

HAGLEY IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR

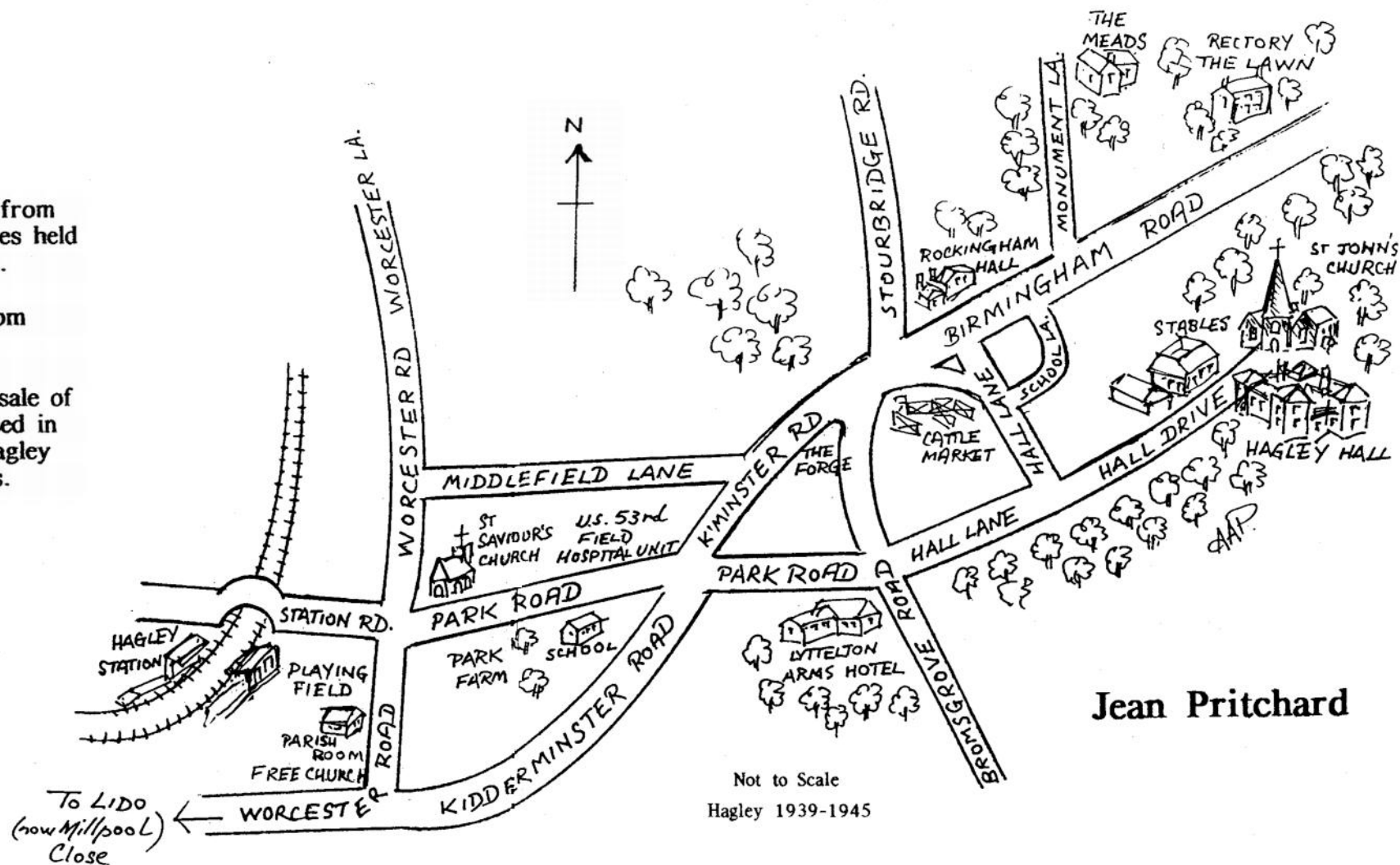
from
Hagley Parish Magazines

Facsimile extracts are from
Hagley Parish Magazines held
in the Church Records.

Advertisements are from
contemporary leaflets.

Any profits from the sale of
this booklet will be used in
the conservation of Hagley
Parish Church Records.

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Jean Pritchard

FOREWORD

8th May 1995 was the day on which the nation officially remembered the fiftieth anniversary of the ending of the Second World War in May 1945.

The occasion was marked in Hagley by an exhibition sponsored by the Community Association and co-ordinated by Mrs Frances Pagett with the help of a small committee. Memorabilia, letters, photographs, old advertisements and many precious relics of the war years were loaned by members of the community. Guest of honour was Marty Sheeron, who had been billeted as a GI in Hagley for several months in the early summer of 1944. Along with many other personnel he was part of the US 53rd Field Hospital Unit. Their base was in Park Road where modern "Oldfields" cul-de-sac is situated.

The contribution by the Church to the Exhibition in May 1995 was a series of extracts from the war-time Parish Magazines held in the Church Records. Some of these extracts are reproduced in this booklet. Because of their specific nature (magazines intended for the Church of England congregation of Hagley) a complete picture of Hagley in the Second World War cannot be obtained from these pages. No doubt there is more which remains to be discovered about the Civil Defence Forces, the efforts of the other Churches and the Schools, for example, as well as the various immigrants into Hagley. Nevertheless the Parish Magazines of Hagley Church of England provide a vivid background to the years of the Second World War in Hagley, then a village with a population of about 2,000.

The collection of magazines is complete for the early years of the War, but from 1942 when paper shortage became a problem many issues are missing, so that the later years 1943-1945 are poorly represented. In spite of this the magazines which do survive prove the importance of maintaining and preserving such an important historical record.

Jean Pritchard
Honorary Parish Archivist

THE RECTOR'S LETTERS

Robert Burns MA was Rector of Hagley from 1923 to 1946. During the war years 1939-1945 his letters in the Parish Magazine ranged from denouncements of the enemy, exhortations to his parishioners and words of comfort to the bereaved. With the hindsight of 50 years some of his views of the enemy may seem harsh, but to many alive at the time they were necessary encouragement to face the long years of struggle.

Writing in late August 1939, Robert Burns denounces the leaders of the enemy but is confident of the outcome of the war:

Telephone :
HAGLEY 442.

THE RECTORY,
24th August, 1939.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

As I write, the war-clouds again hang low and threateningly over Europe, and in fact over most of the world. The situation changes dramatically from day to day and there is no telling what a day may bring forth. But we do not lose heart. All who heard the broadcast on Sunday evening last, how the little band of "Old Contemptibles" kept the German army at bay and inflicted defeat after defeat on them, must have supreme confidence in the spirit of Britain to face whatever may be in store for us. But our confidence does not rest solely on the spirit of our armies. We know that our cause is just and righteous, and that in the long run justice and righteousness must prevail. We may be called upon to endure much hardship, and to sustain many sacrifices, but we are sure that our cause will prevail because it is the cause of God. There is something grimly humorous in the projected alliance of Germany and Russia, two nations which but yesterday, as it were, were calling each other the vilest names possible. And yet the alliance is only logical. Both nations are in the grip of bondage to the will of a tyrant who ruthlessly eliminates any who dare to oppose his way, and both are agreed in denying, if not the existence of God, at least His justice and mercy.

By April of 1940 he is not optimistic of an early end to the war. The strength of the opposition is apparent and he calls on the Parish to support the fighting forces more ardently in prayer. To help achieve this he refers back to the First World War Battle of the Marne in 1914, which, surprisingly, when he was writing in 1940 was only 26 years earlier and must have been fresh in the memories of many people. The Rev Burns' belief in the power of prayer was intense.

Telephone :
HAGLEY 442.

THE RECTORY,
25th April, 1940.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

Still the war drags on and one nation after another falls a victim to the insensate fury of the aggressor.

But what are we doing? Those of us who cannot fight, are we strengthening our brothers' arms by prayer and supplication? After the Battle of the Marne in 1914, when the German forces threatening Paris were hurled back in confusion, one of the leaders of the British forces was heard to remark "The people at home are praying." It seemed impossible otherwise than by a providential intervention that the German General should have made such a blunder. But are the people at home praying this time? From the record of attendances at our Church services it would not appear so. Surely it should comfort those whose sons or brothers or husbands are in the fighting forces to commend them to the care and keeping of our Almighty Father, and to know that they are joined in prayer by the whole congregation. May we hope therefore to see a great revival of worship so that we can commend our cause to Almighty God.

Yours very sincerely,

ROBERT BURNS.

There are many other letters from the Rector pressing for defiance of the enemy and calling for greater efforts to support the Church, but it is noticeable that as the months passed the war became less of a topic: normal life had to go on despite everything. From time to time, too, the Rev Burns lectured his parishioners quite severely in the face of obvious 'war weariness', as in his letter of 21st January 1943, in which he managed to admonish his readers at the same time as acknowledging their difficulties.

The second thing is the apparent slackening of the moral fibre of some people. The stringency of fuel supplies and the threat of the possible rationing of bread have led to rather more grumbling than the occasion warrants. Of course it has often been said of the Englishman that he grumbles and carries on, but when some people begin to feel that they cannot carry on then the grumbling becomes dangerous. And it is more dangerous still when such people put forth stories of their hardships, and so lead their neighbours to think about the difficulties of the times. These people are definitely playing the enemy's game, for the one chance he has of conquering us is to break our will to carry on in spite of all he can do to us. So if you feel inclined to grumble overmuch, think of your blessings first.

Contrast your situation with that of the prisoners in German concentration camps, or of the millions of Europeans groaning under the most cruel savagery the world has ever known, and thank God that you still live in a free England, and that of His mercy He has saved our land from such barbarities. The spring is at hand, pull yourself together, and ask God for renewed faith and courage to hold on until in His good time His enemies and ours are in the dust.

Yours very sincerely,
ROBERT BURNS.

Nearly two years later in his letter of 21st November 1944 the Rev Burns had tempered his aggression and his comments and was calling for sympathy and compassion towards those caught up in the long, seemingly interminable, war.

Telephone
HAGLEY 442

THE RECTORY,
21st November, 1944.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

When one begins to write the matter for the December Magazine one's thoughts naturally turn to Christmas. A year ago perhaps most of us hoped and half expected that the war in Europe would be over before another Christmas, but here we are, facing the sixth Christmas of total war. Our first thoughts must be for those families still divided up by the exigencies of the war; the lads at the front facing all the rigours of the winter and the violence of the enemy; the girls in the various auxiliary services, many on lonely stations up and down the land; and the people at home, many torn with anxiety for the safety of their loved ones, who yet can only hope and pray for a speedy and happy reunion. We think especially of those to whom even hope can bring no further relief, those who have received the dread communication that their son or brother or husband has made the supreme sacrifice.



EFFECTS ON THE CHURCHES

Naturally enough, special prayers were said throughout the war years. As early as October 1939 the Parish Magazine records that:

Prayers for Soldiers, &c.—As already announced in both Churches, we are compiling a list of men and women serving in His Majesty's Forces in order that special prayers may be offered up for them in the Churches. It is our wish to keep this list as complete as possible, and to that end we invite the relatives of those who are already serving or who may be called up to send their names to one of the Clergy. We feel that it will afford some comfort to those whose hearts are torn with anxiety to know that their loved ones are commended to God's care and keeping. We may be called upon to pass through dark days of anxiety and distress, but let us be assured that nothing can separate us from the love of a Heavenly Father, and so let us commend ourselves and our loved ones to Him and rest assured that He will do for us and for them what is best.

There was a disinclination to hold party festivities:

Mothers' Union.—The usual Christmas party will not be held this year. It is felt to be untimely when so many members have sons and brothers at the front. Instead, a service of intercession is held in the Churches on the first Thursday of each month at 3.15 p.m.

As it became more obvious that the war would not be as short as originally predicted, the nation turned more towards prayerfulness:

War Prayers.—In addition to the constant use of the forms of prayer set forth by authority, Hymn 595, "For absent friends," is now sung every Sunday evening at the close of the service.

There were National Days of Prayer:

National Day of Prayer.—Sunday, May 26th, was observed as a Day of National Prayer in accordance with the expressed desire of the King. In our own parish large congregations assembled in our Churches, and throughout the services there was an atmosphere of quiet devotion and serious intent. The Spiritual needs of our people occupied our time and thought, and in penitence and prayer we sought the blessing of Almighty God upon our Country, and leaders and troops, and upon the cause for which we are fighting. The occasion was also used as an opportunity for renewing our faith in God, and for greater seriousness of life and purpose.

Practical restrictions were placed on the Churches, most notably in lighting, or lack of it, and, indirectly, petrol. October 1939 saw this notice:

Harvest Festival.—Owing to the lighting restrictions it will of course be impossible to hold the usual week-night services, and owing to the rationing of petrol, arrangements we had made for preachers from a distance have had to be cancelled.

Christmas Services 1939 were affected:

Christmas Services.—On Christmas Day times of services must be slightly changed for, unless the Church windows are blacked out, the 7 a.m. celebration will have to be cancelled. Therefore times of services are as follows:—

- 8 a.m. Holy Communion ; no music.
- 9.15 a.m. Holy Communion ; Sung ; no sermon.
- 11 a.m. Matins and address followed by Holy Communion.
- 3 p.m. Evensong, said ; no sermon.

'Blackout' requirements continued to be a problem:

Winter Services.—One of the subjects put down for discussion and settlement at the Council meeting on September 13th, was the advisability of blacking-out St. Saviour's Church in order that the usual winter services might be held. The general opinion however was that people would prefer to be at home after dark, as the conditions are so different from last winter.

But even blackout was not without its moments of beauty, as is recorded in the January 1941 Magazine:

In spite of the difficulty in obtaining flowers the decorated Church looked very festive on Christmas Day. Probably none of the 85 who attended the 8 o'clock Celebration will ever forget that service in the dark when the only illumination was one hooded torch on the altar until, at "de-blackening-out-time," towards the end of the service, the Chancel lights suddenly and brilliantly lit the altar with its white flowers and hangings.

Double Summer Time posed problems!

22nd May 1941.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

I am afraid that the experiment of "Double Summer Time" is proving disastrous to our Church attendance, especially at the early morning services. To get up at 5-0 o'clock with a cold north-east wind blowing and the frost white on the grass, is really too much to ask from ordinary people, even though an Act of Parliament may order us to call it 7-0 o'clock.

Around the same time, the Curate, Mr Philpott, was 'called-up' to become an Army Chaplain. The Choir too, was feeling the effects of 'call-up':

The Choir.—Owing to the exigencies of national service the Parish Church Choir has almost disappeared. May we again plead for some more members. Any man or woman, boy or girl, who has a voice and is willing to help, is asked to communicate with Mr. Leonard Round, who will arrange for the necessary practice.

Once in place, these restrictions would continue throughout the war and very little mention is made of them in later Parish Magazines.

SOLDIERS' COMFORTS

WHILE THE MEN FIGHT THE WOMEN KNIT, TAKE TEA OR COLLECT MONEY

The famous war-time spirit of 'togetherness' began to take form in Hagley, Blakedown and Churchill. Private houses, schools, the Rectory and Hagley Hall were all involved.

At this time the Parish Magazines of Blakedown and Churchill were bound in the same issue as Hagley's. There may have been some rivalry in producing 'comforts' for the Forces. Blakedown seems to have been first off the mark in the October 1939 Magazine:

Red Cross Working Party.—May I call your attention to a meeting which will be held in the Parish Room, Blakedown, on October 4th, from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. for the purpose of forming a Working Party, for Hospitals and Soldiers' needs. All the women of Blakedown are cordially invited to attend.

But the November 1939 issue carries a lively account of the first meeting of Hagley Women's Working Party:

Hagley Women's Working Party.—Thunder, lightning and torrential rain greeted the opening day of the Hagley Women's Working Party for the Red Cross. Our spirits sank as we thought how few we could expect to come along to Holm Lacy, Middlefield Lane, to sew or to knit. But it seemed to make us realise how badly these warm clothes would be needed for our boys; and at ten o'clock sharp the first volunteers arrived, and quite soon there were sewing machines purring and knitting needles clicking—pyjamas were taking shape; ounces of wool becoming operation stockings; and knitted squares were being sewn together to make warm blankets.

The afternoon brought even more rain; but ladies came along in their mackintoshes, and soon forgot the weather in the warm room and busy atmosphere.

These ladies really were very busy. The January 1940 issue gave a detailed list of what Blakedown Ladies had produced:

Soldiers' Comforts.—The Blakedown Working Party which meets every Monday afternoon in the Parish Room has dispatched up to date a number of army comforts consisting of the following:—14 blankets, 37 pairs of socks, 27 pairs of bedsocks, 6 pairs of operation stockings, 8 pairs of mittens, 1 helmet, 3 pairs of pyjamas, 18 shirts, 6 helpless case shirts, making a total of 120 articles. A Christmas parcel of comforts has also been sent to each man serving from the village, together with 2s. 6d. P.O., from a "Village Friend."

Churchill Ladies were equally occupied:

Churchill Working Party.—Regular meetings on Wednesday afternoons have been held, and 146 garments made and given to units of the Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force; and to local Military Hospitals. A debt of gratitude is owed to all those supporters who have helped to provide wool and material; for without this help the achievement would not have been possible.

A further list in October 1940 shows how other groups helped:

Blakedown Day School Soldiers' Comfort Efforts.—During the past six months the Old Girls of Blakedown School, and a few friends, have been busy knitting for our Forces.

We have posted parcels to twenty-five Old Boys and men from the village now serving.

Each parcel contained a knitted pullover, Chocolate, and Cigarettes.

In addition to this we have made 7 blankets, 1 pair of sea-boot stockings, 21 pairs of socks, 2 pairs of gloves and 4 cardigans, for the Working Party.

We shall still knit for our boys, as they are called up, and also hope to make Comforts for the men who are guarding us at home.

May we thank all our kind friends who have helped us in our various little money raising efforts.

In conjunction with the Day School we hope to hold an American Tea at an early date for Funds for our Local Defence Services and Child Air Raid victims.—V.A.R.

The American Tea was an idea also taken up in Hagley (well before the USA joined in the War)

As well as knitting and sewing, the ladies had often to raise money to buy materials. An appeal was received in January 1940 from the Worcestershire Comforts Association for 500 pairs of gloves for 'the use of the Worcestershire lads serving at the front'. The February 1940 Magazine appealed for gloves, scarves and helmets to be knitted for the troops in what was described as a 'still desperately cold' winter.

Whist Drives were a popular way of raising money. One held by Mrs Lench of 'The Meads' in March 1940 raised £7.7s.6d. to buy wool. A Garden Party was held on Saturday 22nd June 1940 at 'The Birches' 'by kind permission of Mr & Mrs Wooldridge' to raise funds. A Bridge and Whist Drive and Sale was held in October 1941 at Hagley Hall, tickets for Bridge 5/-, Whist 2/6 and non-players 1/6. including Tea. This was to raise funds for 'the provision of comforts for the fighting services'.

The children of Hagley School were actively engaged in helping several charities as well as the Forces:

Hagley School.—For Red Cross Prisoner of War Fund Week the children of Hagley School are working very hard and hope to make this the largest gift so far to War Charities. The aim is a high one as already since Summer 1940, the children have provided £73 6s. 2d. including £27 3s. od. to Red Cross Funds and gifts to R.A.F. Benevolent Fund, King George Fund for Sailors, Commander Campbell's Mission to Seamen, Lifeboat, St. Dunstan's, Red Cross Aid to Russia, Mrs. Churchills Aid to Russia and Prisoner of War Fund. A sum of over £38 in addition to the above has been collected in the school for wool for making comforts for the Troops and many scarves, helmets, gloves and socks have been despatched to relations and friends of the kiddies serving in the Forces.—*H.W.B.*

A nearer-to-home aspect was highlighted in the December 1940 Magazine by Mrs Perry of Hagley House who requested 'magazines and illustrated papers - not too old - for the use of the wounded soldiers and air-raid casualties in the Bromsgrove Emergency Hospital'. (A rare case of the magazine printing such specific information).

And just to prove that there were more lighthearted moments during the War, an extract from the February 1941 Parish Magazine :

Soldiers' New Year Dinner Parties.—On January 1st. and 2nd., a few ladies of Churchill entertained soldiers to dinner at "The Court" kindly lent for the occasion by Mrs. Tresyllian Williams. The Rector gave the men a very hearty welcome and hoped they would do justice to the substantial meal which had been provided for them. Soon a hearty festive spirit prevailed and an air of jollity pervaded the company. Community singing was heartily taken up whilst the men enjoyed their smokes. Thanks were expressed by the leaders, who said they would carry away with them happy recollections of Churchill. Before taking leave all joined in singing "Auld Lang Syne."

Food Parcels

Thanks to the Red Cross, prisoners in Germany and Italy are now receiving food planned to give a properly balanced diet which makes good the serious deficiencies in fats, proteins and vitamins in so much of their daily rations. The following foods are included in every parcel :—

Biscuits . . . 8 oz. net.	Meat 21 to 26 oz. net.
Cheese . . . 4 oz. "	Milk . . . 14 oz. "
Chocolate . . 4 oz. "	Sugar . . . 5 oz. "
Fish . . . 14 oz. "	Tea . . . 2 oz. "
Fruit, dried . 8 oz. "	Vegetables 10½ oz. "
Jam, Syrup, Honey, etc. 12 oz. "	Special (Vitamin C) 8 oz. "
Margarine . . 8 oz. "	

In addition to the above, various other foods are sent, such as cocoa, Ovaltine, Marmite, Yeates, creamed rice, Bemax, oatmeal, sweets, condiments, sweet biscuits, etc.



(Issued by the War Organisation of the St. John of Jerusalem. Registered

British Red Cross Society and Order of under the War Charities Act, 1940)

'DOING THEIR BIT'

'Doing their bit' became one of the War's most commonly heard catchphrases. 'Recycling', 'make-do-and-mend' were a necessity 'waste-not-want-not' was a way of life.

Who better to collect waste paper in 1940 than the Hagley Scouts - 'throughout the parish on the third Saturday of each month'? They also collected cardboard and metal for the war effort, in increasingly large quantities -

Scrap.—We are asked again to remind our readers about the collection of paper, cardboard, metal, etc., which are useful in our war effort. Until the collection is organised on a national basis the Scouts are continuing their work on the third Saturday of each month. The Scoutmaster writes to thank all the readers who have communicated with him, and says that the hand-cart of early days has now developed into a lorry. Large quantities of cardboard would be also gratefully received or called for by Mrs. Alan Todd, who collects on behalf of the British Red Cross Society. Metals, except aluminium, should be taken to Mr. Green's farm on Park Road. Aluminium, although the immediate need for it has been supplied, will still be collected by the Hon. Audrey Lyttelton on behalf of the W.V.S. Those who can spare pans, casseroles, etc., are asked to send her a postcard or ring up Hagley Hall, No. 408.

'Salvage' was another by-word -

Victory Shop.—When hunting up your salvage if you find any article for which you have no further use but which is too good to destroy, will you kindly send it to the Victory Shop, Eagle House, Stourbridge. If unable to do so a postcard to Miss Theedam, White House, Churchill (Tel. Blakedown 142) will ensure its collection. The Shop itself is open on Wednesday, Friday and Saturday from 10 till 4 when you may be able to procure—without coupons—many useful articles, and also assist the Red Cross Fund.

...'without coupons'...what music to the ears that was!

By the end of 1942 people were no doubt feeling the strain of continuous war, but were exhorted to yet greater efforts -

Hagley Hall Sale.—We hope that every parishioner has made a particular note of Saturday, December 12th, when the Sale will be opened at 2-15 p.m. A large and enthusiastic Committee are powerless unless the public rally round them. So if you have anything in your house or garden that will sell, send it along to the Hall even if it incurs some self-sacrifice. The proceeds are being directed especially to the Red Cross Prisoners of War Fund, and our boys who are prisoners will not have any superfluous luxuries this Christmas. If you have nothing saleable to send then come and buy something, or send a donation to Lady Cobham, or the Secretary, Miss Parkinson, Yewdale, Park Road; or the Treasurer, Mr. Arthur Hingley, Ferndale, Kidderminster Road.

- and to invest their money too!

War Savings.—We would again remind our readers that war Savings groups are in operation in every road and lane of the Parish. It need hardly be stressed that membership of these groups confers a double benefit on the members, in that it ensures a supply of readily converted securities if at any time the owner is short of cash; and on the State, which has the use of their money for the prosecution of the war. Those who are not already members can be put in touch with their nearest collector by ringing up Mrs. Deeley, Colmar, Stourbridge Road, (Telephone 9139) for the Parish Church area, or Mr. A. C. Brown, Station Road, West Hagley, Telephone 365) for St. Saviour's District. Help yourselves by helping your country, and save for the rainy day.

CIVIL DEFENCE

From time to time in the pages of the Parish Magazine glimpses are caught of the hardships and difficulties of civilian life. There are touches of 'Dad's Army' but also hints of danger with precious little equipment to combat fire and bombs. Hagley was fortunate and saw little enemy action, but nationwide countless other communities were not so lucky. The Churches in Hagley continued to try to provide a focus for community spirit and comfort where needed.

Incendiary Bombs - one person's experience:

A member of our congregation, well known to all as "Joan," had a narrow escape recently. She works, during the week, in "a Midland City," and during an air raid an incendiary bomb fell through the roof and burnt, and then fell through the ceiling of her bedroom. A stirrup pump was quickly brought and the bomb was put out without further damage—a valuable illustration of the efficiency of these pumps when promptly and properly applied. If you have a stirrup pump see that you know how to use it to the best advantage.

It was some time before the Churches were equipped to fight fires - and how pitifully inadequate their fire precautions seem now - six buckets and two stirrup pumps at both Churches plus sandbags and ladders! The following notice appeared in June 1941:

Fire Precautions.—

the
Parochial Church Council at its last meeting on May 5th ordered that fire buckets and stirrup pumps, together with a quantity of sand bags, be placed in a convenient position in each Church. This has now been done, six buckets and two pumps are now in each Church ready for any emergency.

Mr H W Cooper's gift of ladders was gratefully received, as noted in October 1941

It was also decided to thank Mr. H. W. Cooper, who has so kindly and free of all cost, provided ladders for both Churches to be used in case of fire-bombs. We hope that these will never be needed but if the worst comes to the worst both Churches are now equipped with fire-fighting appliances.

Maintenance of equipment posed problems -

Stirrup Pumps.—At a recent meeting of the Section Leaders of the Hagley Fire Guard it was mentioned that some stirrup pumps had become inefficient through lack of use. As it is of the utmost importance that these implements should be always in working order it would be well if every possessor of one would make a frequent test of it. The most probable cause of failure is the drying up of the sucker if it is not kept frequently in use. If this has happened it may be cured by dipping the pump in water and gently working the plunger up and down. If this is not sufficient to restore working conditions it may be necessary to unscrew the filter, and pour some thick oil into the barrel. Then screw down the filter firmly and use in the ordinary way. We hope it will never be necessary to put these things to the use for which they were intended, but if the necessity should arise it would be most awkward if it were found that they would not work at the critical moment; and it might result in serious damage while working conditions were restored. When you have your pump in working order again give it a trial in water at least once in three weeks, or oftener in dry weather.

One wonders how large a fire the stirrup pumps could have controlled!

But there were people trained for emergencies. Snippets of information focus into their activities and illustrate how highly they were prized in difficult times -

A.R.P.—A Warden's post has been established in the Institute at the end of the Parish Room. As this is constatly manned the Wardens would be very grateful for some furnishings which would enable them to pass more pleasantly their long hours of vigil. Blankets and Rugs are a first necessity, and then a gramophone or wireless set, while such games as a dart-board or an air-gun would also be gratefully received.

Will any one who can supply any of these needs please communicate with Mr. H. W. Burns, Ivydene, West Hagley.

December 1940

A.R.P. Thanks.—It is gratifying to know that some people read and take notice of the Parish Magazine. Last month we asked for comforts, for the A.R.P. post in the Institute, and now Mr. H. W. Burns, the Senior Warden, writes to say that all their needs have been provided for, and to ask me to thank all the kind donors.

January 1941

We have a special thought for those who turn out of their homes night after night ready to do their particular job in case of any "incident" —Air Raid Wardens, Home Guard, S. John's Ambulance, A.F.S., Special Constables, Demolition Squads,—although, thank God, the services of most of them have not been called upon, they never slacken their vigilance, if ever they are wanted there will be no delay or confusion. We think too of their wives and families who face lonely evenings without murmuring or complaint.

There is a hint of civilian evacuees from areas more vulnerable to enemy attack (January 1941 Magazine) -

Our New Year greetings and Good Wishes also go to those who have sought refuge here owing to their homes being destroyed or rendered uninhabitable, may happier times soon come for them.

The Home Guard took part in a National Day of Prayer in 1941, not without problems (April 1941 Magazine) -

The presence of a large number of the Home Guard at the 11-0 o'clock service on the National Day of Prayer meant that quite a number of people who intended to be in Church had to go away owing to lack of room. A considerable number of extra chairs had been brought in but in spite of using every available seat, including the unoccupied clergy stall, the Churchwardens could not find room for everybody. We heard many comments on the excellent soldierly turn-out of the Home Guard—a very impressive column of men as they marched to Church.

Civic Sunday was well-observed (December 1943 Magazine) -

Civic Sunday.—This was inaugurated six years ago by the Parish Council in their desire to recognise, by attendance in God's House, that all true public service must have a religious background, and has been attended during the war years by the members of the Civil Defence services in uniform. It was held as usual this year on the Sunday before Advent, and it was good to see the old Parish Church filled from end to end by members of the Home Guard and all the other Civil Defence units, representing almost every letter of the alphabet from A to Z. A welcome addition this year was the presence of the G.T.C. under the command of Mrs. Shiner.

After the service the various units were inspected by Colonel the Viscount Cobham, who also took the salute at the march past; members of the Hagley Scouts with their colours forming the saluting base.

We are deeply grateful to Major Cooper who arranged the parade, and to the members of the Halesowen Home Guard whose band added a welcome interest to the proceedings.

'DIG FOR VICTORY'

THE FOOD PRODUCTION CLUB'

By late 1941 the need to produce food to supplement rations was obvious. Hagley's gardeners responded to the call.

The Food Production Club was a great success from the start. The Club was first mentioned in January 1941 when it had over 60 members. One of its main objects was 'mutual assistance by members comparing notes and giving hints to each other at the general meetings'. These meetings were held monthly. The Secretary and Treasurer was Mr A C Brown of Station Road, who 'will be glad to enlist new members on payment of one shilling'.

By May 1942 they were digging up the school field for allotments which became available to let from time to time.

Food Production Club.—This has now got into its stride, and the school field already testifies to the zeal of the members in digging for victory.

Lectures were held at various venues, for example on Friday 12th February 1943 in the Free Church Vestry 'Fruit Trees and Bushes' by Mr Buckley, with lantern slides: Mr Buckley again, at the Lido (where Mill Close now is) on Friday 12th November 1943, talking about 'Soils and Manuring'. The Secretary by then was Mr Parkinson of Yew Dale, Park Road: the cost of membership had risen to '2/- per annum'.

The Lido was used for meetings until early 1945, apparently by permission of the ARP officers -

It is hoped also that the Parish Room will now be available for our monthly meetings. We are very grateful to the A.R.P. officers for the use of the Lido rooms, but it must be confessed that at times they could be very cold, and we hope that the warmer atmosphere of the Parish Room will be conducive to a large attendance of members.

Earlier in the War the Parish Room (on the corner of Church Street) had been 'commandeered' for the ARP and Home Guard, as reported in the Magazine for February 1941.

The Club's activities extended in other directions than just talks and hints. August 1942 saw their first Bank Holiday Gala on the Playing Field, one of its objects being to raise money for the Agricultural Red Cross Fund.

Bank Holiday Gala.—We are sure that August 3rd will be a memorable day in Hagley. The Food Production Club had two objects in view in organising the Gala, *i.e.*, the encouragement of the allotment holders and other food-raising gardeners; and the provision of a stay-at-home holiday for those who obey the wishes of the authorities and refrain from unnecessary travel. The idea has 'caught on,' and the other Civil Defence Services in Hagley are whole-heartedly supporting the venture. By this time every house in Hagley should be in possession of a folder giving particulars of the various attractions and of the many classes of produce which may be shown. A third object has almost necessarily arisen from the arrangements, the raising of funds in support of the Agricultural Red Cross Fund. The Playing field will hold thousands of people and the organisers want to see it filled.

They continued to support the funds of the Red Cross by various entertainments, the last one mentioned in the Magazines being a Concert by the Penn Singers on 10th February 1945.

Next-of-kin parcels

The Red Cross and St. John enables next-of-kin to send a parcel of clothing and other comforts, weighing up to 10 lb., to a prisoner every three months. No food, except solid slab chocolate, may be included, but the Red Cross and St. John include $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. of chocolate as a gift when the parcel is re-packed for its long journey to the camp.

As soon as the War Organisation is notified that a man is a prisoner, a special label is sent to the next-of-kin together with detailed instructions about the contents and despatch of the quarterly parcel.

Where the money comes from

In 1940 and 1941 gift sales, with the aid of local collections, dances, whist drives, etc., have been the chief means of raising money for the Fund.

Gift sales are, however, not the only method of raising money. Experience teaches that splendid results have been obtained by Victory Garden Shows; Whist Drives; Sheep Dog Trials; Ploughing Matches (horse and tractor); Sporting Competitions (skittles, bowls, darts, wrestling and boxing); Weight Judging Competitions (livestock and giant vegetables); Children's Fancy Dress Competitions; Village Band Contests; Jumble Sales with bring-and-buy stalls.



A GRAND GALA

BANK HOLIDAY MONDAY

AUGUST 2nd, 1943

COMMENCING 11-15 A.M.

GARDEN PRODUCE COMPETITION. CHILDREN'S SPORTS
ADULTS' SPORTS. DOG SHOW. ANKLE COMPETITION
FRUIT BOTTLING AND JAM COMPETITION
DANCING ON THE GREEN
OPEN AIR CONCERT PARTY
NUMEROUS SIDE SHOWS
BABY SHOW
MUSIC

REFRESHMENTS BOTH DAYS AT MODERATE PRICES

ALL PROCEEDS IN AID OF
RED CROSS RURAL PENNIES FUND
(PRISONERS OF WAR)

GARDEN SHOW
OF VEGETABLES, FRUIT AND FLOWERS
ARRANGED BY THE HAGLEY FOOD PRODUCTION CLUB.

34 CLASSES. — 69 PRIZES.
All Exhibits will be sold by Auction
at approximately 6 p.m.

and full details of Classes can be obtained from the Honorary
Hagley Food Production Club, G. R. J. PARKINSON, Esq.,
Road, Hagley. Closing date for Entries, Friday, August 4th.

BABY SHOW

FREE CHURCH HALL, AT 3 P.M.
JUDGE: Miss NEALE, WASSELL GROVE NURSING SCHOOL.

3 PRIZES EACH CLASS.
Special Prize for best Made-Over Garment.
Special Prize for best Home-Made Toy.

Entrance Fee - - 1/-

Entry Forms may be obtained at—
THE INFANT WELFARE CENTRE, JULY 14th and 28th, between 2 p.m. and 4 p.m.,
OF from NURSE CHADWICK.

BANK HOLIDAY MONDAY, AUGUST 2ND, 1943
Commencing 11-15 a.m.

MUSIC DURING THE DAY WILL BE PLAYED BY
THE U.S. ARMY DANCE BAND

By kind permission of COL JAMES A. KILIAN

HAGLEY STAY-AT-HOME HOLIDAY

HAGLEY HORSE SHOW and GYMKHANA

PLAYING FIELDS, WORCESTER ROAD, WEST HAGLEY.
SATURDAY, JULY 29th, 1944.

Commencing 2.30 p.m.

£50 IN PRIZES.
15 CLASSES.

IN AID OF RED CROSS RURAL PENNIES FUND (PRISONERS OF WAR).

WOMEN'S INSTITUTE TENT

YOU MUST VISIT THIS TENT AND SEE THE MODEL OF A
PRISONERS OF WAR CAMP,
AND DEMONSTRATION OF PRISONERS OF WAR PARCELS.
VICTORY STALL. CHILDREN'S STALL. DRAM TUG, ETC.
THE NUMEROUS OTHER ATTRACTIONS on the ground will include
SIDE SHOWS—OLD FAVOURITES AND NEW,
ANKLE COMPETITION. TARGET SHOOTING.
PONY RIDES FOR THE CHILDREN. SCOUTS' EXHIBITION.
MUSIC AND DANCING ON THE GREEN.

DOG SHOW

Entrance Fee, 1/- each Class.

Class 1.—BEST KEPT DOG. Class 4.—THINNEST DOG.
Class 2.—CLEVEREST DOG. Class 5.—WORST MONGREL DOG.
Class 3.—BEST RETRIEVING DOG.

Entries will be accepted on the ground, or, in advance, by
S. J. JONES, Esq., Ketcada, Woodland Avenue, West Hagley.

SOME EFFECTS OF THE WAR

The War touched people's lives in many ways. Shortages and restrictions were obvious consequences, and an influx of (mostly) men of the Allied Forces had great social effects.

Paper shortages affected the Parish Magazines. Contents were limited, and by September 1941 the Rector was predicting that magazines might be forbidden in order to economise on paper.

Advertisements were carried in the Hagley Magazines until November 1942 because the printer had held reserve stocks of paper, but when these were used up advertisements had to be dropped.

Another limitation on the contents was the directive by the Censorship Division of the Ministry of Information to avoid publication of statements giving information about 'troops, naval or military movements of any kind, or air raid damage'. Hence the dearth of information in the Magazines about Forces, British or American in the area. (January 1941 Magazine).

INDISCRETIONS IN PARISH MAGAZINES.—We are asked by the Censorship Division of the Ministry of Information to renew the appeal made earlier in the war to the Editors of all parish magazines to be scrupulously careful in avoiding the publication of statements giving information about troops, naval or military movements of any kind, or air raid damage. There have been recent grave cases of leakage of information through this channel. Early identification of the location of air raid damage gives direct help to the German navigation officers in correcting their calculations for subsequent expeditions. The Ministry emphasizes that where a church has been bombed, no early mention must be made of the fact even in the parish magazine of the church itself. -

One tantalising snippet which did find its way into the Magazines, via a Diocesan 'insert', related to Canadian soldiers and identity cards. The following appeared in May 1942 -

MARRIAGE OF CANADIAN SOLDIERS.—After consultation with the Canadian Authorities the Registrar-General has directed all Superintendent Registrars not to issue any licence for the marriage of a Canadian soldier without the production of a written permission of the soldier's Commanding Officer.

As it appears desirable that marriages in Church after licence should also be so safeguarded, I have directed the Diocesan Registrar to inform all Surrogates that no licence for a marriage, where one of the parties is a Canadian soldier, will be issued out of the Registry without the written permission of the soldier's Commanding Officer being produced to the Registrar.

I may add that this prohibition only applies to men under commission rank.

D. COTES-PREEDY

14 April, 1942.

(Chancellor).

IDENTITY CARDS.—It would be well if, after marriage, the officiating minister were urgently to warn the bride that on no account must she herself alter her Identity Card, substituting her married name and new address for her maiden name and her old address. She must send or take her Identity Card, together with her marriage lines, to her local National Registration Office, so that she may be issued with a new Identity Card bearing her new name and address.

Everyone was advised to carry their identity card and this led to the manufacture of identity card holders. One such was made by Miss Bradley of Pendower, Middlefield Lane

Identity Cards. — As these are now being constantly asked for it will be advisable to keep them handy. Miss Bradley, of Pendower, Middlefield Lane has painted a number of cases for holding them which she is selling at any price from sixpence upwards. All the proceeds—not merely the profits but the whole result—will be given to Red Cross Funds.

(Another essential item to be carried at all times, at least during the early years of the War, was the gas mask).

Hagley had its share of evacuees. In November 1940 the village was warned to prepare to receive some temporarily -

Evacuees.—It is extremely probable that in the near future a number of homeless women and children from the bombed districts of London will be sent to Hagley for temporary billeting. May we bespeak for these poor people a hearty welcome to our parish. They have in many cases lost all they possessed, victims of Hitler's insane lust for destruction of life and property. The billeting committee have compulsory power to send these people wherever there are vacant rooms, but prefer to furnish a number of empty houses in the parish, and would be very grateful for gifts or promises of furniture of all kinds, especially beds and bedding. Will those who can help please notify Colonel Elkington, or Mrs. Johnson, Pendyke, Station Road, West Hagley.

The 'Total War' of 1939-1945 meant that no-one escaped from its effects, young or old, male or female, civilian or serving Forces.

Early in the War (April 1941 Magazine) the Churches were aware of the uncertainties which might beset young men and women leaving home -

Men and Women joining the Forces.—If any of these would like to be commended to the care of the Church in any Parish where they may be billeted the clergy would be very glad to forward such commendation. Under the new scheme for women workers it is possible that some of our girls may have to leave home, and we would like to assure them of our interest in their welfare, and pass them on to the care of the Church where they may be serving.

PROGRAMME

Saturday, June 10th

PUBLIC MEETING

at The SCHOOLS, PARK ROAD, at 6.30 p.m.

Speakers will include:-

Sir JOHN WARDLAW-MILLAR, K.B.E., M.P.

ALAN STUART-TODD, Esq., J.P.

MAJOR GILBERT DENNISON, Deputy Regional Commissioner.

Monday, June 12th

FILM SHOW

at The PARISH ROOM, WORCESTER ROAD,

by Mr. Fortescue, of the M.O.I.

Commencing at 8.0 p.m. Admission Free.

Speaker:

COUNCILLOR C. WASTAFF, Esq., J.P., Chairman.

Bromsgrove Urban and Rural Savings Committee.

Tuesday, June 13th

CONCERT at the HALL BARN

by the R.A.F. CONCERT PARTY.

Commencing at 7.30 p.m. Admission 2/-.

Proceeds to the Worcestershire Regiment Prisoners of War Fund.

Wednesday, June 14th

FILM SHOW at The HALL BARN.

Commencing at 8.0 p.m. Admission Free.

Speaker:

A. H. HINGLEY, Esq.,

Chairman, Hagley Savings Committee.

Forces in uniform will be admitted half-price to both Concerts.

SALUTE THE SOLDIER WEEK, HAGLEY

JUNE 10th to 17th, 1944.

Minimum Price 3d.



OF EVENTS.

Thursday, June 15th

HOME GUARD DEMONSTRATION

(by kind permission of Lt.-Col. Laughon C. Goodwin)

by "A" Coy. 10TH WORKS. Bn H.C.

(C.O.: Major H. W. Cooper)

IN HAGLEY PARK.

Commencing at 8.0 p.m. Admission Free.

March Past. Arms Drill. Bayonet Fighting.

Inter-Platoon Tug-of-War. Squad Control by

Field Signals. Assault Course. Platoon Competition.

BAND of the 5th Bn. Halesowen Home Guard.

Friday, June 16th

CONCERT

at The PARISH ROOM, WORCESTER ROAD.

by the RAPCATS CONCERT PARTY.

Commencing at 7.0 p.m. Admission 2/-.

Proceeds in aid of the Local Branch of the British

Legion Benevolent Fund.

Saturday, June 17th

GRAND DANCE

at The PARISH ROOM, WORCESTER ROAD.

8.0 p.m.—11.30 p.m.

Admission 3/-; Forces 2/-.

Music by the Cavaliers Dance Orchestra.

SALUTE THE SOLDIER

A FUND-RAISING ENTERTAINMENT 1944