

WARTIME MEMORIES - J JOHNSON

On Saturday September 1st 1939 before war was declared, Harthill received 99 children and 12 parents, evacuated from Rotherham. Sympathetic families, with room took them in, some stayed for a few years, but others used to living in town, returned quickly.

Early in the war Harthill was on the flight path of bombers destined for Merseyside and Manchester; most people sheltering under tables or in cellars, as the air raid shelters were not fit to use, due to flooding.

August 1940 was a lively month for the air raid wardens, who dealt with 69 colours in messages (yellow, red, purple, white). These colours gave the relative proximity of the invading German plane, white was the 'all clear'.

On August 28th 1940, 19 bombs fell between Cutbright Wood and Loscar Farm in the eastern part of Harthill village. They were mostly 500 kilogram bombs with a few percussion and one large incendiary bomb.

They missed the village from 1/4 to 1/2 a mile. All roads to Loscar were roped off by the home guard: but one local farmer refused to be kept from his fields and told the Home Guard to "bugger off, I've got to get my crops in".

The fire service were called to Loscar by Mr Wilson Wilks and the fire service tender was dive bombed on the way, the occupants taking cover in the hedge bottom.

On the night of December 12th-13th 1940 the Germans chose Sheffield for their target. Many of the German bombers passed over Harthill on the way, and many of the Harthill people saw the flashes of the bursting bombs and the fires burning in Sheffield, eleven miles away.

The same evening several heavy bombs fell in Kiveton Colliery Yard; but failed to explode. The military took them away and diffused them, exploding all but one in Loscar Quarry.

On March 13th 1941 a land mine was dropped and exploded in a field at Woodall, doing little damage and shattering a few windows in the village, including some at Harthill Wesleyan Chapel. On March 12th-13th 1944, four flying bombs 'Doodlebugs' passed over Harthill. One of these exploded harmlessly at Killamarsh.

During the war Fl. Lt Stanley Turner, R.A.F. was navigator of a bomber crew, and made many hazardous flights over Germany. For his courage, example and high sense of duty he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, an honour worthily won by a Harthill born boy.

The war was over at last, and 'V' Day came. A thanksgiving service was held in Harthill Church.

The Church and war memorial were floodlit by Mr Wainscoat. The service, consisting of suitable prayers, hymns and poems, was relayed to a large congregation outside, the Church being packed until 10.40pm at which time the service terminated.

WARTIME HARTHILL

During nineteen thirty nine,
Most of us had seen the sign
Of the war clouds, coming high,
Thoughts of the future, made us sigh.

From Hitler, Chamberlain had not heard,
War was declared on September third.
Preparations were made in great haste,
The dreadful Hun must be faced.

A war! So the country needed coal,
The miners no longer went t'dole;
Pit blower ceased its mighty blast,
The Hezzle at seven, Deep at half past.

Frank Wainscoat started the A.R.P
In Chambers' old house it used to be:
Patrolling the village every night,
Frequently calling 'put out that light'.

The fire service met at The Bell,
They squirted water from the well,
The jet it went up in the air,
Onto fires which were not there.

Tommy Laking drove girls each day'
To t'Armament Factory, Ranskill way;
They all wore turbans around their hair,
Because of the Cordite they used there.