

Housing

In 1919, parliament decided that local councils should build new houses. However, it was not until the 1930s that estates of council houses were built in most areas.



A council house and a private house from the 1930s

In Canterbury 1000 council houses were built. The rent for terraced and semi-detached houses varied from 4s 8d (14p) to 10s 5d (52p) per week, inclusive of rates.

Thousands of houses were also built for sale. The suburban semi-detached house is typical of private developments of the time.

Something to do

Answer the following questions. It will help if you can look at 1930s council houses in your area.

- 1 Why do you think this type of housing was a great improvement on previous types for the people who lived in them in the 1930s?

- 2 What advantages and disadvantages can you see in this type of housing?

Children's lives in the war

The Second World War affected almost everyone. This section looks at two particular ways in which the lives of many children changed – evacuation and school.

Evacuation

In September 1939 thousands of children, instead of returning to school for the new term, said goodbye to their parents and left home. Taking few belongings, they set off with their teachers on journeys by train to unknown places.



Children ready to be evacuated

The government organised evacuation to take children away from places, like big cities, that were in danger of being bombed. They went to stay in safer areas. The children had to take gas masks with them. Some places that were thought to be safe, like Canterbury, turned out to be enemy targets. So, after a few months, all the children had to be sent on to other places!

What can you remember?

Fill in the gaps in these sentences with the right words from the following list:

mother gas masks shops toy teacher railway station

1 The children were taken to the _____.

2 They went with their _____.

3 The boxes they are holding contain their _____.

Colour in the picture.

Air-raids

German aeroplanes bombed many British cities causing considerable damage to buildings and great hardship to the local people. This section looks at how communities were affected and how they reacted to the air-raid attacks.

Air raid precautions

When the war broke out it was expected that there would be damage to English towns and cities as a result of German bombing. Throughout the country, Civil Defence Authorities were set up to make plans for defence against air-raid attacks. Air Raid Precautions (ARP) were published in local newspapers. These were instructions so that everyone knew what to do when an air-raid occurred. The following text describes the job of the wardens in Canterbury.

Wardens

...the City is divided into sectors, each served by a number of wardens. These men and women operate ... as far as possible, in the street where they live and in the adjoining streets, so that they know the conditions there, such as telephones, fire hydrants, the residents, the old and the sick. They are all highly-trained people, and it is to them that the general public may safely go for advice and help. The general public must not hinder the wardens but must obey their instructions, for they have spent many months of their spare time learning what to do. It is the wardens, and no one else, who have the means of summoning the other services. There are 320 wardens in the City...

Air Raid Precaution instructions for wardens

What can you remember?

Fill in the gaps in these sentences with the right words from the following list:

landed in defence wardens bombed
people Air Raid Precautions

- 1 German aeroplanes _____ many British cities.
- 2 _____ were instructions for the people in case of air-raid attacks.
- 3 The _____ can summon the other services.

Project ideas

The following ideas may help you to start or extend your own local history project.

- 1 Interview someone you know about their wartime experiences in the armed forces. You could ask:
 - Which service did you join?
 - Why did you join that particular service?
 - What happened after getting your call-up papers?
 - What was service life like?
 - How strict were the rules?
 - Describe your training?
 - Where did you serve?
 - Which actions were you involved in?
 - Which decorations were you awarded?
 - Was the Home Guard in your local area like *Dads Army*?
- 2 Find out more about the work women did during the war. For example, Land Girls had to learn how to do many jobs on farms, eg milking cows, driving horses, harvesting, which are now done by machinery.
- 3 Interview women who were in the women's services or employment during the war. Do you think they worked harder than men? Compare the different accounts.
- 4 Make a collection of photographs taken of people known to members of the class. Identify the services the people were in from their uniform. Describe some of their experiences during the war.
- 5 Your class could produce a combined account of the wartime experiences of people known to them, especially grandparents, great grandparents and other family relatives.
- 6 Find out about the formation of the Home Guard in your area. What were their duties?