164).

became a Borough Council in 1936. In 1933 Kingston had attempted to annex Surbiton, this ambition being stimulated by the town having a sewage works (35). Kingston had a powerful ally in the *Surrey Comet* whose editorial argued that many people who worked in Kingston lived in Surbiton. The attempts by Kingston to obtain control of Surbiton failed, as the town, then administered as an Urban District Council, was granted Borough status in 1936.

Kingston in the 1930s was a small suburban town of middle and working class people that had escaped the ravages of mass unemployment. The residents were mainly employed in the retail trade or local industries. As the economy improved in the latter part of the 1930s, small engineering companies decided to move to Kingston (36). In 1938 the Mayor referred to the town as' that famous business place called Kingston' (37).

3.4 Surbiton in the 1930s

Surbiton, once a small hamlet, has little claim to antiquity (38). The railway played a crucial role in the development and prosperity of the town when in 1838 the London and South Western Railway built the main line railway route from London to Southampton, which by-passed Kingston. The arrival of the railway and the opening of Surbiton station resulted in the growth of the population and house building (39). The rapid increase in Surbiton's population resulted in the activities of speculative houses builders intent on satisfying the growing demand for middle class villas. However, part of the increase of Surbiton in the 1890s was the result of boundary extensions to include Hook, Southborough and Tolworth. Surbiton, only 12 miles from the centre of London was surrounded by open countryside that developed into a successful suburban town. P. Grevatt, a local historian, described Surbiton as the' Queen of the Suburbs'. It was a place that offered privacy, gardens and countryside views (40). An important asset of the station was the growing number of Surbiton commuters who travelled to London by train.

In the 1930's leisure activities flourished in the area. Surbiton, for example, was noted for its tennis club, where international players competed and residents could bathe in the newly-built lido. During the Second World War the Surbiton Lido was used as a water reservoir for fighting fires. Richard Statham, a local historian, describes Surbiton as 'a relatively prosperous area' (41). It is important to appreciate the distinct differences within Surbiton boundaries between the town's shopping centre and the central residential area dating back to the Victorian era and the sprawling housing estates created by the merging in 1936 of the district of Tolworth, Chessington and Berrylands within Surbiton. The development of these housing estates in the

areas of Surbiton resulted in a transition from rural countryside to that of an extended suburb. Between 1931-1933, the construction of 1,700 private houses at Tolworth resulted in 6,000 more people residing in the area. This was a challenge to the parish of Christ Church which was faced with providing an additional place of worship for the large number of residents. The outcome was the building of Emmanuel Church that opened on the 25 January 1935 (42). High Street shopping at Surbiton during the 1930s was of a different style to that at Kingston, where the shops catered mainly for' out of town' customers. Unlike Kingston, there were no large departmental stores at Surbiton, but the high street offered customers a choice of well stocked grocery shops. There were also outfitters, bespoke tailors, chemists and cafes. Significant changes had taken place in Surbiton in the 1930s as the Borough expanded its boundaries and took on additional municipal responsibilities as described elsewhere in this chapter.

3.5 The development of Malden as a suburb

According to Shaan Butters, Malden was almost uninhabited until 1840s. It developed more slowly than Surbiton and was less fashionable than its neighbour. In 1846 a railway station was built at New Malden. The development of Malden as a suburb could have started in the early 1920s, when it was described in the town's trade directory of that year as 'one of the bedrooms of the city' (43). In March 1920, Malden and Coombe District Council started work on its district planning scheme, as work commenced on the construction of 58 houses. This was an attempt by Malden Council to prevent speculative building in the locality Along with the speculative builder there was the land speculator. This was the case at Malden in the early twentieth century when the National Freehold Estate purchased land lying between what is now Elm Road and Coombe Road which was previously an area of open fields. The land was then sold on to a house builder. An engineer and surveyor were appointed by Malden Council who were authorised along with the Clerk of the Council to prosecute builders who did not conform with the building regulations and bye-laws. This prevented unscrupulous house builders from immediately marking out the land they had been purchased before going ahead to build (44).

During the 1930s Malden had lacked all signs of a town because of the monotonous feature of the layout of the houses. There were no design features, for example, landscaping, a feature associated with a 'Garden city estate'. In 1931 more than than 23,000 people lived at Malden. Mr and Mrs Vaughan and their two sons who had moved from Brixton to Malden in 1934 discovered that it was a totally different environment from that of the Victorian terraces of south London. Near their new house were green fields, oak and elm trees that eventually with the building of more houses disappeared (45). Mrs Molly Brown, who came to live at Malden in a

newly-built house before the war, described how 'the fields around her soon became full of semi-detached houses. 'All the young husbands went off to town leaving their wives at home from 8 am-6 pm. It was a long day for the housewife'(46).

Mr H.G.Brown, who was born and lived at Ditton Hill Farm, recalls that as a youngster, with all the building going on, it was still a country life for him. His father would go out into the fields and shoot rabbits. H.G. Brown attended Kings College School, Wimbledon. To get there he would cycle to Surbiton Station and would walk about one mile from Wimbledon Station to the school (47). For the Vaughan family, who had arrived from Brixton to live in Malden life was so different for them. Malden had wide pavements to walk on and leafy trees that led to a parade of shops. The wife was captivated by the newness of it all, 'there was not a cockney accent to be heard, as there was in Brixton'(48).

As the Malden housing estates developed, farming continued in the unbuilt areas that resulted in complaints from residents about the nuisance caused by the pigsties. Malden Council took action by enforcing a bye-law which required the farmers to keep their pigs away from the houses (49). The *Surrey Comet* reported a similar situation at Chessington where there was 'a mix of town and country with cows grazing between piles of drain pipes'(50). There were properties sold as 'labour saving', that is an electrified home provided with cleaning and cooking facilities. However some of these estates at first lacked essential public utilities and social services. For example, at Berrylands, there were few shops, unmade roads and no street lighting. Public entertainment was almost non existent. W. Richards, a feature writer for the *Times,* states that, 'in the development of a suburb you would not expect it to immediately develop the characteristics of a long established community'(51).

In the 1930s the Malden and Coombe Council spent months negotiating with the land owners at Coombe to obtain the freehold of the unbuilt land to be preserved as a permanent public amenity. The residents of Coombe took an active interest in the proceedings as they wanted to retain some of the land as golf courses. The future of this land that was referred to as 'Coombe's open space' was finally settled by the Malden and Coombe Urban District Council Act of 1933, to the satisfaction of the Coombe residents. An agreement ensured that provision was made to retain the land not only by the Council, but with financial contributions agreed with the Coombe residents. For example, the repair of the private roads meant the local Coombe residents were required to contribute towards their upkeep. The public were given access to walk along these roads, but they were not allowed to drive their vehicles on them. Only the Coombe

residents were permitted to do that. A barrier was erected to prevent unauthorised cars from entering the estate (52). The Coombe open spaces included the Coombe Hill golf course that was used in the early 1930s by the Prince of Wales and Prince George. Women golfers were not allowed to play at the same time with male club members.

3.6 Activities across the municipality of Kingston

During 1935, the opening of the new extended Bentalls store coincided with the completion of Kingston's newly built Guildhall. Why did Kingston, a small borough, decide to build such a large Guildhall? Did the Borough Council anticipate that at sometime in the future the town's administrative responsibilities would increase by the expansion of its boundaries? Shaan Butters records that as local government expanded, Kingston Council staff also increased and the existing council office accommodation became inadequate (53). There were powerful public authorities based in Kingston during the 1930s, that included Surrey County Court and Surrey County Council with the County Hall being sited in the Borough (54). Kingston Corporation retained control of its elementary schools, but Surrey County Council was responsible for secondary education in the town. As a result, Kingston had to guard against the erosion of local power to the County Council. For example, Surrey County Council administered Kingston Hospital, the powers had been transferred from the local poor law Kingston Guardians. Kingston churches held their services on Remembrance Day for those 623 Kingston men who had died in the First World War. During the 1930's the churches had links with Kingston Corporation who controlled the local church schools. Kingston in the 1930's returned a Conservative Member of Parliament. Whatever opposition there was to local council policy, there were no major political challenges before the war to the ruling Conservative party. The Canbury ward, where the Hawker Aircraft factory was sited, was a residential area of working class people and was seen by the Fascist Party as a likely recruiting ground. The British Union of Fascists had established a presence in Kingston since the 1920s and were active in the town. The Kingston fascists had formed a band in the 1930s mainly of bugles and drums, and marched through the town's streets handing out leaflets to the public. The Communists conducted much of their political activities on the streets of Kingston. Whatever complaints were made about the disturbances, there was never any reported violence caused by the political parties for the police to contend with (55).

3.7 Industry and Transport.

Factories had been attracted to move to Malden and Surbiton, the latter being one of the lowest rated districts in the London area. Ratepayers were assured by the local council that the rates

would not rise when Surbiton became a Borough in 1936, but according to local historian Richard Statham they did increase (56). Decca, a major electrical company, had moved to Burlington Road and employed 700 people. According to Deborah Thom, the issues of pay to women workers had been changed but not resolved in the First World War (57). An issue that still continued to exist in the Second World as confirmed by a women wartime welder at Hawkers Kingston referred to on page 158. Thom has examined women's experiences in the First World War and explored issues of gender including women's wages compared to men's. Thom also showed that women made a huge contribution to the war effort by taking on a variety of work that included the physical task of chain making. She argues in her book *Nice Girls and Rude Girls* that the war underlined women's position by their gender. However, she was pessimistic about the gains they had made during wartime as it did not improve their working lives. Thom raise the question if the contribution of women's wartime work bought about social change ? The Veneer Time Switch Company moved to a new factory near Shannon Corner where the building became an elegant landmark. The author, J.B. Priestley suggests in his *English Journey*, referred to in chapter eight, that in the 1930s a new local suburban landscape had been created in England that was synonymous with modern industrialism. This was the appearance of petrol stations, garages, motor lorries and vans. Many of these services were located on the outskirts of the three suburban towns. However, the Hawker Aircraft factory, an ex roller skate arena that was once the Sopwith Aviation Company was situated in the centre of Kingston. From 1936 the factory manufactured Hawker Hurricane fighter aircraft (58). The centre of Kingston was a nodal point, a converging network of transport, that included a railway station, railway marshalling yards and a large bus terminal that could in future be earmarked as an enemy target area.

Good transport facilities were essential for the prosperity of a town as shown by the development of Surbiton, which owed its expansion to the railway. Surbiton had a main line railway station for journeys to London and the south and west coast. Malden had two railway stations that served commuters, as did the station at Berrylands. In May 1938 the Southern Railway extended its services when the company opened a new line to Chessington. Kingston station was not built on the mainline rail route and passengers were required to change at Wimbledon to catch a faster non-stop train to Waterloo. Early in the 1930s Kingston's electric trams were replaced by trolley buses that were driven by overhead power cables. There was also motor bus services that extended out to the surrounding districts. These bus services, provided an important link to the shops for the residents on the new housing estates. Horse-drawn carts were still being used for commercial purposes at Kingston, but the lorry and the van were rapidly replacing this form of transport. It is important in the context of this thesis to refer to the

wireless during the 1930s, because it was a relatively new means of communication. Public broadcasting was still in its infancy. Most people possessed a wireless that brought a new dimension into their lives. Listening to the wireless was for many the main source of their entertainment and national news. For housewives, particularly those living on the newly-built housing estates, the wireless was a social service as it helped to alleviate loneliness. As the nation came closer to war, the wireless was used by the Government to broadcast official information concerning Air Raid Precautions (59).

The decade of the 1930's in Kingston and its districts began peacefully, but ended preparing for air raids. The town in the early years of the 1930s was an established regional shopping centre, The social revolution of talking pictures had bought about mass entertainment to the town. Crowds arrived in Kingston to shop or visit the cinema or music hall. At Surbiton and Malden the building of housing estates resulted in an increase of residents into the area. The developing European political crisis in 1938 that threatened war resulted in Kingston, Surbiton and Malden introducing air raid precautions before the outbreak of the Second World War.

3.8 Preparing for air raids prior to the outbreak of war

During the early 1930s the *Surrey Comet* was mainly concerned with publishing local news about Kingston and its districts, especially reporting social and local sporting activities that reflected life in the area. National politics and indications of a developing European political crisis were at this time almost ignored by the newspaper. However, the reports of the local 'Old Comrades Association' that served as a link with the former combatants of the First World War remained newsworthy. The Home Office ARP circular of 1935 referred to in chapter two had been discussed by Kingston's planning committee. The members were requested to have regard to the possible effect of air attacks on the town when considering future development schemes for the Borough (61). The Government's ARP proposals were published in the *Surrey Comet* on 28 September 1935, when it reported on Kingston's Council debate on the Circular. The *Surrey Comet's* editorial stated that Kingston Council was 'no more than a debating class', because it appeared nothing was being done about ARP. The subsequent absence of comment in the newspaper could imply to their readers there was no immediate need to introduce Air Raid Precautions. This early lack of concern to introduce ARP was not limited to the indifference of the residents of Kingston, but included certain local authorities elsewhere. For example, Birmingham during the 1930s was a city with many social problems. The City Council had a limited budget and was intent on building houses for its residents. This resulted in Birmingham Council being unsympathetic to the needs of ARP. Furthermore, the Unionists that dominated

the Council were confident that Neville Chamberlain's appeasement policy would preserve peace and render ARP unnecessary (60). In contrast there had been a positive response to recruiting ARP personnel from the residents of Croydon. This may have been due to the town's experience in the First World War, described by Berwick Sayers, a local historian, when the town suffered an air raid in 1915 causing damage and casualties (62).

In 1937 there is evidence of a change of attitude by the people of Kingston towards ARP when large numbers of people attended a series of weekly lectures on ARP at the Guildhall (63). Further indication of this new stance towards ARP was shown by a crowded public meeting held later in the year at St Paul's Hall, Kingston, when a resolution was passed and sent to Kingston's Council expressing the need for air raid precautions to be organised in the Borough (64). The general public attitude towards suffering another war was an important factor in ARP planning, and illustrates the planners problem of dealing with morale. O'Brien states that 'the nation was exhausted and the country's belief was that the First World War that had ended in 1918 had been a war to end war'(65). The low number of men who had enlisted as wardens in Kingston after the publication of the first ARP circular was not the sum total of the volunteer response. Early in 1937 women had come forward as volunteers to enrol as nurses. This is important to record, as it is early evidence that there were Kingston residents who had committed themselves to prepare for air raids. It is interesting to note that according to Rochester the idea had emerged in the inter war years of having a nucleus of professional workers assisted by voluntary assistants was a way for the state to gain more control over voluntary organisations by the conditions they attached to funding (66).

The European political crisis at the time of the Munich Agreement in September 1938 acted as a spur for Kingston and its districts to prepare their Civil Defence. Planning and introducing Air Raid Precautions became the primary task for these local council authorities. The Home Office issued instructions to Kingston Council 'to spare no effort in preparing for air raids'(6). As a matter of urgency the three towns were ordered by the Home Office to start digging trench air raid shelters for the public protection. The Fairfield trench shelter, although not the only trench to be dug in Kingston, was the largest public shelter in the town and provided shelter for 2,700 people. The digging of six trenches at Malden to accommodate 4,500 people began on 26 September 1938 (68). This change in attitude towards the possibility of war with Germany was reflected in the decision of some Kingston residents who had privately evacuated their children to the countryside. Two weeks after the signing of the Munich Pact, that had temporarily transformed the threat of war with Germany into a hope of peace, Kingston and its districts appeared to have reverted back to their 'normal way of living'. Kingston Council, perhaps in believing that a peaceful settlement had been agreed, published its five year plan for the town.

In January 1939, the Government announced its evacuation scheme for civilians. Kingston was classified as a neutral area (69). The Home Office decision concerning Kingston's evacuation

status produced letters of protest in the *Surrey Comet*. They included demands that Kingston should be provided with bombproof air raid shelters (70). The subject of shelters is discussed in chapter five. The residents in 1938 were introduced to the air raid warning system with the public testing of the electric sirens at stipulated times. At Kingston, Mrs Oldfield, a town councillor, proposed to the Town Council that a committee should be formed to explore how the Women's Voluntary Service could operate within the framework of Kingston's ARP.

As Kingston Council started to implement its Air Raids Precautions, the town held its annual regatta. People went on their summer holidays, while others flocked to the shopping centre to attend the summer sales advertised in the *Surrey Comet*. This relaxed atmosphere contrasted to the newspaper's editorial of the previous year, when the *Surrey Comet* cynically described the people who had not taken the Munich crisis seriously as the 'suburbanites who live among the buttercups and daisies along side Kingston bypass to watch the traffic go by'(71). Two days before war was declared a national blackout was introduced. Anyone breaking it was liable to be punished (72). This was to have a great impact upon the lives of the people, arguably more than any other Government regulation during the Second World War. Kingston Council cancelled all its planned civil projects. Within a year of war being declared the town's ARP were in action when the first enemy bombs fell on Kingston and its districts.

3.9 Summary

This chapter evaluates Kingston and its districts during the 1930s. Kingston, located twelve miles from London was the location of Surrey's County Hall. The town also contained the Hawker Aircraft Company. In the 1930s Kingston was the garrison town of the East Surrey Regiment. Kingston was a major retail centre that attracted large numbers of daily shoppers. The town had many civic buildings, commercial offices and factories. In 1936 Surbiton and Malden expanded their boundaries and population when they achieved Borough status. The 1930s was a time when many factories moved to Malden and Surbiton that offered employment to local people. The chapter indicates some of the early challenges that could be faced by the local Civil Defence services in time of war 'places that could be envisaged as potential battlefields', for example the nodal point in the area of Kingston railway station, because of their likelihood as enemy target areas. Emphasis has been made on Kingston, geographically the smallest of the three suburban towns. But because of its large shopping centre, it attracted more public attention than Surbiton and Malden. Some of the major changes that had taken place in Kingston and its districts during the decade of the 1930s are evaluated. The building of new housing estates at Surbiton and Malden added to the suburban sprawl of the metropolis and destroyed the local agricultural environment. It is suggested that the increase in the population of these two towns were important factors to consider when planning the local authority ARP. As the populations of these towns increased up to the outbreak of war this could have resulted in a further demand to recruit more wardens and other Civil Defence personnel.

Chapter Three

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Chapter Four

Preparing for Air Raids

Elements of the Civil Defence front line services of Kingston, Surbiton and Malden are evaluated in this chapter. The period covered is from 1935 when the first ARP circular was issued by the Government up to the outbreak of war. The chapter begins by explaining Kingston Council's response to the ARP circular and the formation of the local authorities ARP scheme. Reference is made to the preparation of local public trench shelters at the time of the Munich crisis of 1938, when Kingston and its districts received instructions from the Home Office to organise their Air Raid Precautions in order to achieve a state of readiness against air attacks. The differences in preparing the passive defences of the three suburban towns were related to the variation in size of their respective populations and the extent of their municipal boundaries, that is referred to in chapter one. The subject of social class in the Civil Defence is discussed. Precautions to counter the threat of gas warfare that was a major concern of the Government is analysed in section 4.4 of the chapter. The text evaluates the formation of ARP services at Kingston, Surbiton and Malden including the recruitment of ARP personnel. The ordering of ARP equipment and supplies for these three communities were subjected to approval by the Home Office (Ministry of Home Security).

4.0 1935: the first ARP Circular

In 1935 the first ARP circular was issued that outlined the Government's plans. It invited local authorities and the public to co-operate on a voluntary basis with the Government to create ARP administrative machinery for the purpose of protecting civilians and property from air attacks (1). The Home Office gave Surrey County Council the responsibility of overseeing its local authority ARP schemes in order to reduce the number of scheme-making authorities. Consequently, Kingston and its districts were reliant on the County Council ARP Committee for approving their ARP schemes, that were finally sanctioned by the Home Office (2). Croydon, then a County Borough of Surrey, planned its own ARP scheme. As part of national policy, industrial companies, for example the Hawker Aircraft Company, Kingston, were expected to prepare their own ARP service under the guise of 'Industrial ARP' (3). On 17th September 1935 Kingston Council General Purposes Committee met to discuss the ARP

Circular. Some members of the Committee disapproved of the Government's policy of investing authority with Surrey County Council in approving ARP schemes(4). To obtain support to reverse this policy of scheme making the Mayor of Kingston, wrote to Weymouth Town Council, who had already been in contact with the Home Office suggesting that the County Councils should not be responsible, for the scheme would not produce such good results as would a Borough Council charged with the task (5). No record has been found concerning Weymouth Council's response to the Mayor of Kingston's letter. When Kingston Council General Purposes Committee met on the 22 October 1935, there was still disagreement among the councillors regarding the scheme making policy, that resulted in an amendment being moved by a council member to delay the vote on the introduction of ARP in Kingston until 1941, but this proposal was defeated (6).

4.1 The formation of local ARP schemes 1937-1938

In 1936 Surbiton Council formed an ARP Sub Committee that in the same year became a full ARP standing Committee (7). In February 1937 Surrey County Council approved Surbiton's ARP scheme (8). In December 1936 Surrey County Council invited Kingston to prepare an ARP scheme based on a Home Office model. Kingston's scheme was sanctioned the following year (9). Surrey County Council complained to the Borough of Malden and Coombe about the delay in the submission of their ARP scheme. Malden Council held a public meeting in January 1937 to discuss ARP at the Wesley Hall, Cambridge Street. The Assistant County Director for ARP, Admiral Vernon Sharpe appealed for volunteers. This resulted in a number of people offering their services. In April 1938 Malden's ARP scheme was approved by the Home Office (10). Twickenham Council, referred to in chapter two, was slow in preparing its ARP scheme because it had delayed discussing ARP until late 1936 (11).

Early in 1937, Kingston launched an ARP recruiting campaign as a means to develop its ARP Service that included lectures on the role of air raid wardens. These talks were given by Wing Commander John Hodsoll who in the First World War had been a pilot in the Royal Naval Air Service. Hodsoll eventually became the Inspector General of ARP. This recruitment campaign failed to achieve its target of 1,500 members as only 800 people enrolled (12). Kingston Council then decided on the direct recruitment of ARP volunteers by sending letters to at least two households in every road in the Borough inviting them to serve in the ARP. This initiative resulted in a number of people offering their services (13). In 1938 Surbiton Council adopted the same recruiting policy and posted letters to residents but this was less successful. In 1938 Malden and Coombe still required 624 ARP volunteers (14). A poor response to ARP

recruitment was not always for the same reason which could have been a lack of enthusiasm in the belief there would be no war. There were local authorities, for example, Birmingham Council referred to in chapter four, that treated ARP as an expensive addition to their municipal housing problems. At Clydebank, Scotland, where there was high unemployment, ARP was a political problem. For nearly two years after the publication of the ARP circular of 1935, Clydebank Town Council refused for political reasons to co-operate with the Government to introduce ARP (15). Birmingham and Clydebank suffered heavy bombing during the war. Few of the authors of the books reviewed in chapter two refer to the state of ARP recruitment in their community. However, there were exceptions. The Civil Defence history of the City of Gloucester indicate that recruiting ARP personnel was not a problem. Warden enlistment is discussed in more detail in section 4.7 of this chapter.

4.2 Kingston's ARP preparations at the time of the Munich Crisis

As the European political crisis deepened and the threat of war increased in September 1938, the Home Office requested that Kingston Borough Council should rearrange its business during the following three months and give Civil Defence matters priority over council work. At the time of the Munich crisis, the general public had no indication what was going to happen next and they were experiencing events without the benefit of hindsight (16). The *Surrey Comet* reported the changing attitude of people, who were concerned with the real possibility of the Nation going to war. This anxiety was reflected at Kingston by the increase in the number of people enlisting in the ARP service. By the Autumn of 1938 enrolments at Kingston had reached 1,460 which was close to the town's target figure of 1,500, whereas Twickenham which had a larger population had only enrolled 160 volunteers for ARP duties. In 1937, Eric Johnson, aged 14, who lived at Surbiton, joined the ARP as a volunteer messenger. He was required to attend training courses on poison gas and incendiary bombs. On alternate nights after school he reported for duty taking his homework to the Surbiton ARP Ambulance Depot (17). In 1938, the Home Office announced details of the Anderson domestic shelter for civilians that was to become available during the following year. Priority of delivery would be given to those areas of Britain that were considered the most vulnerable to air attack (18). An account of air raid shelters is given in chapter five.

In 1938, the Home Office informed Kingston Council of the intended establishment of an Auxiliary Fire Service (AFS). The town's Fire Brigade was a local authority service, a separate force from ARP, although these services worked in close co-operation (19). The newly-formed AFS was supplied by the Home Office with fire fighting equipment. Kingston estimated that

100 AFS personnel would be required to supplement the town's fire brigade establishment. Unlike the ARP service the AFS was not a complete innovation requiring new techniques to meet new situations. The Kingston AFS was administered by the Borough Council's Sub-Committee and developed upon a corpus of knowledge, experience and skills that already existed within the established fire brigade. During 1938, Kingston's Town Clerk reported to the Town Council that the first trailer pumps supplied by the Home Office would be delivered immediately and a further twenty one pumps of different sizes would follow. The dispatch of the pumps could be interpreted as forward planning by the local authorities of a possible threat by the German Air Force in using incendiary bombs in any future war.

The problem of where to accommodate the trailer pumps was discussed by the Fire Brigade Committee. One suggestion was that they should be kept at Kingston Cattle Market (20). Kingston's main fire station was located in London Road, near the centre of the town. Two auxiliary stations were later established at the Alexandra Hotel, Park Road and at Rae's Garage in Penrhyn Road. In December 1939 the Kingston Fire Service was increased to five first line stations that were permanently manned, and nine second line stations that were manned if and when required by volunteers. In 1938 Surbiton Council decided to equip their fire brigade with short wave wireless equipment, which at the time was a significant technological advance in communications (21). During that year the Government booklet, *The protection of your home* was delivered to every home throughout the Country. It explained to each householder how best they could defend their home against gas and bomb attacks (22). At the time of the Munich Crisis, the Home Office had instructed local councils to 'spare no effort' in digging trenches for use as air raid shelters. Margaret Gale, as an eight year old school girl who lived by the Fairfield, recalled seeing the workmen digging the trenches. Mrs Gale describes the trenches as being 'quite narrow with bunks on one side and just enough room to walk, and that by the entrance was a blanket that was hung up'. The blanket was used as an airlock in the event of a gas attack (23). Tenants of a Kingston council housing estate had asked for permission, which was given, to dig trenches in the grounds of their estate. At Malden the digging of six trenches, commenced in 1938. The Munich crisis stimulated Malden and Coombe Council to do more than dig trenches. The Malden Council prematurely decided to paint the town's kerb stones and tree trunk white in anticipation of the introduction of the blackout that was not imposed until the following year (24).

On 30 September 1938, the nation's attention was focussed on the return of the Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain, to Heston Airfield, Middlesex, to learn what agreement, if any, he had made with Adolf Hitler. Among the reception party at Heston to greet the Prime Minister on his arrival, was the Mayor and Town Clerk of Kingston (25). The Munich agreement brought relief to the Nation in the belief that peace would be maintained, and the anticipated large scale air attack on England would be averted. However local authorities continued to prepare their Civil Defence.

4.3 The Aftermath of the Munich Pact

In March 1939, Kingston's Town Clerk submitted a letter to the Ministry of Health, the organising authority for civilian evacuation requesting that Kingston children should be allowed to be evacuated under the Government scheme, but this was refused (26). Among the letters of protest published in the *Surrey Comet* regarding the Government's refusal to evacuate Kingston children was one that stated, 'trench shelters proved useless in the Spanish Civil War' (27).

The Home Office ARP departments had grown into a large complex organisation that the Government acknowledged lacked co-ordination. This resulted in a diffusion of responsibilities that functioned under various ministerial committees. In September 1939 the Government decide to combine the administration of the ARP, and established the Ministry of Home Security under Sir John Anderson, who the following year was replaced by Mr Herbert Morrison (28). The Regional Commissioners Act of 1939 resulted in the appointment of Commissioners who in May 1940 were given Civil Defence powers to administer the newly formed Civil Defence Regions throughout Britain. The eleven Regions had at least one Commissioner who had dual responsibilities. In time of war, each Commissioner was given the power to govern the Region if circumstances required it, for example, an enemy occupation of part of the country which prevented Parliament from directly governing that part of Britain. For their Civil Defence role the Commissioner's function was to co-ordinate the Civil Defence with the local authorities ARP services, and if needed overrule in disputes, their decision would be final (29). Terence O'Brien referred to the responsibilities of Commissioners and their Regional organisations, whereas Angus Calder and Philip Ziegler, the authors of standard works of wartime London, only briefly refer to the activities of Regional ARP departments.

The London Civil Defence Regional organisation was an additional layer of authority that Kingston Council had to contend with. The London Region was divided into nine Civil Defence groups that had its headquarters in South Kensington. As London's Regional Group 9 was very large, it was further sub-divided, with Kingston becoming part of Group 9A. To administer the regional organisation something like a 'military' chain of command was necessary. What effect did these higher levels of authorities have on Kingston's ARP service? From my study of the Civil Defence records, my impression was that in one aspect, considerable time was taken up by these different authority meetings by discussing and debating the same subject resulting in duplication and excessive clerical work.

4.4 Precautions against gas warfare

The ARP Act of 1937 stated that each local authority was required to establish its own Civil Defence service based on the assurance that a substantial part of the costs incurred would be met by Government grants of up to 75% for approved expenditure. In the ARP circular of 1935, the Government had avoided the issue of who was to pay for the service, resulting in some local authorities reluctance to spend ratepayers money on what they considered to be a national responsibility. This could explain why certain local authorities were slow to develop their ARP, perhaps anticipating that the Government would eventually pay the full costs (30). In November 1938, Kingston's Town Clerk informed the Town Council that the Home Office would start supplying sufficient equipment for its ARP scheme to deal with a perceived threat of air raids on the local community. As there was no open-ended Government subsidy part of the costs were borne by the ratepayer. The ordering of ARP supplies were closely scrutinised by the local ARP Committee and based on competitive tendering. It was usual for the company offering the lowest price to be awarded the contract. An example of a list of submitted bids is shown in figure three on the next page for the contract for building public shelters for Coombe and Malden. It suggests by the large number of companies tendering, that there was a good profit to be had by the successful bidder.

The public meeting held in September 1937 at St Paul's Hall Kingston, referred to in chapter three, had passed a resolution that expressed the need for an ARP service to include the provision of deep shelters and anti-gas training. The resolution was in complete contrast to the lack of interest by local residents in 1935 when Kingston Council had proposed to introduce air raid precautions into the Borough (31). The public concern for anti-gas precautions may

Tenders for Public Shelters - Borough of Malden and Coombe

From Air Raid Precautions Committee 18 July 1939

Figure 3 : Kingston Heritage Centre

have been linked to the publicity given to poison gas, that had been used by the Italian Army in 1936 during their invasion of Abyssinia (32). The British Government believed poison gas would be used in the early stages of another war. A Government anti-gas school had opened in 1936. One of the first to qualify as an instructor was Mr Drury, the Chief Superintendent of Kingston's fire brigade, who later trained gas decontamination squads recruited from among the Borough's surveyor's office, electricians and sewage workers. During 1941, at the time of the Plymouth Blitz, Mr Drury was seconded from Kingston by Commander Aylmer Firebrace, Inspector-in-Chief of Fire Services, to take charge of Plymouth's fire service that had experienced many problems during the intensive fire raids on the Devon city. An offer of ARP co-operation was made by Malden and Coombe to Surbiton Council to share the facilities at Manor Farm, which had been purchased by Malden Council and converted into a school for anti-gas decontamination courses.

In 1938 air raid wardens from the three Boroughs visited each household of their respective town to record the number of gas masks that would be required. The same year the three Borough Councils were informed by Surrey County Council that, as a matter of urgency, suitable premises should be made available in which to store the town's civilian gas respirators that were soon to be delivered. The Home Office had stipulated that, on delivery of the Kingston masks the Council should immediately assemble and store them. Evidence of co-operation within the Kingston community is shown by the fact that the masks that had been delivered in two sections were assembled at Bentalls depository by 500 local volunteers. However, the official brown cardboard civilian gas mask cases had not been delivered, and would not arrive until October that year. During September 1938 the distribution of gas masks to the Kingston residents was made from a shop in Kingston's Market Place, where long queues formed as people waited to collect their respirators (33). Kingston residents who were concerned about the efficiency of their gas mask could have them tested in the town's gas chamber that was later installed at Kingston's Guildhall. In November 1938, Kingston had formed four gas decontamination squads recruited from Corporation workmen. Their base was at Villiers Road, Kingston, where the squad's protective clothing and equipment were stored. The anti-gas squad's responsibilities included the decontamination of civilian casualties using shower baths and eye treatment. It had been planned that if a gas attack had occurred at Kingston, casualties would be loaned fresh clothing to enable them to return to their home. Squads would also be required to decontaminate any of the Kingston roads, buildings and vehicles that had been fouled with poisonous gas.

The Kingston decontamination squad's activities were linked to the town's gas detection and identification service. Squares of special yellow paint covered Kingston's pillar boxes that would indicate by a colour change to the paint, if mustard gas was present in the vicinity. Painted gas indicator boards were also placed throughout the Borough. One of the disadvantages of using the indicator paint was that each time there was a colour change of the paint caused by poison gas the Post Office letter boxes needed repainting. The use of gas by the enemy continued to concern the Government, but the threat of this form of attack receded during the war. Reports were received by British Intelligence concerning the nature and scale of fires caused by the lightweight incendiary devices the Germans had developed and that their aircraft were capable of carrying these bombs in large numbers. The use of incendiary devices was seen by the Government's Incendiary Bomb Committee as likely to be one of the enemy's more dangerous threats (34). The Civil Defence of Kingston and its district's response in combating anticipated incendiary bomb raids is evaluated in chapter six.

4.5 Social Class and Gender in the ARP services

Angus Calder describes his history of the Home Front in Britain during the Second World War as 'The People's War', arguing that an egalitarianism existed throughout the country in pursuit of a final victory. However, evidence suggests that social class was often a key factor concerning certain ARP appointments. Most senior officers of the Civil Defence were generally middle professional men or ex- senior commissioned officers. For example, the ARP Controllers for Kingston and Plymouth were also the Town Clerks (35). At a higher level of authority, regional commissioners were appointed because they had held high government office, or had a distinguished military service career. All the newly appointed regional commissioners with the exception of one had received a knighthood. The ARP senior executives did not wear a Civil Defence uniform when they carried out their public duties. They dressed in their World War One officer's class uniform or wore a formal dark suit complete with a bowler hat and carried a rolled umbrella. Birmingham City Council who was at first unsympathetic to the needs of Civil Defence, believed that 'introducing ARP to the city would be the thin end of the wedge, leading to a greater regimentation of the working class'(36).

No records have been discovered to indicate the distribution of thei social classes and the peace time employment of those people who served in the ranks of the Civil Defence within the districts of Kingston. An overview of residential class distribution in Kingston and its districts in peacetime is given in chapter three. If the 'war books' compiled at the time of the expected

invasion of England were available they would have supplied details of the people who served in the local Civil Defence and their peacetime employment (37). This would have been useful if these local historical record had indicated there was a particular social class that dominated the ranks of the Civil Defence of Kingston and its districts, in a way that the Women's Voluntary Services was composed of mainly upper and middle class women described in chapter eight.

During the formative years of Kingston Civil Defence, many of the women volunteers were associated with the nursing profession. These women were usually connected with charitable organisations, for example, the British Red Cross Society and were continuing the tradition of voluntary care service that is associated with middle and upper-class women. At Malden, enlisting women for ARP duties other than for nursing had, up to the time of the Munich crisis, been a problem, because of the Malden Borough Council policy of not recruiting women. Kingston Council was hopeful about recruiting women into its ARP service. A 1939 report published by the Town Clerk proposed that the establishment of the town's ARP would consist of 800 members, of which 50 per cent would be women, with 20 per cent of the warden's service consisting of women (38). At Torquay, Devon, the local council appointed a lady 'Head Warden' for its ARP service (39).

4.6 Kingston's Air Raid Wardens Service 1937

In 1935, it was announced in Parliament the establishment of the Air Raid Warden Service, a subject first discussed in 1934, but little had been done to form an organised service until 1937 (40). The warden's service was considered the first link between the public and the ARP controller, who in time of war would direct the deployment of the various Civil Defence units from an ARP Control centre. During an air raid each warden's post would be a separate unit under the direction of the ARP Controller, the warden receiving instructions from him. According to Terence O'Brien, fighting incipient fires was originally planned as part of a warden's task but was given to the AFS. However, the warden retained the responsibility of reporting fire. An Air Raid Warden was expected to be a local resident who was required to work on his own and to possess qualities of leadership, because a warden may have to advise and maintain the morale of the public in the event of an air raid. Their responsibilities also included reporting the fall of bombs and any damage to property. The warden's duties could

include being a shelter marshal whose job was to preserve order. For example, to prevent people from congregating at the entrance of a shelter, thereby obstructing people entering the shelter during an emergency. Kingston Council appointed a squad of shelter marshals for duty at the Fairfield trench shelters. The policy of recruiting local people as wardens was not always practical. For example, there were three mainline railway stations in the Borough of St Pancras, north London without residents in the vicinity but each required the service of a warden (41). An additional problem was that a warden's work was time consuming. The air raid warden was required to undergo training that included anti-gas techniques, first aid procedures and having to participate in Civil Defence exercises. The wives of Kingston air raid wardens were described by the *Surrey Comet* as 'wardens widows' as their husbands were so often away on ARP duty during the evenings. Kingston's Chief Warden was Captain Oldfield, a Kingston Councillor who had two deputy Chief Wardens and sixteen District Wardens. In Britain there were many dual appointments of Chief Constables and Chief ARP Wardens, for example, at Birmingham. The belief was that by appointing the local Chief Constable in charge of ARP it would instil discipline into the warden's ranks. The failure of certain local authorities, for example Kingston, to recruit sufficient voluntary male wardens is not easily explained. There were sensitive and controversial motives during the 1930s that could have affected men's willingness to volunteer to serve as air raid wardens. For example the consequences of the First World War had brought about changes in social and patriotic attitudes in British society. Public disillusionment and patriarchal virtue no longer commanded the general imagination (42). Had some men inwardly questioned that becoming an air raid warden could mean taking on an unknown physical risk that meant self preservation came before patriotism? Titmuss suggests that psychological factors must have played an important role in what people feared (43).

Before the war the British public had been made aware that air attacks could cause death and destruction by what they had seen on cinema newsreels, feature films and in magazines. For example, many people would have seen the film, *War in the Air*, based on the novel by H.G.Wells, that depicts the horror of bombing in London, a drama acted out in the street not in the trenches. The theme of Neville Shute's book *What Happened to the Corbetts*, published in 1939, was an account of a family's suffering in an air raid. O'Brien refers to men that considered their options of national service. He states that 'prospective volunteers' wanted more information about whether this form of duty (warden service) protected them from military conscription (44). If men had been given the choice of serving in the ARP or the armed forces

early in the war, there may not have been a shortage of wardens. It is suggested that the warden shortage at Tolworth (Surbiton) could have been associated with a lack of community bonding as so many of the residents were newcomers to the district. Community bonding was a term used by Dr Christopher French who quoted the Bishop of Southwark when referring to the Surrey suburbs before the First World War as 'the comparative comfortable highly respectable, perfectly contented suburban areas, where the manner of life and the mode of life created very little local attachment and no sense of corporate life, with the gradual and extended growth of indifference'. According to Dr French, historians of the twentieth century perpetuated this view (45). It is suggested that problems of ARP recruitment in the three Surrey suburbs could have had associations with the Bishop of Southwark's opinion of a Victorian suburban life-style. Many of the Tolworth residents were newcomers to the town. They had arrived at Tolworth at a time when there were few social facilities to enable the residents an opportunity to meet up to create a community spirit. According to Professor Benson, people from the same community expressed their belonging through social interaction (46). With reference to Dennis Mills definitions of community, cited in chapter three, if there had been a developed relationship within Tolworth, prior to the Second World War, it may have acted as an incentive for people to enrol in their Civil Defence.

During March 1939 important changes had taken place in the reorganisation of Kingston's warden organisation. The original plan was for a warden to serve 500 residents. The Home Office proposed to alter the ratio to three wardens per 8,000 people. The official reason given for the change was that it would not be practical to adhere to the initial manning plan (47). In April 1939, the Kingston warden service was reorganised into 52 sectors. The sectors were grouped to form 16 warden reporting areas. In the event of a raid, each of the sectors would be patrolled by wardens who were linked to the reporting posts. Surbiton, a larger borough than Kingston, had established 40 wardens posts. The city of Gloucester had 34 wardens posts. The construction of Kingston's warden's posts began in June 1939, when the first of them were built at Brae Court and Cambridge House. Kingston had both underground and surface warden's posts. Each post was provided with a telephone, electric lighting, heating, kettle and chairs. Wardens posts in Kingston were marked by a distinguishing sign as were the homes of the local wardens.

4.7 The Kingston Casualty services

In 1938 the ARP casualty services were established by the Ministry of Health. Their

responsibility was divided between the Home Office first aid parties and the ambulances service that gave rise to various administrative problems (48). The Kingston Casualty Service included 16 stretcher parties, each of 5 men, who had to undergo training to improve their efficiency. Part of this training involved competitions organised by the London Region Authority. Plans were made to establish two First Aid posts in Kingston during 1939. One of the posts was sited at Victoria Road and staffed by the British Red Cross Society, the other located at Grange Road under the care of the St John Ambulance Brigade. Two Ambulance depots were established at Fairfield car park and Burton Hill. Linked to the Casualty service, but under a different management structure, were the Rescue, Demolition and Decontamination services. The men of the Kingston Rescue and Demolition services were recruited from workers employed in the Council yards. The men were committed to stand by duties each of two shifts of twelve hours, the night shift being accommodated at the Villiers Road depot. Training exercises were organised to improve the efficiency of these service. Levels of achievement were assessed by Regional inspectors and the standard of capability was determined by organised demonstrations.

4.8 Operations : ARP Report and Control Centres

The activities of a Report and Control Centre were the most vital functions of a Civil Defence service during an air raid. All local raid incidents were reported to the Centre by telephone or messenger. Incidents were plotted on a large map. The Controller, on the information received, would decide what action should be taken, issuing instructions if necessary for ARP services to report to the scene of an incident. Each of the three mentioned suburban towns had a Control and Report Centre. The Surbiton Centre consisted of two rooms, one was a Message room and the other a Control room, that were located in the basement below the Borough surveyor's office. The Control Room had four telephone lines and the message room had eight lines (49). Malden's Control Centre was based in the Town's Council Offices. Kingston's Control Centre, located at the Guildhall, consisted of two well protected basement strong rooms, and the premises were provided with accommodation for staff (50). Inside the Control Centre there was a large map that indicated the town's ARP sectors, depots and First Aid Posts. Kingston's Control had a staff of seventeen paid telephonists who worked on an eight hour shift. There was no automatic telephone system at this period. Telephone operators were responsible for the incoming and outgoing calls with the exception of the telephone lines that were directly linked to the warden posts, the fire and police stations and to the headquarters of the London Civil Defence Region. To maintain maximum efficiency at the Kingston Control Centre, weekly training exercises were carried out to ensure the smooth working of the unit under active service conditions (51). The Kingston ARP Control Centre

became operational in the late summer of 1939 when the town was involved in a civil defence exercise in communications. In the event of the Kingston Control Centre being put out of action, it was planned that the Centre's activities would be transferred to the Emergency Control Room at Kingston's Electricity Works. During the war this situation did occur when the roof of Kingston Guildhall was hit by a bomb. Paul Barnfield, refers to a Control Centre at Twickenham, but does not indicate where it was (52). Gloucester had two ARP Control Centres, one of them centrally placed in the City that operated in the day time. The other Centre was at Old Bank, situated on the perimeter of the city. This Centre was brought into action at night (53).

4.9 Kingston ARP preparations prior to the outbreak of war

In July 1939 each householder had received the official public information leaflet issued by the Lord Privy Seal's Office, *Some things you should know if war should come.* This included buying blackout material and not to hoard large quantities of food. This leaflet was the first of many that the Government would distribute. In August 1939 the three Borough Councils had began to organise their respective ARP services to bring them to a state of readiness for war. In Kingston, Mrs Oldfield proposed the formation of a committee to explore how the WVS could operate within the framework of Kingston's Civil Defence(54). Details of the WVS contribution are described in chapter eight. The Home Office advised Kingston Council in the summer of 1939 to make special arrangements for a suitable place to be used as a mortuary for those people killed during air raids on the town. Preparations for air raids became more evident in the Borough during the weeks prior to the declaration of war, due to the visual effect of 'ARP' white paint. Kingston Council had purchased 150 gallons of white paint that was used for marking the centre of certain roads as an aid for motorists driving in the dark. In the town, white paint seemed to be daubed on every building. In late August 1939 public brick air raid shelters and warden posts started to be built. Rest centres were prepared to receive people who had lost their home. Stacked sandbags were used to protect certain public utilities, for example, telephone kiosks. Signs were placed that indicated the way to the nearest public shelter. The recruitment of ARP personnel increased, but there remained a shortage of wardens at Kingston. One reason, according to the *Surrey Comet*, was that trained wardens were being evacuated with their employers to other parts of the country (55). There was a shortage of stirrup pumps, that along with buckets of sand were to be the chief implements used by fire-watchers when dousing incendiary bombs. Few of these hand pumps had been delivered to the Civil Defence because the Government had directed that they should be sold to the public and Industry (56).

It is emphasised that the Civil Defence of Kingston was not wholly dependent on the local authority ARP services. The town's Civil Defence also relied on the active participation of its residents who, prior to the declaration of war, had begun to prepare their own air raid precautions mentioned in chapter three. The blackout had an immediate impact on the daily lives and economy of the residents. It created a special market for the supply of light proof curtains, blinds and black paint. It also created a shortage of torch batteries. The blackout at Kingston extended to the boats on the River Thames. The familiar lights that twinkled from their portholes were no longer visible. A solitary moving coloured navigation light was sometimes the only evidence on a dark night that a boat was passing by. Yet on a clear night when a full moon was shining on the River Thames, the moon's reflections on the water illuminated the blacked out buildings and streets of Kingston and made them clearly visible.

How did the ARP preparations in Kingston's compare with other places in Britain? From my review of secondary sources, evidence suggests that most of the communities were in a state of readiness. Belfast, although not one of the secondary sources reviewed, was at the beginning of the war, under equipped, understaffed and in a state of unreadiness. Yet the Ministry of Home Affairs was informed that Belfast was a definite German target. At the beginning of the war there were only four public air raid shelters for the Northern Ireland city and there were no domestic air raid shelters for the residents (57). North Ireland had yet to be integrated into the air raid warning system operating in Britain.

Prior to the war, many Kingston residents went on their summer holidays, other people continued to flock to the Kingston shops for the annual summer sales that were advertised in the *Surrey Comet*. The crowds of daily shoppers that arrived in Kingston at this time of crisis, might have given the impression that the public had marginalised the threat of war. The newspaper continued up to the eve of the declaration of war to report the many local social and sporting events in the district. With the introduction of conscription there were local sports clubs that found it difficult to form a team. After the summer of 1939 the residents of Kingston were subjected to an increasing number of BBC broadcasts which gave advice on how to behave in an air raid. Leaflets were distributed in the Kingston area to every householder explaining how air raids would be extremely violent and noisy (58).

On the 2 September 1939 the Kingston's Emergency Committee that was composed of four town councillors held its first meeting. This was a Government measure that stipulated that in time of war a local Emergency Committee would meet on a regular basis with the town's ARP Controller to ensure the Government's instructions were being carried out. On the same day the Ministry of Home Security instructed Kingston Council to call up members of the ARP service, invest the town's ARP Controller with executive powers and take immediate action to put their ARP scheme fully into force.

4.9b Summary

This chapter evaluates Kingston's Civil Defence preparation up the time of the declaration of the Second World War. After the Munich crisis the town's ARP preparations that had been slow in developing had speeded up. The immediacy of war had rapidly changed the situation of the local authorities of the three towns. All planned civil projects were cancelled. Civil Defence Services were placed under the authority of an ARP Controller. The *Surrey Comet* instructed its readers what they should do in the event of an air raid (59). If poison gas had been used, a warning would be given by means of a hand rattle. The public would be told by the ringing of hand bells if there was no longer any danger of gas in the vicinity (60). The Borough of Kingston had not been a participant in the Government's evacuation scheme as mentioned in section 4.3 of this chapter, but ten percent of Kingston's school children had been privately evacuated.

Whatever state of proficiency the Kingston's Civil Defence had achieved in preparing for raids, there were still problems in the town's ARP service. For example, it was planned that upon the declaration of war all of the town's warden's posts were to be manned 24 hours a day by two wardens, each carrying on 6 hour shift duties, but the town's under strength service did not permit this level of cover (61). Examples are given comparing the preparation of air raid precautions with other communities in Britain. Emphasis has been made on the recruitment of volunteer ARP staff together with special problems encountered by Kingston in enlisting Wardens. Possible reasons for the warden shortage have been suggested. There were no

problems in recruiting women for the casualty and nursing services. Social class within the Civil Defence is discussed. The chapter refers to the appointment of two Commissioners for the London Region that included Kingston, Surbiton and Malden. Kingston Civil Defence although in a state of readiness was a new organisation. It lacked an identity of common purpose within the local community, furthermore the residents were still ready to criticise the service. The capability of each of the local Civil Defence services of Kingston and its districts were an unknown quantity at the outbreak of war and the merit of these services could only be tested by their performance under air attack.

Chapter Four

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Chapter Five

Air Raid Shelters

The chapter analyses the use of air raid shelters during the Second World War and why the Government attached so much importance in providing them for the civilian population. The text evaluates the main types of domestic shelters provided for the residents of Kingston and its districts. The problems associated with shelters are considered. Explanations are given for the controversy surrounding the Government's policy of not providing bomb proof shelters for the public and its subsequent change of policy.

Air raid shelters were used in the Second World War as bombing was the most direct, physical and violent experience suffered by civilians on the Home Front. Their provision was an important part of the Government's policy in the organisation of the Civil Defence (1). Shelters were provided for civilians, not solely for their physical protection against bombing, but for maintaining civilian morale, that is discussed in more detail in chapter seven. The Government's shelter policy is examined in section five of this chapter and was based on the belief that the dispersal of civilians was the best way to reduce the casualty rate in the event of an air raid. The provision of shelters was also linked to the Government's evacuation scheme that was to disperse vulnerable sections of the population (2). For many parents who believed in the importance of family life, shelters offered an alternative to evacuation and a means of keeping the family together (3).

Domestic air raid shelters were manufactured by Government contractors and distributed to the public by local council authorities. Civilians employed in offices and factories were supplied with shelters by their employer, a provision made compulsory under the Civil Defence Act of 1939. This Act also allowed the use of of buildings as public shelters, for example, shop basements and cellars (4). Kingston ARP Committee used the 1939 Act to convert a basement in Clarence Street into a public shelter (5). Not everyone used a shelter and it was not compulsory to seek cover when an air raid warning sounded. There were people who felt more nervous being in a shelter during a raid waiting for a bomb to drop. Other people took refuge under the stairs at home or under a table during an air raid, referred to in section nine of this chapter. At night there were people who stayed in bed during an air raid as it disrupted their sleep and their daily routine (6). There were also disabled people who did not use a shelter, in which case their relatives often felt compelled to remain with them (7).

Air raids, even a solitary air raid warning, resulted in vital war work being interrupted, as factory workers 'downed tools' and went to the shelter. In order that people should carry on their work the Government encouraged employees to continue after the siren had sounded. This resulted in the introduction of roof spotters to detect approaching enemy aircraft (8). The use of roof spotters at Kingston is evaluated in chapter six. O'Brien devotes a considerable amount of his text to shelters in *Civil Defence*. This information has been useful to me, because it has given me an understanding of Government shelter policy. Angus Calder refers to shelters in *The Peoples War*, but does not write extensively about them. Juliet Gardiner, commissioned by the Imperial War Museum, provided useful information in her book about air raid shelters (9). For example she devotes a chapter to the experiences of shelterers.

5.0 Shelters in the First World War

The first enemy air raid on England was made on Christmas Eve,1914, when a German aircraft dropped a bomb near Dover Castle (10). From the summer of 1915 Zeppelin airships were used for night raids over England. London was the enemy's main target, although east coast communities lying on the raider's path suffered bomb damage and casualties (11). There are no reports of bombs being dropped on Kingston at that time. As the enemy experienced serious losses to their Zeppelins, they introduced large Gotha bomber aircraft and reverted to daylight bombing. From the Summer of 1917 the public became nervous as a result of the air raids. In the east end of London there was a tendency for some people to panic when there was a raid because of the poor construction of their homes. Sections of the public began to demand public air raid warnings and shelter protection (12). The provision of air raid shelters for the public during the First World War became a major issue as there were no purpose-built shelters available. The daylight air raids of 1917 caused crowds to seek refuge in the underground tube stations and used them as dormitories. The Government agreed that people could use public buildings to protect them from bombing. The London Commissioner of Police allowed people to shelter in police stations. Many places were adapted as shelters, including mine workings and caves (13).

5.1 The question of shelters in the 1920s

In November 1924 air raid shelters for civilians were discussed by the Committee of Imperial Defence under the agenda 'the prevention of bomb damage'. The principal military experts were asked to report to this Committee on the possible problems arising from future air attacks on the United Kingdom (14) The report presented a gloomy picture because of the rapid development in air warfare, stating that air attacks would be damaging to morale proportionately

much greater than the material damage (15). The Committee was told by the Air Staff that in any future conflict London would be the main target. In 1921 General Douhet, an Italian General and author of *The Command of the Air,* stated 'that intensive bombing would affect the morale of civilians who experienced this form of warfare'(16). During 1922-3 a Commission of Jurists that met at the Hague drafted the *Rules of Aerial Warfare,* but they did not provide legislation for the protection of a civil populations against air attack (17).

On 15 May 1924 an ARP committee met for the first time under the chairmanship of Sir John Anderson, a senior civil servant, later the Lord Privy Seal, that continued to function until 1935 (18). The Committee discussed how the public might react when exposed to air raids. From the late 1920s planning air raid precautions were slow to progress. The revelation in the 1930s of a German ARP scheme, and details from a publication revealing the development of the French Civil Defence, made the British Government's ARP Committee realise they had not kept pace in their planning of the Civil Defence (19). The ARP recommendations that were made in the 1920s lacked the finance and organisation to provide Britain with the means of protecting civilians against enemy raids. Until 1937 the main method of passive defence against high explosive bombs was the use of sandbags, that resulted in the Government purchasing 42 million of them (20).

5.2 The Government's policy of dispersal

In 1917 a Cabinet decision had reported in favour of dispersing sections of the civilian population as a means of reducing air raid casualties. This policy was retained over the years of planning and when building the national structure of ARP. In 1938 the policy of dispersal was restated by the Government (21). Dispersal was implemented by the provision of shelters in vulnerable areas and the evacuation of civilians. The situation regarding the evacuation of civilians from Kingston is referred to in chapter four. The policy of dispersing civilian's by using small domestic shelters was also used to prevent the public from using underground stations as dormitories, referred to in section 5.0 of this chapter. The Government was adamant that dispersal would prevent a 'deep shelter mentality'. Although adverse to deep shelter protection, Sir Samuel Hoare the Home Secretary, stated on 1 June 1938, 'at least one really bomb proof shelter will be made, to ensure the working of the Government's machine in an air war' (22). In August 1938, Professor J.B.S. Haldane, a communist intellectual, and Fellow of the Royal Society, was critical of the Government's policy of dispersal and was an advocate

of providing deep bomb proof shelters for civilians. He demonstrated mathematically that there were no grounds for assuming that bombs dropped at random would cause fewer casualties if people were dispersed than if they were concentrated (23). This led to a deep shelter campaign by left-wing groups which was a serious source of embarrassment to the Government (24) Haldane had visited Spain during the Spanish Civil War and experienced air raids. He also believed that incendiary bombs were far less dangerous than high explosive bombs (25).

The Air Raid Precaution Act of 1937 compelled local authorities to prepare schemes for the protection of persons and property from enemy air attacks. The Air Staff estimated that within two years the German Air Force would be capable of attacking Britain from bases in Germany on a scale of overwhelming intensity (26). In a House of Commons debate on the 15 November 1937, during the Second Reading of the ARP Bill, the Home Secretary admitted that it was not possible to protect a building against a direct hit from a high explosive bomb. He then announced the Government's intention of providing shelters for householders that would give protection against bomb blast and splinters (27). Until then the Government promised to provide sandbags free of charge to local authorities to strengthen buildings used as public shelters (28). In November 1937 there was still a lack of technical information regarding the damage that could be caused by exploding bombs and how to deal with them (29). The most that the Home Office could do at the time was to offer advice to the public via air raid wardens or encourage people to read the Government booklet, *The Protection of your Home against Air Raids*. At Kingston a model refuge room was constructed in the town's Market Place for people to see what was required to adapt a room as a place of shelter. To assess whether a Kingston basement room was suitable for use as a shelter, an individual would require the services of the Borough Surveyor. If a basement could be adapted as a shelter, the owner was entitled to a free issue of building material to carry out the work. In 1939 Kingston Council decided to survey all the basements in the town. A Council report concluded that not more than twenty per cent of the town's basements that were examined were suitable to be used as refuge rooms (30).

5.3 1938 : Trench shelters

The consideration of air raid shelter protection for Kingston residents can be traced back to April 1938 when the Town Clerk asked the Home Office for money to provide shelters for residents who lived close to the Hawker Aircraft Factory in Canbury Park Road. The factory

which built fighter aircraft for the RAF was a potential enemy target. The Home Office replied 'it had no intention of providing money for air raid shelters for these people'(31). The rejection of this initiative caused concern among the residents of Canbury Park Road. One lady recalls 'there was resentment by the local people about the Home Office response as the factory was in the middle of their homes' (32).

At the time of the Munich Crisis of 1938, the Home Office had instructed Kingston Council to immediately start digging trenches referred to in chapter four. Trenches were the most primitive and uncomfortable form of shelter protection. No evidence was found in the Kingston ARP Committee minutes that sanitary arrangements had been installed and without them, these shelters were unsuitable for overnight occupation. Trench shelters were originally intended to be used by people caught out in the open during an air raid (33). The trenches dug at the Fairfield recreation ground were extended to shelter a further 900 people. As the Government believed that, if war broke out, there would be gas attacks, the trench shelters were fitted with gas proof curtains that would be unrolled during an air raid. Work on the Fairfield trenches encountered a series of grievances from the local unemployed men who had been recruited to dig them. The labourers complained that the money they were paid was no more than when they were on the dole. The men argued that digging the trenches made them hungry and this meant they had to spend more money on extra food. If their complaints had not been rectified presumably the digging would have come to a halt. Eventually the dispute was settled and the trench shelters completed (34). Kingston householders were advised by the Council to dig a trench in their garden. In Reading, there were spacious trenches that had been dug in three places in the town (35). At Oxford, trench shelters were prepared in the suburbs of the city where the residents complained the shelters had no roof (36). The construction of other local authorities trench shelters is referred to in chapter two.

Until late 1939 the only public shelters available in Kingston were those that had been dug during the Munich Crisis. As the sides of trenches were liable to collapse the Government had decided to make the trenches a permanent feature by reinforcing the walls with concrete and covering them with a roof. The Home Office instructions for Malden Council to dig trenches during the 1938 emergency had created shelter for 4,500 people (37). At Malden and Coombe, by the time war was declared, there were 24 trenches in the Borough. The golfers that played on the Coombe Park Course had to negotiate the trenches as obstacles (38). Trenches were a quick

way to provide shelters, but their disadvantage was the difficulty of providing drainage for them, as they had a tendency to flood. The trench shelters at Tolworth (Surbiton) were in a dreadful condition because of the accumulation of water. People complained to the Medical Officer who advised the Surbiton Council that nightly inspections of the trenches should be made by an official before they were used. Trench shelters dug at Surbiton were used during the 1940 raids. The shelter at Stirling Walk near Surbiton Lido was built to accommodate 76 people, but during the raids as many as 150 people sought refuge in them.

5.4 1938: The Anderson Shelter

On 21 December 1938, the Minister of Home Security announced in Parliament details of the Anderson domestic shelter that was to be made available to the public. The Anderson Shelter was constructed of thick corrugated steel that gave protection against blast, shrapnel, bomb splinters and debris, but the shelter would not protect the occupant/s from a direct hit by an exploding bomb (39). According to O'Brien, the Anderson shelter was the dominant form of refuge from bombing throughout the war (40). Angus Calder states 'the Anderson Shelter was a masterpiece of cheap and simple engineering, a formal investment for the security of the working class'(41). The Government's policy was to supply Anderson shelters free to people with an annual income of less than £250 who lived in a vulnerable area. Higher wage earners were expected to pay a small charge for the shelter. What was a vulnerable area? According to the official historian, the ARP planners had divided Britain into five grades of vulnerability with respect to the degree of threat given to a designated area being subjected to raids. A grade 5 area might only receive one-seventh of the protection afforded to a high grade area (42).

There were various sizes of Anderson Shelters, the largest could accommodate up to six people (43). One disadvantage of this type of shelter was the restricted room for people to sleep in. The shelter was not suitable for every type of property. A garden was needed in which to erect the shelter, as shown in figure four overleaf. An Anderson shelter was displayed in Kingston Market Place for the public to view. Kingston air raid wardens visited each home to confirm who qualified for an Anderson shelter. At the end of 1939 Kingston Council had delivered 3,240 Anderson shelters from a list of 4,360 applicants. The householder was expected to erect the shelter. A social survey carried out in 1939 indicated that twenty percent of Kingston householders were unable to erect a shelter as a result of age, infirmity, or there was no man in the house. In these circumstances Kingston Council agreed to erect the shelter free of charge.

Figure 4. An Anderson Air Raid Shelter in Eversley Road, Surbiton after an air raid on 12 October 1940.

Kingston Heritage Centre.

The erection of Anderson shelters was not a problem for Kingston Council, unlike at West Ham, where the nature of the clay was unsuitable for trench or Anderson shelters. The West Ham Council's ARP policy did little at first to provide adequate shelters for their residents. Erecting an Anderson shelter in Kingston was easier than assembling a shelter in some industrial communities. For example, at Birmingham, many families lived in back-to back houses with no garden in which to erect an Anderson shelter. As a consequence these residents had to wait until 1941 to be provided with indoor Morrison shelters (44).

In April 1940 Surbiton's Emergency Committee reported that there had been 6,451 applications for Anderson shelters. In 1941 a Ministry of Home Security calculation of Surbiton shelter occupation, that was based on 3.5 persons per dwelling, indicated that 15,150 (60%) local residents had some form of shelter protection (45). By April 1940, the Government had stopped the production of Anderson shelters because of a shortage of steel. The consequence resulted in the three Surrey boroughs deciding to build small domestic brick shelters, as shown in figure five, overleaf (46). Within three weeks of Malden giving notice of its intentions to build brick shelters, the town council had received 335 applications to be allocated one (47). Malden residents who possessed an Anderson shelter were issued with hammocks by the town council, which proved a convenient way of maximising the limited sleeping space within the shelter (48).

In 1944 at the time of the missile attacks on Kingston and its districts, the same type of shelters were used by civilians that had offered them protection in the earlier air raids. On the 5 October 1944, a V1 exploded at Derby Road, Tolworth (Surbiton). One family that had taken shelter in their Anderson shelter survived the explosion intact, but were buried in the vast amount of debris that completely blocked the entrance to the shelter. One of the daughters of the householder who had helped to erect the shelter remembered that her father had kept a special spanner which came with the materials in the shelter for use in an emergency. Finding the spanner, she managed to unbolt the back of the shelter, allowing the four occupants to escape from the rear of the shelter (49).

5.5 Public shelters

During March 1938 the subject of providing public air raid shelters for Kingston had been discussed by the Borough's Air Raid Precaution Committee (50). In the same year a Home Office inspector's report on Kingston's proposed public shelter scheme was received by the Town Clerk. This report stated that the proposals were not satisfactory. The suggested siting of

Figure 5 : Various domestic brick shelter designs for Kingston residents, to replace the Anderson Shelters that had been stopped being produced owing to the shortage of steel.

Kingston Heritage Centre,

several shelters was in an area liable to flooding from high pressure water mains in the town centre. The report was also critical that no census had been carried out of the likely numbers of people to be found in the streets of Kingston at any one time. Furthermore, there was no information available regarding the number of local residents who could not be provided with shelter accommodation (51). The Inspector had considered Kingston's proposal to use a large underground garage in Wood Street as a deep shelter for one thousand people. He was not optimistic that the Home Office would give Kingston permission to build the shelter. Kingston's Town Clerk was convinced that the public could not be protected if the Wood Street shelter were not built (52). The underground shelter was eventually built, but it was not bomb proof.

Criticism of Kingston's public shelter proposals continued in 1938, when a Surrey County Council Engineer reported that an application to provide shelters revealed their careless siting. The report indicated that public shelters should be built in the most appropriate places in Kingston where people might be in the street during an air raid and not sited where it is more financially convenient for the Borough Council (53). It was suggested in the report that the Kingston ARP planner should use a map and divide the Borough into zones, then calculate the number of people who should be provided with shelters. The Kingston Council plan, according to the Engineer, was simply to provide the shelters and then look about for people to use them. Nevertheless he recommended that Kingston with its large traffic flow should be provided with public shelter accommodation ten percent above the accepted level.

In February 1939 the Hailey Conference, referred to in chapter two, had met to discuss air raid precautions. The Conference report proposed abandoning any 'policy of providing deep or stronger protected shelters'(54). How many people used the Kingston surface public shelters at night? A shelter survey conducted on 19 October 1940 by the Ministry of Home Security, recorded the number of people who spent the night in a Kingston public shelter. The results are shown on page 94. The survey indicates that with one exception all the shelters were used, although not to their maximum capacity. In taking into account the low numbers of people that sheltered at the Fairfield trenches, it is revealing that so many people chose to sleep in such uncomfortable conditions.

Wardens Post	Shelter	Number of People
1	Leylands shelter	14
	Tiffin Girls School (public shelter)	8
	Tiffin Girls School (school shelter)	77
2	Tudor Drive between Aragon Road & Barnfield Road	15
	Tudor Drive at junction with Latchmere Lane	16
	Latchmere Road Schools nine shelters	59
3	Park Road Shelter	20
4	St Pauls School shelters	53
5	Kingston Hill Wolverton Avenue	8
6	No shelters	
7	Walter Street	8
	Walter Street A E shelters	79
	Kings Road	35
	Elm Road	12
	Elm Road School Trenches	30
	Richmond Road School shelters six shelters	73
8	Canbury Gardens Shelter	54
9	Wood Street	72
	Garden of Remembrance	4
	Market place large shelter	77
	Market place small shelter	17
10	Fairfield Trenches	449
	Grammar School	nil
11	Tiffin Boys school (members of the public)	57
	Tiffin Boys school (gun crew)	10
	St Peters School two shelters	38
	St Joseph's three shelters	45
12	Cambridge Road	21
	Coombe Road	28
13	Bonner Hill Road School trenches	141
	H.C.Hopper Ltd	17
	Beulah Laundry	19
14	St John's School two trenches	40
15	No shelters	
16	Portsmouth Road	22
	Knights Park	19

Figure 6 : An official shelter survey of people sleeping in Kingston's public air raid shelters on the night of Saturday 19 October 1940.

Kingston Council Archives - reference KTT33/1/1

Kingston Heritage Centre

These two critical reports suggest that providing shelters for the public was a challenge to Kingston Council. Criticism of shelter schemes was not uncommon. Kent County Council, for example, published a report on the Bromley and Beckingham Civil Defence scheme that was scathing of the local authority's shelter proposals (55). Public air raid shelters had been an issue that was pursued by Kingston residents during the Munich crisis. Letters that were published in the *Surrey Comet* suggested that shelters could be provided in the nearby Royal Parks. Kingston Council had written to the Home Office to enquire if constructing a deep shelter at Richmond Park would qualify for a Government grant. The proposal was rejected, the reason given by the Ministry was that an air raid warning of at least seven minutes would be needed to enable people to take cover since the most vulnerable area of Kingston was a quarter of a mile away from Richmond Park (56). Air raid shelters were built at Bushy Park, close to Kingston, these were provided by Hampton Council (57).

Before 1940, the public brick shelters that had been built were rarely used. They had by neglect become damp, unhygienic, forbidding places that had been vandalised. In the Summer months of 1940 when Kingston started to experience air raids people began to use these shelters on a regular basis. This resulted in Kingston Council cleaning their public shelters and equipping them with bunk beds and heating systems (58). Canteen facilities were introduced at the larger shelters where people could buy refreshments. The smaller Kingston public shelters were provided with electric plugs and kettles. As more people began to use these shelters, Kingston Council employed shelter marshals as a means to control the behaviour of people. The distribution of public shelters in Kingston up to December 1939 is shown on page 96 that indicates that there were few public shelters in the central shopping area. The Kingston market place shelters were eventually used as dormitories, occupied by homeless people. Kingston's departmental stores provided day-time shelter protection for the public. For example, Bentalls store allowed their customers to take shelter in their basement during an alert. The town's cinemas and Kingston Empire Music Hall had no provision to shelter the public. The audiences were informed of an air raid alert by a notice being projected on the screen, or the live performances were interrupted by a member of staff who announced to the audience the directions to the nearest shelter for those people who wished to leave.

Figure 7 Kingston Air Raid Shelters (Pink dots) during December ,1939.
Taken from Kingston Civil Defence Report, 1939.

Kingston Heritage Centre.

On 28 September 1940 the Crocker family with six children who lived in a flat at 17 Ravenscar Road, Tolworth were in the Anderson shelter in their back garden when a bomb demolished their home. They were given temporary accommodation in a large house that did not have an air raid shelter. The family subsequently spent their nights in a public shelter at Alexandra Recreation ground. Here the shelterers were friendly and organised a Christmas party for the children (59). At Kingston, several public shelters at Christmas were decorated with 'fairy lights', each shelter had a Christmas tree that had been provided by the local council. The shelterers wore paper hats and received a visit from the Mayor and Father Christmas. Air raid shelters offered more than physical protection in a workplace, they could offer psychological comfort as well. The manager of a Kingston laundry expressed her feelings about shelters, 'we had some shelters put up in the packing room and in another room around the corner was sandbagged. You could not run away from an air raid when it came, but it helped to comfort people by thinking they could be saved'(60).

Paul Vaughan, author of *Something in Linoleum*, lived with his family at Malden on a new housing estate described in chapter three. At the time of the raids in 1940 his father insisted it would be safer if he walked to school and not take a bus 'in case something happened'. Paul solved the problem when going to school and not being caught out in the streets during a raid, where there were no public shelters. He noted which houses along his route to school had a shelter in the front or back garden and decided that if there was an air raid, if necessary he would 'dive into one'(61). It is suggested that the people who sheltered overnight in a public shelter tended to be of the same class of the area they lived in. But did the upper class families that lived at Coombe take their blankets and sleep in a tiered bunk bed in a public shelter? The answer to this question was found in a response by Malden and Coombe Council, who rejected a proposal for the erection of communal shelters. The Borough Council minutes state 'the Council are of the opinion that communal shelters at Coombe are not suitable for this area'(62). Lady Astor, one of the richest women in England, when resident in Plymouth at the time of the Plymouth Blitz in 1941 was driven out in her car each evening from her town house on Plymouth Hoe to shelter overnight at a cottage on Dartmoor (63). McKibbin gives an insight ito the shelter provision for members of the upper classes. He described Lady Cunard and Lady Colefax, two very rich and famous hostesses, who continued to entertain in the bomb proof London hotels 'where even the shelters were smart' (64).

5.6 Problems with Surbiton's air raid shelters

Surbiton Council planned to build fourteen brick shelters in the most populated parts of the Borough. Each shelter had a capacity of fifty people and would be allocated a despatch rider as a means of communication between the shelters and other ARP sectors (65). The Council also embarked on a programme to resolve the problems of the town's domestic shelters. Many of Surbiton's Anderson shelters were faulty, or needed to be enlarged. In September 1940 when the town was experiencing raids, a total of 4,760 shelters in the Borough needed attention. This included 307 Anderson shelters that had been erected by householders and needed to be taken down and reassembled to conform to the building regulations. A flooded Anderson shelter at Surbiton was indirectly the cause of a tragic incident that occurred when on 19 March 1941, Mrs Rising and her daughter Brenda took to sheltering indoors under the kitchen table because of their flooded outdoor shelter. During an air raid a bomb exploded on the house and killed her daughter (66). Damp and flooded shelters were common in the London Civil Defence Region. An intelligence report of the 12 November 1940, describes a visit to Christchurch Parish, Stepney, east London, where there were several shelters, that each accommodated 250 people. The report states 'The shelters were soaking wet from the heavy rain of the night before, water poured down the wall, having seeped through the ceiling, people held up umbrellas, morale was low'(67).

Surbiton Council disputed the cost of repairing their shelters with the Ministry of Home Security. This dispute focussed on the Council's claim for waterproofing treatment between July 1940 and November 1941. The Ministry alleged that the shelters had been waterproofed by Surbiton's Council without approval or knowledge of the London Regional Authority. This had resulted in the payment being withheld because of Surbiton's costs being excessive (68). The Ministry of Security sent Surbiton Council details of costs comparing Surbiton's prices with those of Birmingham. This included the average repair price for a Surbiton standard size shelter £ 3-12s-4d compared with the repair price of a Birmingham Region shelter £1-1s-9d. As Surbiton's Civil Defence expenditure would have been monitored and ratified by the Town Council Committee, a possible explanation of the differences in costing could have been the higher labour costs in Surbiton than in Birmingham.

The Surbiton's Borough Surveyor reported to the Town's ARP Committee the serious defects in some of the domestic brick shelters that had been built in the Borough between 1940-1941. The shelters had been constructed by three contractors in the Borough. Contractor A, built 183

shelters, Contractor B, built 180 shelters and Contractor C, built 135 shelters. The defects were revealed when the shelters were being made damp proof. Further investigations led to the discovery that some of Contractor B shelters were not constructed in accordance with the official building specification. The chairman of Surbiton's Civil Defence Committee ordered a thorough investigation of the condition of the shelters and that the findings should be placed before him. The 180 shelters constructed by Contractor B were inspected, of which 40 roofs were found to be improperly built. These serious defects meant that unnecessary casualties could have occurred in the event of a bomb exploding near to one of the defective shelters. Contractor B admitted the deficiencies. He was instructed to remove the roofs of the defective shelters and rebuild them at his own expense (69). If this information had been made public at the time, it would probably have had a profound effect on the morale of the Borough's residents. No evidence has been found that Contractor B was prosecuted, unlike a builder in Plymouth who was sued by the City Council after the war and found guilty of constructing public air raid shelters that did not conform to the building regulations (70).

5.7 1939: School air raid shelters

Kingston had been designated a neutral area under the Government's evacuation scheme, as mentioned in chapter four. Kingston Council therefore had the responsibility to provide shelters for the Borough's Secondary schools pupils. On 12 June 1939, the joint ARP sub-committee and Local Education Authority members met and decided that shelters were to be provided for Kingston school children (71). Council school shelters did not qualify for a Government grant unless the shelter was available to the public after school hours. Kingston Council was slow in building its school shelters. No tender had been accepted by the Council for their construction until 7 July 1939. This late decision, two months before the outbreak of war, provoked a reaction from the *Surrey Comet* who proposed that Kingston School children should not return to school after the summer holiday until there was enough shelter accommodation for them (72). Kingston's private schools were excluded from any Government funding. Consequently the parents of students from these schools were asked for donations towards the construction of the school shelters. St Andrew's School, Surbiton, was closed when war was declared. When it reopened school attendances were reduced because parents had refused to send their children back to school because the shelters were flooded owing to the heavy rain (73). The air raids on Surbiton during 1940 had an immediate impact on school attendance. On the 27 August only

47 pupils out of a possible total of 177 attended Surbiton Church of England School for boys (74). This poor attendance continued until October 1940. During the daytime when an air raid warning sounded the boys were sent to the shelter. The school's log book at the time of the V1 attacks show that on the 3rd September 1944 the children were in the shelter from 10.30 am to 11.45 am and then again from 2.30 pm to 4 pm.

The pupils of Tolworth Central school spent long periods in the school shelters during September 1940 when the air raids began. On 13 September the air raid warning sounded at 9.40 am. The pupils and staff went to the shelters and remained there until 2 pm. They were then sent home. The staff waited but none of the children returned to school that day. Teachers and pupils became increasingly tired, having lost sleep owing to 57 consecutive nights of air raid warnings. In 1942, when the raids receded there were only two visits to the school shelters. During the period of the 1944 flying bomb attacks, the numbers attending Tolworth Central School for Girls fell dramatically. On one occasion there was only ten girls present at the school (75). When the girls did attend school and there was an air raid warning, lessons were held in the shelters (76).

5.8 1940: The Morrison Air Raid shelter

At the end of 1940 The Ministry of Home Security announced that an indoor shelter, named the Morrison shelter, had been produced and was available to the public. This new form of shelter was designed by Professor John Baker and his staff at the Research and Experimental Branch of the Ministry of Home Security. The shelter was issued free to people with a yearly income of £350 or less, who lived in a vulnerable area. The Morrison Shelter, shown on page 101, was constructed as a rectangular steel frame, fastened by bolts. The top of the shelter was made with thick steel plate. The bottom consisted of a steel mattress. The sides were fitted with wire mesh. The shelter could be used as a table in the daytime and as an enclosed bed for two people (77). There was a demand for the Morrison shelter from people who did not have an Anderson shelter, and by those who did not not want to leave their homes and had preferred to take cover under the stairs or table. Whatever its advantages, the Morrison shelter was limited in scope, it was unsuitable for buildings more than three storeys high because if the building was hit by a bomb the amount of debris that could fall on top of the shelter could impair rescue operations. Alan Davis of Tolworth, recalls that 'the family Morrison shelter was used as a table

Figure 8. A Morrison indoor shelter erected in the front room of a house. Showing space for two people to sleep.
Imperial War Museum .

that was covered with a large velvet type cloth with tassels hanging around the edges'. A Kingston woman remembers singing 'in a very quavery voice' to her son as they lay in the Morrison shelter. He complained 'Mummy stop singing, I can't hear the bombs'(78). At the end of 1941, Kingston ARP Committee reported that 74 percent of the town's residents were protected by domestic shelters. This included 4,600 Anderson shelters for the protection of 20,500 people,1090 Brick shelters that housed 5,000 people and 705 Morrison shelters for 2,500 people (79).

As mentioned in chapter two, not everyone used a shelter. Zena White and her family who lived near Kingston Gas Works used the downstairs larder as a shelter where they placed a mattress on the floor to rest on (80). Another Kingston resident, Harry Mills, preferred to sleep in his bed, while his wife spent the night in an outside shelter. He lashed lengths of timber reaching from the highest part of his iron bedstead to the foot of the bed in the belief that if the roof of his house collapsed due to a bomb when he was in bed, he would be protected (81).

5.9 1942: Deep bomb proof shelters

In late 1940 Surrey County Council decided to take over the responsibility of shelter work for the whole of the County. A report published in 1941 by Surrey County Council referred to the unsatisfactory situation of the damp Anderson shelters. The County proposed to the Ministry of Home Security that it should be allowed to replace the Anderson with other shelters, including an indoor shelter of Surrey Council's own design. No details of this new shelter have been discovered. Surrey County Council also submitted proposals, without naming specific places, for providing new domestic shelters for 75,000 people, but planned limited public shelter construction to protect 25,000 people (82).

The consequences of the intensive night raids of 1940-41 supported the argument for the provision of deep public bomb proof shelters. From 1940 people had taken to using many of the London Underground stations (83). The distinction between a bomb proof shelter and a shelter that only gave protection against blast and splinter is important to appreciate. Huge costs were involved in the construction of bomb proof shelters, but they offered greater enhanced safety and a social environment that improved morale (84). In 1938, Sir John Anderson, the Home Secretary when launching the Government's shelter programme referred to in section 5.4

of this chapter, stated that it was not considered practical to provide bomb proof shelters as a short term policy. This could suggest that, other than the high costs incurred in construction this form of shelter, if Britain went to war, the Government expected it to be a short conflict. No evidence has been found that plans had been made to provide deep bomb proof shelters for Kingston and its districts.

After the London Blitz and in anticipation of further intensive raids, ten emergency food centres were established and dispersed around the Kingston area. One kitchen was based at Tiffin Girl's School, Lower Richmond Road, which was organised to cater for 7,000 hot meals at short notice (85). This suggests the Ministry of Home Security was anticipating intense air raids in or close to the Kingston area. The Government was aware in 1941 there was an underlying public anxiety that if the raids were to recommence, another winter could not be endured with the type of air raid shelters that were available.

If more raids were experienced, the outcome could have been an increase in acute social problems, already evident by people trekking out to the countryside. If deep shelters had been available in 1941 to act as secure bases when Plymouth had experienced intense bombing, it is conceivable that the exodus of the thousands of people who had fled from the city each night might have been avoided or significantly reduced (86). The air raids of 1940-41 that had kept most people confined to a shelter overnight deprived them of sleep and gave a powerful argument for having dormitory bomb proof shelters. For this type of shelter, facilities were required that other shelters lacked. For example, canteen services, toilets, washing facilities and adequate ventilation. Provision would also had been needed for on site management for the shelter population. Extensive planning and high expenditure would have had to be considered by the Ministry of Home Security, and weighed against the possibility that the enemy may suddenly change its policy and carry out short night raids instead. The Government decided to construct a number of deep bomb proof shelters linked to existing London Underground tube stations. Each of these shelters accommodated 9,600 people. The first of these shelters was finished in March 1942 and the other shelters were completed later that year. The Government decided to keep these shelters in reserve pending an intensification of the bombing. Some deep shelters were allocated to essential Government departments (87). In spite of public pressure

that the shelters should be opened and used, they remained closed until 1944 when the V weapon attacks started. When the bomb proof shelters were opened to the public on 9 July 1944, entry was by admission ticket only. As public demand was not high, accommodation was offered to troops who were on leave. The shelters were also used by homeless people and squatters which was not the Government's original intention.

Many of the shelters used by German civilians in the Second World War were bomb and gas proof. The German definition of 'bomb proof' was a shelter that should be able to withstand bombs up to 1,000 kg calibre. This type of shelter was constructed before the outbreak of war in some north German cities. After the Battle of Britain and the decision not to invade England, plans were made to provide bomb proof shelters for all Germany's major cities. These shelters were large multi-storey tower constructions and were larger than those built in Britain. Thousands of tunnel shelters were also provided, as were concrete bunkers for those civilians whose premises had no basement (88).

The 1944 V1 attacks caused new demands for Morrison shelters. As there was uncertainty what the missile threat would entail, the Government decided to manufacture 100,000 Morrison shelters and to strengthen the public surface shelters (89). The Ministry of Supply asked the regional authorities to transfer their existing stocks of shelters to London. Plans were made to evacuate 100,000 civilians from London which included school children from Surbiton, described in chapter six. In 1944 Commissioner Admiral Evans recommended that London should be provided with extra public shelters, based on the belief that future raids would bring a greater demand for them than had previously been experienced. Surrey County Council believed that the chalk in the Surrey Downs was suitable for the construction of deep bomb-proof tunnel shelters that met the conditions laid down by the Ministry of Home Security. There are limited records available of the planning involved in Surrey's deep shelter programme. They involved the examination of five different sites to check if they were suitable for tunnelling. None of the sites were close to Kingston and its districts. Each tunnel would provide shelter for 1,500 people. One feature of the shelter design was that accommodation could be extended if needed, by tunnelling further into the hills. As public confidence in surface shelters continued to be undermined the construction of deep shelters went ahead. Surrey County Council built bomb-proof deep shelters with the verbal approval of Admiral Evans. A deep bomb proof shelter was constructed at Reigate, where the Borough Engineer reported that

the shelter was in great demand. At Guildford a deep bomb proof shelter for 1,000 people was constructed (90). David Farman, who lived close to the Epsom Downs deep shelter, would go with his family to this shelter and stay there overnight. Farman records that the shelter was dug out of the chalk. It had a ramped entrance and consisted of a grid of tunnels that was large enough to accommodate 1,000 people. Wire netting lined the tunnels to prevent pieces of chalk from falling onto the shelterers. There was no concrete lining or pit props. Farman wondered why his family used the deep shelter as there was an Anderson shelter in his parent's back garden. The Epsom Downs shelter would have been safer and larger than the family shelter and the presence of other people would have helped to maintain morale. David Farman records how people would walk up the road to the shelter carrying their bedding and ground sheets. They would enter the shelter, lay their bed out and prepare to stay the night (91).

5.9b Summary

Air raid shelters were a means of Civil Defence that overshadowed all others in importance (92). Evidence indicates that whatever shelter problems were presented to the local authorities, most people, if not all, living in Kingston and its districts were provided with some form of air raid shelter. The earliest public shelters provided for the three towns were trench shelters that were dug during September 1938 at the time of the Munich crisis. Trench shelters were the only form of shelter provided by the Government before the distribution of Anderson domestic shelters in 1939. Prior to the outbreak of war, because of the shortage of steel, public and small domestic brick shelters were built by all three local authorities. The original intention of the Government was for public shelters to be used for short periods, not for dormitory use. At the end of 1940 the Morrison indoor shelter became available to the householders of Kingston and its districts. The domestic shelters were free to families with a modest annual income.

Maintaining trench and Anderson shelters in good order was a major challenge for the three local councils as these shelters suffered dampness and tended to flood. Evidence from the local Civil Defence Committee minutes indicate rectifying shelter problems caused these local authorities considerable time and money. During the night long raids of 1940-1941, the public shelters of Kingston Council were supplied with heating and provided with bunk beds. At Surbiton it was discovered that some public shelters were defective because the builder had been negligent in constructing them. There was a significant change in Government policy when it

was agreed to provide deep bomb proof shelters. This form of shelter was constructed in the Surrey chalk hills, but they were too far away from Kingston and its districts to offer immediate protection for the residents of the three suburban towns. The types of shelters that were used at the time of the V weapon attacks of 1944-45 were, with the exception of the bomb proof shelters, the same type that were provided during the raids of 1940-41.

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Chapter Six

Kingston and districts civil defence capability 1939- 1945

The capabilities of the Civil Defence of Kingston, Surbiton and Malden during the Second World War are evaluated. The chapter begins with the declaration of war by the Prime Minister, Mr Neville Chamberlain and, concludes with the notice of disbandment of the Kingston Civil Defence. Reference is made to Kingston Civil Defence that was in a 'state of readiness' when war was declared. Some of the challenges of the ARP services of the three towns during the period referred to unofficially, as the 'phoney war' are appraised (1). An explanation is given of the rapid change in the conduct of the war resulting in the capitulation of France. This allowed the German Air Force to occupy airfields in northern France placing them within flying distance of Britain. The reason is given why, because of the grave military situation of the Nation that existed, the Regional Commissioners had special powers conferred on them. An evaluation is given of the performances of the local Civil Defences of the three towns during the raids of 1940-41. The text explains the use of roof- spotters at Kingston and the mobilisation of Fire Guards in the three towns. The chapter concludes by analysing some of the challenges of the Civil Defences concerning the missile attacks on the three towns. Table three summarises the number of air raid incidents, casualties and damage to property experienced by the three communities putting into perspective the challenges the local Civil Defencse had to contend with (2).

	Incidents	Deaths	Injured	Properties Demolished	and Damaged
Coombe and Malden	253	80	348	332	11,668
Kingston	31	74	463	260	13,694
Surbiton	198	51	336	223	10,054

Table Three. The number of incidents, casualties and destruction of properties caused by air and missile attacks on Kingston and its districts

Source: *Surrey at War* 1939-1945.

6.0 The declaration of War

The Prime Minister, Mr Neville Chamberlain announced on the radio at 11am on Sunday, 3rd September 1939, that Britain was at war with Germany. Within half an hour of the declaration air raid warnings sounded in Kingston and its districts. The warning was the first weapon of

Civil Defence. Its purpose was to save life by giving people time to seek shelter (3). Few people were out in Kingston on the day war was declared as it was Sunday. At St Matthew's Church, Surbiton, the warning disrupted morning service. As the congregation started to leave, they were turned back by an air raid warden (4). Eileen Malcolm, who lived in Tolworth, remembers that she was out walking with her brother by the River Hogsmill, unaware of the gravity of the situation. It was the air raid warning that made them hurry back home. Her mother who was frantic with worry, told them that the nation was at war (5). At Oxford, mentioned in chapter two, Mrs Bartlett and her family had sat by their wireless and listened to the Prime Minister's announcement and after he had finished speaking those in the room speculated what the war could mean to them (6). The air raid warning was a false alarm, but it probably had a special significance for the Kingston and district's ARP personnel on duty, as it could have been taken as a signal by them to expect the 'knock out blow' that the Government had predicted (7). According to the official history of *The Defence of the United Kingdom*, the anticipation of a devastating enemy air attack on London at the beginning of the war was speculation based on Air Ministry predictions (8).

The expected air onslaught had caused the Government to act quickly. It announced that all places of entertainment, including cinemas and football matches would be closed or cancelled as a precaution against the risk of large gatherings of people suffering casualties by bombing. Churches and public houses were allowed to remain open. After a short period of time, as nothing happened, the ban was lifted. In anticipating air raids on Kingston, letters were published in the *Surrey Comet* suggesting that 'all the public striking clocks in the town should be stopped'. Another letter recommended, 'that at night there should be as little noise as possible so as not to assist the enemy air crews overhead' (9). The German Air Force waited six weeks before dropping the first bomb on British soil during the Second World and eight months before attacking the civilian population (10). At Kingston part of the Civil Defence plan against the expected 'knockout blow' was that all the warden's posts would be fully manned 24 hours a day, but owing to the lack of wardens this policy was abandoned (11). The concern created by the expected air attack gave way to inactivity. The public accused the Government of having over reacted in its commitment to Civil Defence (12). A false optimism prevailed that was evident in Kingston, as crowds of people went shopping or visited the cinemas and the music hall. Furthermore, 10,000 non-residents had registered at Kingston for their weekly food

rations (13). Kingston's Mayor, Sir Edward Scarles, was conscious of the threat of gas attacks. When presiding over Kingston Police Court, Sir Edward asked all those present to wear their gas masks for five minutes in order to get used to them (14). Local public indignation continued about the state of Kingston's Civil Defence because of the financial cost of the service measured against the inactivity of the organisation. The lack of enemy activity over Britain in September 1939 resulted in the Government deciding that it was unnecessary to maintain the ARP services at their maximum strength and ordered a review of scaling down the paid ARP establishment (15). This decision meant that the ARP had to rely on more volunteers. The outcome of the Government's ARP review resulted in Kingston Council not being allowed to recruit any more paid wardens, although no Kingston warden was made redundant because the town's service was already under strength as referred to in chapter four.

The review resulted in Kingston's Fire Service being reduced by 65 percent of its full time AFS members, consequently the force was expected to rely on part time volunteers (16). Kingston's residents were unsympathetic to these Government cuts. Letters published in the *Surrey Comet* reinforced the public criticism of the amount of money being paid out for ARP and the lack of work for the Civil Defence personnel (17). The changes brought about by the ARP review also affected Kingston's rescue service. To overcome what could have been a problem of delays in rescue work, arrangements were made for Kingston wardens and the Women's Voluntary Services to deal with any first aid or rescue work before specialised units arrived at the scene of an incident. In the Autumn of 1939 the local factories who had their own ARP service were asked by Kingston Council to help reduce the problem of delay by agreeing to assist in any air raid incident that happened near their factory premises (18). Surbiton's Civil Defence had also been reorganised. One-half of the town's wardens posts were closed, only to be reopened in an emergency, the number of ambulances were reduced from twenty two to eleven and the number of cars available to transport minor casualties was cut from fifteen to eight.

6.1 1939-1940: The 'Phoney War' period

Air raid wardens had become unpopular with the public by upholding the law that the blackout should be strictly observed. However the lack of attention to the blackout resulted in a crowd of irate people that had gathered outside a shop in Kingston High Street during the hours of darkness, where the shop's front window was fully illuminated. The owner was a Kingston Council member who was not prosecuted (19).

Kingston's Civil Defence was in 'a state of readiness' at the beginning of the war. This was confirmed by an ARP exercise that had been held in December 1939 which was observed by the presence of the two London Region Commissioners. Their report stated that 'Kingston had got down to work and they are confident that the town's ARP will be able to give a very good account of itself' (20).

In December 1939, Surbiton's warden service was disrupted when four wardens were dismissed for refusing to man their post during their duty period. The wardens insisted that they would remain at home and report to their post only when the air raid warning sounded. This problem continued until January 1940 when 26 wardens resigned in support of the 'rebels'. The Home Office who had become involved in the issue, directed that wardens posts should always be manned. Consequently Surbiton's Chief warden dismissed the District warden, Deputy District warden and 53 other wardens. This decision meant that the Berrylands ARP sector was left with a temporary force of six wardens (21). Warden associated problems were not confined to Surbiton. At Esher during May 1940 the wardens had demanded an investigation into the state of their local Civil Defence. They complained that throughout the district there was a lack of equipment. It was reported that 95 wardens were without steel helmets and respirators. The men believed that the warden posts were a waste of money, as many of them had been condemned because of flooding (22).

A mood of complacency and scepticism about the war had spread throughout Britain, that had a disturbing effect on the Government's Civil Defence Committee, because it was essential that 'a state of war readiness' was maintained (23). During November 1939 Kingston residents were accused of becoming lax in maintaining their blackout, that led to threats by the Kingston magistrates to impose heavier fines (24). Early in 1940, recreational facilities were made available for Kingston's Civil Defence personnel. These included the free use of tennis courts, the local YMCA gymnasium and the town's swimming pool. Later a social club for wardens and the AFS was opened with the provision of a fully licensed bar and separate club rooms for men and women (25). Social activities organised by other Civil Defence Organisations were sometimes more ambitious than at Kingston. For example, the City of Gloucester wardens had organised a concert party, choral society and angling club (26).

Surbiton's Emergency Wartime Committee had been set up to monitor the town's Civil Defence, but the meetings were poorly attended, because the members had so many other

committees to attend . Councillor Bradley, a Surbiton Councillor, proposed that the Emergency Committee should be suspended, and its agenda incorporated with that of another Council Committee (27). This was not in accordance with the Home Office Order, which stated that locally appointed war emergency committees should independently monitor the actions of their Council's Civil Defence, referred to in chapter four. During this early period of the war, Surbiton Town Council continued its policy of sex discrimination. For example, the men of Surbiton's Ambulance Service had been granted a one hour lunch break, the women were allowed half an hour. The Council also decided women were not entitled to act as warden section leaders (28). This was a continuation of a Surbiton's Council policy that can be traced back to 1934 when, according to Richard Statham, the Council had debated whether women should be banned from certain jobs as Council employees. One Surbiton Councillor had then proposed that women should be completely barred from all Council employment (29).

During 1940 Surbiton's Chief Air Raid Warden reported to the town's ARP Committee details of a Home Security communication relating to air raid warden's posts. The Minister had received representations about the unsatisfactory conditions which prevailed when Surbiton's wardens in some areas of the town were called upon to undertake stand-by duty. The report explained that warden posts were not designed to accommodate wardens on continuous stand-by duty, but were to be used primarily as a protected assembly point for wardens during an air raid. The Minister indicated that it might be more satisfactory for wardens to be accommodated in a wardens group centre, where sleeping and canteen facilities can be provided. This proposal was take up by Surbiton's Chief Warden, who suggested eight group centres could be provided, consisting of huts sited near to the existing warden posts to avoid extra telephones being installed. If the scheme had been approved the wardens posts would not have needed to be manned continuously. There is a suggestion in this report of a link between this proposed scheme and the challenge made by the Surbiton air raid wardens described in section 6.1 of this chapter.

On 10 April 1940 the Malden wardens service was inspected by a regional officer. His report described the organisation of the warden service, and that periodic inspections of the warden posts were carried out by three district wardens. Malden's Chief W No mention is made by the authors of the book reviews that the reason for Government's policy of providing shelters was also to maintain civilian morale, or if any shelters were used as dormitories. No evidence is given in the books reviewed as to whether the morale of the local civilian population was monitored.
arden, assisted by seven instructors, were responsible for training (30). Because of a shortage of steel, Malden in common with Surbiton had problems of providing enough Anderson shelters for the householders. Malden's Borough Engineer reported that 25 applications for shelters

had already been received and continued to be received at the rate of 50 a day. It is suggested that the increase in shelter applications at this period time could have been due to the nervousness of residents who expected air raids on the town in the near future, as the German Army was advancing in northern France. In an attempt to resolve the shortage of shelters, Malden Council decided to build brick shelters, referred to in chapter five (31).

6.2 1940: The change in the conduct of the war

In the spring of 1940, the consequences of the invasion of France by the German Army was the evacuation of British troops from Dunkirk followed by the defeat of France. This completely changed the British public attitude to the war. Britain prepared for an expected invasion. The threat commenced with the Battle of Britain. The deteriorating military situation resulted in the Government introducing Defence Regulation 29, that gave the Regional Commissioners special powers referred to in chapter four, empowering them to take up their political responsibilities. Regional Commissioners were also given complete control in their region to direct Civil Defence operations (32). In 1940, there was an important change in the Civil Defence by the reorganisation and increase in status of the Ministry of Home Security, by the appointment of a Joint Parliamentary Secretary (33). Air raids became persistent as the enemy switched from attacking shipping and coastal areas to inland targets, culminating in 'The Battle of Britain', which took place between July-October 1940. London experienced its first air raid on the 24th August 1940 (34). Malden, Surbiton and Kingston were attacked in late August and subsequently intermittently bombed up to May 1941 (35).

6.3 The 1940 Surbiton Air Raids

In June 1940 Surbiton's Civil Defence had undergone a reorganisation as a result of its recent internal problems referred to in this chapter. There had been complaints by Surbiton residents of the inadequacy of the direction signs showing the way to public shelters, This could have been an indication of local public concern regarding the possibility of air raids in the district. During August, Surbiton wardens had experienced difficulties when dealing with people who brought their dogs, prams and bicycles into the public shelters (36). The first air raid on Surbiton occurred on 27 August 1940, when two bombs were dropped in the area of Chessington, there were no casualties. The main target of the enemy attack on Tolworth on 2 September 1940 was the Nash and Thompson arms factory, near Tolworth Girls School. Mrs Phillips, recalls that, as a schoolgirl, she was living in a flat at Tolworth with her parents and

three sisters, 'She used to wonder when she was at school if her home was still in one piece and if her mum was all right'. On 28 September 1940, Mrs Phillips was with her family in their Anderson shelter when a bomb demolished their home. The council found temporary furnished accommodation for them at Surbiton. Mrs Philips records 'what a posh house it was to us, we were half afraid to touch anything'. The family would spend their nights in a public shelter in a recreation ground (37). On 2 October 1940, St Mark's Church, Surbiton, was destroyed by fire, caused by an oil bomb. The wardens were first to arrive at the scene of the incident but were unable to prevent the flames from engulfing the Church (38).

The extensive bombing of London resulted in Surbiton's Fire Brigade being called out to places outside the Borough. On 7 September 1940, London Region ordered Surbiton's fire brigade to send five pumps to Mitcham, Surrey. The following night relief crews from Surbiton were sent to West Ham and two pumps were sent to Esher. On 9 September Surbiton experienced numerous incidents involving the fire brigade, as shown on page 118. None of the fires could be considered as major blazes, but it indicates how a constant demand could be made on a fire service over a short period of time (39). The Ministry of Home Security discovered that Surbiton Council used 51,769 sandbags other than for their intended ARP use. The Ministry asked the Council to arrange for the repayment of the cost of the sandbags that were normally supplied free of charge. Letters were received by Surbiton Council which praised the local Civil Defence service. For example, Mr Harris, of Guildford Villas, wrote to Surbiton council, 'I would like to take this opportunity of thanking all who so promptly helped to rescue myself and family together with my unfortunate neighbours, from the ruins of our bombed homes. By your promptness and courage under trying weather conditions, more loss of life or serious injuries have been averted'(40).

6.4 Roof Spotters

On 31 May 1940 the use of roof spotters was discussed at a Group 9 Civil Defence conference at Surrey County Hall, Kingston, where the subject was considered under the subject of 'lookouts'. The Conference proposed that vantage points for 'lookouts' similar to the one that was already on the roof of County Hall, should be established throughout Group 9 of the London Region and equipped with some method of sending visual signals, no more than two miles apart (41). In September 1940 Government leaflets had been distributed asking employers and their

A DIARY OF WARTIME INCIDENTS

17.09 hrs Air raid Warning received

Incident	Time Called	Place	Damage
1	17.30	Kingston by pass	Watchman's hut on fire
2	17.45	46 Knollmead	Gas ignited crater
3	17.52	6 The Byeways	Roof Fire
4	17.56	46 Alpine Avenue	Sheds Burning
5	18.00	Surbiton Hill Avenue	Grass Fire
6	18.02	42 Pembroke Avenue	Roof Fire
7	18.05	1 Pembroke Avenue	Shed on Fire
8	18.07	232 Raeburn Avenue	Roof and Bedroom Fire
9	18.20	18 Meadway	Roof and Stairs fire
10	18.23	215 Raeburn Avenue	Roof fire
11	18.25	Fox and Nicolls	Oil bomb-Damage to road
12	18.31	120 Surbiton Road	Shed Fire
13	18.31	118 Surbiton Road	Shed Fire
14	18.40	152 Surbiton Road	Fire in Larder
15	18.40	Shops in Chiltern Drive	Roof Fire
16	19.10	42 Pine Walk	Fence
17	19.12	116 Surbiton Hill Park	Fence
18	—	9 Rose Walk	Roof Fire
19	—	172 Raeburn Avenue	Roof Fire
20	—	53 Vincent Avenue	Roof Fire
21	22.24	46 Knoll Mead	Fractured gas main light
22	23.00	Assistance sent to Esher	

Figure 9: Fire incidents dealt with by Surbiton Fire Brigade and AFS on Monday 9 September 1940. Copied from an official report of the Chief Officer of Surbiton Fire Brigade.

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employees to carry on working after an air raid warning had been sounded, explaining that arrangements would be worked out for an industrial warning system using roof spotters. These were men trained in aircraft recognition as distinct from the Observer Corps. This warning scheme that was used at Kingston had started at the time of the Battle of Britain. The system provided information that had been transmitted to the spotters from Kent to Hawker's factory that indicated the direction and distance of any enemy aircraft approaching Kingston. A signal was transmitted to Kingston when enemy aircraft approached within forty miles of the town. Roof spotters were part of Civil Defence, but were separate from the official activities of the Ministry of Home Security. Terence O'Brien states, 'roof spotters were a warning system within the public one, that was used to signal imminent danger of approaching enemy aircraft' (42). According to Helen Jones, author of *British Civilians in the Front Line*, Edward Griffiths, a solicitor, unfit for military service, was employed by Hawker Aircraft, Kingston, to run their scheme that included three other roof spotters. At Hawker's, a chequered barrel was hoisted on top of a mast on the factory roof to indicate the presence of enemy aircraft was imminent. The Aircraft Factory agreed to adapt their system and co-operated with Kingston ARP, the Chamber of Commerce and Kingston Hospital so that when a 'Hawker' spotter gave a signal to take cover, a chequered board would also be shown on the roof of Kingston Guildhall and Kingston Hospital (43). In *Oxfordshire at War*, the author refers to the city of Oxford use of spotters 'as it was determined that students should proceed with their studies whenever possible' (44).

6.5 The Kingston Air Raids

Kingston experienced 31 air raids, sometimes when Surbiton was being attacked. According to Mr Forsdike, the Kingston ARP Controller, the scale of these raids appeared to be similar, that is, a moderate fall of high explosive and incendiary bombs. On the 24th August 1940, the first day of the Battle of Britain, RAF fighter aircraft broke up an approaching enemy bomber force that had been sent to attack the Hawker Aircraft Factory at Kingston (45). This was the night that the town experienced its first raid, when bombs fell on Eden Street and Clarence Street. A bomb penetrated Bentalls store that ploughed through to the third floor and exploded in the piano department destroying the entire stock of pianos (46). Kingston's Town Clerk in his

report to the Town Council stated that during the raids on Kingston, the ARP service was well organised and quick to respond (47). Kingston residents were unhappy when it was revealed that in September 1940, the staff at Surrey County Hall had been evacuated to Guildford. The announcement could not have been made at a worse time to maintain morale. The local residents who voiced their opinion in the *Surrey Comet* were unconvinced by the explanations given for this exodus (48).

On the night of 2 October 1940 a large number of incendiary bombs were dropped on Kingston that were quickly and effectively dealt with by the Fire Brigade, wardens and local residents, this was an example of shared dangers (49). The Town Clerk report of the 10 October 1940 states that the Kingston's rescue services 'showed up very well' when a bomb exploded on the roadway, fracturing two high pressure water mains causing considerable flooding in the vicinity, which resulted in a large number of people having to be evacuated from their homes. A rest centre was provided by Kingston Council, and arrangements were made to feed them and to make them comfortable (50). The air raid on Kingston on 12 November 1940 demolished a number of houses in a residential area. The incident started a number of fires that were soon under control. The Town Clerk reported that the situation was so serious that three rescue parties were quickly on the scene. Suspected unexploded bombs resulted in local residents having to be evacuated from their homes, as a search for the exact location of the bombs could not start until daylight. The people were cared for by members of the WVS. The Civil Defence continued its duty into the aftermath of the raid by searching for missing people, while the fire fighters dampened down the smouldering embers.

Civil Defence action in Kingston was not always confined to the ARP services. Troops from Kingston Barracks were called out to assist in clearing the town's streets of debris and rubble. During the air raid on the 29 December 1940, the Rev Wellesly Or rendered valuable assistance in the evacuation of casualties, for which he was awarded the MBE ,with reference to this raid, the Town Clerk reported 'all officers, men and women of Kingston's Civil Defence carried out their duties satisfactorily, time spent training and organising had been worth while'(51). This was a vindication of Kingston's Civil Defence competence and a refutation of the public criticism that the ARP service had earlier endured. The Town Clerk's report of the October-November raids again praises the stirrup pump parties and the public for the effective manner

in which they dealt with the incendiary bombs (52). The experience of shared dangers, according to Professor Titmuss, was a feature of Civil Defence during the air raids during Second World War (53). For people out on a street during a raid there was always the risk of being injured or killed, not only by a bomb but by shrapnel from anti-aircraft shells. Greta Fiasco of Kingston records 'when I was in the shelter I could hear the shell shrapnel hitting the concrete path' (54). At the end of November 1940, Kingston's Town Clerk reported that an increasing number of incendiary bombs were dropped on the town on consecutive nights. He suggested in his report the enemy may have attempted to create an incendiary field in order to start a major conflagration (55). The Kingston impromptu street fire fighting parties referred to above, could be considered as the forerunners of the Fire Guards that the Government later introduced as compulsory fire watching parties, referred to in section 6.7 of this chapter (56). The morale of the Kingston's Civil Defence workers would have been raised by the tributes published in the *Surrey Comet* regarding the performance of the town's ARP at the time of the 1940-41 air raids. There is every reason to suggest a bond had been created between the local community and the Civil Defence that previously did not exist. The public shelter Christmas parties mentioned in chapter five were an indication that Kingston's morale was good. The air raids at this period of time had resulted in an increasing number of people using the public shelters at night. The raids had also increased the application by local residents for domestic shelters by nearly 30 per cent. As the night raids escalated, the number of filmgoers nation-wide also rose, but not at Kingston where audiences fell. No explanation has been found for this apparent anomaly, but the decline in attendance may have been caused by the difficulties experienced when travelling into Kingston, as the raids could have disrupted the public transport services.

6.6 Air Raids on Malden

Malden experienced more air raids than the combined air attacks on Kingston and Surbiton, as shown in table three. It is suggested the reason could have been the main line railway route and the important branch line from Malden to Kingston. The pattern of bombing over Malden, particularly in the area close to Malden railway station and the branch line to Kingston is shown in figure ten, see overleaf. Early on the evening of 16 August 1940 the first and heaviest raid

Figure 10 : A map of Coombe and New Malden showing where the high explosive bombs fell during 1940-41. Note the concentration of bombs that were dropped in the area of the main line and the railway junction.

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experienced on Malden occurred. The enemy aircraft appeared before the public air raid warning was given, resulting in 39 people being killed and many others injured, as well as a considerable amount of damage to property. There was also widespread destruction and considerable disruption in the area around the station (57). Eddie Gardner worked at the Veneer Time Switch Company, Malden. He recalls the staff being alerted by the factory spotters. When the enemy aircraft approached the area, the spotters sounded a series of short sharp blasts on a klaxon and everybody went down to their allotted shelter as quickly as possible. The factory staff were in the shelters for a very long time. The Malden ARP casualty and rescue services were reported to have been outstanding. There were examples of bravery by the wardens resulting in the George Medal and British Empire Medal being awarded to two of them. A Home Intelligence report praised the Malden wardens who visited the shelters to see how the people were coping (58). On October 1940 there was another damaging raid on the town. Air raids on Malden are also discussed in chapter seven, when the emphasis is placed on the state of the residents morale in the aftermath of the raids. There had been an improvement in the provision of air raid shelters at Malden, as the Council had built domestic brick shelters referred to in chapter 5. Furthermore, 1,000 Anderson shelters in the Borough had been concreted to prevent them from becoming damp, while 266 semi sunk shelters had been waterproofed (59).

6.7 1941: The formation of Fire Guard teams

In January 1941 Kingston Council became involved in forward planning for the Civil Defence of the town. The basis of the plan was taken from a report of a meeting held by Surrey's Eastern Emergency Committee of Civil Defence (60). This had revealed the appalling conditions experienced in the provinces after the concentrated air attacks, in particular the devastation of Coventry on 14 November 1940. The Emergency Committee was told that it was the belief of the experts that at some time in the future increased bomb loads would be dropped with a higher proportion being incendiary devices. The consequences predicted were heavy casualties, failure in communications, and fires of such magnitude that they would impede the movement of traffic. The evacuation of civilians would therefore be necessary. A concern of the Eastern Emergency Committee was the possible fate of certain unnamed Surrey communities on the fringe of London. Information was presented that the combined population of these three Surrey places close to London, was identical to the population of Coventry.

Within four hours on the night of the raid on Coventry, large numbers of people had been made homeless. It was suggested in the report that the unnamed Surrey communities in an intensive raid might suffer the same consequences. Furthermore, the combined acreage of these three Surrey places was half that of Coventry, but the density of these Surrey communities was twice that of the Midland city. Using this data, the report indicated it was imperative that the County ARP Officers and Ministry officials should meet with the object of forming a plan of action to co-ordinate all local Civil Defence services in the event of a serious emergency (61). In March 1941, the report of the Eastern Emergency Committee to prepare for an intensive fire raid was taken up by Kingston Council, when they discussed emergency arrangements in the event of Kingston being severely bombed. This was a more detailed plan than the food emergency stores referred to in chapter five of this thesis. Kingston Council intended to use local public and private catering companies that included factory canteens and clubs to provide emergency feeding for 7,000 people. Kingston cinemas and public halls were earmarked as places of temporary accommodation for homeless people (62). Had these emergency preparations been properly planned? Many of the proposed Kingston refuge centres, for example, the cinemas, that were earmarked as rest centres were sited close to what could have been the enemy's main target areas, the Hawker Aircraft factory or the residential area of the town.

The intensive fire raids on Britain during the Spring of 1941 resulted in the War Cabinet introducing compulsory Civil Defence duties (63). A Government decision was made that persons performing fire prevention duties should be known as 'Fire Guards' and would wear an armband bearing that title (64). At first the 'Fire Guard' policy proved unsatisfactory. The supervision of fire parties lacked uniformity as some were organised by the Warden Service, others by the local fire brigade (65). The poor organisation is described by Mrs Gardner of Tolworth who volunteered as a Fire Guard. She was given training, but the system was abolished because so many people failed to report for duty (66). In August 1941 major changes occurred in the organisation of fire fighting with the establishment of the National Fire Service and the consolidation of the Fire Guard scheme (67). The Ministry of Home Security issued an order that Civil Defence units were to reorganise their service to counter the fire raids (68). Local fire prevention schemes were now organised in a manner that paid no attention to local boundaries. These changes within the London Regional Organisation that included Kingston and its districts meant that local civil defence services became interchangeable.

Kingston's Civil Defence had been presented with a new challenge, when as previously mentioned in this thesis, it had been alerted to the enemy's fire raising tactics. Early in September 1941 legislation was introduced with the compulsory registration of all people between the ages of 18-60 as a way to organise an effective fire fighting force for each community. Kingston's Town Clerk records state that a large number of people who had registered in the Borough had claimed exemption from enrolment on statutory grounds. As a consequences there were only 300 people available for fire duty, other than the volunteer fire watchers (69). The failure to recruit Fire Guards raises the questions as to whether or not Kingston Council had failed in its leadership, by not warning its residents sufficiently about the the fire threat to the town, or people did not accept that being a Fire Guard was their responsibility? It is suggested that the latter reason was probably the answer as this problem was not unique to Kingston. Attempts to create a Fire Guard force in the City of Gloucester, was according to H. Larcombe, the city's wartime information officer 'an impossible task'. Tremendous efforts had been made to recruit Gloucester people into forming a fire fighting force, 'but there was no desire by the citizens to serve and for some reason the co-operation of the wardens service was lacking in the city'(70).

The Government's policy of increasing the capability of fire fighting, was evident in Malden where the Civil Defence Committee appointed a Fire Guard Staff Officer. Consequently hundreds of Fire Guard parties were formed, which were issued with stirrup pumps. On 14 May 1941 Malden's Chief Fire Officer gave details of the new Fire Guard Scheme to his ARP Committee, that included the following information 6,297 residents of Coombe and Malden had been registered as Fire Guards and 766 Fire Guard parties had been organised in the Borough (71). Kingston had by the end of 1941 improved its Fire Guard Scheme, as compulsory training had been introduced resulting in 8,500 residents attending courses on fire fighting (72). In 1943 the records of the Kingston Air Raid Precautions Committee record that the Borough had been divided into 73 Fire Guard Sectors, each sector covered an area of 4-5 roads. Kingston Fire Brigade was allowed to increase its full time establishment by 25 percent, as the Ministry of Home Security had conceded that the town's Fire Brigade was undermanned, the reason for which is described in chapter two. As the threat of fire raids increased, the possibility of gas attacks on Britain subsided. There were local authorities who had been lax in maintaining their anti-gas measures. For example, Surbiton's Chief Warden reported to the Civil Defence Committee in March 1941 that the town's Civil Defence would be severely limited in the event of a gas attack as there were insufficient gas masks for the wardens and only 273 sets of anti-gas clothing available. This shortage of protective gas clothing suggests the wardens efficiency would have been undermined if a gas attack had occurred (73).

During 1942 there there had been a lull in enemy activity over the Kingston area. During these quieter periods on the Home Front the Civil Defence was still required to maintained a 24 hour vigilance. Kingston wardens spent their time assisting in salvage collection and being trained in first aid and rescue work. Compared with the situation one year previously there were now more public shelters at Kingston. A management committee had been formed to provide shelter catering facilities. The Fairfield shelter residents had organised a canteen that was overseen by shelter marshals. At a public shelter in Canbury Park Road, Kingston, a family with 3 children had been living there for two weeks before they were discovered by the local authority. On 23 February 1943 the pause in enemy activity over the Surbiton area was broken when an enemy force dropped 580 incendiary bombs on the town that caused 37 fires to private property (74). By September 1943, the absence of enemy activity resulted in instructions by the Region to reduce the number of (paid) whole time wardens from 60 to 38 at Kingston, and that it would be necessary to close half of the 16 posts. The Chief Warden hoped that the Housewives Service would assist in keeping these posts open. From January 1944-June 1944 the enemy began a bombing campaign, 'Operation Steinbeck', in retaliation for the allied air raids on Germany. The main target was London although many provincial cities and towns were attacked. Bombs were dropped on Wimbledon and other areas of Surrey. There are no reports discovered that Kingston, Surbiton and Malden had been raided.

6.8 1944-1945 : The missile attacks

From 1943 to the summer of 1944 there had been a reduction in the number of air raids on London and Surrey. People who had hoped life would be become more tolerable were falsely optimistic. Evidence had been mounting from RAF reconnaissance photography that the enemy had developed a long range rocket (V2) as a weapon of war. Soon after this discovery, launching platforms for another type of unmanned weapon (V1) were identified in northern France. This attracted the attention of the Cabinet's Crossbow Committee as aerial photographs suggested that the enemy could use these platforms to launch explosive missiles against England (75). Soon after D Day (6 June 1944) there were numerous air raid warnings in southern England culminating on the 13 June by the arrival of the first V1 missile attack on England. The attacks had not taken the Civil Defence by surprise (76). The subsequent VI bombardment caused disruption in industrial production and sent people who were out in the streets to seek shelter whenever a missile was seen or heard flying towards their area.

On the 17 June 1944, a V1 completely destroyed a row of houses at Tolworth Park Road, Surbiton, and twelve people lost their lives. Figure 11, overleaf, depicts members of a Surbiton heavy rescue squad that was searching the mass of rubble of one of the demolished houses. One effect of the V1 attacks was the significant decline in school attendance. At St Andrews School, Surbiton, this had fallen to 23 per cent. As the attacks continued, attendance's fell to eleven percent. The pupils spent most of their day in an air raid shelter (77). The pattern of V1 attacks compelled the Government to change its designated evacuation areas. School children from Kingston and its districts were allowed to be evacuated under the official Government scheme. Surbiton Council was given so short notice by the Ministry of Health to arrange the departure of the town's children. that no official printed stationery was available. The Surbiton Evacuation Officer gives a brief insight how residents were living at the time of the V1 attacks,'to ascertain those wishing to be evacuated, I was required to visit air raid shelters, as most people were living in shelters of some kind'. Over 9,000 residents including 1,178 school children were evacuated from Surbiton (78). Patricia Whitewall records 'My Mother did not want me to be evacuated. When my school mates returned from being evacuated they came back with Welsh accents, those who were sent to Leigh came back speaking with a Lancashire accent' (79). The force of an exploding missile caused more destruction to houses than the same weight of a conventional bomb (80). The picture on page 129 indicated the extent of the damage caused by a VI missile that exploded on I July 1944 at Wilson Road, Chessington.

How did the V1 missile attacks on the Kingston area affect the local Civil Defence as compared with the conventional air raids? The almost continuous V1 bombardment alert meant the constant manning of civil defence warden's posts that resulted in a lack of rest for ARP personnel. There were times in Surbiton when the siren sounding every 20 minutes, the residents lived in a perpetual state of 'Alert'(81). To counter this form of attack the Civil Defence tactics were changed. More roof-spotters were used, who could recognise and locate the direction in which a V1 was flying. Civil Defence flying columns were formed that were quickly directed to the reported incident. As a V1 incident was isolated, it was easier to identify the site of an exploded missile, that was distinct from the mayhem caused by a clusters of bombs that had been dropped in sequence. Mr Lulham, a carpenter, describes the flight of flying bombs over Kingston, 'they did not seem to fly very high, they looked quite innocent floating along, all of a sudden the noise would stop, then a terrific bang'(82).

Figure 11 : A heavy rescue squad, denoted by their steel helmets at the site of a house that had been destroyed by a V1 at Tolworth Park Road, Tolworth on 17 June 1944. Twelve people were killed. .

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Figure 12: The destruction of houses caused by a V1 at Wilson Road, Chesington on 1 July 1944. The Anderson shelter in the background appears to be intact.

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At the sound of an explosion in the area of Kingston, it was an established procedure for Kingston's Civil Defence immediately to send out a reconnaissance unit consisting of a light rescue party, an ambulance and a car with instructions to report back to the control centre if no evidence of damage had been found. The number of V1 incidents occurring in Kingston and its districts in the period of the last six months of 1944 were Kingston 8, Malden and Coombe 21 and Surbiton 22 Indicating that Kingston suffered less V1 attacks than that experienced by the other two communities (83).

Details of the V1 attacks were withheld from the public at the time because of the intelligence value to the enemy of knowing where the incidents occurred. Later it was revealed that the casualties were not as high as had been expected, but the damage to houses was considerable. Mrs Doreen Compton wrote to her brother, 'We have escaped so far in Surbiton north, but the devastation in Surbiton south is terrible, whole streets are laid flat by blast. We live in a perpetual state of alerts, when a doodle bug's (V1) engine stops it gave one a horrid feeling inside, even the toughest of us'(84). This letter is more than a statistical record, it reveals the inner state of spontaneous human emotions in the presence of a weapon that could be about to descend and explode, possibly kill. Whatever destruction had been caused at Surbiton, there still remained the countryside that had escaped the pre-war housing developers referred to in chapter one. At Ditton Hill Farm, Mr Broom continued to go out in the fields of his 130 acres of land to shoot a rabbit (85).

The V1 attacks over England eventually receded because their launching sites had been destroyed or captured by Allied forces. Any relief felt by civilians that missile attacks were no longer a threat was shattered by the start of the long range rocket attacks (V2) that followed. The V2 was a large cylindrical missile that carried a ton of explosives. The rocket was fired vertically from a portable platform, allowing the rocket launching site to be moved as often as desired. The menace of the V2 was more serious than that of a V1 because of its tremendous speed and therefore there was no warning to the civilian population of an impending attack. The detonation of a rocket resulted in a violent explosion causing devastation around the point of impact. The Civil Defence was able to meet the demands of a V2 attack because, despite the absence of any warning, the consequences of a V2 rocket attack were very little different from that of a V1 explosion. The rocket was the last aerial weapon to be used against the civilian population of Britain and the final challenge for Kingston's Civil Defence. There were no V2

incidents in Malden or Surbiton. During the afternoon of the 22 January 1945, Kingston experienced its only V2 attack, when a rocket exploded among houses on the north side of New Road at the junction of Park Road. The impact caused a crater 40 feet wide and 20 feet deep. The blast demolished 40 houses and damaged 600 other properties. Three people were killed and 58 required hospital treatment, and there were also a number of casualties who were treated for minor injuries. As two people were reported missing, a search was carried out using listening equipment and search dogs, and the devastated scene was floodlit as there were no enemy aircraft overhead (86). An Incident Inquiry Point, that needed staff with special training in working with the public, was set up close to the site of the V2 incident. The attempt to rescue people at Park Road was interrupted by tragedy when soldiers from Kingston Barracks, who were helping to dig out people buried under the debris, were killed when a wall collapsed and fell on them. Mrs Hilliard who lived in Kingston, worked as a welder at Molesey. She recalled the rocket exploding, 'it shook our place at Molesey'. Someone had told her that a rocket had dropped at Park Road, Kingston, the street where she lived and had left her daughter. She ran from Orchard Road to Molesey Police Station to catch a bus. As Park Road had been closed she used the side roads to reach her home. When she saw all the damage, she recorded that 'she nearly died'. Her daughter's school had not been affected but she feared the worst because of the extensive destruction that had occurred. She describes how 'as she turned to go, her daughter came dancing down the road with an orange in her hand'. Her mother's immediate reaction was 'I could have killed her' (87).

The performance by Kingston's Civil Defence in dealing with the missile attacks were highly commended by a report published in the *Surrey Comet* that stated 'with memories of the bombing blitzes well behind, it would not have been a surprise if the Civil Defence services had been a little stale or out of practice when the 'flying bombs' occurred, but they worked with a smoothness and efficiency which was remarkable, they were well trained and quick on the job'(88). The Kingston ARP Controller also praised the way the Civil Defence workers carried out their duties with speed when the incidents were located. As the war was ending, the threat of air attacks had passed. Kingston's Civil Defence Committee met and discussed the steps that were necessary to disband the town's Civil Defence. The Town Clerk reported he had received a communication from the Ministry of Home Security concerning the steps that would be needed to be taken when the Government decided that the Civil Defence was no longer needed for the purpose of war. The appointed day of 'Disbandment' was 2 May 1945. From this date two months notice was given to all members of the service who were in whole-time service to enable them to seek other work (89).

6.9 Summary

This chapter evaluates the capability of the Civil Defence of Kingston, Surbiton and Malden during the Second World War. Examples are given of the challenges experienced by the local Civil Defence services, before the commencement of the air raids on the towns. For example, the Government's reduction in ARP services. Reference is made to the performance of Kingston Civil Defence during the air raids on the towns between 1940-41. Particular reference is made to the devastating raid on Malden that took place on the 16 August 1940 and the response of the air raid wardens in maintaining civilian morale. The involvement of the Civil Defence during the 1944 V1 weapon attacks on the three towns and the V2 rocket attack in north-west Kingston are evaluated. From the analysis of the evidence available, the performance achieved by the Civil Defence reflected the dedication of the personnel, often working in difficult circumstances and the excellence of training they had received. The accomplishment of these services when under enemy attack, dispelled earlier public criticism of the value of Air Raid Precautions to the community.

Chapter Six
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Chapter Seven

Civilian Morale

The Government attached great importance to the state of civilian morale on the Home Front during the Second World War (1). Civilian morale is evaluated in this chapter up to the period of 1942, when there was a significant reduction in air raids and the war began to favour the Allies. The *status quo* was interrupted in January 1944 when the enemy launched operation Steinbeck, with London being the main target. This was followed In June 1944 by the missile bombardment of London and southern England, that included attacks on Kingston, Surbiton and Malden. The impact that these new weapons of war had on civilian morale is referred to at the end of this chapter. The chapter offers an explanation of morale in the opinion of a physician, and the official historian of Civil Defence. Predictions of what the impact air raids may have on civilian morale is analysed within the context of ARP planning between the wars. Reporting wartime civilian morale by Mass Observation and Home Intelligence personnel are evaluated. The state of morale in Surbiton and Malden after the towns experienced raids is analysed.

7.0 Defining morale

Captain Basil Liddell Hart was acknowledged by Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery as the leading British military strategist of his time (2). Liddell Hart stated that 'all nations at war depend on the morale of its citizens, if this is broken the resistance of its army will also crumble as an inevitable sequel'(3). Morale is a term susceptible to a range of meanings, as the definition of the word appears to vary with time. One concept of morale was expressed by Dr Stephen Taylor, a physician who had trained at the Maudsley Hospital and was during the Second World War, Director of the Intelligence Division for the Ministry of Information. In his opinion 'morale must be ultimately measured not by what a person thinks, but what he does and how he does it, morale is the state of conduct and behaviour of an individual or group'(4). Terence O'Brien, compared civilian morale to the spirit of troops. He argued that for the first time in Britain, civilians were in the front line, and that civilians should properly be called troops'. O'Brien indicated that it is important to distinguish these troops from the traditional armed services. According to O'Brien' civilians were fighting to defend their home but were at the disadvantage of not being armed' (5). O'Brien could only have had in mind the Civil Defence, as he does not refer to the civilian armed force of the Home Guard. The concept of

civil defence workers being endowed with the resilience of troops was officially recognised by the Government, who awarded members of the Civil Defence the Defence Medal for services they rendered during the war (6). Professor Titmuss dismisses the prewar accusations of the lack of resilience in the British people. He stated that in his research that 'it was difficult to find any reference to even a hint ot the fear of a possible collapse in civilian morale' (7). Professor Marwick in his study of the Home Front quoted the political scientist, Harold Laski , 'the people are superb, they know all they suffered, yet they took it with a calm and strength I dare not try to put into words'(8). Sir Harold Scott, a member of London's Civil Defence Administration, who visited the East End of London with Winston Churchill the day after it had experienced a terrible night of bombing, expected to be confronted with panic and bitterness, but found nothing of the kind (9). An important indicator of the state of civilian morale in England prior to the outbreak of the war was the Government's evacuation scheme which was carried out in an orderly manner (10). However, the revisionist historian Angus Calder maintained there was panic and defeatism after the major air raid on Coventry that occurred on 14 November 1940 (11).

It is evident from the differences of opinions of historians that the nature of morale was not clearly understood and is used as a problematic conceptual tool. This problem of defining morale was widespread and is illustrated by the fact that officials in Government ministries were unsure how to report, analyse and deal with morale in a useful way (12). Tom Harrisson, co-founder of Mass Observation, refers to his uncertainty regarding the terms of reference and terminology of the subject, and asked 'what are we trying to measure and how were we to do it ?'(13) .

7.1 Considerations of morale in the planning of ARP

In 1924, the Air Raid Precaution Sub-Committee of Imperial Defence (CID), announced that 'the morale effect of air attack is out of all proportion to the material effect'(14). In the same year, Sir Maurice Hankey, Secretary of the CID, questioned the preparedness of the public to withstand air raids. Hankey's speculation marked the beginning of the Government's fear that civilian morale might break. This concern was fuelled by the rapid developments in military aviation, as aircraft were being designed to increase their flying distance and bomb loads. Hankey stated that, 'the public has no realisation what is in store in the event of another large scale war and I am apprehensive that the full realisation would come as so great a shock that general panic would ensue'(15). ARP planners were concerned about civilian behaviour in a

future war. For this reason their aim was not solely to provide for their physical protection in an air raid, but to offer some form of defence to maintain their morale (16). The uneasiness expressed by the ARP Sub-Committee was influenced by the behaviour of civilians during German air raids on Britain during the First World War, evaluated in chapter five. Evidence indicated there had been a lack of the public resilience that was needed to survive a concerted air attack and that large numbers of people, other than seeking refuge, in London's underground stations had used them as dormitories (17). On one occasion during February 1918, Titmuss states that 'perhaps 300,000 people took to the underground tube stations to shelter from six slow moving aircraft carrying primitive high explosive bombs, most of which failed to explode' (18). An explanation of this behaviour by sections of the British public could had been that, other than being frightened, these people have never before been subjected to air attacks. There were no records of Air Raid Precaution that could have been used to advise the public what they should do and how they should behave in the event of an air raid. Only eight years before the First World War, Louis Bleriot had been the first man to fly across the English Channel. It is reasonable to speculate there were people living in London at the time of the air raids who had never seen a German Zeppelin airship, or an aircraft in flight.

The public fear expressed during these First World War air raids influenced the ARP planners towards pessimism in believing the British people would be faced with an unprecedented calamity. Whereas in the event of a raid they would need to be resolute. According to the experts of the day, if another war came, there would be overwhelming stress on civilians that would cause a mass outbreak of hysteria among the population (19). The Government's dilemma up to the early 1930s was whether to inform the public about its ARP preparations, that had been planned in secret, with the possibility that an impending threat of war might never materialise. There were politicians other than Mr Stanley Baldwin who made emotive pronouncements about air attacks on Britain, referred to in chapter one (20). In 1934 Mr Winston Churchill made a powerful prediction that 'if London came under continuous air attack from the first day of a war at least 3-4 million people would be driven out into the open country' (21) Winston Churchill mentioned that this problem had never been faced before. Terry Charman, the Senior Historian of the Imperial Museum, records that the French Government also believed that on the first day of a war being declared, Paris, like London would be destroyed by air raids within minutes (22). The British Government was also concerned

to what extent pacifism within the nation may have on the development of Air Raid Precautions. In 1934 Canon Dick Shepphard who had founded the Peace Pledge Union, had within two years obtained 100,000 pledges from people in Britain not to fight in any future war (23). The Government nonetheless decided to release details about their ARP plans, as it would eventually require the co-operation of the public to run the service (24). Against this background of pacifism, publishing the proposed ARP scheme was a calculated risk as to the amount of support ARP would have. But the Government's decision to go ahead coincided with the beginning of the decline in the support of pacifism.

A member of the Home Office who was sent to Spain to study the impact air raids had on the state of civilian morale during the Civil War, reported that he found no evidence that could have had been useful to the ARP planners (25). In 1937 Air Raid Precautions were reviewed by the Warren Fisher Committee. Their report published confirmed that the primary aim of Air Raid Precautions was 'the maintenance of the morale of the people'(26). The Government by accepting the Warren Fisher recommendations, had endorsed its own policy that public morale was the first priority of air raid precautions. Another recommendation made by the Committee was that if the threat of war was imminent, school children, the sick and elderly were to be evacuated and sent to official reception areas. The purpose was to maintain the morale of the civilians by an orderly exodus from cities and thereby prevent panic (27).

The predictions by the Air Staff of the increasing scale of attack on the civil population in a future war continued to remain gloomy. In 1938 a Committee of eminent psychiatrists envisaged a high casualty rate, which would require the preparation of specialist hospitals on the outskirts of major cities to receive the large numbers of psychiatric casualties (28). But not all senior public figures were pessimistic about the accusation of a lack of resilience of the British people that would be manifest during an air raid. In 1937, Lord Woolton, Minister of Food in the Second World War had stated in a report on the Fire Service 'we based our recommendations on the belief the British public, faced with an unprecedented calamity, would be competent and resolute'(29). This statement was in accord with Professor Titmuss's opinion referred to on page 137 that it was difficult to find even a hint of the fear of a collapse in civilian morale (30).

Who were the contemporary influences, other than those previously mentioned in the text that expressed their foreboding of an aerial onslaught on the civilian population? The Air Staff believed that the enemy was unlikely to begin its air attacks by bombing factories involved in war production, but would seek to destroy the nation's will to fight by first attacking densely populated areas (31). O'Brien states this threat was made worse when the Air Staff revised the anticipated scale of attack after the Munich crisis, prescribing a still more fearful scenario (32). During April 1939 the Government's belief in massive air raid casualties resulted in the Ministry of Health issuing one million burial forms to the local authorities (33). The ARP planners thought that there would be no time interval to mobilise the ARP services because of the speed of bomber aircraft. These fears were premature and exaggerated, as the German air force had no intentions of launching an immediate attack on London. Professor Titmuss states in *Problems of Social Policy* that Second World War post war medical assessments indicated there was no significant increase in neurosis or mental breakdowns attributed to air attacks. The enemy raids over Britain did not lead to a rise in people requiring specialised medical treatment, in fact there was a decrease (34).

Up to the mid 1930s there had never been any social surveys to confirm the state of the Nation's morale. In 1938 there were national newspaper reports that indicated there were people in Britain who believed that a Second World War was not inevitable, having been reassured by Neville Chamberlain's infamous 'Peace in our time' message at the time of the Munich Agreement. But the promise of peace did nothing to allay the Government's fears regarding the potential behaviour of the British public in time of an air war. During the 1938 Munich Crisis, 150,000 civilians fled from London in a sudden exodus to Wales, described by Professor Titmuss as a panic migration (35). This surprise evacuation confirmed the Government's belief of the predicted behaviour of the public during an air raid. In April 1939, the War Office gave instructions to the Army on how to prevent any breakdown of discipline, to prevent civilians from panicking (36).

At Kingston, crowds of shoppers continued to arrive each day. Other people went on holiday. This movement of people continued up to the time when war was declared. In spite of anticipated air attacks the Government had decided that, in the event of war, it would remain in London to conduct the affairs of state, and to ensue that essential production would continue.

Women and children, who were seen as dispensable, were encouraged to leave the Capital. Mass evacuation would remove many people of a nervous disposition (37). By 1939, the Government's evacuation scheme was finalised, it included the evacuation of civilians from certain provincial cities. On 2 September 1939, 1.3 million civilians were evacuated from London (38).

7.2 Mass Observation and The MOI Intelligence Unit

J.Benson, of the University of Wolverhampton (39) and J. Stevenson, of the University of Oxford (40) in their work on social history do not refer to morale, but chose instead to describe people's behaviour and attitudes with regards to social class and politics. An important advance in understanding certain aspects of social behaviour was made with the formation of Mass Observation (MO). This pioneering social research organisation was created in 1936. The men responsible for creating MO were Tom Harrisson, an anthropologist, Humphrey Jennings, a documentary film maker and Charles Madge, a journalist (41). Harrisson states that the purpose of the organisation was to supply accurate information concerning everyday life of public moods, and to assess civilian morale. Teams of voluntary observers and diarists were appointed to record their observations. The author Norman Longmate, in his book *How we lived then*, refers to a nation-wide panel of 1,500 MO volunteers and two groups of full-time staff, who were based at Fulham and Bolton. The MO surveys were conducted on an assurance to the investigators they would remain anonymous. Evidence was collected through conversation, and people were grouped according to what the interviewer believed was their social class. Those people interviewed were not aware of being questioned for a specific reason. According to Tom Harrisson, one of the important factors that came out of the Mass Observation activities was how little was known about the economic and social conditions in which the British public had lived between the wars.

At the beginning of the war the Government relied on two main sources for collecting information on civilian morale. These were Mass Observation and the Ministry of Information (MOI). In December 1939 the MOI had set up its own Intelligence Department and appointed Mary Adams, a civil servant, as its Director. One of the main functions of the Intelligence Department was to prepare reports on the morale of the civilian population (42). These reports were produced daily from May-October 1940. From October they were produced weekly,

then monthly. The morale of the people in Kingston and its districts was commented on in the early wartime editions of the *Surrey Comet,* which described that morale was high and the communities had adapted well to the wartime conditions. Bentalls department store had made its own contribution in maintaining morale for its customers by producing free in-store entertainment, performed by well known dance bands and artistes. An indication of how the blackout deterred people from going out in the dark for their entertainment, is indicated by an advertisement that appeared in the *Surrey Comet* on 6 January 1940, it read *To Beat the Blackout Blues try Dancing in the Afternoon at the Odeon Cinema Cafe Kingston.*

In June 1940 a Home Office intelligence report concerning the evacuation of troops from Dunkirk referred to a statement by the Kingston Town Clerk 'the public is far from being apathetic due to the fact that efforts are being made to reach them (British troops) by all means available'(43). This message could be interpreted that the Town Clerk had taken the opportunity of this serious wartime situation to sustain the morale of the town's residents. The Government had formed a Home Morale Emergency Committee for the purpose of considering measures to counter any further lowering of morale, because a fear of air raids and invasion had developed (44). In anticipating air attacks, the Emergency Committee believed it was important to revive what little faith there was in the ARP services, and urged that a message should be published to the public that 'the morale effect of air raids is greater than the physical effect'. This was the same statement made in 1924, by Sir Maurice Hankey, referred to on page 137. A London Region report of the factors governing morale in air raids, refers to the behaviour of large communities, where there is a collective feeling among the people that the whole area is a target. To what extent this belief existed in smaller communities adjacent to each other, such as Kingston and Surbiton, was not mentioned. This report also states that most people adapt themselves remarkably quickly to frequent raids. People who are unable to do this have a bad effect on others (45).

The war infiltrated into the daily lives of people and could not be separated from their every day existence (46). There were reasons other than air raids that the Ministry of Information believed could adversely affect morale, these included lack of sleep, overwork, bad weather and food rationing (47). One of the fundamental problems of measuring morale was it could not bear

close analysis. There was a tendency in the early period of the war to blame any unfavourable topic, even the cold weather, for the loss of morale, which by-passed the real human problem. Tom Harrisson states 'the failure to analyse and define the complex of moods covered by morale resulted in the subject not being usefully dealt with' (48). Assessment of civilian morale by the Home Security Department began in the summer of 1940, at the time of the early raids on Britain. Civilian morale measurements were usually based on analysing answers and opinions of people interviewed, as previously stated (49). An unorthodox technique of measuring community morale was used by MO at Plymouth, Devon. After an air raid on the city, the number of lines of washing hung up in the back yards were counted. When the count was made closer to the centre of the city, where most of the bombing had occurred, it was found that the amount of washing hung out had significantly reduced (50).

What form of evidence concerning the state of morale in the civilian population was the Home Intelligence looking for after an air raid ? The principal indicators of low morale were signs of psychosis and defeatism. High morale was indicated to the monitoring officers by people who were in good spirits. Herbert Morrison, the Minister of Home Security, identified high morale as cheerfulness, whereas signs of low morale the Minister associated with depression (51). Monthly reports of civilian morale were also submitted by the Chief Constables to the Minister of Home Security. Professor Marwick in considering civilian morale during the Second World War, refers to two levels of morale,'passive', a willingness to carry on and 'active heroic gestures'. What practical value these particular levels had in assessing the morale of people is difficult to understand (52). Harrisson, referring to morale during the Plymouth Blitz in 1941 found it necessary to distinguish five main levels of morale, the distinctions however were complex and overlapping (53). The Ministry of Information had misgivings about the reliance of Mass Observation reports. Checks were made to verify MO surveys under the supervision of the London School of Economics (54). The measure of morale was made at that time when the term was not clearly defined and the assessment was based on the subjective opinions of Mass Observation interviewers. The state of civilian morale to cope with the stresses and strains experienced on the Home Front, in particular the trauma of air raids, was an important indicator for the Department of Home Security to monitor.

Home Front propaganda was the responsibility of the MOI who used this form of communication to sustain the morale of the masses. The media of broadcasting, cinema and newspapers were subject to Government censorship. Extensive poster campaigns were undertaken as was 'The Empire Campaign' to educate the public and maintain morale by promoting the virtues of the British Empire and Commonwealth. Well known people, for example, J. B. Priestley, toured the Country giving talks in local halls. The idea of propaganda on the British Home Front was a contentious one, as the British Government had been influenced by the Nazi Propaganda promoted by Dr Goebbels, the German Propaganda Minister (55). The MOI used propaganda as a tool for the distribution of information that was often presented in a biased or misleading way, as they showed when informing the public about the evacuation of Allied troops from Dunkirk in 1940. This was presented to the public, more as a victory, than what it really was, a serious defeat. Time and energy spent on this style of propaganda was used by the MOI to maintain the morale of the nation (56). Clive Ponting, the author of *1940 Myth and Reality* contends that sustained morale during the Blitz owed more to Government propaganda and a censored media than to reality (57). The value of film propaganda was to be a central issue throughout the war. The idea of 'the people's war' according to James Chapman, Professor of film studies, University of Leicester ,was part myth due to the images conveyed on the cinema screen of dominant themes that audiences identified with, the parts played in the film by ordinary men and women For example, *Fires Were Started* (1943), that was filmed in documentary style and written and directed by Humphrey Jennings (58).

7.3 Home Office intelligence reports

The reports on civilian morale, mentioned in the following sections of this chapter were prepared by the Home Intelligence Division whose staff included broadcasters, academics, lawyers and civil servants. An Intelligence report of 21 August 1940, stated that morale in all areas of London was excellent. The report mentions that people tended not to seek shelter when the air raid siren sounded (59). Another London Region report listed a number of revealing facts. These included that one-half the population of London at the end of July 1940 were without a shelter. The shelter shortage mirrored the local ARP reports concerning the lack of shelters in the districts of Kingston, explained in chapter three.

7.4 Intelligence reports on the morale of Surbiton

Home Office Intelligence reports of the morale of people living in Surbiton are evaluated below. The reports were confidential at the time. The information was not released for public scrutiny

until after the war. The report dated the 17 August 1940 was brief, and submitted by an unnamed local Clergyman. The text states that 'people had gone to shelter taking the air raid warnings as a matter of course'. The report emphasises there were no signs of panic. The incident was during the early period of the Battle of Britain when numerous enemy aircraft were flying over southern England resulting in an increasing number of alerts being sounded. The Clergyman recorded 'nobody has any intentions of being a casualty if they can help it'. This suggests that people remained in their shelter, and did not venture outside to see what was going on. The report reveals that when the air raid warning sounded, the local school children who were out in the playground were marshalled to their shelters and went down quite happily without any signs of nervousness (60).

On the 7th October 1940 the clergyman submitted another report concerning the morale of the residents of Surbiton, which he describes as 'very good indeed'. The report stated that those people who have lost their homes and possessions were not grumbling and were rehoused satisfactorily. People complained about the dampness of their Anderson shelters that could have affected their health, a problem referred in chapter three. The advice given by the Clergyman was for people to move indoors and prepare a safe room. He recorded that he made great efforts to hold his usual church services in spite of the problem of smaller congregations. 'The services are not well attended, but people turn up if things are arranged for them'.

Summarising these two brief intelligence reports, it is apparent that whatever problems people experienced, the state of morale of the Surbiton people was good. A Home Intelligence report on Surbiton dated 13 November 1940, records that 'the people in Surbiton are living as normally as possible and as there are shelters, they are for the most part staying at home.' This suggests that the residents had a domestic shelter or safe room (61). An undated November report on Surbiton describes, 'a significant change in the mood of the local people over recent weeks, probably due to the raids that they have recently endured. People had spent long hours sheltering, then in the aftermath of the raids seeing the bomb damage in their locality'. The report noted that the 'local people have lost faith in the anti-aircraft guns, as few of them seem to bring down the raiders'. According to General Frederick Pile, Commanding Officer of Anti-Aircraft Command the policy was 'not to try and aim their guns accurately but to fire as many rounds as possible so as to worry the enemy and to hearten the population'. Tom Harrisson in his book *Living Through the Blitz* refers to AA gun fire helping to sustain the morale of civilians.

This Intelligence report comments on the war situation. It stated 'the public will not tolerate blunders as Norway, but the public expect to be told of difficulties involved in the campaigns. If this is done they will accept other serious reverses'. Whoever prepared this report inserted a piece mentioning the speech that Winston Churchill made on the situation in the Middle East. The reporter then reverted back to the bomb damage in Surbiton, referring to the middle class resident's houses that had been damaged. The reporter stated that Surbiton people go at once to a builder when their house is damaged to have it repaired as quickly as possible. Information is given in the report about the number of days that elapse before a new roof is put on or windows boarded up. House owners were required to pay the full cost of the repair. They would have liked Surbiton Council to arrange to debit the bill from the builder, as the Council would eventually be paying it (62). In the archive file next to the Surbiton report, was a record referring to a visit the previous day to Stepney, East London, that had suffered an air raid. Stepney was a poor working class area situated in the same Civil Defence region as Surbiton. The morale of the people visited in one of the Stepney public shelters was described as low. It was apparent that the state of morale differed considerably from one place to another within the same Civil Defence region. One explanation could have been the poor conditions of the Stepney shelter and the absence of Shelter Marshals, resulting in people being subjected to the misbehaviour of shelterers.

7.5 Intelligence reports on the morale of Malden

The town of Malden borders on Surbiton. On Friday 16 August 1940, Malden experienced a devastating raid. Many of the shops in the 'village like high street' that had captivated a Brixton housewife in the 1930's, were damaged (63). An Intelligence report submitted by a member of the Malden Townswomen Guild, describes the conditions of Malden in the aftermath of the bombing, that killed 27 people . 'There had also been considerable damage to property. Everything was disorganised, all the public utilities had been affected and supplies had been cut. It was reported that the enemy aircraft had suddenly appeared at a great height before the air raid siren had sounded. People rushed to the railway station for protection'. Inserted in the report was a comment, 'the last place that people should go to seek shelter, it would have been safer if people had lay down under a hedge'. People who had made for the public shelters found they were already crowded.

The morale of the Malden people was described as being' absolutely marvellous considering the dreadful time they have been through. There were those who had lost friends and were distressed, but there had been no public disorder. Comment was made about those people who collected what was left of their personal belongings, Everyone behaved in a splendid way and helped wherever possible, giving comfort and providing clothing and food for those people who needed it. Residents were not complacent, they were aware of possible future dangers but faced the situation quite calmly'(64). On the the previous evening when the siren had sounded at Malden, people who made their way to a particular public shelter found it was locked. For some reason the person authorised to open the shelter was confused as to whether he should unlock the shelter. It was not until he had contacted the ARP that the shelter was opened, meanwhile a crowd had collected by the shelter door. Had a bomb exploded nearby it could have caused a number of unnecessary casualties .

The report referred to the continuing transport difficulties on Southern Railway. This air raid incident is also described by a 'Wimbledon contact' who had also submitted an intelligence report (65). This report described the situation in Malden and Wimbledon, as both towns had been raided at the same time. The scene of destruction at Malden confirmed much of what was described in the Townswoman's report, but with the additional information that during the raid some of the casualties were caused by enemy machine gun fire. The reporter stated that considering what the Malden people had been through, and how much they had suffered, the people looked marvellously 'bright and calm'. The residents were continuing to make every effort to get things in normal order again. The report praises the work of the ARP wardens for their help and consideration in maintaining morale by visiting people in their air raid shelters. The people did not seem to be nervous, but considered themselves to be extremely lucky to be alive. Further evidence of the community spirit that existed, is indicated by a demolished public house that had been draped with a string of Union Jack flags.

Two further undated intelligence reports on Malden confirmed that the residents anticipated further raids, 'everybody is still waiting for something to happen, but are quite cheerful about the situation and are carrying on with their daily tasks'. This comment suggested that Malden's morale remained good in spite of the belief by the residents of future attacks on the town. The other report on Malden again refers to everyone being amazingly cheerful and bright (66). It is

suggested that this repeated monitoring of the people at Malden may have been due to the Ministry of Home Security wanting further confirmation about the post raid state of a small suburban community. How did local people express their feelings when questioned about how they felt? A secretary admitted to 'feeling depressed again this week because the planes have been getting through and doing a great deal of damage, and the AA Barrage has been so feeble' (67). An Intelligence report on Malden records that 'people were worried about the lights that can been seen on Malden railway station'(68). Local residents suggested that a petition should be sent to the Minister of Home Security for something to be done about the situation. The report also mentioned the movement of people, who early in the evening take their bedding and walk to the nearest public shelter that was a mile away. The reporter described this as 'the usual trek' and recorded that Malden is short of shelters. The size of this nocturnal 'trek out' at Malden was modest compared to what thousands of other people did elsewhere by travelling out to the surrounding countryside. It is suggested that the reason for the trek at Malden could have been for similar reasons. Trekkers wanted more than just protection from bombing, they wanted a secure base to allow them to rest and sleep, as they had to go to work the following morning. Throughout the summer of 1940 until the spring of 1941 the residents of Kingston and its districts had endured sleepless nights because of the raids and air raid warnings. This report refers to people who, as they made their way home during a raid, risked injury by shrapnel from the AA shells. A suggestion was made by the reporter that civilians should be provided with steel helmets, 'as it was frightening to see the size of the fragments of shrapnel on their door step'. No evidence of encouragement to support the morale of the people has been found in the editions of the *Surrey Comet.* Perhaps this omission by the newspaper, was linked to a Ministry of Home Security statement, 'that there is no need to improve civilian morale as people were now in the Front Line'(69).

No Ministry of Information Intelligence reports on the state of the morale of the Kingston residents have been discovered. Brief undated comments referring to Kingston were mentioned in two intelligence reports. One questioned why there are so many big cars travelling practically empty on Kingston Hill (70). The other report asked how owners of these big cars seen in the Kingston district can get sufficient petrol to keep them running? (71). Was the implication by the reporter that the use of these large cars seen in Kingston had an affect on local morale? There were reasons why some people could afford to run large cars in wartime, one being the owners were able to obtain black market petrol. Another being that until 1940 many cars

including Rolls Royce saloon cars were still being manufactured and sold to the public, the owners would officially be allocated a ration of petrol for private use (72). In January 1941 a member of Malden Townswomen's Guild submitted an Intelligence report to the Ministry of Home Security (73). The report mentions that 'everything is going on fairly quietly'. A particular concern of the reporting agent was that nothing had been done about organising fire watchers at Malden. It was the reporter's belief that too much importance is attached to the need for training people to act as wardens. Air Raid Wardens in her opinion should only be organised during their duty times, and that it is not necessary for them to attend lectures about gas and other subjects that were part of the warden's curriculum. The report continues by stating that there are many ARP jobs that can be done without any training, although no examples were given.

The report confirms that the state of morale of the Malden residents continued to be satisfactory. Shopping was described in the report as getting very difficult, but the housewife accepts there is a genuine shortage of food. The reporter suggests that 'there might be profiteering or bad distribution of food, but this does not seem to be considered by the housewife'. Reference is made to a van loaded with beef being delivered at Malden to Sainsbury's that almost created a stampede. The subject of the report abruptly changes to a consideration of the wider war situation, the reporter commenting on how 'Malden people, although very pleased about the news of victory in North Africa, realise that the country has still not properly come to grips with Germany'. Mention is then made to the previous raids on Malden. The report states that a great many people feel that reprisal raids are needed to make the Germans suffer as well. If the German public suffered as much as the British had done it would put a different complexion on things. The report mentions that the British public are aware that Germany is still able to continue bombing operations every night. The report concludes by stating that Malden's public shelters are still being used at night, although there have been no recent raids over the district. A comment is made on how uncomfortable the Malden shelters are, there are no bunks provided and the benches used for seating are too narrow to lie down on.

Home Office Intelligence reports are evaluated concerning the state of morale on the population of Surbiton and Malden after both towns had suffered air raids. These reports are of historic importance, because they contain detailed information on how Malden and Surbiton residents lived and coped under the duress of air raids in the Second World War. The Surbiton report

mentions the long hours the people spent in their shelters and, indicated that the morale of the people was good. The devastating raid on Malden,16 August 1940 is reported in detail, by describing the conditions in the aftermath of the raid and the resilience of the people.

7.6 1944-1945 : The V weapon attacks

During the night of the 12-13 June 1944 the first V1 missile attack on England occurred. The bombardment covered a wide area. The only casualties were at Bethnal Green, east London. Mr E. Gardner who lived at Tolworth, recalls a VI incident on Saturday 17 June 1944. He had been on night work and arrived home at 7.30 am. After breakfast he went to bed. At 1pm he was awakened by the sound of an approaching V1, suddenly its engine cut out and a few seconds later came the sound of an explosion, it had fallen close by in Tolworth Park Road. Twelve people were killed in this incident. The impact of this attack on the local residents was considerable. People became nervous and anxious. A Home Intelligence report on the London Region dated the 6 July 1944, stated that Londoners spirits were' lower than at any time during the last two years'. The long range V2 rocket attacks commenced on 8 September 1944, the first one having fallen at Chiswick.

The V1 attacks on south east England resulted in the Government deciding to evacuate thousands of civilian from the London area. The plans for the evacuation of civilians that had taken place in 1939 had been made obsolete, as the areas of vulnerability and safety had changed. The V1 threat meant that certain areas that had originally been classified as reception areas were switched, and some had become evacuation areas. Kingston originally designated a neutral area by the Government in 1939 referred to in chapter four, was now reclassified as an evacuation area. Government plans for the evacuation of civilians had also been made to deal with possible rocket attacks. Proposals were prepared for the evacuation of 500,000 people from London. New reception centres and feeding stations on the fringe of the Capital were organised but the Government decided not to implement this evacuation, but advised Londoners to stand fast. Unlike the Government evacuation of 1939, when plans were carried out to deal with the expected breakdown of morale, no special arrangements had been made to cope with any major social problem as a consequence of missile attacks (74). The resilient behaviour of the civilian populations during the intensive air raids of 1940-41 had convinced the Government there was no reason to believe that the missile attacks would cause panic.

The conventional piloted raids and V weapon attacks on the civilian populations of Britain were a traumatic experience that had caused 146,374 deaths and serious injury (75). There was also an immense amount of destruction to property. The social problems included emergency feeding, and rehousing the homeless. The consequences of the air and missile attacks on Kingston, Surbiton and Malden are shown in chapter six, page 111. What did all this enemy bombing achieve other than cause distress and disruption? The purpose of the enemy attacks was to destroy the morale of the British people, but it failed to diminish the capacity of the people to withstand aerial bombardment. It was evident that the war on the Home Front was very different to what had been expected (76). From 1941 the Government had decided that British civilians were a calm and courageous people. This was evident from the behaviour of the residents of Kingston and districts during the raids referred to in chapters six and seven. It is suggested that the performance of the Civil Defence's of the three towns also contributed to the morale of the residents, because of the efficiency of the services when dealing with air raid incidents. After 1941 The Ministry of Information ceased to monitor the effect air raids had on the public moods, and turned their attention to other wartime affairs (77). A post-war historiographical consensus concerning the morale of the British people during the Second World War that refers back to June 1940 states it was influenced by a a mixture of fact and propaganda (78). Professor Titmuss referring to the wartime morale of the British people stated 'the behaviour of the civilian population was consistent with mental resilience and a strong capacity to adjust to change'(79).

7.7 Summary

This chapter explains why the Government placed considerable importance on the state of civilian morale when planning its ARP service. The complex problem of defining morale is considered. Reference is made to the Kingston Town Clerk reports on the good state of morale of the residents during the air raids. Further evidence is submitted that indicated the morale was high in Kingston during the winter of 1940, for example the Christmas parties held in the public air raid shelters. Detailed Home Intelligence post raid reports concerning the state of morale of

the residents of Malden and Surbiton are evaluated. The reports bear witness that the people of these small suburban towns had the capacity to withstand bombing. No detailed reports by the Ministry of Information or Mass Observation on the state of morale of Kingston residents and its districts during the period of the missile attacks have been found.

Chapter Seven

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Chapter Eight

Contributions by Local Women on the Home Front

This chapter evaluates the contributions that women made in the Second World War on the Home Front with special reference to Kingston. The introduction explains the difficult situation that many married women were placed in at the outbreak of war, due to the mobilisation of men into the services. An analysis is made of the conscription of women into war work and their employment at factories in Kingston and Surbiton. Women's involvement in Civil Defence is discussed including some of the challenges they met. The text considers aspects of gender patriotism, voluntarism and social class, relevant to the study of Kingston's ARP. The experiences of women in the First World War that were also associated with these four themes are described. The last section is devoted to the major contribution made by the Women's Voluntary Services and their work associated with Kingston, Surbiton and Malden.

A journalist wrote in her diary, four days after the outbreak of the Second World War,'I feel as if I have been waiting for this all my life'(1). It is suggested her dilemma could have been felt by many of the Kingston and districts women who had organised their lives by participating in the war effort on the Home Front. Historians, for example, Penny Summerfield, argues that both world wars dramatically changed women's lives. Men of military age were expected to join the armed forces. In their absence women were encouraged, or mobilised, to contribute to the war effort by entering the workforce (2). However in the First World War there was no Government ARP to serve in. The wartime ideology of mobilisation, recruitment, fighting and killing clashed with the peacetime ideology of separate spheres for men and women and the clear definition of men and women's culture, economic and political contributions (3). In the First World War and arguably in the Second World War, war work for most working class women was a release from domestic drudgery. Deborah Thom states that the 1911 census recorded that about one third of women undertook paid work. From the women of this period interviewed by Thom the largest category of women's work had been domestic service (4). This was the one female occupation changed by the war, but the nature of the employment had also changed, far fewer working women 'lived in'(5). According to Thom, throughout the First World War women were discussed in relation to the male workers they had replaced or as heroines doing a job for patriotic reasons (6). Historians have focussed on the contribution of women's war work during the First World War in factories, but they were also employed as coal heavers, navvies, pottery-makers and vehicle maintenance workers (7). Whatever recognition women had sought, but failed to achieve during the First World War was not due to their passivism. During the war, women's trade -union membership grew from 437,000 in 1914 to 1,209,000 in 1918 for reasons to prevent them from being exploited (8).

At the end of the First World war the Government assumed that the demobilised women war workers would revert to their previous occupation or return 'home. If the First World War had changed the lives of many women, gender differences had not disappeared between the wars. The young working class girls who had worked in the factories or in munitions during the war were in the 1930's possibly married with a family, although many had been widowed or had not married because of the slaughter of men that had taken place during the Great War.

During the First World War the Cinema was still in it's pioneering stage, but silent British patriotic propaganda films and newsreels were shown to audiences. Antonia Lant, film historian, argues that in the Second World War British films should have been made to reassure gender roles. Films in her opinion were the most popular medium for building national identity as they reached a wider public than any other audience and consisted mostly of women (9). Popular wartime films, for example, *A Canterbury Tale,* challenged men's understanding of themselves and their county. Lant states, British Cinema was other than a source of leisure, a news channel and a powerful vehicle for influencing an audience in supporting the war (10).Lant also argues that national identity also depended on reassuring gender film roles (11).The Second World War did necessitate changes in women's lives that was regarded by many as a personal change and development of the individual (12). Women's place in society after the war was not what it had been before 1939. There were women who felt the war for them was a period of constraint and instability, and welcomed the end of the war as a return to secure domesticity (13). Penny Summerfield records that many of the women that were interviewed after the war were convinced that their wartime experience had changed them. For example, Ivy Jones, the daughter of working class parents states from leaving a sheltered environment to join the WAAF, by the end of the war she had more confidence, mixed more and got used to dealing with men (14). It would have been a valuable record to have known if the lives of the women who served in the Civil Defence of Kingston and its districts had been changed by their wartime service, particularly those women who when on duty, were often exposed to enemy activity. However, whatever the extent women's lives were changed or not because of the war, it is evident women made a significant contribution to the war effort on the Home Front. The war had in many ways influenced how women lived, for example, by the absence of men, the evacuation of their children and their mobilisation for the war effort. The Second World War had exposed women

on the Home Front to the danger of violent death and injury by air raids, which was reflected in the 63,221 women casualties suffered in Britain (15). Participation on the Home Front was a new experience for many women, but for the older women, there were some who recalled the First World War and the contributions they made during that conflict. One elderly WVS organiser believed that those women who had borne the responsibilities of social work in the First World War would have to do the same again 'as the post war generation were brain tired and bodily tired'(16).

8.0 Women and patriotism'

Voluntary associations were often linked with class and gender divisions that could not be bridged. But the power of patriotism transcended the boundaries of these social problems by smoothing over the differences that existed (17). In the first World War, British Trade Unions feared the patriotism of women because they saw it as a contributory factor in negotiating conditions of work (18). Patriotism is not necessary associated with war. For example, before the Second World War the British Women's Patriotic League urged people to show their patriotism by always buying British or Empire made goods (19). Being patriotic is devotion to ones country by allegiance to the legitimate monarch or government (20). According to Janet Watson, British people who had chosen to become involved in the war effort exhibited some form of patriotism (21). However Watson argues that most participants in the First World War were motivated by patriotism, but she raises the question about the nature of the patriotism and the relation of the work they were doing. But what was the motive for the increase in people joining the Kingston Air Raid Precaution service at the time of the Munich crisis of 1938? Was it the fear of air raids that would have been a threat to their life and/ or family, or was it a spirit of allegiance to Britain?

During both world wars women's patriotism on the Home Front home extended away from their gender role of domestic duties into their leisure time. For example, many women took to knitting items of comfort for the servicemen as a patriotic contribution, described on page 159. During the First World War, Britain was described as 'a vast knitting machine' arguably the most widely undertaken patriotic act involving women (22). Knitting was an unexciting task but it brought women into the war effort. It is worth noting that the Elementary Education Act of 1870 made it compulsory for girls to learn to knit. Other patriotic work carried out by women at home during the First World War was making brightly coloured bags for wounded soldiers to safeguard their valuables. Lant argues that in the Second World War patriotism necessitated that a British screen identity could be produced only in Britain and by a British Film studio (23).

It is suggested that women's expectation of what the Second World War would be like on the Home Front was completely different to what they experienced. The problems women underwent due to Government controls, regulations or queuing for food were minor compared to the personal challenges they were confronted with. For example, being separated from their family, living with military defeats in the early part of the war and coping with air raids and the death of loved ones. The contributions to the war effort made by women who were members of a local church or voluntary organisation, could be described as 'local patriotism', as they worked at home or in a local group activity. Their participation, however small scale, included fund raising to buy wool for women involved in their local knitting circle. For example, to knit thick woollen socks for men serving on naval minesweepers. Mrs O'Connell, a member of Kingston's WVS, made her contribution at home by repairing clothes and sewing buttons on to soldiers uniforms (24).

The impact of the war created problems for many women. A married man who had enlisted in the services often left behind a wife who had to fend for herself. War for her was a new and perhaps daunting experience. A wife would have to learn to live on a small Government allowance. At the outbreak of war, a private soldier was paid two shillings a day, part of which he was compelled to allot to his family. The official allowance for a man with a young family was inadequate (25). There were employers, for example, Bentalls of Kingston, who continued to make up the salaries of their members of staff who had been conscripted. Some housewives experienced feelings of uncertainty as they were not used to coping with domestic issues, having tended to leave these problem to their husbands (26). Evacuation was a problem for many women, as thousands of children, described in chapter five, had been evacuated prior to the war (27). A consequence of this was the disruption of family life, as women were separated from their children. There were women stressed by their loneliness, as their husband and children were away from home. If there was a benefit, as the war proceeded, evacuation did help to release more women for war work (28).

Mathew Hilton states that in the inter war years there existed a gulf between the social classes and Britain was a deeply unequal society (29). Class division continued in Britain during the Second World War. There is no evidence that this issue was a source of contention experienced in the Civil Defence of Kingston and its districts. Perception of class position in the First World War played a crucial role of how different types of war work were viewed, with accusations of one class being more productive than another (30). Criticism and support of the war effort were rooted in deeply held class convictions about the preservation of a certain kind of social organisation. Working class women were viewed for not being sufficiently interested in the propagation of the war effort; whereas women wearing military uniform were not considered the female equivalent of soldiers. This called into question the gender division that existed in British wartime society.

In the First World War, work for women can be placed along a spectrum of respectability that ranged from those that were consistent with ideas about 'women's work' to those that disrupted gendered norms. What work was thought appropriate for daughters of 'gentlemen' was not the same as for daughters of farmers or industrial workers. Service-orientated war work was considered to be more socially acceptable compared with work-orientated efforts that tended to be seen as more problematic (31). According to Ward the majority of British women in the First World War did not go to work in the munition factories (32). Many middle and upper class women chose to participate voluntarily in the war effort, but voluntary war work spread down the social scale (33). The historian Sandra Gilbert records that the First World War gave women an opportunity 'to use their abilities and to be used'. Deborah Thom argues that the cultural significance of the war was very different for working class women who assessed the war, and commented upon its place in their lives.They did not see their war experience as an opportunity, or as an improvement to their life style (34).

The mobilisation of men into the armed forces during the Second World War created changes on the Home Front. This included increasing numbers of women working in shops and offices. From 1940 the number of women going out to work became more obvious to the public, as they were employed in jobs that were once the domain of men. At Kingston and Surbiton women delivered bread, milk and the Royal Mail. Women also drove buses and worked as railway

porters and ticket collectors. For women, wartime employment bought about important changes in their personal lives. It offered them a wage and more importantly, an economic independence that many had never before experienced. Wartime factory employment often meant tedious work and a long working day. The two largest factories in Kingston, Hawkers Aircraft Ltd and the Leyland Bus works at Ham, relied on female labour to maintain production of Hawker Hurricane aircraft, military vehicles and munitions (35). One woman who worked at Hawker's, recalls, 'I was trained and employed as a fitter, then changed to become a welder, traditionally a male trade, I earned more money, but women welders at Hawker's did not earn the same wages as the men'(36). During wartime, unequal pay existed where women were employed on identical work to men. This was an important issue that was never satisfactory resolved. A woman recalls her life as a seventeen year old working at the Leyland factory, 'I was not allowed to go in the forces, I went into munitions'. She explains that working with bombs at Leyland's had its hazards, as it meant using the volatile substance ether, which resulted in her falling asleep over her machine (37).

There were shops in Kingston that had been incorporated into the local war effort. For example, Perring's furniture shop. Women worked on the upper floor, that had been converted into a factory for the manufacture of armature coils for radio sets (38). On the ground floor the furniture was displayed and business carried on as usual. There were many small engineering companies in the districts of Kingston that employed women. The Mollart Engineering Company, alongside the Kingston by-pass, produced precision electronic components for the Army. This Company had developed from a small room 50 ft square into a large factory. A private house owned by Mrs Gampell at Surbiton had her lounge converted into a workshop. Mrs Gampell formed a small team of enterprising wives of city businessmen to work on producing small aircraft components. The *Surrey Comet* describes the women employed in this house as 'not of the class of women that would be found in factories'(39).

Before the war it was common practice for employers not to engage married women in industry (40). The female labour force in peacetime was largely unorganised, and male dominated trade union restrictions were used to deter employers from taking on women (41). The reluctance of employers to engage women changed during the war because of the shortage of male labour. Women were urged by an extensive Government campaign to volunteer to contribute to the war effort as shown by the poster on page 162. In 1940 the Government's attempt to mobilise women was a failure, as the Ministry of Labour procedures in interviewing the applicants were

Figure 13 A Government propaganda poster used to recruit women into the factories for war work. c1941.

Imperial War Museum

ignored. For example, women were allocated to jobs that they had not applied for and were not given sufficient information about their working hours or rates of pay (42). The labour shortage on the Home Front was a serious problem as ultimate victory depended on a scale of production that was linked to labour mobilisation (43). Using the National Service (No 2) Act of 1940, the Government tried to resolve the industrial labour shortage by the conscription of women. This compelled unmarried women aged between twenty and thirty to register for war work, that was later extended to women up to the age of 40 (44). The Act made it difficult for women under the age of 40 to avoid war work. Provision was made for mothers with children under 14 to be exempted. Married women with young children who had decided to work, created a social problem of child care, that led to the creation of state sponsored nurseries (45). Government conscription resulted in a huge intake of women being engaged in industrial war work. By the end of the war, the high proportion of women working in industry had become commonplace throughout the nation. For example, the workers at the MG motor works at Oxford, mentioned in my literature review in chapter two, were largely women who had replaced the male work force (46).

8.1 The conscription of Women

One woman conscripted into factory work told everyone 'she had never worked before as she always had an allowance and intended to frame the first pound note she received with her wages' (47). The 1943 wartime film *Millions Like Us* was produced to inspire women working in munition factories (48). The story is about conscripted women war workers from different social backgrounds employed in a factory that is bombed and the women are depicted as 'front line soldiers'. The propaganda message to the audience was the importance of wartime group effort where personal desire and ambition are subordinated to the factory production. The grief at the death of a loved one is held back to enable the resumption of teamwork towards victory. In 1934, the journalist J.B. Priestley described in *English Journey* a number of different England's (49). One was the post-war England of new arterial roads, petrol stations and architect designed factories that looked like exhibition buildings with white painted walls fitted with large sun glass windows and grass verges, factory girls looking like actresses. A description likened to the suburban setting of the modern Veneers factory built prior to the war at Tolworth alongside the Kingston bypass. This factory employed many women and manufactured electric time switches during the war. Although there were official regulations concerning working hours, health and safety, working conditions for employees were often determined by local culture, environment and the type of production. The working environment

of a factory in suburban Surrey could be quite different from that of an industrialised community in the midlands. For example. Birmingham, an industrial town that during the war was a place of undistinguished rows of back to back houses, factories and warehouses. A place of grime and smoking chimneys, where women were employed producing vast quantities of armaments and other weapons of war.

The compulsory mobilisation of women had an impact on the Home Front as there was a common purpose between these workers involved in war work and the Government pursuit of final victory. Conscription of women had resolved the shortage of wardens in Kingston's Civil Defence. But did this mobilisation do more than reduce the labour requirements of the Nation by improving local wartime social solidarity? The mobilisation of civilians was known to have created resentment among part-time ARP volunteers having to work alongside the paid conscripts (50). This type of problem did not appear to have existed at Kingston where volunteer members of the WVS and wage-earning civil defence employees worked together.

8. 2 Women members of the Civil Defence

Women had joined the Kingston ARP service when the organisation was first formed. They were mainly volunteer nurses who attended first aid and home nursing courses that had been organised by the British Red Cross Society and St John Ambulance Brigade. The Home Office had been trying to find ways of incorporating nursing schemes into the ARP. Their planners had been impressed by the national organisations which had a history of voluntary nursing care. Eventually ministerial approval was obtained for them to be associated with the ARP (51). At the time of the Munich crisis of 1938, Kingston's Red Cross Society had enrolled thirty women. Their training was held in a room at the Guildhall. Lectures and demonstrations were held at Latchmere Road, Kingston (52). These activities resulted in staffing two First Aid posts that opened in 1939 at Kingston, One at Victoria Hospital, Coombe Road, administered by the British Red Cross Society and the other at the Grange Clinic that was managed by the St John Ambulance Brigade (53). The intention of providing First Aid posts was to screen casualties for their possible admission to hospitals and provide care for people needing medical attention but unlikely to require subsequent treatment (54).

In 1938 nearly one hundred women had enrolled at Kingston as air raid wardens (55). Kingston Council had planned that women would eventually make up 50 percent of the town's ARP establishment, although it was proposed by the Council that recruitmentfor certain ARP grades would be restricted to men. For example, women would be prevented from serving in the

Decontamination Squads. At Malden no women had been enlisted as wardens up to November 1938 (56). This could have been due to the local council's policy of not employing women, a situation that would later be changed. The women who had joined the Kingston's ARP had entered a service that was dominated by men, a situation common to other local authority ARP schemes. For example in the St Pancras Civil Defence service in north west London every senior post was held by a man (57). Women who had enlisted in the ARP had to conform by taking orders from men, whereas men had to learn how to impose discipline on women to carry out their duties. There were exceptions to this male dominance in the ARP. For example, at Torquay mention is made in chapter two, of a 'lady Head Warden' that had been appointed to the town's ARP organisation (58). At Gloucester, also mentioned in chapter two, one of the seven ARP Head Wardens was a women (59). In 1938, The Home Office decided to encouraged women to support the ARP by enrolling in the WVS (60). Women who served in the civil defence during the Second World War included those employed in the following occupations, Auxiliary Ambulance Service, Report and Control, Fire Fighting Services, Stretcher parties, Fire Guards,Wardens Service, First Aid and Hospital service . Women usually performed the ARP routine office duties. Many of the outside tasks associated with air raid precautions were shared by men and women. This included ambulance driving and fire fighting (61).

The contributions made by women serving in the Civil Defence was not limited to those in uniform. For example, at Kingston during an air raid, non-uniformed volunteers including telephonists who were on duty at the ARP control and report centre played a pivotal role by maintaining communications. The ultimate decision of the ARP controller often relied on the efficiency of these volunteers. Arguably their work was the most understated task in local authority civil defence. At Kingston, the town's ARP control centre employed seventeen full time telephonists. Women reported for duty when the air raid warning sounded, while other volunteer telephonists were placed on standby. Women telephonists at Kingston worked in eight hour shifts. These telephonists were involved in weekly training exercises (62).

The duties of women air raid wardens required them to meet the public. A young woman who had a day job in a local hospital had enlisted in Kingston's ARP as a part-time volunteer warden. She recalls that if the tiniest chink of light was seen through anyone's curtains, 'you had to knock them up and tell the people to hide the light, as it could be an indicator to an enemy pilot flying above there was a town below'(63). This lady warden refers to the

identification of aircraft, although it was not part of the official duties of a warden. She recorded that you got to identify the planes by the shape, size and sound of the engine. 'You could tell which were ours and which were theirs'. The Germans had desynchronised the engines of their bomber aircraft to make them more difficult for the British defences to locate them. A full-time Kingston warden describes an aspect of her ARP practical training 'they supplied me with a uniform and I had to pass a test. I had to go into a tin hut erected in one of the school playgrounds and put out a fire with a stirrup pump. When you went in the hut there was this fire and they closed the doors, the hut filled up with smoke. It was really terrifying, but you had to do it or else you would not have been any good as a warden'(64).

Self discipline was essential for women who served in the AFS, particularly when fighting a fire. The reduction of the number of Malden's paid firemen by the Home Office during the early part of the war is referred to in chapter six. This reduction resulted in Malden Council allowing women to volunteer for AFS service, a significant change in Malden Council policy of not employing women. In March 1941 the formation of the National Fire Service (NFS) had been brought about by the extensive enemy fire raids, that had exposed the limitations of having so many small fire brigades, each under a different local authority. The fire brigades of Kingston, Surbiton and Malden were all based within three miles of each other. The order of command in the Fire Service was a problem for women as they had to overcome the male prejudices inherited from the Civil Service and military factions that existed in the force (65). Women who were new to the practices of the Fire Service, were faced with the challenge of having to cope with the enforcement of a strict discipline code and learning the specialised technical language of fire fighting.Whereas members of the WVS were easily recognised by their smart tailored uniform, women members of the NFS were provided with a simple cotton overall, a shapeless raincoat and a poor fitting cap that did nothing for the morale of the individual. Married women were confronted with the additional problem of running their own home. This dual role experienced by many women was recognised by Lady Violet Markham, who had served on the Unemployed Assistance Board in the 1930's. Lady Markham at the request of Ernest Bevin, the Minister of Labour and National Service, was involved in a study to raise the status of women workers. Her 1945 report stated 'the overriding condition in wartime is the national need of a Country fighting for its life, that resulted in temporary conditions of real hardship for women'. Lady Markham admitted she could not imagine her own life without servants (66).

According to the Malden ARP Committee Minutes of October 1942, the Fire Guard headquarters at Malden had been surprised by the large number of local women who had registered for 'Fire Watching' and then claimed exemption from Fire Guard Duty, because they were already involved in war work (67). A similar situation, referred to in chapter six, occurred in Kingston, where 7,500 women had attempted to avoid Fire Guard duties. Kingston's Town Clerk reported to the ARP Committee his intention to resolve the problem by applying the Fire Guard Order of 1943 to make service compulsory (68). This attempt by some women to withdraw from vital local community service had been experienced in other places of Britain. The history of the *Civil Defence* records that large scale evasion of Fire Guard duty occurred (69). No evidence has been found of wholesale evasion of Fire Guard by men at Kingston, Surbiton and Malden. People in Oxfordshire were fined and sent to prison for attempting to evade their fire watching responsibilities (70). Being a Fire Guard could be dangerous when they were exposed to enemy activity. For example, during the 1942 air raids on Exeter the Fire Guards were hampered in their duty of extinguishing incendiary bombs by enemy machine gun fire.

8.3 Women members of voluntary organisations

During the First World War, work was not interrupted by air raids. Women wartime workers were all volunteers until1916 when conscription was introduced. According to Hilton and Mackay voluntary action is undertaken without compulsion, which is deployed through organisations in the provision of welfare services (71).Voluntary organisations were often structured along homosocial lines with men and women involved in separate voluntary association work. In 1938 the Women's Voluntary Services had been created by the Government in anticipation of social problems produced by war. For example, the consequences of bombing and mass civilian evacuation (72). The question arises was the WVS also intended to ease the way for the military conscription of women. Although voluntary service had been available prior to the First World War, the war had acted as a catalyst for massive voluntary action(73). Deborah Thom argues there were times when middle-class volunteers caused problems. Thom cites the evidence of volunteers given in 1916 to the Women's Service Commission. 'it is the hardness of the work. It is work which would not fit anyone else but charwomen. These women have done it for eighteen months for the sake of the country in an emergency until someone else could take it over. I reckon that the time has now come when it should be done by paid labour'(74).

After the First World War a new relationship between the state and voluntary organisations had developed in response to social and political change (75). The state had moved from its role as

enabler and regulator to that of funder and provider, as the expansion of state activity began to increase in spheres of which had previously been the domain of voluntary activity. These changes had important organisational implications as a trend developed that accelerated in the Second World War. This gave the state certain advantages by using voluntary services as its agents, although this presented challenges for the state of how to influence and control voluntary activities (76). What is clear that between the wars gender and class differences did not disappear from voluntary associations. But did the notion of the volunteer change during the Second World War compared with the First World War ? Voluntary services on the Home Front in both wars were mainly performed by women. What changed for many women volunteers on the Home Front during the Second World War was the nature of the work associated with ARP they were required to perform as described on page 161. Helen McCarthy, historian, points out that voluntary associations frequently reproduced the hierarchies and divisions existing in British society, for example, class and gender (77). How far did cross-class associations avoid reproducing class hierarchies within their internal structures? From the evidence available it would appear that middle class people tended to monopolise positions of leadership (78).

The contribution of women on the Home Front during the Second World War has attracted less attention from historians than would have been expected, considering the significant input women made towards the war effort. Most wartime histories of women that have been published are predominately about young women and working class wives employed in factories (79).Yet major contributions were made by those women employed by the state or local authorities. Among the women voluntary organisations that had continued to function after the ending of the First World War, the largest organisation was the Women's Institute (WI). Prior to the Second World War, Lady Gertrude Denman, the chairman of the WI had been approached by the Ministry of Agriculture to become honorary director designate of a future Women's Land Army (WLA) and was asked to prepare an outline for the proposed organisation. Eventually she was appointed its Director of this service and within three months of the outbreak of war, she had recruited 30,000 women members (80). Her husband, Lord Denman, had been made Parliamentary Secretary for the Ministry of Agriculture. The WLA was under direct Government control.

The Women's Institute was faced with difficult decisions in terms of its wartime commitment, as the organisation was formed on the principles of nonsectarianism. As a consequence its

members were deterred from being involved in activities which constituted a preparation for war, or in the event of war, they should not become involved in any belligerent activities (81). Out of respect for its members, the WI hierarchy felt obliged to impose restrictions on those WI Institutes preparing to be associated with war work. For example, the WI refused in 1939 to participate in the Government's evacuation scheme referred to in chapter four (82). This policy was the subject of considerable controversy within the WI membership. Many of its members argued that minority beliefs within the WI should be disregarded at a time of extreme national danger. Consequently, many members stopped attending their local branch meetings. For the first time in the history of the WI there was a significant fall in its total membership (83).

There had been difficulties for the Women's Institutes to hold their meetings, particularly in rural areas where village halls had been requisitioned to receive evacuees or used for other war time emergencies (84). The feeling shown by members opposed to the pacifist policy resulted in the WI adopting a compromising attitude as to what they were prepared to do to help the war effort. The WI major wartime contribution was the fruit and vegetable preserving scheme that involved 2,600 WI village centres (85).

An outlet for many women's voluntary groups was to serve in the local Citizens Advice Bureaux who dealt with many of the intricate human problems (86). The National Union of Townswomen's Guilds (NUTG), claimed that its original association had links with the women suffrage's societies (87). In 1940, the NUTG was under threat of being disbanded through lack of support, but managed to survive. As part of its war effort it staged amateur concerts to maintain the morale of the local people. The Guild also pursued a policy of encouraging married women to work in shops, offices and local industry to release manpower, a decision that resulted in the Guild's revival. By the end of November 1940, the Guild was as busy as ever (88). No evidence has been found of any wartime activities of the NUTG in Kingston and its districts of Kingston except at Malden, where Townswomen Guild intelligence reports were submitted to the Ministry of Home Security, that are referred to in chapter eight. The book *Wartime Women,* based on Mass Observation reports explores the experiences of a wide range of women during the war, but there are no references to Kingston or its districts. Evidence relating to working class women's institutions involved in the war effort in these towns is scarce. The Kingston Council Committee Minutes, record that the local Women's Co-operative Guild, raised money for National Savings and set up its own scheme for knitting comforts for the troops.

8.4 The Women's Voluntary Services

The largest women's voluntary organisation that served on the Home Front during the Second World War was the Women's Voluntary Services. The membership of the WVS was mainly

upper and middle-class women. In 1938 Lady Reading formed the WVS at the request of the Government, to provide a channel through which women could enrol and serve the ARP in a variety of different ways, for example, post-raid social care. The organisation was originally named the 'Women's Voluntary Service for ARP'. Lady Reading had been married to a former Viceroy of India and was a high society hostess. From this elevated social position she raised funds to provide clothes for the unemployed. She proved that other than being a socialite she was capable of holding important positions in charities and women's organisations. According to Lady Reading, being in the WVS was 'a payment for the privilege of living in the best country in the world'(89).

The pre-war lives of WVS members revolved around their attendance's at luncheon clubs, whist drives, organising garden fetes and flag days for their local hospital. This philanthropy was to provide middle class women with the confidence of achieving the social authority and leadership skills they displayed on the Home Front during the Second World War (90). One of Lady Reading's challenges in recruiting volunteers for her cause, was to enrol working class women, but this was met with considerable hostility by the Labour movement. Working class participation in the WVS could not have been helped by Lady Reading appointing Lady Priscilla Norman, the wife of the Governor of the Bank of England as her deputy. Olive Wakeham, a nursing sister, recalls the WVS wartime contribution at Exeter. She states that there was 'a rather better class of women in the local WVS organisation, being highly organised, well to do, these people did not naturally mix with the working classes'(91). One upper-class lady who was not a member of the WVS was the wealthy Lady Astor, the MP for Plymouth and the wartime Lady Mayoress of the City. Lady Astor's disagreement with Lady Reading on how the city's WVS should be run affected the wartime services of the WVS in Plymouth (92).

In 1938 at the time of the formation of the WVS it is probable that many of its members were embarrassed by the collapse of appeasement that had discredited much of British middle-class politics (93). By strict discipline and good internal organisation the WVS remained in control of its activities throughout the war and would not allow interference by other organisations. Lady Reading had refused to establish ranks within the service, which led to criticism that members would be judged on their social status, this was proved by the test of their success (94). The WVS autocratic style of management continued in place of any kind of representative management structure. The local leadership of the WVS appears to have remained predominantly with those with a social position who were seen to be capable of the tasks. At Kingston the WVS Organiser, Mrs Oldfield, was a Conservative Councillor and the wife of a

Kingston Councillor. She had been appointed to her WVS position on the advice of the Town's ARP Controller, who was also the Town Clerk and a solicitor by profession. Details of Mrs Oldfield's WVS work is given later in this chapter. It is suggested that her WVS appointment must have enhanced her own status and placed her in a position of influence, both with the WVS and Kingston Council. There were exceptions as to who held a senior WVS position. For example, Mrs Pearl Hyde, daughter of a publican and a Labour Councillor was appointed as Organiser for the Coventry WVS (95).

The WVS uniform that members were expected to pay for out of their own pocket would possibly have been a deterrent to the recruitment of working class women. Few of these women would have been able to afford to purchase the outfit. The made to measure uniform symbolised the class status of a disciplined auxiliary service operating on very different principles from most other established voluntary organisations (96). The uniform served to identify the leadership cadre of the full time volunteers and the women who were in the services dealing with the public. The rank and file members of the organisation were issued with overalls or a WVS armband. The day to day work of the WVS was administered from a local office which worked in close co-operation with the local authority. According to the historian Angus Calder, it was quite impossible to tell where WVS membership began and WVS activities ended (97). A wartime survey of housewives involved in voluntary work indicated that one in five women were from the upper-middle class, one in ten from from the rest of the middle class and one in twenty from 'the better-off working class' (98).

The Kingston WVS originated in 1939 when the Town Council was keen that a WVS centre should be established in the town (99). Kingston Town Council had received a letter from the Home Office setting out the anticipated position of the WVS in relationship to the ARP. On 22 March 1939 a representative from the WVS explained at a public meeting held at Kingston Guildhall how the organisation would function in co-operation with the ARP. For example, the local WVS would assist the First Aid and Post-Raid services (100). Within one year of being established, Kingston's WVS had enrolled over one thousand members, that suggests there was a strong middle class element in the town's branch. Women who had enrolled in the Kingston WVS included the wives of wardens (101).

The Kingston Housewives Service was a WVS enterprise and an integral part of the town's Civil Defence. The service had originally been formed by the Barnes branch of the WVS and had been introduced in different parts of Britain (102). In December 1939, details of this service were given by Councillor Mrs Oldfield at a meeting of the Kingston ARP Committee. Members of the Housewives Service would be required to be called out in times of an air raid, to care for people who had been affected by the raid and comfort them until the arrival of a first aid party. The intention was that the service would cover every road in Kingston. Members were required to be personally known to their street warden, each member was issued with a printed blue card that they placed in their front window as a means of identification (103). The duties of the Housewives Service also included collecting details of the residents of each household of their neighbourhood. These records would be helpful for rescue workers searching a bombed property. The Kingston WVS Housewives Service initially consisted of 1,500 members, with 400 waiting to be trained. Eventually the role of the Kingston Housewives Service changed because of the prolonged lull in enemy raids in the area (104). The Town Clerk reported to the Kingston ARP Committee that the members of the Housewives Service had been directed to other activities in the community. This included organising local wartime events and raising funds for patriotic causes, for example, the Spitfire Fund.

Surbiton's WVS was organised in 1939 by Councillor Mrs Amy Woodgate. She had become known as a local organiser in supplying transport for the elderly and infirm during the time of the 1926 General Strike. In January 1940 Amy Woodgate issued an appeal that 'no woman in Surbiton whatever her age or ability need be without work of some national importance which she can do in her spare time'(105). This was an example of local leadership on the Home Front. The Surbiton WVS was involved in wartime events other than air raids. This had included assisting in the aftermath of the retreat from Dunkirk by providing and serving food at the railway station to the servicemen. The expected enemy invasion of the South East coast of England resulted in Government plans to evacuate civilians from the south coast towns. Surbiton's WVS was notified to expect the arrival of 8,000 evacuees in the Borough. The WVS co-operated with the warden service to organise billets for these people. Evacuees started to arrive in Surbiton during the first week of July 1940, but the policy suddenly changed, for some unknown reason, and no more evacuees arrived (106).

There was resentment in the labour ranks towards Lady Reading and the WVS. However, the war brought about an alliances between them that involved Ellen Wilkinson, who was Joint Parliamentary Secretary in charge of ARP at the Ministry of Home Security. Wilkinson was the

MP for Jarrow and had taken part in the hunger march in the early 1930's. She had been extremely critical of the WVS, describing it as 'the bastion of arrogant upper-class ladies'. In November 1940 Ellen Wilkinson changed her stance towards Lady Reading and adopted an attitude of closer co-operation with the WVS, as a way of helping Labour women to participate in the WVS (107). There were working class women who felt capable of undertaking social work, as arrangements were made for them to attend training courses that would qualify them for membership of the WVS.

Representatives of the WVS street housewives service normally belonged to 'the prevailing class of their street'(108). No evidence has been found that there were any difficulties in establishing a Housewives Service in Kingston. At Guildford bad feeling had persisted in the WVS among certain factions of its members. The local wardens wives, who were an important source of recruitment for the Guildford Housewives Service would have nothing to do with the local WVS hierarchy. The Guildford Council who had social service responsibilities, kept in the background while discretely establishing a 'Council Housewives service', as the WVS was also unpopular with the local working class activists (109). The difficulties in establishing a WVS Housewives Service had also been experienced in other communities. In April 1942, a public meeting was held at Torquay, to launch a WVS Housewives Service. The proposal were not popular because women wardens had organised a 'good neighbour service' and the wardens believed the proposed Housewives Service would soon be redundant. The WVS Housewives Service scheme went ahead and proved to be very successful when the resort was bombed (110).

An important WVS contribution in Kingston and its districts was salvage collection. The unwanted refuse that could be recycled had become an important wartime resource. There was no activity during the war which was more arduous for the WVS than collecting salvage. In June 1940, the WVS of Kingston and its districts responded to an appeal by the Ministry of Aircraft Production for its members to collect aluminium pots, kettles and pans to be used in aircraft production. The Surbiton WVS also collected waste paper, as shown in figure fourteen, overleaf. The magazines collected were sent on to the servicemen. The WVS Central Supply Service at Chessington held a stock of clothes that had been donated as gifts by the public. The Kingston WVS supplied clothes to the people who had lost their garments in the air raids (111). The Surbiton WVS provided a similar emergency service for people where hundreds of

Figure 14. Members of Surbiton WVS collecting paper for salvage in 1941. Note the name Surbiton has been erased from the van for security A link with the Invasion threat of 1940.

Kingston Heritage Centre

properties had been damaged by bombing, as indicated in chapter six. The level of destruction resulted in numerous people losing whatever clothes they had possessed (112). People placed in such a situation did not always have sufficient ready money or clothing coupons to buy replacement garments.

In June 1944, the V1 missiles attacks over London and southern England resulted in the Government organising an official evacuation of civilians. An estimated 6,000 people, including school children were evacuated from Surbiton to 33 principal reception areas situated in the Midlands and the western areas of England. The Surbiton WVS helped to organise this exodus by escorting the evacuees on their long journeys and ensuring they were fed, they then assisted with the reception of the evacuees before the children were found billets. The WVS members that had escorted a party of Surbiton evacuees experienced the stress of a V1 that flew parallel with their train, the missile came down and exploded by the side of the rail track. Fortunately there were no casualties (113). The success of this evacuation was confirmed by reports received by the Surbiton Town Council from officials of the reception areas, that stated how the Surbiton children were clean, well dressed and well behaved, reflecting credit upon the social standards of a modern suburban community (114). These complimentary remarks about the Surbiton evacuees were in contrast to many of those accounts including Mass Observation reports that dwelt on the poverty and poor state of health of evacuees. Yet many of the reception areas across the country, particularly in rural areas where evacuees were sent had their own pockets of child poverty.

A WVS service was introduced in Surbiton for elderly residents who were cared for in Government hostels and homes in country areas. The scheme, although limited, was the forerunner of the post war WVS Residential Clubs for old people. The Kingston WVS operated a permanent canteen at Penrhyn Road, Kingston, that supplied food and hot drinks to civil defence workers. The Kingston canteen was later converted into a communal feeding centre with the name British Restaurant preferred by Winston Churchill, to provide subsidised hot meals for civilians. WVS mobile canteens were also used at Kingston to supply meals to those people who had been rendered homeless by raids or when people had been compelled to evacuate their homes, because an unexploded bomb was suspected in the vicinity they lived. On the 30 September 1940 a bomb exploded on the roof of Surrey County Hall, Kingston, causing severe damage to the nearby houses. One of the first services to arrive was the WVS with their mobile canteen to feed the homeless.

The 1944 missile attacks on Kingston involved the WVS manning the Incident Inquiry Point (IIP). During an air raid it was the practice of the Kingston Civil Defence to set up an IIP in an area where property had been demolished and people were known to have lived. An IIP was a special social service unit provided for those people concerned about the whereabouts of relatives and friends who were known to have been, or believed to have been, in the vicinity where bombs had been dropped during a raid. It was to the IIP that the local hospital would send their lists of casualties. The duty periods for the WVS women at an IIP were long and often distressing when meeting the distraught relatives of victims. Later when the V2 rocket incident occurred at Park Road, Kingston in the north west area of the town, members of the Kingston WVS were on duty at the IIP. The WVS mobile canteens also provided meals for the large number of homeless and the men who were involved in the rescue of trapped people (115). The V2 incident was the last operational duty of the Kingston WVS.

8.5 Summary

This chapter analyses some of the important contributions made by women on the Home Front, including those from Kingston, Surbiton and Malden. The wartime records of these three small suburban communities is important because it confirms their value to the war effort was just as essential compared to larger communities. Many historians have tended to ignore this level of wartime experiences because outer suburbia wartime experiences did not attract the same degree of public attention given to cities and larger towns. The text explains how the impact of the war affected women, particularly the housewives. The social implications caused by the mobilisation of women are discussed. The text gives an example of working conditions for women engaged on war work in a Surrey suburb, compared to an industrial town in the Midlands. The chapter evaluates the organisation of the main women voluntary organisations together with their contributions to the war effort. The structure of the WVS is analysed and an evaluation is given as to how by the leadership and energies of middle and upper-class women were successfully utilised to play an important part in support of the Civil Defence. The WVS work in Kingston and its districts is described with emphasis on its role in the Housewives Service. An analysis is given of the WVS participation of the evacuation of Surbiton children at the time of the missile attack of 1944.

Chapter Eight
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Chapter Nine

Conclusions

The chapter begins by explaining the purpose of Air Raid Precautions and the planning of the organisation. The ARP preparations for the three towns and the state of readiness of Kingston's Civil Defence are evaluated. An analysis is given of the performance of the civil defence of the three local authorities during the Second World War. The need for more studies on the histories of local authority civil defence is proposed, followed by a brief notes on sources. The chapter ends with a final summary of my conclusions.

My research began by studying the official history of *Civil Defence* by Terence O'Brien. I have reviewed twelve secondary source publications concerning local authorities ARP together with academic papers relating to aspects of the civil defence of certain British blitzed cities. There are few detailed studies on how local authorities of small outer London suburban communities prepared their civil defence and performed during air raids. Why this should be so is open to question. Sally Sokoloff in her paper *'The Home Front in the Second World War and local history'*, refers to this dearth of information and states that the Government's efforts during the war were centralised (1). This could be a reason why so much of the history of Air Raid Precautions is focussed on the main national issues. Sokoloff states that local wartime history concerning the Home Front tends to be aimed at the 'popular book market'. However, small suburban communities such as Kingston and Surbiton had their unique civil defence experiences that merit historical enquiry. The aim of my research was to develop an argument and critically evaluate my two main research questions. Firstly, what was the state of readiness of these suburban civil defence services at the time of the declaration of the Second World War. Secondly, how did these organisations perform in the emergency conditions of wartime?

It is proposed that a local historian who is studying the history of a small suburban town during the Second World War should record for the benefit of future generations, the impact that local civil defence had on that particular community. This is important, given the tendency of contradictory evidence given by local people, possibly the result of limited knowledge and/or confused recollections. Without illuminating testimony of how people lived and behaved on the Home Front during the Second World War, their history during this period will remain

ignored. For example, recording the impact air raids had on the behaviour of residents sheltering during air raids is of particular value, as the use of air raid shelters was an entirely new and untried measure for the protection of civilians.

9.0 The purpose of Civil Defence in the Second World War

In the Second World War, the most direct effect the conflict had on civilians on the Home Front were air raids. It was the uncertain consequences of these attacks, such as the fear of casualties and that the morale of the people might break, that were behind the provision of air raid precautions. The introduction of rudimentary Air Raid Precautions in the First World War by some local authorities, referred to in chapter one, was an attempt to offer civilians some form of protection against air attack. This new form of warfare caused casualties, damage to property and public alarm as some people panicked. In London during 1917-18 many people sought refuge in the underground stations using them as dormitories which indicated to the Government a loss of morale among the population (2). It was obvious from the experience of these air raids that the conduct of warfare had changed and the protection of the civilian population and property against future air raids was necessary.

After the First World War had ended, the Committee of Imperial Defence asked the principal military experts in November 1921 to report on the possibility of future air attacks on the Country (3). This led to the formation of an Air Raid Precautions Sub Committee, its purpose was to plan defences against possible air raids of the future for the protection of civilians and property. Although the planners considered the question of air raid precautions for Britain, their main concern was the problem of defending London, because the Air Staff believed the capital would be the main target for an enemy air force (4). The provision of a civil defence service for the protection of people against high explosive bombs extended to preparing counter measures against the threat of poison gas and incendiary devices. As this was an entirely new concept of defence, experiment and development work was required. The question of the degree of resilience of the British people under air attack was a major concern of the Government, because of the behaviour of civilians during the air raids on England during the First World War (5). In

1937 the importance of maintaining civilian morale was emphasised by the Home Secretary, Sir Samuel Hoare who stated in the most strongest terms when moving the second reading of the Air Raid Precaution Bill,'that the primary job of the ARP was to insure the country against panic'(6).

9.1 Planning Civil Defence

The planning of Air Raid Precautions started soon after the end of the First World War, at a time when Britain was in a post war economic depression. In 1922 the Government had appointed Sir Eric Geddes to head a Committee to reduce national expenditure resulting in the ' Geddes Axe', that led to savage reductions in Government spending (7). It is suggested that the 'Geddes Axe' could have accounted for the limited amount of money available at that time for funding ARP. During the 1920s important planning issues concerning ARP had been raised, for example, predicting how a future air war might be fought, as the performance of military aircraft was rapidly improving. Who was the aggressor that Britain was planning air raid precautions to defend herself against ? Until the rise to power of National Socialism in Germany in the early 1930s the British Government believed that Germany would be at a serious disadvantage as an air power for many years to come (8). This opinion changed in 1934 when the Committee of the Imperial Defence recognised Germany as the hypothetical enemy (9).

Until the early 1930s, ARP planning had been carried out in secret. Throughout this period the ARP Committee's dilemma was whether the public should be told of a threat that might never materialise, or should the risk of maintaining secrecy be taken, that if the country went to war again, the necessary courage of the population would persist? Furthermore for ARP to work would require the active support of the population. On the 9 July 1935, the first comprehensive Government statement on ARP, referred to in Chapter four, was published in a form of an invitation for local authorities and the public to be involved in ARP. The lack of interest shown in Kingston by the residents in supporting an ARP service was not an encouraging sign for the Town Council. This poor response to introduce ARP was experienced by many local council authorities throughout the Country.

Civil Defence planning had been influenced by the prediction of a 'knock out blow', referred to in chapter six (10). It followed that a local authority civil defence service must be ready to function immediately by being able to transfer from a peace to war situation with minimum delay. In March 1935 the Government established an ARP department at the Home Office. The

national ARP organisation was to be based on a close relationship between local authorities and their individual ARP responsibilities. County and County Boroughs would be responsible for overseeing local authorities ARP schemes. In 1937 the Warren Fisher Committee had been convened to enquire into the aims of Air Raid Precautions. Their report defined the aims of the ARP service which were to maintain the morale of the people and to reduce to a minimum the destruction of life and property (11). This meant having well organised ARP services and the participation of the local community. The Warren Fisher Committee report stated that it should be recognised that 'it was impossible to secure complete security (against air raids) by passive civil defence' (12). The ARP Act of 1937 that came into force on January 1938, brought to a close over two years of voluntary collaboration between the Home Office and local authorities. The Act had resulted in Kingston Council being in a more favourable position to initiate Air Raid Precautions. The Government had also committed to pay local authorities grants of up to 75% of approved expenditure. An anticipated 'scale of risk' had been calculated by the planners that graded the degree of vulnerability in areas of Britain. This allowed the planners to decide what main capital equipment would be required and the number of personnel that would be allocated to each of the local authority ARP schemes.

In the aftermath of the Munich Crisis of 1938 important changes were made when the Government's ARP Committee proposed that the ARP services that were administered by the Home Office should be combined under a newly created Ministry of Home Security, with Sir John Anderson as its Minister. A significant development occurred in Air Raid Precautions at the end of 1938 when the Minister announced the availability of a domestic air raid shelter, known as the 'Anderson Shelter', referred to in chapter four. On the 6 April 1939, the Hailey Conference report recommended that no attempt should be made for the public to be provided with bomb proof shelters for the public as these shelters could be used as dormitories (13). The planning of ARP was a huge challenge for the Government for there was no precedent, for that reason it is concluded that the responsible officers must have sometimes used a trial and error approach to find ways of protecting civilians from bombing. The considerable time spent in ARP development reflected the need for designing, developing and testing equipment and the shortage of money for these purposes.

9.2 The state of readiness in preparing for air raids

From 1935 until 1938 there had been little progress in the development of ARP in Kingston, Surbiton and Malden. The aftermath of the Munich Crisis of 1938 marked the time when preparing Kingston Civil Defence became a matter of urgency. It also provided time for the Town's Civil Defence to test their ARP machinery by training and exercises. The Munich Crisis transformed the reluctant attitude of the public that had existed towards ARP into one of a more determined co-operative effort (14). From 1938, the organisation of Kingston ARP Service became more structured, as a number of special ARP services were created. For example, the formation of Rescue Squads. There had been a slow build up of Kingston's ARP in recruiting personnel and in the delivery of equipment. But the service grew in size as the Kingston ARP Committee developed the organisation. Senior appointments were made and the individual services, for example, the Stretcher Bearer parties, underwent training and assessment by Home Office Inspectors. The Air Raid Wardens service that had been formed in 1937, referred to in chapter four, had made steady progress under the direction of Chief Warden, Captain Oldfield. In April 1939 Kingston's warden service had been organised into 52 sectors, each sector under a Head Warden. These were grouped to form sixteen reporting sectors. In an emergency, each of these sectors would be patrolled by six wardens who manned the ARP posts (15). Other Kingston ARP services had been organised that in time of war would be on standby duty at their respective depots. Kingston's ARP touched on every aspect of community life in the Borough from the factories, shops and places of worship to the individual residents who were responsible for maintaining the blackout. According to Professor Titmuss, a state of readiness almost became a permanent feature of life for those who manned the Civil Defence Services. Kingston's ARP had been organised as a network of services that were linked by telephone or messengers to Kingston's ARP Control Centre, that was distinguished as being the operational command in the event of any air raid on the town. The Control Centre was based at Kingston Guildhall, referred to in chapter four. Similar network services were established at Surbiton and Malden. The overall significance of these developments indicate that Kingston ARP was in an advanced state of preparedness before the outbreak of war.

In 1938 the residents of the three towns had been measured and supplied with their gas masks. Mr Drury, Chief Officer of the Kingston Fire Brigade, who had attended a Government gas school to learn how to counter the danger of poisonous gas, then had the responsibility of

teaching other Kingston Civil Defence workers how to deal with gas attacks (16). In October 1938 Kingston Council had embarked on a recruiting campaign for ARP Volunteers. The minutes of the ARP Sub Committee record that large numbers of posters and cards had been received from the Home Office for distribution. 11,000 copies of an appeal for volunteers had been distributed to houses throughout the Borough by the Boys Brigade and Scouts. The Mayor and Town Clerk of Kingston addressed numerous meetings at local factories. Other venues included the departmental store Wolfe and Hollander, The Kingston Tanning Company and Knapp and Drewett, the printers. They also spoke to audiences at the town's cinemas that included Kingston Kinema, the Super Cinema and the Elite Cinema. Their week of campaigning resulted in 262 people enrolling in Kingston's ARP service (17). On 4 November 1938, Kingston Council had constituted an ARP Standing Committee that comprised of five members of the town Council together with ex-officio members (18). Early in 1938 there were no domestic air raid shelters available for civilians. For this reason the Government had encouraged householders to prepare a refuge room to protect them from bomb blast and gas attack. After surveying all the basements in the town it was estimated that no more than 20 per cent of them were suitable to be used as a refuge room (19). How many basements were converted and used as shelters is not known. The situation was different at Tolworth and Malden where the newly built housing estates did not have basement rooms.

During January 1939 the *Surrey Comet* commented on the need to provide facilities for Fire Fighting from the River Thames This issue had been raised by the editor of the paper because of a fire earlier that month at a riverside timber yard 'when half of Kingston appeared to have been threatened'(20). The editorial stated that providing a firefloat, with the possibility of enemy air raids on the town, would be useful, as the supply of water would be assured, but the idea was rejected, it is presumed because of the expense incurred. On the 5 May 1939, Kingston's Town Clerk reported that the town had been placed on the Government list of places that would be provided with Anderson air raid shelters. He announced an estimated 5,422 households were eligible for free shelters (21). There had been a demand in Kingston by the local communist party branch for the Town Council to provide deep bomb proof shelters, but these demands were rejected on the grounds of cost. Kingston ARP Committee were given details of a Home Office notice requesting Kingston Council should arrange its business during the next three months giving priority to Civil Defence matters over other Council affairs. In August 1939, Mr Forsdike, the Town Clerk of Kingston was appointed its ARP controller. The introduction of

the blackout on 1 September 1939 had an immediate impact on the life of people by causing many car accidents, The first fatality caused by the blackout at Kingston was the brother of Hannen Swaffer, a well known British journalist. Despite complaints by the public about the imposition of the blackout, the authorities remained unrepentant.

It is evident from the ARP Committee minutes of the three towns, that from the summer of 1938 there had been no complacency by the town councils in the preparation for the defence against expected air raids on their respective community. Although Kingston, Surbiton and Malden were adjacent to each other, whatever co-operation had existed between the towns in developing their ARP services, each town retained its individual civil defence throughout the war. From the Summer of 1938, Kingston's ARP preparation had taken preference over local council work. A Home Office report describes the influence of Kingston's Town Clerk' whose eagerness in taking an active part in the town's ARP, extended in participating in street corner meetings for the public, this appears to have communicated itself to the rest of the service'(22). During the early months of the war, because of the absence of enemy air activity over Britain the Civil Defence was under employed. This caused a reaction from the residents in Kingston and Surbiton who argued that ARP was a waste of time and money. The Government's response to this situation was a national review of the ARP services that resulted in the reduction of civil defence establishments including those of the three towns.

9.3 Kingston and districts Civil Defence

On the day war was declared the Government had put into operation its Civil Defence schemes. By doing this it had upset the working of the peacetime social services (23). For example, many hospitals, that included Kingston, were emptied of their patients to make beds and medical services available for the expected air raid casualties. Education was severely interrupted throughout the country by the mass evacuation of children to the country side (24). For the Civil Defence the war became a 'waiting game' for the enemy bomber aircraft to appear. But if the war had started with major air raids on London what effect would this have had on Kingston and its districts? Would the bombing have spilt over to these communities ? If this had happened it is impossible to estimate how the local ARP services would have coped. A year later this questioned was partly answered when the air raids started.

At the outbreak of war, Kingston Air Raid wardens had not been provided with uniforms. Their presence on the street was recognised by their black painted steel helmet that was stencilled with a bold white 'W', a service gas mask carrier slung over their shoulder and an ARP arm band. The Battle of Britain that was fought in the Summer of 1940, was followed by the London Blitz, a time when Kingston, Surbiton and Malden were first bombed. The attacks on these towns occurred during the day and night time. An important feature of Kingston and Malden's Civil Defence was the use of roof spotters who were employed by the local factories. Their purpose was to identify and warn the local civil defence of any enemy aircraft approaching in the direction of the towns. This novel warning system enabled factory workers during an air raid alert to carry on with their essential war work. Only as a last resort, given by a signal by a spotter, would the workers down their tools before going to the shelters. Previously when the air raid warning sounded, workers immediately stopped work and took cover (25).

The provision of air raid shelters for Kingston, Surbiton and Malden had been the most important ARP facility provided for the protection of residents of these communities. Shelters were a vital component of ARP. Their purpose and use has been neglected by local historians. There were various types of shelters used by the public. The safe room previously mentioned, was the earliest evidence discovered that offered Kingston householders some form of protection. The large primitive trench shelters that were dug by all the three local authorities at the time of the Munich Crisis in 1938 were uncomfortable, damp and tended to flood and some trench walls were known to have collapsed. To prevent this problem from happening the walls were faced with concrete. Nevertheless trench shelters were used by the local residents of the three towns during the 1940- air raids. During 1939 the Anderson steel domestic shelter became available by personal application to the respective town councils, who delivered them to the householder. The outdoor Anderson shelter was required to be erected in a garden. The distribution was limited as the Government had halted production because of the shortage of steel. Anderson shelters according to O'Brien had spearheaded the Government's shelter policy. Their disadvantage was they were damp and space was restricted, consequently many people stopped using them by sheltering indoors in their home, thereby increasing the risk of injury by bombing. To satisfy the demand of the residents for domestic shelters, the local authorities of Kingston and its districts built small brick shelters of various sizes. There were also private companies that sold domestic shelters. Permission was required by the local council to purchase and erect this form of shelter.

Air Raid Shelter protection were not provided by the large stores at Kingston. During the daytime, if there was an air raid warning the stores allowed the public to take refuge in the basements. The original intentions of local authorities providing public shelters, was that they would be used as short stay shelters for the passing public. When people started to use these shelters for sleeping, Kingston Council fitted them with bunks and provided heating. Shelter management groups were formed in Kingston to provide refreshments for the shelterers. There were reports, referred to in chapter five, that some Kingston public shelters were used as dormitories, but evidence suggests this was not on a large scale. At the end of 1940, the Ministry of Home Security announced that a new shelter, the indoor Morrison shelter, was available to the householder. This created a demand in Malden from people who did not possess an Anderson shelter. Kingston Council provided school shelters, except for the town's private schools. The parents of these students were expected to contribute money towards the cost of the school shelter The same type of air raid shelters were used during the VI missile attacks that started in June 1944 that were used in the air raids of 1940-41. Although the Government reversed its policy on building deep bombproof shelters, this form of shelter was not provided at Kingston or its districts.

The reports from various sources referred to in chapter six, confirm the capability of the ARP Services of the three towns. The consequences of their action in wartime emergencies was to impart confidence in the local residents, that helped to sustain morale within the Community. The local residents were able to observe the bravery of the members of their Civil Defence, resulting in some of them awarded medals for gallantry. Ministry of Information post-raid reports on Surbiton and Malden in 1940 refer to the dedicated work of the air raid wardens and that the state of morale of the local residents was good. During the Spring of 1941 the enemy changed its tactics to concentrate on fire raising raids. The enemy dropped thousands of small incendiary bombs on their target area to start conflagrations. To counter this threat, Fire Guards teams were organised. In Kingston, Surbiton and Malden, thousands of local women, referred to in chapters six were mobilised to meet this challenge. The reason why so many women were employed on fire guard duties was that there were insufficient men available to operate the scheme (26). The task of the Fire Guards, that were organised as street parties, was to spot and douse incendiary bombs. This was achieved by directing sprinkled water from a hand operated

stirrup pump or to throw a bucket of sand or earth onto an ignited incendiary device before it started a blaze. From the summer of 1941 there had been a lull in enemy air activity over Kingston and its districts. This resulted in the wardens given other work to perform, for example, collecting salvage. In 1943 Kingston Town Council contemplated closing down one-half of the warden's posts and hoped the WVS would help in keeping the other posts open (27). This indicates how much poorer the Town's Civil Defence would have been had it not been for the devoted service of the members of the WVS.

From January 1944 to May 1944 the enemy mounted 'Operation Steinbock' a bombing offensive over parts of Britain, the main target being London. No bombs were reported to have been dropped on Kingston, Surbiton or Malden. In June, the enemy launched a new air offensive using unmanned explosive missiles on London and South East England. The bombardment that caused casualties and extensive damage to property lasted seven months. This was an entirely new challenge for the residents of Kingston and its districts. These attacks tested the morale of the local residents of the three towns, but the people adapted to the V weapon attacks and coped with the situation by continuing to carry out their daily tasks. A difficulty for the Civil Defence was estimating the scale of attack. When the V1 attacks receded, so the long range rocket attacks began. As the speed of a V1 was not much faster than a current fighter aircraft, the public air raid warning system was used to signify the approach of a 'flying bomb' in the local area. At Kingston and Malden 'spotters' were used again by the local factories to warn the civil defence of approaching V1 missiles. But the vast speed of a V2 rocket did not allow enough time for the public to be warned to take shelter. The weight of these missile attacks caused the Government considerable concern and were a great strain for the people to endure, because the bombs could fall and explode at any time in a crowded place.

The missile attacks resulted in new evacuation areas being identified that included Kingston and its districts. The same ARP services that were used in the earlier conventional raids were employed to counter the new weapons, but the missiles called for a change of tactics. As most incidents were isolated so the civil defence services could be directed in strength. Civil defence flying columns, consisting of heavy and light rescue vehicles, ambulances and a mobile first air post were formed, and prepared to speed immediately to the site of the incident, even if it was outside the municipal boundary. The continuous nature of the V weapon attacks involved the

constant manning of the civil defence posts (28). The superior power of the V1 caused more destruction to property than the same weight of bombs had caused in previous bombing (29). The first three V1 missiles that exploded in Kingston damaged 1,800 houses and by the end of the attacks on Kingston 8,000 properties had been damaged (30). Surbiton and Malden did not experience a rocket attack, whereas Kingston experienced its only V2 rocket attack on 22 January 1945 which caused numerous casualties and considerable damage. As the Allied Armies advanced across the Continent they continued to overrun the V1 launching sites. This resulted in the enemy using a method of air-launching a V from a bomber aircraft. Of the nine missiles that were launched from an aircraft and fell in the London area, one of them came down in Surbiton killing two people (31). What ever concern the missile attacks had on the residents of Kingston and its districts, no evidence has been found that they affected the morale of the local people. The V1 missiles caused considerable destruction and casualties in all three towns, in particular in Malden and Surbiton. The local civil defence services coped well with the challenges they were confronted with.

Sub Conclusions

Evidence from the ARP Committee minutes of Kingston, Surbiton and Malden indicate that their Civil Defence preparations up to the outbreak of war were well organised, having undergone training for their tasks. Although Kingston Casualty Service had been slow in developing partly because of the delays in building its casualty posts. Surbiton had experienced a shortage of Anderson shelters that in 1940 was partially resolved with the delivery of Morrison indoor shelters. Malden also experienced a shortage of Anderson shelters and the Council decided to build small brick shelters for the residents. Gas masks had been distributed to the residents of the three towns . To relieve the industrial labour shortage that existed early in the war, the Government had introduced the National Service(no 2) Act of 1940 that allowed women and men being conscripted into the Civil Defence. This resulted in solving the shortage of Kingston Wardens. The air attacks caused casualties and destruction to property. In August 1941, new defence regulations were introduced resulting in the formation of 'Fire Guards', that were part of the wardens service. In 1943 thousands of women from Kingston, Surbiton and Malden were compulsory enrolled as 'Fire Guards' and organised into local fire guard parties, contributing to the defence of their community.

Reference is made of the importance of patriotism, class and gender, all were issues intertwined with voluntarism. This evidence helps tell the historian something of the people and challenges that were faced in the Civil Defence of Kingston and its districts. Furthermore they indicate what class of women were engaged on war work on the Home Front in the First and Second World War, The use of volunteers in Kingston's Civil Defence is described that has a history that goes back to 1935 when volunteers were recruited as nurses and air raid wardens that suggests a spirit of patriotism existed in the community. Gender issues associated with local authority ARP are analysed. For example, Malden's Town Council policy who in the latter years of the1930s refused to enlist women for ARP duties. Evidence is given that Class divisions did not prevent Kimgston's middle / upper class women of the WVS from making a major contribution in serving the ARP. As Kingston's ARP Committee was directly responsible for its day to day service, an attempt was made to identify if there was a natural leader of the town's ARP. Was there an individual, apart from the Mayor or elected Chairman of one of the town's committees who could be considered as a person capable of taking on this role? By studying the Kingston Town Council ARP minutes, it was concluded that Mr Forsdike, the Town Clerk and ARP controller, was a man of initiative and organising ability who before the war had been actively involved in Kingston's ARP, by encouraging recruitment into the service. It is concluded that it was Forsdike who led the way in the development of Kingston's Civil Defence. It is evident from the reports referred to, that Kingston, Surbiton and Malden civil defence services functioned efficiently during air raids. The passive defences were sufficient and adequate for the tasks undertaken. This quality of service reflects the dedication of the local civil defence workers to their tasks of helping to save lives, care for the injured and homeless and prevent property damage. The skills of the local senior ARP officers had ensured a competent standard of performance by introducing training and inspections of their services, that were acknowledged by their peers.

9.4 The need for further local studies on Civil Defence

Being a local historian interested in the civil defence of the Home Front in a suburban setting during the Second World War requires primary sources being accessible, and evidence of provenance is essential. Secondary sources can be useful in writing a local history, but care must be taken as to the source of the material that is used. Any person may write an account of the experience on the Home Front of a local community during the Second World War based

on secondary sources, but does this form of publication qualify it as a reliable local history ? According to the historian, Professor John Tosh, 'a student of the subject, is a guardian of our cultural history who offers insight into the human condition'(32). Morale was a key subject concerning local civil defence, but little attention has been paid by local historians to the importance and controversy surrounding morale. Clichés are often used by authors in writing about the Home Front, for example,' doing their bit for the war effort '. What would be more useful for the future historian are details of what actually 'the bit for the war effort' entailed. It is suggested that the history of a small suburban town's civil defence in the Second World War is recorded by evaluating how the local authority ARP as part of the Home Front served its residents and how these people contributed to the defence of their homes and community This would include how the local Council organised the community's passive defences and the manner of the performance of the ARP service in an emergency. It is suggested that research on the civil defence of suburban communities should be encouraged.

9.5 Sources

My study was based on primary sources and limited secondary sources. Oral evidence that has been used was sourced from the Kingston Heritage Centre. Unfortunately no personal diaries or private publications, other than the letters referring to in chapter six have been discovered. More information could have been researched on the activities of the two London Regional Commissioners (Sir Ernest Gowers and Admiral Evans) and the influence of the London Region Office concerning the Civil Defence of Kingston and its districts.

9.6 Final Conclusions

From the evidence presented in my thesis, maintaining the morale of the local civilian population was the most important aspect of Air Raid Precautions. My research indicates that Kingston, Surbiton and Malden were at a state of readiness at the time of the declaration of the Second World War and they performed their tasks satisfactorily during the wartime emergencies. The morale of the local residents was maintained throughout the wartime years that defied the pre-war Government prediction of panic and disorder among the civilian population by the people going about their daily routine in their normal way. It is emphasised the dedication of the local ARP services to duty and performance during air raids was something new and untried. Their performance and service to their community fully justified their recognition as a capable defence force.

Chapter Nine

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