

**THE BOMBING OF BRITISH CITIES AND THE CONTESTING OF
REMEMBRANCE: WWII CIVILIAN EXPERIENCE AND ITS
COMMEMORATION SINCE 1945**

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DECLARATION

I, John Matthew Sharrock, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

ABSTRACT

The notion of resilience, sustained throughout the bombing campaigns of WWII, notably the bravery and fortitude, exhibited as Britain held firm after 1940, has contributed to national self-esteem, in a much-changed post-war world. Its recall continues, in tough times, such as the 7/7 London bombings and the Covid-19 pandemic. Widely deployed, as 'Blitz spirit', the privileging of admirable personal qualities has a cost, this thesis contends, to a more considered knowledge and understanding of the civilian bombing experience.

The aim of the research is to challenge the prevailing Blitz narrative, with its limited representation of the civilian experience, through engagements with and analysis of the processes and practices of civilian commemoration and the people behind them. This aim can be fulfilled by a research plan that conducts an archaeology of the Blitz myth, tracking the historiography of the Blitz narrative, from its foundations in 1940, determining the commemorative materialisation of civilian remembrance and the activism that gives rise to it.

The commemorative material represents the voices of personal wartime memories being heard and seen through voluntary civilian activism, bringing forward private memory to public view. WWII civilian commemoration is limited in quantity and hard to see given the military emphasis of wartime memorialisation. Indeed, the thesis exposes the struggle to establish memorial meaning and engagement at a national and metropolitan level. Moreover, the contesting of civilian remembrance has produced a diversity in material form, more recently in response to important anniversaries, in marked contrast to the standardised commemorations at cemeteries in the immediate aftermath of war.

A broad constituency of activist voices has been heard and the range of their commemorative output speaks to the power of story-telling, personal truths made public, transcending narrow national narratives, through individuals, groups and communities pursuing specific remembrance agendas.

IMPACT STATEMENT

This research study traces the contested development of civilian remembrance since 1945 through the analysis of its memorials and the feedback of campaigners and activists. It has deployed multiple methods to gain knowledge of a history, submerged in myth and appropriated narratives.

It aspires to an original contribution to contemporary civilian studies through the identification, analysis and narration of collective and contested efforts to achieve remembrance, of a wartime experience, which is minimally conveyed in current expressions of the Blitz. In summary, it seeks to redress the limited public discourse which typifies the Blitz; Bagehot's (1876) suggestion that 'the events for which one generation cares most are often those of which the next knows least' (Harrison 2011) is apposite. The processes of translating personal recollection into commemorative form merit the greater attention permitted in this thesis with its dedicated civilian perspective. The stories that have emerged here are extraordinary, tragic and uplifting by turns, and deserve the wider audience that this thesis can lead to, along two desirable paths.

Firstly, as a platform to inspire future inquiry, within academic circles, into the prevalence of wartime myths, often packaged as uniquely British, and their impact, when appropriated for political ends, on historical understanding. Civilian resilience was shared across other theatres of war and this research begs an understanding of the remembrance practices and commemorative outputs arising from European contexts of air war.

Secondly, the challenge to the prevalence of the Blitz story and the limited appreciation of the civilian experience, needs to be continued, after submission, in a continuing process of narrative contestation. Wider dissemination, of the contested narratives and rich personal stories, unearthed in the research is planned. The actors, in the arena of personal memory and public remembrance, deserve wider exposure, of their campaigns and commemorations.

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PREFACE

This thesis traces a post-WWII British journey, from experience to remembrance, a time of change in the nation's place in the world and its people's perception of the impact on their sense of national worth. In a little over 80 years, these changes, in status and perception, are reflected in the matter of this research, the memories, remembrances and commemorations that were formed by the war and then shaped, in the ensuing years, an era that has been described as the 'contemporary past' (Buchli & Lucas 2001).

The journey of contested civilian remembrance, explored during this past, has a personal resonance, determined by the writer's lifetime, of comparable duration, and the transmission of family memories of the Blitz; my mother and brother sheltering in their Morrison shelter, while Pembroke Dock was bombed, and my father's experience of bombs on Croydon Aerodrome.

The thesis springs from an ingrained sympathy for communities, caught in the awful conditions of war, and concern that terrible and tragic civilian experiences, which generated abiding narratives of resilience under bombardment, have been overlooked. A product of a changing national self-image, noted in the Abstract, has been the ready acceptance of a limited Blitz narrative, distastefully repurposed for political ends. Analysis shows this to have been a noticeable trend since the 'jingoism' of the Thatcher Government's pursuit of the Falklands Campaign. Its acceleration during Brexit and the Covid-19 pandemic are illustrated, in the introductory chapter, to show that legitimate myth can be turned to pernicious narrative.

The thesis is rooted in disquiet that my personally-infused contemporary past has seen a more nationalistic and bombastic turn, with the Blitz myth as one its 'badges'. The contested past of the nation, since WWII, exhibits crises of confidence and identity (Addison 2010; O'Toole 2019); the easy recourse to comfortable wartime nostalgia contributes little to an appreciation of the civilian experience. To address this, the thesis aims to deliver a more balanced perspective of the Blitz, to be revealed through analysis of and engagement with the people, processes and practices of civilian commemoration.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis has been made possible by the participation of willing respondents, who welcomed my interventions into their remembrance transactions, bringing personal memory to public view. The generosity of their time and the clarity of their insight has transformed this research enterprise and fulfilled the archaeological aim of finding and analysing the people behind the material of commemoration that represents them.

To date, I have had an association with the Institute of Archaeology which is in its 17th year. Attendance, at Birkbeck evening lectures, between 2005 and 2009, notable for the inspired teaching of Dr Stuart Brookes, was followed by acceptance, on the MA Archaeology programme (2010-2011), through the good offices of, then, director of studies, Dr Ethan Cochrane, who saw past my undistinguished first degree. During the MA, I met, and was inspired by, many people, teaching staff and fellow-students alike. However, Professor Sue Hamilton, who supervised my dissertation, unlocked skills and insights that have sustained the seven-years' pursuit, part-time, of my research degree.

My two supervisors, Drs Andrew Gardner and Gabe Moshenska, have been ever present since 2013, bringing different perspectives. I thank them warmly and sincerely for their guidance, inordinate patience and wise counsel.

Finally, and most importantly, the challenge of delivering the thesis would not have been met, without the encouragement, unconditionally given, of my wife, Mary Sharrock. In addition to managing her own career, an undertaking on a European-scale, from locations in Switzerland and Spain, her determination to see this project through, on occasion, more than matched my own.

1. INTRODUCTION

“Blitz spirit” is an instantly recognisable commodity today, but it has become divorced from historic reality’

Richard Overy in an extract from an article in *The Guardian* (Overy 2020b).

1.1 Prologue

On the 7th July 2020, the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan and the Metropolitan Police Commissioner, Dame Cressida Dick placed wreaths in Hyde Park at the 7/7 monument in memory of the 52 victims of domestic terrorism. Fifteen years earlier, radicalised British suicide bombers had struck at Aldgate, Edgware Road and Russell Square underground stations and on a bus in Tavistock Square. In a city, no stranger to terrorism, these were nevertheless shocking events causing, in addition to the fatalities, serious injury to over 700 people on routine Thursday morning journeys in the capital.

Public reaction, widely represented in broadcast, press and digital media, was revealing and, perhaps, less than measured, in skirting the social and political divisions from which the atrocity grew. Amid the sadness and gratitude, to those who responded to the needs of the dead and injured, were strident assertions of ‘Britishness’, a sense of national identity, externalising the complexities of the attacks to ‘an enemy without’ (Kelsey 2013). These sentiments were shared, within a broad media consensus, which drew parallels with the national mood and behaviour during the Blitz, the sustained aerial bombardments of WWII (Massie 2005, 30). Emerging from the appalling scenes, a striking image has endured; thousands of Londoners, obediently making their way home after work, on foot, in the absence of public transport, for want of a better expression, keeping calm and carrying-on (Crown 2012; Hatherley 2016; Jack 2011, 89-91). This demonstration of quiet purpose caught the popular imagination and, within a few hours, the spirit of the Blitz had been appropriated (Parsons 2005, 16-17) to alleviate the sense of shock and defiantly assert that the nation could ‘take it’, paraphrasing a wartime propaganda film, initially made for American audiences (*London can take it!* 1940). Neither of the uncredited directors, Humphrey Jennings and Harry Watt, both celebrated documentary film makers, could have imagined their nine-minute film, a well-crafted treatment of civilian resilience under fire, would one day, 65 years later, be popularly re-appropriated.

1.2 Background

This thesis examines the civilian experience of six years of conflict and the recall of its history within a post-war context of war memory and commemoration. It acknowledges the heroism, fears and anxieties of the British people, under prolonged enemy attack, and how that affected their behaviour. Inevitably, it also features the destructiveness of bombing and the deaths of thousands of British civilians. The bombardment of British cities and the civilian experience of it together form an important part of the national life story, a well-intentioned narrative, as these remarks suggest, of positive human characteristics, invested with pride, recalled in difficult times. Nonetheless, the thesis proposes to contest the dominance of this script through examinations of the people, processes and practices of civilian commemoration.

The bombing of Britain in WWII, widely known as the Blitz, and the institutional, civic and public response to it, is well documented, starting in the early years of the war (Ministry of Information 1942) and then meticulously recorded in the HMSO Civil Series histories of social policy (Titmuss 1950) and civil defence (O'Brien 1955). The air war, in its distinct phases, impacted the whole country; although about half of the country's population were never bombed, all were under constant threat and at various levels of defensive readiness (Overy 2013, 141). The impact was directly through attack and indirectly through necessary counter-measures (O'Brien 1955, 1). There was 'seldom a day in five years when enemy aeroplanes or flying-bombs or rockets were not over some part of Britain' (Titmuss 1950, 323). London suffered the most prolonged exposure to aerial attack with 'the alert sounding 1124 times during which it endured 101 daylight and 253 night attacks' (1950, 323). Air war impacted Britain significantly through widespread destruction and displacement. Many thousands were killed and injured; almost 70,000 deaths are recorded on the Roll of Honour of Civilian War Dead (Commonwealth War Graves Commission 2021a), over 10% of all British and Commonwealth WWII fatalities.

The history of the aerial attacks is an important component of the nation's post-war cultural history (Calder 1991; Connelly 2004; Noakes & Pattinson 2014; Noakes 2020), taking its place alongside the legendary, nation-defining stories of Dunkirk and the Battle of Britain. Indeed, it has been argued, that it says more, about the post-war nation's view of itself, than those military deeds

(Baxendale 2003; Calder 1991; Morgan 2001). This argument rests, in part, on dismal pre-war predictions that fragile civilian morale would undermine the conduct of the war (Harrisson 1976, 23; Morison 1939; Overy 2013, 23-26; Titmuss 1950, 12). More importantly, it springs from a civilian temperament, amid the all-encompassing experience of war, that confounded expectations, a narrative of which was persistently deployed, to stiffen resolve at home and convince potential allies of the country's ability to fight on.

In 2005, when 'civilians' were again subject to the fatal consequences of bombs, the Blitz narrative, rooted in 1940, was enabled to calm a feverish national mood. Its readily recognised message centred on positive behaviour, deemed uniquely British, a natural poise and calmness under fire (Jack 2009; Kelsey 2013). The power of the narrative was unifying and simple: the experience, indeed, the spirit of 1940, could be safely invoked; the nation realising that, having negotiated the perils of the Blitz, it could get through 7/7. However, as intimated in these early comments, the way significant events in a tragic past are remembered and repurposed demands scrutiny. Nowhere in evidence, in 2005, were legitimate recollections of homelessness, displacement, fear, destruction and death, all significant outcomes of the original Blitz. Their exclusion, regrettable yet understandable, was no match for the simple recall of more positive aspects of a complex past, pointing to the uneven remembrance of the British civilian experience. This unevenness is also in evidence in commemorative materialisation. Britain and its overseas battlefields abound with monuments to warfare and warriors as attested by more than 90,000 records held on the Imperial War Museum's War Memorial Register; later analysis will show that dedicated civilian memorials account for less than 1% of this record. In London, the Bomber Command Memorial of 2012, close to Hyde Park Corner, highlights the uncertain revelation of civilian experience. Much criticized, aesthetically and morally (Moore 2012), the monument marks the loss of 55000 aircrew in the controversial air offensive on Germany. In honouring the undoubted bravery of the crews, a minimal acknowledgement, indeed lip-service, of civilian consequences, is offered, in a generalised, rather meaningless, inscription on the frieze, remembering:

'all those, everywhere, who are casualties of air warfare'.

1.3 Popular Myths

The Blitz narrative, paraded in 2005, at a time of shocking tragedy, appropriated particular aspects of the wartime experience, resolution and defiance, to act as a metaphor for a display of national togetherness. Contemporary histories of the Blitz similarly lauded civilian fortitude but not to the exclusion of evacuation, rationing, black-out, gas masks, civil defence, sheltering, damage, dislocation, death and injury (Calder 1941b; Farson 1941; Hodson 1941; Jameson 1942; Lewey 1944; Marchant 1941; Mass-Observation 1940a; Muir 1942; Nixon 1980 [1943]; Underdown 1942; Woon 1941). It was in this immersive war experience that the notions of the Blitz and its spirit took early root. Inez Holden, a writer working in a factory, later lost to the bombs with many fatalities, spoke of co-workers' dignified waiting, working-on under prolonged threat, exhibiting impatience 'with easy heroical talk and pat-off patriotism' (2019 [1941], 74).

The term, Blitz, whose development and meaning is covered later, emerged during 1940 to represent devastating air attack, taking its place alongside 'total war', 'home front' and 'The People's War' as wartime expressions of the all-encompassing experience, endured by British civilians, conjured extensively in books and newspapers throughout the post-war period. All are still in use but it is Blitz that arguably captures best all that civilians had to contend with under bombardment, the frightening, dispiriting and intensely tragic events that gave rise to the casualty toll. Blitz also represents something less tangible and, as this thesis argues, more contentious. Inherent in the expression, as intimated above, are human characteristics, emerging in the earliest days of the bombardment, of resilience, togetherness and bravery (Ministry of Information 1942; Ziegler 1995), a spirit of the times, promoted by government agencies and popular media, then and still.

These remarks signal a tendency, not limited to civilian experience, for wartime exploits, the lived experience of protagonists, to be modified by time and telling, to attain a mythical quality. Myth is a concept given to confusion and misunderstanding, not least in dictionary definitions embracing it as a widely-held but false belief, deeply rooted in folklore and the supernatural, as well as a popular conception which exaggerates or idealizes the truth. Myths have been described, in a conscientious objector's memoir of a 'cack-handed' war, as 'an orgy of over-simplification that shape attitudes that would last a lifetime' (Blishen

1972, 123). More positively, it can represent popular narratives, life stories of a group, or even a nation, that are crucial to a sense of identity and need not be taken as 'untruth, still less lies' (Calder 1991, xiii). As a 'particular explanation' of events, a myth is a fabrication, selective and embellished, to form a version of history, a sense of where a group stands in the world (Connelly 2004, 1).

A wry observation, on the nature of myth, suggests that it brings no harm as long as it is not believed (Jack 2011, 89). Allowing for journalistic tongue-in-cheek, Jack (2011), with Calder (1969; 1991), Connelly (2004) and Morgan (2001), explores popular myths adopted to come to terms with Britain's diminished status in a post-colonial world, one in which Britain's proud wartime narratives are presented, paraphrasing Churchill, as 'our finest hour' (Jenkins 2001, 621). It is not a single narrative but a compound of momentous events in sequence, from evacuation to demobilisation, from Dunkirk to D-Day, which resonate with each other to define the heroic role of service personnel and civilians throughout the war. The brief descriptions of the Blitz, in these early paragraphs, point to its mythic quality and its place within an overall wartime myth that is not novel. A process of mythologisation, with roots in wartime government communications, gained traction during the post-war period, with particular prominence and critique after the late 1960s (Calder 1969; Calder 1991; Connelly 2004), wherein resilience and unity prevail, in popular imaginings, over tragedy. This process is examined in Chapter 4.

Harking back to a 'heightened imagined past' appears to increase during periods of crisis; Ian Hislop (2005 xi-xiii) speaks of 'plundering the olden days' to make more sense of a difficult present (Oliver 2005; *Not Forgotten* 2005). It was therefore to be expected that the Blitz should be recalled after 7/7 with a powerful message that British unity and determination can overcome enemies wherever they are from. The 7/7 narrative appropriated, as a nation-defining legend, a wartime spirited response invoked, by politicians, press and public, in difficult times. Extraordinarily, the Blitz had been similarly deployed in New York, by then-Mayor, Rudi Giuliani, in the aftermath of 9/11 (Field 2002). In episodes, the capturing of specific elements of the Blitz has continued since the early 2000s, appearing, for example, as a subtext to the stand-alone position adopted by the 'Leave' persuasion in the Brexit debate (Toynbee 2019). The visceral response, by broadcaster, Andrew Neil, to the 2017 terrorist atrocity on

Westminster Bridge, asked, of the perpetrator's supporters, whether they knew who they were taking on; the British, had stood up alone 'to the might of the Luftwaffe, air force of the greatest evil mankind has ever known' (Warren 2017). Further examples are evident in the context of the Covid pandemic, not least the fighting talk that accompanied the early Government response. This reached its apotheosis, in an extraordinary statement, by the then Health Secretary, Matt Hancock (Dejevsky 2020; Freedland 2021; Harris 2020; Hyde 2020; Reuters 2020), which exhorted the current generation to show the fight of its grandparents:

'...withstanding the nightly pounding [...], the rationing, the loss of life, they pulled together in one gigantic national effort. Today our generation is facing its own test, fighting [...] new disease [...] to protect life.'

There are surely few times when applying such rhetoric is uncontroversial and universally acceptable; perhaps the lauding of quiet resolve in 2005 was one of them. The pernicious deployment of a Blitz spirit as a 'patriotic device' is questionable at any time but at its worst when an atrocity had come from within as it did in 2005 (The Economist 2020). The thesis decries the political deployment of wartime clichés, the selective weaponizing of the Blitz; it is uncomfortable with what is excluded. The lazy link of rationing and loss of life is, at best, insensitive and is emblematic of the issue recognized here, that remembrance of the tragic outcome for thousands is obscured in a popular narrative which replaces harsh reality with the balm of Britain, alone, meeting disease, terror and Brexit, with the equanimity of our 1940 ancestors.

The Blitz myth, in its simplicity and ready acknowledgement, represents notions of national pride, encoding bravery, stoicism, humour and team spirit, standing tall under fire. There is a substantial body of work that reinforces the display of these characteristics by the public during the war (Addison 1990; Addison 2013; Calder 1969; Calder 1991; Harrison 1976; Levine 2015; Mackay 2002; Smith 2000). This work also acknowledges that the Blitz had a less wholesome side, that 'not all of the nation's grandparents were model citizens' (The Economist 2020). Recourse to the BBC's People's War archive yields many eye-witness accounts of mean-spirited behaviour and relentless looting (BBC 2020). There is, nonetheless, a consensus that, on balance, the behaviour of civilians under fire was commendable. Ziegler points out bad behaviour such as greed, panic

and cowardice, but the population 'endured the blitz with dignity, courage, resolution and astonishing good humour' (1995, 163). However, this thesis contends that the preference for a limited Blitz narration tunes out, not just the seamier side of existence, the grim needs of survival, but the even nastier realities of death and destruction. They are forgotten in a preferred mythology whose persistence and deployment renders the civilian experience, under enemy bombardment, as elusive and historically misunderstood; the marginalisation of its remembrance is addressed in this thesis.

1.4 Analytical Framework

Widely-held narratives of the bombing of Britain's cities in WWII have prospered and persisted through their re-telling over the post-war period. This has created a present-day understanding, distanced from a harsher reality, a separation of 'fear and loss from episodes of bravery, resolution and humour' (Connelly 2004, 5). More recently, in a presentation for the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC), Noakes, echoing her latest research (2020), suggested that civilian death mattered in wartime but notions of 'Blitz spirit' fail to describe that past in a meaningful way today (CWGC 2020b). Overy suggests Blitz reality is the victim of a 'cruel' myth, improperly publicised for its publicly-accepted sentiments, not its truths (2020b).

In essence, Britain's civilian war experience is remembered for fine personal qualities rather than death and injury. Recently, this divergence is found in selective and simplistic political re-imaginings of historical events, pitting in opposition, experience and myth. This opposition presents a contentious remembrance, subsumed within a myth, which, in its post-war embellishment, overwhelms appalling experiences and tragic consequences.

The events in review are almost within reach, a surviving, lived memory for some, albeit few now, over 75 years after World War II. For the vast majority, memories of that time are not experienced but are received, inherited and absorbed, during a 'contemporary past' that links past events and their narrative in the present (Buchli & Lucas 2001). The contemporary past, under review in this research, dates from pre-WWII fears of civilian death and disorder until the present day. *En route*, it passes distinct phases of air war and post-war years of remembrance and narrative formation. Thus, it is a past that links lived experience of the Blitz with a present-day dominant narrative, a badge of

exceptionalism (Major 2020), paraded in an 'age of discontent' (Malik 2020, Title), as a national story (Von Tunzelmann 2021).

This research undertaking is thus identifying and addressing the problem, emphasised and endorsed by Overy (2020b) and Noakes (2020), that:

Understanding of the civilian bombing experience is impaired, overlooked and misconstrued, in the construction of the modern narrative.

The remembrance of the civilian war experience, in today's narrative and material forms, is the product of a complex weaving of actors and activism, government and civil society, indifference and forgetting. In a clamour to be heard and seen, history, through its stories and narratives, evolves through competition; some stories subside and others predominate in a process of *contestation*. Understanding that contestation is crucial to a better understanding of the Blitz. The construction and evolution of the modern narrative, during a shared contemporary past, has eclipsed important aspects of the civilian experience which need a more balanced hearing. This is summarised in the following research proposition:

There is a limited place for the civilian dead in the remembrance of the Blitz which can be revealed through analysis of and engagement with the people, processes and practices of civilian commemoration.

The aim of the research is to challenge the prevailing Blitz narrative, with its limited representation of the civilian experience, through engagements with and analysis of the processes and practices of civilian commemoration and the people behind them. To present a more balanced Blitz narrative, the thesis proposes to contest the myth, in its dominant narrative form, in an exposure of an 'historic reality' (Overy 2020b) of the Blitz, its human consequences and how they are recalled. It proposes to do this through these research questions:

1. How and why did the narrative of the Blitz emerge from its foundations in 1940 to its prevailing position today?
2. How is the narrative reflected in remembrance? What is the nature and extent of civilian remembrance in its commemorative forms?
3. Who are the actors in the contested remembrance of the civilian experience and can an engagement with them reveal a more rounded history than that presented by the current narrative of the Blitz?

These questions exhibit an archaeological and anthropological motivation to challenge and contest the narrative, revealing the experience it obscures through the commemorative material behind the myth and the processes and people that inspired both.

Saunders, establishing the credentials for the study of modern conflict, advocated multi-disciplinary approaches to investigation of the material products of war and the people behind them (2002; 2012). The questions yield a qualitative, composite methodology:

1. A historiography of the Blitz story and the establishment of its myths
2. Identification and analysis of civilian memorial archaeology
3. Identification of and engagement with agents of civilian remembrance

The implementation and impact of this research plan, encompassing archive and database investigation, activist interviews and study of the narrative and commemorative heritage of the Blitz, follows in Chapter 3.

Archaeology can act as a re-constructor of memories and, in the analysis of commemorative artefacts, demonstrate how and by whom those memories are transmitted. Moreover, in its anthropological perspectives, it can reveal the people and their motives, in the act of archaeological formation. Together, material culture and its creators and consumers, determine the challenge to the prevalent myth.

The research questions ask what the material and its actors convey in an 'enriching' of the memory of the war, one that transcends 'passive consumption of media images' (Wilson 2007, 227-228). In the context of Western Front mythology, Wilson adds that 'popular' memory has been distanced by 'popular culture' from the horrors of [trench] warfare. This thesis, hence, proposes, through its analytical framework, a multi-faceted approach, covering the excavation of both narrative and memorial artefacts (Myers 2008, 243-4), in an archaeology of the myth of the Blitz.

1.5 Summary

A problem of historical understanding has been identified with respect to the civilian experience of the Blitz, raising questions about the mutation of interpretations of the past, the materiality of remembrance and the dynamics of activists and supporters who have undertaken the challenge of civilian

commemoration. The research proposition signals the three part analysis framework of meaning, materialisation and activism that carries the later analysis chapters. It amounts to an archaeology of narrative, commemoration and people. An understanding of how these elements coalesce to a statement of Blitz memory, modern scripts that challenge an embedded myth, is vested in a theoretical context of *contestation* with respect to remembering, narrative formation and commemorative practice. Theoretical frameworks, yielding a better understanding of the contested meaning of the wartime Blitz narrative, in today's discourse, are developed in the next chapter and provide the building blocks of the archaeological endeavour and its analysis, in Chapters 6-12, of civilian remembrance in its commemorative forms, practices and activism, from across Britain, with detailed case histories in London, Portsmouth and Bath.

Remembering the bombing and exploring the contesting of civilian remembrance comes at an important time. Over eighty years ago, 1,500 Londoners died during the night of 8th/9th May 1941 (Collier 1959). These, the heaviest losses of any raid on Britain during the war, are often obscured in the 'celebration' of VE Day. An expectation that the dates of the heaviest bombing raids would be perpetuated in post-war remembrance (Calder 1941a) has never been fulfilled and yet these are times when such history deserves to be recalled to counter the political repetition of a limited Blitz narrative, readily deployed in the special conditions of the pandemic.

The aim of this thesis is to redress the balance with a new approach to presenting the Blitz that explores its realities through its remembrance practices and people, an exploration of personal Blitz memory. The theoretical exploration of the space between 'Memory and Materiality' (Myers 2008) and how that shapes the archaeology of memory, analysed in succeeding chapters, is the matter of the next chapter.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

'By the politics of war memory and commemoration we signal the contestation of meaning that occurs within and between the different forms and the (unequal) struggle to install particular memories at the centre of a cultural world, at the expense of others which are marginalised & forgotten'.

Contested remembrance defined in Ashplant, Dawson and Roper (2000,xi).

2.1 Background

Chapter 1 has positioned the bombing of Britain through the contested nature of its remembrance, suggesting that the experience of death and loss is poorly represented in Blitz narratives and might be better understood through an analysis of civilian commemorative practices. This proposition emerges from the evolution of wartime myths in the 75 years since the end of WWII and a preliminary observation that what is being remembered only partially reflects the experience of living and dying under aerial attack. Implicit in this proposition is an argument that wartime and Blitz myths are popular but their simplistic, narrative form progressively degrades the saliency and truth of the wartime experience of civilians, represented by the remembrance of the civilian dead. It is not that the loss of life is forgotten, even if there is little room for the dead in a Blitz myth that is uplifting and defining of national character. It is instead subordinated, not spoken of, not just in public discourse but in public space where the perception that civilian remembrance is crowded-out by a dominant military presence in post-war commemoration is tested in this thesis.

This preamble introduces the concepts at the heart of this project, memory and its related components, remembrance and commemoration. These concepts, as the following analysis suggests are given to confusion, overlapping interpretation and inappropriate interchange. The thesis maintains that each performs a specific role in recalling and looking-back on a contemporary past which pitches experience and reality in opposition with narrative and myth. Navigation through the web of memory work has been framed through a simplifying, structure, wherein:

Memory represents mental processes of recall.

Remembrance concerns actions that perpetuate memories.

Commemoration defines the outcome of that remembrance.

This conceptual framework culminates, through the argument and analysis that follows, in the notion of *contested remembrance*, which, as the thesis title declares, is central to an understanding of the civilian experience of bombardment in WWII, its narrative evolution and its influence on the scale, nature, meaning and visibility of its commemoration.

2.2 Memory

The source of the divergent versions of the past discussed in this thesis is memory, the mental processes of recall, rooted in individuals and their senses. Memory, despite the writer's simplifying framework above, is a complex matter and one that excites concern in its usages and modifications. Harrison, on changes in remembering over time, cited the Bartlett theory (1932) which proposed that remembering resulted from 'imaginative reconstruction or construction, built out of the relation of our attitude towards a whole active mass of organised past reactions or experience, and to a little outstanding detail which commonly appears in image or in language form' (1976, 324). Memory, thus stimulated by external and internal factors, is hence an inexact representation of the past and by its exposure to influences, is not static. It is evident, therefore, belying the simplistic description as mental processes of recall, that memory is a problematic concept.

In 2008, a memory studies journal, dedicated to adding recognition, form and direction 'in this nascent field' (Hoskins et al 2008, 5) was launched, just two years after Winter criticised 'the trivial linking of memory with every facet of our contact with the past, personal or collective' (Winter 2006, 3). Debate, in academic journals, reflects on the usage of the term, *memory*, in which its sensory origins are conflated with actions and manifestations of recall that coalesce from the individual to the collective (Green 2004; Winter 2006, 3-4). Moshenska addresses this as a hyper-inflation of memory terms, unsuccessfully bridging too wide a range of concepts (2015b, 197-198). Green's recognition of the danger of conflation of collective memory with individual scripts (2004, 35) and Kansteiner's critique of the methodological discontinuity between memory studies and the historical consciousness of social collectives (2002, 179), are evidence of resistance to an obsession (Bourke 2004, 473) with *collective memory*, on which the deconstruction, see below, by Winter (2006) followed. In the thesis, where I have designated the modern Blitz narrative, a myth where

memory is absent, the misplaced description as a collective memory has been called-out.

Winter, beyond concern with semantics, has sought a theoretical reconsideration of memory, in which the 'individual retrieval of personally encountered events', is separated from *remembrance* (Winter 2008, 9).

The application of modifying prefixes, designating various collective and descriptive forms of *memory*, relates to social formation. This debate is of interest to this thesis because the contextualisation of socially-influenced memory, by an often bewildering application of qualifying prefixes, is problematic in understanding the lived experience of the Blitz. Connelly, for example, in an introductory passage, alludes to national, collective, public, visual, flexible, popular and cultural memory, and later to folk- and false memory (2004, 2-14). This extension from individual processes to the collective, from specific recollection of events to shared knowledge, is, when paraded as a singular 'collective' memory, a damaging simplification, divergent from the nuance and diversity of meaningful remembrance.

2.3 Collective Memory

Reflecting on these issues is important in coming to terms with the inevitable; as the decades since the end of WWII unfold, those with lived experience of the bombing are dying-out and with them go their personal memories. However, this 'immense and intimate fund' (Nora 1989, 12) is not necessarily lost. Those personal memories survive, potentially modified, in inherited, shared narratives, passing down the generations, their preservation the responsibility of others, often family members, who, seven decades since WWII, have no direct memory of it. It is a responsibility of remembrance, as living memory dies, transposed to those who were absent. The fulfilment of this responsibility to the past is in acts of remembrance and forms of commemoration in which *memory* is stored in archives, films and books as well as in material commemoration such as memorials and monuments (Winter 2017). Whether enshrined in stone, brass, paper or celluloid, memories are perpetuated, at levels beyond the individual, forming group narratives sometimes summarised as *collective memory*.

This construct is centred on the work of Halbwachs which argues that individual memories are shaped by '*cadres sociaux*', social frameworks, a group or

collective, from a family to a society. The individual memory is hence part of a group consciousness that lives beyond the realm of the individual, a 'collective memory' (1992 [1925]). On this basis, collective memory, as an explanation of widely-held beliefs or group consciousness of a particular past, offers a route to explaining the emergence of Blitz narratives uninvested in experiences of the time. Furthermore, in this sense, collective memory works to reshape the original, individual memory, the sort of external influence that echoes the 'imaginative reconstruction' in the Bartlett theory (Moshenska 2010b, 199). However, the concept has attracted critique which coincides with the surge in conflict commemoration across the world, identified as a 'memory boom' (Winter 1995) which in terms of later work by Winter (2006) could, with perhaps more justification, be termed a remembrance boom. Winter's critique, in which he objects to the 'cavalier' use of 'collective memory', focusses on memory as a process, through which individuals and groups 'engage in acts of remembrance together' (2006, 4-5). Halbwachs also links process with the act of remembrance in acknowledging that:

'The framework of memory confines and binds our most intimate remembrances to each other' (1992 [1925], 53).

This binding is a concerted remembering, a summation of individual processes of recall, which critics suggest do not add to a singular collective memory; each atom of the whole is personal, framed by social and cultural influences, but not subordinated to them (Bourke 2004, 473-485) permitting, not collective memory, but an historical consciousness, a shared, multi-vocal view of the past. This approach is supported in Calder's analysis of the wartime myths of 1940 in which he brings the notion of authentic, everyday knowledge, derived from shared narratives, the telling of stories, to a historical consciousness that transcends legend and untruth (Calder 1991, 9).

Memory, in itself, is not the source of the controversy, at least not in its individual form, associated with Proust's 'lost past, recovered', in processes of involuntary, prompted memory (Bartlett 1932; Winter 2006, 21-22). It is at the shared level, such as the various conjunctions described above, that a collective memory jars. In the absence of agency, the misplaced pre-fixing of memory yields 'trite generalisations and sweeping statements' such as the *memory* of a nation (Moshenska 2015b, 205). It is the presence of individual

agency, in the related matters of remembrance and commemoration, that determines how memories of the individual and within a group are enacted. In a recent review, which exposed the narrowness of the myth, Blitz spirit was described as a 'patriotic device embedded in collective memory' (The Economist 2020). While by no means the only recent addition of a social prefix to a psychological process, it confirmed Bourke's forthright view that collective memory is an 'obsession' (2004, 473).

The concern expressed regarding the triteness and overuse of collective memory to sum up a narrative extends to state intervention and formation of 'ideological discourse' (González-Ruibal 2008, 256). This suggests a subordination, not of memory but of the means of expression, of personal and shared recollection, under authority. The Franco regime's rigid shaping of post-Civil War narratives, 'infused with power relations' (Bourke 2004, 474) is now being addressed by a statutory *recuperación* of 'historical memory' (González-Ruibal 2007, 205). Despite the uncomfortable prefix, memory laws now permit collective acts of remembrance, reflecting discourse of a different colour.

Blitz narratives also sprang from 'ideological discourse' through wartime news management and propaganda which, whilst insistent, was not enforced, as in Spain. The historical consciousness of the myth of the Blitz is thus not a monolithic, unchanging story of civilian spirit, solely determined by state-centred propaganda. It has been characterised as an evolving narrative of broad consensus, shaped in post-war discourse (Calder 1991; Connelly 2004). To describe the narrative outcome as the collective or the national or the public memory of the Blitz is problematic. There can be no one memory, however pervasive the narrative. As Bourke contends '...individuals remember, repress, forget and are traumatised, not societies' (2004, 473). This distinction isolates personal memory, based on possession, held or inherited, and its coalescence into a shared consciousness. In summary, not all subscribers to a pervasive myth will necessarily share personal or inherited memories of it; ascription of 'collective memory' is thus inappropriate (Winter 2006, 4).

There are 'hallmark' dates of collective remembering, at a societal level, such as VE day or 9/11. Each individual memory of them was/is personal, informed by place, time and experience (Winter 2006, 5), so coalescence to a singular collective memory of say 9-11, 7/7 or VE day is fanciful. It makes the ready

recourse to a Blitz 'collective memory' all the more questionable. Halbwachs expresses the process as follows: 'to retain these remembrances we must tread the same path that others would have followed had they been in our position' (1992 [1925], 53). The question arises here whether Halbwachs is identifying the transition from personal memory to collective memory or indicating that social frameworks determine the act and nature of remembrance.

2.4 Remembrance

As seen above, the concept of memory has attracted strong critique when applied to group, collective contexts (Bourke 2004; Moshenska 2015b; Winter 2006). Nonetheless, the process of memory, 'the individual retrieval of personally encountered events' (Winter 2008, 9), is the path, through the operation of Halbwachs' frameworks of memory, that bonds remembrances to each other (1992 [1925], 53).

A worldwide remembrance surge, emerging in the early/mid 90s, was a response to, *inter alia*, anniversaries of World War I and, 50 years from the end of WWII, a rapid increase in discussing and remembering the Holocaust (Ashplant *et al* 2000, 3-7). The surge, characterised as a 'memory boom' (Winter 2006), saw a proliferation of remembrance forms, some 'orchestrated by nation-states' and others such as personal testimony, public commemoration, film and writing (Ashplant *et al* 2000, xi). Winter also promotes a wider definition of remembrance acts than the creation of material commemorations, citing academic research, family events and writing memoirs to create meaning from the study of a violent past (2008, 9). The extension of this point embraces individual, simple acts of remembrance, from visiting a grave to buying a poppy, as valued as a plaque or cenotaph in calling to mind the past, each with their particular meaning. The passing of WWI veterans accelerated the accession, by family successors, of responsibility for the preservation of their memories, finding expression in acts of remembrance and memorialisation, a passing from survivor to cultural memory (Ashplant *et al* 2000). The aforementioned surge followed a post-WWII remembrance hiatus, in marked contrast with post-WWI mourning and grief in twenty years of structural memorialisation (Winter 2008, 7).

Earlier in the chapter remembrance was defined as the actions that perpetuate memories. In contrast with the personal sense of memory, remembrance readily

extends from the individual to the collective (Moriarty 1997, 125), through the operation of 'social agency' (Ashplant *et al* 2000, 3), a term which characterises the work of Winter and Sivan (1999) and that continued by Winter (2006; 2008; 2017). Social agency underpins the concept of *collective remembrance* defined as the acts and manifestations which are the outcome of collectives and the agency of individuals working within them (Winter 2006, 3-7).

Earlier work (Winter 1995) had studied remembrance of the Great War through the sites of memory 'in which communities endeavoured to find collective solace after 1918' (1995, Frontispiece). This work was capitalised on by Winter and Sivan (1999) who first urged a rejection of the notion of collective memory in remembering war, favouring instead the concept of *historical collective remembrance*. This recognised the link between collective action and the work of remembrance, drawn from many conflicts around the world. It emphasized the actions of small groups and their questioning of a state-led 'collective memory' (1999, 9). It articulated an unease with an unmerited 'sense of consensus' on collective memory, as a metaphor for remembrance, commemoration and shared narratives, pithily dismissed as lacking 'causality' (Bourke 2004, 473). Causality, embraced as agency by Winter and Sivan (1999, 29), was described as operating through three groups of actors, each vying to do the work of remembrance:

1. Civil society
2. The State
3. Collective, voluntary enterprise

Collective remembrance is defined by its actors, 'the product of individuals and groups who come together not at the behest of the state [...] but because they have to speak out' (Winter and Sivan 1999, 9). For civil society, the reservoir of public consciousness of war narratives, the actors largely adopt the passive role of followers or collaborators and attract the sobriquet, *Homo agens*. In the state and its agencies, dependent on the political structure or imperative, the attribution of role is less straightforward and the role of instigator emerges, eschewing the role of follower. *Homo actans*, the activist, principally an individual or a small group, also looms large in collective enterprise, galvanised by shared objectives, in projects aimed at the fulfilment of community remembrance goals (1999, 29).

2.5 Contested Remembrance

A conceptual framework, at the start of this chapter, defined *memory* and *remembrance* and their role in understanding the notion of a *contested remembrance* of the civilian experience of bombardment in WWII. The preceding sections have illustrated that both concepts are contentious, in their linguistic usage and theoretical deployment, suggestive of the challenges facing those who seek public remembrance and meaningful commemoration.

Remembering does not occur in a vacuum; each act is influenced by politics, social change, grief, neglect, forgetting, anniversaries, activism, nostalgia and practicalities such as finance. In addition, while acts of remembering are driven by internal, personal motives and memories, they are socially shaped and culturally informed, as they negotiate the above influencing factors. Regardless of its source, the pursuit of remembrance is tested in the meanings intended, through the processes adopted and by the institutions and groups involved.

Remembrance, 'what groups of people try to do when they act in public' arises from a contest of 'transactions and negotiations', amounting to a politics of war memory and commemoration (Ashplant *et al* 2000, xi). Ashplant, Dawson and Roper, with this language of trade-offs and deals, offer a route into the multi-faceted notion of contestation, by exploring 'relations of power' that structure ways in which wars are remembered, across a range of commemorative forms:

'By the politics of war memory and commemoration we signal the contestation of meaning that occurs within and between the different forms and the (unequal) struggle to install particular memories at the centre of a cultural world, at the expense of others which are marginalised & forgotten' (2000, xi).

This manifesto of contestation is multi-layered and speaks, from the outset, of the intent of remembrance and its reflection in the meaning of commemorative outcomes. It suggests a contestation, not necessarily adversarial, based on shades of meaning, the mixing of messages, preferences of form and, in short, a multiplicity of outcomes, not all of which can or will deliver the requisite remembrance.

It also echoes, through the identification of struggle, the notion of unequal power, described earlier as 'power relations' (Bourke 2004, 473), conjuring the

role of the state in relation to other sources of remembrance. Later consideration of state-centred discourse, in a British context, exhibits subtlety in political influence, in contrast to repressive remembrance environments, where power relations and transactions enforce politicised versions of the past. The subjugation of personal recollection, by the imposition of state-led ideological discourse (González-Ruibal 2007, 205; 2008, 256), is seen vividly in the presentation of Barcelona's Blitz which, like that in Britain, has been the object of cultural appropriation and the building of myths. The Barcelona bombardment is part of the state-centred repatriation of pre-Civil War 'historical memory', contested and suppressed in decades of Francoist authoritarianism. Supported by national and provincial legislation, a 'partnership' of city authority and people has confronted the past hegemonic history in presenting striking commemorative outcomes on the occasion of significant anniversaries (Sharrock 2020). In Barcelona, the 'power relations', challenging a limited history of bombardment, are shared between state-led agencies and voluntary enterprise. This partnership has not/yet to be materialised in the British context where narrative contestation is unfolding from the grass-roots where, as later chapters demonstrate, personal memory is channelled to public remembrance. State-centred interventions illustrate the presumption that remembering is virtuous and that forgetting is 'necessarily a failing' (Connerton 2008, 59). Connerton's framework describes *repressive erasure* and *prescriptive forgetting*, as examples of extreme state intervention, with the latter, in Spain, 'vigorously prosecuted' until the death of Franco. In the former West German Republic, 'the identification and punishment of active Nazis was a forgotten issue by the early 1950s' in an effort to restore a level of cohesion to civil society and re-establish the legitimacy of the state (2008, 62). Germany's destruction by bombing was repaired but the 'effacement of grievous memory' was a product of institutional intervention, ceding to civil society's overwhelming desire to forget. As traced by Sebald (2003), German literature reflected this desire not to remember and colluded in *forgetting as humiliated silence* (2008, 68-69). Connerton also links forgetting to the 'orgy of monumentalisation' following the carnage of the Great War, its memorials forming places of mourning for the Glorious Dead (Winter 1995). The 10 million wounded survivors, the 'dismembered-not remembered' were marginalised, the sight of

them deemed 'discomforting, even shameful' (Connerton 2008, 69) and not consistent with a united narrative of glory and sacrifice. Ashplant, Roper & Dawson describe a form of forgetting, in 1950s Britain, wherein 'evasions', in literature and film, of class, politics and gender divisions, sustained a picture of a nation united (2000, 271). Examples of this are exposed in Chapter 4 and feature collaborations, of the state and a willing civil society, built on meanings which permit oblivion and forgetting. A parallel is observable in the research proposition and its recognition that there has been a relegation of the civilian dead and injured in a Blitz myth of togetherness and resilience.

In an extended essay, Ashplant, Dawson and Roper recognised three paradigms of remembrance production, namely state-centred, social agency and popular memory through which integrative and collaborative insights from each, permitted 'the transactions and negotiations that occur between various agencies-state, civil society, private social groups and individuals-involved in producing war memorials' (2000, 3-85). These vectors of remembrance parallel the categorisations of civil society, state agency and voluntary enterprise, identified by Winter & Sivan, as a framework in which actors, whether collaborators or instigators, transact and negotiate the remembrance process (1999, 9-29). Moreover, there is a close relationship with the political and communicative pathways of memory transmission toward cultural realisation, identified in work by Assman & Czaplicka (1995, 125-133). The trade-offs in and between these paths of transmission, explored in Chapter 4, have yielded the distortion identified in the previous chapter, the supremacy of the myth over the memory of the civilian experience in cultural form. However, it is in the development of a theory of *popular memory* that the particular dynamics and interactions of small groups was envisaged and later observed, (see case material of Chapters 7-11, comprising different types of collective formations of memory, which Winter describes as people working together, 'in public to summon the past' (2006, 5).

Dawson describes the process, that he, Ashplant and Roper inscribed, wherein kinship groups, such as old comrades and local community groups, empower individual stories of shared experiences to form a shared but private narrative. To break out of the internalisation, the 'immediate circle of memory', and perhaps interact with new collective structures, the group adopts the role of

actor (the *Homo actans* of Winter's and Sivan's analysis). Public exposure brings new challenges and contests in a 'social arena' of trade-offs, a balancing of power and its relations, if the original intimate group is to succeed in the unequal contest of bringing its particular remembrance to fruition (2005, 154).

This section has summarised the vesting of remembrance, contested or otherwise, in people with individual, personal memories shaped by social milieu and the practicalities of delivering public remembrance. These actors, followers and instigators, inheritors of survivor memory or challengers of state narratives, are at the heart of contested remembrance seeking meaningful commemoration for the people and the memories they represent. It is to the arena of commemoration that the thesis turns to now.

2.6 Commemoration: Form, Meaning and Place

At the start of the chapter a simplifying framework was proposed based on process (memory), action (remembrance) and outcome (commemoration). Commemoration speaks to form, meaning and place and is the outcome, event or manifestation of the act of remembrance. This distinction is sustained in this project and is the concluding step in an analysis of theoretical frameworks of memory and of an unravelling of the notion of contested remembrance.

Contestation communicates the struggle by individuals, small groups and institutions to make public their stories. The essence of contestation is distilled in the potential for all commemorative forms, including memorials, to succumb to the risk that personal memories on which the remembrance process is founded are subsumed 'to the collective, where the personal becomes marginalised and unconstituted' (Buchli & Lucas 2001, 80). Their assessment adds that 'In every memorial something has been left out; it is the absent that causes the tension', a quotation chosen for its clarity in communicating the inevitable compromise in transacting memory into collective remembrance. Its echoes in the limitations of the Blitz narrative are all too clear and are evident in the analysis chapters to come.

Acts of remembrance present commemorative forms ranging from books and films to memorial events, a conjunction of object, place and people (Halbwachs 1992 [1925], 53; Stephens 2013, 659). The emphasis in this thesis, however, is on material commemorative outcomes, memorials and monuments, familiar sights/sites in cities, towns and villages across the country. From grand

monuments to humble plaques, town cenotaphs to bound-books of names, their variety and number speak of memories, grief, loss and celebrations of valour. They mark points in time of past conflict. There are 306,000 CWGC grave markers at 13000 sites (Commonwealth War Graves Commission 2021a) and over 90,000 recorded war memorials in Britain (Imperial War Museum 2021), the product largely of the country's imperial/colonial past and the sustained war remembrance in the years following WWI.

Memorials deserve consideration beyond their proliferation; they are common, not commonplace. They inscribe memories of honour, valour, sacrifice and loss, as places of mourning (Winter 1995), 'shaped in the social framework of remembrance-individual, collective and national' (Stephens 2013, 659).

Furthermore, they can encode personal emotions of guilt, anger, forgetfulness, regret and shock, alongside considerations of nationality, faith, gender, age and ethnicity. These are filtered through the group or collective, as Halbwachs suggested, 'treading the same path' (1992 [1925], 53), to forge a collective identity, through the work of commemoration but at a cost, the subsuming of personal memory in the collective process of conferring public meaning (Buchli & Lucas 2001, 80).

The contest of the personal and the public meets at the materiality of commemoration, where memorials influence the contestation of remembrance; they invariably outlive the people and the memories they enfold, perhaps extending the words of a message, if not its original meaning, beyond the generation that created it. Each memorial originates with an intention to remember, a call to memory for those interacting with it, but meanings are not guaranteed to last if the links, between remembered and rememberer, are broken. Commemoration endures when it holds meaning for those who follow.

The social frameworks that inspired the post-Great War parades and wreath-laying at cenotaphs are an example; formed of survivors and directly bereaved, their remembrance was framed within a national remembrance consensus (Winter 2006, 141-143). Those survivors who once marched to mark the passing of comrades are now, themselves, gone and yet, prompted by the centenary years of the Great War, and despite critique of 'vainglorious memorialising of war' (Toynbee 2019), these commemorations appear as relevant to war remembrance as ever (The Guardian 2010).

Nonetheless, commemoration stands in an uncomfortable space between what happened and what is remembered and forgotten, a place where memory ceases to be agile and stimulating but crystallizes, in Nora's description, when environments of memory translate to *lieux de mémoire* (Nora 1989, 7). This metamorphosis sees the memory invested in a memorial, monument or plaque, originally well-intentioned, no longer living, its meaning gone, the commemoration reverting to a piece of stone, steel or slate, a mere footnote, becoming 'the matter of history'. The memorial no longer functions as an outcome of active remembrance as its link to the actors, the social framework that created it, has been broken (Nora 1989, 18-19). Analysis by González-Ruibal paints a pessimistic picture. Places of memory, embracing collective remembrance in material form, are doomed to a meaningless future as *lieux de mémoire* if a gulf opens between them and the social structures that created them. He dismisses *lieux de mémoire* as well-worn metaphors, 'clichés that claim to encapsulate memory' but fail, detached from socially significant recollection, absorbed into 'a monument apparatus sustaining an ideological discourse' (2008, 256-257). These trenchant views are applied in the analysis to some great monuments of state, citing the Arc de Triomphe, yet they beg a debate on commemoration at all levels, those that reflect the politics and saliency of national narratives and humbler yet personal interventions. In regard to the latter, an observer, preferring anonymity, from a remembrance institution, cited the storage of memorials, compiled by churches, schools, factories and other institutions that no longer exist, in a vast warehouse, a 'cemetery' of forgotten memorials, with apologies to Zafon (2004). The observer questions whether new memorials should be created when many others, still relevant, remain unshown.

This example and the pessimism of the descent to *lieux de mémoire* is by no means a verdict of destiny for all monuments as they evolve from the realm of the abject, to spaces where memories are materialised, 'constituted in relation to a group's identity'. González-Ruibal acknowledges this by citing Ground Zero in New York and Washington's Vietnam Memorial. In this regard, he concurs with Young (2017) that these monuments invite a continuing social engagement that has saved them, to this point, from becoming trivialised and absorbed into 'a monument apparatus sustaining an ideological discourse' (2008, 255-260).

Young has spoken of 'memory, counter-memory and the end of the monument' in the context of post-conflict remembrance in Germany (1997). His analysis of public art, sculpture and memorials in the early/mid-nineties endorsed memorialisation that subverted monolithic norms and traditions, favoured impermanence and invited cultural interaction to stimulate memory (Lupu 2003). His monumental critique continues in 2017, describing an unbroken chain from Lutyens' Thiepval, by way of German counter-monuments, to a 'vernacular arc' linking Berlin's Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe and the pools of infinity on the 9-11 Plaza in New York. He cites Maya Lin's Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. for its challenge to the 'static fixedness, bombast, self-certainty and authoritarian didacticism' of conventional monuments (2017, 8). Reiterating themes from earlier work, Young echoes Sert, Leger and Giedion (Giedion 1958 [1943]), fulminating against 'pseudomonumentality' which parades 'routine shapes from bygone periods, mere clichés without emotional justification' (Young 2017, 10-14). It is not fanciful to imagine Young's verdict inveighing against the Bomber Command memorial. An argument that size and form can militate against human connection informed the scale of the Berlin Holocaust *Denkmal* and the 9-11 negative-form pools, both projects in which he had a major role. Borg recognised that a memorial lacking human scale might compromise connection. Choosing to contrast the relative simplicity of the Unknown British Warrior in Westminster Abbey with the Menin Gate and the Arc de Triomphe, he observed 'vast size and imposing position are not of themselves a requirement for a good memorial' (1991, 142).

Monuments by definition have a role to remind and transmit to later generations (Young 2017, citing Giedion 1958) but many fail, not only because scale overwhelms interaction, but through a failure to establish connection-cultural, personal and collective, the very pathways of memory transmission identified by Assmann, leading to a breakdown in the interdependence of memory and the memorial, which must commemorate and communicate.

The anti-monument critique is embedded in social practice at memorial sites. Monuments can fail, be frozen, by a breakdown in social engagement or they can live because the memory and memorial remain connected (Eröss 2017, 19-20). Connerton's 'orgy of monumentalisation' after WWI decried the appropriation of the 'glorious dead' and the prescribed forgetting of the

'dismembered-not remembered' (2008, 69). His view came when the virtue of remembrance was reviving in the midst of London's recent memorialisation, explored in Chapter 6. Memorials exist in all shapes and sizes and they are the first undaunted recourse of individuals and communities in public remembrance of a difficult and/or violent past. The pop-up memorial on the Albert Embankment to the dead of the pandemic and the rapid memorialisation of 7/7 point to the continuing urge, albeit driven by different motives, to remember through commemoration; even the ephemeral on-site memorials, appearing within hours of 7/7, such as cards, post-it notes and placards, are enshrined at the London Metropolitan Archives.

The theoretical literature makes clear that the contest between history and remembrance exists in an inherently uncomfortable space of memory transaction, imperfect by dint of its collective processes and the passage of time. The contesting of remembrance has its arena in the realm of commemoration. The balance between 'what happened' and 'what is remembered' depending on the functioning of memory and its vulnerable agility (Nora 1989, 7). Eróss (2017) distinguishes between living memorials and frozen monuments depending on the capacity to sustain regular social practice. This suggests that engagement is two-way. The memorial has to earn public acceptance and the public have to remain engaged, through time, to provide a memorial legacy to succeeding generations.

Winter observed the conjunction of significant anniversaries of WWI and the Holocaust in a late-20th century memory boom. Later analysis suggests this continued, certainly in London, into the 21st. The commemorative upsurge, around the centenary years of WWI generated wide popular support although its subtexts, variously perceived as nationalistic and vainglorious (Jenkins 2019; Jones 2014; Toynbee 2019), were not universally popular. The centenary saw the galvanising of remembrance by individuals and communities, long after the last of the Great War generation had died, repurposing the image of the 'Tommy' as ghost statues at schools, churches and village cenotaphs. Poppies became a sea of red in the moat at the Tower, giving physical emphasis to the notion that private 'first-hand remembering' is negotiated to public remembrance through the deployment of a 'legacy' of memory (Moriarty 1999, 653-4). For all of the uncertainty, implicit in this commemorative critique,

the memorialisation process continues and evolves; amid a continuing public commitment to war remembrance, a 'vibrant discourse' of renewals and revisions is observable (Marshall 2004, 51). And yet, where is the place of civilian remembrance to match this? The remembrance of civilians remains locked in the *lieu de mémoire* of Blitz Spirit, which this thesis suggests is a failed 'monument' where fitting remembrance is unable to function, locked in a 'collective fabrication' of the past (Buchli & Lucas 2001), detached from the bombs that once defined it.

2.7 Structuring an archaeology of Blitz memory

In Chapter 1, the research proposition expressed its concern over the sublimation of the civilian experience under bombardment by a modern narrative, simplified in political appropriation. It predicated an archaeological challenge, to the embedded script, which engaged with the people, processes and practices of civilian commemoration. A three-part framework of research questions and methodologies focussed on the contestation of memory formation in the remembrance arena, the unequal task of bringing memories to public remembrance, in an environment of competing narratives and challenges to meaning, materialisation and protagonist.

The theoretical canon that faced this review is controversial, not least in the dilemma between memory and its understanding in collective situations. Nonetheless, a simple framework has distinguished mental process from action and outcome, at all societal levels, from the state to the individual, acting out different roles around an understanding of contested remembrance. A significant body of work, reviewed in this chapter, identifies the interplay of agencies, from the state to the individual (Ashplant *et al* 2000; Bourke 2004; Winter & Sivan 1999; Winter 2005). These actors provide a bridge from the private (memory) to the public (remembrance), to paraphrase Moriarty (1999, 654-655). This chapter has sought to establish some clarity in that regard in a separation of the constitution and functioning of memory, its acts of remembrance and its commemorative outcomes.

The theoretical review is central to the archaeological framing of the thesis through its identification of three broad vectors and modes of *transmission*, political, communicative and cultural (Assman & Czaplicka 1995). Furthermore, this has devolved into/influenced the work of Ashplant *et al* (2000) and Winter &

Sivan (1999) in the interlinking of state, society and popular memory with the cultural output of smaller groups.

From this analysis, the thesis defines three structures in its archaeological framework. The first concerns meaning and a Blitz narrative, simplistic in its recall, that operates beyond any theoretical framework, being neither memory nor remembrance. Through empty repetition, it operates 'in place of memory' (Nora 1989) and has no outcome that enables the past to be commemorated. The exploration of the myth, its evolution and the experience it fails to communicate is the matter of Chapters 4 and 5. This exposition is central to the context of memory formation seen in the case chapters of 6-11.

The theoretical review of memory, remembrance and commemoration points to the second structure, the materialisation of remembrance. It raises the issue of what constitutes an effective monument or memorial. The debate has been vested in social engagement, the roles of purveyors and consumers of remembrance and the extent to which their work and observance sustains their remembrance challenge. The thesis advocates no position on what a memorial should be in regard to size, prominence, message or meaning. The description of 'humble', in an earlier paragraph, is framed only in the context of a milieu of larger, more expensive and, in some cases, controversial commemorations. No pejorative connotations are intended yet, as the analysis chapters will show, there is an inevitable critique of material, some opinionated and some vested in the scholarship of others. A particular perspective is offered on a group of monuments in London where the original meaning, vested in the civilian experience of death and destruction, has been modified, by time and contested implementation, to have more common ground with the Blitz myth.

More generally, commemorative critique is vested in a desire to show how communities of experience are forming memories, However, civilian commemorative material, undeniably, is elusive, fragmented and limited, yet showing a diversity that creates prominence and pride. Some of it is more effective in communication and engagement than others, some is small and some extravagant, some reflect ideological connotations of remembrance and others the fate of a few people caught up fatally in the lottery of indiscriminate air attack. Nonetheless, ALL are the product of collective remembrance, what individuals and groups do to bring memory from the personal domain into the

public realm. In that sense they all reinforce that this thesis is a work of archaeology of the Blitz and its memory. Archaeology can act as a re-creator of memories and, in the analysis of commemorative artefacts, demonstrate how and by whom those memories are transmitted.

The third structure centres on the identification and role of the protagonist in the creation of commemorative material. Moshenska foresaw the power of a 'relentless focus on humanity amidst monumental materiality' (2008, 173) as building blocks of conflict archaeology. The crucial motivation of this thesis echoes this. Transcending distaste with the manipulation of narratives of wartime bravery, the thesis foresaw, amid the elusive material of remembrance, an unparalleled opportunity for an innovative perspective, the interrogation of archaeological material in the act of its formation, the public flowering of Blitz memory in the act of its commemoration. The thesis pursued the Halbwachs' route, seeking 'the same path' (1992 [1925], 53), to engage in the transactional nature of civilian remembrance and isolate, in an archaeology of Blitz memory, the social influence on individual memory and hold the outcome up to a mirror of the myth. The challenging, highly-personal evidence in later chapters bears witness to this, a vibrant grass-roots remembrance, an archaeological contesting of the Blitz myth, its formation and evolution.

2.8 Summary

The writer has no personal experience of the Blitz and hence no personal memory of it. The consciousness of it, exhibited within the thesis, derives from the memories of others, fieldwork, published sources and from personal interactions, paralleling those identified by Calder (1991, 9). It amounts to an inherited understanding, which is uneasy with the broad consensus, a so-called collective memory of a Blitz spirit, seen as a confusion of inherited memory, perpetuated knowledge and unquestioned narrative. The thesis arises from the uncertain revelation of the human cost of the Blitz. It has been shaped by a long-standing distaste of the means and motives of narrative management of the best qualities of the blitzed British people for ends that specifically marginalised their lived experience. The route to the thesis is grounded in this unease and in an opportunity to challenge the embedded narrative with an insight into the formation of memories and the communities that hold them in the process of commemorative implementation.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

'..a more holistic, historical archaeological approach [...] a series of excavations into the soil, the texts, the imagery, the landscape, and the memory.'

Extract from *Between Memory and Materiality* (Myers 2008, 243-4).

3.1 Objectives

This study of remembrance comes from a perspective, at odds with the apparent consensus. It does not subscribe to a collective 'memory' of the Blitz and is concerned that the accepted narrative is distorted, largely myth rather than understanding, yielding an improper reflection of history, which denies the civilian dead the respect of proper remembrance. The deadly effects of civilian bombing have been overtaken by the persistence and prevalence of popular narratives which grant a limited place for the civilian experience in the remembrance of the Blitz.

The research targeted the concealed history of the civilian experience by exploring its narrative and commemorative forms. In Chapter 1 the thesis presented a proposition that there is limited place for the civilian dead in the remembrance of the Blitz which can be revealed through analysis of and engagement with the people, processes and practices of civilian commemoration. This chapter outlines how that was approached.

From the theoretical review, the notion of contestation, the unequal struggle to translate memories into active remembrance (Ashplant *et al* 2000), has particular relevance in an assessment of the civilian experience and its dominance by persistent, yet limited narratives. The research proposition incorporates the impact of contestation on impaired civilian remembrance and questions the extent and influence of contestation on commemorative materialisation and the actions and motives of agencies and protagonists. The arena of contested civilian remembrance is where their work is transacted, influenced by the passing of the survivor generation, driven by meaningful anniversaries. It is where commemorative outcomes are shaped and where new meanings are possible, in response to the simplifying focus of popular narratives. To understand this 'place' of contest and challenge, a place of remembrance processes, commemorative practices and protagonists, the thesis proposed, in Chapter 1, page 22, three questions that sought an

understanding of what happened to civilians under bombardment and present its remembrance in the face of myth (Wilson (2007, 227). It aimed to link the evolution of remembrance narratives with the scale and nature of civilian commemoration and the agencies, groups and individuals that contested it.

3.2 Methodology

The research plan deployed qualitative methods in a compound methodology, with roots in history and archaeology. Paralleling the three research questions, the research plan followed three methodological strands:

1. A historiography of the Blitz, contrasting civilian experience and the evolution of the present narrative and its limitations.
2. An archaeology of remembrance practices to establish the context, time-line, location, form and visibility of commemorative outcomes.
3. Engagement with commemorators and analysis of remembrance activism.

The methodologies, reflecting the textures and tones of sources, memories, narratives and motives, are by definition qualitative. The classification of commemorative material produced some quantifiable data on memorial types but was not crucial to fulfilment of the research plan.

The research plan balanced investigation of remembrance practices with the Blitz narrative; their divergent evolutions suggesting a 'tension between remembering and forgetting' (Myers 2008, 231). Combining historical and archaeological methodologies managed the conflict between reality and myth, material and text, the divergence of an unchallenged narrative and inhibited remembrance.

3.3 Historiography

The desire for revelation and analysis of the commemorative outcomes of contested civilian remembrance and their divergence from limited but entrenched narratives took the thesis into a methodological strand that called for an understanding of the Blitz, the narratives that emerged from its lived experience and how they had been shaped in the 80 years of the contemporary past. How and why the Blitz story, from inception, under fire, transformed into the proposed modern myth, a complex story of multiple viewpoints and sources, was revealed in part by a review of a significant body of literature some of which emerged early in the period of bombardment. Early interventions, for example,

emerged from the agency charged with news management and home propaganda, the Ministry of Information. In a series of popular, readily-affordable booklets (Ministry of Information 1941; 1942; 1943; 1945) the shaping of a Blitz narrative of calmness under fire is evident. At the start of London's heavy night raids another agency, Mass-Observation, independent of government but contracted to it for public opinion reports, was relating home front experiences which differed markedly from ministry output (Harrison 1976). Present at every blitzed town, in capturing what people were thinking and saying, it was matched by very few contemporary accounts (Calder 1940; 1941; Marchant 1941), limited under wartime reporting controls. At the same time, photographs, newsreels and films were managed to feature narratives which focussed on civilian behaviour and morale.

Transcending a review of cultural output, this methodological strand reviewed the history through the evolution, mode and agency of its writing. In tracing the divergence of history and memory, Nora recognised the 'emergence of a history of history', in a developing historiographical consciousness (1989, 9). With this guide, the thesis presents a story of writing the story, which traces the timeline, nuances and embellishments, under wartime, post-war and recent conditions.

Historiography, as employed in this research design, was not a study of the principles and techniques of history-writing. It was a presentation and review of published sources and visual media which presented the unfolding history of the Blitz narrative as a biography of its writing and representation. The current, received narrative has emerged from multiple sources, dating from the time that bombs were falling to the recent events, prefaced earlier. The historiographical analysis has exposed the narrative's unfolding and is presented in Chapter 4. How the narrative is contested by aspects of the civilian experience of the Blitz is explored in Chapter 5.

3.4. Commemorative Practice

The second methodology targeted an understanding of how the Blitz is reflected in the nature and extent of civilian remembrance and in its commemorative forms. It pursued an archaeology of remembrance practices to establish the context, time-line, location, form and visibility of multiple commemorative outcomes. Memorials, monuments and plaques, the significant elements of the cultural material of wartime remembrance, are easily visible in every

community; almost 90000 are recorded on the country's main monuments archive. The limited extent and visibility of civilian material in a military-dominated universe, surmised in the introductory chapter, was borne out in the analysis of material commemoration. The thesis established a comprehensive picture of civilian commemorative material and its nature and development through the four approaches outlined below.

1. Published sources

Listing of commemorative artefacts is extensive and ranges from national databases (Imperial War Museum's War Memorials Register), through specialist books (Boorman 1995; Borg 1991; Brooks 2011; McIntyre 1990) to local websites such as London Remembers, 'aiming to capture all memorials in London' (London Remembers 2021). Important also are incident-specific records, often generated within social media; Facebook hosts many sites devoted to monuments and memorials. An example, Memories of bygone Portsmouth, has in excess of 30,000 followers (Marshallsay 2021). The main national database, the War Memorials Register alone has almost 90,000 records of which around 2,060 are termed 'civilian', although, for reasons outlined later, not all are a consequence of the air war. In London, the country's most intensely bombed region, about 300 Blitz memorials are listed in Brooks' compendium (2011). For this project, the sources combined to provide good coverage of existing material but to understand the nature and development of civilian commemoration more than a catalogued list was required. Published information is not necessarily comprehensive and can be inconsistent, lack sufficient detail and visual references. Most of all it lacks a context which in-situ validation affords.

2. Guided fieldwork

Directed by published and archive sources, in-field investigation located, surveyed and recorded commemorative material in a wide range of urban contexts. Each artefact, be it memorial plaque, bombed church or cenotaph was logged with a short narrative and a photographic record. The log noted materials, measurements, inscriptions and dedications, location and setting. The timeline of each artefact was established, wherever possible. Inauguration and unveiling dates, whilst often absent from database sources, were followed up through newspaper archives and civic records. The accumulated data

established artefact biographies, locational contexts and timelines, some of which are visible in a series of appendices.

3. Case histories

A perspective on the civilian ordeal and its remembrance was sought in case history analysis. Preliminary review took place across a broad spectrum of candidates. Birmingham, Bristol, Clydebank, Coventry, Hull, Liverpool, Plymouth and Southampton all delivered credentials of contested Blitz narratives, diverse commemorations and examples of activist communities. The selections of London, Portsmouth and Bath are justified as follows.

London suffered over 30,000 civilian fatalities, two-thirds of which were sustained in 9 months of relentless bombing from September 1940 until May 1941 (Ministry of Information 1942). It was during this bombardment that the term Blitz was coined although it is now ascribed to bombing in other places. London's identity still reflects the Blitz urban myth, its celebrated 'spirit'; a recent source of pride and comfort in tough times (Jack 2011).

Portsmouth, with its naval dockyard, received many tactical raids as well as heavy, concerted attacks which killed over a thousand residents, burned-out the Guildhall and devastated the commercial heart of the city. After the war, heralding massive restructuring, the city was dubbed the 'Smitten City' (Portsmouth Evening News 2010 [1945]).

Bath suffered an unexpected weekend of raids in April 1942 for which it was poorly prepared; hundreds died but most of the city's Georgian heritage survived. The experience has been portrayed in film as *The Forgotten Blitz* (2011). Local history has stimulated extensive commemorative activity; civilians were added to Bath Cenotaph in 2003, just 8 years after WWII service casualties (Bath Chronicle 2012).

The cases present commemorative practices which exemplify the Blitz, highlight activism and point to the contestation of the processes and outcomes of remembrance. In this way the hidden stories and personal insights of activists and survivors are revealed.

4. Commemorative analysis

Commemorative items are artefacts, the secondary deposition of cultural material from the bombing. In places the monument, memorial or plaque is the

only surviving vestige of the Blitz. Their isolation, see point 2 above, in a commemorative landscape of manifold military emphasis, highlighted their meaning and relevance to an appreciation of the civilian experience of the Blitz and their relevance and engagement in the present. An analytical framework deployed the following criteria:

Form: What is the memorial?

Function: What was the memorial's intention and what is remembered?

Agency: Who initiated and installed it?

Setting & Context: Where is it? Why was it installed?

Timeline: When does it date from?

Meaning: What does it convey and has that changed?

Engagement: Does the memorial still meet its original intent and function?

The adoption of this framework permitted a determination of where an individual memorial fitted in the universe of commemorative material and the agency that determined its creation. The life stories of the reviewed commemorations, incorporating the incidents that provoked their remembrance, proved invaluable in the identification of individuals, groups and institutions, involved as victims, bereaved and commemorators. It is to them and their stories that this methodological review now turns.

3.5 Activist Contact

The research proposition makes clear the subordinate position of civilians in the British remembrance landscape. The theoretical framework of personal memory and collective remembrance, in Chapter 2, pointed to the contestation, between agencies, at different levels, 'political and local', which shapes 'common phenomena of war memory and commemoration' (Ashplant *et al* 2000; 6). Commemorative agencies operate in the broad arena of 'civil society', the analysis of which pits in opposition the state and social agency. The former conveys the over-arching political control of remembrance in some societies as well as the establishment of authority narratives shaped by institutions, operating as 'agents' of state, such as the popular press. Social agency represents popular, 'collective enterprise', people and small groups acting together, perhaps in opposition to 'state-led' narratives (Winter and Sivan 1999, 29).

This preamble introduces the third element of the framework, the protagonist. At the outset, before methodological choices were settled, contact with remembrance activists, the people engaged in the processes and practices of commemoration, was an unknown quantity. Were the activists 'recruitable' and willing to participate? Was their work identifiable in the historiographical texts or the archaeological record? As perhaps the potentially richest source of novel insight into contemporary memory formation, much of the 'original contribution' was dependent on the identification of appropriate candidates for interview.

In the event, effective contact with groups and individuals behind previous and current commemorative initiatives was fulfilled. The aforementioned data sources, field work, media coverage and social media channels led to a solid roster of candidates. Contact was also established at memorial sites and events such as unveilings and church services. The details and affiliations of those who were thus instrumental in delivering the research outcomes, explored in Chapters 6-11, are summarised in **Appendix 23**.

The mechanics of recruitment involved initial contact by letter, email, Messenger, personal introduction or phone. At the outset a Credentials Letter, signed by the academic supervisor, and an Information Sheet describing the project were furnished to encourage participation, allay doubts and outline the direction of the proposed dialogue. Respondents were invited to sign an Informed Consent Form which indicated that data on name, address, age, occupation, role with the action group and affiliation to those commemorated would be collected. The respondent's right to an election of confidentiality and withdrawal at any time was confirmed at this stage. **Appendix 1** summarises the interview process and documentation.

The adopted interview approach had been guided by the tragic events that respondents were commemorating. Their evocations of fear, death and injury might involve personal loss, traumatic family history or community emotions stirred by remembering the violent past of the Blitz. An approach was necessary which was empathetic and sensitive, that enabled insights, opinions or memories, otherwise concealed, to emerge and which an overly-formal approach might inhibit. The approach which lent itself to this situation, through more discursive engagement, was semi-structured interviewing. Key characteristics of this method are the use of open, pre-determined questions

with a degree of flexibility in their deployment to follow new traces. Structure is provided in the lead given by the interviewer in establishing a meeting place and time, setting a time-limit and indicating the ground to be covered. However, no formal questionnaire is presented for interviewee completion or completed by the interviewer as responses are received (Whiting 2008). One definition of this approach is 'of conversations where the outcome is a 'co-production of the interviewer and subject' (Adams 2010, 18).

For this plan, semi-structured interviews were adopted because sensitive subject matter directly resulting from past trauma and loss is better addressed by a conversational tone which can react to emergent themes. The exchange requires open questions and responses which permit nuance, insight and emotion perhaps precluded by questionnaire box-ticking. This emphasis on apparent informality is acknowledged in qualitative research to be 'informal, conversational, emergent and spontaneous' (Tracy 2013, 140). Emergent themes require questioning that is not over-prescribed and which can respond to tones and leads from the respondent.

The choice of interview method is also dependent, in part, on the scale of the enquiry; the contrasting approach of the following examples of qualitative research, on memorialisation and memory narratives, demonstrates this. Orange conducted one-on-one interviews with an informal interview technique around a list of questions enabling rather than prescribing the discussion to take shape from it (2014). In contrast, Walls and Williams (2010), tracing 'social memory' in the South Hams District in Devon, deployed interviewers and prescribed questionnaires to achieve community coverage. The respondent universe anticipated in this thesis was very specific and likely to be small so the informal, semi-structured approach was adopted.

The choice of place can influence the effectiveness of the approach. An interview can work well if it takes place near the remembrance site or the site of the event to be commemorated. Indeed, 'walking while talking' can mobilise a place to stimulate recollection (Anderson 2004, 254). A site of memory and commemoration, as with a conventional archaeological site, 'can be a uniquely effective forum for the articulation and negotiation of memory narratives' (Moshenska 2008, 164-5).

The interviews were recorded by note-taking, working through a list of questions shared with the interviewee. Specific questions related to the commemoration aside, the interview framework covered general views on the Blitz, its collective remembrance and explored what the civilian bombing meant to the respondents. The interview areas are summarised in **Appendix 1**.

Essential to the effectiveness of the participant research was sensitivity in managing public engagement that incorporates private memory. Therefore, it acknowledged important ethical considerations, arising from issues rooted in a traumatic wartime past; the commemorative events in this research invariably recall great violence and death. Meeting at sites, with a disturbing past, required sensitivity with survivors and witnesses, by definition, now of advanced years. It has been observed that the presence of survivors is 'ethically hazardous' (Moshenska 2008, 164). Two controls were established. Firstly approaches to survivors were managed through active 'officers' of memorial groups and secondly the place of interview recognised the wisdom of meeting in public. A Human Participation Research Application outlining the research and precautionary steps was submitted and approved on 30th March 2015; additional approval from UCL Research Ethics Committee was not deemed necessary. The required data protection information was submitted at both Institute and UCL level (**Appendix 1**). Anonymity and the right to withdraw at any time were clarified as part of the recruitment process.

Activist contact followed the approach described here and proved to be a rich source of material to justify a proposition that an understanding of commemorative process and memory practice through direct contact with the agents behind the artefact might enable a better reading of the Blitz.

3.6 Summary

At the conclusion of Chapter 2 the thesis had interrogated a broad theoretical structure which underpinned an analytical framework for the delivery of an archaeology of Blitz memory. The methodology was structured around three archaeological approaches which explored civilian experience, its mythical representation, the materialisation of remembrance and the actors making public their stories and memories. The challenge to generalised notions of the Blitz is analysed and presented in the chapters that follow.

4. THE BLITZ: MEANING AND MYTH

'.....the Allied war has been sanitised and romanticized almost beyond recognition by the sentimental, the loony patriotic, the ignorant and the bloodthirsty'.

Wartime: Understanding and Behavior in the Second World War (Fussell 1989, ix).

4.1 Introduction

The central proposition of this thesis addresses the contesting of the civilian experience of the Blitz in narrative and commemorative form. In this chapter, the formation, development, fashioning and entrenchment of that narrative is outlined, a 'history of the history' (Nora 1989, 9), to establish a timeline of narrative formation, a biography of the Blitz narrative and its communication since inception. The assertion that Blitz realities are submerged in popular, yet limited, narratives is not new. Harrison, thirty years after the war's end, described a 'massive, largely unconscious cover-up of the more disagreeable facts of 1940-1' (1976, 13). Calder (1991), alarmed by the politicising of wartime narratives, was perhaps the first to describe a Blitz Myth. This chapter tracks the Blitz story from 'bitter, violent' reality (Overy 2020b) to the narrative, recently deployed through withdrawal from Europe and in pandemic posturing, limited in its remembrance of the civilian dead, their place, in our post-war history, at best, misunderstood and, at worst, forgotten.

4.2 Defining Blitz

It is in the contestation of divergent narratives and commemorative practice that the analytical approach of the thesis resides. The research proposition is concerned not just with divergence but with absence and forgetting. Thus, the research seeks answers to how and why the prevailing narrative of the Blitz, shared by politicians, press and people, emerged supreme from its origins in 1940 and crystallised through post-war reiteration to unshakeable myth, the concept of a Blitz spirit. Care is needed to define Blitz, its origins and early meanings. As a noun or verb, the term is in routine, current use, figuratively extending to urgent action on everyday events and methods of sporting defence. It originated in 1940, an abbreviation of *Blitzkrieg*, the German compound noun, readily adopted in British newspapers, to describe a 'Lightning

War', the combined air and land strategy which swept German forces through the Low Countries by spring 1940. Air support, including dive-bombing, for infantry and armoured columns, was designed to deliver military objectives with explicit speed and violence (Overy 2013, 60-61). An extension of a *Blitzkrieg* strategy to defeat Britain required sea-borne invasion and air superiority neither of which were guaranteed to deliver the requisite speed that had proved effective on land. As the emphasis of the German attack changed in September 1940 so did the British usage of *Blitzkrieg*; the air component began to be spoken of in a contracted form that has proved resilient since (Holman 2007).

The earliest example of print usage in Britain, cited by OED, is the *Daily Sketch* of 2nd September 1940 which declared 'We "blitz" hun planes in weekend raids'; the newspaper used quotation marks. A week later, 9th September, after the sudden escalation of night attack, the *Daily Express* offered 'Blitz bombing of London goes on all night' (1940, 1). These mass-circulation daily papers would have significantly contributed to the common use of blitz, invariably in lower case at that stage, to the exclusion of *Blitzkrieg*. There is evidence of its use to describe night bombing by Mass-Observation in October 1940 (Harrison 1976, 87), the September-December offensive (Calder 1941a) and in regular articles posted by American pressmen (Pyle 1941, Reynolds 1942). In a few weeks, Britain had absorbed the word and by usage transformed it from sudden attack to 'destruction by aerial bombardment' (Gardiner 2011, xv).

The ascription of a German word to something it imprecisely defines should not perhaps merit discussion were it not for the fact that Blitz has sustained mythical connotations throughout the post-war years, reflecting the mood and morale of the British people, without necessarily invoking aerial destruction. Blitz is similarly rarely bracketed with the unwelcome human by-products of bombing, fear, anger, looting or defeatism. V.S. Pritchett suggested that Londoners were largely morose, fatalistic, frightened and depressed during 1940, moods that could be interpreted as calmness under fire (2002). Many treatments of Blitz history (Calder 1969; Calder 1991; Connelly 2004; Fitzgibbon 1957; Levine 2015; Mackay 2002; Mosley 1971; Ponting 1990; Smith 2000; Titmuss 1950; Ziegler 1995) acknowledge less than upstanding behaviours but not to the detriment of an overall assessment that challenges to morale were well-met by civilian resilience. Mackay, paraphrasing Titmuss (1950), observes

that behaviour was 'consistent with mental resilience and a strong capacity to adjust when circumstances brought mortal danger' (2002, 3).

The bombing of London, from the first major night raid on 7th September 1940 until the last heavy raid of 11th May 1941 (Gardiner 2011, xiii-xiv), is generally summed up as the Blitz. At what point the entire campaign on London was characterised as a distinct event, with a capital B, to rank alongside the Battle of Britain, is not certain, although a sense of official sanction is implicit in the Ministry of Information's ascription of Blitz to London's bombing ordeal in *Front Line* (1942, 22) as distinct from 'the Liverpool Blitz' (1942, 114). After the war, use of blitz and Blitz was variable; Harrison (1976) always handled the term in lower case. The path to a near-universal representation as Blitz, not through respect for German noun capitalisation, takes a decisive turn around the 50th anniversary of the bombing. Ponting (1990) and Calder (1991) clearly saw the Blitz as an entity deserving of upper-case and Ziegler (1995) observed upper-case Blitz punctiliously when discussing its mythical status. Transcending an etymological nicety, the capital letter convention marks the evolution of Blitz to a more consensual, validatory meaning, a narrative of heroic fortitude divorced from a context of death and destruction.

4.3 The Myth of the Blitz

The Introduction addressed the notion of popular myths and their roots in the simplifying expressions that emerge publicly to convey the all-encompassing experience of war. It was observed that the retelling of war experience is subject to change as memories fade and time mellows the inherent tribulations of conflict, taking on a mythical quality.

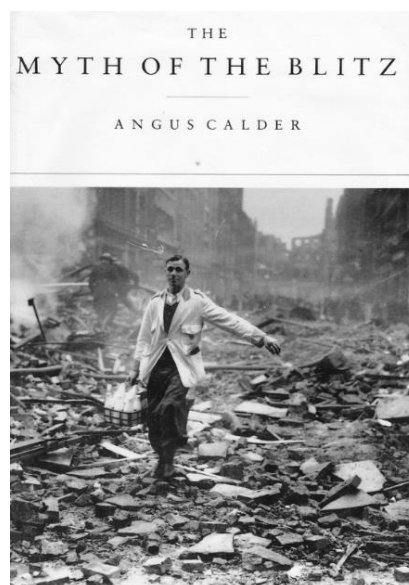
Some care was taken to deconstruct *myth*, acknowledging, yet separating, the connotations of folklore, fabrication, manipulation and untruth from particular explanations and popular conceptions of events that assert truths. Connelly's suggestion that myth is selective and embellished, to fabricate a sense of where a group or nation stands in the world (2004, 1), helps to clarify the distinction. Calder insists it need not be taken as 'untruth, still less lies' (1991, xiii) and that a narrative of falsehoods is not sustainable (Calder 1991, 9). The particularity of myth and its basis in truth emerges from the Barthesian model, promoted by Calder. Barthes' model clarifies that myth acts 'economically', refining the complexity of human acts, granting 'simplicity of essences' and 'a blissful clarity:

things appear to mean something by themselves' (Barthes 1993 [1957]; Calder 1991, 2-3). Calder's panorama of the influences that constructed national consciousness around the pivotal events of 1940, Dunkirk and the Battle of Britain, are grouped with the bombing narrative to form the Myth of the Blitz (Fussell 1991). Their 'truths' are signalled by language, needing little elaboration, but in Barthesian terms, they do not signify all of the truth; 'blissful clarity' comes at a price which is explored in the reconstruction of the Blitz story in this chapter and was exemplified, after the 7/7 bombings, when the myth upheld beliefs in stoic, British values but suppressed the domestic causes of the atrocity (Kelsey 2013, 85).

Myth emerges from story-telling and the establishment of 'historical consciousness' (Calder 1991, 9), separated from legend by authenticity, a basis in past experience. Historical consciousness carries with it a sense of passivity, an acceptance of a filtered history leading to a broad consensus. The Blitz myth, eagerly and widely-adopted, validates bravery, stoicism, humour and team spirit as characteristics attracting legitimate pride. It sums up how people were supposed to behave and 'it became how we did' enduring 'the blitz with dignity, courage, resolution and astonishing good humour (Ziegler 1995, 163).

Figure 1

Milk Delivery. Cover of *The Myth of the Blitz* (Calder 1991).



This validation of behaviour is shared by others. Calder counterpoints unchallenged acceptance of solid morale with home truths of overnight

'trekking', conscientious objection, disorganisation and discord, yet concedes that the British fought in 1940-42 with 'unusual unity and in a markedly civilised spirit', adding that conditions at the height of the Blitz were in any terms as tough as front-line experience (1991, 142). Harrison acknowledges that, from a chaotic institutional response, a generally benign civilian mood emerged. As an epilogue, to acerbic criticism of civilian protection, he argues that the Blitz was 'terrible but not at a cost of decency, loyalty, morality and optimism of the vast majority. Whatever it did destroy, it failed over any period of more than days appreciably to diminish the human will, or at least the capacity to endure' (1976, 280). Harrison's choice of 'whatever it did destroy' echoes and endorses the shadow cast by the level of casualties. In Harrison's study of lived/observed experience the dead, who 'keep no diaries,' become detached and voiceless. Regardless of the carnage, the dead tended 'to be looked past, to be put aside from continuing concern' part of a 'normal human capacity' to move on (1976, 97-98). This callous reaction appears to form an essential element of the resilience shown by civilians, whose fragility under the bombs, had been anticipated to undermine the conduct of the war. It illustrates also that death is less readily absorbed into the collective consciousness; experience of survival and endurance fund the narratives which feed into myth.

Myths offer a particular explanation of the past, shared at various collective levels, shaped and shorn on a journey from inception. Their popularity reflects feelings and emotions in the present, often stirred by crisis, which gain from a reflection on a past invested with pride, gratitude and success. As the air war progressed, civilian morale, measured by endurance and resilience, held up under intolerable conditions (Calder 1941; Grayling 2006, 43; Overy 2013). McLaine's contention that morale attained a mythical quality does not question its truth. However, it is suggestive of what may have been discarded or sublimated in the ascent of a dominant narrative (1979, 1). In the case of the Blitz myth, its various wartime and post-war guises relate courage and endurance under fire (Calder 1940; Calder 1941a), a cornerstone of British identity (Calder 1991), Britishness, dogged good humour, team work and cohesion (Connelly 2004) and stoicism, after 7/7 (Jack 2011, 89-94). These characteristics, to a greater or lesser extent, were all present from 1940 as bombs fell on London, a collective response by civilians to the now absent and

discarded, the Blitz without its 'ghastly garb' of damage and death (*London can take it!* 1940), paraded, concurrent with this research, in populist Brexit and pandemic politics. The pandemic death toll in April 2021, at over 150,000, is more than twice the number of WWII civilian fatalities, exposing the shallow political expediency of the myth's deployment (Hyde 2020).

The civilian reaction that saw the nation through bombardment in WWII is now increasingly represented as Blitz Spirit (Brown 2020; D'Ancona 2018; Geoghegan 2016; Jack 2011; Overy 2020a; The Economist 2020). Stripped of bombs and civilian consequences, while paraded in newspaper and political commentary, as stoicism and determination in a difficult or dangerous situation, the narrowness of the myth could not be more starkly demonstrated.

4.4 Narrative Formation and Development

The research proposition questions the marginalisation of civilian remembrance in terms of its commemorative outcomes under the limitations of a dominant Blitz narrative. In this section the formation of that narrative which communicates how the British behaved rather than what they experienced is examined. Theoretical frameworks, outlined in Chapter 2, expressed remembrance through its actors and their negotiations and transactions. The actors, states, groups and individuals, working alone or in collaboration, contest remembrance in what has been termed 'a politics of war memory and commemoration' (Ashplant *et al* 2000, xi). On a global level, the main post-war source of remembrance initiatives, the 'articulation of war memories', has been nation states (Ashplant *et al* 2000, 22). Interactions between the state and those contesting group and private remembrance participate in 'a hegemonic process' from which a dominant idea emerges by negotiation (2000, 13), weaving personal and group experiences in to 'powerful and influential scripts' (Moshenska 2010a, 35). Hegemony, here, is suggestive of a balance of negotiation and imposition of war remembrance narratives. Earlier, the aftermath of the Spanish Civil War was cited as an example of the rigid implementation of state-centred ideology. In Britain, however, the role of the state has been less dominant; collective remembrance is typified by intermediation, between public and institutional spheres, exemplified in the shaping of public consensus around state remembrance agendas after the end of WW1 (Moshenska 2010a, 36).

It is proposed that the formation of the Blitz narrative is also an accommodation, balancing the state narrative with civil society's ready acceptance. In this context, the roots of the dominant Blitz narrative sprang from governmental ideological discourse managed, from September 1939, by a reintroduction of a Ministry of Information (Mol) within the Home Office (Mol Digital 2021). Its opening two years were chequered, with changes in leadership and an unsure handle on its large remit (Holman 2005, 203-204). Its main role, activated through news management and press censorship, was suppression, justified on security grounds. Information denial sometimes required the divergence of truth and its 'officially sponsored image' (Harrisson 1976, jacket inside front). The Ministry controlled a sprawling committee apparatus for the propagation of home and overseas publicity in Allied and neutral countries (Holman 2005, 204-205). For six years, until it was wound-up in March 1946, it exploited all available media, including a roster of war artists (MacLaine 1979, 53), funded and influenced the British film industry (Aldgate and Richards 2007, 5-12) and became a successful publisher. In this latter regard, the Publications Committee, developed a platform of cheap 'paperback propaganda' with lots of monochrome pictures and illustrations (Irving 2014). These 'Official War Books' achieved great success with nine of them selling over a million copies (Holman 2005, 213). *The Battle of Britain*, first issued in March 1941, was the Air Ministry's account of 'the Great Days' of August-October 1940, positioned as a clear victory and 'a great deliverance'. The 'melancholy remnants of a shattered and disordered armada' were shown at a time when the Blitz had been in place for 7 months (1941, 34-35). This was one of the most popular of the books, eventually selling 15 million copies, in forty-two editions and twenty-four languages (Holman 2005, 213).

In film, the Mol was involved through the influence of its Film Committee on newsreel and cinema features, such as the story of Mitchell, the inventor of the Spitfire, in *The First of the Few* (1942). This 'wartime classic' celebrates the ingenuity of the designer along a direct trajectory to victory in the Battle of Britain (Downing 2013). Editorial influence, allied to supply-side management, gave Mol control, over content and construction of the 'ideology of national unity', in support of the war effort (Aldgate & Richards 2007, 5). The relationship with documentary film makers, whose political leanings often opposed

propagandist demands, was often fractious (2007, 8-9). Nonetheless, wartime documentary output was distinguished, bringing subtlety to outright propaganda themes. One film, perhaps the most influential, was a 'short' that overtly addressed morale at the height of the Blitz, drawing on civilian endurance, even as bombs were falling. It arose from extended access granted to American journalists during the Blitz to boost the British cause in their sceptical home country. Quentin Reynolds of *Colliers Weekly*, a major U.S. news outlet, had, from direct experience in the midst of the bombing, formed the view that Britain would not be beaten. He wrote and narrated the 9 minute film, *London can take it!*, for American cinema transmission, where its message of 'no panic, no fear, no despair' was well received. It was released in Britain, as *Britain can take it*, also to broad popular approval (Aldgate & Richards 2007, 120-122) just as provincial cities were beginning to experience the 'awful reality of being bombed' (Overy 2020b). The British Film Institute describes it as 'the most renowned cinematic representation of the resilient heroism of ordinary Londoners during the early days of the Blitz' (Stollery 2014). This high praise for overt propaganda reflects the documentary's deft weaving of image, narration and language. Albeit 'highly selective in its truths' in the absence of bodies and grief (Jack 2011, 93), it set the tone, with sweeping statements of morale as 'higher than ever' and of people 'fused together, not by fear, but by a surging spirit of courage...'. This hyperbole is delivered calmly, as matter-of-fact, conceding that people and property are harmed but exalting those that live through bombardment:

'It can only destroy buildings and kill people. It cannot kill the unconquerable spirit and courage of the people of London.

London can take it!

The artfully-avoided horrors in *London can take it'* were also manipulated in other media. The cover photograph, shown above, is one of many stage-managed constructions portraying stoic behaviour and steadiness under fire; by late-1940, 'British spirit', a narrative of resolution, was being crafted, located in the 'common and unconscious heroism of ordinary individuals' (Calder 1940; 1941b). Jack suggests that *London Can Take It!* did much to create the singular British sense of it (2011, 92-93). Reinforcement was vested also in the appropriation of St Paul's Cathedral as a symbol of resistance and fortitude under fire. Shown in the opening and closing sequences of *London Can take It!*,

it was on the night of 29th December 1940 that its survival came to represent the essence of the Blitz.

In the weeks leading to Christmas 1940, heavily-bombed provincial cities and ports had 'passed through the fire undaunted' (Churchill 2005 [1949], 333). After a short Christmas lull, it was again London's turn. The City was not the sole target but it endured the most of a prolonged deluge of incendiary bombs; the extensive, uncontrolled fires were soon dubbed, for obvious reasons, the Second Great Fire of London (Allbeson 2015, 541-542; Gaskin 2005, 316). This raid attained more than a name. It came to represent the Blitz, in its portrayal of resistance and steadiness under fire, through the Christian symbolism of the Cathedral centred in the financial and trading heart of Empire. An insight into the intense heat from a major incendiary attack runs through an account of the efforts of 9,000 firemen to quell the flames of 100,000 incendiaries, with the Thames tide at a low ebb and many offices locked for the weekend, unprotected by firewatchers; fire crews were enjoined to save the Cathedral 'at any cost' (Demarne 1980, 23-30). The fires produced the largest area of urban desolation in the Blitz (Ministry of Information 1942, 20), destroying 10 Wren churches and the Guildhall (Beaton 1941, 42). The survival of St Paul's was close run; a cathedral task-force, armed with stirrup pumps and sand buckets, doing what they 'thought they ought to' and passing into urban myth (Calder 1941b, ix).

A photograph by Herbert Mason, capturing the Cathedral dome emerging from the smoke of thousands of fires, became the defining symbol of the Blitz. Fitzgibbon (1970 [1957], 211-215) repeats Mason's account of the clouds parting to reveal the cathedral. Kent likened it to 'a great ship lifting, above smoke and flame, the inviolable ensign of the golden cross' (1947, 33). The image appeared in the *Daily Mail* two days after the raid, delayed by the manipulation required to pass the censor (Hastings 2010). The foreground of the shot showing the dark silhouette of burned out and damaged properties was obscured and hence any remote connection with people, death and suffering was removed. Presented as the 'War's Greatest Picture', the photo is 'one that all Britain will cherish-for it symbolises the steadiness of London's stand against the enemy' (*Daily Mail* 1940, 1). This indeed transpired; Mason's image was widely exploited by the Ministry of Information to focus on an image, a signifier, a Barthesian visual cue; it was circulated through books and magazines,

'published by the hundreds of thousands' to transcend the events that it captured (Allbeson 2015, 545). The supremacy of the visual image in communicating wars and promoting national identity (Connelly 2004, 4; Matheson 2008), in this case, leveraged the structure and symbol of an enduring monument to present an imagined Blitz of resilience and unity, the ability to 'take it' and survive. The image remained in extensive use throughout the war although its implementation was less pronounced in provincial cities where local images of principal, symbolic structures were drawn on to demonstrate a civic unity; Portsmouth's Guildhall and Coventry's Cathedral representing the best examples. Mason's image today is less certain; shorn of context, it fails to recall the Blitz narrative, although, as a 'brittle polemical device' (Wright 2009, 312), it featured in the *Daily Mirror's* coverage of the July 2005 bombings, under a headline, 'We can take it' (Parsons 2005).

In March 1942, the Ministry of Information published *Front Line*, the 'Official Story of the Civil Defence of Britain' (1942, 3). This traced Blitz defence measures and outcomes in London and the Provinces, including great detail on major raids and bomb tonnages. It deployed the military messaging of civilian mobilisation and continued from the 'Great Days' of the summer of 1940 until the end of 1941. A propagandist bent runs through the booklet's descriptions of staunch behaviour while shortcomings are acknowledged. Yet for each issue-squalid shelters, homelessness and forced-exodus-there are morale-boosting passages, claiming outright success against strategic attack. It contrives to present details, on a city-by-city basis, of casualties, without undermining the upbeat message of steadfast behaviour, successful rescue and effective fire-fighting. *Front Line* (1942, 78- 81), features a 'Borough in the Blitz', in which parts of Tower Hamlets and Newham can be recognised. It shows the devastation of homes, bereft civilians and salvaged possessions, all things that in 1940 could not be broached. The juxtaposition of upbeat messaging but depressing photos is remarkable and one photo with the simple caption names four cities, Guernica, Warsaw, Rotterdam and London. The Capital had become another city to share the fate of the others; indiscriminate, cynical attack on civilians where life and death was of no consequence to the attacker. London, in contrast, had survived. This was demonstrated by recovery from a 'Strike at the Heart', St Paul's, momentarily emerging from smoke and flames, similar to the

Mason image, the work of *Daily Mirror* photographer, George Greenwell (1942, 16-18). The cathedral and its symbolism hence revisited but within the confident tone of the post-Blitz hiatus, after May 1941, downplaying the passivity of 'taking it', while claiming victory from endurance and professionalism. The worst of the Blitz had been endured and civil breakdown had not come to pass. *Front Line* proved to be a popular addition to the MoI roster selling 1.3 million copies in under a year (Overy 2013, 175). Its epilogue extolled the contribution of the 'many', to follow the previous year's commendation of the 'few'. It quoted Churchill, from April 1941, on a visit to Bristol, who had seen '...the spirit of an unconquerable people' (Ministry of Information 1942, 160).

So ended one of the more overt state-centred attempts to shape public opinion on the bombing of Britain, closely coinciding with the 1000-bomber raids on Cologne, Essen and Bremen of late May and June 1942 (Grayling 2006, 20). As the country moved from 'taking it' to heavier reprisals, so the development of the myth of British spirit continued with a willing public.

In March 1943, Jennings, one of the uncredited directors of *London can take it!*, continued the narrative of the Blitz in a feature length documentary on the exploits of an East End Auxiliary Fire Service unit. *Fires were started* was one of the most popular films of 1943 and followed *In Which We Serve*, released in September 1942. The films share a distillation of national character and extol endurance, self-sacrifice, stoical humour and team spirit; both were rewarded with box-office success (Aldgate & Richards 2007, 209-210). In the latter, Noel Coward wrote and directed the story of HMS *Torrin*, which was lost to enemy action, linking its officers and men with the people they left behind; some were fatally caught up in the Plymouth Blitz (The Word Machine 2015). *Fires were started*, in its 'creative interpretation of actuality' demonstrates Jennings' pride in the 'courage and doggedness of the ordinary British people' and neither he nor Coward had resort to 'crudely propagandist commentary' (Anderson 1961). *Fires were started*, 'the most renowned cinematic representation of the resilient heroism of ordinary Londoners during the early days of the Blitz' (Stollery 2014), with, *In Which We Serve*, is considered to be a formative influence on the development of the Blitz myth (Aldgate & Richards 2007, 242-243). In 1944, Coward's stage play, *Blithe Spirit*, a 'light comedy about death' featured a song, *London Pride*, composed for a 'city of quiet defiance' (Callow 2014).

In 1943, a third official booklet regarding the air war on the home front, *Roof Over Britain*, was issued. In its unselfconsciously triumphalist tone and style, it complemented the earlier two. The rapid development of Britain's gun, searchlight and balloon defences after 1938, from a slow start, was claimed to provide an effective shield that downed c.600 enemy aircraft by early 1942, forced the attackers to a higher ceiling and reduced accuracy. The pamphlet was happy to concede that the bomber may 'always get through' but not 'always get home' (Ministry of Information 1943, 43). Taking the attack to the enemy was acknowledged to boost morale (Harrisson 1976, 101) although as the anti-aircraft response grew so did the risk of shrapnel and return shells. An independent observation wryly concurred: 'They don't bring down many Jerries but they sound good in spite of the nasty bits of steel that come down. You feel that Jerry is not getting it all his own way' (Ingham 1992 [1942], 95-96). The positive gloss on anti-aircraft guns that runs through the pamphlet did not, for clear reasons of morale, acknowledge concern over casualties from returning shells. On the night that new rocket ordnance had indirectly precipitated the fatal crush at Bethnal Green, nine died in other parts of London by AA 'friendly-fire' (*Daily Herald* 1943; Webb 2020). The scale of the problem gave rise to a parliamentary question of the Home Secretary (UK Parliament 2020 [1943]).

Overstatement had been woven into state-sponsored wartime communication. from the outset, with a lack of subtlety maintained by *Roof over Britain*. As the war progressed, and confidence in victory rose, some commentary bordered on the risible. A foreword, by Clement Atlee, in a Blitz memoir, praising 'cockney' spirit, suggests that in 'those grim days I never found anything but cheerfulness' (Lewey 1944 cited by Harrisson 1976, 361). This is one example of an 'explosion of outrageous romantic lying' a phenomenon observed by G.B. Shaw, in myth-making of an earlier time (Jack 2011, 109).

In 1945, Mol published a justification of Britain's wartime achievements and its leading role in the victory over Germany. *What Britain has done* (Ministry of Information 2007 [1945]) presents a mass of statistics to emphasize the triumph of 'British Spirit', deemed more important than economic or strategic efforts '...in rising to the occasion in many hours full of peril [it brought] salvation to Britain, to her Allies and to the world' (2007, 116). The spirit of the British is expressed through dogged perseverance, endurance and exaltation of the 'sense of

danger and responsibility' in 1940 which gave 'the national character a sharper identity'. A fourth facet referenced the determination to plan for the future whilst in peril, implying a unity of purpose, fashioned under duress (2007, 115). There is no reference to the civilian dead in its long lists of statistics. This booklet was a valediction, published on 9th May 1945, in the euphoria of peace, on the cusp of 'unparalleled domestic reform' long-denied to ordinary people but whose obduracy had earned them the spoils. The Ministry had gone by March 1946 (Mol Digital 2021).

Hitherto-forgotten, the booklet was re-released in 2007, as British spirit was again encoded in response to modern attack (Jack 2011; Kelsey 2013). In 1945 it closed a phase in the historiographical time-line, shot through with the '...courage, good sense and self-sacrifice' of ordinary civilians yet, in projecting a 'self-image constructed early in the war', hiding the truth (Overy 2013, 176). That truth is absent from the 1945 booklet in its urge to move on. The booklet signals the institutional management of a narrative, desirous of a forward-looking identity, that requires forgetting, a discarding of the past and memories that serve little purpose, in the management of the new identity, as conceptually framed by Connerton (2008, 62-63). It is part of the continuing thread which runs from 'our finest hour' to victory in 1945; the prescriptive, explicit and unapologetically repetitive construct of British spirit. State-led discourse, through the work of Mol, balances 'prescriptive' remembering in the construction of a narrative that equates the Blitz, with an unconquerable spirit, and forgets the civilian dead, in a 'set of tacitly shared silences' (2008, 63).

Tacit silence suggests a degree of complicity in dealing with the aftermath of bombing. Mass-Observation feedback suggested a marked tendency for civilian death 'to be put aside from continuing concern by those not directly concerned' (Harrison 1976, 97-99). As Harrison observed the 'normal human capacity to sweep death under the carpet was if anything accentuated by blitzing, it was no good wallowing in it' (1976, 97-99). Titmuss, emolliently, emphasizes life-affirming attitudes of those who had experienced bombing, emerging, if not unscathed, at least in a position to set positive goals (Titmuss 1950, 347-350).

The willing embrace of the emerging narrative of British pluck and dogged refusal to buckle is nuanced, amounting to more than public acquiescence and perhaps in a sense of pride that expectations of moral collapse had been

forestalled. Grayzel's assertion (2012) that the bombing of WW1 had an impact on mutual 'buy-in' to expectations of stoicism finds an echo in work by Hammett (2017) in which WWI front-line veterans channelled their service and duty into countering adverse perceptions of civil defence operations.

4.5 Fashioning and Entrenchment

A case has been made for the establishment of a Blitz narrative by 1945 that disguised the truths of bombardment, hidden in a controlled fashion, by the British authorities. Evident civilian resolve was packaged as British Spirit, an invention whose words and meaning are witnessed in state-sponsored cultural production throughout the war. Today, the Blitz is remembered 'in the terms the authorities had originally wanted' (Overy 2020b), an evolved narrative, which is believable but limited, and constrained in its meanings and expressions. The narrative's distance from reality is evident in limited public recognition and understanding of civilian death and distress. It is represented in a dominant, national myth, embedding endurance and unified defiance, deployed on occasions of national crisis to shape public opinion, projected more recently in various work as Blitz Spirit (Allbeson 2015; Arnold-de Simine 2007; Bent 2020; Jack 2011; Kelsey 2013; Noakes 2020). This thesis now considers the influence, on the modern narrative, of its post-war shaping.

The absence of the dead, from the valedictory publication of the Ministry of Information, was attributed to prescriptive forgetting of negative narratives that might undermine the post-war social re-construction agenda. This approach, is partially countered in two of the 28 Civil Series official histories, published by His/Her Majesty's Stationery Office (H.M.S.O); both avoid transparent propaganda. In O'Brien's largely dispassionate analysis of civil defence, reference to the dead is not avoided, in the citing of specific incidents, such as the shelter tragedy at Bethnal Green. Moreover, the impact of the enemy attack receives official sanction, in the casualty analysis, in its appendices (1955, 677-679). The review takes a broadly positive view of civil defence preparation and the measures, enacted in-war, to address its failings. Titmuss, in contrast, focusses on the 'unfinished business' of post-war domestic reform and a requirement to continue better government control of public health and well-being, after their neglect of the 1930s (1950, 506). An appreciation of behaviour and spirit is implicitly acknowledged through the characteristics, of

'improvisation' and 'resilience', which maintained 'the business of community life' through the improvements in provision of post-Blitz services (1950, 304).

The Civil Series was paralleled by 36 H.M.S.O. volumes of official military history, also largely completed during the 1950s. Collier's history of the air defence of Britain (1957) casts a more positive light, on the Government's home front management, than the two featured civil volumes; claims made in *Roof Over Britain* (1943) are repeated. Casualties are rarely mentioned in a narrative focussed on the phases of the enemy's aerial offensive. A 'national will' (1957, xv) is attributed, to fortitude and stoicism, throughout a seemingly unending ordeal; 'no-one was quite safe, and all knew it' (1957, 434-435). That there was no civil collapse is attributed to:

1. Confidence in the growing power of the air defences to counter enemy threat.
2. Bomber Command taking the attack to the enemy.
3. Civil Defence services.
4. Government policy.

On the latter point, the Government is praised for not ignoring the hardships of the time, alleviating them where possible and fostering a 'spirit which would make them bearable'. In the 12 years since 1945, Collier's assessment reads as if the degrading and frightening experiences of the war years barely affected the people under attack. It marries, in a nakedly manipulative manner, wartime leverage of morale and behaviour, to create a positive post-war narrative of a government and its subjects. Collier adds, with unintended irony, that the 'much written' plaudits for civilian forbearance, might seem exaggerated, perhaps to later generations, before adding that the 'common man' is 'yet entitled to his word of praise: the people of Britain were not found wanting' (1957, 435). Masquerading as history, this embellishment of fortitude dispenses official sanction at a time when myth-making was reaching a crescendo in other quarters.

In the 12 years spanning *What Britain Has Done* (1945) and Collier's assessment (1957) the slow realisation that Britain's place in the world had irrevocably changed was abruptly reinforced by the 1956 Suez crisis. The dismal national narrative was countered by an outpouring of books and films, a flourishing of positive wartime history, significant for its volume and repetition of

the country's unique contribution to winning the war through the valiant deeds of its people. The proliferation of popular histories and films established the iconic status of wartime events that are now by-words of the post-war national identity. The stories, and their representation at the cinema, in a time of low television penetration, covered the major signposts of victory from the miracle of Dunkirk (Butler & Bradford 1950; Divine 1941; Divine 1945; *Dunkirk* 1958; Trevor 1955; Lord 1982) via El Alamein (Lucas Phillips 1962) to D-Day (Ryan 1959). The Battle of Britain and Bomber Command were represented, sometimes posthumously, in operational war memoirs (Cheshire 1943; Gibson 1946; Gleed 1942; Hillary 1956 [1942]; Johnson 1956; Richey 1955 [1942]). These were accompanied by treatments and depictions of flying heroes, the 'aces' and 'knights of the air', bordering in some cases on hero-worship (Braddon 1954; Brickhill 1951; Brickhill 1954; Collier 1962; Collier 1966; Forrester 1956). Extremely popular films came from this genre such as *Reach for the Sky* (1956), about the career of legendary 'legless' pilot, Bader and *The Dam Busters* (1955) featuring Gibson V.C. and 617 squadron. The parade of heroes and heroines extended to clandestine operations in Europe, prisoner-of-war camp escape and naval actions (Brickhill 1950; Brickhill 1952; Churchill 1952; Forester 1959; Lucas Phillips 1956; Lucas Phillips 1958; Minney 1956; Reid 1952; Williams 1949).

This upsurge in patriotic and heroic remembrance of the recent war, the cited examples are but a small sample, reiterates some government-inspired wartime messaging but are not a product of propaganda nor a simple case of media dictating public understanding (Connelly 2004, 269). There appears to have been a latent public demand, assertively met, for a uniquely British historical interpretation, not a united narrative of grief, such as followed the First War, but one that signalled purpose and heroics to accompany the Peace and its promises. Barthesian 'clarity' was achieved, at some cost to distinctions of class, politics and gender (Ashplant et al 2000, 271), to produce a cultural construction, distilled to a collective consciousness, of how the war was won. The films and books reflected an uncritical, consensual unity, not an un-negotiated acquiescence, rather a willing collaboration by the actors in the remembrance arena. The public at this time did not have to be 'led by a ring through its nose' (Connelly 2004, 269) and the consumed narratives contributed

durable myths, unburdened by callously-sidelined civilian death, as anticipated during the Blitz (Harrisson 1976, 97-99). Concealed in this cavalcade of post-war historical production, derided as 'public glossification' (Harrisson 1976, 324), were darker perspectives compiled under bombardment and limited disclosure. Some were highly-coloured (Lewey 1944; Woon 1941) and others, with perhaps more durable value in giving a balanced perspective, rank alongside the cited Civil Series official histories (Calder 1941; Hodson 1941; Nixon 1980 [1943]; Sansom 1944; Sansom 1990 [1947]). A personal reminiscence, not published until 1959, by a former warden, tasked with assembling the dead for burial, mordantly observes that there were always too many legs (Faviell 1959, 105). Middleton, one of the cadre of American journalists, paid tribute to the 'unknown, unknowing base of British society', the ordinary folk in their sweaty, stinking shelters 'who saved London's name'. This respect for Londoners is inspired by suspicion of the British class system and desired that the Blitz's spirited response is not perceived as a middle-class/elitist conceit vested in surprisingly good behaviour. He ensures that talk of spirit is married to the awful level of dead and injured and that the 'second autumn of the war is a dark memory to be locked away at the back of the mind' until 'a sight, a sound, even a smell unlocks memory's door' (1963, 182-188). John Steinbeck's memoir of his time as a war correspondent in Britain is unsparing in its balance of personal qualities and the tragic reality of a bomb's carnage (1994 [1958], 78-80).

These remarks identify an unequal contest between different collective narratives. The relatively rare assessments of the Blitz, in which nothing was left unsaid, were quickly overwhelmed by the volume and collective acceptance of the popular narratives and by the publication and commercial success of Churchill's volumes of WWII history (Addison 1992; Churchill 2005 [1949]). This contest is reinforced in the publication of two books in 1969 and 1971.

Longmate, in a monumental catalogue of everyday life in WWII, intentionally left military and bombing experience to others. His deliberate pursuit of the mundane was drawn from responses to hundreds of newspaper and magazine invitations to share reminiscences about the war in 'its innumerable acts of unselfishness and endurance' (1971, xiii). Calder similarly drew on 'banalities and absurdities', the 'parts played by ordinary people' (1969, Rear Cover), to

track the effect of war on civilian life (1969, 15). Both treatments conjured the all-pervading, highly-variable nature of the civilian experience. Terms such as mundane and banal need not carry pejorative connotations; war, in all of its manifestations, will have moments which can be so characterised. They mark what people care to recall and shape the narratives, of unity and fortitude, humour and honour, which are a familiar accompaniment to the way that the war was viewed and recollected by those who were distanced from the nastier aspects of air war. This is exhibited in a book of recipes and remembrances, *Bombers and Mash*, still in print after 40 years (Minns 1980). It speaks of women managing the separations of evacuation and conscription while working and maintaining family and household together. It is a social history of the home front where air attack remains uninvited. It is an example of post-war literature, marked by nostalgia, with affectionate backward glances to a time of digging for victory, rationing and 'Woolton' pie, memoirs of a shared past to be celebrated for its spirit and unity of purpose (Goodall 2008; Havers 2009; Hylton 2012; Shaw & Shaw 1990; Whincop 1990). They are evidence of a willingness to embrace elements of a wartime spirit and a human nature to sublimate unpleasant memories of the wartime experience.

When Calder published his social history of a people's war, his intention was to depict the effect of war on civilian life in its many and varied human forms, some facile, others fundamental. He remarked on the limited offering of contemporary grass-roots Blitz material (1969, 629), acknowledging some of the volumes cited above and the importance of Fitzgibbon's balanced account of the Blitz drawing on Mass-Observation material. This did not shy away from the grim history of the bombing as a vivid description of a buried child testifies (1957, 269). Calder felt that civilian war impact had been underplayed and ill-considered in history from above. Conscious of the power of ingrained narratives, Calder conceded that his approach would be revisionist as it tackled myths, established in texts and television programmes. He observed that 'if a mythical version of war still holds sway [...] every person that lived through those years knows that those parts of the myth which concern his or her own activities are false. The facts to destroy legends are not hard to come by' (1969, 15). Indeed, throughout, it is fact that accentuates and challenges accepted narratives, although it would be in a later book (1991) where, with recourse to

the framework of Barthes, myth was decoupled from falsehood and legend. The relevance of *The People's War* is in the notion of a unity of experience and buy-in to a better future, shaped in wartime discourse and reinforced in post-war embellishment. Longmate's grass-roots history, in its promotion of the public's comfortable nostalgia for the wartime days fits Harrison's characterisation of a glossing-over of the truth, albeit with a consensual stimulus.

One of the national narratives cited by Calder (1969, 117) focussed on the Dunkirk evacuation and the questionable perception of a spontaneous rallying of the small boats which exhibited a national character of reacting well, shaping-up after a setback. Dunkirk spirit was frequently invoked in the weeks after the deliverance when it was soon equated with the Battle of Britain, mythologised in the valour of Churchill's Few, and giving 1940 a pivotal position in the national self-esteem (Summerfield 2010). The close-call of the Battle of Britain had been given literary support (Wood & Dempster 1961) which inspired the screenplay of the film of the battle, released with an all-star cast and at excessive cost in 1969. *The Battle of Britain* sought the truth of the narrow margin of victory in 1940 but could not escape the mythologising that Calder, for example, would see as underpinning the emergence of a national myth, with political undertones. In a more nostalgic vein, Boorman's treatment of the Blitz (*Hope & Glory* 1987), failed to challenge the resistance of the myth.

The Myth of the Blitz (1991) was Calder's creation to illustrate that Britain's 'imagined greatness' depended not on military aspects alone but a popular consensus based on the national morale (Baxendale 2003, 1; Gardiner 2008) derived from the people's war. Its timing, and the work of others (Ponting 1990; Smith 2000) reflected disquiet at the political mood of the Thatcher years. The appropriation of a Churchillian stance in the prosecution of the Falklands campaign put characteristics of British exceptionalism in the public domain; legitimate fortitude, echoing 1940 and the 'finest hour', were exploited and indeed matched in a fervour for the departure of the task-force from Portsmouth, still nostalgically revisited on local 'bygone memories' web pages. Calder's 1991 deconstruction did not arise from disquiet at the claims of fortitude and unity, the civilian truths, but at sentimentalisation and political re-purposing which he appeared to suggest had 'worked themselves out' when his book was published (1991, xiv). Fussell, reviewing Calder, highlights the

Barthesian purity of the Blitz myth in its lacunae, the absence of incompetence, cowardice, anti-Semitism and despair, to which this thesis would add death and injury. He acknowledges that their sanitising burnishes the indispensable and immutable plot/myth, essential to British self-worth, which encodes 'unity, set-aside of class divide, phlegm, Cockney humour, patriotism and raw courage'. He attributes successful implanting of these components of morale to 'sophisticated but provincial publicity operations' (1991, 51-52). Writing about 2005 and 7/7, Jack suggests that sentimentalisation and political re-purposing which Calder (1991) asserted had 'worked themselves out' were still active in reducing the Blitz to a 'folk-memory' of stoicism, enshrined in films such as *'London can take it!'* (2011, 89-94). The quiet understatement of Jennings's documentaries however is not present in a raft of television films, marking recent decade anniversaries, which exhibit hyperbole, inaccuracy and breathtaking simplicity.

They take a lead from *Blitz on Britain* (1960), narrated by Alistair Cooke, released, just 20 years after the events, with striking firefighting and rescue footage, which broke new ground in the re-telling of the Blitz narrative. However, the producers' claim that it was providing the 'first full record' is open to challenge since the civilian death toll of almost 70,000, is not mentioned, despite tragic scenes of the dead and injured being removed from bombed buildings. Sadly, the portrayal of the civilian experience, reverts to a clichéd representation of civilians as front-line soldiers, their endurance overcoming military might and arrogance. Cheerful 'bobbies', singing in the shelters and happy evacuees overwhelm the footage of the smoking rubble to create the enveloping warmth of post-war myth. Fifty years later, *Blitz Street* (2010) constructed a house and over four episodes blew it to pieces with different ordnance to 'replicate the Blitz'. The commentary, befitting a ludicrous concept, spoke of 'the biggest firestorm in history' in flagrant ignorance of Hamburg or Dresden. Faced with a choice, to give in or 'carry on', the British people behaved differently and with Blitz spirit, 'a real event that gains popular significance', won through! A film on Coventry overshadowed heartbreaking survivor testimony with overstatement; buildings are not destroyed but obliterated and Coventry did not burn, it was incinerated by a firestorm 'devouring' the city. As 'apocalypse' approached, 'civilisation and its survival'

was in the balance, fear was taking hold and morale was beginning to break down; 100,000 fled in panic (*Blitz: The Bombing of Coventry. November 1940* (2009). In this and other treatments (*Blitz: London's Firestorm* 2005; *The First Day of the Blitz* 2010) there is a pattern of language that demeans the experience of those who lived through the bombing and who lost family members, homes, livelihoods and suffered fear and trauma. The children, to whom they bequeathed their memories, could not fail to feel slighted by generalisations of spirit and dark days at the hands of the 'nazi war machine' (*Children of the Blitz* 2017). These films failed a duty of balance and accuracy in a pursuit of popular history that amounted to a repetition, indeed over-embellishment, of wartime myths. The cultural output of Blitz history, exemplified in this output and other literary efforts (Webb & Duncan 1990; Wicks 1990), prompted by significant anniversaries, appears to be a response to a public need for reassuring narratives. To this end, ready reassurance is observed in new cinematic versions, of wartime myths, emerging to bolster a sense of British identity in the year after the Brexit referendum (*Churchill* 2017; *Darkest Hour* 2017; *Dunkirk* 2017).

It is unsurprising that thoughtful, balanced literary output (Gaskin 2005; Gardiner 2011; MacLeod 2011; Ray 1996; Stansky 2007), has struggled to reshape the limited perspective of the Blitz, given the entrenchment of its popular support. Levine makes a case that Blitz spirit, sustained the country after the 2005 bombings and that time has barely altered its function: '*Britain Can Take It-and so can you*' (2015, 314). He adds 'We must not forget, of course, that many thousands were killed during the Blitz' (2015, 309). Yet only in his final pages, of the seamier secrets of the Blitz, are the dead acknowledged, relegated to a footnote to a 'folk memory'. Even *Front Line* recorded the dead and injured with more dignity (Ministry of Information 1942). Nonetheless, some exposure of limitations of the entrenched Blitz narrative has emerged to challenge an otherwise unrestrained political deployment. Overy deems its use to be cruel in a Covid context; the simple repetition of key words, like unity, resolve and resilience, misapplied for political gain (2020b). Two distinguished films from the BBC (*Blitz Cities* 2015; *Blitz: The Bombs That Changed Britain* 2017) challenge the London-centric nature of Blitz history and develop personal memories of specific incidents into historical narratives that

challenge a simplistic 'collective memory'. Likewise, an attempt to look beyond clichés and recall the suffering is the aim of *Blitz Spirit with Lucy Worsley* (2021). The television film enjoins its viewers to reflect on an 'empty shell in which resilience alone remains', to make the civilian experience and its broader history count. It argues against the politicisation of the narrative, in pandemic communication, yet, although effectively presented by a popular historian, in the writer's opinion, it could have been braver, more explicit, in its exposure of home truths hidden behind simplistic myth repetition.

4.6 Summary

The myth is a shared narrative, an embedded popular consciousness. The traced path is largely consensual, nurtured in wartime by government institutions and transacted by a collusive media and a willing public (Coughlan 2019). Through time, it is now a narrative of those who have no direct experience of the events it masks. Analysing the narrative consensus, however, needs to acknowledge that the bombing experience and its reporting were uneven; over half the British population were never bombed and most towns, despite constant alerts, had few raids (Overy 2013, 141-142). For the majority, the knowledge of the brunt borne by the East End, Clydebank, Liverpool and Hull would have been partial, amid vagueness of the location of incidents, suppression of casualty numbers and morale-boosting press coverage. However, for those under fire, the disinformation, on fatal incidents, morale and displacement, had no leverage (Coughlan 2019). They knew, too well, the truth of bombed-out streets, bereft neighbours, filthy shelters, over-whelmed rest centres, extensive looting. Propagandist material was seen through immediately by those directly involved; 'glossification' was not for them, they were the people of Middleton's 'dark autumn of memory' (1963, 188).

The Blitz, hence, has two aspects of popular recognition. Firstly, it is a widely-held consciousness, about a time past of heroic qualities, passed on in history books and story-telling. It is here that the narrow narrative is firmly embedded, a passive inheritance of the surviving, the unwounded, the scared but unscathed, the distanced but sympathetic. Secondly, it lives on in personal, inherited and shared memories of a darker shade, less prominent perhaps, but brought alive in personal and collective remembrance. This is a narrative of victims and their

families which is elusive, seldom heard in common discourse, finding no welcome in Blitz Spirit (Noakes 2020).

The Blitz experience that plays a significant role in Britain's 'public memory' of WWII (Connelly 2004, 130), in a post-war world of diminished national status, is now interpreted through the positive characteristics that the wartime generation exhibited at pivotal moments in the war (Baxendale 2003; Calder 1941; Calder 1969; 1991). This chapter has explored the rise of the Blitz myth, how a narrative, granting comfort and validation, should produce an eclipse of the desperate history of civilian death and injury. It has been argued, in this review of Blitz culture and meaning, that civilian narratives became progressively detached from the bombing and its consequences. Calder argued, as early as 1969, that the distillation of devastated cities into one-word symbols- Guernica, Dresden, Hiroshima, Hanoi- seen in the similar juxtaposition of London and Rotterdam in *Front Line* in 1942, obscures rather than represents the facts of life and death (Calder 1969, 261). 'Blitz' is comparable, divorced from its source narrative, it has been distorted, appropriated to express more benign sentiments, speaking of human nobility rather than experience; a myth characterised as Blitz Spirit, an evolution on a clear line from British Spirit at the war's end. Whether it can be seen as 'a real event' (*Blitz Street* 2010), is questioned here and in the analysis of civilian experience that follows next.

5. CIVILIAN EXPERIENCE

'Brokers, clerks, peddlers and merchants by day, heroes by night'.

'These civilians are good soldiers'.

Quentin Reynolds' narration in *London can take it!* (1940).

5.1 Prelude

The Introduction flagged this chapter as a platform for a broader perspective of the Blitz, presented through the medium of civilian experience, amid obscured scripts of the air war, which, together shape the foundations of remembrance and commemorative outcomes analysed in later chapters and case studies.

WWII was not the first time that Britain had been bombarded; over 1500 deaths resulted from naval, airship and aircraft attacks in WWI (Castle 2015; Castle 2018; Faulkner and Durrani 2008; Hyde 2012; Oliver 2005; Watson 2014). The term 'Home Front' emerged in *The Times* in April 1917 (Oxford English Dictionary 2021). London's raids provoked unprecedented resort to the underground system for shelter (Overy 2013, 21). Feelings ran high; the death of children at North Street School, Poplar on 13th June 1917 caused particular revulsion (Morison 1937, 116-122) although the war's costliest raid was on Folkestone (Leclere 2017). In January 1918, fourteen people died entering a shelter in Shoreditch, provoking crude anti-Semitic allegations in the press (White 2014, 249-250). **Appendix 2** has examples of the commemoration of these events.

London's experience provided a glimpse of a future in which technology had transformed the destructive power of air attack. From the early 1920s, air-power strategies were influenced by Douhet, an Italian General, whose concepts of air superiority coalesced into a doctrine widely taken-up by military planners; air attack could win a war with a 'knock-out blow' visited on 'febrile' populations in crowded cities, destroying civilian willingness to fight on (Overy 2013, 23-26). This doctrine and its casualty predictions drove aviation policy, planning and action throughout Europe. Morison, in a study of the WWI raids, predicted chemical and incendiary attack, elimination of governance, catastrophic urban destruction and huge loss of life (1937, 181-195). Werner noted Germany's adoption of the Douhet doctrine, observing that their airforce is 'regarded as the specific weapon of totalitarian warfare; as the long-distance weapon to obtain a

decision in a lightning war, to attack and paralyse the enemy in his own country far behind the front lines' (1939, 137).

Werner's analysis allowed no distinction between front-line combatant and the home front; civilians are hence integral to a consolidated war effort. The Government had debated bombing since the early 1920s with respect to air raid mitigation (Titmuss 1950, 3-7). In 1932 a speech by Stanley Baldwin emphasized inexorable air power (Middlemas & Barnes 1969, 722):

'..it is well also for the man in the street to realise that there is no power on earth that can protect him from being bombed. Whatever people may tell him, the bomber will always get through'.

'..the only defence is in offence, which means that you have to kill more women and children more quickly than the enemy....'

That the war would be fought through the concept of civilian casualties mattered greatly not only to policy-makers but to the general public. A popular film made dire predictions of civil breakdown (*Things to Come* 1936), a nightmare vision that thankfully did not come to pass. However, a novel that foresaw a city, modelled on Southampton, amid food shortages and weak local governance, descend into chaos (Shute 1939) was uncomfortably close to the experience of Coventry. Peace campaigners, for whom women and children had no place in the front line (Peace Pledge Union 2009; Hetherington 2015) were also caught up in the feverish months leading to war. Their campaigning never faltered (Brittain 1944; Peace Pledge Union undated; Westwood 2011) despite Baldwin's candour chiming with Orwell's blunt logic; total war allowed no exceptions (Luckhurst 2017; Orwell & Angus 1970, 179). Hope for a solution to 'this mad threat to our great cities' had long dissipated (Morison 1937, 206).

Pre-war planning was driven by an obsessive focus on bombing lethality. In WWI 300 tons of bombs had killed around 1,500 people but by 1939 the government was planning on fifty deaths per ton; a 60-day attack would lead to 600,000 deaths (Harrisson 1976, 23). The expectation of carnage and fear of morale collapse had hastened civil defence preparations (Haapamaki 2014; Overy 2013, 27-28). As Britain entered the war, it had been anticipating the impact on its people for over twenty years. Post-war assessment (O'Brien 1955) observed that Civil Defence during the war grew into 'an affair of much complexity', involving millions of ordinary citizens, outside of the Armed Forces,

firstly, as participants in defence organisations and secondly as victims of enemy action that at times 'weighed heavily in the balance between victory and defeat'. The growing portents of war saw significant steps taken to limit public impact through evacuation, shelter and gas protection and air-raid precautions. They were 'well-advanced' by 1940, having benefitted from the hiatus of the 'Phoney War'. The Government 'achievements' extended to an effective warning system and national black-out enforcement (1955, 20-25).

Acknowledging the gas threat, forty-four million masks had been issued. Shelters covered trench, surface and domestic forms; 2.5 million Anderson shelters for domestic gardens had been supplied by June 1940 (1955, 329-336). O'Brien's assessment saw the 'fourth arm' of the Services, in 'a fair state of readiness' (1955, Inside Front Flap).

5.2 Britain's Air War

Following the declaration of war on 3rd September 1939 there was an immediate mobilisation of defence measures, mass evacuation and the Black-out. During this 'Phase of Uncertainty' (Titmuss 1950, 137), air attack was insubstantial. Middlesbrough was the first English town to be bombed in late May 1940. However, the fall of France on 18 June escalated the German offensive (Ministry of Information 1942, 6).

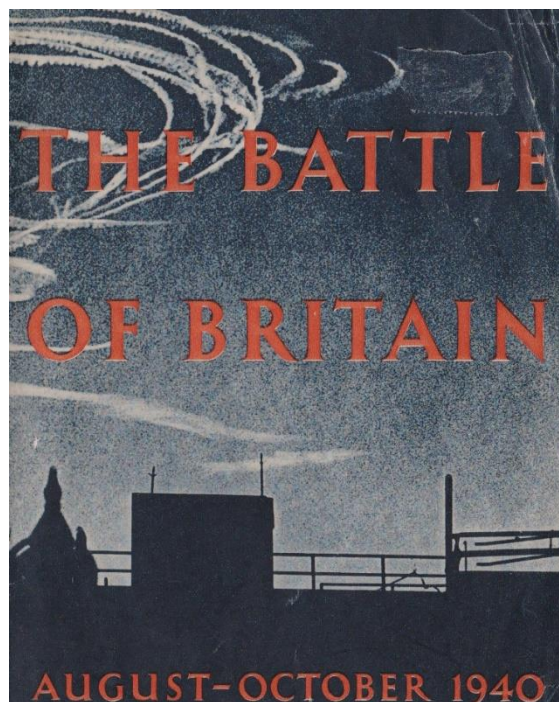
Three phases have been identified in the year to June 1941, starting with raids between June and August 1940, on coastal towns and convoys, as a prelude to invasion (Ministry of Information 1942, 6-9). The second phase pitted RAF Fighter Command in defence of airspace in daylight air battles for air superiority (Overy 2013, 88-89). The Battle of Britain, in the Air Ministry's assessment, 'the Great Days' of 1940, is accorded a distinct timeline in a booklet of January 1941 (Ministry of Information 1941). In six weeks, from 8th August 1940, air defences, despite severe pressure, denied the enemy a decisive breakthrough. A successful day on 15th September 1940 saw sixty enemy aircraft destroyed (Overy 2013, 88), significantly less than initial claims of 185, still repeated in 1941 (Ministry of Information 1941, 24). That day has become Battle of Britain Day, when Fighter Command pilots are remembered, having been immortalised on August 20th as The Few (The International Churchill Society 2020).

In casting the Battle as a clear-cut victory, the pamphlet of 1941 started a process where the 'terrible beauty of the Summer of 1940', in which Fighter

Command fought a 'decisive draw' (Jenkins 2001, 611-629), became a managed, selective and simplified narrative of events that has subsequently evolved into unchallengeable myth (Calder 1991, 98-101; Jenkins 2001, 630). More prosaically, Overy suggests that enemy losses merely hastened a planned transition to the third phase since the strategy of daytime air superiority had not demonstrably worked (2013, 88-89). The Luftwaffe's *England Angriff* was a 12-month campaign; its notable change in emphasis did not acknowledge a Battle of Britain (Overy 2013, 73-74).

Figure 2

Front Cover, *Battle of Britain*, Ministry of Information Booklet 1941.



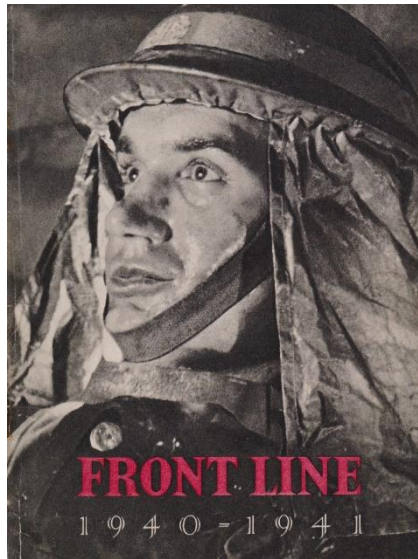
From 7th September 1940, a significant strategic switch to night-time heavy bombing of Britain's cities was enacted, targeting the destruction of the nation's economy and governance, a phase soon summarised as the Blitz. The Luftwaffe doctrine of air power (Werner (1939, 37), combined the paralysing aerial knockout-blow with ground forces. Pre-invasion, night attacks were performed as an independent strategy; uncoupled from land warfare, for aggressor and defender alike, they represent the first strategic air offensive of WWII (Overy 2013, 89). The specific timing of the switch to night attack was triggered by a late-August raid on Berlin (Clapson 2019, 37; Overy 2013, 83-85).

The first night Blitz on London on 7th September 1940 signalled the most concerted element of the air war and it is generally accepted that it lasted until the end of May 1941 (Ministry of Information 1942). It was characterised by multiple aircraft sorties lasting most of the night as aircraft crossed the target area untroubled by then-ineffective night-fighter defences. The German bomber force consisted of a thousand twin-engined bombers with a payload of around 2,000 kilograms; a prolonged stream of aircraft was needed to deliver an effective blow (Ramsey 1988, 28-29). From 7th September until the end of November 1940, London was attacked on every night but four (Ministry of Information 1942, 15), by up to 400 aircraft, causing extensive destruction in the East-End dockland boroughs. Even as attacks were extended to provincial targets, London was routinely attacked (1942, 15). The bombardment was sustained throughout December 1940 until May 1941, varying from 'lighter', sporadic raids by up to fifty aircraft to notable heavy raids, perhaps angry reactions to RAF night attacks (Overy 2013, 107-108). Major raids attracted their own popular signature. The first raid on 7th September 1940 was 'Black Saturday' (*Black Saturday 2015*; Ramsey 1988, 56) and the raid of 29th December 1940 was 'The Second Great Fire of London' (Gaskin 2005, ix-xi). This raid, with its burned Wren churches and a narrow escape for St Paul's, was to become a focus for Britain's Blitz narrative, eclipsing heavier and costlier attacks on London, before the Blitz ended. On March 19th, 'The Wednesday' and April 16th, 'The Saturday', over seven hundred bombers killed more than a thousand civilians on each of the two raids (Ray 2000, 227-232). The final large raid on the 10th May cost over 1500 civilian lives, London's worst casualty toll of the Blitz (Collier 1959; Ministry of Information 1942, 21-22).

The extension of night operations to inland industrial targets (Overy 2013, 93) was signalled by a raid on Coventry on 14th November 1940. Birmingham, Sheffield and Manchester suffered multiple raids as part of a broad assault which extended to Bristol, Liverpool and Southampton before the year's end (Ministry of Information 1942, 82-88). Meanwhile, daylight 'nuisance' raids were continued throughout the night phase (Overy 2013, 91- 93), presenting a continuing threat until May 1941 (Blake 1982; Rootes 1988).

Figure 3

Fireman. Front Cover of *Front Line*, Ministry of Information Booklet 1942.



The bombing of Coventry is significant for the shocked reaction of the city's authorities and the general public (Harrison 1976, 133-134; Levine 2015, 95-116; Mass-Observation 1940b). Coventry in 1940 had a densely-populated core hugging closely its Cathedral precincts. The 11-hour attack was, at the time, as heavy as any yet experienced with over five hundred tonnes of high-explosive and incendiary bombs concentrated on the city centre. The raid was soon positioned as an indiscriminate attack on civilians, helped by gloating German propaganda claiming the obliteration of the city, in a, now-dated, neologism, *Koventrieren* (McGrory 2015, 81-93). A visiting American newsman described a mass exodus of dazed survivors with 'order and clearance' soon re-established (Pyle 1941, 82). This view was challenged in fierce criticism by Harrison of poor local governance. He observed a collective shock to a city, stunned into inaction and descending into a loss of hope (1976, 133-135). The Ministry of Home Security was quick to react to the paralysis and spirits were lifted when the King, with the Secretary of State, Herbert Morrison, toured the city on the 16th November (McGrory 2015, 93-95). The city slowly recovered its poise (Shelton 1950) and the symbol of the cathedral ruins became the focus for a narrative of hope and defiance, even as over four hundred dead were buried in mass graves. Local estimates suggest a death toll of almost six hundred (Historic Coventry 2021; McGrory 2015, 101-103).

The new year, 1941, saw a continuation of attacks on industrial centres and an intensification of attacks on port cities; the centre of Portsmouth was largely destroyed on 10th January 1941. Overy has identified a German plan geared to a mid-1941 'culmination point', at which point the *England Angriff* was to be significantly phased-down ahead of war with Russia (Overy 2013, 106-107). An opposing view notes that while the bombing of London showed continuity 'the attacks on the provinces were spasmodic, intermittent and widely dispersed'. The Luftwaffe made seventy attacks across 24 towns including London, Liverpool, Plymouth, Glasgow and Belfast between March and May 1941 (Titmuss 1950, 304). Moreover, the attacks were reminiscent of the 'the aimless, destructive outbursts of a child' rather than an outcome of clear, decisive planning often regarded as 'the prerogative of totalitarian leadership' (Titmuss 1950, 304). The pattern of attack takes on a different complexion from research into German records (Overy 2013, 106-107) which suggests a discriminating plan, including that on Belfast of 15th April 1941, when over 150 bombers targeted the shipyards at a cost of nine hundred lives, more, in a single raid, than anywhere other than London (Ministry of Information 1942, 122-124; Moore 1965). On 22nd June 1941, the endgame was reached, Russia was invaded and, as planned, the *England Angriff* was wound-down (Overy 2013, 73-74). As 1941 closed, the country could not have known that the most destructive phase of the air war was over. Nonetheless, *Front Line* tempted fate in unabashed triumphalism: the 'great German offensive, against the back kitchens and front parlours of Britain,' had met with total defeat (Ministry of Information 1942, 158-159).

Few areas of Britain were spared from the enemy in the air, either through civil defence preparation, alerts or actual attack. In the south of England, 'tip and run' raids (Ministry of Information 1942, 132) were prevalent after the summer of 1941 and continued throughout a period of relative calm before the V-weapon incursions in 1944. There were however two distinct bombing phases, the second came as a nasty surprise in early 1944 and the first took the Blitz to small, poorly-defended regional cities, during April and May 1942. The *Baedeker* Blitz was launched against 'historic' cities, allegedly picked from the famous guidebook. First mentioned in Germany, the British press quickly adopted the description and it has persisted since (Rothnie 1992; Rothnie 2010,

98). The targeting of Bath, Canterbury, Exeter, Norwich and York, whether drawn from the guide or not, was determined following RAF raids on Lubeck and Rostock (Rothnie 2010, 149-150). The retaliatory raids were individually damaging but of little strategic value (Overy 2013, 118). A later case study enlarges on the Bath Blitz and its remembrance.

The final conventional airborne phase in Spring 1944 was a series of raids, dubbed the Little Blitz (Conen 2014). These *Steinbock* raids incurred more casualties, than 1940-1941, in the London boroughs of Fulham, Wandsworth, Chelsea, Hammersmith and Islington (CWGC 2021a; Overy 2013, 120-121). These raids were soon followed by the final enemy flourish. Vengeance weapons, *Vergeltungswaffen* (Ogley 1992; Campbell 2012), had been anticipated and the first, the V-1 flying bomb, had to contend with three defensive screens, fighter cover, barrage balloons and anti-aircraft ordnance. Around 9,000 were launched from mainland Europe between June and December 1944 with a 1945 flurry launched from aircraft (Ramsey 1974). The effective defensive screen destroyed 4,200 *en route* (Ogley 1992, 5; Overy 2013, 121-122). London was also protected by an intelligence operation that influenced a pull-back in range (Overy 2013, 122), at some cost to Kent and other southern counties (Rootes 1988, 200) where around 2,600 fell (Ogley 1992, 5). The London Civil Defence Region, comprising Greater London and suburban sections of the Home Counties reported 2,420 incidents. The V-1, was, in modern parlance, a cruise missile (Overy 2013, 121-122) but in spirited treatment by press and public this new form of deadly aerial warfare attracted popular soubriquets such as buzz-bombs, dingbats and doodlebugs (Ogley 1992, 3) although the official government term was Flying Bombs (O'Brien 1955, 653). London's first, on 13th June 1944, caused fatalities at Grove Road, Bethnal Green. The shock of the new weapon brought a resumption of mass evacuation and resort to public shelter (Overy 2013, 121-122). They accounted for 6,200 dead and 18,000 seriously injured (O'Brien 1955, 677-679).

On 8th September 1944 a new weapon demolished houses and caused three fatalities in Chiswick (Ogley 1992, 142-143). The V-2 was a supersonic, high-altitude rocket. Too high and fast to defend, its range and accuracy were unpredictable; the weapon was not officially acknowledged until early November (1992, 157). Over 1,100 made landfall of which 600 were in the London region;

fatalities exceeded 2,800 (Overy 2013, 121). The V2 impact caused deep penetration. At Smithfield Market in March 1945 over 100 fatalities were caused by the building's collapse into the tube tunnel below (Demarne 1980, 85-88).

Figure 4

First V2, Staveley Road, Chiswick 2004 (IWM 2021/WMR 62244).



On March 27th, 1945, the final V-2 incidents of the war were recorded, highlighting the lottery of indiscriminate rocketry and its remembrance. At Hughes Mansions, Vallance Road, Bethnal Green, a block of flats was hit killing 134 people. The hysterical reaction of the residents 'swarming the scene', hampered the rescue and 'some force had to be used to clear the area...' (Demarne 1980, 88). The scene today is marked by a ground plaque offering minimal respect of the carnage so close to the war's end.

Figure 5



Last V2, Hughes Mansions Memorial (IWM 2021/WMR 12602).

Later that day, in Orpington, Kent, Ivy Millichamp became 'the last person in Britain to be killed by enemy action'. This is inscribed on her gravestone placed in 1989 on her previously unmarked grave (Ramsey 1990, 534-535).

The V-Bomb campaigns cost 9,000 lives when thoughts were turning to peace, following the establishment of the Allies in France after D-day. The apocalyptic prophecies of the nineteen-thirties had not been fulfilled but the country was exhausted and too many had died. Titmuss contextualises the post-war review of social policy delivery with the observation that the country had suffered 'in proportion to its population [...] a larger number than any other member of the United Nations [...] 40,000 had died before the United States and the U.S.S.R. entered the war' (1950, 239). The dubious exclusion of German fatalities ought not to undermine the significance of the civilian toll; it took three years before more soldiers died than women and children (1950, 334). Numerical analysis apart, air war, despite mitigation measures, had exacted a terrible human cost. From James Isbister on 16th March 1940 (Ministry of Information 1942, 6) to Ivy Millichamp (Ogley 1992, 184), bombing had left almost 70,000 dead and 400,000 injured (O'Brien 1955, 677). Over half of the dead and injured were women and children under 16 (1955, 678), people and their 'worlds blown apart' (Gardiner 2011, 361). At no time in the nation's history had the impact of war been so democratised, its effects universal, with little discrimination as to age, gender or domestic situation (Grayzel 2012, ix).

5.3 Civilians in a People's War

The prelude to air war foreshadowed the blurring of front lines and civilian vulnerability (Morison 1937; Werner 1939). Throughout Europe where the home and battle fronts physically overlapped (Overy 2013, 126) un-numbered millions died in the carnage and genocide that followed (Judt 1992, 84; Thomson 1957, 810). Europe's air fatality data are equally uncertain. Overy estimates a toll in Europe of 600,000 (2013, 17), accepting that a definitive total is impossible. Indeed, Sebald claims that 600,000 deaths were inflicted by the Allied bombing offensive in Germany alone (2003, 4). The brief description of the air war above conveys the damage visited on Britain whose island status shielded its people from the worst excesses experienced on the mainland.

The notion that, on any day, enemy aircraft were somewhere overhead (Titmuss 1950, 323) is suggestive of constant alarm and anxiety, an immersive

aerial threat (*The Times* 1932, 8). Therefore, even where the air war did not move beyond baleful threat, in rural areas and country towns, preoccupations were directed to making the best of evacuation, rationing, the black-out and family separation, no less a people's war for the absence of sustained attack, damage and displacement. However, it is to these, the deadly experiences of the Blitz, that this thesis turns with perspectives on the nature of civilian status. As war approached, there was considerable doubt whether the populace could rise to the challenge with the morale and solidarity of those on other front-lines. It was presumed that 'widespread neurosis and panic would ensue' (Titmuss 1950, 18-19). However, to the surprise of pre-war sceptics, conditions were endured with unexpected unity and spirit but with no 'front-line' equipment (Calder 1991, 75). Baxendale (2003), echoing Titmuss and Calder, observes the ascription of new meaning for British civilians. Their 'social existence' becoming spoken of in increasingly militaristic terms; unarmed, unorganised and undisciplined, civilians faced uncertain challenges 'as best they could' (Titmuss 1950, 3), yet with expectations of soldierly mettle. For the first time, civilians were accorded a positive identity; a managed definition of their status on the new front line, calling for the embrace of combatant qualities of 'stoicism, steadfastness and a willingness to endure hardship and risks associated with battle, including death' (Grayzel 2012, 315). Hitherto, they were invariably defined in the negative as persons NOT in armed forces employment; hence, non-military personnel. Grayzel argues that there was an acceptance of civilian partnership with combatants, forged by the remembrance of the attacks in WWI and pre-war debate, a 'domestication of war' where morale, once the preserve of a disciplined military, would be culturally appropriated to civilians. Whether this 'partnership' had consent or not, there is little doubt that civilians were actively 'militarised' from the earliest part of the war, a process which accelerated as bombing grew in intensity. The language of government-inspired material unequivocally pursued this, ascribing military stereotypes to civilian fortitude (Ministry of Information 1942, 7). The crude propaganda of 'clerks by day, warriors by night' in *London can take it!* (1940) should be considered in the same vein. The 'citizen warriors' of civil defence exceeded one and half million in late 1940; 80% were volunteers and 25% were women. *Front Line* declares their contribution to defeat of the air assault by 'power of thought, action and

endurance, based upon the clear consciousness of a just cause' (1942, 159). The statement encapsulates how civilian status was mobilised as an active part of the wartime information apparatus erected as a wartime contingency plan explored in the previous chapter.

5.4 Casualties

Civilians were introduced into the military apparatus of casualty recording and management from an early stage in the war. While the numbers of casualties belied 'lurid' pre-war predictions (Overy 2013, 24) they represented a civilian catastrophe that merited recognition. The toll of war in Britain receives official expression through the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC). Their WWI and WWII Rolls of Honour list each military and civilian fatality, without reservation of age, gender, rank, creed or ethnicity. The record of war dead exceeds 1.7 million; of the 666,665 incurred in WWII, 10% are civilian:

Army	368,042
Air Force	124,362
Civilian	69,171
Navy	65,915
Merchant Navy	37,604

Source: Commonwealth War Graves Commission

The Commission emerged on the Western Front, under the leadership of Fabian Ware, whose mobile ambulance unit initiated the recording of the graves of soldiers killed in action. In 1915 the War Office recognised Ware's registration commission. In 1917, by Royal Charter, an 'essentially amateur enterprise' became the Imperial War Graves Commission, charged with reburial of the British and Empire fallen in permanent cemeteries (Morris 2008). Their work today commemorates the war dead in cemeteries and on memorials at 23,000 locations in more than 150 countries (CWGC 2021a). There are famous monuments to the missing at Thiepval and Ypres' Menin Gate which stand close to enormous cemeteries like Tyne Cot (Coombs 1986). In Britain, over 20,000 missing RAF personnel are remembered at Runnymede and 36,000 merchant mariners at Tower Hill. Naval personnel lost at sea are remembered in monuments at Portsmouth, Devonport and Chatham. At 13,000 sites across the British Isles, 170,000 people are identified by the CWGC's characteristic markers and a further 130,000 on cenotaphs and curtain walls. The fulfilment of

its charter obligations costs over £70 million each year, funded by governments in proportion to the number of casualties (CWGC 2021a).

For military casualties, CWGC's mission is to provide and curate the place of burial and, where there is no known grave, present a memorial to the missing (Crane 2013, 96-97). The Royal Charter determines the commemoration of:

‘Officers and Men of Our Military & Naval Forces’ (Military includes Air Forces) who died between 4 August 1914 and 31 August 1921 and 3 September 1939 and 31 December 1947, regardless of cause, whilst serving in a Commonwealth military force’.

Merchant Navy deaths are included in the military records except when suffered on land by enemy action. Deaths in Home Guard service are also deemed military despite their composition of local volunteers, often ineligible for service.

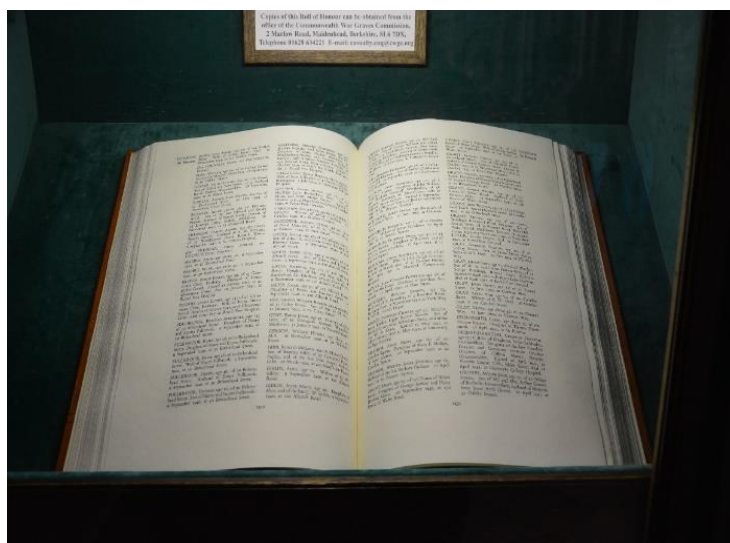
The CWGC's mission for civilian commemoration does not extend to cemeteries, cenotaphs or gravestones. It commemorates through a book of remembrance, the Civilian War Dead Roll of Honour. The duty of recording Commonwealth civilian war dead was entrusted, by supplementary Charter, in 1941, to the then Imperial War Graves Commission; Commonwealth replaced Imperial in 1964. The key distinction for a civilian is the aforementioned absence of armed services employment. This definition permits inclusion of members of the fire service, police forces and on various ARP and rescue duties (O'Brien 1955, 690). For a civilian to be recorded death has to be ‘by enemy action’ which includes death in overseas prison camps, those lost at sea and those killed by allied ordnance and weapons in so-called ‘friendly fire’ (M. Donnelly pers.comm. 18 October 2019). In the formal tones of the Supplemental Royal Charter, 15th June 1941, a civilian is not in a military force but will be recorded ‘in whatever walk of civilian life who have died or may die in the present War from War injuries’. They need to be a Commonwealth citizen who died between 3 September 1939 and 31 December 1947 (Imperial War Graves Commission 1941). The inclusion of Commonwealth bombing casualties places Malta fourth after Liverpool, Birmingham and Lambeth in the list of reporting authorities. **Appendix 3.**

The commemorative bureaucracy of the CWGC, underpinned by the established local authority structure of civil registration, ensured an acknowledgement of the civilian dead no less than that accorded to military

dead. Civilians, non-military casualties, have equal status, their names, line upon line, visible in physical books in Westminster Abbey. The recording and recognition of the civilian dead by the CWGC followed precedents and processes developed to commemorate military casualties. As displayed later, Ware's zeal to record the civilian dead presumed an equivalence with military combatant sacrifice for King and Empire, reinforcing a quasi-military status, implicit in the state-managed civilian discourse trailed above.

Figure 6

CWGC Civilian War Dead Roll of Honour, Westminster Abbey.



However, in the management of death and dislocation this desired civilian status was severely tested as the next paragraphs will show.

5.5 Managing Death

Deaths due to war operations had been under consideration by the Ministry of Health since the mid-1920s (Titmuss 1950, 14), culminating in the assembly of significant powers that remain one of the more contentious aspects of wartime state intervention (Noakes 2020, 174; Rugg 2004, 154). Matters of identification and removal of the dead, mortuary provision and mass burial were well-advanced by the 'grisly intimacy' of government officials at the start of the war (Titmuss 1950, 14 and 21), dismissed, with rare insensitivity, as 'casualty work' (1950, 239). This preceded an unprecedented period of government direction which hastened, often insensitively, the efficient disposal of the dead (Harrison 1976, 99). Speed was imperative, for reasons of morale and public health; the

despatch of a high volume of fatalities sometimes limited the opportunity for identification and presentation for personal, family burial. Where numbers and circumstance dictated, burial sites for multiple casualties were required. At over 100 locations across the country there are sites of communal burial, the sharing of grave space, ranging from a handful of deceased to several hundred.

Summaries, analysed by location, are in **Appendices 4, 5 and 6**.

The grave sites are evidence of an aspect of the government response to the air war that is deemed to have been more efficient than social provision (Titmuss 1950, 239) by a Government intent on a more soldierly response. Since 'loved ones were dying for the nation', it presumed that it would 'mean much' to relatives if burials were attended by military honours (Ministry of Information 1940b). This manipulation of civilian status was inspired by a perceived need to manage death's impact on the morale of the living, survivors and bereaved, while in parallel swiftly managing casualty despatch.

The requirements of local authorities in the management of 'Civilian deaths due to war operations' were stipulated in MoH Circular 1779, of 28th February 1939. Simultaneously, one million burial forms, which linked mortuary and death registers, were distributed (Titmuss 1950, 21). The form was crucial to establishing the civilian database on which the CWGC Roll of Honour became dependent (Margry 2010, 44-47). Circular 1779 enjoined local authorities to procure mortuary space, using compulsory powers as necessary and provide transport for bodies. Authorities were later relieved of reporting deaths by enemy action to coroners whose inquest obligations, in this regard, were suspended (Ramsey & Ramsey 2019, 75). This circular, with its far-reaching powers and assertion of strong central control, began a concerted engagement between local and burial authorities and government ministries. The prediction of high casualties and consequent demand for graves and coffin timber meant government pursuit of 'communal imperatives' which led to consideration of cremation and mass burial 'in lime' (Titmuss 1950, 13). At operational level, the approach of MoH insensitively exerted an imbalance between tradition and enforcement, the subsuming of 'familial control over the final destination of the corpse' (Rugg 2004, 154). Tensions continued throughout the Blitz; over-estimation of bombing casualties and the greater problems of bombed-out, displaced families failed to relieve pressure on individual burial authorities. York,

following a damaging *Baedeker* raid and Hull and Sheffield, overwhelmed by phases of continuous attack, were forced to implement mass burials. Nonetheless, the strong, national tradition of family burial of claimed bodies was maintained by and large throughout the Blitz but, as these northern cities show, it could be challenged by intense raiding and limited local mortuary provision (2004, 166-168). The efficient administration of death, regardless of regulations and circulars, was determined by the seriousness of the raid and sometimes descended into chaos, adversely influencing the imagined dignity of liaison between bereaved and burial authority. Noakes describes issues in Liverpool, Clydebank, Sheffield and Belfast. The latter, which suffered the greatest one-raid loss outside of London, saw 163 people buried in 153 coffins (Noakes 2020, 175-185). Needham (2009, 124-134) spares no detail in the identification of the deceased and burial problems encountered in Nottingham.

The realities of a Blitz could present local authorities and burial agencies with an overwhelming number of dead and the grim task of recovering, reassembling and identification of bodies. The displacement of those in rest centres, often at a distance, saw the number of unclaimed bodies rise; burials had to proceed, as directed, 'wrapped in sheets and interred in mass graves' (Rugg 2004, 161). The bereaved, coping with loss, bereft of homes and chattels, were thus confronted by the spectre of a 'common' grave and a pauper's burial in little more than a hessian sack. These fears were particularly prominent in some disadvantaged communities resulting in some of the highest incidences of claiming the body for private burial (Noakes 2020, 175). In Clydebank, two heavy raids on consecutive nights in March 1941 had made 35,000 residents homeless (Titmuss 1950, 312-313). The town authorities had no choice but a 'hasty committal' of 120 unclaimed civilians at the local Dunottar Cemetery in a mass grave, attended by 'a host of politicians, bureaucrats and clergy', who 'hastened swiftly away'. Bitter reflection speaks of 'something irredeemably squalid', of authorities who 'did not supply even cardboard coffins so that bodies were lowered into wet Dunbartonshire earth in the indignity of bedsheets and kitchen string' (MacLeod 2011, 8). A similar burial in Hull in May 1941 was also a miserable affair; despite limited family attendance for the burial of 200 victims in a shallow trench, public grief was uncontained. Patriotic local press coverage had a jarring effect on local sentiment (Rugg 2004, 166-168).

These mass burials invariably took place when the community mood was fragile and the balm of an 'heroic' burial, with 'militaristic rhetoric' emphasizing sacrifice and honour, became established practice although its standard was variable (2004, 154). The covering of bare shrouds in flags and the attendance at mass funerals of civic, religious and military dignitaries, amounted to a 'politics of burial' (Noakes 2020, 175-185), dressing civilian loss in ritual, language and symbols familiar from military remembrance. The Government thus sought, selectively, dependent on propaganda value, the 'pre-emptive' management of grief and bereavement (Noakes 2020, 232), as expertly deployed in the aftermath of the bombing of Coventry in November 1940. Later analysis will show, inconsistent stage-management of 'heroic' communal burial. In addition, post-war, mass grave commemoration has left a questionable legacy of civilian remembrance archaeology explored in a later section.

5.6 Dislocation and Distress

Official assessments of civil defence and social services (O'Brien 1955; Titmuss 1950) acknowledge that deaths were significantly lower than pre-war estimates through a combination of mitigative methods and over-estimation of the enemy's airborne capability. Government, national and local, was therefore less tested on the management of killed and injured than had been planned (1950, 239). The relative efficiency in dealing with the dead highlighted deficiencies in management of the social problems of the living (Harrison 1976, 24) to the detriment of 'reducing social distress and finding remedies for the general disorder of life' (Titmuss 1950, 239-240).

Poor anticipation and provision placed significant stress on authorities that were universally slow to rise to the challenge; initial responses to property damage and homelessness were overwhelmed by demand. Provision of basic requirements of shelter, food and blankets was uncoordinated and vested in dated attitudes and institutions. Harrison suggests an overemphasis on death and destruction left 'little consideration for other, less obvious' consequences of 'confusion, anxiety, dislocation and distress' (1976, 24). Titmuss deals with this with uncharacteristic bluntness. He speaks of government incomprehension and paralysis in the provision of social support. Imagination, planning and execution failed the basic civilian test, to restore, after bombardment, basic needs of 'shelter, food and warmth' (1950, 239-240).

Hilde Marchant's stark assessment of shaken morale on arrival in Coventry in November 1940 (Marchant 1941) earned faint praise as 'relatively objective' (Harrison 1976,133). Her upbeat *Daily Express* front-page, reporting shattered homes but stout 'cockney' hearts, on Monday, 9th September 1940, was anything but (Marchant 1940). Her report, under government regulation, was two days after the start of the London Blitz; to those on the receiving end, 'Black Saturday'. From late afternoon until the early hours, two raids, the first with 375 attackers and the second with around 250, had killed over 400 'cockneys' and seriously injured 1,600 (Ministry of Information 1942, 11-12). In these first days of the Blitz, the plight of the bombed was largely obscured by reporting limitations. These did not prevent derisive revelations (*Daily Worker* 1940) although the paper's consistent anti-government line led to suppression by January 1941 (*The Manchester Guardian* 1941). A more subtle attack on government handling of the Blitz was made by a campaigning journalist, Ritchie Calder, in the *New Statesman*, an influential weekly magazine. On 21st September, within two weeks of the start of the night offensive, he exposed the lack of institutional understanding of bombing effects, supine local authorities and damaging conflicts of departmental jurisdiction. He likened the resilience of 'ordinary people' to seasoned troops (1940, 276-78); fifty years later his son, paid similar tribute (Calder 1991, 75).

Calder's resounding critique, stridently out of tune with the 'take it on the chin' coverage of 'popular' newspapers (*The New Statesman* 2006), described conditions hitherto kept from public knowledge (Luckhurst 2010). In three pages, the dislocation and social breakdown of the early days of the Blitz is unveiled, the consequences of institutional inaction evident in the unfolding of a terrible tragedy on Agate Street, Canning Town. Hallsville School had been requisitioned as a temporary rest centre, a place for a cup of tea and a sandwich, not for crowds of frantic, displaced persons. The widespread damage of 'Black Saturday' had left hundreds of families with nowhere to go. They were tired and dirty, 'bombed out' of their homes, possessions and ration books; they crowded into the school with its limited facilities to await transport away from danger. Many had walked miles to different agencies vainly seeking help and information. There were at least 600 people that should have been moved on Sunday and Monday, but transport problems left them exposed in a heavily

bombed district and in premises already badly damaged (Ramsey & Ramsey 2019, 126). Conditions were squalid and provision of basic food and blankets had broken down; the Public Assistance Committee, a relic of Victorian Poor Law administration, was unable to respond. In the early hours of 10th September, the school received a direct hit with enormous loss of life.

Calder raged at the failure to avoid a tragic outcome that he had foreseen and had vainly sought to prevent. His description of rescuers descending on ropes into the school crater conveyed vividly the scale of the tragedy (Calder 1940, 276). Estimates of the dead vary widely. *Carry on London*, which expanded the thesis of ordinary people stepping up in the absence of institutional support, suggests a death toll of 450 (Calder 1941b, 57). This frankness is astonishing as the worst phase of the Blitz had yet to conclude. The 'official' number of dead, recorded by the CWGC, is 77, with many given a mass burial in the East London Cemetery in Plaistow. Inevitably, such variation is accompanied by the assertion that bodies were unrecovered. The scale of the disaster prompted suppression of casualty estimates and occasioned high level attention; Churchill visited the next day, the King and Queen on Friday 13th after the Palace had been damaged the same day. In a letter, the Queen spoke of 'a school that was hit and fell on top of the 500 people waiting to be evacuated-about 200 are still under the ruins' (Gardiner 2011, 40-41). **Appendix 7** summarises the remembrance of this tragedy and its understated post-war commemoration.

Calder's exposure of the social service breakdown in East London has passed into myth, its importance as a link in the chain, to a post-war welfare state and national health service, explored in a recent film (*Blitz: The Bombs That Changed Britain* 2017). Calder's grandsons, Gideon and Simon, repeat the 'utter lack of decency' in the treatment of the displaced and the 'barely anticipated' need for social provision (Calder 2017). Calder's 1940 *New Statesman* article was a powerful rendering of what 'ordinary people' endured, the civilian experience of being 'blitzed', adding to the uncomfortable truths to which the government was party through intelligence reports of public opinion (Harrison 1976, 327). The Government and the War Cabinet presumably felt great discomfort at Calder's public word-pictures of bloodied, tired, hungry and angry people, transport failures and ultimate tragedy. Their secret briefing, just hours after the tragedy (Ministry of Information 1940b), is brutally curt:

'Extreme nervousness of people rendered homeless at being herded together in local schools with inadequate shelters. West Ham school filled to bursting point from Saturday night onwards, blown up by H.E. bomb with many casualties. This has caused great shock in district'.

Such briefings were prepared by Home Intelligence, a division of the Ministry of Information, from many sources including submissions from Mass-Observation's national panel of diarists and observers, often directly experiencing the bombing (Harrison 1976, 13). Harrison, one of the founders, stayed with the M-O project throughout the war (Jeffery 1999 [1978]) and his presentation of the Blitz is a narrative of actual experience, buoyed by a conviction that truth and the 'officially sponsored image of it' are divergent. He presented his 1976 book as a conflict of fantasy and reality (1976, 18), yet a book about life experience in 1940-1941 Britain. Page by page, the voices of the Mass-Observation archive distil into hardship, inadequate rest centres, squalid, dangerous shelters, under-resourced repairs, shortage of food, heat and a roof, unrelenting trekking from danger and then back to work. Strongly-expressed views on the transacting of post-Blitz relief contrast sharply with Government output. This is particularly evident in September 1940 where public despondency (Mass-Observation 1940a, x-xii) is ignored in daily morale briefings to ministers and civil servants which communicate a different perspective. While there was policy and encouragement of managed evacuation in 1940 (Samways 1995), self-preservation had forced many to make their own move to safety and had decamped to stay with relatives outside London; in Stepney, a borough of 225,000 people over half had gone (Mass-Observation 1940a, 3). Government concern was with temporary population shifts, the concept of trekking. On 9th September, in heavily bombed areas, 'there has been little sign of panic and none of defeatism'. However anxiety and 'the chaos in domestic affairs' resulted in 'aimless evacuation' to other places in West London, an 'exodus caused by greater fear than the actual circumstances justify' (Ministry of Information 1940a). History was repeating itself; 'impromptu' evacuations, as in 1917-1918 (Meisel 1994, 301; White 2014, 217-218), were again making the Government uncomfortable.

The next day, 10th September, on the same page as the Hallsville School tragedy, the briefing observed, rather obviously, 'little evidence that these efforts

to escape are due to defeatist feelings, but are simply because the people are thoroughly frightened' (Ministry of Information 1940b). Two days later, it declared 'morale is high: people are much more cheerful today' yet 'unofficial walkout from dockside areas' was continuing. 'Apprehension' is noted in districts where rest centres 'have been bombed with great loss of life' (Ministry of Information 1940c). The desperate conflation of good cheer and apprehension underlines the extent to which dislocation and distress had wrong-footed the Government.

Churchill, in a parliamentary debate in 1934, foresaw the dismal prospect of millions of bombed-out civilians streaming into the rural hinterland of cities with serious social ramifications (Meisel 1994, 316). This 'nightmare vision' came to pass in 1940, not perhaps in millions, but in sufficient numbers to perturb the authorities. Clearly trekking as an indicator of weakening morale was of concern and it was government policy not to encourage it; as a result provision in the reception areas was inadequate (Harrisson 1976, 168). The daily movement, from a more sympathetic standpoint, reflected a balancing of safety with job retention (Titmuss 1950, 312-313). This was observed as the motivation for nightly trekking in Coventry, Plymouth and Southampton with perhaps the most dramatic example arising from the destruction of Clydebank. Estimates suggest that the town of 47000 people held barely 2000 of them at night, prompting the mischievous observation, 'where they all went to no one knew' (1950, 312). In fact, many went to reception centres in the hills north of the Clyde, vividly described in a novel of a resourceful, homeless young girl on a quest to find her displaced family (Reid Sexton 2011). These temporary 'billets' did not discourage a return to work and MacLeod notes a strong recovery at John Brown's shipyard and the Singer factory, the two principal employers in Clydebank (MacLeod 2011, 276). As much as 'living in an open field' meant less than the loss of employment' (Titmuss 1950, 312-313), other places, such as Merseyside, were less sanguine; being forced to sleep on tarpaulins saw morale fall to dangerous levels and 'the grimness of the people has a menacing note' (Beaven & Thoms 1996, 202).

There is little doubt that the Government neither embraced nor managed trekking in London before the Blitz moved to the provincial and port cities where significant night-time forays out of town became the norm. The approach in

London to the high casualty toll, displacement and trekking, relentlessly fed by grass-roots reports, was, on 24th September 1940, to axe rigid rules on shelter on the Tube network (Gregg 2001). The failings in the provision of aid to the displaced was tackled through the appointment of a Special Commissioner for the Homeless by the end of the month (Levine 2015, 32). Mass-Observation welcomed the appointment of the Conservative MP, Henry Willink, but had reservations about the extent of his remit with respect to housing (Mass-Observation 1940a). In the event, Willink brought order and organisation to London's homeless crisis and established a housing repairs function which was judged to have made good progress by November 1940 (Ziegler 1995, 127 & 154). Government liaison with voluntary stakeholders in social policy improved under the new commission; by mid-1941 'post-raid services had to their credit an impressive record of achievements' (Titmuss 1950, 300), a statement whose validity is reviewed later.

It might reasonably be expected that London's harsh Blitz lessons in September and October 1940 would assist in alleviating the civilian experience in provincial cities. However, Harrison lists the same failings in basic relief provision; from food to blankets, from repairs to information, all were in limited evidence during the winter of 1940-41 as one city after another was bombed (1976, 292-293). It is unsurprising that lack of preparation should afflict civilians in the bombed cities for that reflected a national failing, acknowledged earlier. Less easy to comprehend is the absence of liaison between the London institutions, centralised under Willink's Commission, and the regions, afflicted by administrative disfunction of overlapping relief agencies and local authority jurisdiction. As an example, the heavy raids on Plymouth saw extreme overnight trekking into rural districts, estimated at 30,000, placing enormous and unplanned strain on bombed civilians and those that received them (Harrison 1976, 226-234). In Liverpool, the most heavily bombed area outside of London (**Appendix 3**), Mass-Observation reports noted the 'vehemence' of civilian reaction to inadequacies of local leadership, loss of confidence in public shelters, absence of emergency feeding, power black-outs and transport breakdown. Civilian ill-feeling, with morale verging on 'a willingness to surrender' and rumours of the imposition of martial law came to a peak following the 5 day Blitz of early-May 1941 (1976, 242-243). This was six months after

similar experiences were endured in Coventry and outside government assistance had there been swiftly mobilised to bolster morale for propaganda purposes. It seems inconceivable, in retrospect, that no coordination, with an aim of managing provincial morale through social relief, had been planned. It demonstrates, what Titmuss observed, that each local council, its officials and its citizens had first to experience a heavy raid before they could form any idea of its consequences (1950, 306-7). Pressure on local authorities, lacking the scale of London, mounted with damage concentrated on compact city centres. Portsmouth lost its main commercial hub to incendiaries on 10th January 1941 (Portsmouth Evening News 2010 [1945]) while only 6,000 of the 93,000 homes in Hull escaped bomb damage during the raids of March to July 1941 (Beaven & Thoms 1996, 197). Clydebank's destruction in March 1941 was extreme; it took 800 men seven months to repair the damage (MacLeod 2011, 8). As seen, in the contrast between Coventry and Liverpool, help from central government was variable in extent and timing (Titmuss 1950, 306-307), not helped by planning inadequacies. For each civilian killed, thirty-five were bombed-out of houses either destroyed or made uninhabitable (1950, 328-329). Across six years of war, 2.25 million people were made homeless for at least a day; 1.4 million were in London. The pressure on rest centres, emergency feeding, forced billeting, 'always a degrading business' (Beardmore 1984, 193), relocation and emergency repairs is visible in data as of May 1941:

107,000 rehoused

366,000 billeted

1,120,000 houses repaired

The numbers represent a record of achievement, of sorts, driven by need and the unequivocal 'magnitude' of civilian distress and its alleviation (Titmuss 1950, 299-300). That some improvement was achieved, in partnership with voluntary bodies and 'ordinary' people, confirms a measure of responsiveness to the civilian plight. It speaks to the penchant, sometimes ascribed as uniquely British, for 'muddling through', making-up policy and provision simultaneously, under duress, trial and error over planning. This evolves into a positive characteristic, a prominent facet of wartime myth in the post-war years (Calder 1991; Connelly 2004). Civilians on the receiving-end deserved structured provision; positive connotations for them were illusory.

5.7 Shelters

On the 9th of September 1940 an upbeat assessment of 'cockney' morale appeared in the *Daily Express* (Marchant 1940). However, in Bethnal Green, the trench shelters on Victoria Park were seriously over-crowded (Ziegler 1995, 116). An angry crowd, estimated at 5,000, attempted entry to the partially-completed underground station. This was reported in the police daily war diary, neatly hand-written in a cardboard-covered HMSO notebook. For metropolitan London, it crisply notes 357 deaths, including 5 policemen, and 567 injuries; morale is considered generally good with 'uneasiness and some bitterness in the East End ...'. It dismisses the rushing of the tube as 'order restored by police and Home Guard' (Metropolitan Police 1940). This event was unreported, overshadowed perhaps by an incident at Liverpool Street where locked gates, police and troops were no match for the crowd and their unruly scramble to the platforms (Ziegler 1995, 116-117).

Within days of the bombing campaign, the public mood had turned and the shelter policy, central to the Government's civil defence measures, had been challenged (Richards 2011). The Government approach, reflective of the Baldwin 'doctrine' of the unstoppable bomber, had been temperamentally fatalistic on the practicalities of maximum protection. For budgetary and political reasons, it opposed an interventionist, socially-inclusive approach exemplified by purpose-built, underground shelters for collective neighbourhood use (Meisel 1994, 301). Dispersed protection, largely in place by 1940, that avoided large gatherings, seen as potential hotbeds of agitation and defeatism, had been preferred (1994, 318).

Proponents, of a different political colour, informed by passive defence in the Spanish Civil War, vigorously opposed the chosen path. The bombing of Barcelona (1936-1938) was seen as 'the laboratory of the science of aerial bombardment' (1994, 307) and protection of the public in bespoke shelters had been observed in action by the eminent Professor, R.B. Haldane, who led others in challenging government dispersal strategy (Haldane 1938, 162; Langdon-Davies 1938; Macroberts 1938; Pons i Pujol 2008).

Ultimately, government persistence prevailed and civilian protection, as Britain entered the war, has been assessed by Meisel (1994, 316) as coherent, if conservative. O'Brien, however had been less guarded; provision of

government-funded domestic air-raid protection, gas-masks and stirrup pumps in large numbers 'must be regarded [...] as revolutionary' (O'Brien 1955, 171). It soon transpired to be a short-lived revolution. The pre-planned gas protection strategy (Ministry of Home Security 1938) had been effective in delivery of safety equipment but had the unfortunate effect of diverting resources to the detriment of management of prolonged incendiary attack (Overy 2013, 149). Households struggled in the face of extensive property damage, failings in the building standard of surface shelters and the length of enemy attack; bombers were over parts of London for up to 8 hours during the first weeks of the Blitz. Night-long exposure under the stairs, in a basement or an Anderson shelter, was not sustainable. Effective against shrapnel and flying debris, dispersed shelters were vulnerable to direct hits. In Kennington Park, Lambeth, on 15th October 1940 a bomb killed over 100 trench shelterers; 48 were recovered for burial in Lambeth Cemetery. The remainder are thought to lie where the damaged trench was filled-in, since 2006 marked with a memorial stone (Pateman 2006).

Figure 7

Stone, Kennington Park, Lambeth. 2006. (IWM 2021/WMR 56675).



The civilian response has already in part been addressed; significant numbers left altogether and many of those obliged to stay had recourse to the short-term intra-city movements that troubled the Government. Many, where possible,

sought the perceived safety of large communal spaces, initially informal and opportunist (Mass Observation 1940a, 45-46), but soon brought under the auspices of local authorities and voluntary groups. One example, an abandoned underground station, St Mary's, in Aldgate, was destroyed at ground level yet functioned, as a Stepney Council shelter, throughout the war (BBC 2010; Mass Observation 1940a, 48). Schools, church halls and 'unhealthy railway arches' were part of the informal adoption (O'Brien 1955, 507). Initially, these places had irregular, uncontrolled entry and were unfit for prolonged stays, lacking basic hygiene facilities. Even the Ministry of Information mentioned the early squalor (1942, 67). The most notorious, the Tilbury, became London's largest shelter (O'Brien 1955, 507; Preston 2020).

The Commercial Road Goods Depot, demolished 1975, stood at the western end of Whitechapel. Its Victorian origin as the terminus of the London, Tilbury & Southend Railway explains its popular name (Smith 1979). In the early raids of September 1940 shelterers moved into the lower levels, under cavernous arches, shared with horses and margarine boxes; conditions were degrading but users had little choice (Mass Observation 1940a, 46-48). Numbers grew and the local authorities formalised the building as a shelter and over the next few months developed its facilities. Its use peaked at 16,000 people and it regularly held 10,000. It was bombed in November 1940, incurring significant damage in its upper levels but this did not prevent extensive use throughout the Blitz (Preston 2020). Calder (1941b, 40-41) visited in the early days, noting it had fulfilled a similar purpose in WWI. American war correspondents Pyle (1941) and Reynolds (1942) beat a path to the Commercial Road to report on Britain's 'citizen warriors' as did politicians and visiting delegations including the US President's wife, Eleanor Roosevelt in 1942. Improvements coincided with this trans-Atlantic charm offensive and attracted artists on 'wartime duty' including Ardizzone (Imperial War Museum 2020), Henry Moore (Ackroyd 2012) and Rose Henriques (Ayad 2019).

The Tilbury evolved to demonstrate governmental action for its people, the narrative burnished by touring reporters and politicians, its irregular origins and disgusting conditions obscured. One person, however, could not forget what residents experienced in September 1940. Articulate critique was filed by a 'teenage working girl living in Stepney' writing full-time for Mass-Observation

(1940a, 47), in their aim to study the 'sociology of the largest underground concentration of humans yet known' (Preston 2020). Many years later, the former teenager, Nina Masel, recalled '...a hell hole', its overwhelming stench from a lack of facilities. It was 'an outrage that people had to live in these conditions' (Mack & Humphries 1985, 260). These conditions were typical of the recourse to informal sheltering and a shelter in Spitalfields also gained notoriety. Calder visited the basement of the Fruit and Wool Exchange on several occasions noting the progress of a remarkable local optician, Mickey Davies, who wrought significant improvements for the 2,500-5,000 regular shelterers including bunks, medical care and sanitation (Calder 1941b, 43-45). The Tilbury and Mickey's Shelter exemplified local response to urgent demand in September 1940 for shelter, the deeper the better, in which civilians had confidence, shaken under the prolonged bombing that had challenged dispersed security policy. Public pressure was soon applied to London's extensive underground rail network, the Tube, whose stations, providing ready access to deep shelter, were closed for sheltering as the night raids started. The underground had provided mass shelter in WWI, particularly during the winter of 1917-18. Large numbers sought shelter during the so-called Harvest Moon raids on five consecutive nights at the end of September 1917. Stations such as Kings Cross, Elephant and Castle and Finsbury Park had between 5-12,000 people packed on their platforms (Gregg 2001, 5) and, across the system, up to 300,000 were sheltering by October. Road and foot tunnels at Rotherhithe, Blackwall, Woolwich and Greenwich accommodated 50,000 by early October in 'primitive' conditions (White 2014, 215- 218). In 1934, Churchill, responded to air attack and its potential for catastrophic civil terror with a view that 'anything that can give us relief or aid in this matter will be a blessing to all' (Meisel 1994, 316). This would seem to point to the adoption of the underground system meeting many of the potential benefits of deep shelter, without the over-concentration of the 'Haldane' approach. However, resistance to opening the 'tube system' continued right up to the onset of the Blitz on a pretext of avoiding transport disruption (Gregg 2001, 7). The Government saw the Tube, like mass shelters, as potentially defeatist; a reluctance to leave on the 'all clear' fostered by a 'deep shelter mentality' (Meisel 1994, 318). Rules

were enforced by locked overnight gates as the first bombs fell on 7th September 1940 (Ackroyd 2012, 165-175).

The Government initially remained reluctant to reverse the policy, despite evidence of the pressure imposed by long, heavy raids. In many places civilians had subverted the policy by the simple pretext of buying a ticket (Gregg 2001, 4-19). The breaching of the gates at Liverpool Street (Ziegler 1995, 116-117) was not opposed by the police presence while, at Bethnal Green, confrontation was quietly managed. The policy was unsustainable and reversed eventually, after weeks of heavy bombardment, by 25th September. The Tube soon became the main shelter for beleaguered Londoners (Gregg 2001, 21-24).

The extent that citizens had taken the law into their own hands was exemplified at Aldwych, packed-out each night for three weeks before it was officially opened as a shelter (Farson 1941, 62). On average, the system sheltered 120,000 people in Autumn 1940 after peaking in late September at 177,000. Overcrowding and welfare were addressed, following public pressure, by December with bunk ticketing, feeding and sanitation improvements at 80 stations (Ackroyd 2012, 165-175; Gregg 2001, 21-24). The monochrome photographs of Bill Brandt vividly convey the shelter experience of the Blitz (Seaborne 1988). A particular incident has passed into folklore as an example of inequality necessitating public exposure. On the 10th of September, the day of the Hallsville bombing, activists from the East End, entered the Savoy Hotel, and demanded access to the shelter; on the 'All Clear' they left peacefully (Levine 2015, 56-57). The 'occupation' has come to represent how Communist Party agitation changed policy and opened the 'tubes' (Gregg 2001, 18), deserving of commemoration in its exposure of the 'received narrative of the Blitz' that speaks inaccurately to equal sacrifice and unity (Bambery 2017).

Soon after the opening of the Tube, evaluation of trench and surface shelter design and construction was under way (O'Brien 1955, 505-506). Under extreme blast conditions surface shelter collapse had cost lives and trenches were susceptible to side collapse and rapid waterlogging, although they were believed to be more popular, as they were below ground (Pateman 2006, 4-5). Mass-Observation reported a rapid loss of confidence in them in September 1940. Improvements were effected between December 1940 and March 1941 (1955, 523-524). In 1985, Nina Hibbin, neé Masel, the teenage writer on the

Tilbury, recalled her frustration with street shelters, informed by direct personal experience (Chrisp 1987). Feeling that her critical input had been manipulated in a Ministry of Information leaflet, positively promoting shelter safety, she and Mass-Observation parted company (Hibbin 1985). Pressure on the Government returned in 1941 with respect to large, underground, 'bomb-proof' shelters. Attentions of the 'moderate press' joined the pre-war voices and, in keeping with the reactive nature of civilian policy, eight purpose-built deep shelters were available from Spring 1942; with the passing of the main Blitz phase their use as civilian shelters was limited (O'Brien 1955, 544).

Throughout this review, the primary motivation of sheltering civilians was greater confidence as bombs fell, matching safety with reduced anxiety. However, there were elements of British obduracy, later packaged to represent a 'romanticised' Blitz spirit, which contributed to a higher level of casualties than was necessary. Civilians died not just because of poor housing and shelter, but because they took the risk of defying the bombs, eschewing public shelter for staying at home (Overy 2020a). The underground system and the larger informal shelters, while not unscathed, were spared what had befallen the mass gathering at Hallsville School. There were casualties in October 1940, through roof collapses, at Trafalgar Square (7) and Bounds Green (19). In October 1940, 60 died at Balham where a large crater sent a cascade of water and mud onto the platform. In January 1941, a bomb fell into the booking hall at Bank station causing over 100 fatalities (Gregg 2001, 78-82). However, the costliest disaster took place where this review started, in Bethnal Green, the scene of the 'riot' in September 1940. In October 1940, the station had been officially opened as a shelter for 5,000, an example of the underground system providing deep shelter and managed facilities. The plan however was fatally compromised by a single entrance and a narrow staircase. In March 1943, during an air raid alert, 173 people were crushed to death on the stairs.

5.8 Summary

The bombing of the British Isles during WWII destroyed cities and neighbourhoods; people were rendered homeless, made dependent on a state struggling to manage outcomes of the Blitz whose force and impact was, at best, uncertain (Titmuss 1950, 3). Vulnerability to air attack had preoccupied government planners since the 1920s and death, medical and hospital

provision, property damage, destruction of infrastructure, homelessness and destitution had all been modelled (Titmuss 1950, 12-22). Despite the unpredictable outlook, there was a fixed point in the planning, an expectation that people, *en masse*, would show weakness and irresolution under sustained, high-casualty attack. Behaviours observed in WWI influenced that view, perhaps disproportionately (1950, 16-19). A conclusion that the 'moral effect of air attack is out of all proportion to the material effect' (O'Brien 1955, 6), diverted resources to civil mitigation, given that destruction of willingness to fight-on could lose the war (Overy 2013, 23-26). This presumption manifested itself in evacuation, gas protection and air raid measures which, noted earlier, were 'well advanced' by 1940. Social post-raid provision was less advanced and a clear link between well-being and morale appears, at best, to have been misunderstood, with the serious failings outlined above.

A recurring theme in this review of civilian experience has been the 'militarisation' of their status, from low expectations of their ability to match their combatant counterparts to the soldierly virtues they displayed in their experiencing of bombing. Titmuss and two Calders (1950, 1940 and 1991) have used military metaphors in praising civilian resilience while Harrison observed that their 'maybe monumental' achievement 'did not let their soldiers or leaders down' (1976, 281). Resulting from the blurring of front lines, civilian warrior epithets earned equality in state-sponsored books of remembrance and burial under national flags. The ascription of equality is less easily assimilated in the experiences of those bombed-out of home and neighbourhood, distressed and bereaved, shabbily treated and poorly served.

A Government priority, as it prepared for war, was the nurturing of the civilian spirit as soldiers in a front line. This review has questioned whether Blitz planning ever matched this aim to arm them with the means and morale to mitigate the anticipated bombardment. The post-Blitz experiences that civilians in London and the provinces endured between September 1940 and June 1941 confirmed a significant gulf between governmental wishful thinking and social provision. A daily intelligence briefing of Tuesday 10th September 1940 observed that civilians 'are beginning to feel, and are being referred to, as "soldiers in the front line", everything should be done to encourage this opinion of themselves, to be made to feel that their friends and relations had died for

their country, in the same sense as if they were soldiers, sailors or airmen'. This statement appeared on the same day as the Hallsville School tragedy; even if the enormity of its 450 rumoured dead had not been confirmed, this remains a note of crashing insensitivity (Ministry of Information 1940b). Whether encouragement of front line status positively influenced the public huddled in inadequate, filthy rest centres and shelters, beset by nightly bombing, is fanciful. The briefing also floats the idea of civilian burial with military honours:

'..it might be a small but extremely telling point if, for instance, the dead were buried with Union Jacks on their coffins, or if the Services were represented at their funerals. Attentions of this kind would undoubtedly mean much at the moment' (Ministry of Information 1940b).

Empathy deficit aside, this suggestion became Ministry of Health policy, reiterated in circulars to burial authorities (Rugg 2004, 154). The note and its timing suggest the distance between the public and their 'masters' on matters of morale and endurance, on what it meant to be civilian in distress. Thankfully, over a matter of months the gross failings of the initial post-Blitz response were ameliorated, helped in part by improvisation at grass-roots level (Calder 1941a; Mass-Observation 1940a) between collaborative voluntary institutions, local churchmen and 'ordinary people' (Calder 1941b, 53-61). September to December 1940 was a time of adaptation to the challenges of intensive bombing, with civilians demonstrating a 'slow and steady acclimatization' to life under bombardment' (Harrison 1976, 66). Titmuss professes astonishment that post-Blitz relief, 'under attack, poorly conceived, under-funded', was delivered to London's credit. Perhaps from a perspective of 1950, post-blitz 'achievements' can be claimed, and yet it took the best part of the war to improve beyond a philosophy of 'demoralised, panic-stricken crowds' confronting institutions which 'had declared blankets to be a luxury for those whose homes had crashed [...] around them' (1950, 300-303). There was nothing military in the proficiency and provision of post-bombing treatment; these were 'plain and humdrum' problems (1950, 327).

This thesis contends that viewing civilians through a military lens subverts the remembrance of their Blitz experience. In conferring honour and sacrifice to indignity, inequality and indifference, the dead, the deprived and the distressed are denied a voice. In this process, part unwitting and part manipulated, the seeds of the Blitz narrative as it has evolved were sown. What happened to

civilians under fire, beyond any claim of progress and achievements, was that almost 70,000 died and thousands of others had their lives transformed amid second-rate treatment; this is the secret history of the Blitz, not a catalogue of the less wholesome (Levine 2015). Acknowledging it, does not deny resilience and endurance, these are unchallengeable outcomes of the People's War; the British were bombed-out and endured (Calder 1991, 120). However, the first aim of this chapter was to identify aspects of the civilian experience, obscured in modern discourse, which contrast with the simplicity of a Blitz narrative that selects only resilience and spirit for political purposes. A second aim was to provide a context for the commemorative outcomes of civilian remembrance and activism addressed in the chapters that follow.

6. MONUMENTS & MEMORIALS

'Memorials be they imposing structures in bronze within large cities or small rough-hewn crosses from local stone on village roadsides, are the most public component of the material culture of war remembrance and occupy a space between the public and the private'.

Moriarty in *The Material Culture of Great War Remembrance* (1999, 654-655).

6.1 Introduction

The thesis, to this point, has presented aspects of the civilian Blitz experience as a counter-narrative to its evolved, mythologised version. Chapter 4 demonstrated that the experience of living and dying under enemy bombardment became increasingly elusive and historically misunderstood, obscured by what might be described as a 'collective memory', the concept critiqued in Chapter 2. At this juncture, the thesis seeks to place civilian contested remembrance, beyond analysis of its narrative form and experiential contrasts, into its context of war memory and commemoration.

It has already been noted that, with over 90,000 memorial records of a predominantly military character, the visibility of civilian commemoration, particularly in the context of the divergence of the narrative paths of the Blitz, is challenged. The extent and nature of that challenge is explored in later chapters which explore civilian remembrance, its commemorative actors and its material in selected contexts in London, Portsmouth and Bath. In this chapter, the national context of remembrance, the institutions that help to define it and the place of Blitz remembrance within it are explored.

6.2 Defining Memorials

The framework of memory investigated earlier defined key concepts to be applied in defining the role of memorials:

Remembrance: actions that perpetuate memories.

Commemoration; outcomes of remembrance.

The pursuit of remembrance is testing, an unequal struggle of competing stories, waiting to be told from personal and collective recollection, challenged by time and processes; funding, planning, activist consensus and public and institutional support are all in evidence in the cases analysed later. The contest presents itself in the meaning of an act of remembrance, difference in intended

and received understanding and the relevance and engagement of its commemoration. The contesting of remembrance is present in the wording of the theoretical construct, reviewed in Chapter 2 (Ashplant *et al* 2000, xi):

Contested Remembrance: ‘...the contestation of meaning that occurs within and between the different forms and the (unequal) struggle to install particular memories at the centre of a cultural world, at the expense of others which are marginalised & forgotten’.

Notwithstanding the trials and challenges of bringing ‘memories’ to the world, there is evidence, certainly in Britain, that memorialisation has never been more popular, with the exception of the years immediately following WWI. Memorials, in all forms, material and virtual, are installations of memories, commemorative outcomes of acts of remembrance, by all levels of society, from individuals often acting with others in a collective enterprise, hence *com-memoration*, through to places and events where the nation, as it were, stands together in memory of those who have passed in conflict. From the Cenotaph to the humblest plaque, memorials mark actions which reflect an urge for public remembrance, to record events and the people caught in them, not only ‘in memoriam’, but also to inform those that interact at the point of remembrance that they are now party to that history (Maltman 2001; Moriarty 1999, 653-655).

Not all commemorative outcomes will have durable interactions or fulfil the ambitious intentions of their creators. Nonetheless, the contesting continues; Winter has described the last quarter of the 20th century as a ‘boom’ time, reflecting the influence of anniversaries and a myriad of personal, collective and national motives (2006, 1). Thus the pattern of centuries continues. War memorials can be traced to antiquity (Borg 1991, xi) but it was in the years after WWI that their numbers on European battlefields (Coombs 1986) and in Britain grew so significantly, as Borg observes, continuing ‘the biggest communal arts project ever attempted’ (1991, ix). Throughout the country, cities, towns and villages remember their war dead through some form of public memorial (Aslet 2012; McIntire 1990, 10). This outcome reflected the anguish of the losses of the Great War and was urgently pursued in the first decade after 1918 as communities, amid some peer pressure, vied to respect their dead without delay (Boorman 1995, 1). In 1945, after six years of war, amid concern over cold-war conflict, the same intensity of commemoration was missing. Words of

remembrance were added to existing memorials; Boorman suggests this is how the majority of the WWII dead are commemorated (1995, 1).

The memorial definitions of two national databases, the first with a mission to record and the second with a curation role, establish the boundaries of a vast record of remembrance. The War Memorials Register (WMR) was conceived in 1988 to build a comprehensive memorial record. It was commissioned in 1989, as the United Kingdom National Inventory of War Memorials (UKNIWM), by the then Director of the Imperial War Museum (IWM), Alan Borg, with funding support from the Leverhulme Trust (Boorman 1995, 1). The project ran originally outside the auspices of the IWM but was soon moved in-house to manage a rapid growth in submissions from the general public and volunteers. The original UKNIWM mission was primarily an art historical survey to promote the appreciation, use and preservation of war memorials (Furlong *et al* 2002). The inventory defined a war memorial as:

'any tangible object commemorating those killed in or as a result of military service, including civilians'.

Every kind of memorial is recorded with the exception of CWGC grave markers. Names on private graves, particularly of family members missing in action, are included (2002, 3). The project covers all conflicts; beyond the majority commemorating WWI and then WWII, there are entries from the Napoleonic War, Crimea, Zulu and Boer Wars, the Irish Troubles, the Falkland Islands Conflict and recent engagements in the Middle East.

From its early iteration in art history, recording figurative and other sculptural styles, the database evolved to reflect the variety of memorial forms being observed (2002, 5). The inventory was compiled from thousands of site surveys conducted by up to 500 volunteers; by 2001 the database held 47,000 records. In November of that year the database was launched on a public access terminal in the IWM. A few years later, UKNIWM was renamed the War Memorials Archive and from October 2014, it attained its present title, War Memorials Register, when over 65,000 records were migrated to a new computer database (C. Brogan, Project Manager, War Memorials Register, pers comm. 20th April 2020). The number of records continues to grow rapidly, standing at over 90,000 as at November 2021, fuelled by significant anniversaries, particularly the Great War centenary. There are 65 remote and

21 office-based volunteers, each working from an online handbook, to assist in the recording of memorial description, inscription, location, materials, condition, craftsmen, architects, unveiling ceremonies, references and further information about those commemorated. From tentative steps in 2001, the online records are now freely available on a public database (Imperial War Museum 2021). Recent enhancements to recording software permit the names on memorials to be uploaded as well as photographs. The current WMR definition of a memorial has adapted to acknowledge those returning safe and the inclusion of animals:

'Any physical object erected to commemorate both those killed in, or as a result of war, and those who served and returned alive. This includes memorials to civilian casualties and animals'

The second national database, War Memorials Online, with over 40000 entries, is operated by War Memorials Trust (WMT), a UK charity formed to register and protect war memorials. They estimate that there are over 100,000 UK war memorials, many of them 'treasured' as others deteriorate with aging, weathering, neglect and, regrettably, vandalism. WMT's ambition is the preservation of every memorial and the memory of the individuals recorded, *'from past or present conflict, civilian or service personnel'* (War Memorials Trust 2020). Founded in 1997, its definition states that a memorial is:

A sign of remembrance; preserving the memory of a person or thing.

Any object can be considered a war memorial:

'... if the inscription and/or purpose behind the creation or erection of the object links it to the remembrance of a war or conflict'

WMT (2020) adds that memorials can commemorate individuals and groups, those who die in action, in wartime accidents, from 'friendly' fire and of wounds or disease during or subsequent to a conflict. Further, they can commemorate those who served and survived. They note that;

'civilians involved in or affected by a conflict or war can also be commemorated as can animals' .

The definitions of both memorial registers reflect the changes in the nature of war and its extension to a civilian 'front line'. The awkwardness of language, which links civilians with animals, is unfortunate, sounding a note of discord in the national narrative of wartime unity.

Analysis of data from the War Memorials Register reveals the dominance of Great War remembrance:

Conflict	2001	2020
First World War	29,863	63,032
Second World War	16,346	31,844
WWII Civilians	445	2,050
WWI Civilians	0	663

The success of memorial data-gathering has doubled the register in 20 years. A review of memorial form, below, points to the importance of names added to gravestones, assiduously added by a cadre of dedicated volunteers. In 2020 these names accounted for over 20% of the material record. In this sense, the register remains true to its founder's belief that 'war memorials are about the deaths of individuals whether a single tomb or a seemingly endless list of names carved on a wall' (Borg 1991, 142).

The WMR recording guidelines permit a wide array of material descriptions ranging from huge structures to small plaques, from Holy Communion cups to chalk landscape figures. However five categories account for 90% of the record:

Board, Plaque or Tablet	36,786
Gravestone Addition	19,014
Crosses, Stones, Obelisks	9,645
Church Fabric, Windows	8,917
Rolls of Honour	6,505

There is an enormous variation of style, size, prominence and geographical spread within each of these groups, a catalogue of conflict commemoration, and a repository of history, which is local and inclusive. Many of these artefacts of remembrance carry just a few names and hold meanings particular to a family, community, work group, hamlet, village or town. They are known to the particular community or family within it but have a limited wider significance, other than a brief mention on a register. Nonetheless, each of the 90,000 recalls an aspect of past conflict, the remembrances that Halbwachs saw as binding, one to others, a catalogue of war memory in every corner of the country.

6.3 Commonwealth War Graves Commission

The multitude of personal and community memorials stands alongside icons of British and Commonwealth collective remembrance established in the period of national mourning after WWI. The Cenotaph, the Tomb of the Unknown Warrior in Westminster Abbey and the monuments of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) are places of memory for the nation, continuing an unchanged role since their inception. Stimulated by the WWI centenary years, the war graves, cemeteries and monuments of the Western Front are increasingly popular (CWGC 2021a) and are the public face of the CWGC's work across a vast commemorative estate. This operation is supported by extensive records which contribute to the mission it has held, since the first Royal Charter, the commemoration of the nation's war dead, with equal honour.

The fallen are commemorated in physical books of remembrance, the Debt of Honour Register, retained in the CWGC headquarters archive in Maidenhead and displayed in various ways in places like Westminster Abbey, Edinburgh Castle and in Commonwealth capitals across the world. The register honours the 1.7 million men and women of the Commonwealth forces who died in both World Wars. It is the culmination of a century of immense achievement in rescuing, from the chaos of battle, the information to honour each of the fallen, as an individual. At the touch of a few keys, these days, a family member's record can be summoned from the freely-accessible database (CWGC 2021a) which sits over a huge repository of data, millions of notes and transcripts from conflict zones, correspondence with bereaved families, grave stone inscriptions, maintenance records, details of landscaping and planting. Serious historical inequalities in commemoration were exposed several years ago and are now being addressed with candour and a reparation plan (CWGC 2021b).

Fabian Ware, whose vision and persistence established the Commission and drove it forward, during the twenties and thirties, continued to lead the organisation in WWII. He quickly realised that powers, extended by Charter in 1940 to WWII military casualties, would require further extension, if civilians, the 'deliberate slaughter of whom' had created a new category of war victim, were to be commemorated under the same guiding principle of equal honour (CWGC 2020a). On 18th September 1940, 10 days after the first night raid on London, Ware, in a letter to the Prime Minister, argued for the changed status of civilians

and requested extra powers to start registering names (Ware 1940). Churchill's response, on 10th October, repeated the fear that civilian casualties could yet exceed service deaths, and supported name collection. He was firm in not promising any form of government commitment (Churchill 1940). Ware consistently placed great value on the morale benefit of naming the dead and provision of a record for the bereaved. The demands placed on them in the unfolding Blitz required their 'consent' and promoted a need to be valued (CWGC 2020b). A Supplemental Charter was granted in January 1941, declaring that:

'provision should be made for honouring and perpetuating the memory of those in whatever walk of civilian life that may die' (Imperial War Graves Commission 1941).

The charter supplement was limited to the compilation of casualty lists and did not extend, and has not since, to cemeteries, cenotaphs or gravestones. The name-gathering was an enormous undertaking, running alongside the compilation of service honour rolls. The effort, shouldered by a small team, included liaison with local authorities and cross-checking of thousands of next-of-kin records and addresses. The painstaking, manual recording produced a roll, by early 1942, of over 43,000 civilians who had died before September 1941; the main phase of the Blitz in London and the provinces had been deemed over by May 1941 (Ministry of Information 1942). Ware's vision was made achievable through the application of the peace-time bureaucracy of death registration, deployed effectively during the war, under the local government structure of civil registration (Rugg 2005). Calder observed oddly, as a compliment to 'ordinary' people, that their roll of honour had been compiled before war started, by the Registrar General (1941b, xiv).

At the time the roll was heading for completion, plans for future publication and display had not been fully determined. Ware's aim was for the four volumes, ready in 1942, to be displayed in Westminster Abbey, the consideration of civilians, alongside their service colleagues, symbolised in a location close to the Tomb of the Unknown Warrior. In this he was to be frustrated by Herbert Morrison, the Home Secretary, and his insistence on no public access until the war had ended. For Morrison, morale was less at risk in limited disclosure, the antithesis of Ware's vision. Ware's persistence, relentless lobbying and calling-

in of favours is on display, in the CWGC's archives, in the Maidenhead office. However, in keenly contested, but unfailingly polite, correspondence, Morrison won the day (Morrison 1942; Ware 1942). The rolls were received by the Abbey in 1942 but not permitted for display, although they were available for consultation at CWGC offices in London and Edinburgh.

Ware, who died in 1949, did not see the culmination of the Commission's work; the completed list, in seven volumes, for the whole war. Six red, leather-bound books, were handed to the Dean and Chapter by The Duke of Gloucester, President of the Imperial War Graves Commission, at a short ceremony, on 21st February 1956; a seventh volume was added to the showcase in 1958 (Westminster Abbey 2021). This modest artefact, dwarfed by surrounding monuments, stands, as hoped by Ware, at the western end of the Abbey, close to the Unknown Warrior, the tradition of turning a page observed ever since.

Figure 8

Civilian Roll of Honour, Showcase, Westminster Abbey.



From uneasy beginnings and testing negotiations, Ware's vision, for civilians to be ranked, alongside the military in equal honour, had been fulfilled. The display case is the public manifestation of the Roll of Honour of Civilian War Dead, a record of the loss of almost 70,000 British and Commonwealth citizens to enemy action, 'a remarkable but little known commemorative treasure' (CWGC 2020a).

The roll of honour is arranged by county and then by local government area. The lists are then alphabetical by surname with address, place of death and family relationship. This detail, visible for over twenty years through an online searchable database (M. Greet pers.comm 21 May 2020), ensures an acknowledgement, of the civilian dead, no less than that accorded to military dead and missing. Each online entry links to a personalised, condolence page in the form of a commemorative certificate; the days of postal requests, for individual entries, for half-a-crown (12.5p), are long gone.

The Roll of Honour represents the central, permanent memorial that Ware had aimed for. In a draft press release, in late 1942, the Commission observed that the form of commemoration for civilian war dead, at the war's end, 'could not be foretold' (Imperial War Graves Commission 1942). However, by July 1943, the expectation was that the 'present war' would be remembered on an allied war memorial day, yet to be determined (Chettle 1943). The Civilian War Dead Roll of Honour was never intended to be the unforetold commemoration, the one national, all-encompassing monument to civilian sacrifice in Britain. It is a position gained by default; nothing better conveys the enormity of the civilian death toll. The Roll of Honour is a magnificent achievement, a trusted pillar of state recognition and performs an important function as a place of memory, for such as an individual tracing a family member or a researcher checking names on a war memorial. In common with the 6,000 or so other rolls and books, recorded by the WMR, it is a gateway to research, quiet reflection and personal memory rather than a route to remembrance; under glass cases, in church alcoves, on library walls and in illuminated scripts, access and engagement are distanced, individual and largely private. An expectation of a role in national collective remembrance, 'what groups of people try to do when they act in public to conjure up the past' is hence unrealistic (Winter 2006, 5). The CWGC nonetheless plays an enormous role in war remembrance; through its vision and efforts, it accommodated the memory of civilians into its military catalogue. Conscious that the general public are unaware of their work, not least with respect to the civilian role, CWGC has stepped-up public engagement, on social media platforms, encouraging regional volunteer groups and opening a memorial experience in France. In 2020, eighty years after the start of the Blitz, an excellent live talk sought to correct any misapprehension that they stand only

for big memorials and military gravestones by emphasizing the Civilian Roll of Honour (CWGC 2020b). A short essay on the continuing work of the CWGC and its management of a growing interest in commemoration is in **Appendix 8**.

This site of universal civilian commemoration highlights the absence of any other national acknowledgement of the Blitz and its consequences, an absence reinforced in a post-WWII memorial hiatus, explored next, before analysis of more recent monumental investment, in which opportunities were presented, but not taken, for civilian recognition.

6.4 National Remembrance

The Commonwealth war narrative in material, monumental form since WWI is unmatched in London, its main home, the centre of Empire. A walk from Whitehall, the Cenotaph and Haig's equestrian statue, to Hyde Park Corner passes Canadian, Australian and New Zealand memorials and ends with the Royal Artillery Memorial and, nearby, the Machine Gun Corps Memorial (English Heritage 2014; Jack 2012; Siddall & Clements 2013).

Monument and memorial have so far been used interchangeably to describe objects performing a commemorative function. Although this is debated in the final chapter, in the light of the thesis analysis in Chapters 7-11, it is pertinent at this point to echo Young and suggest that 'monuments', in popular discourse, speak to a grandeur and scale that transcends 'memorials' (2017, 14). This contextualises new British architectural statements, born in something of a 21st century 'memory boom', a term coined for the 'long shadow' of war and genocide remembrance in the latter part of the last century (Winter 2006, 1). New memorialisation has flourished (Gough 2008, 329) as perceptions of Britain's identity and its place in the world have infected an uneasy national mood, particularly with respect to relations with Europe (D'Ancona 2018; Jones 2014; O'Toole 2019). These monuments created the necessary conditions for funding, state encouragement and popular support. A moment that had passed in 1945 had taken over 50 years to be redressed, in the millennial decades.

They commemorate everything from animals in war to the Iraq & Afghanistan conflicts. The conjunction of anniversaries (Marshall 2004, 37) and campaigning by ex-service groups, from the RAF in particular, gained popular and government support. Some share an overdue re-negotiation of neglected war

histories which points to a memorial quietus, in the uncertain years of social reconstruction, when ambition was conflicted by austerity. There is a view that reticence, eschewing 'public triumphalism', left London, with a limited WWII memorial culture (Kerr 2001, 75-87).

It might have been otherwise, for there is evidence of animated discussion, from the end of the main phase of the Blitz in 1941, about the expected form of post-war remembrance. While still under aerial threat, eminent people foresaw the post-war disappearance of traces of the Blitz. They understood that it would be memorials that enabled the sacrifice of people and their cities to be known and recalled (The Architectural Press 1945, 4). There were however signs that the urge to memorialise would differ from the sentiment that drove mass remembrance after WWI. Civic authorities were giving early consideration to the management of war-damaged houses, shops and streets, prioritising the effacing of the painful legacy of war, a past better forgotten through urban re-birth (Clapson & Larkham 2013, 1; Fergusson 2011[1973]; *The Proud City: A Plan for London* 1946). Memorably, the Dean of St Paul's, welcoming the opportunity to rebuild the devastation surrounding his church, said that failure to make the [city] worthy, of the spirit of those who fought, would see posterity rise up and 'curse us for unimaginative fools' (The Architectural Press 1945, 3).

Archived memoranda and correspondence of the Imperial War Graves Commission (IWGC) shows that a number of forms of remembrance were under discussion in July 1943 with, among others, the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association (MPGA), whose preference was a general appropriation of bombed sites as gardens of remembrance. An IWGC file note found the prospect of 'a multiplicity of stunted, separate commemorative monuments at home' alarming. Their assumption, presumably reflecting the general tenor of remembrance considerations at the time, was that new sets of town and village obelisks were unlikely and the 'preservation of ruins, as such, was not to be encouraged'. The note further anticipated that 'the average municipality', would seek civilian commemoration, by name, at the cemetery communal graves, marked by screen walls (Chettle 1943). This turned out to be an accurate forecast of the institutional approach which is analysed in Chapter 7.

Evidence of further influence by IWGC is seen in their participation in surveys and discussions with other prominent religious, architectural and heritage

bodies (Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce 1944). This forum was well-established by the end of 1944, leading to the establishment of a War Memorials Advisory Council (Royal Society of Arts 1944) which ultimately supported an imperial WWII memorial, albeit not necessarily in monumental form. There was a growing sense that the repetition of the memorialisations of WWI would find little public support. A Mass-Observation bulletin confirmed that its correspondents deprecated the 'cold, stone' of WWI memorials and supported more 'useful' means of remembering (Mass-Observation 1944).

The desire for practical remembrance characterises another attempt to establish a national war memorial, one 'better than any work of art'. Proposed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Hugh Dalton, in 1946, a national land fund of £50m, from the sale of war surplus, was set-aside to acquire land 'dedicated to the memory of the dead, and to the use and enjoyment of the living, for ever' (Wilson 1994). Despite its grand memorial vision, the Land Fund became mired in politics and diversion of funds (Borg 1991, 141; Rickwood 1987, 15-23) and it was never to fulfil its lofty aims. The War Memorials Advisory Council also failed to gain traction for its desired national memorial; by 1947, post-war priorities lay elsewhere and the memorial debate, despite its broad-base and good intentions, came to a halt; the appetite and resources for a national memorial and memorial day had dissipated (Royal Society of Arts 1947); the moment for the national memorialisation of WWII had passed (Mass-Observation 1947).

British post-war realities had intervened to constrain public remembrance, both military and civilian. Utilitarian memorials, robustly preferred by Mass-Observation's writers panel (1944) and in the advisory committee's deliberations (Royal Society of Arts 1944) also fell victim to changed post-war priorities and account for just 2607 records, about 3%, of the War Memorials Register. In a colourful passage, Noakes suggests the 'messy, destabilising and sometimes destructive feeling of grief was no more allowed to disrupt the postwar than it was wartime; a society that was reconstructing itself, looking forward, had little space to look back and mourn the dead' (2020, 258).

6.5 Twenty-First Century Memorialisation

The recent wave of extravagant public commemoration, coinciding with the narrowing of public Blitz narratives, began with consideration, in the 1980s, of a

central location for national remembrance. This was achieved with the establishment of the National Memorial Arboretum (NMA), on a 150-acre site at Alrewas, Staffordshire, in 2001. NMA is a UK registered charity, linked to the Royal British Legion. As a destination for over 300,000 visitors a year its mission ensures that:

'the unique contribution of those who have served and sacrificed is never forgotten, the baton of Remembrance is passed on through the generations and there is a year-round space to celebrate lives lived and commemorate lives lost' (National Memorial Arboretum 2021).

The centrepiece of the NMA is the Armed Forces Memorial, built from one thousand tonnes of Portland Stone, occupying a man-made tumulus, with walls that commemorate personnel lost, on active service, since the end of WWII. Unveiled by the Queen, in 2007, it is an active memorial with space for additional names. Radiating from the central mound are tree-lined paths and glades where the NMA hosts over 400 memorials representing organisations, largely related to war and conflict, many inspired by their ex-service communities. These include emergency services, charities and a small range of civil groups such as peace and accident campaigners (National Memorial Arboretum 2021). The Arboretum, in permitting non-conflict commemoration, is a holistic place of mourning and more than a dedicated war memorial estate (Williams 2014, 76-77). The NMA's constitution is inclusive and places emphasis on 'those who served or sacrificed for the nation'. It aspires to be 'where the nation remembers', although it has yet to provide a home for a dedicated civilian memorial. It does, however, host remembrance of those whose original place of commemoration has disappeared. For example, the memorial to 16 Watney's Brewery public house tenants, lost to enemy action (IWM 2021/WMR 51069), has a home following demolition of its original site. London, wryly described as already 'full of memorials' (Jack 2012), is however where the memory boom is most visible, capitalising on a collective appetite for remembrance of certain national narratives. The Animals in War monument, dominating a traffic island on Park Lane, was unveiled in 2004 to coincide with the 90th anniversary of WWI; over £2m was swiftly raised from prominent benefactors and public contributions (Animals in War Memorial Fund 2021). Recognition of the vast numbers of animals deployed in war found popular

support, for a place in London's memorial repertoire, although its rationale was questioned by the Peace Pledge Union (2009, 23). The raising of the money for an elaborate and attractive monument, with its prominent portrayal of horses and other pack animals in WWI, demonstrates its importance in the order of contested remembrance priorities.

It was followed in 2005 by recognition of the participants in the Battle of Britain, on the Victoria Embankment, opposite the former Air Ministry building, next to the 1923 RAF Memorial; 3,000 names are inscribed on a striking memorial wall, from which life-size bronze figures of 'scrambling' pilots break-out (Battle of Britain London Memorial 2021). At a cost of £2 million, it fulfils a similar role to that of the National Memorial to the Few at Capel-Le-Ferne, Kent, dating from 1993 (The Battle of Britain Memorial Trust 2021). These memorials, albeit from different organisations, continue the avid public recognition for the Few which started soon after the war with a dedicated window in Westminster Abbey.

However, this tribute was not extended to aircrew of Bomber Command for whom a small window in Lincoln Cathedral, in the early 1950s, had to suffice. Bomber Command's bravery and high casualty rate were facts lost to public narrative as disquiet, over the policy of indiscriminate bombing of Germany, jarred with the country's own heroic civilian narrative. Ritchie Calder, critical of retaliatory bombing strategy, to force unconditional surrender, cited the resilient civilian experience in London, to suggest it was misplaced to expect the moral collapse of German citizenry (1965). Left-out of post-war myth formation (Calder 1991, 41-43), frustrated aircrew veterans organisations saw deliberate attempts to avoid appropriate recognition. Arthur Harris was not awarded, as other service chiefs, a post-war peerage and his 'elevation' to a plinth in front of the RAF's adopted church, St Clement Dane's, in 1992, was four years after Fighter Command's chief, Dowding (Gough 2008, 329). Controversy, because of repugnance at the carnage of Hamburg and Dresden (Heitmann 1990, 1-27; Overy 2013, 391-396), dogged the efforts for a memorial in London (Moore 2012) in recognition of the aircrew whose bravery merited public acclaim, even if their 'misguided' leaders did not (Overy 2012). Eventually, a memorial was erected with the assistance of prominent donors and vigorous campaigning.

The Bomber Command Memorial was unveiled by the Queen in 2012, in Green Park, close to Hyde Park Corner (Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund 2021).

Massive bronze effigies of an RAF bomber aircrew stand on a huge plinth within a classical Portland Stone colonnade. The monument's size reflects the command's 'noble sacrifice' of almost 58,000 casualties. Its location keeps honourable company, with those clustered around the Wellington Arch, in a remarkable transition from obscure recognition to monumental prominence. Its scale and style have been characterised, perhaps unkindly, as 'amnesiac classical' and criticised for lacking nuance, with the hope of 'some recognition of moral complexity, some regret' left unfulfilled (Moore 2012). Words, high up on a frieze, indirectly address this, inviting onlookers to 'remember all those, everywhere, who are casualties of air warfare'. It is debatable whether these words are sufficient acknowledgement of 'all the dead cities' (Grayling 2006); nevertheless, they represent, by default, an acknowledgement of civilian dead in a city where, this thesis argues, there is only ineffective or indirect recognition, beyond that enshrined in the Roll of Honour. The memorial is ambivalent since its scale amounts to a public confrontation of the critics of the allied bombing offensive, and by extension its crews (Grayling 2006), and yet its recall of a consistent, brave sense of duty, to deliver a flawed and ultimately futile policy, is dramatically achieved (Overy 2012). In a further demonstration of the recuperation of Bomber Command's reputation, to coincide with the 2018 centenary of the Royal Air Force, the International Bomber Command Centre (IBCC) was opened at Canwick Hill, in the self-styled *Bomber County* of Lincolnshire. The grounds are encircled by walls carrying the names of 57,871 men and women who gave their lives while serving in Bomber Command. At the centre of the site, erected in 2015, a 31-metre spire, the wing-span of a Lancaster bomber, connects visually to Lincoln Cathedral, a few miles away. IBCC aims to tell the personal stories of service men and women of RAF Bomber Command, ground crews and civilians affected by the bombing campaigns, on both sides of the conflict, during the Second World War (International Bomber Command Centre 2021). The intention to reach out to both sides, is still a work-in-progress and needs to avoid the political expediency of the frieze on the London memorial with its oblique dedication to casualties of air warfare; addressing the humanitarian stigma of allied bombing is sensible but not that simply achieved. The reinstatement of Bomber Command has followed a difficult path through the contestable themes of bravery and sacrifice on one hand and deadly consequences on the other. The

London memorial remains controversial and has been vandalised on four occasions (Sky News 2019). The minimal reference to the consequences of bomber offensives has not deflected criticism and nor has it placed civilian loss into a wider war narrative of culpability and remembrance; the human impact of the bomber offensives in Europe and at home is still memorially unrevealed.

This is demonstrated in two significant memorials in London representing subjects that might have more directly addressed civilian loss. Outside Westminster Abbey's West Door is a five-foot diameter circular stone memorial unveiled by H.M. The Queen on 10 October 1998. The Innocent Victims Memorial was inspired by the then Dean of Westminster, the Very Rev Michael Mayne, as a constant reminder of C20th global violence and suffering. In a clear inscription it asks for remembrance of 'All Innocent Victims of Oppression, Violence, War'. On the outer rim is a quote from Lamentations 1:12: *Is it nothing to you, all you who pass by?* Visitors leaving the Abbey can hardly fail to notice this large roundel with its challenging inscription, although the Dean's vision of a statue of a mother and child, fleeing into the sanctuary of the Abbey, did not get beyond the Westminster Council planning process (WMR 63337/ Imperial War Museum 2021). There is still much to lament in the 23 years since installation; beyond an annual wreath-laying in November, since 2012, casual observance notes that this monument occasions fleeting engagement.

Remembrance of the role and service of women in WWII has been enshrined since 2005, in the centre of Whitehall, close to the Cenotaph. The Women of World War II Memorial (WMR 51288/Imperial War Museum 2021) is a bronze cenotaph standing 7-metres high. At a reported cost of £1m (BBC News 2005), this monument is not as inclusive as its official title suggests. The repeating motif, on its 4 sides, are over-size service uniforms and work clothes. They endorse the inscription:

This memorial was raised to commemorate the vital work done by nearly seven million women in World War II.

The exclusion of yet more millions of women, unavailable for work through family and house-keeping commitments, or age and infirmity, was not a question of oversight, as the former-Speaker of the Commons, Lady Boothroyd, patron of the memorial fund, confirmed. This overdue recognition of their war-

winning role deliberately singles-out serving and working women, their uniforms a metaphor for being quietly removed and hung up, while men take the credit (Bentham 2005). This comment speaks of the resolve and capability, vital contributions to the war effort, of a united and purposeful home front. It also conveys regret that a reversion to traditional gender roles and a diminution of female work empowerment followed forces demobilisation. The Peace Pledge Union, perhaps predictably, wondered why a massive memorial was needed 'depicting some of the costumes' (sic) worn in wartime (2009, 23). The monument perhaps represents an opportunity lost, not only in its lack of inclusivity but also in its failure to assert the service and sacrifice of all women, not least the 63000 female civilians who died or were seriously injured.

Figure 9

Women at War, Bomber Command & Battle of Britain London Monuments.



There is one civilian public commemoration which specifically references the victims of 'civilian' bombing (Bates 2005). Arising from the bombing outrage in London of 2005, 52 casualties of terrorism, on the home front of a different kind of war, are remembered in a permanent memorial. It was unveiled in Hyde Park in 2009 on the 4th anniversary of the attacks. It comprises 52 silver-grey *stelae* in four clusters representing the attacks at three tube stations and on a bus. The victims' names are inscribed on a nearby plaque (Royal Parks 2020).

Figure 10

Shadows of 7/7 Stelae over Memorial Plaque, Hyde Park, London.



This was a rapid commemoration and reflected the shock of the events in a city celebrating the award of the 2012 Olympic Games. It owes much to the political realisation of the social and cultural repercussions of home-grown terrorism. At each of the three tube stations is an individual plaque with the names of those who died at the location. At Tavistock Square, where the bomb was detonated on a bus, a similar plaque, affixed to the railings of the British Medical Association, has been removed and replaced in 2017, supported by the victims' families, with a permanent memorial in the square's garden, noted for its peace and reconciliation monuments (Tavistock Square Memorial Trust 2021). The national implications of the London attacks are reflected in recognition at the National Memorial Arboretum and references in peace gardens and recreational areas in other parts of London and the country.

Significant acts of remembrance have been navigated into the public domain confronting commemorative processes and negotiations inherent in the 'unequal struggle' (Ashplant *et al* (2000, xi). An appetite for memorials that reflect the politics and saliency of certain national narratives had created the necessary conditions for funding, state encouragement and popular support. The moment that passed in 1945 took more than 50 years to be redressed, in the millennial decades. Hesitant post-war remembrance has been materialised with the exception of the victims of the Blitz. They remain marginalised, awaiting an effective memorial challenge of preferred but limited narratives.

Reflection on the absence of a focal site of civilian commemoration should not presume that monumentalisation, however popular, is unanimously accepted as

the answer to proper remembrance. An earlier observation regarding the extensive memorial storage of now-defunct communities is a case in point. Connerton's ascription of an 'orgy of monumentalisation' after WWI and the prescribed forgetting of the 'dismembered-not remembered' is another (2008, 69). His view came when the virtue of remembrance was reviving in the midst of London's recent memorialisation and reinforced the truism that memorialisation is not compulsory and that forgetting, under its varied conditions, should not imply failure or a lack of respect.

Winter observed the conjunction of significant anniversaries of WWI and the Holocaust in a late-20th century memory boom. Earlier analysis has suggested this continued, certainly in London, into the 21st. The commemorative upsurge, around the centenary years of WWI generated wide popular support although its subtexts, variously perceived as nationalistic and vainglorious (Jenkins 2019; Jones 2014; Toynbee 2019), were not universally popular. The centenary saw the galvanising of remembrance by individuals and communities, long after the last of the Great War generation had died, repurposing the image of the 'Tommy' as ghost statues at schools, churches and village cenotaphs. Poppies became a sea of red in the moat at the Tower, giving physical emphasis to the notion that private 'first-hand remembering' is negotiated to public remembrance through the deployment of a 'legacy' of memory (Moriarty 1999, 653-4) that counters death of living memory and the remorseless decline through time. Undaunted, memorialisation processes continue and evolve; amid a continuing public commitment to war remembrance, a 'vibrant discourse' of renewals and revisions is observable (Marshall 2004, 51). And yet, within this, this chapter questions the status and materialisation of civilian remembrance. The remembrance of civilians remains locked in the *lieu de mémoire* of Blitz Spirit, which this thesis suggests is a failed 'monument' where fitting remembrance is unable to function.

6.6 Summary

The critique of monumentalisation, launched in Chapter 2 and addressed implicitly above, significantly predates the work of Nora, González-Ruibal and Young. Giedion, in 1943, reflected that lasting monuments flourish in periods defined by a unifying consciousness (1958 [1943], 48). If true, London's monuments of the 21st Century have a problem, given their birth at a time of

national uncertainty, a time when narrow wartime narratives have political traction and a presumption that monuments reflect the desired but elusive sense of national worth and identity (Freedland 2021; Major 2020; Runciman 2020). Why else would a second national memorial to the Battle of Britain be investable and how does the bombast of the Bomber Command memorial help narratives of understanding of what it meant to be a civilian in air war? Echoes of Nora and Young can be heard in the opinion that the Women at War and Innocent Victims Memorials hold questionable levels of public engagement, lack a social framework and represent merely picturesque additions to a London already full of memorials (Jack 2012), where 'more diverse and imaginative forms of remembrance' remain elusive (Moshenska 2010b, 5).

In the absence of national civilian commemoration, beyond the Roll of Honour, focus now turns to the public material culture of Blitz remembrance. This archaeological record holds major importance not only in countering the narrow narrative of Blitz Spirit but as evidence, a secondary formation, of war vestiges, revealing the past that befell people and places under the bombs. This saliency derives from the loss of visual reminders of the Blitz, where a 'third wave' of development is now superimposed on post-war reconstruction (Watts 2015). Brooks (2011) points to the disappearance of residual evidence as a spur to his record of wartime relics. The Blitz is thus increasingly represented by civilian commemoration, acting for the effaced evidence of 70 years of urban reconstruction, to speak of the deathly reality of war. The materials, as in all forms of archaeology, require recording and curation to facilitate construction and transmission of bombing memories. Above all, however, they require engagement, social interaction, if their meaning, in an environment of military memorialisation of two world wars, is to prevent the oblivion of people and events that gave rise to the materialisation. The founder of a fire service memorial charity, sees the perpetuation of history dependent on acts of remembrance at the site of that history so that, where memories have been stilled by time, the sites give voice for future generations through commemoration (S. Maltman, pers.comm. 19 April 2021). Speaking to the hope that civilian remembrance and commemoration nurture and speak more eloquently, than the Blitz Spirit narrative, is the work of the chapters that follow.

7. CIVILIAN COMMEMORATIVE ARCHAEOLOGY

'...the average municipality would wish to commemorate the CWD by name in the cemetery, at the communal graves...'

Internal File Note, Imperial War Graves Commission (Chettle 1943).

7.1 Introduction

An emergent and then pre-eminent Blitz narrative was described in Chapter 4. The well-earned praise, for resilience and courage, that contributed to winning the war, has evolved into an unchallenged 'popular memory' in which the civilian experience, exemplified in Chapter 5, is obscured; there is a limited place for the civilian dead in a unifying narrative of the best qualities of the British people. Equally, as the foregoing chapter illustrated, civilians have only a limited role in the materialisation of national remembrance, after early-postwar expectations for national recognition of military and civilian casualties were not fulfilled. A 21st century surge in monument building, amid pursuit of specific service agendas, has produced a range of memorials whose critique reflects problems of inclusion, relevance and social interaction. This is a context in which overdue national civilian recognition might have flourished were it not for the primacy of the Blitz spirit narrative, reiterated with political bias, in which the civilian dead have a limited role (Noakes 2020; Overy 2020). Therefore, in the absence of a place for collective civilian remembrance, commemoration of the dead is, of necessity, vested in the CWGC Roll of Honour whose development emerged from practices tested in pursuit of military remembrance.

The challenge for this thesis now is to investigate civilian remembrance, through the identification and analysis of its commemorative forms, to undertake the research plan's aim to conduct an archaeology of civilian remembrance, starting with a register of its extent and nature.

7.2 Civilian Memorial Records

The War Memorials Register (WMR) holds over 90,000 records of the nation's commemorative output. This number has more than doubled since 2001, assisted by organised in-field recording and wider definitions. Civilian commemorations, despite a six-fold increase in the same period, represent just 3% of an overwhelmingly military record. The register records, as at 2nd June 2021, 2,779 civilian memorials of which 2,102 are for WWII and 677 for WWI.

The growth is an overdue rectification of historic under-recording. WMR civilian memorials list those of the Home Guard and the Merchant Navy, yet their dead are classed as non-civilian on the CWGC lists. The WWII civilian record includes over 700 merchant navy memorials and gravestone additions, a level of commemoration reflecting the 36,000 mariners lost at sea, many of them added as ‘missing’ on family graves. Another 190 entries, a miscellany of non-Blitz records, fall outside the scope of the study.

The type of Blitz memorial culture was established by a hand-count of the remaining 1200 items relating to the civilian experience of the air-war:

Dedicated Plaques, Stones	221
Dedicated Church Memorials	69
Shared Church Memorials	231
Shared Community Memorials	212
Shared Institutional Plaques	153
Cemetery Communal Graves	100
Dedicated Grave Additions	62
Rolls of Honour, Police Plaques	110
Council Flats and Hospital Beds	49

Undeniably, on this cursory analysis, the extent of civilian commemoration is sparse relative to military remembrance outcomes; indeed, there are more commemorative reredos screens, organs and lecterns in churches than all civilian memorials. Other published sources, each with their particular perspective on commemoration, bear this out. A popular online memorial gazetteer, London Remembers (2021), by April 2021, had recorded 6,133 memorials, representing over 60,000 people, places and events; 83 of these recorded ‘civilian deaths by enemy action’, double the 2014 number. The database of War Memorials Online (2021) shows 294 civilian entries within a universe in excess of 40,000. Boorman’s review of WWII memorials, published on the 50th anniversary of the war’s end, was an early contributor to the WMR (1995); in a selection of 700 memorials, 60 exemplified the remembrance of civilians, drawing attention to those at cemeteries above communal graves. A listing of ‘relics of the Home Front’ (Brooks 2011) traced WWII remnants in the City of London, the 28 wartime Metropolitan Boroughs and parts of East and

West Ham (present day, Newham). This area was impacted more than any other by the air war. Almost 300 relics of wartime archaeology are listed, under half of which, 130, are of civilian memorial plaques, stones of remembrance, free-standing monuments, ruined churches and a comprehensive London-wide listing of cemetery mass grave monuments. The remainder includes shelters, faded signs, shrapnel damage on buildings, memorials to Britain's allies and *émigré* governments and plaques recording bomb damage to buildings.

The predominance of shared commemorations within the 1200 memorials reflects the pattern observed earlier; churches, institutions and local communities extended their plaques, stones and cenotaphs to accommodate the new war dead (Aslet 2012, xxi). Dedicated civilian memorials, the plaques, memorial stones, books, gardens of remembrance and free-standing monuments amount to a recorded universe of just 611 references, a material culture of civilian remembrance even more focussed than the bare commemorative data suggests. The WMR is by no means comprehensive yet, despite some inconsistencies, it provides an adequate measure of civilian commemoration and as indicated in the case material to follow was an invaluable tool of preliminary enquiry.

The top-line civilian memorial analysis now turns from its overall extent to assess function, agency and setting of two significant memorial forms which emerged in the first years of peace. Ruined churches, which were promoted to form the bedrock of post-war remembrance, with varying levels of success, in several cities, are explored below in section 7.5. Firstly, the thesis considers the communal sites that reflected WWII burial imperatives and their related memorial structures erected over the graves.

7.3 The Politics of Burial

In Chapter 5, wartime state-managed discourse, that invested civilians with a quasi-military status, was reviewed. This impacted the management of multiple casualties and 'Heroic' burial, emphasizing sacrifice and honour, became established practice (Rugg 2004, 154). Noakes has identified a 'politics of burial' (2020, 175-185), which cloaked civilian loss in the rituals of military remembrance, perhaps most expertly deployed in the aftermath of the bombing of Coventry in November 1940 (2020, 232).

Responding to the fragile response of the people and their civic leaders, the Government moved quickly to forestall an enemy propaganda victory to add to their aerial 'triumph'. Restoration of pride, severely-shaken, in a city close to post-raid paralysis and hysteria (Harrison 1976, 135), began with a visit from the King, followed swiftly with relief columns of 'mobile feeding canteens, water carts, ambulances, transport vehicles, doctors, engineers, billeting officers, building workers and materials, loud-speaker information vans, blankets and other equipment' (Titmuss 1950, 314). Improvements in resolute behaviour followed the influx of aid (Pyle 1941, 82) and damaged factories were soon running again (Levine 2015, 111). The recovery, albeit assisted, speaks highly of the efforts of local people (McGrory 2015, 103-110) but not of local council leaders, particularly criticised for the information void that opened after the raid (Harrison 1976, 339-340). They were more forthright, with government prompting, on the burial of multiple casualties. In two mass funerals, over 400, around 80% of the fatalities, were buried, not in shrouds, but in coffins. Although authority funded, the funerals lacked the overtones of burial 'on the parish'. A thousand mourners attended the first funeral, when 172 were laid to rest (McGrory 2015, 100-101). These were planned variations, in normal wartime burial practice, and may explain the 'widespread citizen consent', interpreted by Noakes (2020, 176-177), in marked contrast to that exhibited by the bereaved in other cities. The 'consent' is evident in the unprecedented film coverage of the mass funeral, by Pathé News, depicting a dignified file of grieving relatives (*The Tragedy of Coventry* 1940). Misgivings over the crowded grave, coffins were three deep in places, were allayed by assurances that a fitting memorial would be installed at the burial site (Noakes 2020, 176-177). In 1952, that assurance was fulfilled, with the dedication of the Coventry Residents Garden of Remembrance; a white memorial wall, with corporation crest, at the head of the grave site, carries over 800 names, on 8 panels, flanked by tall piers (IWM 2021/WMR 17717). Heavy raids, in April 1941, killed another 400 residents and the site was re-opened for their interment. Today, the site is well-maintained and frequently refurbished for annual services of remembrance (Hewitt 2021). The dead, under an immaculate lawn fringed with flowering shrubs, bear the added weight of history and the ideological discourse, mobilised by the Government, at a crucial time in the Blitz under the pressure of fragile morale.

Figure 11

Coventry Residents Garden of Remembrance. 1952.



Coverage of mass funerals, from a government perspective, was selective and dependent on propaganda value. The inconsistency is evident in other cities where details of location and casualties were obscured. In Clydebank, a 'town in the West of Scotland', hurried committal arrangements created local scepticism on the casualty numbers; a feeling that lingers to date (McKendrick 2021; MacLeod 2011, 251; Macphail 2000; *The Clydebank Blitz* 2011). In Portsmouth, Harrison was unimpressed with the stage-management of the interment of 90 victims on 17th January 1941. Mass-Observation members, mingling with the bereaved, noted that the dignitaries, in full regalia and multi-faith panoply, appeared to out-number the mourners. The cortege had processed through crowded city streets, led by a Royal Marine band, flanked by military, Home Guard and civil defence detachments. Harrison characterised this show as 'masochism *en masse*', arising from questionable leadership, hitherto elusive, since the heavy raid a week earlier (1976, 187). Another stage-managed funeral, in Harrow, for a multiple burial of ten victims in 1945, created a 300 yard-long cortege of 'Union Jack, Bishop of Willesden, Civil Defence, WVS'. The observation that the 'show' could not alleviate the 'trouble that resumption of normal life would bring', foreshadowed the isolation of the bereaved, after the

mourning cavalcade had passed, before the 'incident becomes only a tale to tell to the grandchildren' (Beardmore 1974, 190).

Bombings that killed children also attracted political involvement and three of them are explored here. Noakes analyses a tragic event of 1942 in Petworth, which destroyed the local school, citing the symbolic links, with historic wartime sacrifice, in the military pomp accompanying a long cortege to the town cemetery (2020, 175-185). Today, the political pageantry long departed, the grave site has a forsaken air, its long trench marked with the fading names of the dead on concrete kerbs; pristine Portland Stone was not the chosen material for this commemoration (IWM 2021/WMR 43466 & 56604). The events in Petworth and how they have been remembered may be seen in **Appendix 9**.

In 1943, similar attentions were paid in Lewisham, after a 'tip-and-run' raid killed 38 children and 6 staff, at Sandhurst Road, Catford (London Borough of Lewisham 2021). Thirty-one of the children and a member of staff were buried in the local Hither Green Cemetery, side-by-side, in a long, shallow trench. The grave-side funeral service, in its appropriation by church and state, had received 'unprecedented' national publicity; the Bishop of Southwark, acknowledged local high feeling, calling for reticence, to an enormous congregation, said to number 7000 (Blake 1982, 54-56). Private grief, forced into a public domain, by the intrusion of a 'state' funeral, overshadowed the authorities appeal to 'a higher purpose' (Noakes 2020, 178-179).

There is scant evidence of a higher purpose at the site today. The unadorned trench is visible in the foreground of **Figure 12**. Up close, the names on the low kerbs are fading. The adjacent plot is for 335 of Lewisham's 1,000 civilian Blitz victims (Lewisham War Memorials 2021). The War Memorials Register (IWM 2021/WMR 12312) records the grey concrete, Blomfield-style cross, whose plinth-base is badly cracked. In marked contrast, is the clean, white stone of a nearby CWGC plot, just visible on the left. The Borough grave plot is acknowledged but excluded from the record and the school trench is not referenced at all; the WMR has an ambivalent attitude to memorials that are construed as grave markers. The contrast today, with the state-inspired, stage-managed funeral of 75 years ago, is clear; the event suited a wartime purpose but ultimately failed the bereaved and the community, by leaving no lasting legacy of remembrance, in a place subject to neglect, a void where lasting

meaning is absent. In 2000, a memorial naming the victims was placed in a memorial garden, on the site of the school (IWM 2021/63281).

Figure 12



Hither Green Cemetery: Civilian Communal Graves.

In the early hours of Friday, 30 June 1944, a V1 came down on Weald House, Crockham Hill, taking the lives of 22 young children and 8 nursery staff, relocated from blitzed districts in London. It was Kent's worst bombing incident and an avoidable tragedy. The village of 800 people, lies 3 miles south of Westerham; it was observed that the village lay directly under a V1-flightpath to London (Fielding Clarke 1970, 259-260; Long 1995, 148-152).

The relocation of nursery-age babies to the area was part of a long-standing plan (London County Council 1939). A previous incident, when a closed south coast holiday camp, housing young evacuees, was bombed (Adkins & Adkins 2016; London County Council 1940), had not led to changes. In contrast, there was a hasty retreat, from the properties neighbouring Weald House in July 1944 (Savage 1944b). To that point, advantage had been taken of large country houses vacated for the duration of the war. These houses, on the ridge which runs east-west across the northern part of Kent and Surrey, commanding extensive views over the Weald, are exposed to air attack; empty, because of war risk, they were deemed safe for London's evacuees. The LCC's questionable evacuee policy cruelly exposed the infants. Weald House was a location of last resort; other premises in the locality were either full or damaged;

an internal note, within a week, macabrely records that Weald House 'ceased to be used as a nursery on 30th June 1944' (Savage 1944a).

For the community, like others across the south-east, this late phase of the Blitz was a shocking event. The dead and injured were removed to Edenbridge Hospital, 3 miles south of the village. A graveside funeral for 29 of the 30 victims took place, four days after the incident, at Edenbridge Cemetery, adjacent to the Parish Church, attended by Civil Defence cohorts and senior clerics (BBC 2014; Edenbridge History 2021). The mass committal was attended by the Bishop of Rochester whose message, equating civilian sacrifice with that of the armed forces, in a morale-boosting homily, dismissed the V-rocket attacks as the enemy's desperate last throw (Gilmour 2010). The burial place was a matter of expediency, determined by the location of the hospital and mortuary (B. Ogley pers.comm. 14 January 2016), and haste, deemed necessary with multiple fatalities and limited facilities (Rugg 2005). A memorial stone was in place by 1950 (B. Ogley pers.comm. 14 January 2016) on the edge of the burial plot.

Figure 13

Weald House Memorial and Communal Grave, Edenbridge. 1950.



In a curious twist, a view that the vicar of Crockham Hill had refused to have the children buried in the village churchyard has persisted (Gilmour 2011). The vicar's autobiography makes clear his opposition to neglected graves in churchyards. However, the tragedy induced a nervous breakdown and he was absent from his parish when the burials took place (Fielding Clarke 1970, 261). His alleged refusal is relevant; continuing resentment has, in part, motivated the recent installation of a memorial in the village.

The Weald House Memorial in Crockham Hill was dedicated on Sunday, 30th October 2016, in a moving ceremony, attended by scores of villagers and observed by the writer, at the invitation of the Chairman of the War Memorial Playing Fields Committee, Mark Hancox. A memorial had been on their agenda for 'a number of years' before his arrival in the village in 2010 (M. Hancox pers.comm. 16 October 2015). The ceremony, in its simple dignity, permitted the community to pay its delayed respects to the victims of 1944. In a prayer of dedication, the essence of local remembrance is clear; the memorial will 'act as a lasting reminder to the community of Crockham Hill of all those so tragically killed that day'. The 30th victim, not on the Edenbridge stone, is included.

The monument is a 2.5 tonne monolith of Welsh grey slate about 1.5 metres high, a metre wide and 0.5-metre-deep. It is inscribed with the same dedication as its predecessor in Edenbridge and lists the names and ages of the 8 staff and the 22 children. On the reverse of the stone, a short message acknowledges the memorial as the work of the people of Crockham Hill and Westerham. It fulfills a link, with the tragedy in their midst, not possible in the confusion and haste of 1944.

As the cases at Petworth and Hither Green show, the immediate post-war commemorations were followed by a long hiatus until new memorials were placed. The Weald House tragedy, albeit residing in the memory of the community, faded into the unstructured, public consciousness of the Blitz. The desire for a memorial grew organically, gaining momentum, from the early 2000s. Village memories were stirred by the story of Peter Findley, orphaned in the tragedy, and discovering his mother's identity only in 1989 (Findley 2004). Peter's search generated wide publicity, providing impetus to the emerging memorial project. The story was told, through the institution of the village

newsletter, by a local historian, whose insight into the village community has informed this section (K. Reynolds pers.comm. 1 June 2018).

Figure 14

Weald House Memorial, Crockham Hill. 2016.



The discordant vicar narrative, from conversations at the unveiling, was not entirely stilled by the memorial; resentment for some runs long and deep. The alleged exclusion of the children, from burial in the parish, was more than a convenient myth to trail during funding appeals. It appears nonetheless to have been a minor factor in the village groundswell that supported the campaign. The placing and dedication brought the campaign to a conclusion, having navigated

typical planning and funding issues that saw the 70th anniversary in 2014 missed (M. Hancox pers.comm. 16 October 2015).

It took 72 years for the village to have its own memorial, welcoming back their young visitors, with more enthusiasm than the village had shown evacuees in the war (Long 1995, 76). A clear sense pervaded the dedication ceremony; the Weald House dead are now remembered in the right place. The village had fulfilled its community duty, which the cemetery grave memorial site did not allow; indeed, the main historian influencer had never been to the 1950 memorial (K. Reynolds pers.comm. 1 June 2018). The irony of evacuating young infants, to end up in harm's way, in a small village in Kent, remains the enduring memory of the tragedy, now permanently marked, within sight of the ridge on which they were tragically exposed.

The interventions of government, following well-intentioned national imperatives of morale and security, were selective and manipulative with respect to the management of civilian death and burial. The international propaganda value of the Coventry mass funeral, a demonstration of defiance to the enemy and resilience to potential allies, was exceptional. In projecting that raid as a criminal concentration on innocent civilians, initial evidence to the contrary was managed into a byword of Britain's stoic response to the Blitz.

Events, without national or international ramifications, were not, to employ a current term, investable, although local authority and religious institutions employed a similar 'politics' and language of shared sacrifice exemplified at Hither Green and Edenbridge. However, as the crowds dispersed and the bereaved attempted to resume normal life, shared sacrifice was not matched in shared honour, as the following review of cemetery memorialisation will show.

7.4 Cemetery Monuments

In the late-1940s and early-1950s, a time of post-war recovery and the embrace of peace, national memorialisation remained unfulfilled. However, as observed above, the work of community remembrance was extended to its WWII dead (Boorman 1995, 1). Simultaneously, an important commemorative outcome of the early post-war period was starting to appear, a product of state and local authority intervention, in a programme of memorial installation at cemeteries.

Cemetery gravesites, whose formation and extent has been outlined above, were soon translated from sites of mourning to sites of memory, from communal burial to an intended collective remembrance. Their colonisation by memorial structures was largely complete by the early 1950s, for the most part hastily installed, cheaply built and often on the outer margins of the cemetery.

Figure 15

Collage of Cemetery Monuments.



The earliest installation coincided with Armistice Day, 1948, at Abney Park, Stoke Newington (Loewe 2012). A much later addition was in Clydebank where the mass grave was unmarked until 1961 (MacLeod 2011, 346-347). In the London region, covering the wartime inner and outer boroughs, there are 56 sites and memorials (**Appendix 4 and 5**). The remainder are spread across the rest of the country. Coventry, with around 800 interments, is the largest but the seven-day Blitz on Liverpool in May 1941 saw the largest single committal in a communal grave at Aintree Cemetery; of over 550 burials, 370 were unidentified civilians (Noakes 2020, 184). Efford Cemetery, Plymouth received almost 400 and Hull's Eastern Cemetery, 327 victims (**Appendix 6**). The numbers speak of the casualty pressure, outside of London. These movements of the dead, as revealed earlier, were executed at some cost to the dignity, taken as read during peacetime, and sometimes with a clumsy application of government-inspired stage-management of 'heroic' communal burial.

Consideration of the marking of communal graves emerged during the war, prompted by the extension of the Imperial War Graves Commission remit. The Commission's perspective was not particularly expansive, judged by 1943

correspondence (Chettle 1943). In the context of an expectation of national commemoration and the pressure to fulfil its military obligations, IWGC was opposed to a multiplicity of commemorative monuments yet it promoted civilian commemoration at cemetery communal graves, believing remembrance is better delivered 'where the casualty lived and died' (Chettle 1943). The expectation was, with few exceptions, fulfilled. In 28 of the 29 former London Metropolitan Boroughs, civilian multiple-burial sites were marked; two boroughs, Wandsworth and Chelsea, have memorials at two locations. Screen walls, flanking the burial plot, are, as anticipated by Chettle (1943), the typical form, often with a corporation crest, above names inscribed on the stone or on plaques. Expediency, however, in some examples, resulted in elongated trenches, fringed by low kerbs on which names were added; the trenches were marked with a stone and sometimes a cross. The memorials generally reflect the conditional financial inducement, summarised in a 1948 Ministry of Health Circular 35/48, detailing exchequer assistance for the provision of grave marking. The size and embellishment of a memorial was at the discretion of the local authority, tempered by a grant level of £8 per individual in a mass grave and £11 for an individual headstone. Instructions were issued for 'simple' memorials, avoiding elaboration or architectural features, bound by low stone-fringed borders. Where authorities had already progressed grave-site memorials, the grants could be applied retrospectively (Summers 1948).

In London, few memorials break with the utilitarian approach, expressed in the circular; two stand out in their use of lighter coloured materials. Westminster (IWM 2021/WMR 29757) has an attractive column and cross. St Pancras with a central white stone obelisk on a stepped base (IWM 2021/WMR 57993) compares favourably with the low brick wall, with the barest detail, adopted by Islington in the same cemetery. These examples are shown in **Appendix 10**. None of the London authorities adopted individual grave stones. Haycombe Cemetery, Bath employed individual white stones which are in keeping with an adjacent CWGC plot. Nottingham (IWM 2021/27472) and North Shields (**Appendix 6**) also adopted a similar approach. These few examples apart, cemetery memorials, with their greying stone and weathered brick, compare unfavourably with the impeccably maintained CWGC plots of white stones.

This category of commemorative archaeology has a depressing uniformity, not least in the unelaborate walls of brick and concrete, born of the imperative and economy of their time. Moreover, from Clydebank to Camberwell, and from Plymouth to Poplar, these places wear heavily the emptiness, inherent in the tragic fate of their incumbents. These places and monuments appear unfrequented (Jack 2011, 94) and, for the years between burial and monument, they met González-Ruibal's ascription as places of abjection, a primary stage, on a route to a place of memory (2008, 255-260). Today, despite sporadic and belated attempts to overcome 70 years of neglect and material decline, these sites feel removed, not just in their invariably marginal cemetery locations, but from the people for whom they were intended. Chettle's assertion in 1943 that remembrance is better delivered, 'where the casualty lived and died', clearly misunderstood the physical and psychological separation of home and burial. The upheaval of war saw many communities disperse during the Blitz and in post war urban restructuring (Young and Willmott 2007 [1957], viii). Distance typifies the status of the dead from the inner boroughs hit hardest in the Blitz. Crowded neighbourhoods and limited space had, long before the war, dispersed large cemeteries to the outer fringes of the capital. The City of London Cemetery is in Essex and Chelsea's memorials and civilian war graves are in two separate Wandsworth cemeteries. These are just two examples which resulted in many victims being removed for burial many miles from their former places of residence-and, indeed, from where they died. Their monuments are therefore on the margin of the domestic and commemorative landscape, increasingly unfrequented as survivors pass-on and their families disperse. They reflect the imperative of their time and remain removed, physically and socially, from meaningful remembrance. Even local cemeteries, close to the events that brought the victims to them, can feel remote; when the crowds had dispersed and the military bands and ministering prayers had fallen silent, these places in the absence of 'live, regularly performed spatial practices' (Nora 1989, 7) entered a process of 'frozen' monumentalisation (Eróss 2017, 21), denied 'spontaneous memory' in a 'fossilised' state (González-Ruibal 2008, 256). In the 'uncertain place' of war memorials in the 21st century', Marshall cites Nora's transition of *milieux*/environments of memory to *lieux de memoires* (2004, 37-38) where memory crystallizes. Unfrequented and disengaged, these cemetery memorials physically embody memory in their graves but their limited

functioning as sites of remembrance, saw them entering a long period of neglect and obscurity.

These memorial sites were formed in places determined by government and local authority responses to the pressures of war. Moreover, the language of burial reflected a state-centred ideological discourse, a representation of national narratives of duty and sacrifice, civilian death cloaked in military uniform. Tarlow emphasises the importance of personal responses to bereavement and mortality, sensing the balancing of nationalist ideologies (albeit referencing WWI) and emotional factors such as grief and shock in the shaping of commemorative responses. She adds that 'people select monuments, places and ways of remembering for their power to express intense and personal feelings' (1997, 105). Deriving from physical separation or figurative emptiness, this personal selection has broken-down, limiting personal engagement at sites of 'non-elite' material culture, paradoxically created in government-inspired 'elite' institutionalisation of grief (Tarlow 1999, xii).

This assessment covers an 80 year timeline from burials in the intensity of air attack through the materialisation of remembrance in the 1950s to faltering steps in redressing neglect and wear. It paints a picture of bleak uniformity in meaning and engagement that exacerbates the evident material limitations of commemoration. Worthy attempts to create an environment for meaningful remembrance of the civilian dead faltered at most sites as funeral pomp and fleeting remembrance gave way to 'neglected obscurity' (Peace Pledge Union 2009, 23). Winter observed, like Tarlow, that remembrance needs a place where stories can be told (Winter & Sivan 1999, 40) and at dispersed cemeteries the occasional poppy wreaths and rare, albeit emotional, family messages are testament to the lack of collective remembrance in practice at these sites. These are places and memorials detached from 'socially significant' recollection, created at 'the service of power' (González-Ruibal 2008, 256). A journalist, Ian Jack, seeing the Blitz as a folk memory, its stoicism 'beautifully enshrined in films and literature', wrote of never seeing flowers or sign of care at the 'tumbledown' civilian grave memorial in Abney Park, Stoke Newington (2011, 94). This memorial carries 122 names and recognises 9 unidentified victims; 95 of the 160 people who died, not far away, at Coronation Avenue on 13th October 1940, in one of the worst incidents of the Blitz, are remembered

here (Loewe 2012). **Appendix 11** reviews the community action that has achieved local recognition of this tragedy.

Figure 16



Abney Park Cemetery, Stoke Newington: Grave and Memorial.

Since Jack's comments, the site and monument were refurbished in 2013. In my photograph, from 2015, the relentless 'greening' of the stone is evident. More recently, to re-commemorate the tragic incidents, 80 years earlier, the local authority once again responded to community pressure to rectify the memorial's drab condition (IWM 2021/WMR 11940).

The restoration of faded inscriptions and cracked walls, at sites like Abney Park, has slowly gained pace in recent years, stirred by major anniversaries and an overdue recognition of a neglected memorial form. As a Coronation Avenue survivor observed 'if memorials are not kept up, people will forget about the war, about the Blitz and about all the innocent people that were killed' (Loewe 2012, 85). In Portsmouth, scene of Harrisson's indictment of local leadership (1976, 187), local volunteers have been holding remembrance services at the communal grave in Kingston Cemetery on the 10th of January for the last three years, attended by a few citizens, happy to relate their family remembrances of the city's heaviest Blitz. The volunteers, whose main task is a museum of the 'Pompey Pals' battalions of the Royal Hampshire regiment in WWI, are local

men with a keen sense of civic pride, stepping in to provide belated 'live, regularly performed spatial practices' (Nora 1989, 7). These rare acts of remembrance, from experience, only temporarily lift the desolation felt standing over a mass grave site. They are unable to answer a key question: Who benefits, from this memorial, when the links, between the dead, the bereaved and their descendants are broken by time and distance? Is it possible that these small remembrance events can regain some latter-day resonance, at sites, whose hasty formation, was not built to 'dwell on the past for long' (Clapson & Larkham 2013, 4)? One answer is found in the uncertain interpretation of grave memorials by the Imperial War Museum on the WMR. On a rigid application of rules, these sites are grave markers, and can be excluded from the record. This has so far applied to Lambeth, the borough sustaining the greatest loss of life in London, and Belfast, which suffered more casualties in one night than anywhere, but London. These records are no longer available on the public database; a number of others are similarly scheduled for disposal. In continuing discussions, the lack of any other agency picking up the memorial record, not least for the large numbers of unidentified civilians, has been emphasized by the writer, thus far to no avail.

This process symbolises the return to the abjection of the unrecorded grave, the anonymity of death and the peril of forgetting the civilian past. These memorials represent an important element of the nation's universe of dedicated civilian remembrance and their communication of the past brings an understanding of the awful history that brought dead people to these places. An initial product of public health management, under extreme conditions, which saw the dead cleared away with the debris, they have become distanced from community, home and place of death. As absent, out-of-sight heritage, their link with the bereaved and the wider community was severed almost on the point of interment. The memorials, placed perhaps ten years later, maintained an ideological discourse, whose time had passed (González-Ruibal 2008, 256). In Chapter 2, the interdependent concepts of remembrance and commemoration were established; action and outcome working together to give meaning and expression to individual and collective memories. In the separation described here, the absence of active remembrance has rendered the material

commemoration invisible. It is as if the place of burial has returned to a state where 'memory is erased', placed in quarantine (2008, 256).

The notable exception of Coventry has ensured their civilian grave memorial, forged in the service of a state narrative, has not become detached from social engagement. Through active, on-site remembrance (Hewitt 2021), the memorial and grave-site sustain a civic discourse, one that extends the city's adopted role as a world-leader in remembrance and reconciliation; the resurrection and re-formation of a place where memory is no longer absent. In this regard, it is linked to the emblem of Coventry's Blitz, the shell of St Michael's, the medieval cathedral, destroyed in November 1940. At the remains of the altar, a weekly service for peace resounds across the preserved ruins.

7.5 Ruined Churches as Memorials

Coventry's approach to the repatriation of its ruined cathedral, to a worldwide icon of peace and reconciliation, raises the question of the deployment of ruined church buildings. These are relevant for two reasons. Firstly, they were an early response, to post-war remembrance, when the national mood was moving-on. Secondly, their establishment was reasonably consistent, in Britain's provincial bombed cities (Historic England 2020; Mason 2018), but intentions were unfulfilled in London, where, arguably, a ruined church would have had memorial traction. An estimated 30 churches have been preserved, in a 'freshly ruined state', since the end of WWII (Clark 2019). Important examples, in addition to Coventry, are in Plymouth, which included one in its ambitious renewal plan of late 1943 (Twyford 1945, 54-56) and in Bristol, at St Peter's, in a city park setting, where 1400 civilian dead are remembered, by name (IWM 2021/WMR 20013; Historic England 2021/374567).

In the City of London, after extensive damage and destruction, post-war priorities for church demolition or reconstruction were actively debated, in clerical, civic and government circles, from the early years of the war (Larkham & Nasr 2012). The debate in London cast damaged church buildings in two ways. Firstly, as monuments from an historic pre-war environment, expected to be lost, not only to war, but its reconstructive aftermath. Secondly, beyond considerations of cultural heritage, ruined church architecture was considered in a remembrance role, a representation of the human cost of the war; the ruin, in

commemorating its own destruction, acting therefore as a metaphor for the violence visited on the locality and its people. In this regard, the blackened walls of St Michael's, adjacent to the 'new' Cathedral in Coventry, the most prominent institution of war on an innocent populace, symbolises the attacks and recovery from them. The ruins and surrounding precincts locate cues to the city's ordeal, a planned heritage, consistent with modern values and a link to a troubled past. A short analysis of the Coventry Cathedral ruins and its memorial culture is in **Appendix 12**. As the following review will confirm, London could not match Coventry's achievement.

The bombing war was indiscriminate and, particularly at night, inaccurate. Larger buildings, including churches, were at greater risk because of their size and prominence. Damage to a church, particularly those invested with a long history and spiritual significance, held a symbolism beyond the destruction of its fabric. The notion of the deliverance of St Paul's Cathedral in December 1940 was carried through, in press and public discourse, as a symbol of national defiance and resolution. On 17th January 1941, just three weeks after the so-called Second Great Fire of London, from which St Paul's was 'saved', an opinion piece in *The Spectator*, by an eminent painter, John Piper, weighed-in on 'how to deal with ruined City churches' (1941, 60-61). Piper, at that time, had produced celebrated paintings of Coventry Cathedral and Temple Church, Bristol. He was a critic of the extreme curation of preserved ruins which 'embalmed' them, rendering them lifeless. The fear of 'arrested decay' and hence 'arrested taste' was reflected in his picturesque ruins (Art UK 2021; Piper 1940; Reardon 2011, 30).

In retrospect, it seems extraordinary, that correspondence columns were 'full of suggestions', while the night Blitz was still sustained (Piper 1941, 60). Some might concur that over-concern, with a building's demise, borders on the self-indulgent (Bevan 2006, 7). Piper's reaction was shared by others, appalled by the devastation of the 29th December 1940. Fire had significantly damaged 17 of the City's 45 churches (The Architectural Press 1945, 17); 'the loss of ten Wren churches in one night is something that made London gasp' (Beaton 1941, 42). Beaton visited the City churches on the morning after the raid and observed they 'had suffered a disgusting change, a metamorphosis at first stupefying' (1941, 45-46). As unfeeling, and artistically self-centred, as this

assessment might appear to those enduring nights of bombardment, it reflected the aforementioned start of an active wartime debate. .

At the London diocesan level, consideration of the future, moved from 'quickly organised committees' in 1941 to a Bishop's Commission on City Churches whose final report in 1946 largely determined the fate of the damaged churches (Larkham & Nasr 2012, 297-300). It was however an independent intervention that would promote a sample of these churches as 'memorials to the catastrophe of war' (2012, 309). In January 1944, the Architectural Review contributed to the national debate on the remembrance of the war dead of WWII (Chettle 1943; Mass Observation 1944; RSA 1944) with a solution to the 'problem' of the bombed churches of Britain (The Architectural Press 1945, 5). Later, in August 1944, just weeks after D-Day, and prompted by Plymouth's clear vision for one its bombed churches, the solution was expressed forthrightly in a letter to *The Times* calling for the preservation of churches 'in their ruined condition as permanent memorials of this war'. Signatories included Lord Keynes, T.S. Eliot and Kenneth Clark, the art historian who had been Chairman of the Ministry of Information War Artists Advisory Committee. The letter suggested that selected churches could represent each of the services with one, specifically in the City, set aside for 'a memorial to the thousands of Londoners who died in the blitz, for whom those walls of calcined stones were once not monuments but tombs' (The Architectural Press, 1945). The letter was included in a booklet, *Bombed Churches as War Memorials*, published in 1945, which advanced the solution more specifically, advocating the appropriation of two or three bombed churches in London and one in each of the blitzed provincial cities (1945, 11). The churches would be presented as 'garden ruins' to meet three requirements. These were provision of a place of sanctuary, incorporating short work-day services and places for quiet prayer, space for small green oases in the resurgent cityscape and, the 'finest responsibility', as war memorials (1945, 17-19). To emphasize this point, a definition of the purpose of a war memorial was offered (1945, 19):

To make men remember, to keep fresh the faith of those who fought and the names of those who died in that faith

Gender and faith imbalance may be imputed in this definition, but the intention is clearer in the rest of the main editorial; the ruined churches were to stand in memory of all who served and died, military and civilian. The idea of separate churches for each service (and one for serving women) appears to have been dropped. The commemorative approach is not advanced, beyond a rousing conclusion that these few places of rest and worship will be reminders of 'the sacrifices, the gallantry and the faith of those who fought and died, many thousands of them among these very stones whose existence today is a testament that they did not die in vain' (1945, 22).

The principal editorial was written by Hugh Casson (1910-1999), a noted architect and artist (Royal Academy 2021). His piece reflects a nostalgia for the 'strange beauty' of war traces and fears, with the disappearance of 'shabby heaps' of stones, that the ordeal, that brought the destruction, will seem 'remote, unreal, perhaps forgotten' (1945, 22). In a debate about aesthetics, Reardon reviews the role of the War Artists Advisory Committee, under the aegis of Kenneth Clark. Clark was a champion of John Piper whose depiction of the destruction of Coventry Cathedral is one of the images 'clearly intended as propaganda in support of the war'. On the 'romanticism of war ruins', human figures are noticeably absent and there is 'empathy with the architectural ideal rather than the human'. This neglect of the human experience reflected a fear of artistic censorship of war's human cost but it also revealed a preference for the 'abstract beauty of material devastation' (Reardon 2011, 29-30).

The architectural pamphlet, whilst given to over-wrought language, does not have the picturesque as its sole focus. Recognition of a sanctuarial role places it beyond the abstract and considers the practical use of memorial space, supported by articles and illustrations, imagining the featured church memory spaces, with details of tree and shrub planting. The pamphlet considered five damaged church spaces which it felt could meet the three criteria of sanctuary, space and remembrance. Two of them lay outside the City at St Anne's, Soho and St John's, Red Lion Square, Holborn. The former continues as a restored church but there is no access from the former church yard, now detached as an open leisure space; a small plaque affixed to the base of the tower acknowledges the un-named local people who died in the war. As for St John's graceful arches, prominent in the booklet, they were lost when the church was

demolished in the early 1950s. The City of London sites were St Mary, Aldermanbury, later removed to Fulton, USA, to commemorate Churchill's 'Iron Curtain' speech and St Alban, Bread Street, which survives only as a tower, in non-ecclesiastical use. Only one survives, in a form recognisable from the pamphlet; the ruin of Christ Church Greyfriars, located on the junction of Newgate Street and King Edward Street, close to St Paul's Cathedral.

The City of London has another site in ruination, exemplifying the ravages of the Blitz, amid modern buildings that have effaced most other vestiges of wartime damage (Brandon-Salmon 2019). St Dunstan in the East Church Garden, is a gothicky, ivy-clad survivor of Great Fire and Blitz (City of London 2021b). It holds no memorial designation, appearing on a map as 'a City oasis surrounded by church ruins', to orientate other memorial sites (WMO 2021).

At this juncture, a distinction can be made between *monument* and *memorial*. This thesis contends that ruined church *monuments* act symbolically and that a *memorial* transition occurs only when it acts directly on remembrance. The wartime debate, played out in *Ruined Churches as War Memorials* (The Architectural Press 1945), asks much of the symbolism of the *monument* ruin to recall the war that created it (Arnold-de Simone 2015). A memorial to the dead was never specified.

The grand idea of appropriating bombed churches, to deliver meaningful war remembrance, was never fulfilled in London. The urban calm of St Dunstan and Christ Church is unaccompanied by any on-site memorial reference; both speak to war through their ruins, a mute reminder of the destructive force of the Blitz. It is questionable whether the connection is made as readily as *The Times* letter of 1944 anticipated. An action on memory requires communication and clarity of intention for engagement to prosper. In a decade of site observations, at ruined memorial churches, Larkham saw minimal engagement and a transition to a more questionable status as mere 'memento' (2019, 49). Christ Church, became a garden space in 1960, after nearly two decades, as a managed bomb-site, awaiting redesignation (City of London 2021a; Larkham 2019, 60). Now, after seven decades, Christ Church, has again emerged as the possible site for a memorial, not focussed on its own destruction, but as a vehicle for London-wide civilian remembrance.

7.6 Christ Church Greyfriars

A three-volume chronicle of the Blitz, through the medium of 'then-and-now' photographs, is dedicated to the 70,000 dead and the 80,000 injured (Ramsey 1987; 1988; 1990). London, it observed, unlike Berlin, had no monument or memorial to remember the Blitz casualties; 'to our way of thinking, Christ Church [...] abandoned since 1940 should be our memorial. We commend the idea to our City fathers... (Ramsey 1988, 370). Christ Church Greyfriars is a Grade 1 listed Anglican church building, significantly damaged in the Blitz (Beaton 1941, 69). It stands, roofless, within sight of St Paul's, on the north side of Newgate Street, at the junction with King Edward Street. Its appearance today, despite post-war changes that have removed most of the south and all of the east wall, exists because of the debate stimulated by *Bombed Churches as War Memorials* (1945). The pictures and drawings therein show the church, after the clearance of rubble from the nave, and how it might look with a garden layout. Christ Church survives as a public space, dominated at its west end by a rebuilt tower and steeple. There is a stunted south wall and the east end is open; the garden gives way to the pavement which is separated from the road by a low concrete platform marking the church's former boundary.

Parish duties were long ago subsumed into a neighbouring church. It is listed as a memorial at War Memorials Online, in a new record of June 2020, described as 'rose gardens in bombed-out church and yard' and '.... largely destroyed by bombing [...]. The decision was made not to rebuild the church; the ruins are now a public garden' (War Memorials Online 2021/272121). The church site is part of a larger scheduled monument, The London Greyfriars, which dates to the foundation of the Greyfriars Abbey, which occupied land to the north and west, beneath an office complex which now envelops the site. The former churchyard of Christ Church, west of the tower, is grassed over and fringed by iron railings (Historic England 2021/1002002).

Figure 17



Christ Church Greyfriars from the South-East.

The Abbey church survived the Dissolution to become, in 1547, the parish church of Christ Church, until lost in the Great Fire. It held royal connections, providing the burial place of four English Queen Consorts (Beaton 1941, 63-70; Kent 1947, 71-72; Swan 2015). In 1552, another post-Dissolution institution was established in the former Abbey precincts. Christ's Hospital, a school for 'needy children', remained a neighbour of the church until 1902 when it transferred to Horsham, where it still flourishes. A bronze sculpture, celebrating over 500 years of its mission, was mounted on the south wall of the church in 2017 (Davies 2021).

Historic England (2021/1359217) describes Christ Church as ‘Late 17th C, over earlier friary, coursed rubble and Portland stone. Particularly fine west tower and steeple, the urns replaced in fibre-glass. Only 5 bays of north wall of church and a fragment of the south wall remain’. The Wren church rose up from the Great Fire between 1677-91, with the tower added in 1704. See **Appendix 13**.

Beaton photographed ‘its vacant expanse of wreckage’ describing it as a ‘noble but unexciting specimen of Wren’ (1941, 69-70). It was not considered for rebuild and entered a state of limbo, pending a new role (Larkham & Nasr 2012, 380). In 1989 the garden was laid out in a style reminiscent of the Architectural Journal booklet (1945); the levelled stumps of the nave pillars are marked by tree planting. The ruined church building presents itself as a pleasant open space, managed by the Corporation of the City of London, a church garden, flanked by the five-window tracery of the north wall (City of London 2021a). A small wooden plaque refers to the parochial transfer to St Sepulchre, close by at Holborn Viaduct, and explains briefly that ‘This Wren church was destroyed by fire bombs in December 1940’. It is a space uncluttered by signage, plaques or church memorabilia, beyond the recent sculpture on the south wall. At the base of the tower are remnants of the huge pineapple finials that formerly adorned the four corners of the church. It wears its wartime history lightly; there is no sense that this site has a memorial function or was promoted as such in 1945. The church and garden have had ‘the sense of any visible violence’ erased, ‘traces of the act of destruction are lost in the smoothly cut, symmetrical walls’ (Reardon 2011, 44-45). Watts describes the extent of its post-war erasure as a ‘polite mess evoking no great thoughts of human sacrifice’ (2015).

Extraordinarily, with its obscured remembrance credentials and divided opinion on its cultural value, Christ Church, seventy years after its partial destruction, is again the object of promotion as a potential war memorial, in a campaign seeking restoration in the name of almost 30000 Londoners.

7.7 The Civilians’ Memorial

In early 2016, the campaign for a Citizens’ Memorial at Christ Church Greyfriars to ‘..commemorate the heroism and sacrifice of the citizens of London during the Second World War ...’ was featured by London Remembers (2021/Christchurch-Greyfriars Church). A Citizens’ Memorial internet campaign

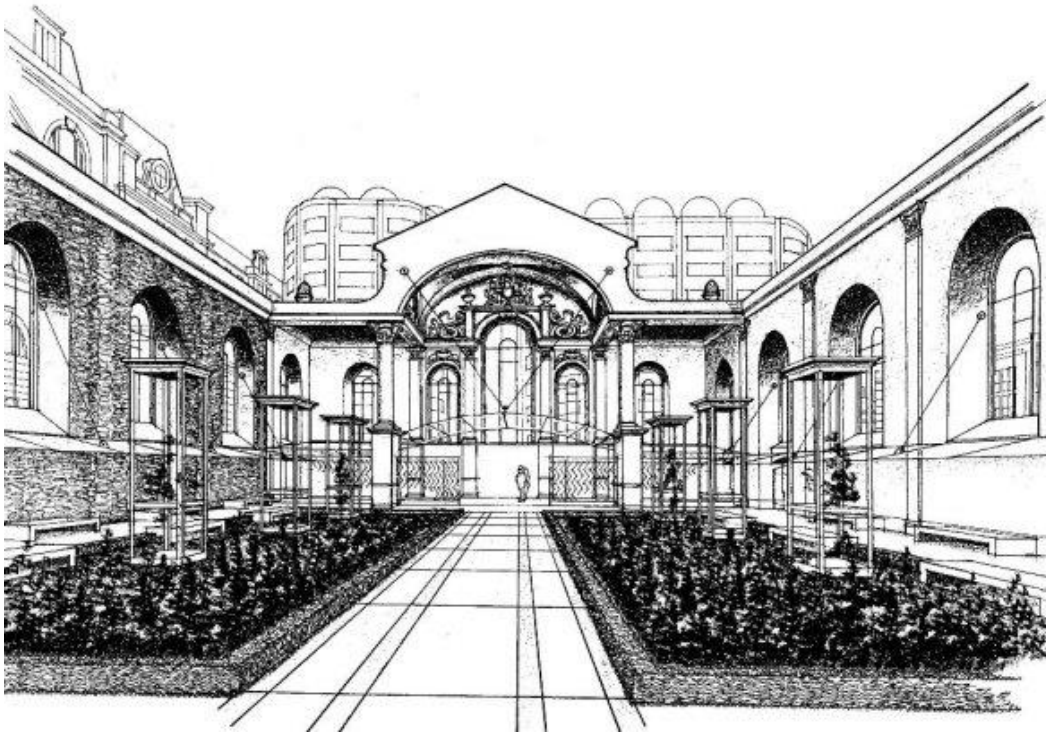
had first appeared in 2012 as a detailed history of the site with architectural drawings of the envisaged restoration of the east end, demolished in 1973. It echoed the wartime debate for this bombed-out church to function as a memorial, specifically dedicated to the civilian dead of the London Blitz. The author and campaign instigator, Ian Heron, an architecturally-trained, freelance designer, had been campaigning on City heritage issues since 2001. The Citizens' Memorial plans, for the reinstatement of the south and east walls, pay homage to the concept for Christ Church outlined by The Architectural Press (1945). However, at the time of London Remembers' coverage, the online material had not been updated since October 2013 and campaigning in press and social media, so visible in two simultaneous Bethnal Green memorial initiatives, reviewed later, had gone quiet. The campaign appeared moribund, suggesting that an extremely worthwhile subject had succumbed in the 'unequal contest' of remembrance that it had entered. The campaign had a champion and an articulate plan yet its attempts to foster support seemed to have faltered. A vocal advocate for a fitting civilian memorial (Watts 2010) drew the unfortunate conclusion that 'a campaign in 2013 to turn [Christ Church] into a more meaningful memorial was short-lived' (Watts 2015).

However, in late 2017, the project re-emerged, re-energised and renamed, as the Civilians' Memorial. Its essence had not changed; it aims to fulfil the original intention for the site after the War, by rebuilding the demolished walls, and create, within the nave space, the memorial which 'would commemorate the fortitude and sacrifice of the wartime generation of Londoners. Twenty-eight thousand Londoners lost their lives as a result of aerial bombardment during the blitz, yet still they have no adequate memorial' (Heron 2018).

An explanatory essay, accompanying the project statement, was a carefully-worded critique of past institutional failure and disinterest in the heritage aspects of the site. It stated that 'the City is content that a misleading narrative is conveyed to the many visitors to the site' (Heron 2018). The fresh start of the Civilians' Memorial project, following a lengthy quiet period, appeared to have entered a challenging phase which prompted a request to meet.

Figure 18

Christ Church: Sketch of Civilians Memorial, 2017.



The meeting on Thursday, 8th November 2018, in the nave, at the foot of the tower, reviewed the site's history and the vision for its restitution. Mr Heron (IH) is a designer with a passion for the built environment. He was born in 1943, in London. His father worked for Bethnal Green Metropolitan Borough and his mother held a secretarial position in the Civil Service. His father was a volunteer ARP warden and assisted in rescue efforts at the tube disaster in March 1943.

IH recounted his view of the history of the building since it was blitzed. The condition of Christ Church after the damage of 29th/30th December 1940 was chronicled at the time (Beaton 1941) and, in the years that followed, as its future role was under consideration (Architectural Press 1945; Kent 1947). The church lost its roof and virtually every internal feature was destroyed from pews to memorial plaques. Nonetheless, for a seriously damaged church, it had four walls and a tower although the six bays of the nave were marked only by the stumps of once-grand pillars. The genesis of the Civilians' Memorial project is found in a childhood interest in Wren's churches and concern over a plan, in the early 1970s, to demolish most of the south wall and all of the east end. A new pavement line was to be established truncating the church by the elimination of

the most easterly of the six bays of the nave. In 1973 the demolition went ahead; walls which had survived the Blitz came down to widen a road. The demolition was in the event unnecessary; the road plan was dropped. In 1989, when the interior was planted as a rose garden, no work took place to restore the lost fabric (Gilpin 2008, 65). In 2000, work commenced at the church site to reinstate the truncated church footprint; IH 'looked forward to the demolished walls arising again. So it was disappointing when the new boundary wall stopped at about 1.5 metres!' (I. Heron pers. comm. 7th March 2019).

IH's architectural pursuit started in earnest in 2005 with a proposal to the then Chief Planning Officer of the City to rebuild the church as a visitor centre, funded by retail units, such as bookdealers, in an echo of pre-war Paternoster Square. This idea was soon abandoned as the City already had plans for a centre south of St Paul's. A revision followed in 2005-6 with a proposal to reinstate the outer fabric, as it had been, pre-demolition, at the end of the war. IH termed this the Pineapple Project as it involved the return of the four finials to the external corners of the church. The 'pineapples' are visible today on the ground, close to the tower. For a week in June 2006, the Pineapple Project participated in the second London Architecture Biennale with a small display of explanatory panels on the church railings, attracting support from the architects of the adjacent Merrill Lynch redevelopment. There was an important piece of work in parallel; the tower which had been reconstructed in 1960, was converted into a private residence in 2006. The Pineapple Project was widely promoted by IH between 2006 and 2009 through a personal contact list of politicians, cultural commentators and corporation planners. Conditional support was given by the Chief Planning Officer, subject to funding from sources external to the City (Garrod 2007a, 13). The proposal attracted supportive treatment, in periodicals (Garrod 2007a; Garrod 2007b; Gilpin 2008), where it was welcomed for its restoration of Wren's external vision. Garrod observed the key success factors as firstly enthusiasm and then initiative and 'not a little money' (Garrod 2007a, 19); a costing in July 2007 exceeded £3m.

In 2007 the character of the project evolved to take account of the memorial role that had lain dormant since 1945. The project was renamed as the Pineapple Project and Greyfriars Memorial Garden, then simplified to Greyfriars Memorial Garden. IH acknowledges this significant change in emphasis which extended

consideration to the internal use of the ruined space. The shift was provoked by the 1945 pamphlet. 'The knowledge that, at the end of the war, Christ Church, amongst many others, was proposed to be designated for this purpose gave my own project an overriding meaning and rationale - up to that point it had been essentially a heritage endeavour. At last it seemed possible to make a convincing case for repurposing the site, restoring the missing walls, and of course eventually to enable a plausible appeal for funds to be made' (I. Heron pers. Comm. 9th March 2019). In this most telling passage, IH banked the enthusiastic reception for the Pineapple proposal and deployed the influence that civilian remembrance might have on institutional and public support. The impact on the scale of the project, at that point uncoded, was substantial and required a return to the drawing board. In parallel with other projects and activities, Ian continued to develop contacts. In early 2011, the project had matured significantly and with it came a new name, The Citizens' Memorial, which prioritised its purpose to commemorate the people of London. The main modification to the earlier scheme was the addition of the restored sixth bay of Wren's church, adjacent to the east wall. The existing pavement, which runs north-south on King Edward Street, and passes the current end of the church, is retained and accessed through pedestrian arches in the north and south walls leading into a covered arcade where the sixth bay of the nave was before demolition. The proposal included architect-standard elevations of a restored altar area, the decorated pediment and windows as Wren had them built.

The website and blog using the new name was launched in May 2012 and enjoyed some good reviews from commentators on City life and heritage matters (London Remembers 2016; Watts 2015; Williams 2014; Woodall 2013). The Member for the City Ward of Farringdon Within, where the church stands, met IH twice. His enthusiastic promotion, of the scheme within the City administration, did not result in a level of support to take it to the next level; the revised scheme was costed at £5.2 million. IH continued to push the proposal in 2014 at a 'Cultural Hub' workshop at the Barbican Centre, one of several City initiatives to increase foot traffic from St Paul's to other parts of the City. The location of a rebuilt Christ Church would have been an undoubted historical and cultural asset; the presentation received a minimally polite acknowledgement.

It was at this time, as intimated earlier, that the project fell silent; campaigning was put on hold for family and personal reasons. Happily, in late 2017/early 2018 the campaign was revived, rebranded as the Civilians' Memorial (Heron 2018). At the site meeting, the rationale for the restoration of Christ Church as a memorial space was outlined and is summarised here:

1. A key factor is the location, within sight of St Paul's, of a Wren church intended long ago to perform a remembrance function in its blitzed state. It complements a route of civilian memory from Bankside via *Blitz*, the National Firefighters Memorial, the People of London tablet in St Paul's churchyard and Postman's Park, London's first *homage* to civilian sacrifice.
2. The adverse impact of the Corporation's demolition and unsympathetic repair is retrievable, a view supported by independent architects.
3. There is a legacy effect from the proposal first made in 1944.
4. Its wartime destruction renders it worthy of a new, memorial role, not just as a rare surviving symbol and relic of war but to engender a modern day meaning.
5. The installation of civilian memorial plaques at the altar of one of Wren's masterpieces would represent a fitting stimulus to a 21st century ministry, albeit secular, of remembrance of civilian sacrifice in war.

The campaign approach has continued its focus on advocacy of the project vision, a personal commitment of indefatigable networking with potential supporters, backers and influencers. The list holds scores of contacts, ranging across architects, surveyors, urban planners, historians, lecturers and tourist guides. It includes high profile individuals: a former Bishop of London, a theatrical impresario whose father had been organist at a Wren church, former MPs and at least one former cabinet minister.

IH brought his first vision for Christ Church to the attention of senior figures in City planning departments in 2005 and ventured into public exposure in 2012 with his blog pages for the Citizen's Memorial. The relaunch of 2017 is no less well argued and established on a sound historical base. As summarised above, the 5-point rationale has conviction and logic, supported by clear illustrations of the plan. The project however has stalled again; critical to future progress however is the relationship with the City's heritage and planning departments.

Their 'good offices' are dependent on their reaction to the critical tone of the 2017 relaunch with its references to historical errors and inaction. Mr Heron intends to continue campaigning, in the hope that his conviction can be matched by others with contacts, energy and an ability to engender and mobilise government and community support.

Our meeting concluded that this a hugely ambitious, one-man campaign, driven by a conviction that the proposal is both right and deliverable, albeit for a few million pounds. Furthermore, the strength of the proposal, the professionalism of its presentation and its solid rationale, require a clear campaign strategy, a plan of action and reinforcements. Personal advocacy alone is unequal to the challenge of moving the project forward; the contests, provided by funding, media and popular support, require supporters. It is difficult to foresee that personal conviction and persuasive advocacy can alone deliver the requisite traction; patrons, a committee, a budget and a funding plan are the elements missing when compared with other campaigns. There are no imperatives that carry this campaign, no burning political reason for the take-up by local or national government and public interest requires a stimulus to move from broadly supportive to one demanding action.

Following the site meeting, regular contact with IH continued and during the early part of 2019 some progress was evident, albeit short-lived. Lobbying of Historic England had been productive with respect to the memorial aspect of the campaign. Their response to the project proposal saw a civilian memorial as a positive idea and they had 'no objection' to it in principle. A willingness to discuss ideas on improved interpretation within the ruin and matters of commemoration was offered. On the reconstruction proposal, while regretting the lost fabric in the 1970s, they remained unconvinced believing the aesthetic values of Wren's design combined with the ruined walls sufficiently evoked the memory of the Blitz (Pers.comm I. Heron). IH was disappointed as the restoration is a *sine qua non*; the memorial options were not followed-up.

In the on-site exchanges in November 2018, the enlisting of Winston Ramsey was suggested, given his forthright views on London's civilian remembrance void and belief that Christ Church had sufficient stature to fill it (1998; 1997). His initial response in January 2019 was positive, thinking the memorial a 'grand

idea', promising wholehearted support and a head-on approach to the City. He set out to check the status of the Christ's Hospital Memorial and what had been involved in its installation. After a long silence, Mr Ramsey abruptly withdrew. He cited the extant, if not publicly acknowledged, designation by the City Corporation of Christ Church as a memorial. Regardless of cause, the failure of the Ramsey initiative was dispiriting. It exemplified, brusquely, the tribulations of contested remembrance. It seems likely that it is an issue of what constitutes a memorial and who benefits from it. The constitution of Christ Church as a war memorial, because it curates wartime damage and presents evidence of the destructive power of bombing, seems a poor fit for the type of civilian commemoration implicit in Ramsey's comments in 1988 and 1997. A designation, without public acknowledgement, benefits no party. It conjures the notion of abjection, a place of memory without the lifeblood of social interaction and collective meaning. Nonetheless that designation was presented as the pretext for withdrawal of a potentially strong supporter.

As this research project reaches its conclusion, the status of the Civilians' Memorial is uncertain. Undaunted, 15 years of campaigning have been pursued to articulate important heritage and remembrance matters, through numerous iterations. There have been episodes of interest and support followed by indifference and silence. Leverage of a well-argued position has lacked the oxygen of widespread public support and media interest. It remains a lone endeavour; additional resource, to manage the complexity of a combined heritage restoration and remembrance initiative, has not been developed. The disappointed reaction to the rejection, by Historic England, of the restoration argument, saw support, in principle, for work that could develop into effective civilian commemoration, not pursued. This suggests that civilian remembrance was an expedient to gain support for and funding of an increasingly expensive rebuilding. IH has single-mindedly pursued a heritage project, born of distaste at architectural vandalism, whose future requires an acceptance of past mistakes which even the leverage of remembrance has struggled to achieve.

The open space today, frequented by city workers and visitors, is not the unrestored monument/symbol of the Blitz advocated by artists, writers and architects in the 1940s. It is not as the bombs left it, a damaged church, resistant to attack and surviving, albeit as war-wounded. It is not a memorial in

any sense that would stimulate individual or collective remembrance, other than its own demise. The irony of further disfigurement, unnecessarily inflicted by its curators, is not lost on the project's creator whose relentless advocacy and dogged pursuit have perhaps won the argument but at a cost of alienation of those in whose gift the progress to restoration lies.

7.8 Summary

This chapter has isolated two civilian commemorative typologies from a universe that is undeniably limited. There are about 1200 Blitz memorials on record of which half are dedicated; the remainder are extensions of WWI and WWII remembrance. Cemetery monuments and ruined churches begin the civilian remembrance timeline and both are the product of state and institutional discourse, distanced in form, meaning and time, from the personal memories, socially transacted through groups and communities, which typify more recent initiatives, visible in the case studies to come. They were a product of politics and information management, minimal authority deference to civilian death and bereavement and a contest between heritage issues and remembrance.

Burial practice, under wartime constraints, determined Blitz remembrance in the early years of peace, leaving a questionable post-war legacy of drab monuments and a breakdown in social intercourse at the 100 mass grave sites; with few exceptions, they are distanced from any semblance of remembrance.

Ruined churches pitch heritage conservation in a contest with remembrance. In London, a well-meaning attempt to combine both came to nothing at the war's end although, in some regional cities, such as Bristol, Coventry and Plymouth, this has been achieved. London has no ruined church that explicitly addresses civilian remembrance and, in the case cited, an attempt to leverage it into a heritage endeavour has, to date, served neither well. It exemplifies starkly the challenge of contested remembrance and the consequences of an unsupported lone crusade in a world of competing heritage and remembrance endeavours.

8. LONDON

'If London is to get the Blitz Spirit memorial it deserves – a dignified sculpture in a prominent public place, dedicated to all Londoners who experienced the Blitz – it requires somebody to take the initiative. And that, ironically, would chime against the spirit of the Blitz: one of exaggerated nonchalance at what took place over London in the winter of 1940-1941'

Blog extract: *Why is there no London monument for the Blitz?* (Watts 2010).

8.1 Introduction

The 600 or so items of dedicated Blitz remembrance are the visible representations of the civilian conflict in a post-war environment of sweeping urban renewal and a predominantly military commemorative landscape. They are more visible in London than elsewhere given the capital's extended experience of bombardment. The next two chapters focus on London and each recognises an important distinction in the source of remembrance. In Chapter Two, paradigms of remembrance isolated state-centred, social agency and popular memory, the latter representing voluntary enterprise through which collaborative, commemorative output is channelled (Ashplant *et al* 2000, 3-85). Two examples of popular memory, emerging from the grass-roots of society in Bethnal Green are analysed and compared in Chapter 9. This chapter addresses commemorative outcomes that reflect the transacting of remembrance through institutions targeting national and metropolitan agendas. The analysis commences at a small church garden in London's West End.

8.2 St James's Church Garden

On October 14th 1940, St James's Church, Piccadilly suffered serious bomb damage. Tragically, the curate and his wife were killed. They are remembered on a plaque inside the restored church. A rare version of Wren's work, outside of the City of London, St James's damage was captured in a 1942 version of a celebrated colour film of the Blitz (*Britain at War* 1946; Newman 2011 [1948]). The church was restored and re-dedicated by 1954 but, 8 years previously, an early symbol of civilian remembrance had been unveiled (Kent 1947, 122-123). In May 1946, Queen Mary, H.M. The Queen Mother, opened the Garden of Remembrance in St James's churchyard, marked by a 'neatly constructed board facing the pavement' with the following commendation:

The garden on this bomb damaged site was given by the late Viscount Southwood on behalf of the Daily Herald to commemorate the courage and fortitude of the people of London in the Second World War

Southwood, publisher and newspaper magnate, had died only a month prior to the royal unveiling. His bequest had purchased and restored a site which survives today as a pleasant yet modest space dotted with shrubs, trees, planters and seats. The site is to the west of the church yard. Its unequivocal commemoration of the courage of Londoners is still signified by the 'neatly constructed' wooden board, signed in the corner, *Gerrard 1946*. It now faces the west wall of the church, above the considerably more pretentious Southwood Memorial, a Portland stone oval fountain with bronze figures of children on dolphins and conch shells. The fountain is '22ft 3" by 13 ft 3"', with a high back, inscribed 'Viscount Southwood', against the bequeathed, raised garden, which is accessed by steps on either side (Historic England 2021/1031599). See a brief dossier in **Appendix 14**.

The rear of the monument wall has two niches containing the cremated ashes of the Viscount and his wife. The monument was completed in 1948, two years after the garden was opened. Its listing cites the quality of the sculpture, a novel piece of garden design and a poignant memorial from the first days of post-war reconstruction (Historic England 2021/Southwood Memorial in St James's Churchyard). The garden includes a statue, in its far south west corner, by the sculptor of the fountain and its figures. It is just visible on the left of the photograph below. A stone panel, next to the statue, reads:

This garden within the curtilage of St James's Church, until 1945 known as the 'green churchyard', was dedicated to the bravery of ordinary Londoners shown in the Second World War. A statue of 'Peace' (Alfred Hardiman R.A.) stands among the trees and this calm space serves as a living act of remembrance and prayer for peace and courage in the world

This dedication appears to date from a 2012 garden refurbishment. The finish of the plaque is regrettable and its message confusing. In attempting to clarify the role of the statue, a dilution of the original civilian role is implied, probably unintentionally. The extension of the garden's mission, to a world peace agenda, dilutes what the Historic England listing recognised: the poignancy of the garden's creation, amid the destructiveness of war, and its foundations in

post-war recovery. The stone close to the statue is makeshift; previous inscriptions are crudely effaced and super-imposed with poorly thought-out generalising sentiments. The piecemeal commemoration continues with a stone plaque on the church wall several metres from the garden. It reiterates the original commendation, but for the link to the Herald newspaper, of which Southwood had been Chairman (War Memorials Online 2021/135601).

Figure 19



Southwood Memorial and Garden of Remembrance, St James's.

The site, its garden and monument, exemplifies the 'peculiarities of Blitz remembrance in London', characterised as restrained, disjointed, fragmentary and muddled, in previous on-site analysis (Moshenska 2010b, 5 & 18-19). These characteristics were readily observable in 2015, yet the site's importance projects beyond its idiosyncrasies. In 1946, very senior royal and clerical parties, a Queen and London's Bishop, stood close to a damaged church, and what was to become Southwood's memorial and grave, to open a small garden, in the name of the courage and fortitude of the people of London. The plans for national recognition of civil and military dead, documented previously, had faltered, yet this initiative was fulfilled. This was one of the earliest civilian

commemorations framing bravery within the realities of bomb damage and reconstruction. Southwood's bequest clearly held an importance to merit royal patronage. The garden had no pretensions in 1946, beyond the eloquence of Kent's neat board, yet the recent, still bitter civilian experience of death and destruction is somehow channelled through the qualities of courage and fortitude that Southwood's bequest promoted.

The garden today does not communicate its royal endorsement; it is one of several quiet church places across London, small oases in a frenetic city. The qualities espoused were later to be crystallised into a limited Blitz narrative, that speaks only to 'spirit', yet the St James's memorial garden, established so close to the Blitz, transcends the later twists of meaning, to represent the foundation-stone of London's elusive civilian remembrance on which more recent attempts at commemoration have attempted to build.

8.3 'Blitz' and The People of London

Two monuments which evoke the Blitz lie either side of St Paul's Cathedral. On the south side, stands a striking monument depicting three wartime firemen tackling a blaze. *Blitz* was unveiled by the Queen Mother in 1991, fifty years after the nominal end of the London Blitz, naming the 1,000 who had died across the country in WWII. It is located on Sermon Hill, at the top of the Jubilee walkway, which joins the Thames at the Millennium Bridge. The bronze action figure now carries the names of over 2,000 firefighters lost in action across the country not only in war but also in peacetime. It was relocated to its present position, with an extended plinth, to accommodate this changed emphasis, and re-dedicated as the National Fire Service Memorial in 2003 (The Firefighters Memorial Trust 2021).

Its original commissioning, by the Guild of Firefighters, was strongly invested in London's Blitz, despite its national representation. In 1958, the WWII fire service dead in London were remembered in the Memorial Hall at the former London Fire Brigade HQ on Albert Embankment, Lambeth (WMR12161). The memorial there carries the names of 336 fire service personnel who died in service in WWII; 300 of which served as auxiliaries. The memorial's inscription, above the panels listing those killed on duty, acknowledges the partnership of regular firemen and the auxiliary fire services. A sculpture, *The Fireman's Blitz*, presented in the mid-1980s, by C.T. Demarne, former Chief Fire Officer of West

Ham, forms part of the overall memorial but is listed separately (WMR 56711). The future for the memorial, within a still-active station, is in some doubt, pending development of the site (London Fire Brigade 2019).

C. T. Demarne (1905-2007) is a key figure in the remembrance of the wartime fire service, directly as a senior officer throughout the Blitz and in his memoirs and articles after the war. The service and sacrifices of fire service personnel were chronicled in Demarne's *The London Blitz: A Fireman's Tale*, a slim paperback published in 1980. In 1988 Demarne contributed to *The Blitz: Then and Now Vol II* (Ramsey 1988), whose publisher re-released *Fireman's Tale*, coinciding with the 50th anniversary of the London Blitz, in 1991. Demarne, with Ramsey's support contributed to a revival of interest in and remembrance of the fire service almost half a century after their wartime exploits and their promotion, for propaganda and entertainment purposes, in books and films.

Demarne is credited with the memorial concept of *Blitz* and the sculptor was his son-in-law, John W. Mills. The aforementioned gift from Demarne to the LFB Memorial Hall in the 1980s is a model of the sculpture. Details of the monument are in **Appendix 15**. The WMR record (IWM 2021/11777) describes it as 'National Firefighters WW2', a clumsy reconstruction of the wordy inscription, which, amid a confusion of font sizes, tries to cover all of the facets of the original and amended roles. The Firefighters Memorial Trust is the monument's custodian and holds a service of remembrance each year. The 2021 Service has been cancelled with an intention to resume in 2022. The evolution of this memorial and its dedication to represent all firefighters, everywhere and for all times, is an important act of remembrance, although the end result of the changes may be criticised. The sculptor's intention was for the sculpture to be closer to ground level, the extra height makes the firemen seem remote. Even with the extra height, the doubling of the names leads to a cramped presentation. The 2003 change in emphasis, albeit more holistic and inclusive, was viewed with alarm, by former Blitz firemen and their descendants, fearful that the role and sacrifice, notably of the AFS, was being diluted (S. Maltman pers.comm. 14 January 2019). However, by the time of the re-dedication a programme of dedicated fire remembrance was already well established, under their own auspices, as summarised in **Appendix 24**.

Its standing, as a WWII memorial, following rededication, has, in this sense, diminished. However, despite its amended role, its representation of the Blitz remains evocative, linked geographically with another tribute to Londoners and their fortitude, on the northern side of the Cathedral, in St Paul's Churchyard.

The People of London Memorial (Kindersley 2021), a circular tablet, is located close to the Cathedral's North Door, at the centre of a paved circular plaza through which pedestrians from Paternoster Square can pass, via Canon Lane, to Newgate Street. Location details are in **Appendix 16**. On the 3-tonne limestone block, a Churchillian quote exalts the qualities of the city's people:

In War, Resolution. In Defeat, Defiance.

In Victory, Magnanimity. In Peace, Goodwill.

The polished stone, about a metre in diameter and half a metre high, has the following dedication around the side:

The People of London 1939-45 Remembered before God

Figure 20

The People of London Tablet, St Paul's Cathedral Churchyard.



Certain anniversaries are deemed important and inspire remembrance initiatives; in 1995, the 50th anniversary, of the end of the war in Europe, was the stimulus for the *Evening Standard* to launch a campaign which promised the recognition of London's civilians and encouraged reader funds accordingly. London Remembers, an online searchable database of the capital's monuments and memorials, describes it as commemorating 'the 30,000 Londoners who died in air raids' (2021). The campaign came to fruition close to VE day in May 1999. It was an occasion befitting the attendance of Queen Elizabeth, the

Queen Mother, who unveiled the memorial in the shadow of London's most iconic Blitz survivor, St Paul's Cathedral (IWM 2021/WMR 17959).

This memorial project had a clear objective, a prominent site, a celebrated sculptor and royal patronage. It successfully tapped into popular sentiment to bring to public space a 'people's' monument when London and the nation were addressing remembrance across a broad range of largely military commemorations. In the 22 years, since its unveiling, it remains an attractive piece of urban furniture, but it has been eclipsed by the more prominent memorials, explored earlier. This may be related to its remove from the memorial intensity of the West End, its ground-level presentation or the generalised sentiment it projects. There is a lack of clarity in what and who it represents. Distanced in time, from the publicity attending its highly visible unveiling, the dedication is perhaps too enigmatic and unable to contribute to a better understanding of this important part of London's history. The all-embracing dedication to Londoners does not specifically reference the Blitz or the 30,000 civilian casualties. A clarification of what the memorial represents is to be found close by; set flush in the paving, is a six-inch square plaque which explains the genesis of the tablet and its enigmatic declarations. The words are in a spiral:

This memorial, subscribed by readers of the Evening Standard, is dedicated to the People of London for their fortitude during the Second World War.

This memorial addition is easily missed yet its message helps in understanding the monument's otherwise obscure meaning. The message establishes the stone's newspaper provenance and its intended commemorative outcome; a monument to fortitude, the very characteristic, worthy of undoubted respect, celebrated over 50 years earlier, by the Southwood bequest. The People of London Tablet, furthermore, materialises the popular narrative of the Blitz, the admirable response of the people. However, any representation of civilian casualties is obscure, any symbolism of civilian loss, enshrined in the stone and its inscriptions, too tenuous for substantive engagement and social interaction. In the absence of symbolic clue or representative form, the intended meaning of this stone is lost. In place of a memorial to the civilian dead, London has another monument to Blitz Spirit.

8.4 Civilians Remembered

On the night of December 29th/30th1940, during the heavy raids that decimated the City of London, a riverside complex of warehouses at Hermitage Wharf, Wapping, was destroyed. Wapping, a once-thriving dockland neighbourhood, is the part of the former Metropolitan Borough of Stepney, that lies just east of the City. It sustained terrible damage and many fatalities throughout the war; the courage and resourcefulness of its local people are colourfully described in the memoirs of the wartime mayor (Lewey 1944). The cleared site had many post-war uses but was largely derelict during the 1980s dockland decline. It nonetheless survives today as the Hermitage Riverside Memorial Garden, a pleasant open space, with a 200-yard-wide river frontage, giving uninterrupted views of the Thames and Tower Bridge. On its three landward sides it is overlooked by smart apartment blocks and dockland heritage, including the restored lock and gates for the now-filled Western Docks. In its south-west corner, stands a substantial block of polished marble, *circa* 3 metres high and 2 metres wide, on a Portland stone base. The shape of a dove of peace has been cut from the block (War Memorials Online 2021/166517). This is the Memorial to the Civilians of East London (IWM 2021/WMR 63346). It was designed by a local sculptor (Taylor 2021):

Figure 21

Hermitage Riverside Memorial. 2008. Wapping.



A small gathering of about 100 people attended its unveiling in 2008. The then Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, Hazel Blears,

paid tribute to the unflinching courage of the people of the East End, observing that 'Blitz Spirit' was born in Wapping, where the 'last riverside site' has been saved for the community (East London Advertiser 2008). The event marked the end of a prolonged, bruising and divisive campaign to prevent residential development of this space which presented an opportunity for open-access to the riverside along this stretch, where much of the Thames Path, from the City to Shadwell, is behind converted wharves and apartment blocks. The site was saved after a 20-year community campaign in which remembrance of the Blitz played a significant role.

In 1981, an unelected governmental organisation was established to transform the large areas of East London left derelict by the post-war decline in traditional dockland operations. The London Docklands Development Corporation (LDDC) had extensive land purchase and planning powers and was bent on renewal through, *inter-alia*, riverside residential development. In the late 1980s a substantial land block had opened up alongside the Hermitage Wharf site; had development positions been progressed, public waterfront access would have been denied. Grass-roots opponents sought support through Tower Hamlets Council, whose position was compromised by a lucrative deal struck with LDDC which had opened up the two-acre site adjacent to the former wharf (Ramsey 1997, 23). Local people, with familial links to the devastation of the Blitz in Stepney, formed the Hermitage Environment Group in 1991 to forestall LDDC plans. Another group of local activists adopted a more direct campaign style, embracing protest marches, council meeting demonstrations, fly-posting and media publicity. In early 1995, led by Marianne Fredericks and Meryl Thomas, they had joined with the Hermitage Environment Group to form Civilians Remembered to campaign for a memorial and space to honour London's Blitz victims. The name had been suggested by John Mills, the sculptor of the firemen's memorial near St Paul's (1997, 22). It was the creation of Civilians Remembered which transformed the emphasis of the campaign from public amenity provision to Blitz remembrance. This is nowhere better communicated than the community's web pages of the time. These present a justification, floridly vested in the nationwide civilian sacrifice of WWII, when 'this small island nation bravely stood alone, against the full might of Hitler fascism, in defence of liberty, justice and democracy'. The pages reiterate the unwavering

civilian response and speak of the death of many civilians. The web content is surrounded by blazing torches and accompanied by the trumpeting of the 'Last Post'. It unequivocally advocates a dedicated war memorial serving as a universal reminder to remain 'vigilant in safeguarding this hard won freedom...'. While the context is national, the emphasis is on an 'East London WW2 Memorial for Civilians 1939-1945' (Civilians Remembered 2021a) encompassing space for community memorial purposes as opposed to luxury housing. The combination of local issues and remembrance ran the risk of diluting the campaign but this did not deter an early-day motion, with 112 signatures, in the Commons:

That this House believes strongly that 50 years after the end of the Second World War, it is high time that a memorial be built in East London to civilians who suffered continuous bombing, and who died in the blitz, and to dock workers who risked their lives to keep the London Docks open; and further believes that Hermitage Wharf, the last remaining suitable riverside site in Tower Hamlets, is an ideal location for a memorial park which would both enable the survivors and their descendants to enjoy the riverside, very little of which is accessible to East Enders, and would be a lasting memorial to the courage of the population of London (UK Parliament 2021 [1996]).

Effective campaigning, with the endorsement of a well-supported parliamentary motion, secured a Public Inquiry into the development plans for 'the last remaining available site on Wapping's Riverside' (Civilians Remembered 2021a). In 1997, the Inquiry rejected the proposal of the LDDC and its chosen developer, Berkeley Homes. It added that the Hermitage site was appropriate for the construction of a 'Civilians Remembered War Memorial' and quiet waterfront garden at its western end (Civilians Remembered 2021a). The overall development, including land adjacent to the former wharf site, was now conditional on the accommodation of a memorial and garden space. This was a major campaigning achievement but progress after 1997 was slow and fractious, not only in negotiations with the developer but within the campaign group itself. In seven years, between 1997 and 2004, Civilians Remembered progress reports (2021b) speak of contestation over the form and scale of the memorial garden; proposals and counter proposals were traded between the

campaign group and the developer. The campaign group desired the whole site to be based around remembrance, with a visitors' restaurant and educational/study space. This impinged on the residential potential of the site.

The coalition of those who sought the protection of space and others with a comprehensive remembrance agenda came under pressure. The machinations of this period, save for the partisan pages of *Civilians Remembered*, are not available for detailed scrutiny. However, in a telling post-script, *After the Battle* magazine, which had covered the campaign in 1997, confirmed the continued wrangling, over the nature of the memorial garden, and a breach between the constituent partners of *Civilians Remembered* (Margry 2010, 55).

In 2002, the campaign group had splintered; the Hermitage Environment Group had resumed its independence and had submitted its own plans to the council. However, in April 2004, *Civilians Remembered*, by now constituted as a Trust, were claiming that Tower Hamlets planning committee had passed its application for a *Civilians Remembered Memorial* at Hermitage Riverside in Wapping, 'the culmination of many years of campaigning'. This was an ambitious plan, uncosted, at least in the public domain, incorporating a Memorial Pavilion featuring a roll of honour commemorating those who lost their lives during World War Two. The plan sought 'a fitting and long over-due national memorial to the civilians killed and injured in WW2' (*Civilians Remembered* 2021b). Had this been delivered London and the nation would, at last and in full, have embraced the remembrance of its civilian dead.

This short summary exposes the confusion, and ultimately the fault-line, of campaigning on two fronts. The Hermitage Riverside Memorial Garden, that emerged in 2008, dispels any notion of a holistic site of remembrance. None of the plans, optimistically declared in 2004, were delivered. What is seen today is, in its essentials, that proposed in 2002: a public space, some 200 yards wide by 50 yards deep, with seats, shrubs and sward, with an uninterrupted riverside outlook. The monument itself is tasteful, evocative and symbolic, albeit surrounded by a high security fence. However, the memorial is specifically dedicated to a narrower civilian universe than advocated in the 2004 plan. Repeated on opposite sides of the stone base is the following text:

2ND WORLD WAR 1939-45

MEMORIAL TO THE CIVILIANS OF EAST LONDON

It is unclear what is meant by East London so the memorial is far from 'the only public memorial to the thousands killed in the London Blitz' suggested in coverage of the unveiling (East London Advertiser 2008). An adjacent board, see Figure 22, however, speaks of tens of thousands of casualties in London and major cities. There is no acknowledgement that the memorial and space are the resolution of 17 years of negotiation and challenge, positioned as a community fighting the rapacity of the developer, under the banners of first, the Hermitage Environment Group and, second, Civilians Remembered. The protracted campaign, 1991-2008, illustrates that the plans of a powerful alliance of an unelected organisation, with extensive planning powers, and private developers can be successfully opposed. However, the coalition of the opponents had a fault-line which appears to have been exposed as the national/metropolitan remembrance ambitions for the Memorial Garden departed from an original desire to prevent the loss of public access to the riverside. On one side will be those for whom this protracted wrangle with private developers is a great success; in the materialisation of the park and its monument, the desired public breathing space, in an otherwise private river frontage, was delivered. For others, the outcome will have proved to be anything but a successful culmination. The Civilians Remembered web pages abruptly end in 2004. In 2009, when the Trust is formally closed, they resume, briefly, with a poignant, if less than convincing, valediction which declares that 'Thanks to the success of our Community's 'Civilians Remembered Campaign', Wapping's Hermitage now has a WW2 Memorial, we will never forget them' (2021b). However, the adjacent plaque reveals that the claimed success is illusory; Civilians Remembered is unacknowledged:

Figure 22

Hermitage Riverside Memorial Garden Plaque. 2008.



The eclipse of Civilians Remembered illustrates the bruising nature of contested remembrance. Its role, from 1995 when it galvanised the project, with Marianne Fredericks at the forefront (Ramsey 1997, 23-26), is completely overlooked. It has not been possible to gain direct insight from within the campaign; Ms. Fredericks has been a Ward member on the City of London Council for many years, holding several significant committee positions; regrettably, attempts to make contact were not met with a response.

The plaque holds clues to the compromises and conflicts that produced the memorial and site seen today. The leading contributor cited is the developer, Berkeley Homes, whose Chairman was also a member of the Trust. It might be observed that the developer won the unequal contest, through a 'Trojan horse' tactic. However, by joining the remembrance campaign, an inevitable curtailing of the development ambition was acknowledged.

In 2008 the Hermitage Riverside Memorial Garden was finally opened after 17 years of campaigning, for public riverside space, amid rampant post-war redevelopment of the former Docklands. The outcome is a testament to tenacity, sustained despite division, a victory over an unelected determination of public space. The harnessing of parliamentary and local authority support is an example of the management of the politics of war memory at the heart of contested remembrance. The price paid however is compromise. The civilian commemoration is not the memorial for London and the Nation that part of the campaign coalition hoped for. It is however a belated acknowledgement, in symbolic form, of the human cost of the Blitz. There is no hint, 13 years after the

Garden's opening, of the contest from which it sprang, one where a memorial for civilians was appropriated to signify a disputed tract of land and persuade national and local authorities of the wisdom of its public access. The analysis here shows the nature of contestation, in many of its facets: the separation of meaning, the infighting and the conflict of objectives. Remembrance brought the campaign to its triumph and also to its fracture.

8.5 Summary

There is a telling phrase on the Hermitage Wharf commemorative plaque: *rather than dwell intrusively on the dead*, which echoes a view from the 2002 planning document from the Hermitage Environment Group, the formal commissioners of Wendy Taylor's 'Dove'. In the sculptor's opinion, presumably reflecting her brief, the memorial should represent something to celebrate and honour, not be onerous or oppressive (Taylor 2021).

The remark is an implicit rebuke of the direction that the campaign was taking before the split. It also suggests, almost certainly unintentionally, an uncomfortable exclusion of remembering the dead from the honouring of civilians, the theme, explored by Noakes (2020), discussed earlier. The commissioners, of the 'Dove' and its symbolism of hope, were from families with personal experience of loss and grief. For them, death may have become oppressive and best addressed obliquely. As said elsewhere, there is no single standard nor set of rules for the translation of personal memory into public remembrance. Nonetheless, the point raises a more general observation: avoidance of the civilian dead, in the monumental narrative, has emerged as a definite pattern in this chapter of commemorations. London is pre-occupied, as are Watts' epigraph remarks, with monuments where civilian resilience and spirit are metaphors for the unspoken acknowledgement of the civilian dead.

The actors herein are not the purveyors of state-centred discourse but are stakeholders in the needs of their social milieu, their family and community. At Hermitage Wharf, they sprang from the locality, mobilising family wartime experience and memories, to form a memory group of the type defined by Dawson (2005, 154), fighting for space to relax and remember. Their confrontation with business imperatives was bruising, certainly compromised. but ultimately, for some, successful. The '(unequal) struggle to install particular memories at the centre of a cultural world, at the expense of others which are

marginalised & forgotten' is perhaps no better exemplified than in this case study (Ashplant et al 2004, ix).

This chapter, of a select group of commemorations with civilians at their heart, has shown the contestation of meaning that occurs not only between conception and implementation but also in the years that follow. It was never in the newspaper magnate's imagination to create a memorial extolling virtues that now inhabit the limited world of the myth of Blitz Spirit to the exclusion of a better understanding of the civilian experience that he sought to commemorate. The Evening Standard's intention was to recognise civilian loss but its reader funds built a 'dignified sculpture in a prominent public place, dedicated to all Londoners who experienced the Blitz' (Watts 2010), in which the civilian dead were lost in material translation and enigmatic wordage. At a time when new memorials, of the Battle of Britain, Bomber Command, Animals and Women at War, were conceived and implemented, a memorial intending civilian remembrance had moved from drawing board to planning committee, only for factional differences to quash its ambition.

This review echoes some of the problems of monuments discussed previously. They, with the exception of *Blitz*, have evident limitations in their unnamed victims. Engagement is reduced by location and passivity; none feature in routine community remembrance. They show that bringing civilian remembrance to the world is difficult; the pressures on intention, implementation and interpretation are enormous, in a crowded commemorative landscape. They exhibit limitations in meaning that are compromised by time and narrative. As a counter, to this wholly negative assessment, they are representatives of a limited, elusive canon of civilian commemorative material, precious exemplars of good intention and remembrance, however flawed, without which the experience of civilians in the Blitz would have no mark, no public essence. This essence is shared in commemorative practices and processes at local, community level, no less committed to the task of creating engaging sites of memory. The thesis now examines two of those initiatives from the same London neighbourhood.

9. BETHNAL GREEN

'When war is done, count the cost, on 19 steps 200 were lost'.

Lyric from *Bethnal Green Tube Disaster*, Frank Povey & the Pyros (1991).

9.1 Introduction

Bethnal Green is a district within the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. Until 1965, it was a Metropolitan Borough, governing about 110,000 people, in an area of around 1.2 square miles, surrounded by Shoreditch in the west, Hackney to the north and Bow and Mile End in the east. On its southern border it fringed Whitechapel, Poplar and Stepney. During the war it was heavily bombed, suffering almost 600 fatalities; incidents in the borough bracket the air war timeline. On 7th September, in one of the costliest incidents of the first night of the Blitz, a bomb penetrated a shelter under the Market building on Columbia Road. On 13th June 1944, London's first V1 casualties were sustained at Grove Road in the east of the borough (East London History Society 1994). Finally, in the last major incident of the war, on March 27th, 1945, a V-2 rocket killed 134 people at Hughes Mansions, Vallance Road, on the southern border with Stepney (Demarne 1980, 88). The worst civilian incident of the war, with the highest official death toll of 173, took place in the borough on the night of 3rd March 1943, at the entrance to the Bethnal Green underground station, precipitated by air-raid sirens and the firing of new rocket batteries in an adjacent park. This and the incident at Columbia Market are the subject of recently completed remembrance projects exposing previously obscured history to public gaze through grass-roots activism and commemoration. The projects, just a mile apart, share the struggle to get extraordinary stories told in the places where intensely personal memories of fatal wartime events were formed. The commemorative responses differ markedly, exhibiting diverse motives, meanings and methods in the contesting of civilian remembrance.

9.2 Columbia Market Air Raid Shelter

Columbia Road is at the far western edge of the former borough. It extends for half-a-mile and starts and finishes on the road from Shoreditch to Hackney. In the west, it runs on an east-west axis until Ravenscroft Gardens, where it turns north-east to rejoin Hackney Road. It has hosted a well-known street flower market for many years continuing a tradition, from the establishment in 1859 of

a covered market and dwellings, built in a grand Victorian-Gothic style. Columbia Market and Buildings was funded by a banking heiress, Lady Burdett-Coutts. The dwellings were superior to much of the surrounding residential stock, housing a library and laundry. The market building had space for 400 stalls; a basement storage area was designated as an air-raid shelter by 1940 and could accommodate up to 1000 people (Betts 2005). The Columbia Market buildings survived the war despite the damage of 1940 but its market, never as successful as others in London, declined rapidly after the war; by 1958 it had been demolished. The site is now replaced by the Dorset Square Estate, next to Ravenscroft Gardens, and a 20-storey tower block, Sivill House; the only evidence of the huge 'folly' is found in a set of gates to a post-war nursery school (G. Twist Pers. Comm. 3 November 2015; The Gentle Author 2013). A visit to Columbia Road in 2013 readily noted the divide between post-war estate development on its northern side and the gentrified 1930's estates and mid-Victorian terraces, around Quilter Street and Jesus Green, to the south. Two small cardboard crosses, in a circular flower-bed at the foot of Sivill House, signified that something worthy of remembrance had occurred here.

On the 7th September 1940, the CWGC records 586 civilian deaths in bombing raids across the country. Two of the more serious incidents occurred less than a mile apart yet received contrasting news coverage at the time. The incident at Columbia Market was widely reported, albeit after the delay of 48 hours imposed by authorities. *The Manchester Guardian* describes the 'Bomb's Havoc in Crowded Public Shelter' suggesting the shelterers were unlucky as the bomb penetrated a ventilation shaft; fourteen deaths were admitted but the location, as became the norm, was disguised, in this case, as an 'East London district' (1940). The destruction of a Peabody Trust tenement on John Fisher Street, Whitechapel, which killed seventy-eight residents and visitors, was not publicly acknowledged at the time. This fuelled discontent as the local populace knew what had transpired (*The Days of Glory* 2010). In 1995 the Trust erected a plaque, after detailed research, naming the victims (IWM 2021/WMR39889). The Columbia Road incident had more coverage because of Churchill's visit on the 8th September. Observations by Major-General Ismay, who was with Churchill when he 'went first' to Columbia Road, on the morning after the raid, suggest it was well received; 'about 40 of the inmates (*sic*) had been killed and a

very large number wounded' (Gardiner 2010, 28-29). People were still searching the site and the crowd rallied to the Prime Minister, impressed with his show of emotion and defiance (Larson 2020, 215-216). Eye-witness accounts of the tragedy paint a darker picture (Betts 2005; Gunner 2005). The adequacy of the shelter, under a glass skylight, is questioned and the bomb which fell on the 100 or so shelterers was no fluke (Rennie 2014) rather the same 'calculable certainty' that befell Hallsville School 3 days later (Calder 1940, 227).

It is obvious, in the contrast in urban fabric, that war has dramatically changed Columbia Road. Dorset Estate was started by 1957 and Sivill House by 1963. Many of the bombed moved away, by choice or of necessity, never to return, in the well-chronicled East End 'diaspora'. The scale of dockland decline, the easterly move of the 'City' and the influx of residents of new ethnicities saw the rupture of long-established kinship ties that characterised the 'old East End' (Dudgeon 2008; Young and Willmott 2007 [1957]). Unsurprisingly, the departing community took its memories with them and left a void; the incident became just one of many that in time were publicly forgotten. The event and its victims remained un-commemorated when the Market and dwellings were demolished in 1958; unstilled, private memories were however to be given public voice many years later through the mechanism of BBC's *WW2 People's War* online archive of wartime memories contributed by members of the public; 47000 stories were collected between June 2003 and January 2006. This initiative stored personal wartime memories, before the inevitable silencing by time, creating a history resource drawn from the grass-roots, in a way similar to that adopted by Calder (1969) and Longmate (1971) in depicting a 'People's War'. Clear memories of the Columbia bomb were added to the archive in 2005. Tom Betts' story (2005), takes the reader into the cavernous Market basement and through the chaos of first aid, hospital transfers and family separation. Henry Gunner (2005) speaks of the unspeakable horrors confronting those arriving on the scene of carnage.

Tom Betts' story, vested in a young man's guilt, having cajoled his mother to take to the shelter, where she died, has been told by others since (*The First Day of the Blitz* 2010; The Gentle Author 2013). The 2010 film, a television documentary, reiterated the tragic fate of a wedding party that had taken to the shelter. This inspired a local resident living close to Columbia Road. Mr Twist is

not an Eastender, hailing originally from Manchester. During 2011 and into 2012, working alone, he undertook research, to put names to those who died in the incident and put right the absence of commemoration (T. Wood pers.comm. 2nd November 2015). Geoff Twist (GT) is an unlikely activist, a self-confessed recluse, happier in the Guildhall Library than on a campaign trail. After a slow start, his project needed more resource and he persuaded a friend, Trevor Wood, to join him. These men, with no personal involvement in the incident, brought different skills and contrasting temperaments. The project moved forward rapidly in 2012 with the co-option of the Columbia Tenants and Residents Association (TRA), representing the road's communities, such as those living on the Dorset Estate. Contact with Tom Betts opened up links to more victims as did the Columbia Market War Memorial blog pages and an active Facebook presence. The circular garden on the western side of the tower block was believed to mark the site of the air raid shelter and was selected as the ideal site for a wreath laying on the anniversary of the bombing on 7th September 2013 (East London History Society 2013).

The relatives of the bereaved, identified by GT, enthusiastically embraced the memorial project and many of them attended the unveiling of the memorial, naming the lost, on 7th September 2015, the 75th anniversary. A project, costing a few hundred pounds, had come to fruition allowing the victims' families, whose ties to the area had been severed, to be re-connected, through remembrance, to a place where their parents grew up. In a nice touch, Stephen Humphries, producer of *The First Day of the Blitz* (2010), directed a short film of the unveiling (*Columbia Market War Memorial Project 2015*). Sadly, for reasons that will become clear, Geoff Twist, the project's founder, is missing from the committee credit at the end of the film.

The incident and its human cost are eloquently conveyed on the memorial which is a modest ground plaque, 2 feet (70 cms) square and 2.5 inches (10cms) deep, in polished black granite. It reads:

IN MEMORY OF THOSE WHO LOST THEIR LIVES WHEN A
BOMB PENETRATED THE COLUMBIA MARKET AIR RAID
SHELTER 7 SEPTEMBER 1940

The 45 known casualties with their ages are then listed. Concerned that the exact number will never be known, the plaque acknowledges the memory of 'those who died through their wounds after 7 September 1940'.

Figure 23



Columbia Market Memorial, Columbia Road, London E2. September 2015.

The plaque was unveiled by Tom Betts and 98 year-old May Piper, née Carman. She was saved by her sister-in-law who died trying to protect her. She also lost two brothers. The Carman's were part of the wedding party whose tragic loss had inspired Geoff Twist. The unveiling was attended by the Mayor of Tower Hamlets and the community representatives who had helped to bring the campaign to a successful conclusion.

The story of this project, from inception to fruition, is the subject of a conversation with Mr Trevor Wood MBE, Chairman of the Columbia Market War Memorial Group on 2nd November 2015. The meeting started at the memorial which lies on the corner of a shrub bed in the middle of an elevated garden lying east of Sivill House, overlooking Ravenscroft Park; it continued for almost three hours. Mr Wood (TW) was born in 1955 at home in Patriot Square, Bethnal Green. He has a brother and sister and has lived in this part of the East End all his life, his current home being in Hackney. Indeed, the Wood antecedents settled in Spitalfields in the early 18C as Huguenot refugees, so his East End roots run very deep. TW is a professional artist (FRSA 2005) and holds a degree in Fine Arts, from Chelsea and Camberwell Colleges of Art. He is

involved in a wide range of charitable and voluntary work and has spent over 30 years involved in disability sport for which he was awarded the MBE in 2003.

As an East Ender, he grew up hearing family tales of the Blitz and recalls playing near the bombsites of Columbia Road before the new estates were built in the early sixties. However, until he was approached by GT, he knew nothing of the Columbia Market shelter tragedy. A possible reason is that his Mother and Grandmother, were caught up in the other great tragedy in the Borough which cost 173 lives on 3rd March 1943. TW's family had made their way, to the tube station shelter, along Cambridge Heath Road, passing the former Town Hall, the Museum Gardens and St John's Church, before descending the steps. The family made it to the bottom as the crush began and were, according to his Mother, among the last people saved.

The project, when TW joined in 2012, required a reset to balance the background work, mastered by Twist, with stakeholder management, for which he was less disposed. The following paragraphs reflect the stresses and pressures that the project experienced. They speak of frustrations, delays, internal bickering and political feet-dragging. They point also to a successful conclusion and the delivery of a memorial project, on time, to the delight and approval of its stakeholders.

Funding, once the form of the memorial had been agreed, was not a problem. The final cost of the stone plaque was £550. A quiz night in a pub in 2014 had raised almost all of this. Donations had been received from families including the Betts and the Carmans. Help in kind, office space and meeting facilities, came from the Dorset Communities Association (DCA). The stonemason, based at Manor Park, also joined in; his quote was significantly the lowest received. An interesting contributor was the long-established Marie Celeste Fund who, at the time of the bombing, had paid for some of the burials. More was raised than was needed to supply, inscribe and lay the stone. The residue has been handed to the DCA who have undertaken to hold anniversary events; one such took place in 2017 (Columbia Market War Memorial 2021a). Tower Hamlets council is responsible for the maintenance.

This is a memorial of modest cost, delivered on time to great acclaim from its stakeholders. This obscures an internal feud and breakdown in the friendship of the two organisers which jeopardised the deadline set for unveiling on the 75th

anniversary of the bombing. From 2010 to 2012 GT, playing to his strengths, carried out the research into the victims; the list of those commemorated and their surviving relatives is largely complete thanks to his efforts through social and local media contact. Later he found the stone mason and with the help of a survivor pin-pointed the site of the shelter.

The work of sourcing permissions and canvassing of local support is what Trevor Wood was brought in to progress. In late 2012, links were established with the Columbia Tenants and Residents Association; their Chairman, Pawla Cottage, joined the group as Secretary. Endorsement for the placing of the memorial on the Dorset Estate came from its community association. One of its members, Nasrul Islam joined the project committee as treasurer and Kabir Ahmed, a former local councillor, joined as Vice-Chairman. The committee was never more than five people but late in the project the group's numbers fell to four as GT resigned and was side-lined. He later recanted and was in attendance at the unveiling. The main clash was over the form of the memorial. GT's view was felt to be unrealistic by the project committee which was more pragmatic when it came to lobbying support. The modest monument emerged from confused committee machinations where internal wrangling and bickering were regrettably played-out through the public pages of Facebook. In 2014 there was an extended hiatus which placed the targeted unveiling at risk and whilst TW speaks well of the former Mayor of Tower Hamlets, the successor authority to Bethnal Green since 1965, the recently deposed and disgraced Lutfur Rahman, there were issues in the local authority that were frustrating. An agreement in principal with the Mayor was gained in a meeting as late as 13th April 2015 and a full set of planning documents was supplied. However, by June nothing had come back from the planning and parks departments whose approval was needed. Documents were re-submitted and a meeting with council officials and the stonemason finally saw written approval gained in mid-July 2015. The stone was placed just in time for the 75th anniversary albeit in a location different to that envisaged. The circular rose garden, at the foot of the western side of Sivill House, where the small crosses were seen by the writer in 2013, was the anticipated site for the memorial being adjacent to the site of shelter. There was resistance to that site from the residents of the tower block. Moreover, Sivill House is listed and the preferred monument site would have

needed heritage approval which was a hurdle too far at that late stage. The final choice of site, on the opposite side of the tower, was deemed acceptable but the compromise is a reflection perhaps on the rushed completion of the project. It appears to have had no damaging effect on the remembrance of the events of 1940 however and feedback on the memorial and its unveiling has been very positive (Columbia Road War Memorial 2021b). The remembrance process materialises as a monument but, in bringing knowledge and meaning to past events, it acts emotionally in conferring personal closure for the relatives. Mr Wood spoke animatedly about the memorial 'finding a lost community' in its reconnecting of severed neighbourly links. He invoked the concept of *diaspora* in explaining the long delay in commemoration. He cited the Ettridge family, which lost three members, whose orphaned siblings were separately adopted; their later families were reunited through this process. For Tom Betts, it brought welcome closure and enabled him, with Geoff Twist's help, to find where his Mother was laid to rest. It was clear to Trevor Wood from the reaction of families, reunited for the unveiling, that this was a project that had delivered. Heart-warming stories, emerging from this small plaque in an inner-city estate, reinforce that these projects are worth doing. Moreover, it permitted families, whose ties to the area were broken, to be re-connected through remembrance. However, asked if he would do it again, the answer was emphatically 'no!'. Planning and implementing remembrance exercises, characterised by personality clashes and planning delays, can be a frustrating and painfully slow process. Trevor noted that his painting took on a darker hue over the 3 years of the project reflecting not a task of joy but the hideous nature of the events being recalled. He hadn't known of the Columbia incident while growing up in Bethnal Green but in a final comment on the contested remembrance of this tragedy there is an uncanny link with the next. Trevor's parents were both on the Bethnal Green tube stairs when 173 people were crushed to death in 1943. Trevor's mother was one of the last to be rescued. His father, a teenager in the Home Guard, awaiting call-up, was also on the landing that night and was involved in moving bodies. It was several years later that they met and married. In the years that have passed since 2015, Trevor Wood has returned to his painting and Geoff Twist has continued to exhibit idiosyncratic spurts of energy on other causes. Remembrance events and wreath laying have continued, only

to pause during the restrictions of the pandemic. The memorial is well looked after, not least by GT who tends the flower bed within which it sits. The strained relations between Trevor and Geoff have been healed. TW considers it the best work he has done (T. Wood pers.comm. 4th June 2021).

9.3 Bethnal Green Tube Shelter Tragedy

Bethnal Green underground station is beneath a busy cross roads, where Cambridge Heath Road, running north from Whitechapel, meets Roman Road from the east and Bethnal Green Road from the west. It is the centre of the former Metropolitan Borough; within a short walk is the former town hall on Patriot Square and St John's Church is opposite on Roman Road. In 1940 work on the extension of the Central Line had halted here and the station had yet to be operational. On 3rd March 1943, a wet night, air-raid sirens, at 20.17, summoned people to the underground station, in use as a shelter since October 1940. As crowds descended damp, well-worn stairs, a lady carrying a child slipped and others fell over her; the ensuing crush suffocated 173 people, including 84 women and 62 children. It was London's worst recorded disaster. Here, close to safety, these Blitz victims died, but not at enemy hands; no bombs fell on the area that night (Stairway to Heaven Memorial Trust 2021a).

The entrance today, now one of two, is in the same place on the south side of Roman Road. There are still 19 steps down from street level to the small landing and the sharp right turn of seven stairs to the ticket hall. These days the stairway has reinforced treads and central and side handrails. This site of wartime tragedy was unmarked until a steel plaque, above the stairs, was installed in 1993, fifty years after the event. The plaque is still in position but for those, hastening to their tube journey, it is difficult to read; stopping to take in its significance is not advisable (War Memorials Online 2021/258229).

Today, there can be no doubt that something very serious occurred here. Towering over the entrance is a striking monument in the north-west corner of Bethnal Green Gardens, the Bethnal Green Tube Shelter Disaster Memorial (War Memorials Online 2021/159790), known popularly, however, as the Stairway to Heaven. It overlooks the tube station stairs and was formally unveiled on 17th December 2017.

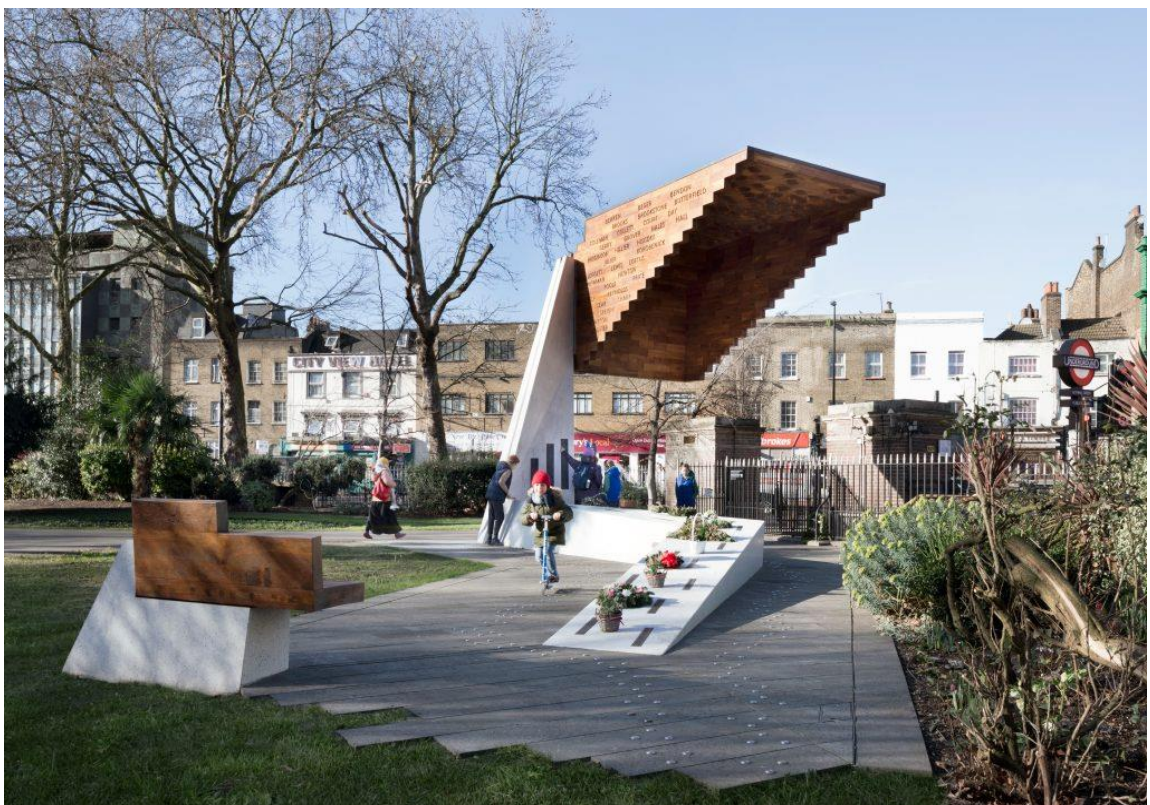
Figure 24

Bethnal Green Memorial Plaque. 1993.



Figure 25

Bethnal Green Tube Disaster Memorial. Stairway to Heaven. 2017.



The appalling loss of life, had it occurred in peacetime, would have been more widely known with the public discussion and reprimand which has attended

disasters such as Aberfan, Hillsborough and Grenfell, chilling in their one-word recall to memory. Ground was first cut on the memorial site in 2012; six years after the campaign group, soon established as the Stairway to Heaven Memorial Trust (STHMT), had been formed. In many respects, however, the project and its mode of contestation, were shaped many years earlier in the aftermath of the tragic events on the stairway.

The long delay in wider recognition of this tragedy, through the absence of public memorialisation and the impact of neighbourhood fragmentation, is framed within an amalgam of emotions, shaped in war and afterwards, a 'cocktail' of sympathy deficit, community trauma, blame, guilt, bereavement, grief, anger and institutional impunity. The mechanisms of wartime secrecy, generational reticence and community dispersal created a narrative vacuum; in the outside world the tragedy was forgotten. However, in the hearts and minds of the witnesses, survivors and bereaved, there was no forgetting; a narrative, initially dormant, of unremedied grievance, festered, before emerging to reclaim the remembrance of the tragedy, in the community's own form and words.

In 2017, after eleven years of cajoling, publicity, fund-raising and regular public acts of remembrance, the belated recognition of a shared and hitherto concealed history was achieved through a monument of striking presence and symbolism. The recriminations of the tragedy healed, in a surge of community action, to right a perceived wrong, through a public memorial. The unveiling of the monument, a significant addition to the memorial landscape in London, brings an end to the prolonged aftermath of the tragedy, not just as a symbol of long-overdue civilian remembrance but also as affirmation of community action, albeit contested at every stage, from which closure and healing may be derived.

9.4 Disaster and Aftermath

The deep-roots of the memorial campaign are revealed in analysis of community fear, government intervention and personal repression in a timeline stretching from 1940 until the present. It reveals the impact on those caught-up in the events of 3rd March 1943 and how, in the following decades, personal memory was translated to public remembrance.

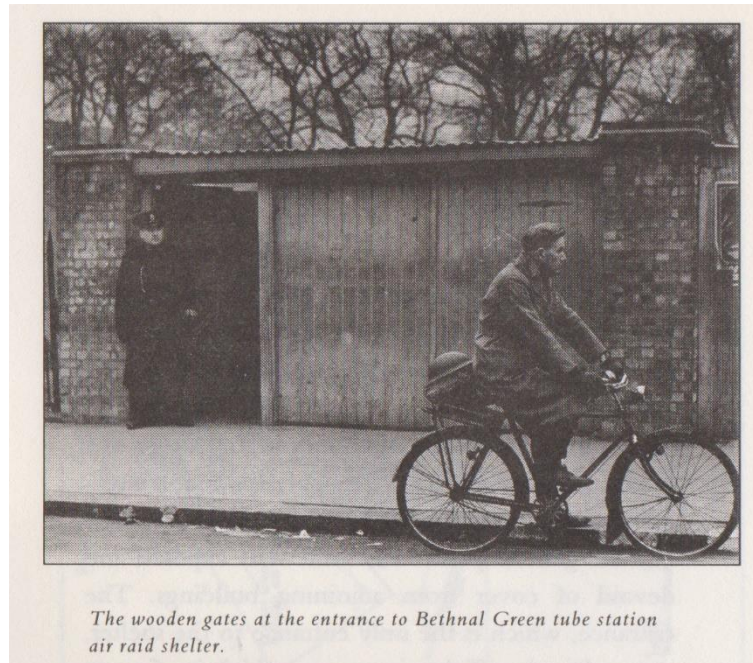
For Bethnal Green, shelter provision had proved contentious since the start of the Blitz; it saw tragedy on the first night at Columbia Buildings. Shelter overcrowding in Victoria Park (Ziegler 1995, 116) led to a forestalled invasion at

the station entrance (Metropolitan Police 1940). A fearful and displaced community, pushed to a limit, were met by fellow, albeit uniformed, citizens, and prevented from taking shelter (*Days of Glory* 2010). Their fears were justified when a shelter inside the park suffered a direct hit on 15th October 1940, trapping around a hundred inside and killing fifteen (*Disaster at the Tube* 2003). This incident took place within days of a publicity event attended by the Home Secretary, Herbert Morrison and the London Regional Commissioner for Civil Defence, Edgar Evans, later Baron Mountevans. This established the unfinished tube station as a deep shelter, 65 feet below ground, with 4000 ticketed bunks (*The Times* 1940). Evans reported to London's most senior civil defence Commissioner, Sir Ernest Gowers. Morrison and Gowers were destined to play significant roles in the aftermath of the disaster.

Through tragedy and protest, the tube shelter had already, by 1940, taken a prominent role in the lives of the community and it was still in extensive use in 1943, a time of 'nuisance' raids and heightened expectation of German retaliation to raids on their cities. Indeed, numbers in the shelter were increasing in the days before the disaster. Kendall, whose research first listed the casualties by name, other than in the CWGC archive (1992, 30-33), estimated that on 28th February, it held 500 people, rising on 2nd March to 850. On the 'fateful night', around 1500 had safely entered within minutes of the alert. 'Ten minutes later a salvo of rockets from the newly opened gun battery in Victoria Park half a mile away opened up, with a terrifying screech which had never been heard before. Rumour went round that bombs were falling, and approximately 120-200 people, around the narrow entrance surged forward down the stairs' (1992, 27-28) with horrific consequences. After a night of low casualties, assessing morale as 'good', across London, the Metropolitan Police War Diary of March 4th noted, in its typically brisk style, 'except at the Shelter incident at Bethnal Green tube' (Metropolitan Police 1943).

Figure 26

Bethnal Green Tube Entrance. 1943.



The *Evening Standard* on 4th March 1943 said that a 'Propaganda Raid was No Surprise-London Was Ready For Siren'; it referred to concerted defence from AA and night fighters (1943a). However, the edition could not publish still-unofficial reports on the tragedy or that Gowers had hastily convened an inquiry at the Town Hall with the local MP and Borough Councillors (Kendall 1992, 28). Kendall presents the detailed official Ministry of Home Security statement issued for the morning's papers of 5th March:

'On Wednesday evening a serious accident took place near the entrance to a London Tube Shelter, causing the death of a number of people by suffocation. According to accounts so far received, shortly after the Air Raid Alert sounded substantial numbers of people were making their way as usual towards the shelter entrance. There were nearly 2,000 people in the shelter including several hundred who had arrived after the alert, when a middle aged woman burdened with a baby and a bundle tripped near the foot of a flight of 19 steps, which lead down from the street. The flight of steps terminates on a landing. Her fall tripped an elderly man behind her and he fell similarly. Their bodies again tripped up those behind them, and within a few seconds a large number of people were

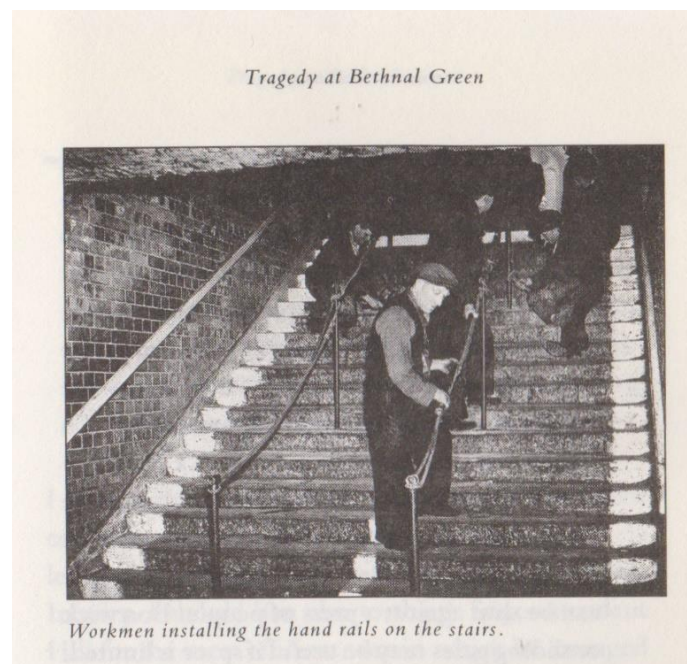
lying on the lower steps and the landing, completely blocking the stairway. Those coming in from the street could not see exactly what had taken place, and continued to press down the steps, so that within a minute there were hundreds of people crushed together, and laying on top of one another, and the lower steps. By the time it was possible to extricate the bodies it was found that a total of 173 had died. A further 60 were in need of hospital treatment. Statements from a large number of eye witnesses, members of the police and civil defence services, made it clear that there was no panic before the accident on the stairs, no bombs fell anywhere else in the district during the evening. Preliminary reports received by the Home Secretary [...] indicate that police, wardens, soldiers, WVS and civilians worked hard and well to rescue the victims. Mr Morrison has instituted the fullest enquiries to establish in greater detail what took place, and to see whether any structural or administration weakness has been brought to light’.

An inquiry, prefigured in the final paragraph, was officially announced on 10th March and replaced the Gowers initiative which had already agreed that burials would be authority-funded and not in a common grave. On Friday, 5th March, the press coverage reflected the detached tone of the prepared statement. *Daily Herald* led with a pithy headline: ‘A Woman tripped-178 killed in London shelter’ (Daily Herald 1943). The report, which excludes the location of the tube station, mentions the press of people at the entrance, the noise of ‘heavy gunfire’ and the tragic sequence of events. The difficult extraction of bodies is detailed. An eyewitness noted that it was not the first time that large crowds had struggled with the narrow entrance. The article repeated that there had been no panic. *The Times* headline is also to the point: ‘London Shelter Disaster-178 people Crushed to Death’ (The Times 1943a). The correspondent ventures a critique of the lack of a central handrail and poor lighting and reports local concerns about the small entrance. The editorial in the same edition acknowledges that no bombs fell within two miles of the district but that there was ‘an unusually heavy barrage’. It adds that the police, soldiers, WVS, wardens and civilians worked well and that local people behaved in ‘exemplary’ fashion without panic. The managed disclosure of the tragedy contrasts with details, including names and addresses, in the same edition of the *Daily Herald*; two soldiers and seven

civilians had been killed by returning AA shells (Daily Herald 1943). The *Evening Standard* reported that the Ministry of Pensions had quickly allayed fears that injuries compensation for these civilians might be withheld: 'those killed and disabled will be treated as if it had been caused by bombing'. Furthermore, installation of handrails had started and an inquest announced (1943b).

Figure 27

Bethnal Green Tube: Installation of Handrails. 1943.



Panic had been mentioned in the MoHS statement. The denial of its existence suggests early concern at the reaction of those outside when the rocket barrage started. Two weeks after the disaster, an inquest verdict of accidental death was recorded by the Coroner, after jury deliberation of evidence from witnesses and shelter staff. The Coroner was specific in dispelling 'sensational rumours' in precise terms: 'There is nothing to suggest any stampede or panic or anything of the kind...' (Butler 2015, 10).

The depth of local feeling and a rapid mobilisation of community action is evident in the correspondence engendered by the establishment of the official inquiry under the chairmanship of an experienced London Magistrate, Sir Laurence Dunne (The Times 1970). The Dunne Inquiry, reporting directly to the Home Secretary, was announced on 10th March, took evidence, *in camera*, from 80 witnesses and proved 'characteristically expeditious and decisive'; it was

completed in under two weeks by 23 March (Davenport-Hines 2004). A suggestion that 'protesters in the East End demanded a public inquiry' (Davenport-Hines 2004) is not supported in correspondence at the National Archives which conveys a more polite and measured, albeit urgent, tone (Beaken 1943). Relatives of those killed and injured had met as early as 6th March and sent a letter to Herbert Morrison on the 8th, signed by the 'Organiser', H. Beaken, a relative of three family members among the fatalities. The request for a public inquiry was met by a brusque reply from a private secretary on the 10th which addressed the question by reference to that day's announcement of the private Dunne Inquiry (Peterson 1943). Unabashed, again with inordinate courtesy, a committee representing relatives of the victims, through their Hon. Secretary, requested clarification regarding the attendance of the Mayor of Bethnal Green in Dunne's private inquiry (Johns 1943). Another brusque reply stated they were under a misapprehension. It suggested that the mayor was uniquely placed to sit in on the proceedings, given her local knowledge, and that her attendance, whilst temporary, had been at the specific request of the Home Secretary. The reply also confirmed that invitations had been extended to a list of attendees, requested in a separate letter, from the action group (Macdonald Ross 1943). The deportment of the action group, based on the archives, is in stark contrast to other correspondence received by the Inquiry. One hand-written post-card blames the Jews for 'all the nasty work' and hopes to 'turn the dirty dogs out of the country'. The card was marked 'no reply to be sent'. The Board of Deputies of British Jews, distressed by the widespread rumours that Jews took fright and caused panic, in an echo from Spitalfields in January 1918 (Dwyer 2010), specifically requested a balanced judgement on the basis that Bethnal Green is not a Jewish area and those who did live locally avoided the shelter because of past anti-Semitism; they received a reassuring response (The National Archives 1943). Later it will be seen that the Inquiry was explicit in its denunciation of speculation about pick-pockets, Jewish panic and Fascist gangs causing the crush (Butler 2015, 9). The troubled political and sectarian context of the Inquiry, evident in these archives, determined their embargo until 1972.

It has been suggested that Dunne's judgement was displayed at its best in the 'aftermath of a civilian catastrophe' (Davenport-Hines 2004). At the time,

however, a test of this judgement was denied to all but the Home Secretary and his cabinet colleagues, for Dunne had concluded the Inquiry through two controversial propositions:

This disaster was caused by a number of people losing their self-control at a particularly unfortunate place and time.

No forethought in the matter of structural design or practicable police supervision can be any real safeguard against the effects of a loss of self-control by a crowd. The surest protection must always be that self-control and practical common sense, the display of which has hitherto prevented the people of this country being the victims of countless similar disasters.

These were damaging conclusions of great propaganda value for the enemy and demoralising for the bereaved community, and were quickly embargoed, despite an original intention that the report would be made public. The 'psychological' overtones, the 'main and proximate' cause, were not revealed until 1945. A watered-down version, in a White Paper of April 3rd 1943 (Morrison 1943), exposed some criticism of safety measures, presented as influential but not the main cause. The consequence was local authority exposure to suits for negligence. *The Times* reported the completion of the Shelter Inquiry report on the 9th April 1943, confirming that publication was to be withheld as it contained material of potential help to the enemy. The location, 'a London air raid shelter', remained secret (1943b).

In 1944, despite the disappointment of the governmental *volte-face* on the Inquiry report, the determination of the community to seek redress became more organised. On 27 March 1944, a Trust Declaration for the Bethnal Green Tube Shelter Accident Scheme had been granted (Tower Hamlets 1944a). In April 1944, a Mrs Annie Baker of Braintree Street, Bethnal Green sued the Bethnal Green Council for negligence, after her husband and daughter were killed. The council admitted their responsibility, but denied negligence. A High Court judgement was handed down in July 1944, in favour of the plaintiff. The judge observed that the council were responsible for making provision for the safety of people using the shelter and added that the 'dangerous condition of the steps made the entrance a death trap' (Kendall 1992, 29; Tower Hamlets 1944b). This statement carried no public weight at the time as proceedings

were held *in camera* (The Times 1944). Following the judgement, the Ministry of Pensions awarded weekly pensions to widows and their children. Later in the year the Bethnal Green Council unsuccessfully appealed the judgement and it was through active newspaper correspondence, on the iniquities of the statutory time for compensation-uptake, that the location of the incident was unofficially made public (Dollond 1944; Nash 1944). The dismissal of the Council's appeal was reported in December 1944 and followed in early 1945 by a decision not to appeal to the House of Lords. Mrs Baker's compensation award would now be extended to others in discussion with a relatives' committee; the council's liabilities were quietly met from central government funds (Fountain 2012; The Times 1945a; The Times 1945b). The conclusion of litigation, after the failure of the council's appeals, enabled the proper administration of the accumulating funds for victims' families through the Bethnal Green Shelter Disaster Fund. The proceedings of the fund, which ran until the early sixties, are held in the local archives (Tower Hamlets 1963).

The eventful year for the community and its representation of the bereaved families had established a material reward for its activism. It was now required to confront the publication of the Dunne Inquiry findings and a new chapter in the unfolding narrative of the disaster's remembrance. The *Report on an Inquiry into the Accident at Bethnal Green Tube Station Shelter on 3rd March 1943* was published by His Majesty's Stationery Office on 19th January 1945. A parliamentary statement, on behalf of the indisposed Home Secretary, was read to the Commons. His absence left the statement unquestioned by MPs. It referred to the loss of self-control of the victims, overshadowing additional disclosures of unaddressed safety concerns that had fallen between different authorities (Daily Herald 1945). The irrevocable link of cause and panic was forged even though Dunne (1945) formally eschewed it:

Panic is not perhaps the proper word to use, there is no doubt that the crowd of between 150 and 200 remaining outside the shelter were out of hand and frantic with nervousness, confusion and worry, which heavier gunfire and salvos of rockets did nothing to allay...

The conclusions drawn, with the proposition of self-control to the fore, raised legitimate concerns, challenging the promoted notion of civilian resilience under fire; from a distance of 80 years, the delay in the publication of the Inquiry

Report had some justification. The report methodically and thoroughly sets out the facts; station layout, shelter arrangements and wardenship were detailed, noting that less than half of the 173 killed were regular users of the shelter. The anticipation of the raid, the siren and searchlights had brought other would-be shelterers that night (Kendall 1992, 29). The station entrance and stairs received particular attention and defects in the shelter's structure, lighting, and supervision were pointed out. However, beyond a stern rebuke, the report concluded that these, as well as the absence of policing at the entrance, were subsidiary causes of the catastrophe. The new rockets were instrumental in causing the surge of people into the entrance, where, in a departure from an otherwise measured tone, in a matter of seconds, the stairway became 'a charnel house of immoveable and interlaced bodies five or six deep' (Davenport-Hines 2004; Stationery Office 1999, 60-61).

Morrison's decision to defer the report's publication had of course raised a local outcry and had, for reasons that became clear in 1945, complicated accident litigation in 1944. The suppression of the indictment of crowd behaviour had also withheld important evidence on security concerns. This showed that the council should not have shouldered blame alone. It explains the almost unseemly haste in provision of handrails and crash barriers, the presence of Gowers at the Town Hall on the 4th March 1943 and the government funding of the local authority's compensation liabilities. The telling disclosure in the delayed report was a letter from the Town Clerk to the Civil Defence London Commission which in no uncertain terms pointed to the risk of the shelter stairs:

There is a grave possibility that, on a sudden renewal of enemy air attack, there would be an extremely heavy flow of persons seeking safety in the Tube Shelter, and that pressure from such a crowd of people would cause the wooden structure to collapse, and a large number would be precipitated down the staircase...(Butler 2015, 6).

Dunne had reviewed the proposals by the borough council to repair the perceived deficiencies and the round of correspondence with the London Civil Defence authority, under the leadership of the aforementioned Sir Ernest Gowers. The council proposals were rejected by the civil defence authority on the grounds that the modest expenditure was unnecessary. It is unsurprising

that these disclosures, after two years of suppression, were seen as a covering of tracks (Fountain 2012).

The Report's credibility, particularly within the community of victims and their families, is challenged in its handling of this evidence. Legitimate criticism of the local council and the civil defence agency, who had both failed to address the risk, was levelled by Dunne but not given as a prime causal factor given the over-riding conclusion that no amount of security preparedness could overcome a crowd's loss of self-control. The damaging revelation was mitigated by two years of secrecy even if the *Daily Herald* received the Report in its headline as 'Council Foresaw Tube Crush-Shelter Deaths Disclosure' (1945). The 'cover-up' narrative, quick to emerge, has continued to this day. The unpalatability of the failed dialogue between the local authority and the civil defence agency, for which he was ultimately responsible, is deemed to have inspired Morrison to unduly influence the findings of the Dunne Inquiry so that it could be embargoed on state security grounds (Butler 2015, 10-11; Fountain 2012).

Earlier, it was implied that Dunne's judgement in his report might not hold up to scrutiny; loss of self-control is presented as an open proposition with no counter-argument. To that stage in the report, the narrative tone pointed to findings that reflected the inquest verdict of accidental death. Dunne's report details the inherent risks of the one entrance, the failed dialogue on responsibility for improvements to a poorly lit stairway and poor definition of shelter stewarding and policing responsibilities. Punctuated by acerbic observations on the failings of responsible agencies, there is sufficient detail to suggest that the accident was avoidable or at least might have been less catastrophic had relatively simple steps been taken to improve access. This renders the abrupt emergence of the verdict as a shock and conveys a judgement affected, at best, by undue haste and, at worst, by external influence. While inadmissible, this speculation challenges Dunne's findings and their presentation as incontrovertible assertions of fact, damning the crowd and thus the victims. His descriptions of a nervous, confused and worried crowd focus on the 150- 200 remaining outside the shelter when the rockets were fired. The new rocket artillery had not been heard before and its loud noise was clearly unnerving; even after two years of relative calm, since the 1940-41 Blitz, there was palpable fear. Nonetheless his conclusion is a surprise. Was it

possible that East Enders, who had battled through the Blitz, simply panicked (Lack 2003), that the circumstances saw the crowd's descent into disorder? Previous assertions, that there had been no panic, had all been voiced when it was more politic to point to civilian resilience; no such restriction applied to Dunne's private enquiry. Nonetheless, the evidence that Dunne took from those who were there appears to have been given little weight. Witness statements were not available for scrutiny until 2010 and they contrast markedly with his final assessment of the fatal impact of crowd behaviour. Remarkably, no senior official from the London Civil Defence authority nor the town clerk, the author of the horribly accurate prediction, gave evidence in person (Butler 2015, 11).

Dunne points to the overwhelming impact of loss of self-control, making mitigation measures unnecessary, irrelevant and ineffective. The argument that his report lacked balance, condemning the Bethnal Green community to deal with the slur of a self-inflicted wound, has played an important role in shaping the attitude of the memorial campaigners, whose relatives they represent. In early 1945, as the nation's thoughts turned to peace, the community mood in Bethnal Green, after two years of government silence, the contesting of compensation claims and, through the exigencies of war, publicly unacknowledged grief, can only be surmised. Expectations, given hard-won court judgements and the inquest verdict were dashed. Any hope, invested in the original request for a public enquiry, that the authorities, who had failed the shelter dead, would be held to account, was gone. It had been an uneasy time with the focus of blame resting on the local authority given the partial release of Inquiry comments. The aforementioned Lady Mayor, after much personal abuse, unable to reveal the truth of thwarted attempts to improve safety, was forced to leave the district (Zip 2013). The impact of Dunne's findings on the community would have darkened an already bitter mood; the role of scapegoat, amid the impunity of the authorities, not least those in government and civil defence institutions, would have been particularly galling. Embedded in the report's verdict, a verdict moreover with no recourse of appeal, the people of Bethnal Green, those who stayed and those who left, were tarnished as victims and architects of their own tragedy. These two eventful and demoralising years are the foundation stones of the remembrance project. From a stew of emotions

and memories a trail leads to the Stairway to Heaven memorial, its route checked in the post war years by community reticence and untapped memories.

9.5 Memory, Narrative and Campaigning

The post-war years saw a crystallisation of the accident inquiry narrative, distilled as panic, and the eclipse of the inquest verdict. It would take almost 70 years for survivors to contest the established narrative in pursuit of redemptive remembrance. The entrenchment soon manifested itself after the war; the official review of Civil Defence covered the tragedy briefly, reiterating the Dunne report verdict (O'Brien 1955, 544-545). In Dunne's obituary, conflating objective with outcome, it is suggested that Morrison invited him to conduct *an inquiry into the panic* (writer's italics) in the Bethnal Green Tube Shelter (The Times 1970). Davenport-Hines, in a hagiographical assessment, translates the crowd, seen by Dunne as *out of hand and frantic*, to 'a disorderly mob' (2004). An article of 2003 speaks of 'collective hysteria' and an inability to admit 'the indisputable truth: that the East Enders, who had battled through the Blitz, simply panicked' (Lack 2003). This opinion reduces a nuanced, complex and traumatic community tragedy to a sound-bite, whose rebuttal is seen in the monument on the green by the tube entrance.

In common with other Blitz incidents, peace accelerated the disappearance of the Bethnal Green tragedy from general discourse to a state of public obliviousness. It was to remain un-commemorated until the 50th anniversary in 1993. There were few reminders until then. An eye-witness memoir (Kops 1963) conveys the fear and relief of those whose family were caught in the shelter and resentment that, after 20 years, rumours of Jewish panic still persisted. Inspired and appalled by the tragedy, Kops wrote and co-produced a television film (*It's a Lovely Day Tomorrow* 1975) which restates the facts of the accident and emphasized the poor state of the stairs and entrance. The reconstruction does not suggest or depict panic yet is otherwise disparaged for its clichéd representation of East End life during the Blitz in a savage review. Its stereotypical characters and a failure to withhold the 'tele-mythology' of the Home Front conveyed 'no sense of horror; dignity and decency were all'; 'Cockneys could take it'. In a final line, the reviewer captures the problematic essence of the Blitz myth: 'Nostalgia had laid a numbing hand over the whole enterprise' (Ratcliffe 1975). There was however an absence of nostalgia in well-

constructed reconstructions of the tragedy in a wider Blitz history (Hyde 1986; Ramsey 1987) and in the thoughtful, albeit local, research by Kendall (1992). However, this coverage could not prevent the tragedy slipping from public view. Memories, blighted by connotations of panic, and their obvious contradiction with the generalised post-war narrative of civil resilience, do not easily re-emerge in public remembrance, without significant contestation. For survivors, witnesses and bereaved there was no forgetting, the memories lying deep within their 'individual and communal consciousness' for decades (Butler 2015, 5). This conclusion emerged from the lottery-funded Bethnal Green Memorial Project (2013-15), a venture between the University of East London and the Stairway campaign, which collected over 30 oral-history recordings from individuals and families involved in the disaster, for many the first opportunity to share their stories and open-up about the impact on their lives and that of their families (2015, v-vi). In pages of heart-breaking testimony, repressed memories and nightmarish visions of the past are heard, the experience of war beyond cosy narrative and invocations of 'spirit'. The oral history project continued a sequence of revelations, emerging as the memorial project gained momentum. Joan Paul recounted how her mother died in front of her young eyes and Peter Perryment spoke of the impact on his life; who would not be traumatised, as a young boy, head between knees, under the bodies of dead and dying people (*Sheltered Lives* 2010). Peter died in 2019, his living memories preserved in perpetuity in the archives of the Bishopsgate Institute. The Memorial Project structured the process of unburdening locked memories, its link, with the Stairway campaign dream, granting 'permission' to lay bare private thoughts for the good of the community and its search for redress through remembrance. The inhibited recall of the tragedy has multiple influences. For some it was the severing of close ties of family and kinship and for others the internalising of grief (BBC News 2013). Butler's oral history project (2015) found trauma so deep that survivors could not talk about it to their own families. Young survivors stayed silent in continued obedience to their parents' collective sense of wartime duty. The silence extended to medical staff attending the emergency. Dr Joan Martin, a junior doctor, was on duty at Hackney Children's hospital where victims of the tragedy were taken. She was sworn to secrecy as she came off the most traumatic shift of her career. She remained as good as her

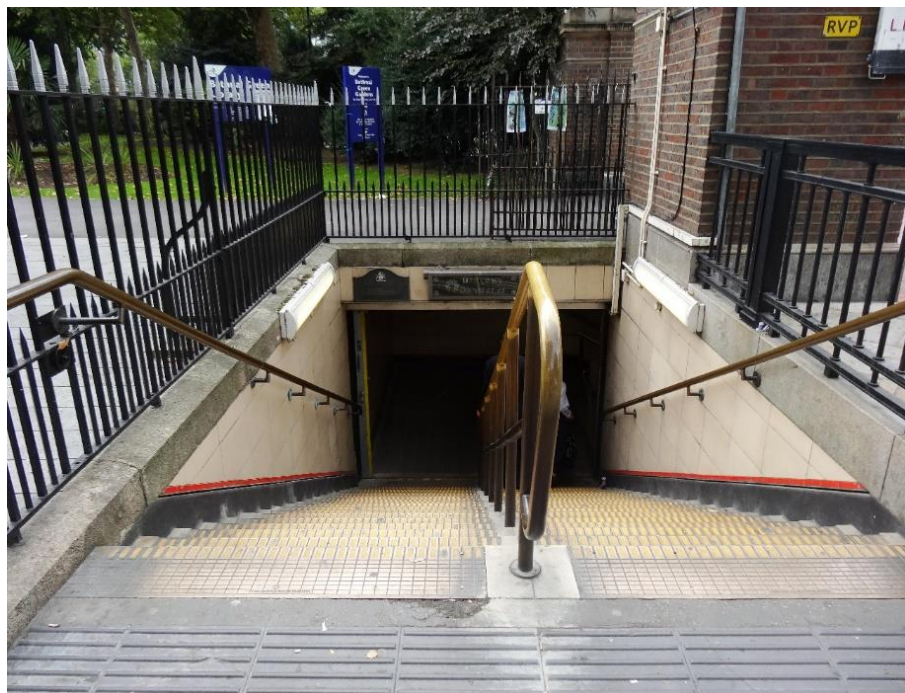
word, telling no-one, not even her mother, until survivors publicised the disaster on the 50th anniversary in 1993 (*Coping with casualties* 2010). Dr Hal Yarrow was similarly reticent, affected by what he had seen. A local GP, he had gone to the scene to 'help where he could'. His daughter recounted his silence on the horrors of that night (Ms J Fielden pers.comm. 1st March 2015).

The 50th anniversary triggered an opportunity for long dormant narratives to surface. For Mrs Ivy Brind silence was not a matter of obedience but repression. Ivy was pulled from the crush, physically and psychologically scarred. The baby nephew she was holding died, causing a lifelong divide with her sister, the boy's grieving mother. She lost her mother too, finding her body later in a temporary mortuary. Her personal trauma was 'bottled-up' for almost 50 years until an approach from Libby Purves of *The Times*, prompted by the anniversary. Ivy at last felt able to open-up with strangers and her family. Purves's article (1993) is sensitive and speaks, not of panic or disorder, but of the bravery of the bereaved and the traumatised. Ivy's daughter, Sandra Scotting MBE, grew up knowing of the history of the tragedy but nothing of her mother's experience. The sense of injustice was to inform her adult life and lead to an important role in the search for meaningful remembrance (Purves 1993; S. Scotting pers.comm 28th September 2015; *The After Effects* 2010). Trevor Wood MBE, of the Columbia Market project, recalls family remembrances that embraced the past more openly. Their memories were not defined by family tragedy, although his mother lost many friends. He recounts family stories of the parades of hearses to the cemetery and the rumours of pick-pockets targeting those who took their valuables to the shelter (T. Wood pers. comm. 2nd November 2015). A curious sense of resignation also pervades the belated recall of some survivors; a metaphorical shrug before getting on with the rest of their lives. Ray Lechmere, aged 9, was on the stairs with his parents, grandparents, two brothers and a sister. All four children somehow got free and were sent down to the tube platform, waiting all night, in vain, for their adult relatives to arrive. In the morning they walked home, passing bodies lined up by the park railings on Cambridge Heath Road. For three days they believed they were orphans. Ray went back to school and never thought to tell his friends that he had lost his parents. Fortunately, his mother had survived, found days later in hospital (R. Lechmere pers. comm: 28th September 2015). Mr Lechmere, an important

voice in the Stairway campaign at 87, summed up community reticence in 2014; ‘...after the funerals, life just went on. You didn't talk about it. It was never spoken of. I was ashamed of it, I don't know why’ (Edge 2014). For Mrs Babette Clark, still bubbly at 89, the creation of the memorial project was an outlet for a private but joyful family history; from a very close call, Mrs Clark and her sister were pulled from the crush. Their father, believing them to be in the tube station, searched, in vain, all night to find them. A later tearful reunion was a signal moment in her life. She emerged as one of the campaign’s staunchest supporters and clearest communicators.

Figure 28

Bethnal Green Tube Stairs and Plaque from Roman Road.



The first material commemoration, on the 50th anniversary of the tragedy in 1993, was implemented by the local authority (Boorman 1995, 154; IWM 2021/WMR12606). It is a black 3ft x 2ft nowy-headed steel plaque on the left side of a frieze, above the stairs; on its right is an emergency warning display box, 6ft x 2ft; if activated, it flashes Do Not Enter. In 1993 the Mayor of Tower Hamlets had responded to local concern that there was no official recall of the disaster. The response was a memorial service in St John’s and the plaque installation. Kofi Appiah, later became a patron of the memorial project. After

the original went missing, the plaque was replaced, after renewed community pressure (S. Scotting pers.comm. 28th September 2015).

The 1993 plaque was a minimal response to community pressure and beyond a recording of the event and the death toll was not of a form that could address the concerns about the cover-up and the unchallenged panic narrative. In 1999, in a popular series on subjects ranging from the Boer War to the Profumo Scandal, the recently-privatised Stationery Office re-published the Dunne Report under the title *Tragedy at Bethnal Green*. This exposed the events at the tube and their aftermath to a wider, newer audience. It was soon followed, in the early 2000s, by the canvassing of an astounding story of a local man, claiming to be the last child pulled alive from the crush (BBC News 2003; B.S. 2002).

In 1943, an impending raid was signalled by the radio going off. Around 8pm on 3rd March, Alfred Morris, aged 13, left his family home on Old Ford Road to go to the shelter. En route, as expected, the siren started. Like many other witnesses, such as Bernard Kops, Trevor Wood's mother, Babs Clark and the Lechmere family, he would have joined the throng making their way down the stairs, as they had done many times. People were carrying their bedding, picked up in places along the way, from so-called 'bundle shops', often cafes, where they could be kept during the day at work or school. Alf was most of the way down when searchlights went on and the Victoria Park rocket battery let loose. The surge knocked him off his feet and he was trapped. An ARP warden, a Mrs Chumley, saw him struggle and pulled him out by his hair. She sent him downstairs, honour-bound to say nothing; he obeyed. For many years after the war, his reticence was the norm, not from guilt or repression, but, because he had been told to stay silent, turning down the large amounts being offered by press to give the 'inside' story (Morris 2005). Why had Mr Morris decided to break his silence? In 1998, he and his wife had left Bethnal Green for Essex and by 2003, aged 73, he clearly thought it time for the contested past, of which he was part, to be more widely known. Mr Morris was prominent in media attention directed at the tragedy's 60th anniversary (BBC News 2003; Lack 2003). In an angry and tearful denunciation of the searchlights and the rockets, standing at the place of his rescue, he rails at the waste of the life of the 173 victims (*Disaster at the Tube* 2003). This 30-minute BBC film focuses on the rocket firing, described as a test, for which no warning was given. At this point,

Alf Morris was not calling for a memorial which would settle the debt he believed was owed to the dead. However, there were stirrings in the community, 10 years after the installation of the station plaque. Survivors and their families were asking for a better memorial to the dismay of the local authority whose good offices had secured the first plaque. The Council undertook to discuss the matter with survivors (BBC News 2003). This episode was the third time, since the tragedy, that survivors had organised themselves to apply pressure on the local authority. Indeed, the memorial service that took place in St John's (Kendall 2003) is more evidence of a degree of community organisation. In retrospect, the conditions for the establishment of the memorial project were falling in to place, driven by anniversaries and the transition of the remembrance task from survivors and witnesses to their children. Sitting out in Essex, Alf Morris had unwittingly become the voice of the campaign; he would soon receive a telling knock on his door.

9.6 The Secretary, Survivors and the Architect

I made contact with Sandra Scotting, the Hon. Secretary of the project, at the memorial service in March 2015. We met formally on 28th September 2015 when the memorial project was at a critical stage. Major funding, logistic and planning issues were still outstanding, three years after work had started. The memorial was only half-built and divisions in the project team were emerging. In this context, granting my meeting request was generous. We met at the memorial site and then in Nico's, a long-established café, used as a 'bundle shop' during the Blitz. We sat round a table with her husband, Lee and two survivors, Ray Lechmere and Babs Clark. The conversation focused on the tragic facts of the crush, the lasting impact on families, her own family story (Purves 1993) and the remarkable stories of Mr Lechmere and Mrs Clark. SS reiterated concerns with the 1993 plaque and the years of deception and unfair blame which justified the scale and expense of the proposed monument; a smaller, less costly monument would not represent a commensurate recognition for the community's collective trauma. The undiluted enthusiasm to impart the campaign narrative, after almost 9 years of campaigning, comes out in the interview summary which can be seen in **Appendix 17**.

To investigate the architectural vision and its adoption by the community, I met the architect in June 2018, a few months after completion. The Bethnal Green

Memorial, a title preferred by the architect, while understanding the value of the Stairway to Heaven, started in the most prosaic of circumstances. In 2006, travelling by bus from Bow to Tufnell Park, Harry Paticas, Director of a local architectural practice, Arboreal, spotted the modest plaque, above the stairs of the Roman Road entrance to the underground station. The contrast between the enormity of the incident and its commemoration inspired a chain of events from which, 11 years later, the Memorial would emerge. Mr Paticas (HP), after local enquiries, concluded that something out of the ordinary was required to achieve proper recognition of an incident whose scale would in normal times have a national currency. It was not long before, in a moment of inspiration, the architect was able to articulate a monument of the scale and symbolism to make the powerful statement that the 1993 plaque could not; an elevated canopy, over the void of the stairs where the victims met their fate. The idea, an inverted stairway in the sky, is clearly visible in the outline launched by HP through the local newspaper, the *East London Advertiser*. They dubbed it 'Stairway to heaven' which later came to define the project in its relentless pursuit of publicity and funding.

Figure 29

East London Advertiser. Stairway to Heaven. 2006.



However, to move from the drawing board, Paticas knew his idea needed support from the community it sought to represent; the concept does not

typically precede the client and their brief. The response was disappointing and there was 'silence for a month' (H. Paticas pers. comm. 28 June 2018).

Eventually, a letter arrived, in shaky hand, from the aforementioned Alf Morris (AM) who had received a copy of the paper from his sister in Bethnal Green. He, possibly the last person pulled to safety, had alone responded to the memorial idea. HP went to Hornchurch to meet this man, whose story he did not know, without any expectation of the reaction his idea would have. Greeted by an emotional 86-year-old and the words 'I've waited 50 years for someone like you to come along', he knew he had stumbled on a deep well of suppressed emotions (H. Paticas pers.comm. 28th June 2018).

From a prospect of his concept failing to find a client, HP could now see an avenue of opportunity; with an eager Alf Morris he set up a local public meeting for 28th October 2006. Publicity was again afforded by the supportive local paper and flyers were distributed; notices attached to railings pointed to St John's, opposite the station on Roman Road. It was here that the community had responded to the remembrance services in 1993 and 2003; moreover, the crypt had functioned as a temporary morgue on the night of the disaster.

Figure 30



Public Meeting Flyer. 2006.

HP recalls an attendance of around 200 people, including a number of local politicians. The meeting's attention was secured with a slide show tracing a young Alf's route from home to the shelter at around 8 PM on the 3rd March 1943. In an extraordinarily highly-charged meeting there were tears, a release of pent-up grief and, for some, a first chance of public mourning. For many attendees, in their parent's lifetime, talk of the tragedy had been, as previously observed, off-limits. HP was quick to dismiss the idea of some *émigré*

community descending on a place their family had left. About one-third of public meeting attendees were still living locally and many like Alf, Babs Clark and Ray Lechmere lived close by and still had family in the neighbourhood. Sandra Scotting, perhaps one of the furthest away, in Kent, was drawn to the project, inspired to help by her mother's 'catharsis'. She and her husband joined the steering committee, formed that evening, from which the group that would steer the project was established, giving Paticas's idea the client it needed. The idea of a monument, in memory of the event and its victims, despite an outline costing approaching a million, was endorsed by the meeting and marked the start of the project. Importantly, immediate informal support from Tower Hamlets Borough Council was secured that evening. Under the controversial leadership of Lutfur Rahman, the council was also a supporter of the Columbia Market proposal. Bethnal Green & Bow MP George Galloway (2005-2010) also voiced his support after the public meeting.

In the early months of 2007, the small team, with their architect, built the solid foundations of the Stairway project. Sandra Scotting, with long experience in charity fund-raising, became Hon. Secretary and had set up a charitable trust by March 2007 (The Charity Commission 2021). Her husband, a retired accountant, assisted former bank manager, Derek Spicer (Hon. Treasurer). Derek, like Sandra, had lost family members in the crush. Alf Morris was appointed Chairman. The original committee all had some direct link with the disaster. The fifth trustee, and spiritual adviser, was the Rev. Alan Green, Rector of St. John on Bethnal Green. Members were added over the years, particularly from 2012, but the five founding trustees saw the project through to completion. One of the first tasks, under the guidance of the architect, was an understanding of the memorial milieu that they had enthusiastically, if naively, embraced. Tours of other memorial architecture influenced the development of the project brief. An insight to the committee's undaunted approach and community insight is in the following extract of a note received from Sandra Scotting in November 2015:

Before we finalised our memorial some of the committee members went around central London with the architect looking at all the war memorials there. We learnt a lot and it helped us to refine our design. We found the cenotaph cold and stark, but appropriate for the huge losses of WW1. It had indentations for

wreaths and flowers which we added to ours. We liked the Women at War memorial and thought it powerful. Like most, of course, they all cost at least £1m and that was quite a few years before ours was costed and they had lots of help on the financial side. The Animals at War memorial in Hyde Park was incredibly elaborate and it cost £7m several years ago, but being for animals they had no trouble raising the funds!! We were not impressed with the 7/7 bombings memorial, particularly when you consider that it cost £1m and that was with a lot of free work by the architect for the publicity. No doubt it was what the relatives wanted, but we did not think it immortalised the enormity of that dreadful day. We were, however, impressed by [...] the Australian memorial near Marble Arch as there were lots of things to read around [it]. It helped us to realise that we needed the memories of our survivors, relatives and officials to be placed on our memorial for people to read for future generations so they could build up a mental picture of what had happened on our fateful night. I think it is one of the things that we have found resonates with the visitors to our memorial. As mentioned before, we find that whatever day of the week, whatever hour of the day, we always find somebody there looking at the memorial and reading the plaques. For that we are extremely pleased as they are people who would normally just walk on by I think.

The project team did not blanch at the many obstacles, experienced by some of these schemes and with an unwavering confidence plunged into a round of planning, financial and stakeholder engagement to deliver a statement memorial; Arboreal Architecture was appointed with a budget of c.£525k.

In March 2007, the project published its ambitious aim to contest the perception of guilt, from an unjust panic narrative, with an uncompromisingly grand public monument to be in place by 2008, the 65th anniversary (Stairway to Heaven Memorial Trust 2021b). This coincided with the resumption of the anniversary remembrance service, held in St John's, on Sunday, 4th March 2007. Their publicity release presents an interpretation of the events of 3rd March 1943 and its aftermath that shows the team were more than enthusiastic amateurs in the 'unequal' contest to get their memories into the public domain. Well-advised spiritually and architecturally, they demonstrated shrewd professionalism in the disposal of their skills and resources. Operating without an advertising or public relations agency, they mastered overstatement and careful presentation of facts

to build a picture of government suppression, a news blackout and an absence of enemy activity. While this was true for their neighbourhood, German aircraft were over London that night at a cost of lives in other districts. In the presentation of Alf's story, any conjecture that he was 'the last to be rescued alive' was missing; in the frantic efforts to free the trapped his status is not a provable fact, but a promotable story-line. Indeed, the testimony of Peter Perryment and Ray Lechmere, not forgetting Trevor Wood's mother, suggests that, at the least, there are others to which a similar claim could be attributed. This doubt does not lessen the trauma of young Alf nor imply that it did not happen. There is nonetheless an unashamed pattern, in the early appeals, on TV and in the press, that mobilises Alf's story, embellished or not, at a time when other heart-breaking stories, bottled up for years, awaited to be told (BBC News 2007; Davies 2007). Davies' coverage in the Times drew a largely positive response. However, one correspondent, with a family link to the aftermath of the accident, hoped to see a memorial in the form of grants and bursaries, for the educational benefit of youngsters from the community, that would be 'better than a bronze that many might pass without ever noticing' (Walford 2007). In response, Alf Morris, in his role as Chairman of STHMT, restated the case for the stairway, on a scale commensurate to the community's loss, unsparing in its detail of the carnage and the indignities of the aftermath (Morris 2007).

The emphasis on the Morris story and its distinctive fusion of belligerence and raw emotion was good for the project imperatives of publicity, funding and political support; at this stage in March 2007, however, it only had the first. The original costing of the Paticas vision, in bronze, approached £1m. Settling on a stone and wood approach was budgeted at £525,000 (S. Scotting pers.comm). Original fund-raising from the community had yielded only £25k so a well-organised funding plan was needed and adopted. The cornerstone of the campaign was in securing national and local government support and local business pledges. Tower Hamlets Council had voiced its informal support in late 2006. Formal commitment was stimulated by the publicity of Alf's story and secured through a committee presentation that emphasized the antithesis of the 'old East End', presenting instead a multi-faith, multi-cultural initiative for the whole community embracing teaching materials and local engagement. Tower

Hamlets became the most significant contributor to the memorial fund with an initial pledge of £150k (S. Scotting pers.comm). There were publicised donations from Canary Wharf, Boris Johnson, as London Mayor, and the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers. At national level, an early Government waiver of VAT was applied for and ready support was flagged by early day motions, by George Galloway in March 2007 and Andrew Rosindell, MP for Romford, in March 2008 (BBC News 2008a and b). In an early, perhaps premature show of optimism, the local paper flagged the early signs of government support.

Figure 31



Newspaper Publicity. 2008.

Pledges of institutional support depended on the matching of funds from other sources and both were dependent on confidence that the project was deliverable. The trust committee which already knew that funding was their main concern as they entered 2008 were working closely with the architect and his challenges. As an award citation of the Royal Institute of British Architects later pointed out, the task of the architect was complex having created the project, researched and established his own brief and discovered the people to be his client. The client and the architect, according to the accounts I have, worked largely in harmony and effectively met the challenge of the site stakeholders, Transport for London (TfL), Tower Hamlets Council and Thames Water (Royal Institute of British Architects 2021).

At no time did the project consider compromising on the design even when the post-2008 downturn hit fund-raising, throughout three rounds of planning applications or when a change in location was forced on the project by TfL, the underground operators (BBC News 2009a). The vision for the memorial was that its 'heavenly' stairs would sit over the actual stairs as a canopy. This was

refused by the TfL citing safety concerns. In another view, they expressed discomfort at the link between modern tube travel and disaster (Butler 2015, 84). The memorial now stands a few metres away from TfL property within Tower Hamlet's Library Gardens. An aerial photograph, see Figure 33 below, confirms that the symbolism of the heavenward stairs is not compromised.

In 2015, local authority and commercial pledges were expected to cover about 60% of the projected cost (S. Scotting pers. comm: 28th September 2015). The remainder was thus dependent on public sources such as donations, bucket collections, pub quiz nights, themed dinners and dances. In the days before online crowd-funding, the charity produced its own campaign films (*Bethnal Green Tube Disaster Memorial 2009*; *The Bethnal Green Underground Disaster 2012*; *One Hundred and Seventy-Three 2012*) and produced regular project updates on Facebook and through its own web pages. A blog by the Trust started in 2011 as part of the social media element of their public relations and fund raising plan. One example highlighted that there were Jewish victims (Bethnal Green Memorial 2012).

It became clear that the telling of personal stories through media and social channels was effective in raising the campaign profile and its charity income. From 2008, the 65th anniversary of the disaster, a sustained publicity campaign was implemented, starting a 10 year journey of home-grown funding. Alf Morris' version of events, infused with anger and regret, was featured extensively; 'this permanent memorial has got to happen. All these people here lost relatives. You can't have this - hanging flowers on railings' (BBC News 2008a). In another news clip, he meets the grand-daughter of his rescuer, Mrs Chumley. With £175,000 pledged, the appeal for donations was unrelenting; for Mr Morris, when 'this memorial is up and these people could be remembered, I would die a happy man' (BBC News 2009b). The BBC One Show, a mainstream early evening magazine show, featured a five-minute piece by Arthur Smith, with an increasingly querulous Alf Morris: 'People died, what for? Nothing, going to a place thinking I'll be safe. There should be a proper memorial.' Morris is also pictured laying a wreath on Mrs Chumley's grave. As Smith says 'all there is to show for it is this discreet plaque' referring to the 1993 memorial (BBC 2010b). *Wartime London with Harry Harris* (2009) sees Alf, on the stairs and in Nico's, the café/bundle shop, with Harris, a celebrity London taxi driver who later

became a patron of the STHMT. An East-ender, his style is direct, with the authenticity of the fellow 'cockney'.

Alf Morris was the dominant campaign voice from 2008-2011. Indeed, his experience of 1940, not 1943, featured in BBC News coverage of the 70th anniversary of the Blitz (BBC News 2010b). In a gradual change to a more collegiate tone, Sandra Scotting was first featured in campaigning in February 2009, just ahead of the 66th anniversary service at St John's. Resolutely on-message, she outlined parliamentary support for 'a more fitting memorial', adding that a plaque can never tell a story and risks removal or loss. The proposed memorial's scale ensures that will not happen (BBC News 2009a). The story of Peter Perryment was featured increasingly (Simons 2011) and news stories started to appear as the charity called in favours from East End celebrities. The 2010 service 'starred' Dame Barbara Windsor who laid a wreath with the clear message that 'we honour the women of the war and animals in war, so we should honour the civilians that died'. Sandra Scotting drove the message home that 'A local architect actually saw the plaque, researched what was going on and thought, "Well, this was the worst civilian disaster of the Second World War, it deserves more than just this plaque". He designed the Stairway to Heaven memorial and suddenly all the survivors and relatives got together. Here we all are, we set up a charity and now we're raising money as hard as we can.' The charity announced that it had raised £200,000 (BBC News 2010a).

The unwavering pursuit of publicity and funds continued throughout 2010 and 2011, with responses from as far afield as the United States where a successful novel and off-Broadway play featured Laurence Dunne and his report (Dettman 2010; Kane 2010). The new MP for Bromley and Bow, since 2010, Rushanara Ali, who grew up in Bethnal Green, became a great supporter (S. Scotting pers. comm). A watershed for the charity campaign was 2012 when sufficient funding was in place to start construction in April (Wilson 2012). The sinuous white stone base and the vertical pillar were in place by the year-end and the site was ready for the 70th anniversary service on 3rd March 2013 (The Times 2013).

The partially completed monument was launched by a new face of the campaign. Babette Clark was 11 at the time of the tragedy; her story of survival was delivered without sombre, angry darkness. She was to become a major

voice in four more years of public meetings, community events, TV and press publicity.

Figure 32

Partial Completion. 2012. The Times 2013.



BBC News showed families laying flowers at the memorial; no more would they have to attach their flowers to the Roman Road railings (BBC News 2013a). In a second piece, the transition from architect's sketch to a permanent place of remembrance, was narrated by Dr Toby Butler, at that point at the University of East London. He linked the campaign's oral history project, which he was leading, with the release of repressed memories and their expression in the new memorial. Along the length of the stone base, small plaques tell some of the stories gathered by the survivor and witness interviews (BBC News 2013b). Butler, from 2017 a freelance consultant on digital heritage, brought experience, in collaborative heritage projects and community engagement, to the campaign, at a time when it needed to fulfil the holistic scope that had enlisted the initial support from Tower Hamlets Council. Public access to memory space through digital walks, a schools teaching pack and a book on the campaign were the products of this engagement (Butler 2015). Butler also brought a studied, soothing voice to the campaign at a time when funding was precariously

balanced and planning issues were ongoing. The campaign team was refreshed by the addition of new committee members (The Charity Commission 2021)

For two years, after the first construction phase, the campaign message struck a more political tone. The cover-up had been an underlying theme since the beginning (Hardman 2008; Dettman 2010) but a focus on recently-released papers at the National Archives (Fountain 2012) saw a dissonant slant in the campaign's publicity which spoke less of a community working together and more of one cast as a victim of an unjust verdict. Vindication was the theme and an over-personalisation of the role of Herbert Morrison was the target of pointed critique (Brooke 2012; Edge 2014). This narrative, with its emphasis on the *canard* of panic, could not drown the impact of the campaign stories of Clark, Perryment, Lechmere and others which had begun to eclipse the hitherto defining voice of the campaign. Alf Morris, as the founder of the project, had built the early awareness that the campaign needed, in terms that were less relevant to an emerging agenda of community cohesion. Alf relinquished the chairmanship but remained a trustee; no longer was it his voice alone that dominated the narrative and his last public intervention was in 2013 (Zip 2013). On my visits to remembrance services, remarks, that will remain unattributable, questioned his story and its dominance of the campaign but there can be no denial that his approach, splenetic and heartbreaking by turns, eagerly appropriated by the campaign trustees boosted the project at its formative, most fragile time.

In 2015, it was clear, from interviews with campaigners and survivors, that after three very difficult years, there was an emerging optimism. In two films, independent of the trustees, the point of the campaign, lost in flirtations with government conspiracy theories, was restated: fit and proper remembrance of a community at one with its aims and sense of its place in the world. *Real Lives-Reunited* (2014) brought together, at the partly-built memorial, Margaret McKay with the daughter of her rescuer, P.C Penn, one of the first on the scene. Off-duty and seeing the crush, he had parked his heavily pregnant wife in a safe place and started extricating people, as his long testimony in the National Archives demonstrates (Penn 1943). Penn rescued Margaret from the arms of her dying mother. It was his child to be, Doreen Freeman, that Margaret was to meet. Indisputably manipulative, this emotional reunion married tragedy and

bravery. It reinforced, if it were needed, the value of story-telling and its curation, in the same vein as the oral history project (Butler 2015).

Remembrance of a different kind is in a second short film, *I Remember, I Remember* (2015) which traces the stories of three children whose survival evoked varying and challenging adult responses. Nonetheless, all three came together in the project, to have their emotions paraded for the benefit of others, in a spirit of collective remembrance. Some of their personal comments are extraordinary. Mrs Babette Clark, a life lived with a love of dancing, can 'die happy' now the memorial is completed. Mr Lechmere, recalling his mother's wounds, says 'they went through it down there', seemingly oblivious to his own trauma.

The optimism observed in 2015, within the project team, was not misplaced with the completion of the memorial in 2017. Major problems had been negotiated between the first building phase in 2012 and the second. Planning applications had to be renewed, the original building company had gone into liquidation and building materials that had been promised were no longer available (Stairway to Heaven 2021b). However, the important thing was that the completed Memorial stood proudly next to the stairs on 17th December 2017. The BBC made a ten-minute film of the unveiling ceremony and released it the following March to coincide with the 75th anniversary service held in St John's (BBC 2018).

The formal ribbon-cutting was performed by a visibly frail Alf Morris and 102 year-old Dr Joan Martin, whose silence typified the generational reticence following the tragedy. The unveiling ceremony was attended by Tower Hamlets Mayor, John Biggs and the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, who stressed the importance of remembering the survivor's stories. Sandra Scotting said the completed memorial gives 'closure, reminds people what happened and how awful it was'; she adds, in counterpoint to closure, that she still hopes for some official apology. Perhaps, the most apposite summing up of the monument's role is from Rev. Green, trustee and spiritual advisor, when he spoke of the unveiling as 'due respect' being paid, 'permanently, openly, publicised, not hidden away' (BBC 2018).

The 2018 service had a full congregation with each of the 173 names read out by family members as candles in their memory were lit on the altar. This most moving, yet simple, dedication has continued uninterrupted since 2007 but for

the pandemic in 2021 when a virtual service was broadcast via social media channels. The project may have found its motivation in perceptions of undeserved guilt, humiliation and injustice yet in these simple remembrances it is family, kinship, stories and shared memories that are the more lasting motivators of remembrance. After the blessing, the congregation process across the Roman Road and gather around the memorial. In a curious nod to the old East End, and seemingly without dissonance in a much changed neighbourhood, the procession is led by traditional Pearly Kings and Queens, an organisation, rooted in the working class districts of North and East London devoted to raising funds for charitable causes (The Pearlies 2021) and a British Legion standard-bearer. Supporters, survivors and families lay wreaths and flowers as neighbourhood fire crews stand in attention. In 2021 these same firemen stood in silent vigil on the first Sunday in March in the absence of the crowds that one hopes will return again in the future. In the 2015 service a trumpeter signalled the last post. The trivial military overtones of remembrance are overshadowed by the sharing of stories which continues back in the church with tea and *beigels*. Here, the solemnity is parked and a hub-hub prevails as a survivors photo shoot is staged, at which the call 'not him, he's not a bloody survivor' rings out. In the crypt a local group is staging a play on the disaster, a macabre setting as this is where some of the dead were brought on the night of the tragedy. This is the side, unseen by the media. This is a community, perhaps just for the day, but one without rancour or recrimination over a catastrophic miscalculation that assumed people would treat the rocket test as a routine air-raid and file calmly into the tube station. As Brian Penn, whose family stayed home on the fateful night, observes 'conspiracy theories still do the rounds, but just occasionally the truth is more compelling. Frailties of the human condition were there for all to see; it was just one assumption too many. As the disaster slips from living memory, it is even more important to mark the event' (Penn 2018). Across the road, that event is marked with a monument of striking presence and symbolism. Its scale, and the achievement in its delivery, perhaps worthy of recognition in a wider, national consciousness of war memory.

In the years that followed the intense pressure of the campaign, Sandra Scotting and Harry Paticas were rewarded for their role in community remembrance with an MBE. Derek Spicer died in 2019. Alf Morris's work was

almost done in 2015 when he stood alongside the partial memorial, too lost in the moment to speak. After the 2017 unveiling he has been unable to attend the remembrance services. He has not been rewarded with an MBE.

9.7 The Memorial

The early sketch of 2006 is visible at the heart of the completed memorial; the 'stairs' attached to the vertical plinth. The scale, symbolism and position is well represented from an aerial photograph.

Figure 33

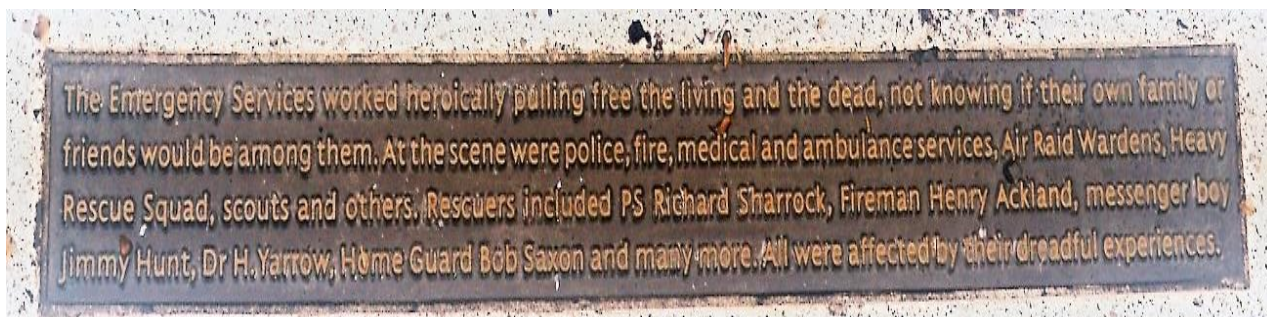
Bethnal Green Tube Disaster Memorial. 2017. Aerial View.



This shows the alignment with the entrance stairs where the people died. STHMT aimed for something striking and this is what has been delivered. The view is from the east with St John's Church out-of-shot on the right. The sustainably-sourced teak stair is a cast of the space in which the crowd descended in 1943. The roof has 173 conical perforations through which, around midday, spots of light are projected to the ground, to complete the physical and symbolic link with the actual stairs. The clear, sinuous lines of the white stone base snake for almost ten metres before a rapid vertical thrust to the canopy adorned with the names of the victims. The names are repeated on the column, close to a small light replicating the twenty-five watt bulb which lit the entrance. The memorial is studded with fourteen small plaques, a

commemorative telling of stories of the bereaved, the survivors and the first-responders. It is one of the features that transforms the monument to a memorial and creates the chance for lasting engagement through the narratives of real life and death.

Figure 34



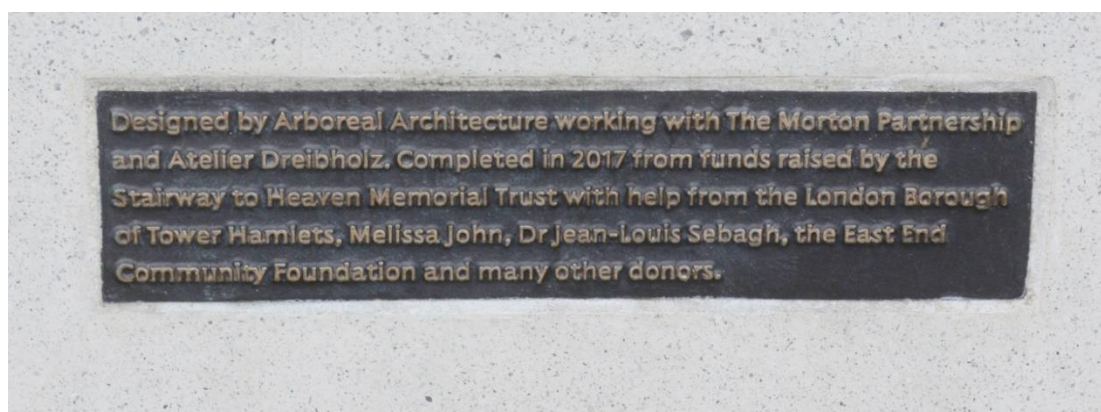
Bethnal Green Memorial. 2017. First Responder Plaque.

The 15th plaque, entitled The Bethnal Green Tube Shelter Disaster is about 1 foot square and tells the plain facts of the tragedy, without reference to panic, cover-up, guilt or injustice, in a message dedicated to the people it remembers. The War Memorials Register insensitively suggests the inscription speaks of 'stampede and panic', in a clear case where external information is added as if it were part of the monument (IWM 2021/WMR70373).

A discreet plaque, low on the side of the base pays tribute to Arboreal, Tower Hamlets Council and some specific supporters. Eleven years of toil and eventual triumph by the Memorial Trust are very understated.

Figure 35

Bethnal Green Memorial. 2017. Acknowledgement Plaque.



The completed memorial was delivered under budget at £467k (H. Paticas pers.comm). Sandra Scotting observed that without the architect's personal 'investment' in a cause that he believed in and helped to shape, it would have been considerably more (Pers.comm. 28th September 2015).

Any approach to the crossroads is dominated by the high canopy and its prominent names. It demands attention and its sensitivity in explaining the past is in marked contrast to the means of contestation that saw it from sketch to its new landmark status. This had to be direct, confrontational, hyperactive and sustained, at some cost to style, messaging and method. Moreover, amid the practical challenges of delivery, strained relationships were managed and did not challenge the eventual completion. The campaign had gained much, in its early days from emotional and sometimes angry declarations on the tragedy. An emerging emphasis on community relations jarred with the disputatious side of this approach. It was perhaps inevitable, yet, nonetheless sad, that the original partnership of architectural vision and the last survivor should become increasingly ineffective. The stories of others became more important to support a more holistic community narrative, not one born of grave injustice alone.

The monument is silent on internal divisions or the methods adopted to effect its delivery in time for the 75th anniversary of the tragedy. It meets the criteria set by the campaign in symbolising what happened in a way that encompasses all of its victims, the bereaved, the injured and their rescuers. It is immovable and prominent, its size is commensurate with the scale of the tragedy and the degree of distortion in the telling of this local history. Something this large and the public nature of its campaign inevitably invites critique. Detractors might point to an over-brash aesthetic from a group looking for redemption through scale rather than meaning. Its neighbourhood location may be at odds with the ethnicity and religion of its present communities, potentially resentful of *émigrés* planting a monument to a past with no meaning for them. The memorial group, via comments from Paticas and Scotting, believe completion silenced most critique, adding that doubters of the wisdom of this scale of investment were won over by its visible communication of the tragedy. The monument is part of a remembrance package with multi-media commemorative material and a community engagement programme that has reached into schools and local groups through the local Inter-faith Forum. The original support from Tower

Hamlets Council was conditional on the outreach element of the proposal and, both morally and financially, it has not wavered (Pers. Comm. S Scotting). Indeed, the local authority, with the help of volunteer 'guardians', has the task of curation and custodianship after the installation (H. Paticas pers. comm).

The community, for whom this monument is overdue recompense for the criticism and forgetting of their loved ones, has created a memorial vested in family ties, social frameworks and personal memories. This, in the writer's opinion, is a well-designed and executed memorial, with symbolism allied to specific remembrance, inviting engagement. The striking lines and scale make it impossible to pass-by, without asking what happened here?

9.8 Summary

The new monument at the tube station has promoted family reunions, personal healing, open discussion of a shared past and pride in the community; well-attended public events of remembrance, should they continue, in the Covid aftermath, will act to retain some cohesion in the widespread community of the disaster survivors and bereaved families. The STHMT committee are either survivors or lost close family members, a previous Chair was pulled from the crush by his hair. Their stories are of heartbreak and heroism, infused with the anger of being silenced and the injustice of blame. Family members were part of 'an unruly mob' that had 'panicked', exhibiting a 'loss of control' and hence bore the brunt of blame. The post-war generation had learned little from their family. Many people respected being sworn to secrecy and the stories had been repressed, staying untold until the pressure was relieved after 1993 and eventually completely released through the momentum of the project.

The unequal struggle of contested memory and meaning is writ large here with a hugely imaginative and unconventional memorial. The Bethnal Green Memorial is now a landmark, perhaps the grandest and most memorable, in the catalogue of civilian remembrance in London, with a substance transcending empty monumentality through the naming of the victims and the display panels with their heart-breaking stories. It is no mere cliché 'without emotional justification' (Young 2017, 14). The Stairway to Heaven Charity had a vision vested in a search for redress and this has resulted in a monument of physical and symbolic stature, within a community much changed since the events of

1943. Its roots in injustice have evolved into holistic personal remembrance in a public form.

It shares, with the more modest Columbia Market plaque, a past of innocent loss in a supposed place of safety. The neglected stories of both deserved to be commemorated. Put into context by the personal testimony of the activists who shaped them, these are critical insights into the history of the Blitz. Their commemorative outcomes differ enormously yet both express the essence of contested collective remembrance: the harnessing of personal loss or grievance and the willingness to campaign to get public visibility and redress.

The Stairway memorial group was blessed with a shared vision and a preparedness to mobilise the past in a way that maximised their resources and overcame daunting funding and planning obstacles to place a monument, fundamentally revising an improper 'collective' memory of events, in an area where the monument might have had limited meaning, for the neighbourhood's ethnic and religious mix, had their community outreach programme been ineffective.

It would be predictable to suggest that the Columbia memorial has been adversely affected by the scale, organisation and public awareness achieved just up the road. Columbia Market War Memorial however had its own *raison d'être*. It is a place of reflection, removed from the life-rush of a busy tube station, and its inception adopted an emollient tone. The Columbia activists worked quietly, with simple aims, unburdened by deep hurt, to find survivors and the families of the victims and involve them in its unveiling. Even so, it nearly missed its mark given the strains between its rather quixotic founder and the more practised networker he had invited to help. There is a distinct sense that Trevor Wood, born and bred in Bethnal Green, whose very existence derives from his mother's escape from the tube stairs, was neither in tune with the prevailing narrative at the stairway nor their approach. Wood suggested the stairway project could have had a decent memorial sooner had they aimed lower. In meeting Trevor, I can appreciate that the methods, approach and complexity of the Stairway project would not appeal. Their zeal however was driven by close-family loss; by a twist of fate, Trevor's family were spared that. Both teams feel they have succeeded in their aim to create a memorial that is relevant and involving. They knew what they wanted and who it was for. Their

monuments meet the conditions that can sustain their meaning after the long hiatus of neglect and forgetting that stimulated their development. They fit into a local commemorative landscape summarised in **Appendix 18**.

In extending their memorial work to their communities, both Bethnal Green projects gained local support and demonstrated an assurance in delivering contested, collective remembrance through engaging commemorative practices. Their respective commemorative achievements confront the community experience, their realities of the Blitz, living and dying in the way of the bombs, expressed in material communication denied to the simplified, politically-channelled Blitz narrative critiqued from the outset of this thesis. Now, seventy years after these tragic events, a long silence is over. As member of the Stairway team said in 2015, it is never too late for a truth to be told.

10. PORTSMOUTH

We are bruised but we are not daunted, and we are still as determined as ever to stand side by side with other cities who have felt the blast of the enemy and we shall, with them, persevere with an unflagging spirit towards a conclusive and decisive victory.

The Lord Mayor, 11 January 1941 (Portsmouth Evening News 2010 [1945]).

10.1 Introduction

Portsmouth is a crowded island city defined by its surrounding waters.

Geography grants it great harbours, recalled in almost every city corner, for sea-goings and home-comings, wars and trade, fortresses and ferries. War and defence are common themes in its museums and attractions. The modern city is itself a product of significant wartime damage. It suffered 67 raids and 1581 alerts between July 1940 and May 1944 (Jenkins 1986; Portsmouth Evening News 2010 [1945, 5]); 930 civilians died and 2,800 were seriously injured (Blanchard 1945).

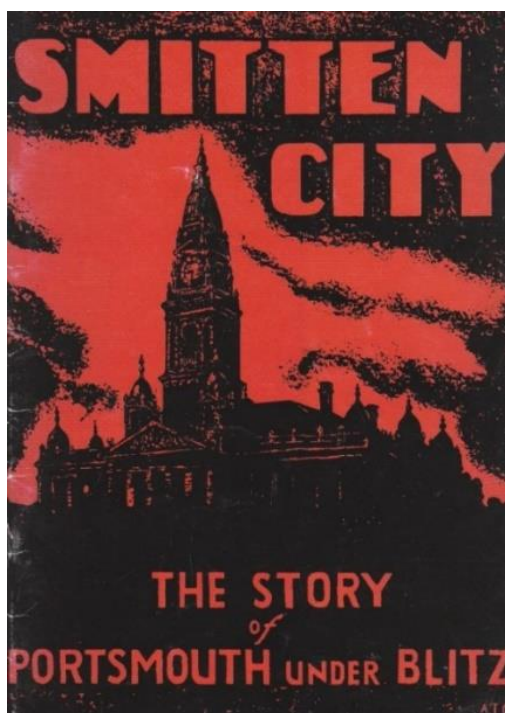
The heaviest raid of Friday, 10th January 1941, which has become a focus for remembrance, left 170 dead, over 400 injured and 3,000 homeless (Owen 2016); 25,000 incendiaries re-shaped the centre of the city. The Guildhall, symbol of its elevation to a city in 1926, was gutted, leaving only a shell (Triggs 2003, 5 and 31). The Royal Garrison Church lost its roof and the George Hotel, where Nelson spent his last night in Britain, was destroyed. It was the night that Portsmouth became the *Smitten City*. Although its main utilities were destroyed or disabled, the city managed to contain the damage and forestall the experience that had brought Coventry close to paralysis. An unsubstantiated story persists (J. Marshallsay pers. comm. 10 January 2019) that a London Fire Brigade convoy, *en route* to assist, turned back on Portsdown Hill, with the blazing city at its feet. Believing the city was finished, they turned away.

Portsmouth was not alone in urban branding, in the aftermath of its air war. Coventry was, for a time, the 'Martyred City' (Reardon 2011, 30; *The Martyred City* 1940) while Plymouth presented itself as the 'Worst-Blitzed' (Twyford 1945). Several cities saw their Blitz ordeals as 'forgotten', if not wilfully ignored, by the predominant narrative of London, a state-of-mind that persisted, in post-war literary treatments in Clydebank (MacLeod 2014), Glasgow (Smith 2016)

and Liverpool (Holmes 2010; Jones 2003). Portsmouth positioned its Blitz as a stimulus for the post-war task of reconstruction and re-housing (Triggs 2003, 5-6). A litany of destruction, 'awaiting the builders', was the message of *Smitten City* (Portsmouth Evening News 2010 [1945, 5]. The impact of the bombing is presented through images of damage and destruction of shopping streets like Palmerston, Kings and Commercial Roads. The only reference to casualties is a captioned mass funeral photo, Figure 39 (2010 [1945], 46).

Figure 36

Cover of *Smitten City*. Portsmouth Evening News 2010 [1945].



A snapshot of the process is personally recalled on Little Southsea Street, where the gas-lit, family home sat, amid broken terraced houses, punctuated by bomb sites and buddleia. Today, the same street has uniform, red-brick, low-rise flats; the surviving terraces were demolished by the early 1960s.

These family links are material to the choice of Portsmouth as a central case study in the thesis. While other provincial cities suffered higher casualties, it was the local 'yarns' and family remembrances that coloured the choice. It was where the air war was first revealed to me in those Southsea bomb sites and where the Guildhall clock was stuck at 10 to 3 for 18 years.

10.2 Civilian Archaeology

To establish a sense of the city's civilian remembrance response to its damage and dead, walking surveys, assisted by internet sources, were undertaken between 2013-2020. Memorials in Portsmouth (2021) and the War Memorials Register (IWM 2021) illustrate the city's memorial riches; of over four hundred commemorative records, just eleven are civilian. Another five, not on the register, complete the small record of memorials; they are summarised in **Appendix 19** and reviewed here, starting with the earliest in the civilian chronology.

Portsmouth, in common with other blitzed cities had recourse to mass burials. In previous analysis, the commemorative material that followed, within a few years of the committals, was observed to share a uniformity of style and standard. Furthermore, location and neighbourhood dispersion led to a separation in post-war engagement and questionable maintenance support from local authorities and cemetery operators. There are two multiple-burial sites and memorials in Portsmouth, both at Kingston Cemetery, which lies in the centre of the island.

Figure 37

Location Map of Kingston Cemetery, Portsmouth.



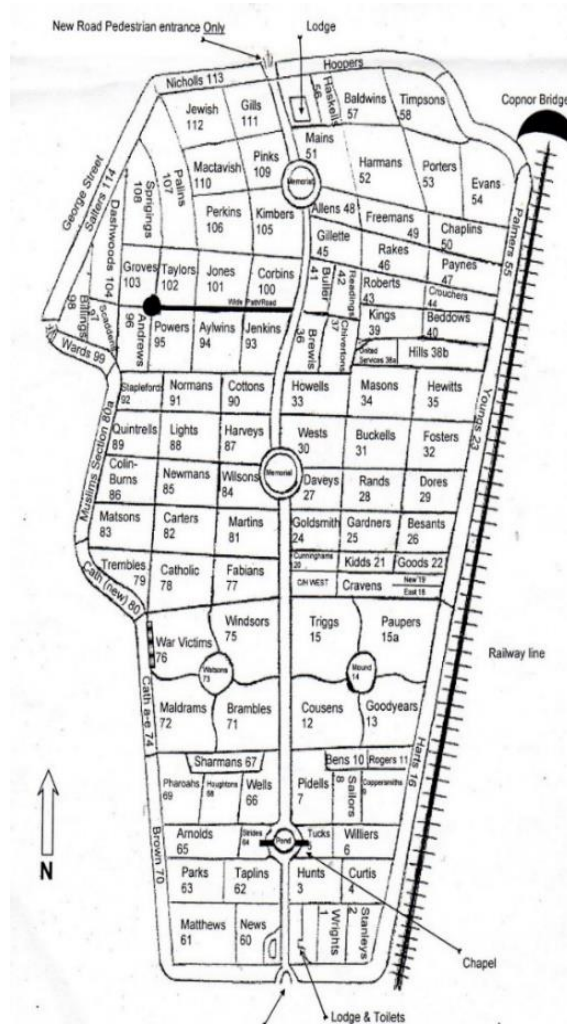
Memorials in Portsmouth 2021

It dates from 1854 and at 52 acres is the city's largest. It has a north-south alignment, widening from its southern end on St Mary's Road. The main-line to London runs the length of the eastern side. The cemetery is divided by a central

road and a Blomfield-style Cross of Sacrifice stands at the northern end; in an adjacent plot are many private civilian casualty burials.

Figure 38

Plan of Kingston Cemetery, Portsmouth. Memorials in Portsmouth 2021.



Memorials in Portsmouth 2021

The larger of the civilian sections is about a third of the way along the western side, close to the cemetery wall, section 76. The Civilians Memorial-West (WMR 21447) commemorates by name 110 civilian and five military victims buried in the adjacent plot which also includes the remains of 20 unidentified victims. The memorial is a rectangular stone block with an inscription at its head and five slate panels beneath:

Erected to the memory of those men, women and children both known and unknown who died as a result of enemy bombing on this city and whose last resting place is near this spot.

Four vertical panels display the 110 named civilian victims in alphabetical order followed by a general statement in memory of unidentified victims. The fifth panel at the base carries a religious homily of sorrow, sacrifice and rebirth. The five military victims are named on separate CWGC stones. The memorial plaques date from 2011, replacing the stolen originals. They were re-dedicated with a remembrance service close to Armistice Day. The original plaques listed the casualties in order of their grave row and number including each of the unidentified victims (Memorials in Portsmouth 2021/Kingston West). The monument faces west, towards the cemetery wall and the immediately adjacent burial plot, a north-south low mound, about 5 metres wide, 75 metres long and less than a metre high. The mound is where 135 victims were buried in two rows, one of 89 plots and the other of 46 plots. 117 of those interred died in 1941 with the remainder buried between August 1943 and the end of the war. The five CWGC headstones are placed centrally and thus do not match the actual place of interment. The position of one casualty can be placed with certainty; at the southern end of the mound, a 6-inch square granite sett, inscribed 1/89, marks the burial place of L. Abrahams, row 1, plot 89 on the original plaque (Memorials in Portsmouth 2021/Kingston West).

Memorials in Portsmouth confirm that 49 of the casualties died on 10th January 1941, including two from 101 High Street and 19 from Besant Road where a public shelter sustained a direct hit. These events and their memorialisation are detailed later. The victims were buried, on the 17th January 1941, after a showy parade, derided by Harrison (1976, 187).

Figure 39

Mass Funeral. Kingston Cemetery. 17th January 1941.



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The second grave memorial, Civilians Memorial-East (WMR 21446), lies further north, on the eastern fringe of the cemetery, at the edge of plot 40/Beddows, facing the railway. At the centre is a limestone block, about 1.5 metres high, with the same inscription and homily of sacrifice as Kingston West, above a single slate plaque which has 31 names of 29 civilians and two serving men whose CWGC headstones face the memorial. The plaque is also from 2011 as a precaution following the western memorial theft. Two unidentified casualties are also buried with those named (Memorials in Portsmouth 2021/Kingston East). The stone is flanked by a low dry-stone wall on a north-south alignment, facing the 30 metre-long burial mound enclosing the grave plots in one row. This burial group is for some of the city's earliest bombing casualties; thirty-one of the thirty-three died between August and December 1940. The grave memorials, on both sides, were in place by April 1951 (Portsmouth Evening News 1951). They are well-maintained in comparison with many of those seen in London and the western memorial still features in remembrance events.

Soon after the cemetery graves were opened the earliest civilian commemoration was effected. Bramble Road is the small street in Southsea to which close family moved, in the late 1950s, from Little Southsea Street. On the 10th January 1941, a surface shelter in Bramble Road School was hit with several fatalities. The school is next door to the Church of the Holy Spirit, rebuilt and re-dedicated in 1958. It stands on the site of St Matthews, itself new in 1924, but destroyed in the same raid as the school shelter (Yates 1980). A scout meeting was in progress, in the church hall, when the alarm sounded; the troop made their way quickly to the adjacent playground shelter, where five of them died, when it took a direct hit (Hind 2006, 16-24). All five lived close to the church where they are remembered.

Following its destruction, St Matthew's parish duties were taken up nearby, at St Bartholomew's, where the scouts were quickly remembered, on a wall plaque, installed later in 1941. When the parishes merged, in 1958, the plaque came to the new church (M. Bridgman pers.comm. 7 August 2021). The date of this otherwise unremarkable plaque is significant. It was the city's first civilian commemoration and the only one to have been installed during the Blitz.

Figure 40

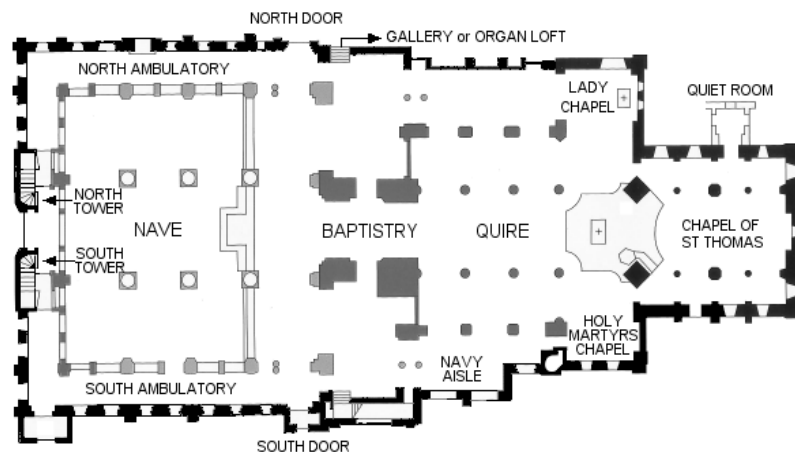
Boy Scout Memorial. Bramble Road Shelter. 1941.



The next civilian references are found in Old Portsmouth, at the southern tip of Portsea Island, adjacent to the Harbour, where the city started life before the Victorian surge to the north. It is home to Portsmouth Cathedral, a building in a Romanesque tradition, with a characteristic 'lighthouse' tower. In 1927, the parish church of St Thomas of Canterbury was extended to create a building fit to represent the new city. The 12th century nave and chancel of the original church are incorporated into the Quire.

Figure 41

Portsmouth Cathedral Plan from Memorials in Portsmouth 2021.



As befits a maritime city, there are many naval memorials, including that of an unknown sailor of the Mary Rose. Civilian remembrance is found in the Baptistery where a wall plaque names eight Red Cross nurses who died by enemy action in WWII (*Hampshire Telegraph* 1941; IWM 2021/WMR21532). The memorial dedication on 31st October 1947 (*Hampshire Telegraph* 1947), was attended by the local MP, the Lord Mayor and family members.

Figure 42

Red Cross Memorial. Baptistery, Portsmouth Cathedral. 1947.



In the North Ambulatory, in 2014, there were three desks with books of remembrance to those who lost their lives during WWII. The central one had an interactive facility and book with the names of service casualties (War Memorials Trust 2021/74640). It was out of order in 2014; by 2020 it had been removed. On either side of the terminal were two traditional bound volumes in glass cases. On request, a vergger allowed access which confirmed their different intentions. One is hand-written on vellum and is the Corporation's Book of Remembrance, dated to 1952 (WMR 40552), naming civilian victims of bombing. This was organised by the head of social services, Elizabeth Kelly, who also initiated the events that led to the second book. This is a specially printed version of the Civilian Roll of Honour for the County Borough of Portsmouth, narrower in scope than the 1952 book, but with the CWGC's format of biographical detail. This was dedicated in a special service in 1957 (Imperial War Graves Commission 1957). Neither book was on display in 2020; the

vellum version was in a strong room and the other in an aumbry on the south wall. A verger again allowed access and explained their removal for safe-keeping and to free space in the ambulatory. Their removal from easy public access is related to the establishment of the WWII Memorial Wall in the plaza, whose development is described later, adjacent to the Guildhall, which was fully-populated by 2016. Regardless of this major recognition of military and civilian war dead, it is regrettable that, after display, side by side, for over sixty years, the books should be removed. The cathedral no longer honours the WWII dead by the tradition of the turning of the page in its books of memory.

The southern side of the Cathedral, until 1941, was hemmed in by houses on High Street. The houses were destroyed on January 10th 1941. In the south-east corner of the cathedral precinct, amid flood lights and notice boards, sits an unobtrusive rectangle of granite, a few inches high and about 2 feet square. This stone names the 14 people who died here, 2 in the street, and 12 in the cellar of number 101. It was unveiled in 2011 on the 70th anniversary of the destruction of the building (IWM 2021/WMR94045). It was not however the first plaque to mark this place. No record has been found, to date, for a small tablet which read *In Memoriam, 101 High Street, 8 April 1941, R.I.P.*; also unknown is why it had an incorrect date. The 2011 unveiling was attended by relatives who spoke of the chaos which failed to identify remains destined for hasty burial. The plaque was funded by a local history group (Memorials in Portsmouth 2021/101 High Street); posies of flowers are often seen here.

Close to the Cathedral is a partially-ruined church with service remembrance at its heart. The Royal Garrison Church has C12th origins and acts as a memorial through the symbol of its roofless nave, according to an undated church leaflet:

Following detailed consideration [...] it is therefore not intended to replace the main roof so that the Nave will remain as a partial ruin as a memorial to all those service men who gave their lives for their country, in particular in the second world war when the church was damaged.

There is no sign to confirm this role, which appropriates the city's Blitz without recall of those who perished in it. No sign is needed for its military role; under open skies, memorials festoon its walls to recall those who served Portsmouth when its garrison rivalled its maritime responsibilities. In the still-covered chancel are brass plaques of war heroes from Nelson and Wellington forward

(English Heritage 2021). The ascription of a memorial role for WWII is questionable when knowledge of it is so understated; War Memorials Trust does not recognise it (2021). Social engagement and leverage of its air war symbolism are absent; the city's civilian sacrifice finds no remembrance here. There is civilian recognition, however, outside the churchyard gate. The Men and Women of Portsmouth Stone (WMR 40556) is a metre-high block of granite depicting wartime civilian activities through a series of panels. Sadly, these images of the police, fire brigade, ARP and nurses, are barely legible having 'fogged' in the salty air. On its top, a metal plaque reads:

This plaque commemorates the dedication of the men and women of the City of Portsmouth who, through their steadfastness and devotion, contributed to the safekeeping of their city during the period of World War 2, 1939-1945. Unveiled by Lady Daley 5th March 2000.

Margaret Daley, was the wife of the wartime Lord Mayor, Dennis Daley. Responding to the plight of the city, they were seen, not entirely without sarcasm, as 'energetic, devoted, hard at work, smiling at everything' (Harrison 1976, 189). Harrison, un-stirred by the rousing words of the epigraph, criticised Daley for his '...rosy view, in so far as anyone from outside could penetrate that piece of civic façade' (1976, 189). Lady Daley is one of a group of women, including Elizabeth Kelly, whose committed service is visible in the city's small universe of civilian remembrance archaeology. A memorial window at St Colman's Church, Cosham, depicts her leading children away from the flames. The review now moves about 1 mile north of Old Portsmouth to Guildhall Square where the city's formal remembrance is centred. Its setting has been determined by the shaping of the city. Rapid expansion in the latter half of the C19th saw the town expand, in a northerly direction, up the peninsula, from its historic origins near the port and dockyard. The new centre of the aspiring city was established in Landport around the main railway station. In 1890, a new Town Hall, redesignated in 1926 as the Guildhall, was opened, on the western side of a large public square (Quail and Stedman 1993, 35-39). The main railway station sits on the northern side of the square and its 1876 harbour extension snakes around the northern side of the Guildhall. The space between the Guildhall and the railway embankment, the northerly extension of Guildhall Square, was developed as a memorial plaza after WWI.

Memorial Square presents contrasting approaches to remembrance. In 1921, funded by public subscription, a memorial befitting great wartime sacrifice was unveiled (Borg 1991, Plate 176). On a curving western wall, 10 bronze plaques, about 3 x 2 metres, carry thousands of names; each plaque is highly decorated with laurels and scrolls. In front of them stands a column, topped with an elaborate burial casket, with sculpted base panels depicting the work of the forces. The memorial sits in a bowl, like an open-air theatre, accessed by a short flight of steps. Two statues add a melodramatic flourish; machine gunners, a naval rating and a soldier, aimed and ready to fire, as if defending the memorial, flank the entrance steps. These are the work of Charles Sargeant Jagger whose Royal Artillery Memorial at Hyde Park Corner is perhaps the most celebrated of his realist sculptures (Borg 1991, 80-81). Portsmouth's desire for city status, is reflected in these bombastic flourishes and sombre accompaniments, limited by train announcements which inhibit any attempt at quiet reflection.

Until 2005, however, the Memorial Square had no WWII commemoration, save for words on a low, boundary wall, added in the 1970s (Historic England 2021).

IN MEMORY OF THOSE WHO LOST THEIR LIVES IN WORLD WAR II

This absence ended, 60 years after the war, with a monument of classical simplicity, a Lutyenesque cenotaph, which fulfilled civic and public aims for WWII remembrance, after a particularly prolonged gestation. The monolith, around 3 metres high, carries a simple plaque, with city and service crests:

IN MEMORY OF THE SERVICE MEN AND WOMEN AND THE
CITIZENS OF PORTSMOUTH WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES IN DEFENCE
OF THEIR COUNTRY DURING WORLD WAR II

On the curved wall, behind the obelisk, are lists of 3500 WWII victims on 17 stone panels. Twelve carry the names of some 2500 service personnel and five for around 1000 civilians. The memorial delivers its message of remembrance without the drama and pomp of its WWI predecessor. Its simple lines and clear inscriptions make it a fitting partner in Portsmouth's World War Memorial Park (IWM 2021/WMR 21430 and 96619).

Together, the WWII cenotaph and name wall create an evocative memorial, which neither could perhaps achieve alone. This harmony, however, obscures a

long, uneven process, a 27-year campaign, from 1989, via 2005, until 2016, to deliver overdue remembrance of the city's WWII dead. This example of contested remembrance was not typified by opposition or hidden agenda. Civic reticence, amid competing demands on funding, was met by the polite but relentless campaigning of a retired school-teacher.

Figure 43

WWII Cenotaph and Memorial Wall. 2005 & 2016. Portsmouth.



10.3 World War II Memorial

The memorial review, thus far, shows a marked hiatus in civilian commemoration after the 1957 honour roll in the Cathedral. The city had nothing to show until 2005, other than the Men and Women Stone of 2000. Commemorative absence has been observed, as a general post-war hiatus, elsewhere in the thesis. In Portsmouth, entrenched in military and naval culture, the delay in remembrance of its war dead, suggests other factors at work. One explanation is the eagerness to break with the wartime past and focus on its legacy of massive housing issues (Portsmouth Evening News 2010; *Smitten City* 1981; Stedman 1995). The latter made huge demands on finance and it was not until 1989 that WWII remembrance was mobilised. Initially alone, a

remarkable campaigner raised the issue and soon gathered support from veterans organisations. Aged 56 at the time, Mrs Jean Louth embarked on a second career, unaware of its tortuous path and longevity, to challenge funding obstacles and local government hesitancy, to produce a remarkable commemorative outcome.

Jean Louth's father, Bombardier Harry Short, died in May 1940 at Dunkirk; she was 7 years old. In 1989, having raised a family, she realised that her city had nothing honouring citizens that had not survived the war. She was clear that something needed to be done and set out to enlist friends, ex-service men and women and local organisations to press for a memorial and raise funds. Tim Backhouse, who created the Memorials in Portsmouth web resource, expressed no doubt that the 2005 memorial would not have existed without the 'dogged determination' of Jean Louth and the help of the Normandy Veterans Association and the Portsmouth South Branch of the Royal British Legion. Their funds were matched by the City Council (BBC News 2009c).

Louth's campaigning did not end with the 2005 cenotaph, despite the elapse of 16 years. The next phase was to add names to the memorial. In May 2006 a charitable trust was registered as the Portsmouth WW2 Memorial Fund charged with 'raising funds for the provision and maintenance of a memorial to commemorate those from Portsmouth who lost lives in the Second World War and inscribe their names' (Open Charities 2021/1114162). The charity operated for 11 years and was wound up, having fulfilled its obligations, in 2017. It was based at the City Council offices on Guildhall Square with six trustees including Jean Louth, Colin Barrell, designer of the cenotaph, and members of the council, including its leader from 2004-2014, Cllr. Vernon Jackson.

The Trust swiftly settled on a proposal to populate a wall with over 3500 names behind the cenotaph; costed at £100k, names were to be added as funds allowed. Progress was slow; corporate and individual donations were impacted by the 2008 financial crisis. The charity needed a change in approach.

This was launched on Remembrance Day 2009 with a personal plea from Jean Louth to the people of Portsmouth for help to complete work on the memorial. Her appeal was aimed at those related to the unremembered dead, asking them to contribute, as it were, one £30 'brick' at a time. Her own fear-'When I'm gone who is going to remember people like my father?'-was transferred to the 'many,

many people now, whose fathers, perhaps even grandfathers, were killed in that war. How will they be remembered unless their names are there?' (BBC News 2009c). The role of the council, under the leadership of the above-mentioned Vernon Jackson, nudged and cajoled over many years by Louth's zealous campaigning, was becoming more proactive. It set up web pages for individuals to 'apply' for a listing and began collecting names of service personnel who had died. The City Records Office worked on the compilation of definitive lists of names from 2010 until 2013 (Portsmouth City Council 2013). The list drew on the World War II Books of Remembrance on display, then, in the Cathedral. Progress on assembling the data, and presumably on funding, enabled the council to announce their intention to add civilian names to the memorial wall, on the 70th anniversary of the 10th January raid, under the headline, 'Portsmouth Remembers Blitz Victims' (BBC 2011).

The 2011 Blitz anniversary was also marked with a memorial service for all who had died in the bombing. The event took place on the Guildhall steps and 1013 names were read out. These included civilians, Home Guard, ARP and service personnel known to have died in the bombing. The list had been compiled from the data of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, Portsmouth Dockyard and the City Museum and Records Office (BBC 2011). The council had assembled local community groups, survivors, relatives of the dead and volunteers to participate in the reading, after a two-minute silence and the sounding of the air-raid siren. The Guildhall bells, known affectionately as the Pompey Chimes, were silenced, as they had been 70 years earlier.

This anniversary was important to the memorial project as it galvanised the efforts to get the names displayed and the charity group were in a position to install the first of the panels carrying some 610 service personnel. The unveiling of these took place near Remembrance Day in 2012. Jean Louth, remarking on her, then, 23 years of campaigning, reiterated the aim to add the remaining 2900 or so military and civilian men and women (BBC News 2012).

A year later, significant progress had been made and 1300 more names had been added to the wall. Again, Remembrance Day, in November 2013, was the time to publicise the charity's progress. Jean announced the 'marvellous news' that Portsmouth City Council had pledged the remaining £27,000 required to finish the wall. At the time of the council's pledge, the wall had 1,949 names,

listed alphabetically, up to the surname Scott. As Jean observed 'we are almost there with my dad's name [Short] which is why I started all this in the first place' (BBC News 2013c). The BBC News item quotes Portsmouth City Council who added that the funding meant the remaining names would be added in time for 2014 and the planned commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the D-Day landings. Jean observed the great injustice caused by the historic absence of a memorial and added 'These men and women have had to wait so long. Now between us, we have righted this wrong' (BBC News 2013c).

The funding pledge brought the finishing stages of the project into view and the progressive filling of the wall continued, as announced. Indeed, by June 2014, the twelve armed-service casualty panels had been completed, fulfilling Jean Louth's wish to see her father's name inscribed. A news gathering, on Armed Forces Day, June 24th 2014, saw his name unveiled and, viewing it for the first time, she paid tribute to him as 'a regular soldier' and hence 'one of the first to go' and not return. She observed that it is easy to say that we will never forget those who lost their lives 'but we will if their names aren't there to be remembered'. She thanked the city's big firms and the people of Portsmouth who had been 'brilliant with their donations' (BBC News 2014).

The long story of the Memorial Fund closed formally with the winding up of the charitable trust in 2017 but as Jean Louth enjoyed the unveiling of her father's name, and the last of the armed-service names, in mid-2014, one more major task awaited completion. In 2013, when the council pledged the remaining £27k, of a total budget of £90k, it was implied that the 1000 and more civilian casualties would be added in time for the 70th anniversary of D Day; in the event this did not happen. Photographs from 2015 still show the bare brick where the 5 civilian panels should have been. Given the Fund's unwavering commitment, to record all the city's WW2 casualties, this was unfortunate.

Happily, the completion of the wall was achieved, in 2016; all 17 panels were in place carrying almost 3500 names. The 1029 civilians appear under the heading, CIVILIANS WHO LOST THEIR LIVES. This is considerably more than the 930 identified just after the war and is also a few more than the 1013 whose names were read out on 10th January 2011. Some armed-service Blitz victims are included with the civilians as well as on the military panels. This over-eagerness apart, the memorial represents a great achievement. Indeed, the

whole WWII memorial in juxtaposition with its WW1 predecessor, sharing the same ground, also has an element of rarity (Borg 1991, 142). An onlooker, with a family-member on the memorial, said it was important to 'remember civilians as much as those in uniform, to remember that all casualties in war leave behind a lot of sorrow and heartache in families, and they're worth remembering as much as those that fight on our frontline' (BBC News 2016).

The final formality was an unveiling ceremony in September 2016, the culmination of 27 years of work for Jean who was reported as '...quite pleased that I have been able to do this, because I'm just an ordinary woman, I'm nobody special' (BBC News 2016). In more cynical times, this might smack of false-modesty, but her public appearances, shaped by formal unveilings and press attention, belie this and show a dedicated and determined individual, now in her mid-eighties, with a genuine desire for fitting remembrance of, what she termed, as 'a thousand ordinary people'.

Realistically, the achievement was not delivered by her alone. She has paid public tribute to Vernon-Jackson and his support since 2004, after years of battling alone. Vernon-Jackson regained the leadership of the council in 2018, after 4 years in opposition. In the memorial phase, since 2005, the council added polish to Jean's role as figurehead. While it is her campaign and her achievement, in the clear messaging, the choice of apposite unveiling dates and the careful management of funds and expectations during the piecemeal process, over almost ten years, the professional hand of the local government, with perhaps an eye on party interests, can be seen. In a nice final flourish, Jean received national recognition in 2018, from then Prime Minister, Theresa May, with a Points of Light honour, a daily award from Number 10, to recognise local volunteers and their work (Prime Minister's Office 2018). Jean Louth is the latest in a line of redoubtable women whose service has been pivotal in the city's civilian remembrance; a short summary is in **Appendix 20**.

Work continued on the Memorial Park into 2020, in preparation for the 75th anniversary of VE day. Access improvements, on the eastern side of the plaza, saw the removal of the low, retaining wall and with it the original, and for many years, the only, reference to WWII casualties (Callingham 2019). No longer needed, with the completion of the WWII Memorial, its passing, a product of the dynamism of remembrance, is nonetheless regrettable.

10.4 Besant Road Shelter

The next civilian reference is a mile north-east of the Guildhall, in the neighbourhood of Fratton, on Arundel Street which traverses east-west. At its junction, with a north-south dual-carriageway, there is a large roundabout, a supermarket and its petrol station. This is where Besant Road School stood until 1958. Portsmouth suffered its worst loss of civilian lives, in a single incident, here when a direct hit killed around 80 people sheltering in the school grounds (Hind 2006, 4-14); 64 of them were women and children (Nimmo 2011). The tragedy occurred in the early evening on Friday, 10th January 1941 as Portsmouth's 31st raid was getting started. For seven hours, around 300 aircraft attacked the city, their incendiaries destroying the central city districts, leaving 170 people dead (Sadden 2011). The destruction of the shelter, despite accounting for almost half of that night's fatalities, quickly passed from general discourse; *Smitten City* makes no mention of the incident or the burial of some of its victims at the mass funeral (Portsmouth Evening News 2010 [1945], 46). The determination of the city and its populace to move on, favouring rebuilding over remembrance, pushed the incident further to oblivion.

Figure 44

Besant Road Shelter Memorial. Arundel St., Portsmouth. 2011.



Not until 2011, 70 years after the disaster, the same year that saw the new plaques at Kingston Cemetery and 101 High Street, was it commemorated, with a modest plaque, on a wall of the petrol station. The memorial placement is challenged amid the paraphernalia of garage safety equipment and signage; regrettably the chalk mark for its placing is still evident. In spite of the sub-optimal location and presentation, this is an important commemoration for its conjunction of personal memory and public remembrance.

The following image (Memorials in Portsmouth 2021/Besant) shows the school from the north with Arundel Street traversing from east-west in the foreground. The low building to the left of the school, close to the junction with Spencer Road, is a typical street shelter. No date is available for the image but the roof on the far right has clearly sustained damage which suggests any time after 1940. The image is widely used (Hind 2006, 5; Triggs 2003, 54).

Figure 45

Besant Road School from Arundel Street, c. 1941.



The site is shown on the following 1942 map extract. The school occupies the area contained by Arundel Street, Besant Road (now Holbrook Road), Spencer Road (now Murefield Road) and Garnier Street. This is the area occupied today by the petrol station. It remains unclear, from local testimony, whether the shelter, in the above image, is the site of the tragedy (R. Rowe pers.comm. 14 August 2019) or, as Memorials in Portsmouth (2021) speculates, 'in the playground', behind the main buildings.

Figure 46

Map of Besant Road. National Library of Scotland. 2021.



The compelling story that drove the project is that good luck spared Noreen Rowe, Robert Rowe's mother, and her good friend, Barbara Tombs, who, with Barbara's 16-year-old sister, Pearl, were returning from roller-skating in Southsea. As they made their way home, along Arundel Street, the air-raid warning sounded. Breaking into a run, Barbara lost the heel of her shoe and Noreen stayed with her, to shelter in a shop doorway; Pearl ran on to the school shelter and 'perished with her mother Nellie and sister Madge' (R. Rowe pers. comm. 16th August 2019).

On 16th August 2019, I met with Mr Rowe (RR), born 1947, who, until retirement, ran his own building company. At his home, between Southwick and Wickham in Hampshire, he explained why and how he brought his memorial project to fruition. Robert explained that, after retirement, he had begun to write up a personal history; he was happy to show me the relevant pages. As a young man, his mother had recounted her lucky escape and the rumours that the site had been closed-up without all the dead having been removed. This had special poignancy for the Rowe family. Their first post-war home, to which the new-born Robert was brought, was adjacent to the Besant School. Given that his existence resulted from his mother's lucky escape, it is unsurprising that he 'was always intending to make sure the site would be marked and

remembered'. Mr Rowe said that all his life he had been motivated by how close his mother came to death inside the shelter.

As the post-war years passed, family life and career were at the forefront, although Robert's serial volunteering also included remembrance events. In November 1982, as President of British Junior Chamber, Portsmouth, he unveiled a plaque, at Portsmouth Cathedral, in memory of those who lost their lives in the Falklands conflict, a commemoration concurrently observed by the Junior Chambers of Coventry, Liverpool, Plymouth, Sheffield and Southampton (Memorials in Portsmouth 2021/Falklands). In 2005, for the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar, Robert and his wife, Marilyn, volunteered to join Nelson's crew of 800 in a re-enactment on HMS Victory in the Dockyard. This led to an invitation to the 70th anniversary of the Portsmouth Blitz on the Guildhall steps. Reading the names of the Tombs family, friends of his mother, was a poignant experience. It confirmed that it was time for his long-held plan to be progressed. On February 1st 2011, soon after the Guildhall event, having contacted the owners of the service station, approval for a plaque was received, with a donation. The project now had a site and funding and approval from the City Council soon followed; his one-man mission had already earned the support of relatives of the dead in response to local newspaper promotion (Nimmo 2011). This had re-printed the names of the dead, compiled five years earlier, in what was probably the first public remembrance of the victims (Hind 2006, 109-110). On Monday, 15th August 2011, with the Lord Mayor in attendance, the stainless-steel plaque was unveiled on a south facing wall of the Asda petrol station, attended by over 100 people, including relatives of the victims. The unveiling, with short speeches, a last post and a minute's silence, was led by Mr Rowe. He summed up the transfer of private memory to public remembrance:

Those that died on this site have always been remembered and now this memorial will make sure that they won't be forgotten.

There is every reason for pride in getting that plaque put up and reminding the people of Portsmouth of that single tragedy in a much wider tragedy of the 10th January 1941. One of the darkest days in Portsmouth's proud history'.

The daughter of Barbara Tombs, Susan Harvey, spoke of the cost to her family and the lasting trauma of an unmarked event:

I don't believe my mother [...] ever got over what happened (she) almost had a feeling of guilt for having survived. Now they finally have something that tells people what happened there [...]. Lots of people had waited decades to get things off their chests, and suddenly all that came pouring out of them (Nimmo 2011).

Touched by the people who came to pay their respects, a 'low-key affair was made into a day to remember' (R. Rowe pers. comm. 16th August 2019).

Mr Rowe's single-minded pursuit, in his mother's memory, came at an important time in Portsmouth's recognition of its civilian war dead. In an important anniversary year, well-marked by public engagement, the council was still wrestling with the best way to fund and record the memory of the town's casualties at its WWII cenotaph. Alongside the stone at 101 High Street and the Daley window at Cosham (see **Appendix 19**), activism was encountering personal memory and translating it into public form after a long hiatus. Rowe's commemoration amounts to more than a mere plaque; the truth of its place, and the simple tragic facts, achieving a public acknowledgement where none existed before. A broken shoe determined the commemoration he was fated to deliver, giving many, whose memories had been suppressed, the opportunity to vent their feelings and see some closure.

A similar commendation applies to the act of remembrance inherent in *City of Gallant Hearts* (Hind 2006). Bob Hind is a 70-something journalist with *The News*, Portsmouth's Evening paper. This 2006 memoir, drawing on the personal testimony of surviving family members and friends, tells many stories of those who died in the Portsmouth Blitz. His narrative builds, case by case, the sequence of terrible events in his native city, the tales of loss reminding readers that behind the statistic of 930 civilian war dead are moving, deeply-personal tragedies. This memoir first published the names of the Besant School victims. Personal knowledge of the incident dates from family conversations in the mid-sixties. It was the Besant Road tragedy that was discussed at home in Bramble Road, just a few houses from that bombed school. What I had perhaps assumed was an iconic incident of the Blitz had become overshadowed, lost in time, as Portsmouth pursued the major challenges of reconstructing a new city.

10.5 Summary

Portsmouth's commemorative archaeology starts and finishes with the naming of the dead. From five young Scouts to over 1,000 civilians, the city has travelled a path of remembrance of lows and highs, of speed and hiatus. It has achieved what some still seek, a manifest linking of home front sacrifice, in equal honour, as espoused by Ware, with those who encounter war through battle. There is, with the exception of the stone next to the Garrison Church, no sermonising of spirit, no empty narrative of popular resilience, no separation of civilian loss from a narrative of war experience. The Men and Women of Portsmouth (2000) sits oddly in the timeline, related to millennial celebrations.

The work of Louth, Hind and Rowe is important in a city that hitherto had failed adequately to remember its civilian war dead. Initiatives since 2006 have seen the civilian names added to the screen wall behind the WWII cenotaph and the unveiling of memorials like that for the Besant Road shelter victims and those at 101 High Street. Hind's book (2006), a commemorative practice in its own right, perhaps stimulated greater awareness of Portsmouth's Blitz, at a time when living memories of that time were fading. For friends and family, it surely provided a welcome boost to their personal hopes of keeping memories of their loved ones alive.

This is a city that takes its wartime nostalgia seriously, evidenced in the popularity of Hind's pages in the local paper and the success of two local history initiatives. Memories of bygone Portsmouth is a Facebook group that has eclipsed others in the city; its followers exceed 35000. JJ Marshallsay, a 50 year old amateur historian, is the founder. His voracious appetite for Portsmouth's history is allied to a gift for storytelling. His postings on Portsmouth's Blitz experience are the result of extensive research into local history archives and his own family history; they bring forward hundreds of responses, recalling the places and people lost in the 67 raids of the war. He lost close family members to the bombing. He is clear that, even after the completion of the civilian wall, in the Guildhall memorial precinct, there is still more to be done to remember the 930 fatalities. JJ has a mission to commemorate them with a glade of 930 trees, mentioning a site near Port Solent, which overlooks Portsmouth Harbour (Pers.comm. 15 November 2019).

Engagement in civilian remembrance is part of another group, the Pompey Pals Project, a small charity commemorating the raising of two local battalions for the Hampshire Regiment in WWI (The Charity Commission 2021/1159596). In January 2019 and 2020 on the 10th, it held a remembrance service at Kingston Cemetery, at the western memorial, following up with a wreath laying at the site of Besant Road Shelter. This mirrors the 'wreath run' every November by the Lord Mayor to memorial sites across the city, including both Kingston memorials (G. O'Brien, Cemeteries Manager, pers. comm. 15 November 2019).

The short service of remembrance at the civilian memorial at Kingston Cemetery was attended by about 20 people. Its significance is in its storytelling. One gentleman, choosing anonymity, long retired from the dockyard, attended because his family had lost four members in the Blitz; they are buried, close to the northern end of the cemetery. A sense of continuing great loss was evident. Another local man told the story of two families, the Marks and the Ripiners, buried within sight of their former homes. Fifth Street runs parallel with the western wall of the cemetery, its visible roof line broken by post-war houses, marking where destroyed houses had been. On 16th August 1943, a little girl, Maisie Marks, was with her cousin Patricia (7) at number 53 and was urged to stay by her Aunt Alma (26) when the air-raid warning sounded; however, she heeded her mother's order to run home and survived, unlike Alma, Patricia and another cousin. Alma was the sister of Grace Ripiner who died just along the street at number 35. Her husband, Marine Stephen Ripiner was at home and he died and is buried with her and their 12-month-old child (D. Yates pers.comm 10 January 2019). Mr Yates story has probably been told many times, an 'urban legend', in the tight-knit community that has remained in the small streets around Kingston and Fratton. In the absence of the act of remembrance, it might not have surfaced, its recognition afforded through this research.

This review has isolated just 16 items of civilian commemorative material. Together they demonstrate how local activism and institutional support have combined, throughout a long period of post-war overshadowing, to produce civilian remembrance, notably in 2011, seventy years after the heaviest attacks. Long-gone is a self-image of being smitten, a proud maritime city has emerged which contains in its midst elusive yet meaningful reminders of the trials of its population.

11. BATH

'The chief winter spa in Britain... unrivalled among provincial English towns for its combination of archaeological, historic, scenic, and social interest. It is a city of crescents and terraces...'

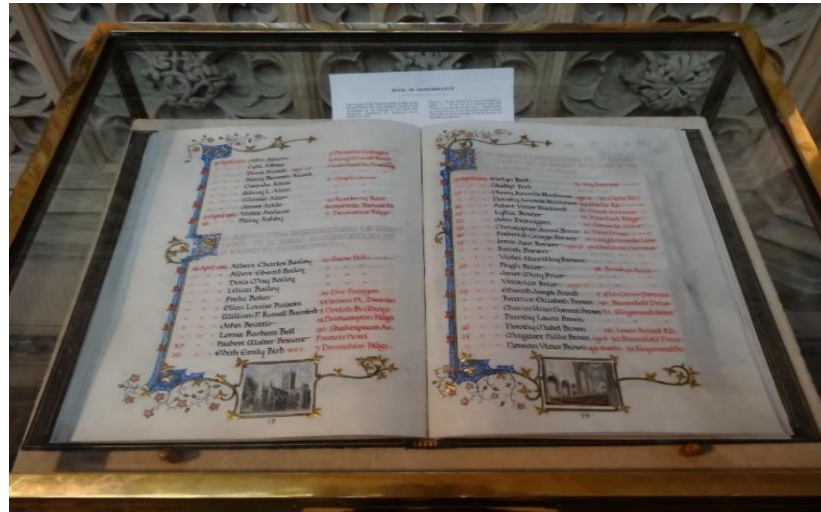
Extract from *Baedeker's Handbook for Great Britain* 9th Edition 1937.

11.1 Introduction

A visit to Bath in 2012 introduced a little-known fragment of the city's long history; the city had experienced, in late-April 1942, a two-night bombardment by the Luftwaffe, a so-called *Baedeker* raid. In 1987, when Bath gained World Heritage Site status, few, outside the city, would have known that 417 had died in the city of sumptuous architecture and Roman Baths (Mills 2020). A Jane Austen Festival and its costumed promenading were in full swing outside Bath Abbey as the choir and organ warmed up for a festival recital. Close to the Gethsemane Chapel, on the right of the altar, where wall-mounted plaques remember retired Army heroes and Georgian gentlefolk, drawn to the town by its healing waters, stands a modest table. In a glazed cabinet is an open book of remembrance in honour of the city's military and civilian fallen in WWII. Each of the beautifully illuminated pages records the dead in copperplate-script. A small card explains that there are 35 pages, 16 for military casualties and 19 for civilians. The book was created in 1950, at the behest of Bath's War Memorial Committee, for all victims of the wartime attacks including those '... known as the Baedeker Raids in April 1942 said to be in revenge for RAF attacks on Rostock and Lubeck' (Bath Abbey 2020). Lubeck suffered serious damage to its medieval core which prompted a plan to retaliate on places with similar heritage rather than strategic military value (*The Forgotten Blitz* 2011). The Bath raids followed those on Exeter, two days earlier, and preceded other 'heritage' targets, York, Norwich and Canterbury. The persistence of the myth that the targets were selected on the basis of guidebook ratings ensures that they will forever be characterised as *Baedeker* raids (Caddick-Adams 2002).

Figure 47

Book of Remembrance, Bath Abbey. 1950.



There were three phases of attack. The first, on Saturday, 25th April 1942, started around 11.00 PM; the first sign was the siren, then flares from pathfinder aircraft. The air-raid alert was a common signal as enemy planes passed by en route to other targets. The raid strength varied between 150-200 aircraft and did not arrive in one stream; the first raid lasted for several hours. The second raid was in the early morning of Sunday, 26th April and the third later that day and into Monday, 27th. The city and its people were largely undefended, without even a balloon barrage, and, as soon transpired, ill-equipped to deal with the intensity of the attack. A 2011 film *The Forgotten Blitz* focusses on the shock of the attacks, with the strategic target of Bristol just 12 miles away, and pursues a theme that 'people don't realise what Bath suffered' (Daily Mail 2011). The bombing of Bath is portrayed as an act of infamy, as if its gentility should hold it above such things.

11.2 The Chronicling of the Bath Blitz

The Forgotten Blitz (2011) forms one element in a surge in output related to the 70th anniversary of the raids (Bath Chronicle 2012, Brown & Spence 2012, Rothnie 2010, Spence 2012). However, it was earlier literary interventions that were instrumental in gaining awareness of this lesser known aspect of Bath's history. First published, in 1975, *The Bath Blitz*, by an evening paper columnist, drew on an obscure 1942 volume, by an employee of the same newspaper

(Wainwright 1992 [1975]; Wimhurst 1942). A photo-essay, its emphasis was on physical damage to the city and civilian resilience:

Between ourselves, 101-year-old Mrs Elizabeth Dick told the Mayor of Bath, 'Hitler thought he'd frighten me. But he didn't'.

The cover then adds:

He killed 417 Bath people, though, and destroyed over 200 buildings of architectural or historical interest. The Assembly Rooms were gutted, the Circus and Royal Crescent set on fire.

In 1983, with more depth, *The Bombing of Bath*, graphically describes the personal impact of the bombs, the city's lack of preparedness and the ineffectiveness of its civil defence and night-fighter protection. Post-raid apathy was followed quickly by 'trekking', as thousands left the city, for shelter in the surrounding woods and hills. There is less emphasis, on damage to iconic Georgian architectural heritage, than in Wainwright's book, although it does contain the relieved assessment that the substantial damage, west of the city centre, was only to poor-quality housing (Rothnie 2010 [1983]).

Wainwright's slim volume of black and white photos was re-published in 1992 for the 50th anniversary of the raids (Wainwright 1992 [1975]), accompanied by a television film, narrated by the author (*The Bath Blitz* 1992). This gave a more personal account of the bombing, voiced by survivors of the bombing, some of whom in 1998 formed a memorial group, the Bath Blitz Memorial Project (BBMP). In 2001, to raise funds, the BBMP team produced its own film of compelling, hitherto-untold stories, seen through the eyes of the young children they were at the time. In addition to a growing understanding of what this otherwise unwarlike city had experienced, the shared experience of this small group was effectively deployed to shape Bath's commemorative response to WWII (Bath Blitz Memorial Project 2020).

11.3 Bath's Commemorative Archaeology

Fieldwork in Bath was undertaken in a series of city walks, guided by local history sources, between 2013-2020 (Bath Heritage 2020; Rothnie 2010 [1983]). The sequence of material, just 12 records of dedicated civilian commemoration, is in **Appendix 21**. In addition to the Abbey Roll of Honour (1950), an early acknowledgement of the civilian cost of the war is at Queen

Square Lawn, an elegant public garden, surrounded by grand Georgian town-houses. It is part of the late-C18th architectural development on the western side of Bath by John Wood the Elder. He died before completion and it was his son who saw through his vision in the completion of the Circus, the Royal Crescent and the Assembly Rooms. On the right-hand entrance pillar is a small plaque which reads:

This lawn was given to the City in 1948 by the owners and occupiers of premises in Queen Square in memory of those Citizens who lost their lives by enemy action in air raids on the City during the 1939-1945 War. Presented, in replacement of the original, to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the bombing of Bath and the 50th Year of the reign of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, by the Mayor and Charter Trustees of the City of Bath. 2002.

Even earlier, in November 1947, a plaque was unveiled in the Police HQ, then in Manvers Street, recording those killed on active service and 9 who died in air raids. The plaque is now out of the city at Avon Police HQ, Portishead (IWM2021/7224).

These plaques and honour rolls predate by several decades the next civilian commemoration in the city centre as, throughout the 1950s, the focus turned to restoration of prized architectural heritage. The southern side of Queen Square is an example. The Francis Hotel opened in 1858, in town-houses by Wood the Elder (Forsyth 2003), was destroyed, as a plaque on its wall declares, and 'rebuilding was completed in 1953'. Similarly, the Assembly Rooms and the building opposite, the Regina Hotel, now smart apartments, were seamlessly repaired (Brown & Spence 2012) with the briefest of reference to the Blitz on a small sign in the foyer. The Regina had suffered a direct hit during the Sunday raids killing 30; people, who had lost their homes on Saturday, perished in the hotel where they had temporary refuge (Dickinson 2006). The emphasis on Bath's Regency heritage, and its post-war restoration, is in marked contrast to the fate of buildings with limited architectural value, dismissed as low-grade slums, to be over-built by large retail stores and modern precincts. South of Queen Square, the Abbey and Royal Baths, was the crowded neighbourhood of Kingsmead, where incendiary fires were unchecked, and many deaths were recorded. The largest family loss in the city occurred here; the street in which

nine members of the Rattray family died exists no longer. The view that post-war planning and development did more damage than Hitler's planes is aired in a polemic bemoaning the destruction of 'the little houses of the true C18th Bathonians' (Fergusson 2011[1973]). As this reinforcement of an architectural and class divide was played out, remembering the dead, swiftly transported to their communal grave, was under way, in a more respectful fashion.

Haycombe Cemetery is on the SW edge of the city, high on a hill, about 5 miles from the city centre, in rolling grounds, punctuated with veteran trees. It dates from 1937 when smaller Victorian cemeteries in the city were full. Haycombe is where the dead from the air-raids were taken for interment and the Bath & North East Somerset Council website (2020) refers to the civilian graves as follows:

...some of the most interesting graves in Haycombe are the graves of those who died in the blitz of Bath in May 1942. It was anticipated that there would be further raids so the two long communal graves needed at the time were dug at either end of the total area designated for the purpose of burying all civilian casualties. Known to staff as the 'long communal' and the 'short communal', both rows have a memorial detailing the circumstances of the raids. As no further raids occurred they stand in splendid isolation. Maintenance of these graves is kept as closely in line with the war graves section as budgets permit.

Figure 48



Mass Funeral. Haycombe Cemetery, Bath. 1st May 1942.

The date given possibly arises from confusion with the date of burial; many interments took place on 1st May 1942. The two lines of graves are about 200 metres apart and today are less 'isolated' by a hedge and encroachment by post-war interments. The graves are marked by compact white head-stones and have space and an open vista from most angles. The first row, on the right side of a descending road, is the 'short communal'.

Figure 49

Haycombe Cemetery Short Communal. 1950.

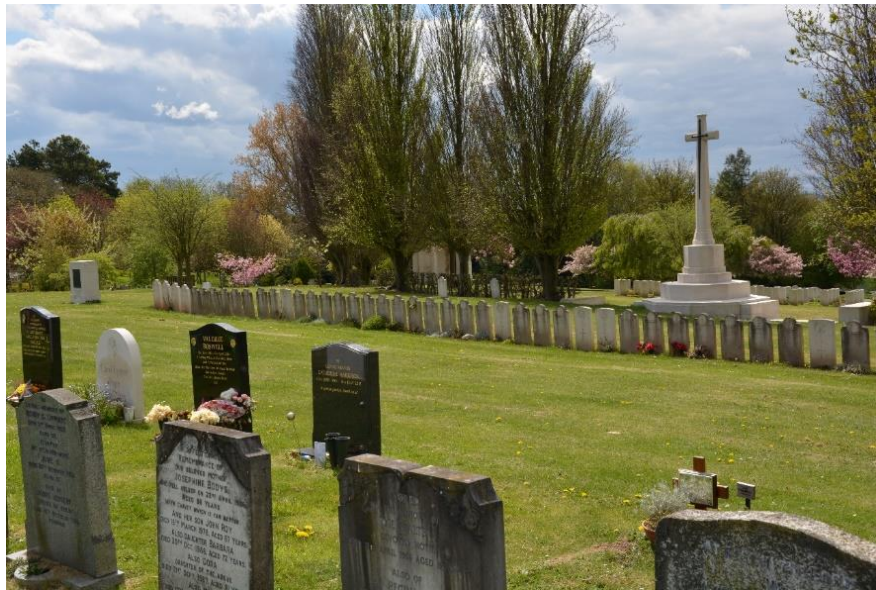


It is shaded at the far end by a mature beech and comprises two rows with a total of 47 headstones, two of which are CWGC markers. There are 36 in the front and 11 on a second row. There are 70 named casualties including the nine from the Rattray family.

The 'long communal' lies further north, adjacent to the contemporary 1939-45 CWGC plot, with its Blomfield-style cross of sacrifice. The installation date for military and civil plots is given as c.1950 (War Memorials Online 2021/251342). There are 112 headstones in one long line with 2 others, alone, a few yards further north, towards the plot boundary. They mark the burial places of victims of sporadic raids in 1941, including three East End evacuees.

Figure 50

Haycombe Cemetery Long Communal. 1950.



The long row of headstones is marked at its western end, as in the short plot, with a plain white block, c. 1.5m high, with a dedication to ‘those who died in Bath during the air raids on the 25th, 26th and 27th April 1942’.

Figure 51

Memorial Stone, Long Communal, Haycombe. 1950.



There are 157 names on the stones, two of which record family who died after the war, 4 are recent refurbishments and 6 are CWGC markers. Confusion in the aftermath of the raid is evident in the separation for one family; Elsie Horstmann is named on the long row whereas her husband and son are named

on the short. The Horstmann family ran a substantial engineering enterprise in the city; the nature of their death denied them a place in the family plot at Locksbrook Cemetery, where they were later remembered on a gravestone. The casualty count at Haycombe is 227 including 20 unidentified casualties; over half of Bath's civilian dead are in these two communal plots.

For its grave-site remembrance the Bath authorities resisted the memorial form adopted in most other places. The choice of small nowy-headed, white stones ensured that the location, next to the CWGC plot, was harmonious. Each stone carries the years of the war within a laurel wreath motif. However, in 2015, the civilian stones were looking grey, at best off-white, even on a bright Spring day. An adverse contrast, with the four new stones and the adjacent war graves, is now evident. The cemetery authority is funded to maintain the CWGC war graves but, as remarked above, upkeep of the civilian stones is budget-dependant. A self-confessed 'thorn in the council's side' is concerned that nearby CWGC-maintained, German graves are in better condition (C. Kilminster pers. comm. 2nd February 2020).

This place of remembrance contributes to a sense that, like the presentation of the city's heritage status to the wider world, the evidence of the war is to be tastefully managed. The implementation of a more dignified place and signifier of burial contrasting positively with others cited in earlier chapters. The city's work here was followed by the long post-war hiatus that settled on the matter of civilian remembrance elsewhere in the city. It would be the 1990s, around the 50th and 60th anniversaries, before new commemorations were enacted.

Oldfield Park is a district, south of the river, whose terraces are not of the grandeur of Wood's Bath; these are artisan dwelling places, close to a ribbon of industrial estates carrying through-traffic to Bristol and beyond. It is an area marginalised, geographically and socially, from Bath's heritage-centred identity. In 1942 this area, close to the gas works and the industrial sites hugging the east-west flowing Avon, was a prime target. There were substantial casualties at the junction of Third Avenue and Shaftesbury Road where a shelter and police post received a direct hit, just outside the Scala Cinema (Rothnie 2010, 48-50); over 20 were killed, including 8 special constables who are named on the plaque, now in Portishead (Morgan 2008a). The tragedy is marked by fragmentary shrapnel damage on the ends of the terraces on both sides of Third

Avenue. Immediately south of the former cinema, now a Coop, is a small circular garden. The memorial garden marks the 50th anniversary of the *Baedeker* raid (Bath Heritage 2020; IWM 2021/WMR 7212). The memorial structure is a timber loggia with climbing plants and box hedge. A small central area has benches around a circular plot planted with a cherry tree. The plaque, at ground level, is on a concrete base. In 2014, it read:

On the 50th Anniversary of the Bombing of Bath this area was dedicated by the Mayor of Bath, Councillor Denis Lovelace. In memory of those who lost their lives in the raids on 25th, 26th and 27th April 1942

Figure 52

Memorial Loggia, Oldfield Park.1992. Photo: April 2014.



This garden commemoration is important, in its recognition of those who died 50 years earlier and for ending the long memorial hiatus in the city. In 2014, it did not reference the Scala tragedy whose close proximity presumably influenced its siting; more recent changes have addressed this. This suburban location, as discussion will show, has limited the memorial's impact on city-wide civilian remembrance, which has been better provided by initiatives, centred in the city, at the Bath War Memorial. Nonetheless, the memorial garden, in 2014, was well maintained, with spring-flowering plants and shrubs, creating a pleasing oasis, located at the junction of grim events from the past. Subsequent visits have noted a sad decline at the site and amendments to the dedicatory material. A review of this is undertaken later in analysis of independent activism.

11.4 Bath Blitz Memorial Project

Catharine Place is a pretty square of John Wood town-houses around a small island of trees and shrubs, within black wrought-iron railings, reminiscent of private squares in London. On an entrance gate is a tiny plaque, dedicated in 1996, to Bath's civilian dead, after the garden was restored in 1995. Small in size, it however represents timely recognition, in the heart of Regency Bath, absent since 1948, when 'traces of those days were fast disappearing and memories of Bath's role in the Second World War were being forgotten' (Bath Blitz Memorial Project 2020).

In 1998, 10 Bath residents formed the Bath Blitz Memorial Project (BBMP), with four aims:

1. To create a fitting memorial bearing the names of those who died
2. To create an educational resource for future generations
3. To save the only building in Bath still bearing obvious scars of the Blitz.
4. To campaign for a museum in Bath that covers the whole of the city's history.

All of the campaigners had direct experience of the events of April 1942 and some of their stories had already been told in their own fund raising film. Anne Salter (Née Marks), is seen, in a yellow dress, in an early colour photograph, surveying the destruction outside the block where she lived; close by, at 7 New King Street, 11 people had died including Mrs Ford and her six children, Anne's school friends. Doreen Williams' father, Fireman Leonard Smith went in to work, although formally off-duty, never to return. In the Circus, there is a noticeable

depression left by the bomb that killed him. He was a nameless victim awaiting mass burial until identified and given a special service by the National Fire Service. Harry Hemming's wife lost 4 family members and was grievously injured. She and her father were trapped as water from a broken main filled the crater; she heard her father drown (*The Forgotten Blitz* 2011).

The shared traumatic past was channelled into the preparation of a definitive list of the dead and, in this regard, a particular contribution was made by one of the founders, John Penny (Fishponds Local History Society 2020; Morgan 2008b; Rothnie 2010, 160). Negotiations, with the local authority, for a memorial site were also undertaken. There is no evidence for consideration of the Oldfield Park bower; an original preference was for Queen Square. Emphasis soon switched to the gate of Victoria Park, the site of Bath War Memorial, close to the Royal Crescent (Bath Blitz Memorial Project 2020).

This is an impressive monument with a tall Cross of Sacrifice, designed by Sir Reginald Blomfield, with its characteristic point-down, wrought-iron broadsword, on an octagonal plinth. There are 9 plaques listing the dead of two world wars and later conflicts on the curved wall behind the cross. The memorial was unveiled by Blomfield and Viscount Allenby in 1927 and dedicated by the Bishop of Bath & Wells. The process of establishing the memorial at this place was not straightforward; other schemes and sites were part of a highly contested process (Branston 2021). During the deliberations, the names of over 1100 WWI war dead had been placed temporarily on the wall of the Royal Mineral Water Hospital, before transfer to the new memorial.

It remained a WWI memorial site until 1995, the 50th anniversary of the end of the war, when plaques were added with over 600 names of WWII service casualties (IWM 2021/WMR 7275), with two explanatory plaques. The first acknowledges the addition of WWII names to those of the city who died in WWI. It is dedicated to the men and woman serving in HM Forces, including civil defence and special constabulary casualties. The second makes reference to civilians without acknowledging their number:

THE NAMES OF OUR CITY'S GALLANT DEAD WHO MADE THE
SUPREME SACRIFICE IN THE WORLD WAR 1939-1945 TOGETHER
WITH THOSE OF CIVILIANS KILLED BY ENEMY ACTION ARE
RECORDED IN BOOKS OF REMEMBRANCE AT BATH ABBEY

CHURCH AND THE CHURCH OF ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST SOUTH PARADE

At this point, in the remembrance of Bath's Blitz, here was an oblique acknowledgement of the city's civilian losses, which added no more than the Oldfield Park plaque which predated it by three years. The local authority would have recognised the increasing interest in the history of the Blitz, from the aforementioned literary and film output, which spoke not only of heritage devastation but also of lives destroyed. It had not sought however to initiate a civilian memorial, referencing instead the 1950 Books of Remembrance.

It would be 2003 before the campaigning of the BBMP fulfilled its first aim of recording the names of the civilian dead on an equal platform with service casualties. It had however broadened the original remit, beyond materialisation, to embrace acts of remembrance, following a memorial service, in Bath Abbey in 2002, on the 60th anniversary. A service in memory of the Blitz and its victims at Bath's War Memorial has taken place between 2003 and 2017 on the nearest Sunday in April to the date of the attacks. Educational Resource Packs for each secondary and primary school in the Bath area were distributed free of charge by June 2005. Bath's broad appeal as a tourist destination, transformed by its World Heritage status, might seem alien territory for narratives of death and destruction but museums, heritage sites and newspapers embraced the campaign from the start (Bath Chronicle 2012; Bath Heritage 2020; Bath in Time 2021; Museum of Bath at Work 2021).

At the April 2003 service, the Mayor of Bath unveiled the new civilian plaque on the southern (left-hand) pillar of the cenotaph. On the upper panel a dedication, beneath the city's coat of arms reads:

IN MEMORY OF BATH'S RESIDENTS AND VISITORS WHO LOST
THEIR LIVES AS A RESULT OF AIR RAIDS ON THE CITY 1941-42

This memorial was funded and erected by the Bath Blitz Memorial
Project April 2003

The lower panel then lists, in 8 columns, 400 named dead, beneath which, a few words confirm that not all victims could be named and are 'known only to God'.

Figure 53

Bath City War Memorial and Civilian Plaque. 1927 and 2003.



I attended the non-denominational remembrance service, with over 100 others, in April 2014. It included the placing of a wreath near the plaque, songs from local schoolchildren, prayers, a minute's silence and a lone-trumpet Last Post. The aging of the original project team was evident with just two co-founders in attendance; the girl in the yellow dress, Anne Salter, observed from the warmth of a car. Harry Hemming centred a talk on the experience of the late Joe Marsh (one of the 2001 video eyewitnesses). Brian Vowles (Chairman), in a short address, read out a conciliatory message from twin-town, Braunschweig. After a brief introduction, both gentlemen shyly expressed delight that people still wanted to come and pay their respects. The fulfilment of the memorial plaque

and the educational materials are matters of great pride and are the enduring legacy of this group of unlikely, yet effective, activists. The thinning of the ranks of the BBMP led to a decision to make the 75th anniversary, April 2017, the final formal memorial service. The web site however continues, despite the pandemic, to give notice each year of informal gatherings at 3PM on the nearest Sunday. Fittingly, the daughter of Fireman Smith, Doreen Williams, aged 91, laid the wreath at the final service.

A final campaign aim was achieved in 2016. BBMP, having successfully campaigned for the listing of the heavily-scarred former labour exchange on Milk Street, had secured the installation of a plaque on its façade, unique in Bath, as an unrestored artefact of the bombing, pocked with significant shrapnel damage. The façade has been retained as the ground floor external wall of mixed-use student accommodation and commercial space, frustrating hopes it would become a Blitz museum. Nonetheless, this relic of the war has been saved, its plaque, unveiled by Bryan Vowles, a final success for the Bath Blitz Memorial Project in almost 20 years of campaigning (Wyatt 2016).

11.5 Independent Activism

The timeline of Bath's civilian remembrance has established that the places of commemoration, with few exceptions, are clustered in the Bath known for its heritage and tourism. The bombs however had caused more casualties and damage in districts marked by some unsympathetic post-war re-development (Fergusson 2011 [1973]). In one of these districts is the memorial garden in Oldfield Park, reviewed earlier. It is linked to an activist, Chris Kilminster. When I asked if BBMP had any involvement with the memorial activities in Oldfield Park, a divergence of remembrance approaches was observable; 'Chris (Kilminster) likes to go his own way' (H. Hemming pers.comm. 27 April 2014).

This becomes clearer with analysis of the scene at the garden memorial on Friday, 25th April 2008. A gathering of 200 people came to this modest bower in suburban Bath to witness a service of remembrance and reconciliation, attended by the Lord Mayor and local religious leaders. An ex-Luftwaffe pilot, Willi Schludecker, 87 at the time, had taken part in all three raids in 1942 and had returned to Bath to deliver a formal apology to its people, achieving worldwide media attention (BBC News 2008c; Military History Forum 2021; *The Nine Lives of Willi Schludecker* 2011). The event had been organised by Mr

Kilminster (CK) who had lost several family members in the Blitz. He had arranged earlier wreath-laying remembrance events here and at Roseberry Road, where the family had been killed. His internet publicity for the 2008 anniversary attracted the attention of the German Embassy, on Schludecker's behalf (Rothnie 2010, 165-167). CK, after initial misgivings, hosted the pilot at events across the city, including a visit to the communal plots in Haycombe Cemetery. At the service, CK read the 56 names of victims under 12 who had died (C. Kilminster pers.comm. 5th February 2020), adding that the visit had 'taken honour and courage on Willi's part. I hope he goes back remembering that we are friends now and I thank him for coming' (BBC News 2008c).

On Sunday, 27th April 2008, just two days after the Oldfield Park service, on the other side of town, the annual service at the Bath War Memorial took place. Mr Schludecker was not in attendance having returned to Germany. The independence of these two strands of remembrance sits uncomfortably; reticence on both sides fails to explain the divergence, which provoked the earlier comment of Kilminster's independent approach.

CK was an energetic organiser and while his formal pieces to camera were assured, documentary footage shows a man out of his comfort zone but responding warmly to the pilot. The event in the bower was deemed a success by many who attended, some with direct memories of the bombing (*The Nine Lives of Willi Schludecker* 2011). The event was marked by a plaque, on the lower part of the short plinth, which CK confirmed he had personally installed; a copy with the same dedication was unofficially added to the rear of the long communal memorial stone at Haycombe. It was absent by 2020. CK suggested it had been stolen (pers.comm. 5th February 2020).

In early 2015, a visit to the Blitz Memorial Garden observed that the 1992 plaque had been replaced; the dedication was unchanged but had an addition reading 'Respect Plaques'. Remembrance wreaths from the previous November were fixed to the perimeter fence, suggestive of a formal act of remembrance at this site. It transpired from a later conversation that they had been removed by CK from Haycombe as they 'were only going to be thrown away'.

Unofficial curation of the memorial garden was also in evidence in 2020. Chris Kilminster has undertaken the custodianship of the memorial bower for many years. However, the shelter, that the bower confers, has attracted anti-social

behaviour and vandalism. Routinely, CK has repaired and replaced the commemorative plaques. The evidence of visits to this memorial site is that the material record has been degraded by change, partly necessitated by mindless damage and also the application of an individual remembrance agenda. The changes since 2014 are of concern. Site condition has declined significantly. The central box hedge has disappeared and there was a lot of litter; without spring blossom the bower was drab. Clearly, any work by the council parks department has defaulted to the unofficial custodian. The temporary plaque of 2015 has been replaced with a new plaque, a new colour and a new message:

THIS MEMORIAL IS DEDICATED IN MEMORY OF THE VICTIMS OF THE BATH BLITZ 1941 AND APRIL 1942 WHEN SADLY A TOTAL OF 417 PERISHED INCLUDING 56 YOUNG CHILDREN. WE ALSO REMEMBER THE LOSS OF LIFE IN THE PUBLIC SHELTER HERE IN THIRD AVE AND ALSO THE PUBLIC SHELTER IN ROSEBERRY ROAD, TWERTON ON SUNDAY 26TH APRIL 1942. WE WILL REMEMBER THEM, CHRIS KILMINSTER (ORGANISER). DENIS LOVELACE (CLLR). PLAQUE DONATED BY JOHN TIMPSON CBE, TIMPSON PLC.

The presentation is shoddy with low-grade materials and uninspired colour choices on the now drab plinth. This is a shame because the memorial is at last linked with the local shelter tragedies, at some cost, in the tangled words, to the integrity of the marking of the 50th anniversary. Somehow, the inscription carries all of the themes that CK later confirmed were important to him; lost childhood, the destruction of communities sheltering together and the ‘forgotten’ victims of the 1941 ‘tip-and-run’ raids. Meeting him, detailed below, reinforced the personal closure he has been seeking for most of his adult life. Since 2014, he has used the memorial bower to achieve this by taking it upon himself to solve the damage by vandals, sometimes with dubious means and effects. However, in another part of the neighbourhood, with other stakeholders, he has translated personal loss into a site and act of public remembrance, on which he might well reflect with more pride and some closure.

11.6 Roseberry Road

Less than a mile west of the memorial bower is the neighbourhood of Twerton, hemmed in on the north by the river and south by the Bristol Road. Roseberry

Road, a small street of terraced houses, was vulnerable to attack, with a gas works and major rail junction to the east. On 26th April 1942, a shelter and row of houses were destroyed on Roseberry Road, to cause one of the worst incidents of the Bath Blitz; the death toll was 29. The second element, of the *Baedeker* raid, accounted for 151 of Bath's casualties (Fishponds Local History Society 2020). Over 50 of these, at Roseberry Road and the Scala Cinema/Third Avenue shelter, were sustained on that Sunday morning in April 1942, just a mile apart. CK has managed memorial initiatives at them both.

In a formal ceremony on 27th June 2019, a memorial stone and sculpture were unveiled on a re-developed site, after a three-and-a-half-year campaign (Britten 2019; Wyatt 2019). Intrigued by another memorial initiative by Mr Kilminster, I asked if he would be happy to talk. His response was enthusiastic and we were able to meet on 5th February 2020. Chris (73) and his wife, Patricia have a son and a daughter. They live up high in Bath's southern hills, with views across the city. Chris had a long career with the RAC until he retired. I was first aware of his involvement in Blitz remembrance in 2013 when reading of his hosting of the repentant Luftwaffe pilot over the anniversary weekend in April 2008. It was not long before the scale of his family's loss in the bombing became clear when I saw the name Kilminster on several graves at Haycombe cemetery.

The aircraft that had bombed the city late on Saturday evening had returned to their base in Evreux, Brittany, to re-fuel and re-arm, before embarking on the second raid, this time in daylight. At three minutes past 5 in the morning, on a low-level approach to the rail junction, from the west, an aircraft dropped two 500kg bombs; both fell short with tragic effects. One destroyed a surface shelter, despite its 14-inch reinforced concrete roof and walls, and the other substantially destroyed numbers 12-27 Roseberry Road. According to CK, thirty-one local residents were in the shelter and only three survived. This version varies from the CWGC record which suggests many of the victims died in their homes. While this distinction is not relevant to the memory of the dead, eye-witness testimony appears to agree with Kilminster's research (Bath Blitz Memorial Project 2020). Fireman, Tom Gale, was in the street with a tender drawing water from the Avon and describes the bomb striking the shelter and the ensuing carnage (Rothnie 2010, 45-47).

The incident claimed the lives of five members of Mrs Kilminster's family including her husband and a daughter, Mary, aged 7. Mrs Kilminster survived, although badly injured. Another daughter, Shirley was blown out of the shelter. Presumed to have been orphaned, she was about to be sent to Canada, when belatedly reunited. Chris is the son of his mother's second marriage and he has taken her name. Mrs Kilminster never returned to Roseberry Road.

Growing-up in post-war Bath, CK had direct exposure to difficult memories of war; injury, family bereavement and dislocation were fertile ground for a lifelong commitment to civilian remembrance in his home town. The ruined houses at Roseberry Road were levelled and the site converted to industrial use. It had been a milk depot when vacated in 2015 and by 2016 the site was under consideration for residential development. Spring Wharf, Roseberry Place now inhabits what was Roseberry Road. This prompted CK to visit the scene of his family's loss. He approached the site clearance company and asked if he could lay a wreath in his family's memory. They spoke to the site owners and developers. Moved by the tragedy that befell the residents, they proposed a permanent memorial on a green space adjacent to the river, in a conjunction of personal commemorative and corporate community practice (RGB Group 2017).

The green space was renamed Mary's Walk in tribute to the half-sister that CK never knew. On April 26th 2017, 75 years after the tragedy, a service of remembrance was held to remember the victims. Coincidentally, on the other side of the city, the Bath Blitz Memorial Project was hosting its final service.

The twists of fate that saw one sister die and the other live, power the act of remembrance on this site of mourning, long forgotten under the wheels of milk floats, allowing it to become a site of memory. From the start of site development, life on Roseberry Road in 1942 has been revealed from the debris of destruction; pottery, scullery tiles, bottles and jars, along with part of a bomb casing, have been recovered near to Mrs Kilminster's house. The site did not undergo any pre-construct archaeology; material has been retained which would have been discarded. Its importance to CK, as a link to the family lost and a sister he never knew, is priceless. Some of it has been returned, in a time-capsule close to the new memorial.

The Roseberry Road Memorial is a 2.5 tonne rectangular block of polished Indian marble on which stands a steel sculpture representing a family of four. Unveiled in June 2019, this monument is dedicated to the:

VICTIMS OF ROSEBERRY ROAD AIR-RAID

SUNDAY 26TH APRIL 1942

It stands around 2.5 metres high and is inscribed on three sides with the names of 28 victims. An inscription on the front face reads:

Remembering the Bath Blitz 25th-27th April 1942

There follows a long inscription to those 'who lost their lives here in Mary's Walk' after a description of the destruction of the surface shelter.

The design of the memorial and the choice of the stone was the work of the site architects who, with the landlord and the developer, funded the £15k cost; no mention of the source of funds appears on the memorial.

Figure 54

Roseberry Road Memorial, Mary's Walk, Twerton, Bath, 2019.



Much of the memorial site, the little garden around the monument and the signage for Mary's Walk, has been arranged by CK. A second memorial was

also unveiled in June 2019. A truncated CWGC gravestone, inscribed to a Soldier of the Great War from the 1st Regiment, South African Infantry, was discovered during site clearance. Despite CWGC doubt of its authenticity, in a fine gesture, it has been erected next to the Roseberry Memorial with a plaque for the two Bath men who joined the 1st Regiment and died in its service.

After the unveiling, CK 'discovered' a 29th victim, Louisa Humphries. He is hoping to arrange the addition of her name to the stone. This is an unfortunate oversight as Louisa was not unknown or unrecorded. She appears with the 28 others in the CWGC record and a street-by-street analysis of recorded victims (Bath Blitz Memorial Project 2020). Chris did not seek validation for his research and this unfortunate error is the result.

In an extended discussion, CK expressed his wish to do the 'right thing' in the names of his mother and his sisters, with sincerity and dignity. His style is down-to-earth and he wears his heart on his sleeve. Yet, this is a seasoned campaigner, a man to persuade developers to underwrite a public expression of personal loss, to allow their riverside garden to become a memorial site. CK has maintained, in all of his memorial adventures, a desire that all of Bath's casualties should be remembered. In a recent web thread, he said of his work 'I did it for the citizens of Bath. I have done it to heal lots of wounds and lots of pain' (Military History Forum 2021). He believes that the Roseberry memorial is as much for them as the specific victims named on it. He is not a historian by academic training and little of his work is in written form. Instead, his detailed knowledge of Bath's Blitz is 'written' in a unique sequence of commemorative material and remembrance events and their attendant publicity. He sought closure in this latest act of remembrance, driven by the family trauma of his adult life. At Roseberry Road, the egregious tinkering of his unchecked custodianship at the memorial garden is not present; operating within bounds, an object of civilian remembrance brings family and community loss into public recognition, in a fitting manner, that, beyond pride, should help him in his quest for personal closure.

11.7 Final Considerations

Throughout 7 years of research visits, two concurrent strands of remembrance activity have been evident in Bath. One has taken a durable leadership position in placing the Bath Blitz within the mainstream of the city's heritage, its victims remembered with equal honour on the war memorial, an achievement that other cities, Portsmouth, for example, have struggled with. The other, in contrast, is not driven by a team united by a shared experience of Blitz terror and loss. Instead, its driver is an outsider from working, suburban Bath, removed from the city's genteel core. That the outcomes and practices of their remembrance activity should differ is thus unsurprising and not, of necessity, problematic. However, a lack of mutual acknowledgement of and representation at acts of remembrance conveys a sense of disquiet, although there has been no evidence of open discord. Observed here, in action, is the contestation of remembrance, that struggle of individuals and small groups to bring their projects to wider attention. Unquestionably, working alone, albeit Mr Kilminster's preference, has not helped the quality of neighbourhood remembrance to always be delivered with finesse. It feels alien, with their shared objective to recall to memory what might otherwise be forgotten, that the remembrance activists should have inhabited separate universes. As both groups head into retirement their universes can now never be joined. However, their commemorative output will play a part in forward remembrance together, in a joint legacy of the small group activism, observed in the theoretical literature (Ashplant *et al* 2000; Winter 2006).

12. RESEARCH CONCLUSIONS

'History focusses mainly on great events and important people to the exclusion of ordinary people whose enterprises and struggles inspire tales of mutual support and resilience. They should be remembered and celebrated as well (Loewe 2012, 85).

12.1 Introduction

This thesis draws to a close after a journey into the recent past, a seven-year exploration of personal and family memories, the memories of others, cemeteries, churches, cenotaphs, bomb sites, archives, memorial records and hundreds of commemorative plaques and stones. It has turned the pages of neglected books of remembrance and held scraps of paper, in mortuary records, of casualties identified only by an article of clothing. There have been humbling experiences in the presence of survivors, whose own hell has been channelled into the remembrance of others. It reveals that stones, from 56 blitzed cities, were transported to a place with unfulfilled national memorial aspirations. It has seen how a wartime documentary, about part-time, civilian firefighters, was turned into a memorial programme that remains active after 25 years. The author has walked streets, once frequented by a group of teenage scouts, to understand their short journey, from home to a scout meeting, from which they did not return. Most of all, the undertaking has encountered people driven, not by myths of Blitz spirit, but by the challenge of translation of private memory, theirs and the people they collaborate with, into public remembrance. As the tone and style of these remarks suggest, there has been a personal investment into this research inquiry, one with its roots in family remembrances, outlined in the Preface. Similar memories, part of an inheritance from those who were there, when the bombs were falling, are held by many others. They perhaps share the sadness and distaste that their history, formed under fire, should be submerged in the appropriated narratives with which the thesis opened. The parade of simplified notions of a British, war-winning spirit has been a growing phenomenon in recent years, an invocation of the 'blitz spirit' at the first sign of crisis (Bent 2020; Golby 2021). This phenomenon has provided the impetus behind the thesis, which has sought to confront that narrow narrative, to trace the contested remembrance of civilian experience since 1945, through the analysis of its memorials and the feedback of campaigners.

The bombing of British cities in WWII ended in 1945. The word that was coined, under duress, in the 'bitter, violent past' (Overy 2020b) of the air war, was Blitz. In the 77 years, since the last bomb fell, the word has become embedded and its usage changed to represent a perceived spirit of the times, the myth of the Blitz (Calder 1991), from which a simplified narrative has prevailed.

The myth, that a common spirit pulled the nation through, particularly in 1940, is, in the right hands, not of necessity, pernicious and manipulative. It is a version of the past that accentuates the undoubted, unexpected resilience of the British; it need not conceal the reality of being bombed, yet that is the distortion on parade in the 21st century, in an acceptance that death and destitution are to be sublimated. The further the nation travels from the war, the more the narrative narrows, in a seeming correlation with the degree to which the people, and its leaders, have become less self-assured regarding their place in the world (Barnett 2002 [1972]; Jack 2011; Kettle 2020; Olusoga 2019; Runciman 2020; Toynbee 2019). The country is as uncomfortable now, I suggest, as at any time in the post-war past; recourse to politically-expedient Blitz sound-bites is a reflection of that.

This concluding chapter supports the argument that simplistic deployments, of the commodity of a Blitz spirit, pose a problem, beyond political expediency. The tragic outcome of the Blitz, an 'awful reality' (Overy 2020b) for thousands, is obscured in a popular narrative, bathed in the comfort of the resolve, first shown in 1940. The analytical framework, established in Chapters 1 & 2, was dedicated to the investigation of this problem of conflation and obscurity. In an archaeology of Blitz memory, analysis of the myth would contextualise the formation of commemorative materialisation and contemporary remembrance activism. It aimed to reveal the material of civilian remembrance through analysis of an extensive range of case studies exemplifying the struggle to place narratives with meaning, relevance and engagement in a cultural world, already crowded with material outcomes of military and non-military remembrance. It anticipated the presentation and formation of community memories of the Blitz giving personal voice in public expressions of remembrance, the bridge from the private (memory) to the public (remembrance), to paraphrase Moriarty (1999, 654-655), effected through commemoration, delivered by individuals, working alone or within small groups.

12.2 Myth and Experience

The first stage, in fulfilling the aim of the thesis, sought the deconstruction of the theoretically-challenged Blitz biography, through an exploration of the meanings lost, discarded and diluted, on its narrative journey. How and why the narrative of the Blitz emerged, from its foundations in 1940, was presented through the concept of an evolutionary time-line. This process, in Chapter 4, yielded a life-cycle, comprising the broadly consecutive themes of formation, fashioning, entrenchment and intervention. The analysis drew an early conclusion which sought to balance the vectors of construction and revision:

The narrative path is consensual, nurtured from the earliest days by government and transacted by a collusive media and a willing public.

This conclusion was reached through a review of the evolutionary stages but is revisited here, in the light of later case work and the identification of a competing narrative which follows a different path.

The formation theme, detailed the nudges and directions, given to the British people, in a swathe of government communications, under bombardment conditions. They promoted spirit and resilience, through a government institution whose main task, the management of morale, was prosecuted largely through controlled information and news management (Coughlan 2019; McLaine 1979). The Ministry of Information manipulated the underlying resilience of the people, into a narrative of unity and defiance, summed-up in 1945 in the notion of 'British spirit' (Ministry of Information 1941; 1942; 1943; 1945). Calder, an early critic of government mismanagement, described the civilian response as 'guts, fortitude, gumption, dogged commonsense and learned defiance' (Calder 1941b, 149). These positive attributes were appropriated in the promotion of a uniquely British spirit, no less an empty slogan, in 1945, than its 21st century metaphor for a nation's identity crisis.

Post-war fashioning of war narratives, including that of the Blitz, was evident in the review of 1950s cultural output. Government shaping of the war narrative was less strident but nonetheless insistent (Collier 1957; O'Brien 1955; Titmuss 1950). Writers, film-makers and news outlets met the demand of a national mood for uplifting narratives, already reflected in the lack of impetus behind national memorial initiatives. The fashioning thus took place in a lengthy post-

war remembrance hiatus, one where a gentle, comfortable arm-chair view of a 'finest hour', featured in Longmate (1971) and Minns (1980), enabled the entrenchment of 'Blitz spirit', 'a real event' (*Blitz Street* 2010), as one of its war-winning components. Ritchie Calder's critique, of a pursuit of unconditional German surrender, through retributive bombing, understood that, if London 'could take it', there was every chance that enemy cities could as well (Calder 1965). A profound, unshakeable belief in British exceptionalism, persists today, as it did then (Major 2020), and illustrates the power of myth in political hands. The cultural review, in Chapter 4, listed many examples of a nostalgic turn in the treatment of the Blitz, colourfully described recently, as 'psychological bunting that festooned the national mind' (Brown 2020, 1). Using Mass-Observation material she tracks the concerns and worries of the pandemic and relates them to the war years which, for many, live on as the stuff of legend. An early critic decried nostalgia's pervasive 'numbing hand' (Ratcliffe 1975).

While deconstructing narratives of Dunkirk, Summerfield argued that the 'absence of a censorious state', did not automatically assume the existence of a 'natural popular consensus'. However, both the 'miracle of Dunkirk' and the myth of the Blitz, were able to establish a 'formidable position in national memory' (Summerfield 2010, 788-790). This position, one of unchallenged dominance, became strongly embedded in a period when the state was considerably less interventionist than its wartime policy of crude manipulation. The myth of the Blitz, with its basis in truth, the reflection of many good, unexpected, resolute and brave behaviours, found little resistance. Pushing against an open-door, to become 'Blitz spirit', a narrative of acquiescence that chimes with a need to look back with pride, part of a normal human capacity to move on, for those not directly touched by tragedy.

The willingness to embrace a limited narrative echoes the coping mechanism of the living when surrounded by death and destruction. Harrison's view, from field-responses by Mass-Observation staff, was that regardless of the carnage, the dead were 'put aside from continuing concern' (1976, 97-98). This appears to form an essential element of the resilience shown by many survivors. A more recent illustration, that death is less readily absorbed into the collective consciousness, may be recalled from the Civilians Remembered campaign, in Chapter 8. The memorial plaque at Hermitage Wharf, Wapping, sought not to

'dwell intrusively on the dead' or the onerous and oppressive influence they exert (Taylor 2021). The result is a monument that, in spite of its symbolism, scale and quality, may never function as a memorial. Its future is predicted in the theoretical views of Nora, and their translation by Eröss, where such 'memory production' becomes frozen into '...mundane elements of public space,...' (2017, 19). Its detachment, from socially-engaged remembrance, will see it 'absorbed into a monument, sustaining an 'ideological discourse' (González-Ruibal 2008, 256), that it shares with the narrative of Blitz spirit.

Harrison observed that post-war fantasy was overwhelming 'reality' when he came to write his memoir, just 30 years after the war had ended (1976, 18). A 'glossification', characterised by falsification, fiction, exaggeration, suppression and propaganda, was merging to form 'a luscious mishmash', somewhere between 'dream and action' (1976, 322). In this, less than clear, passage, which otherwise sees a governmental and institutional hand in the process, he observes the human need to collaborate in the fantasy (1976, 335-336). A clearer interventionist trend, was identified by Angus Calder some years later (1991), in the manipulation of pre-existing myths, in the service of politics, in the gunboat politicking of the Falklands Conflict in 1982. A recourse to Churchillian rhetoric and a hearkening to the spirit of the wartime myths, were observed in the language of the Thatcher Government; it inspired his deconstruction of wartime myths. The rhetoric galvanised popular support, with language evoking the Blitz and its spirit of the British people. As the analysis of Chapter 4 describes, the interventions and deployments of Blitz narratives, 'sanitised and romanticized almost beyond recognition' have accelerated into the 21st century, led by the 'sentimental, the loony patriotic, the ignorant and the bloodthirsty' (Fussell 1989, ix). Fussell's target was the war in general but the remarks are apposite to the status of the Blitz narrative, and some of its current proponents. The author now recognises, what was less clear, before engagements with remembrance actors, that the Blitz, within its multiple narrative strands, has two that are dominant but divergent. The first, and most entrenched, is the widely-held consciousness of a past of heroic qualities, transacted in mass-culture material, press coverage and political output, forming a passive inheritance, now that living memory has all but passed. It is here that the politically-

deployed, narrow narrative, is firmly embedded, the preferred, bequeathed text of the unwounded, the scared but unscathed, the distanced but sympathetic.

Secondly, the Blitz lives on in personal, inherited, shared and active memories of a darker meaning, albeit much less prominent, but brought alive in personal and collective remembrance. This is a narrative of victims, survivors and bereaved and their family remembrances, which is elusive and seldom presented in common discourse, finding an uncertain welcome in 'Blitz Spirit' (Noakes 2020), yet, as the case work has demonstrated, is channelled into meaningful commemorations of personal agendas. Perhaps the best examples of success are those from Bath and Portsmouth where, with different approaches and constraints, a small survivor group and a resourceful activist delivered significant civilian commemorations, within dominant military monuments, in 2003 and 2016.

Clearly, the general conclusion of an easy consensus does not apply here, where the narrative path is contested, where, recognised in an apt observation, 'a sight, a sound, even a smell unlocks memory's door' (Middleton 1960, 188). This divergent path speaks to memories of the Blitz, cruelly obscured by the ascent of the simple myth, in a process, which, with apologies to Connerton (2008), the thesis describes as apathetic erasure. Perhaps, '...now more than ever, we should reflect upon the true history of the blitz spirit – and lay its sentiment to rest' (Overy 2020b).

The dominance of the popular narrative has, the author contends, isolated a dangerous simplicity, as a symbol of a complex past, in three ways. Firstly, it eliminates a sense of the ordeal of civilians in general, and the bereaved in particular. Any semblance of the diversity of reactions, to the experience of being bombed, is lost. Many observers, at the time and since, have chronicled that our forebears exhibited venality and dishonesty alongside their resilience. Epic levels of looting are evident in oral histories recorded by the BBC's People's war archive. Fitzgibbon's treatment of the bombing of the Café Royal is particularly chilling in that respect (1971, 141-152). Religious and racial intolerance were evident in the Bethnal Green tragedy and throughout Bourne's catalogue, of the indignities experienced by Britain's Black communities, on the Home Front (2010). Human frailties and failings are as obscured by the limited narrative as the death and displacement of civilians. A failure to acknowledge,

that, together, they represent a 'secret history', is evident in a recent attempt to restore some balance that, in my opinion, badly misfired (Levine 2015).

Second, Blitz spirit in its simplicity of content and the expediency of its deployment, has become 'divorced from historic reality' (Overy 2020). It thus does a disservice to the trials and suffering of civilians, the 'plain ordinary people', who did brave and resourceful things, because 'they felt they ought to', invoked by Calder (1941b). Their resilience, publicised without attenuation, as early as 1942 in *Front Line* (Ministry of Information 1942), rose above the pre-war expectations of moral and physical collapse, the expectation of malingering in shelters and public order breakdown. Titmuss expresses strong support for this view. However, his exposition, of the nuances and triumphs of social cohesion, is now lost in the 'spirit' to which it has been distilled.

Thirdly, it eliminates from discourse the bloody nature of bombardment that killed almost 70,000 people and badly injured another 140,000. Death and rationing are not equal in the balance of human experience and their ready conjunction, in a selective Blitz narrative, supports the unsurprising opinion that post-war generations are poorly informed and the proposition that it is in the artefacts and agents of remembrance that Blitz truths can be found.

How and why Blitz Spirit rose to its present dominance arises from multiple influences but the argument returns to the willingness of the public to go along with narratives of simplicity, leading to historical indifference and increasing ignorance, as time and generations pass. An inference earlier, suggested a relationship between the nation's post-war sense of identity and narratives that support a sense of worth. This was reinforced in a 2020 podcast where historian and political commentator, David Runciman explored how British politics should deal with its imperial past, in the age of Brexit, with Fintan O'Toole. The war, as a tipping-point to a post-colonial world, and by implication its myths, forms an undue influence on considerations of national self-regard (Runciman 2020). It is apparent, to take the title of Runciman's podcast, that Britain has 'wrestled with its Past', throughout the passage of the narrative time-line and, as yet, knows not how to shake off 'fantasies of the past' (Olusoga 2019) nor how to form new national stories (Malik 2020).

The entrenchment of Blitz spirit, as a shorthand for the bombing, was concluded in Chapter 4, to be part-manipulation and part-willing, even-unknowing, consensus. People have a need to look back with pride; but those looking back now, were not there, they have no experience of the Blitz. They lack the insight that a stinking shelter, corpses in the street, people gasping for their last breath on a tube stairway, might bring. Their perspective, in the absence of a better-known, more widely discussed Blitz history of experience, is thus rose-tinted, without depth, leading to a lazy consensus. Runciman and O'Toole (2020) expressed the country's drift to a right-leaning nationalism, culminating in Brexit, in the context of changes to the nation's self-worth, a failure to accept a diminished national status, promoting the acceptance of a limited history.

For good reasons, the performance of civilians during the war is largely something to be proud of, from their bravery and resilience to their good-nature (Calder 1940; Calder 1941; Calder 1991; Fitzgibbon 1957; Ziegler 1995). However, the civilian experience, uninfluenced by wartime processes of narrative management, is one of sudden death, loss of home and chattels, dispersion and family separation. Any narrative that fails to accommodate the families wiped-out in the bombing, such as the Rocks in Clydebank and the Fords and Rattrays in Bath, needs correction. The tragic, improperly-measured failure of the displaced at Hallsville and the degradation of the Tilbury shelter need to be told alongside the nobility and guilt of the survivors, such as Tom Betts, Ray Lechmere and Peter Findley. Their stories state the deadly effects of aerial attack and the life-long trauma visited on those who lived through it.

They are told with varying methods and effectiveness, in their material commemoration, the synthesis of which this chapter now turns. In Chapter 5, the experiences of civilians, under the bombs, were described through the scale of their casualties, dislocation and distress, the squalor and danger of the shelters, the slow learning of lessons as the Blitz moved from London to the provincial ports and cities. These are the components of history that are ignored in the retailing of the Blitz narrative in the hands of politicians, the popular press and general discourse. It is the memory of these experiences however that informs and generates the outputs-commemorative processes and practices-analysed in the case studies and through the perspectives of those involved in bringing those memories into the material of remembrance.

12.3 Memorials and Monuments

The analysis of commemorative archaeology commenced in Chapter 6 where, after a short definitional section, the nature and extent of Britain's memorial culture, with around 90,000 records, was unveiled. It was from the Imperial War Graves Commission's approach to war remembrance that the recording of the civilian dead was conceived. The outcome, as discussed, is the monument to 70,000 civilians in Westminster Abbey, the Roll of Honour. Its great achievement, beyond its contested development, at the hands of a cautious wartime government, is that civilians are accorded equal honour, with each other and their military counterparts. Largely completed by the mid-1950s, it remains the one national memorial of the civilian dead; nothing remotely close has followed in the intervening years. Those years saw a hiatus in post-war memorialisation that ended, either side of the millennium, with a national surge, promoted by major anniversaries, a redress of gaps in services remembrance and coincided with the political entrenchment of a limited Blitz narrative.

Civilian remembrance, it was suggested, suffered from an absence of traction, while other causes, such as animals in war, exploited a ready support. A general characteristic of the surge was the lead from large institutions, such as the Royal British Legion and ex-service organisations, that were able to get support from government. Therefore, while military monument building moved forward, civilian remembrance lacked a champion from two of the key actors, the state and civil society, at a national level, represented in influential and well-endowed institutions, recognised in the theoretical review (Ashplant et al 2000; Winter 2006; Winter and Sivan 1999).

The thesis considers that the Royal British Legion has played a limiting role in shaping civilian recognition at the National Memorial Arboretum and through its most public institution, Poppy Day. Change in the Legion's stance, on the latter, is only recently observable in a cautious 2019 amendment of its mission statement, to better reflect civilian inclusivity, prompted by recent terrorist events. Hitherto, the mission had stated that, the poppy was a symbol related 'to the armed forces community specifically' but, confusingly, 'not exclusively'. It alluded in vague terms to the 'wider impact of conflict'. The recent change is less vague and acknowledges 'innocent civilians' lost in conflict and terrorism (Booth 2019). This wordage is carefully chosen, perhaps over-sensitively, as if

the inclusion of civilians, specifically those at home, might put at risk the millions raised by the annual appeal for armed service charities. Furthermore, national memorial initiatives at the Arboretum and the Women at War monument have, to date, avoided easy extensions to include civilians, leaving a void filled, on the one hand, by the popular narrative and, on the other, by the CWGC.

The research exercise that started in 2013 was curious, but not unduly concerned, that there was no national memorial to the country's civilian dead. Consideration that civilians would feature in the memorial plans, under discussion by the War Memorials Advisory Council in 1944, and the ruined churches debate, within architectural circles, as discussed earlier, came to nothing. However, the thesis field-work soon encountered monuments that aspired to represent London's civilian dead, over half of the national death toll. Each, when analysed, had a questionable validity, as places of lasting and fitting civilian remembrance. St James's Garden, for example, exulting Londoners' fortitude, is all but forgotten. The Firefighter statue, *Blitz*, lost the relevance, to the bombing and fire defence, inherent in its name and symbolism, when its status changed (The Firefighters Memorial Trust 2021). Indeed, lost from general view, is a monument, with national pretensions, not discussed in this thesis until now, in the town, with perhaps the longest association with the Army, Aldershot. Overlooking a small dell, a figure of Christ surveys a garden, with stones from 56 blitzed cities and towns. This monument, with symbols of shared destruction, has some of the credentials to meet the national ambition set for it in 1950. However, in a town, managing armed forces restructuring and decline since the war, there is no sign that its potential has been tested as a setting for acts of remembrance. **Appendix 22** has details of its dedication in 1950. Illuminated testimonies, from each contributing borough and city, are bound into a memorial book, located in the adjacent parish church. They reflect sentiments acknowledging loss yet declaring hope for the future. Local sources describe the statue and garden as Aldershot's Heroes Shrine, its National Memorial, to those who lost their lives in the Second World War (Cole 1980, 265) An inscription, now faded, pays tribute to the people of 'our devastated cities'. It is an elegant monument, establishing, as did the garden at St James's, notions of fortitude. It has sadly, inevitably, slipped into obscurity.

The conclusion drawn on these monuments is unequivocal; through the earlier analysis of conception and delivery, they are sites that have become empty of remembrance, fitting the cruel designation of petrified history (González-Ruibal 2008, 255-260; Nora 1989). They show a divergence between commemorations of individuals and small groups and those from the state and civil society side of the agency profile. They exemplify the problems that monuments acquire, through the absence of social engagement, explored in Chapter 2, where 'empty monumentality', as expounded by Nora (1989) and Young (2017), was acknowledged. That would perhaps have been the fate of a national civilian monument, had wartime proposals been progressed, as it is the fate of cemetery memorials, distanced, physically and spiritually, from the communities that engagement might have been drawn.

The 'problem with monuments', addressed in Chapter 2 and here, brings the discussion to a reconsideration of 'weakly articulated' definitions of monument and memorial (Gough 2008, 325) and the variations in adoption in some of the literature (Boorman 1995; Borg 1991; McIntyre 1990). There has been a growing realisation, driven by the case work, that a clear distinction does matter. Monuments are acknowledged to speak of size, grandeur and the imposition of triumph and celebration (Gough 2008, 325). They mark a separation of monuments, to and of war, from memorials of the dead, *mémoires aux morts* (Aslet 2012; Dowd 2019). Memorials achieve living remembrance, while monuments mark the death of memory (Gough 2008; Nora 1989).

Drawing these, perhaps simplistic, distinctions has permitted an improved appreciation of case material. This is noted in a distinction between monuments to *qualities* and remembrance of *experience*. The evidence of the former is exhibited with the People of London tablet and St James's Church Garden, which fail in a *memorial* task of promoting engagement and enabling personal memory, despite their inscription of valour and resilience. They fall into the category of *lieux de mémoires* cited by Nora (1989) and endorsed by Eröss (2017, 19) and González-Ruibal (2008, 255-260). Those acts of remembrance that produce memorials representing the *experience* of war, often expressed through the naming of the dead, are relevant and engaging; linked to the memories that shaped them, they promote social engagement, through the stories they tell and the locations they choose. They transcend monumentality,

and add to collective remembrance, through meaningful commemorative practice. Their foundation is in the personal and their implementation is in the collective. Clearly visible, at both of the Bethnal Green commemorations and the Bath and Portsmouth WWII memorials, the contrast with, say, the People of Portsmouth stone is clear. The community remembrance of its unveiling has been lost in time; it will remain embedded on the pavement but not transition into societal practice. The Besant plaque, so well-meaning in its translation of a personal memory, is limited in its brevity and its location; sadly, in time, it may become a neglected sign on a garage wall, divorced from 'live, regularly performed spatial practices', with its victims un-named (Eröss 2017, 19, citing Nora 1989).

In a comment, predating the London monument boom and the establishment of his own memorial project (War Memorials Register 2021), Borg articulated that imposing size and position does not guarantee an effective memorial. My case work endorses his view that ultimately war memorials are about individuals, even when part of an 'endless list of names carved on a wall' (1991, 142).

Already, a seemingly endless wall of names, the Covid Memorial on the Albert Embankment, is provoking a pandemic remembrance debate (Blake 2021; Jones 2020), in arguments, similar to those of the late war years (Royal Society of Arts 1944). Idle speculation, perhaps, yet a national monument, invoking resilience and fortitude, with echoes of Blitz spirit, would surely fail the pandemic dead.

In earlier discussion, the supremacy of the myth, and its irresistible evolution to Blitz spirit, was determined to be a synthesis of manipulation and acceptance. The manifestation of the civilian eclipse, in the modern narrative, however, has developed a deliberation and purpose, as the political needs of 'spirit' have grown. It has been observed that non-working, civilian women are specifically excluded from the Women at War monument. All civilians are slighted on databases by their optional inclusion, in the same sentence as animals. The People of London tablet overlooked the civilian dead by a desire to laud Londoners and their general deportment in the war. Remembrance services, which of late, have reflected the vulnerability of civilians, to terror and conflict worldwide, still do not directly address wartime civilian casualties. I observed, to the officiating rector at a recent local cenotaph service, that a few words would

have accorded equal honour, to the 70,000 civilians who died 'alongside' the serving men and women of WWI and WWII; he undertook to reflect on my 'specific' point. These examples reinforce a key finding in answering the questioning of remembrance and commemorative practice. The civilian cause of remembrance has to confront a competing narrative bias within an environment of commemoration heavily-weighted to the demands of military remembrance.

12.4 Commemoration and Activism

The search for the civilian commemorative practices of the Blitz has, as intimated in the opening remarks of this chapter, followed a diverse trail. Case histories and memorial studies in London, Portsmouth and Bath have taken conversations, interviews, archives and literary sources, to a material of commemoration that, on initial analysis, is small-scale, elusive and fragmented, within a military remembrance 'landscape' which dominates the archaeological record of civilian material of around 1200 items. Important guides (Boorman 1995; Borg 1991; War Memorials Register 2021) have recorded that about half of these are extensions to memorials that existed at the end of WWII in towns, churches, schools and places of work. The 'new' material, that dedicated to civilians, rather than sharing a platform, exceeds 650 records, within a total of more than 90000. Significantly outnumbered, by other conflict commemorations, the material suggests that the limited visibility, of the civilian dead, in modern discourse, might also apply to its material of remembrance.

However, my case analysis, and consideration of hundreds of other memorial references in many locations, suggests otherwise, presenting diversity and meaningful engagement, as a counterpoint to fragmentation, delivered by actors, determined to communicate experiences, transcending notions of Blitz spirit. More than 30 people have contributed to the research programme, with a range of inputs, from old stories and rumours to thought-provoking observations. Some of them have been happy to participate in the chosen semi-structured interviewing method while others were happier to talk without structure. There have been no examples where Blitz spirit has been invoked as a motive or a challenge; for the most part those involved in the 'work of remembrance' are indifferent to public narrative, given their commitment to a private agenda based on memory (Winter & Sivan 1999, 29). The participants and their roles in their respective projects are acknowledged in **Appendix 23**.

My analysis of form and type covered over 2000 entries on the War Memorials Register, to weed out non-Blitz records. A significant monumental form, explored at length in Chapter 7, established in the early years of peace, was the cemetery monument, erected at places of mass interment. This commemorative type illustrates the different actors in the field of remembrance. Cemetery monuments were a product of institutional groups, usually local councils, rather than the output of a 'popular kind of collective memory' (Winter & Sivan 1999, 29). The 'top-down' intervention produced over 100 of these mass grave monuments, after community plaques, the most extensive of civilian commemorative forms. Driven by a wartime imperative, the dispersed location of the grave sites, in multiple cases, limited them as ongoing places of remembrance. The earlier review concluded that, with few exceptions, these failed to sustain community engagement, as predicted in the theoretical literature (Eröss 2017; Nora 1989). Accepting the notion of difference between monument and memorial, developed in the previous section, many of the cemetery memorials reverted to 'empty monumentality'. Those that did not, for example at Coventry, Abney Park and Portsmouth, were 'saved' by regular acts of remembrance and community support, denied to many others, especially in London, on the fringe of unfrequented cemeteries.

The long hiatus, that followed the placing of the structured and formulaic cemetery monuments, was ended by important anniversaries and by particular activist agendas and this stimulated the diversity seen in the case chapters and in the appendices. It required the thesis to consider the stories of the actors, their journey to remembrance, as the key to the commemorative practices that ensued. Starting with the people, behind the artefacts of remembrance, has yielded extraordinary stories, and not just from significant commemorations.

In Portsmouth, it was a broken buckle that piqued the memory of lone activist, Robert Rowe. At Crockham Hill, Peter Findley's measles saved him twice; on one database, he is listed, as a survivor, under his given and adopted names (Kent Fallen 2021). A historian's chance meeting, with a friend of his late mother, found his only photo of her, stimulating a village to do something, it could have done years earlier. In Stoke Newington, the huge loss of life at Coronation Mansions, produced commemorative outcomes in a community, whose diversity matched that of the community of experience that had been

broken and dispersed. The memorial group cleverly harnessed new cultural connections to take on the task of remembering (Loewe 2012). In Bethnal Green, the harnessing of a new community was successful, through a collective construction of a new narrative, which eventually replaced one based on victimhood, injustice and suppression. A sense of re-claiming East End culture, lost at the war's end (Dudgeon 2008), was resisted. These examples exhibit a multiplicity of voices, in contrasting commemorative responses, a vibrant grass-roots, social agency, jostling to project a diversity of meanings and intentions. The case histories have exposed new memorial initiatives which fulfil needs felt unanswered by previous efforts of recall (Crockham Hill, Petworth and Hither Green), recovered forgotten events (Besant Road School and Columbia Market) and recognized a city's civilian dead, whose remembrance, left to local institutions, had been neglected. When stimulated by grass-roots activism, they responded, albeit with initial reluctance (Portsmouth and Bath).

So, who are these 'grass roots' actors? Defining the actors, in the 'ring' of remembrance, is of course as diverse as the communities they come from. In a telling quote, the society that 'wrought the conflict' produces the people that seek to commemorate it (Schofield 2011, 3-5), a truism perhaps, yet one which, as the thesis has recorded before, evokes the source of remembrance, at the personal level of memory, even when that has been bequeathed to the generations that follow. In a sense, Calder summed it up in the preface to *Carry on London* (1941b, ix), they do it because they think 'they ought to', fulfilling an obligation to a past shared with kith and kin. Hence, they are relatives of those who did not make it out of a shelter, those that escaped and stayed to help, those alarmed by secrecy and false narrative and those, without direct experience or memory, moved by a shared story of unmarked tragedy, as outlined in the epigraph (Loewe 2012). These are some of the reasons that explain who the protagonists are.

In being so defined, their commemorative approaches and outcomes, presented in the thesis, validate the theoretical literature and meet the expectations of small group activism inherent in the vectors of remembrance identified by Winter & Sivan, a framework in which actors, whether collaborators or instigators, transact and negotiate the remembrance process (1999, 9-29). This work concurs with the structure of collective remembrance proposed by

Ashplant, Dawson and Roper that defined three paradigms of remembrance production, namely state-centred, social agency and popular memory. The latter, close to collective, voluntary enterprise, defined by Winter & Sivan (1999, 29), operates, in internal collaboration, with the other agencies, 'the transactions and negotiations that [are] involved in producing war memorials' (Ashplant *et al* 2000, 3). However, it is in the development of a theory of *popular memory* that the particular dynamics and interactions of small groups and diverse collectives was projected.

The case work and activist contact validated the notion of tight kinship groups, of shared experience, empowering individual stories to form a collective but private narrative. This was particularly evident in Bethnal Green where the community narrative, formed of hundreds of memories and years of suppression, long remained an internal narrative. The Bath Blitz Memorial project was a quintessential group, bonded by age, experience and neighbourhood; its tightness and focus saw it pull off the remembrance of the Blitz victims with equal honour, 13 years quicker than in Portsmouth.

For popular memory to be effective the group has to break out of the internalisation, the 'immediate circle of memory' (Dawson 2005, 154). Groups, in the popular memory theory, adopt the role of actor (*Homo actans* in Winter's and Sivan's 1999 analysis). Public exposure brings new challenges and contests in a 'social arena' of trade-offs, a balancing of power and its relations, if the original group is to succeed in the unequal contest of bringing its particular remembrance to fruition. The interactions with other stakeholders are part of the challenge. At Hermitage Wharf, in Wapping, it was the meeting, of two separately constituted groups, that transformed opposition into effective campaigning. Clearly, the agendas were not single-minded with, as demonstrated, unfortunate results and a disappointing campaign outcome.

The emergence of commemorations at a local level, as observed, in the case material, points to the behaviour of individuals, doing the work of remembrance, through collectives. Clearly, not all of the projects show groups, as intimate or tight-knit, as the theory proposes; that said, almost all of the projects illustrated the challenge of going it alone. Alf Morris's lonely declamations from the tube stairs and Jean Louth's sadness, that public memory was denied to her city's 3500 WWII dead, would have meant nothing, without a social arena, arising to

help. Robert Rowe, helped by family and support from the local media, benefitted from effective liaison with other stakeholders and the institutions he needed to proceed. Geoff Twist would have failed to respond, to the narrative of the decimated wedding party, in the Columbia Market shelter, had his over-ambitious memorial intentions not been reined-in by his recruits to the project. Such are the examples of challenge, the renegotiation and trade-off that characterise, as predicted, the contesting of remembrance.

There are challenges, beyond protagonist issues of cohesion and team-play, of a processual nature, a contestation defined by the generally poor understanding of the civilian wartime story and post-war challenges of neighbourhood dispersal. These impact funding, and the inaction of institutions, while trying to drown out the clamour of other demands on remembrance. All of the cases, at one time or another, confronted these challenges, with funding defining the most difficult passages of projects. The Stairway took six years for ground to be broken while Portsmouth's WWII remembrance saga lasted 27 years.

The third element, of a contestation framework proposed in Chapter 2, comprises challenges of intention and meaning. In the review of the post-war programme, of establishing ruined churches as war memorials, London's main candidate devolved to Christ Church Greyfriars. The church ruins have spent their post-war life as an open garden space, with a little-publicised designation, as a memorial to the Blitz. Conferring a monument, like Christ Church, with a memorial designation, unsupported by communication of terms of remembrance, means it is unlikely ever to be socially-enacted as such.

A project to formalise its memorial function within an extensive restoration (Heron 2018; Watts 2015) has come to nothing. The campaign, the Civilians' Memorial, starting as a considered heritage endeavour, but exploited civilian remembrance, when interest and institutional support had faltered. The true colours, of the lone activist, were revealed when a legitimate offer for some civilian recognition was dismissed; the renovation of the Wren church was his *sine qua non*. The project's future is problematic, not least, because important stakeholders have been alienated, by past critique, in otherwise eloquent advocacy. In addition, the proponent needs to move, as predicated (Ashplant et al 2000; Dawson 2005), into collaboration, with other agencies and groups, where heritage restoration is the single goal, without the attempt to leverage

civilian remembrance. A confusion of aims similarly hampered the Hermitage Wharf campaign.

Confusion of meaning is unfortunately sometimes translated during implementation. The People of London tablet, intended as a reader-funded memorial to London's Blitz casualties (London Remembers 2021) was unveiled as a monument to fortitude with not even an oblique reference to the original meaning. Where it got lost *en route* to a rather attractive block of stone is not clear. It stands close to St Paul's whose survival, while all around was devastated, in December 1940, was massaged into the defining symbol of London's spirit (Allbeson 2015). The dominance of that narrative seems to have overshadowed the original intention of the Evening Standard's campaign. It is unfortunate that, within a short distance of the Cathedral, the tablet should join the stunted initiative at Christ Church and the revision of the meaning of *Blitz*.

To this point, this short synthesis of case study material, with theoretical foundations and research questions, has attempted to define the protagonists, describe what they do, alone and in collaboration, and the challenges that have to be confronted. The arenas of contested remembrance, reviewed and observed across London, Portsmouth and Bath, exhibit experiences that are daunting, bruising and dispiriting before uplifting fulfilment. The emotional investment required begs the question: What do they want?

The people who engage with memorials, particularly those who are active in bringing them to life, represent varied motives, that drive an urge to restore a version of the past. Recalling memories, of a harsh time punctuated by sudden death, is inevitably infused by normal human emotions, such as guilt, anger, sadness, compassion. What evokes the emotional response can be an incident, unevenly reported or forgotten, a narrative that causes community guilt and suppression or a person or group of people that merit wider recognition of the harm that befell them. As noted above these are not the sort of people to be motivated by the dominant Blitz narrative. The thesis concludes that they draw their power from their community and its shared past. An example is the motivating influence of shelter tragedies, evident throughout the case work. Death, where safety had been expected, has brought these shelter stories to the head of commemorative agendas, evoking the fear of meaningless loss. That victims died 'for nothing' brought Mr Morris to tears on the tube stairs

(*Disaster at the Tube* 2003). It is the commemoration, the galvanising of community memory, that brings meaning to the bereft (Winter 2008, 7).

The motive that appears paramount is the mortality of memories, those of the activists and those of the constituents they represent. This perhaps explains the quickening of remembrance initiatives, driven by anniversaries, the passing of time and a fear of forgetting, a depletion of the 'immense fund' of living memory (Nora 1989). A good example is the 25-year charity campaign, Firemen Remembered (The Charity Commission 2018), which has its roots in the creation of national fire services in 1942 and the disappearance of the Auxiliary Fire Service (Maltman 2001). This had 25,000 civilian volunteers in London and inspired the famous wartime documentary, *Fires were started* (1943). Uncertain how their memories were to be heard, and then preserved, several former members coalesced around an organiser, Stephanie Maltman, inspired by the film, whose home became a safe-haven and forum for them, and their memories of those they had lost (S. Maltman pers.comm. 14 January 2019). Across London, there over 20 oval plaques which recall the lost firemen by name, precisely located, where they died. From a motive, solidly located in a fear of being forgotten, the campaign continues, infused by a wish to respect the original driving force, those who have now passed out of living memory. It demonstrates what brings people to a role in collective remembrance; empathy, for the victim and the survivor, and a mission to share the story. That sharing becomes a commemorative act, in the true sense. Those values have played a significant role in the campaign. Mrs Maltman seemed surprised, in our discussion, that what Firemen Remembered had accomplished, was in any way exceptional. A list of the commemorative plaques is in **Appendix 24**.

There is no doubt, from the evidence of my case studies, that a fear of forgetting, and of being forgotten, is the most important driver of remembrance, at the popular memory level. Jean Louth justified her campaigning in Portsmouth with the question that 'How will they be remembered unless their names are there?' (BBC News 2009c). Reinforcing this, is the view of a supporter in Stoke Newington, of the Abney Park and Coronation Mansions projects: 'if memorials are not kept up, people will forget about the war, about the Blitz and about all the innocent people that were killed' (Loewe 2012, 85).

12.5 Final Remarks

This detailed analysis, dovetailing the theoretical context of the thesis with the research questions and outcomes from the case material, brings the undertaking to a conclusion. The aim of the thesis has been to challenge the prevailing Blitz narrative and the limited representation of the civilian experience. It was through engagements with the people and practices of civilian remembrance that the challenge was mounted. Expressed as an archaeology of the myth of the Blitz, the historiography of the Blitz narrative, from its foundations in 1940, has been held-up to the mirror of commemorative materialisation of civilian remembrance and the vocalisation of memories from a varied constituency of activists.

The presentation of commemorative output demonstrates the power of storytelling, making personal truths public and challenging the national collective sense of the civilian experience, sometimes described as Blitz spirit, in popular and political discourse. The myth that 'Blitz spirit' saw Britain through a war has become a monument, one that sublimates death, to be sustained as a folk-memory and political tool. Tracing this narrative path of the Blitz, opened the door to its divergence. The narrow narrative is largely a willing adoption of state transactions and cultural treatments of the past, the eclipse of the civilian experience, a matter of apathetic erasure.

However, the competing 'narrative' lives on in commemorative material, the outcome of activism, transcribing the personal, inherited and shared memories of people, transacting the work of remembrance. It is the narrative of 'communities of experience', translated by descendent generations, to which a moral responsibility to remember has devolved (Wierling 2013). This narrative operates, with an innate consensus, unaffected by state intervention, political expediency or adherence to Blitz spirit. It is monumental, only in its aggregate, of individual remembrance, yet to be enacted. While it is circumscribed, by the prevalence of the preferred narrative, its emergence, in hundreds of examples, led by individuals, transmitting memories into the 'unequal' contest, reveals more of the civilian experience than the imposing 'monument' of Blitz spirit. The white noise of the narrow narrative is overwhelmed by the truths of personal memory inscribed, through collective action, in acts of remembrance and their commemorative outcomes

The varied, fragmented and scattered civilian commemorative landscape does not in itself paint a positive picture. Civilian remembrance, no less than military, has monuments that have limited meaning and social engagement, the aforementioned empty monumentality showing 'where there is no meaning, there is no commemoration' (Winter 2008, 7). However, the exposure, in the thesis of civilian commemorative activism, suggests remembrance is well cared for, vouchsafing the experience of the past, not permitted in the limited public projection of Blitz spirit. The agents of remembrance, those in their small groups, and then their wider communities, have been seen plotting the fulfilment of their agendas, confronting their roadblocks, re-engaging the past, through public story-telling. From the Stairway to the humble plaque at 101 High Street, Portsmouth, this is their Blitz narrative, a sense of reality, born of lived experience, shared memories and collective remembrance. British civilian commemoration may not adequately reflect the experience of enemy bombing in its limited quantity. Elusive, it may be, but it amounts to more than numbers. Its forms, lists of names and narrative plaques, show the qualities of living remembrance, denied to monuments that articulate a collective Blitz memory. Those working towards a better remembrance of their experience are thus enshrined in the memorial and its message. Active remembrance has been observed that is noisy, busy and loquacious. A story-telling that projects a plurality of agendas, translating to public form, personal memories of the past. In essence, fulfilling the desire for a more rounded history. The notion of personal memory and its projection, through community and collectivity, eloquently displayed in the theoretical literature, is visible in much of the material. Designed to hold meaning, engage socially and tell relevant narratives, undistorted by empty phrases of spirit or resilience, this is the evidence brought by people, sought in the aims and intentions of the research plan and its activist engagements.

The last word relates to impact, a life for this exposure, of civilian experience through commemoration, after submission. The thesis identified, in its title, the contesting of remembrance of the civilian experience of the Blitz. What has been revealed are the outcomes of contestation, visible at every point, narratively and materially, in the post-war timeline. Old and new stories have been retailed and analysed and, in my opinion, shed new light, on civilian

remembrance and its commemorative material, through a dedicated focus on their place in the post-conflict, contemporary past. Furthermore, protagonists of British civilian remembrance have participated in the process, testing notions from decades of theoretical intervention, in the workings of personal memory, into remembrance and its commemorative product, a material culture shouldering 'the larger responsibility of our personal and collective memories' (Buchli & Lucas 2001, 80).

The thesis aspired to make an original contribution to contemporary civilian studies through a 'revival' of a minimally-conveyed wartime experience. These remarks contend that the originality of the thesis is vested in this revelation of the civilian experience through the material of its commemoration, the voices of its actors, often at the time of its creation. If, as suggested, the 'corollary of this, of course, is that decay or destruction of these brings forgetfulness' (Buchli & Lucas 2001, 80), the journey to date requires continuing validation. The aging generation, featured in the case material, those who participated in the research plan, deserve their memories and actions to be remembered, a task they faithfully followed in respecting the inheritance of their forebears. Nora observed that 'the remnants of experience [live] in the warmth of tradition' (1989, 7). My archaeological enterprise endorses this, identifying memory and its narrative, through the tradition of storytelling and commemoration. The thesis, through an archaeology of myth and experience, has built a 'richer narrative' that is more than a match for 'sanitised, bloodless' myth (González-Ruibal 2018, 113).

However, none of this matters if comment, critique and further research are not inspired by this endeavour. This part of the journey ends with an expectation that active civilian remembrance continues to challenge mythical scripts, with newly-told stories of otherwise-forgotten narratives, to be given space and form, from hitherto unheard voices.

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APPENDIX 1

INTERVIEW PLAN & APPROVALS

1. Project Summary

An investigation of WWII civilian remembrance, artefacts, processes and people. The project covers the civilian experience in Britain during the Blitz in WWII and its subsequent commemoration. Whether the commemorative landscape balances the civilian history of death and destruction or the endurance of the Blitz myth is echoed throughout the enquiry.

2. Research Aims & Questions

The research hypothesises that British civilian remembrance and its commemorative material inadequately reflect the experience of enemy bombing during WWII and that a remembrance vacuum has resulted from the pervasiveness of myths about the bombing since 1945. My research aims to make an original contribution to the study of collective and contested remembrance by tracing the development stages of civilian commemoration since 1945 through the feedback and testimony of some of those directly involved in the processes of active remembrance in Britain.

The research aims to rediscover and re-present the concealed history of the civilian experience in its narrative and material forms. It has adopted the following core research proposition:

The limited place for the civilian dead in the remembrance of the Blitz can be revealed through analysis of and engagement with the people, processes and practices of civilian commemoration

My research questions are:

1. How and why did the narrative of the Blitz emerge from its foundations in 1940 to its prevailing position today?
2. How is the narrative reflected in remembrance? What is the nature and extent of civilian remembrance in its commemorative forms?

3. Who are the actors in the contested remembrance of the civilian experience and can an engagement with them reveal a more rounded history than that presented by the current narrative of the Blitz?

3. Methodology

1. A historiography of the Blitz contrasting the actual civilian experience and the evolution of the present narrative, with its projected limitations.
2. An archaeology of remembrance practices to establish the context, time-line, location, form and visibility of commemorative outcomes.
3. Agency analysis and activist contact.

The project envisages that personal interviews will evoke stories, memories and opinions to aid an understanding of the nature and variation of current and historical commemorative processes. The oral testimony of remembrance protagonists, be they survivors, their relatives or friends, could prove invaluable in addressing my research aims.

As a crucial element of the contested memory framework the proposed dialogue had the following aims:

1. to validate the notion of small group activism (Dawson 2005; Winter & Sivan 1999), and seek evidence for actor typologies, the instigator and the follower, proposed in the same work (1999, 29).
2. to contribute to an understanding of the workings of remembrance in action, the aforementioned power relations and transactions of remembrance
3. to yield an understanding of current and past memorialisation processes
4. to highlight the hurdles and challenges which confront active remembrance and if and how they were overcome.

4. Selection and Recruitment

There are three main recruitment opportunities:

1. Contact with groups and individuals behind previous and current commemorative initiatives.
2. Informal conversations at memorial sites and events e.g. unveilings, church services.

3. Contacting individuals and groups involved in researching and representing remembrance initiatives.

5. Timing

Interviews between 2015 and 2020.

6. Interview Method

My approach will be to secure an informal interview without a formal questionnaire having described my research, expanding on the summary information sheet and having secured informed consent. The aim is to record with simple equipment and to achieve as relaxed an interview as possible. Interviews will take place in public places close to the memorial site as possible.

The choice of an informal approach, built around my research questions, is designed to be flexible in the pursuit of particular insights, opinions and memories as they arise. The interviews cover:

1. General views on and understanding of collective civilian remembrance.
2. What does civilian bombing and the Blitz mean to them?
3. Description of the project, its development, status and funding.
4. Who is/was being remembered and why?
5. The motivations for the remembrance act proposed
5. Why is the commemoration planned now?
6. Have the event or the people been commemorated before?
7. How and why did the interviewee/s get involved?

7. Data Management

The following respondent data will be requested: Name, address, age, occupation, role with the action group and affiliation to those commemorated.

All material will be transcribed, treated with confidentiality and, where requested, published with anonymity. The results will be published in my dissertation and, perhaps later, in academic journals.

8. Contacts

Columbia Market War Memorial Group:

Trevor Wood MBE: Chairman. Interview on 2nd November 2015.

Geoff Twist: Founder. Meeting declined. Contact maintained via E mail

Stairway to Heaven Memorial Trust:

Sandra Scotting MBE: Hon. Secretary. Interview September 28th 2015.

Lee Scotting. Hon. Accountant. Interview September 28th 2015

Barbara Clark. Spokesperson. Survivor. Interview September 28th 2015

Ray Lechmere. Spokesperson. Survivor Interview September 28th 2015

Anna Caroline Reid: Trustee. Facebook Contact.

Mrs J. Fielden. Daughter of attending doctor. Conversation 2015.

H. Paticas MBE. Arboreal Architecture. Interview: 4th March 2018.

Dr T. Butler. University of East London. Bethnal Green Memorial Project.

Crockham Hill Memorial

Mark Hancox. Committee Chairman. Interview: 16th October 2015.

Bob Ogley. Writer and Local Historian. Interview: 14th January 2016.

Kev Reynolds. Historian & Travel Writer. Interview: 18th June 2018.

David Gilmour. Village resident. Historian. Various correspondence.

Bill Curtis. Local historian, curator, Westerham Museum. Informal chat.

Rev. Sue Diggory. Vicar. Holy Trinity, Crockham Hill. Informal chat 2014.

Bath

Chris Kilminster. Independent activist. Interview: 5th February 2020.

H. Hemming. Bath Blitz Memorial Group. Informal chat. 27th April 2014.

Portsmouth

Robert Rowe-Initiator Besant Road Shelter Memorial. 14th August 2019.

J.J. Marshallsay. Memories of Bygone Portsmouth. 15th November 2019.

Ms T. Pritchard. Parish Assistant. St Colman. 3rd November 2016.

Ms M. Bridgman. Church of the Holy Spirit. 3rd November 2016.

Mrs J. Scarborough. Retired Teacher. Daley School. 4th November 2016.

Tim Burnett. Administrator. Portsmouth Cathedral. 29th August 2019.

Gareth Lewis. Chair: Pompey Pals Charity.

Chris Pennycook. Operations Manager. Pompey Pals Museum.

G. O'Brien. Portsmouth Cemeteries Manager. 15th November 2019.

Dave Yates. Teacher. Kingston Cemetery. 10th January 2020.

Firemen Remembered

Mrs S. Maltman. Co-Founder. Firemen Remembered. 14th January 2019.

Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Ms. M. Donnelly. Commemorations Policy Manager. 18th October 2019.

Michael Greet. Archive Assistant. 18th October 2019.

9. Disclosure

Transcripts approved by respondents. Rights of confidentiality and withdrawal are outlined in the Information Sheet and Informed Consent document .The data and their transcripts will be available for disclosure to supervisory, research and scrutiny staff within UCL Institute of Archaeology as part of the processes of academic assessment.

10. Forms

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PHD DISSERTATION RESEARCH



Information Sheet
updated 19-5-21.do

INFORMED CONSENT FORM



Informed Consent
Form updated 19-5-

INTRODUCTORY LETTER



Introduction
Letter.pdf

RE: Application for Ethical Clearance

Sparks, Rachael

Mon 30/03/2015 16:43

Inbox

To: Sharrock, John <john.sharrock.09@ucl.ac.uk>;

1 attachment

Project Risk Assessment.doc;

Dear John,

Thank you for sending me your Human Participation Research Application form. Looking at what you propose to do, I can give you ethical clearance to go ahead and begin collecting your data. However you should take note of the following:

1. You will NOT need to seek additional approval from the UCL **Research Ethics Committee**, as your proposal falls into their list of exemptions. This is based on the fact that you will not be working with anyone under the age of 18, or who might be otherwise considered vulnerable, and the subject matter is unlikely to put participants at particular risk of harm or adverse consequences. Should this change, please contact me again for further advice.

This said, because of the nature of your subject matter, it is more than likely that many of those you choose to interview will be quite elderly. This is fine, providing they have the capacity to offer informed consent to take part in your project, and are not resident in a care home or hospital. If they do not have this capacity (for example, because they are suffering from dementia), then it would not be appropriate to interview them without UCL Research Ethics Committee approval in place, so bear this in mind. If they are care home residents, or in hospital as current patients of the NHS, then a whole different set of ethics approvals would be needed from a National committee, so you should not be working with people in this category either.

2. If you need to interview people in private residences, which seems quite likely, then you should fill in a Risk Assessment Form (see attached). Send this to Sandra Bond (sandra.bond@ucl.ac.uk). She can help you if you have any further questions about how to fill this in, or risk assessment in general. Basically, the risks to be managed is that of you going alone into a private home to collect your data; to minimise risk, you would do the interview during the daytime, make sure people know where you are going and when, that you have a mobile phone with you in case of emergency, know safe routes to and from the venue, and if at all concerned, consider taking a friend with you. That sort of thing. If you plan to stick to interviewing people in public spaces such as cafes during the daytime, a risk assessment would not be necessary.

3. I have discussed the matter of anonymisation with Gabe, and he and I have agreed that partial anonymisation would be acceptable, providing your research subjects agree to it. By this, we mean you would record people's testimonies using their initials (e.g. RS), rather than their full names, with the understanding that some details of the personal stories told might allow them to be identified. However those who want complete anonymisation should be given it, in which case you would use a pseudonym, and make sure that there is nothing in their stories that might allow identification.

Because you are not aiming at full anonymisation, you would need to follow the requirements of the UK Data Protection Act 1998, in terms of how you protect the data you collect (see

<https://outlook.office365.com/owa/>

31/03/2015

(http://www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology/research/ethics/data_protection for more information on what this means). You will also need to follow UCLs **Data Protection** procedures. This means you will have to inform various people about the data that you will be collecting and how it will be stored.

- First of all, you need to contact the Institute's Data Protection Officer and tell him how you plan to keep the personal data you collect secure (when you fill out your UCL Data protection form, they ask if you have done this). Our officer is Dafydd Griffiths, and his email is d.griffiths@ucl.ac.uk. This is done for his information only. ✓ 2/6/15
- Next, you also need to inform our IT officer, Peter Schauer of your proposal. He can be contacted at: ioa-it@ucl.ac.uk. Again, this is done as a matter of information only – so make it clear that you are informing him of your plans and don't need a reply. ✓ 2/6/15
- Once Dafydd and Peter have both been informed (and don't worry if neither replies), the final step is register your project with UCLs Data Protection Officer. To do this, go to the UCL Legal Services http://www.ucl.ac.uk/finance/legal_services/data_protection/index.php and download their 'Form 2: research Registration'. Complete the form, and email it to: data-protection@ucl.ac.uk. Your application will probably take around 5 days to process. They assign you a reference number, which you don't actually have to do anything with (its intended to be used for anyone who is putting in a formal Research Ethics Committee application). When they ask you for the name of the principal researcher on this project, put the name of your supervisor (as it is not allowed to be a student). You may also need to tell them that you are not putting in a Research Ethics Committee application, as your research has been judged exempt from this by the Chair of the Institute of Archaeology's Ethics Committee. ✓ 3/6/15
- This registration should be done before you begin collecting your non-anonymised data. ✓

4. You will also need to follow ethical procedures for gaining **informed consent** from potential recruits, which will involve providing them with an information sheet to read, and consent form to sign. Sample versions of both forms are available on the IoA ethics dissertations guidelines page for downloading (http://www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology/research/ethics/dissertations_guidelines); adapt these to your specific needs, but take note of the information that they should include (such as mentioning their right to withdraw without penalty). Bearing in mind what I said earlier about your research subjects being elderly, you might want to consider rewriting the same forms to be more user-friendly, including using a larger font size to make them easier to read. ✓ 3/6/15

You can set a date, up until which people can withdraw; this should be when you plan to start collating and analysing your data. In order to allow people to do this, you will need to put some kind of individual code on each information sheet (which is given to recruits), that is also recorded on the interviews. Then if someone wants to withdraw after interview, they can contact you and say 'please destroy interview no. 6', and you know which one to delete from your research. In your case, the code could be based on the initials that you will be using, if these are unique.

I think this covers everything, but let me know if you have any further questions,

Best wishes,

Rachael

From: Sharrock, John
Sent: 23 March 2015 21:07
To: Sparks, Rachael
Cc: Gardner, Andrew; Moshenska, Gabriel
Subject: Application for Ethical Clearance

<https://outlook.office365.com/owa/>

31/03/2015

20150604 Email Confirm

Crouch, Spenser on behalf of Finance.Data Protection

Thu 04/06/2015 14:35

To: Sharrock, John <john.sharrock.09@ucl.ac.uk>;

3 attachments (179 KB)

Reg_Form_2 Draft.doc; Information Sheet Draft.docx; Informed Consent Form-Draft.docx;

Dear John Sharrock

Thank you for the application for Data Protection Registration.

I am pleased to confirm that this project is covered by the UCL Data Protection Registration, reference No Z6364106/2015/06/19, section 19, research: social research.

It is rarely necessary to store electronic personal data on portable devices such as laptops, USB flash drives, portable hard drives, CDs, DVDs, or any computer not owned by UCL. Similarly, manual personal data should not be regularly removed from UCL premises. In the case of electronic data, to minimise the risk of loss or disclosure, a secure remote connection to UCL should be used wherever possible.

Downloading personal data on to portable devices or taking manual personal data off-site must be authorised in writing by the Data Owner, who must explain and justify the operational need in relation to the volume and sensitivity of the data. The data must be strongly encrypted. Users should only store the data necessary for their immediate needs and should remove the data as soon as possible. To avoid loss of encrypted data, or in case of failure of the encryption software, an unencrypted copy of the data must be held in a secure environment. The Computer Security Team's guidance on encryption should be followed:

<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/informationsecurity/itsecurity/knowledgebase/securitybaselines/encryption>

Manual personal data and portable electronic devices should be stored in locked units, and they should not be left on desks overnight or in view of third parties.

In order to comply with the fifth data protection principle personal data should be securely destroyed when no longer required, with consideration for the format of the data. The Computer Security Team's guidance should be followed for electronic data:

http://www.ucl.ac.uk/isd/common/cst/good_practice/secure_disposal_guidelines.

Personal data must not be disclosed unlawfully to any third party. Transfers of personal data to third parties must be authorised in writing by the data owner and protected by adequate contractual provisions or data processor agreements, agree with UCL's notification and must use safe transport mechanisms.

If not already done so, please provide copies of any information sheets and consent forms that you are using.

When all essential documents are ready to archive, contact the UCL Records Office by email records.office@ucl.ac.uk to arrange ongoing secure storage of your research records unless you have made specific alternative arrangements with your department, or funder.

<https://outlook.office365.com/owa/>

~~06/07/2015~~

Regards,

Spenser Crouch
Data Protection & Freedom of Information Administrator
Legal Services, Finance & Business Affairs, UCL | Gower Street | London | WC1E 6BT
Internal Address: 6th floor | 1-19 Torrington Place | London | WC1E 7HB

Please protect the Environment. Print only if necessary.

Confidentiality and Legal Privilege: The contents of this e-mail and its attachment(s) are confidential to the intended recipient and may be legally privileged. It may not be disclosed, copied, forwarded, used or relied upon by any person other than the intended addressee. If you believe that you have received the e-mail and its attachment(s) in error, you must not take any action based on them, nor must you copy or show them to anyone. Please respond to the sender and delete this e-mail and its attachment(s) from your system.

From: Sharrock, John
Sent: 03 June 2015 17:42
To: Finance.Data Protection
Subject: Project Registration/UCL Data Protection

I have pleasure in attaching:
Form 2 : Research Registration Application
Draft Informed Consent Form
Draft Information Sheet.

I look forward to your consideration of these documents and am ready to provide additional information as required.

John Sharrock

<https://outlook.office365.com/owa/>

~~06/07/2015~~

APPENDIX 2

WWI CIVILIAN COMMEMORATIONS

1. Upper North Street School

Allegorical figure on plinth with names. Poplar Recreation Ground, East India Dock Road, Poplar, Tower Hamlets, E14 0AE. 1919.

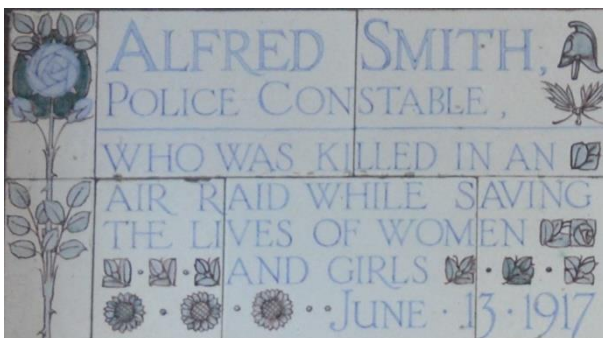
WMR 56716: <https://www.iwm.org.uk/memorials/item/memorial/56716>

WMO 69078: <https://www.warmemorialsonline.org.uk/memorial/69078/>



The centenary of the school bombing was marked, on 15th June 2017, by a memorial service at All Saints Church, Poplar where the Queen unveiled a new plaque. She also visited Mayflower School which stands on the site of North Street School (Friends of Island History Trust 2017).

A centenary talk at the National Archives by Ian Castle, *Germany's First World War Bomber Offensive against London* gave more detail on the raid: On Wednesday, 13th June 1917 14 aircraft left Ghent and approached London over Romford where they were engaged by 'ack-ack'. However, all aircraft safely returned to base after the attack. The raid saw 100 bombs dropped, with 72 within a 1 mile radius of Liverpool Street Station. In total, the raid killed 162 people. 12 were killed at a clothing factory on Central Street (EC1) but many more were saved by the heroism of PC Smith who blocked a door. (Price 2015, 113-117). Remembered at Postman's Park:



Castle has also written extensively on the Zeppelin raids (2018) which commenced on 31st May 1915: <https://www.iancastlezeppelin.co.uk/>

2. Queen Square, Bloomsbury

Small ground plaque marks the fall of a bomb from a Zeppelin in 1915; at the north end of Queen Square Gardens:



3. Old Bedford Hotel

The 24th September saw the start of 5 raids known as the Harvest Moon offensive during which the Bedford Hotel was bombed with significant casualties. A plaque marks the site on the hotel wall facing Southampton Row:



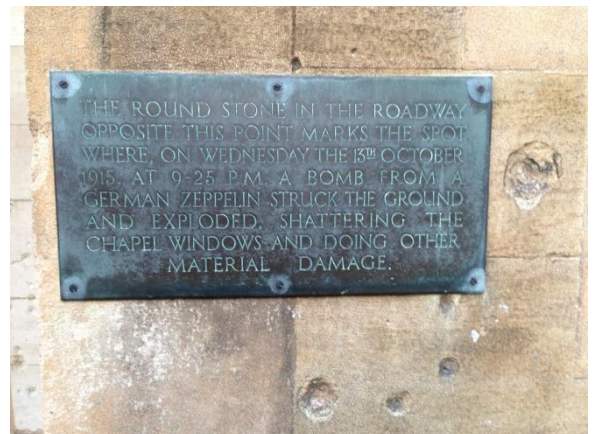
3. Tontine Street, Folkestone.

Folkestone was hit on 25th May 1917 and 62 died queuing for food in a street market. Original site of bomb (and plaque) demolished. New plaque in Garden of Remembrance. WMR 62185.

Leclere, M., 2017. Folkestone Air Raid: 100 years on town remembers Tontine Street disaster. <https://www.kentononline.co.uk/folkestone/news/a-quiet-spring-day-then-126206/>

4. Lincoln's Inn

Small roundels in road mark the impact of WWI bombs adjacent to visible shrapnel damage and attendant plaques.



APPENDIX 3

CIVILIAN WAR DEAD BY RECORDING AUTHORITY

Liverpool County Borough	2666
Birmingham County Borough	2147
Lambeth Met. Borough	1646
Malta G.C.	1473
Bristol County Borough	1237
Wandsworth Met. Borough	1206
West Ham County Borough	1186
Kingston upon Hull	1144
Plymouth County Borough	1119
Coventry County Borough	1106
Lewisham Met. Borough	1053
Westminster City	1033
Camberwell Met. Borough	1029
Southwark Met. Borough	1006
Islington Metropolitan Borough	941
Stepney Metropolitan Borough	932
St Pancras Met. Borough	925
Belfast County Borough	869
Portsmouth County Borough	845
Croydon County Borough	813
Undivided India, Bengal	788
Poplar Metropolitan Borough	769
Hackney Metropolitan Borough	749

Liverpool, with Bootle (458), Birkenhead (454) and Wallasey (315) incurred 3893 fatalities. The West Midlands area of Birmingham, Wolverhampton & Walsall (25), West Bromwich and Dudley (69) and Solihull (36) totalled 2277. Glasgow (705), Clydebank and Greenock exceeded 1500. London, in its wider definition with the boroughs that now form Newham, suffered over 30000 casualties.

Source: CWGC

APPENDIX 4

LONDON BOROUGH	FORMER AREAS	WAR DEAD	LOCATION	WAR MEMORIALS REGISTER
CAMDEN	Hampstead MB	235	Hampstead	60509
	St Pancras MB	924	St P & Is, E. Finchley	57993 76 names
	Holborn MB	269	Putney Vale	59264 Faded
GREENWICH	Greenwich MB	642	Greenwich, Eltham	58579
	Woolwich MB	681	Plumstead	59734
HACKNEY	Hackney MB	749	East London	12377 107 names
	Shoreditch MB	495	New Southgate	Demolished see WMO195013
	Stoke Newington	222	Abney Park	11940 1948 114 names and 9 uni/d
H'SMITH & FULHAM	Hammersmith MB	469	Mortlake(H'smith New)	52408 1953 149 names and 7 uni/d
	Fulham MB	443	N Sheen (F'ham New)	18065 1949 93 unnamed
ISLINGTON	Islington MB	941	St P & Is, E. Finchley	57979 No names or number
	Finsbury MB	336	None	Sports Ground
KENS & CHELSEA	Kensington MB	434	Gunnersbury	63246 51 un-named
	Chelsea MB 1	462	Putney Vale	59265 56 names
	Chelsea MB 2		Morden	12201 39 names
	Kensal Green		St Mary's Catholic Cem, Kens	59788 Belgian casualties Bounds Green
LAMBETH	Lambeth MB	1646	Lambeth	59429 1952* 360 names
LEWISHAM	Lewisham MB 1	1052	Hither Green	12312 335 names New Plaques 2011
	Lewisham MB 2		Ladywell	12261 WW1 Zepp & Gotha Hither Gr and Sydenham
	Lewisham MB 3		Brockley	12227 WW1 Zepp & Gotha Deptford
	Deptford MB	703	Grove Park	12283
SOUTHWARK	Bermondsey MB	709	C'well New, Honor Oak	47499 1995 Refurb 400 names
	Camberwell MB	1029	C'well New, Honor Oak	47499 1995 Refurb
	Southwark MB 1	1006	C'well New, Honor Oak	47499 1995 Refurb
	Southwark MB 2		Nunhead	47504 Sch for disposal: grave site designation
TOWER HAMLETS	Bethnal Green MB	527	City of London	12342 1950 Shared with City and Stepney
	Poplar MB	770	Tower Hamlets Cem Park	12583 1952 190 unnamed
	Stepney MB	932	City of London	12342 1950 Shared City and B Greer 250 names
WANDSWORTH	Battersea MB	538	Morden; formerly Battersea N	70549 No names or number
	Wandsworth MB 1	1206	Putney Vale	59266 12 named 18 un-named
	Wandsworth MB 2		Wandsworth	59312 4 named 24 un-named
WESTMINSTER	Westminster MB	1003	City of W, Hanwell	29757 1950 200 names
	Paddington MB	338	Mill Hill (was Padd Cem)	58091 68 names
	St Marylebone MB	445	St P & Isl, E Finchley	58000 86 names 1948 design competition
CITY of LONDON	City of London	374	City of London	12342 1950 Shared B Green & Stepney 250 names
INNER LONDON BOROUGHS		19580		
*	Sch for disposal: grave site designation			

APPENDIX 5

LONDON BOROUGH	TYPE	FORMER AREAS	WAR DEAD	LOCATION	WAR MEMORIALS REGISTER	
BARKING & D'HAM	Outer	Barking Mun Bor	229	Rippleside	36454	
		Dagenham Mun B	179	Chadwell Heath		
BARNET	Outer	Barnet UDC	54			
		East Barnet UDC	55			
		Finchley Mun Bor	76			
		Hendon Mun Bor	252	Mill Hill	72494	14 names
BEXLEY	Outer	Friern Barnet UDC	97			
		Bexley Mun Bor	169	Banks Lane, B'heath	1213	
		Erith Mun Bor	111			
		Crayford UDC	90			
BRENT	Outer	Chislehurst & Sidcup	179			
		Wembley Mun Bor	157			
		Willesden Mun Bor	395	Willesden Nw	58138	
BROMLEY	Outer	Bromley Mun Bor	230	Elmers End	41841	Civil Defence Mem
				St Mary Cray	45781	
		Beckenham Mun B	350	Elmers End	12768	21 AFS from Beckenham
				Elmers End	41841	12 Civ Def Beckenham
				West Wickham	3855	5 AFS from Beckenham
				Orpington UDC	141	
CROYDON	Outer	Penge UDC	103			
		Croydon County B	813	Thornton Heath	773	
		Coulsdon & Purley U	77			
EALING	Outer	Acton Mun Bor	179			
		Ealing Mun Bor	298			
		Southall Mun Bor	20			
ENFIELD	Outer	Edmonton MB	180	Edmonton	58499	
		Enfield UDC	201			
		Southgate MB	134			
		Hornsey Mun Bor	215			
HARINGEY	Outer	Tottenham Mun Bor	260	Tottenham	47871	
		Wood Green Mun B	86			
		Harrow UDC	173	Harrow Weald	11087	
HARROW	Outer	Romford Mun Bor	169			
		Hornchurch UDC	156			
		Hayes & Harlington	63	Cherry Lane, Hayes	2250	Gramophone Co
		Ruislip Northwood	37			
HOUNSLOW	Outer	Uxbridge UDC	73			
		Yiewsley & W Drayton	0			
		B'ford & Chiswick Mun	70			
		Feltham UDC	36			
KINGSTON upon THAMES	Outer	Heston & Isleworth Mu	239			
		K'ston u Thames Mun B	103			
		Malden & Coombe Mur	66			
		Surbiton Mun Bor	52			
MERTON	Outer	Mitcham Mun Bor	150			
		Merton & Morden UDC	170			
		Wimbledon Mun Bor	171			
NEWHAM	Outer	West Ham County B	1186	East London	12376	240 Names
		WHCB 2		East London	56326	ARP Custom House Sch
		WHCB 3		East London	39134	West Ham AFS
		East Ham County B	473	Manor Park	WMO 170782	57 names
REDBRIDGE	Outer	Ilford Mun Bor	523	Barkingside	39354	
		W'stead & Woodford M	226			
		Chigwell UDC	71		22413	
R'MOND u THAMES	Outer	Barnes Mun Bor	74			
		Richmond Mun Bor	105	R'mond & E Sheen	Grave site; no memorial	
		Twickenham Mun Bor	150			
SUTTON	Outer	Beddington Mun B	50			
		Carshalton UDC	78			
		Sutton & Cheam Mun B	187			
WALTHAM FOREST	Outer	Chingford Mun Bor	71			
		Leyton Mun Bor	466	Manor Park	12328	
		Walthamstow Mun B	322	W Forest jewish Cem	58020	
OUTER LONDON			11040		23	

APPENDIX 6

CITY		LOCATION		WAR MEMORIALS REGISTER			
Bath		Haycombe Cem		1950	227	Individual stones incl 20 uni/d	
Belfast 1		Belfast City	65888	1951	154	Sch for disposal: grave site designation	
Belfast 2		Milltown R.C.			20		
Bentley		Arksey, Nr Doncaster	28033		14		
Birmingham		Witton Jewish Cemetery	47992		9		
Bristol		Greenbank	66191				
Chelmsford		Chemsford Cem	45590			Hoffman employees 1944	
Clydebank		Old Dunottar	57356	1961	120		
Clymping	Sussex	Churchyard		WMO 215015		Civs and servs from RNAS Ford	
Coventry			17717		800		
Cowes, IoW		Cowes, IoW	40775		31		
Dartford, Kent			40959				
East Cowes		Cowes, IoW	21797		52		
East Grinstead		Mount Noddy			22	Whitehall Cinema 9-7-1943	
Eccles Blitz Victims		Peel Green Cem	75840				
Edenbridge		E'bridge Cem	1145		29	Weald House Mass Grave	
Freckleto, Nr Lytham, Lancs		Holy Trinity C'yard	10545			Air crash on school	50 casualties
Glasgow		Eastwood cem			8	Unidentified	
		Riddrie Park			10	Unidentified	
Grantham, Lincs		Grantham Cem	93080		70		
Greenock, S'clyde		Greenock Cem	53658	1951		WMO198847	
Grimsby		Scartho Road				WMO268224	
Gosport		St Ann's Hill					
Hull		Northam	36439		327		
Hull		Eastern Cemetery	36456		23		
Liverpool		Anfield	2418		554	Includes 337 unidentified	
Liverpool 2 Wallasey		Rake Lane Cem	1255				
Liverpool 3 Bootle		Orrell Cem	2270		138	Includes 20 unidentified	
Manchester		Southern Cem	18561				
Newark		Newark cem			30	Ransome factory	
Newbury		Shaw cem	41408		19		
N Shields, T&W		Preston Cem			107	Individual stones	Factory shelter
Norwich		Earlham Cem		WMO267949			
Notttingham		Southern Cemetery	27472			Individual stones	Coop Bakery
Orford	Suffolk	St Barts C'yard	20669		13		
Petworth		Petworth Cem	43466		29		
Plymouth		Efford	25785		397	Total casualties 1174	
Portsmouth 1		Kingston Cemetery East	21446	1951	33		
Portsmouth 2		Kingston Cemetery West	21447	1951	135	Includes 20 unidentified	
Salford		Agecroft	66815				
Seaham		Seaham	71023				
Sheffield		City Road Cemetery		WMO234805	134		
Southampton		Hollybrook	91293				
Stretford		Stretford Cem	2805	1948	67	includes 17 unidentified	
Sunderland		Grangetown Cem	68765		57		
Torquay		Torre Churchyard			134		

APPENDIX 7

HALLSVILLE REMEMBRANCE

South Hallsville School, Agate Street, Canning Town was a temporary rest centre. It was soon overwhelmed by the displacement caused by the attacks of 7th September 1940, known as Black Saturday. Pending transfer out of the danger zone, over 600 people were scheduled to be moved by buses on Sunday, 8th September. The transport did not materialise that day nor the next. At 03.45 on Tuesday morning, 10th September, a bomb scored a direct hit causing a huge crater into which the school building fell. Casualty numbers range from 600 to the official count of 77 on the CWGC civilian register for the West Ham County Borough (Boniface 2010; Calder 1940; Gardiner 2010, 30-33). Local rumours still surface on Facebook sites from the area that assert 200 dead still lie beneath the rebuilt school. A letter by the then Queen, after a visit to the bombed school on Friday, 13th September 1940 speaks of 'walking in a dead city' to a school 'that was hit and fell on top of the 500 people waiting to be evacuated-about 200 are still under the ruins...' (2010, 40-41).

The incident received limited coverage, in common with many incidents of the time, through the press controls exerted on national high-circulation newspapers. These controls did not prevent an article in the *New Statesman*, within two weeks of the incident, openly critical of the failings of the authorities whilst disclosing the appalling level of casualties (Calder 1940). The allegations of negligence and the death toll were repeated in a book in the following year (Calder 1941b, 57).

Despite Calder's critique, the incident was soon to fade from public scrutiny amid post-war neighbourhood dispersal. Calder, was soon lured from journalism into the Political Warfare Executive (Addison 2013; National Library of Scotland 2006; Rudd undated).

Many of the dead were transferred for burial to the East London Cemetery in Plaistow where they are named, among 250 West Ham citizens, buried in a common grave area marked by a tapering, octagonal cross on an inscribed cruciform plinth, surrounded by a boundary wall and accessed by steps:

<https://www.iwm.org.uk/memorials/item/memorial/12376>

It was to be fifty years before, in 1990, the tragedy of Hallsville was publicly remembered. The Queen Mother returned to unveil a plaque at the school (Brooks 2011, 28), close to a garden and trees planted by schoolchildren. The plaque refers only to 'those who were killed' and contains no hint of the enormity of the tragedy. A small garden adjacent to the school entrance was unveiled in 2006; and this is similarly understated. Images and text are available at: <https://www.iwm.org.uk/memorials/item/memorial/12412>

Unsurprisingly, the local 'knowledge' of what happened and its disparity with official reports has created an undercurrent of suspicion that the events were covered up because of the heavy death toll. The decade anniversaries of 2010 and 2020 have excited renewed speculation on the discrepancies in the record (*Blitz: The bombs that changed Britain* 2017; Boniface 2010; Brooke 2020; Oakley 2014). In early 2021 a book was published by a local author purporting to tell the uncovered story based on snippets of memory culled through social media from relatives of the dead and survivors. In contrast to other incidents there is no call for a statement of public remembrance in the form of a memorial (Etienne 2021).

The pattern of low-key remembrance has continued. In November 2019, a service was held at the cenotaph outside the former-church of St Luke which is across the recreation area, opposite the school. The cenotaph which dates from the aftermath of WWI is inscribed on the lowest face with:

Remember local civilians killed by enemy action 1940-1945.

Press coverage of the service mentions the local belief, that more were killed than the official toll, in a reference to the 'disastrous bombing' (Brookes 2019).

In 2020, for the 80th anniversary, the Mayor of Newham unveiled a tree and small plaque inside the school grounds (King 2020). This was reported in more challenging terms with open reference to a government cover-up, urgent filling of the crater and a death toll in excess of 600 (Newham London 2020).

APPENDIX 8

COMMONWEALTH WAR GRAVES COMMISSION

On 27th September 2021 the number of civilian casualties stood at 69171 (CWGC 2021a/WWII/Civilian War Dead). The seven volumes established in Westminster Abbey by 1958 carried 66,375 names, the vast majority of those named dead from UK aerial bombardment. The Roll also accommodates the deaths of overseas Commonwealth citizens killed by enemy action, deaths of civilian prisoners of war and civilians lost at sea.

One of the characteristics of the Civilian War Dead Roll of Honour is that it is active, a living document. The gradual growth since 1958, averaging about 50 per year, reflects the correction of errors and omissions, from an otherwise remarkable registration process. For example, at a service on 23rd May 2017, to mark the centenary of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, two supplementary books were presented to the Dean at the High Altar. These books formalised the several hundred new names uncovered by recent research and are now added to the original listings (Westminster Abbey 2021).

In a meeting at the CWGC offices, preparatory to an investigation of archive material, I was able to talk with Michael Greet, Assistant Archivist, and Ms. Mel Donnelly (MD), Commemorations Policy Manager. It was confirmed that the registers are not set-up to provide gender or age analysis. MD's responsibilities include the maintenance of the rolls of war dead, with a commemorations team of 12, under her leadership, dealing with hundreds of enquiries each week, across both wars, all services and civilians. She observed the significant increase in enquiries in the last decade arising in part from the expansion of home computing and consequent access to family history records, a greater interest in the war record of past family members, amid the passing of the war generation, and the impact of significant anniversaries. She is one of four adjudicators on queries which might give rise to register changes and additions. As the civilian adjudicator, her rulings are determined by rules established in the Charter and its supplements. For the military roll, it is a death in service, however arising, that is recorded. For civilians, the essential criterion is that the death must arise from the conflict and result directly from enemy action. MD emphasized the Roll's embrace of all Commonwealth civilians in their overseas

locations, civilians lost at sea and those who died in overseas internment camps, such as civilians sent to forced labour camps on the mainland from the Channel Islands. One element that has added to the roll in recent years has been further modification of incidents of so-called 'friendly fire'. MD cited examples of the interpretation of enemy action to include specific cases of civilians killed by allied munitions or operations, ground casualties from allied aircraft crashes and children/adults killed when handling live enemy ordnance.

From the outset, the roll's compilation challenged interpretations of what determined civilian status. There are grey areas which define uniformed services as civilian, such as fire, both national and auxiliary, police and ARP/Civil Defence. Service casualty allocations cover the Home Guard and some curious inclusions such as war correspondents, youngsters in the Air Training Corps and ENSA. There are areas where death by enemy action is problematic and creates problems in commemoration. Military forces enter the war 'enlisted', hence failure to return results in the status of 'missing in action'; the name is so recorded, appearing on a memorial such as Thiepval or at the RAF memorial at Runnymede. Civilians do not enlist and hence in the absence of a recorded death there is no mechanism of establishing the status of 'missing'. There are thus no reliable numbers for the unregistered dead, those not seen again, after the bombing, and those going unidentified to an unmarked grave. The indiscriminate nature of bombardment also claimed the lives of military personnel, perhaps on family leave, caught in raids alongside their fellow citizens; unfortunately, their cause of death is not identifiable in the data.

It is clear, from the discussion at the CWGC, that commemoration does not stand still; the last decade has seen a major increase in interest in personal and family history centred around the centenary of WWI and other significant anniversaries. The CWGC has met a demand to explore civilian themes in recent public engagement. It seeks to balance its better-known role as curator of large monuments and characteristic cemetery markers. Its focus has been on the civilian roll, a living document, still capable of inspiring demand, to see entries in physical form, in the Abbey. There are touching human stories behind every line of the Roll and the adjudications that have added 130 names to the civilian roll in 2020 (CWGC 2020a).

To mark the 80th anniversary of the Blitz, the CWGC's resident historian, Lynelle Howson (LH), hosted a live talk (CWGC 2020b). She was joined by Professor Lucy Noakes, since 2017, R. A. Butler Chair of Modern History at the University of Essex. She was 'billed' as the historian who delves beneath the surface of the Blitz myth, citing a recent television series (BBC 2017). The event attracted 6.6k viewers and over 100 comments, some of which reflected the low awareness of CWGC's role in remembering the civilian war dead. LH impressively led the presentation from Ware's initiative in 1940, through key elements of the CWGC's work, to prompting final thoughts, on civilian remembrance, within the context of a pervasive 'Blitz spirit'. LH made the point that the roll of honour is a physical memorial with the bound books in the Abbey. However, she raised the question of a national memorial and its absence: Where is the Thiepval for civilians?

Professor Noakes pointed out that discussions near the end of the war assumed that there would be a national memorial. However, financially, the plans were unable to progress, amid other priorities. However, a more subtle reason was bound-up with memory and remembrance. Blitz myths were being established during the war, but as the country's post-war challenges mounted, our place in the world was eclipsed. The importance of a nation-defining myth, the inherently/exclusively British, Blitz Spirit, hence, assumed undue emphasis, a place in our 'collective memory', that finds no place for the dead. As a historian, Noakes is uncomfortable with Blitz Spirit as a version of our past, and its tendency for political appropriation and popular misunderstandings of how people felt and what they experienced. The Blitz, as observed in the Introduction, is easily transposed from one crisis to another (Bent 2020; Dejevsky 2020; Hyde 2020). Thus, the civilian dead need to be granted more space and time to avoid manipulation and misappropriation of their history and memory. The CWGC Live event is one small step in this journey and LH spoke movingly of the loss of whole families, children, so young, with no number against their age, every name a tragedy, a family broken. Ware ensured that 'the vast multitude of the dead' are remembered and that seeing the number and name 'should sober one'; in counting the cost, 'one must not pretend the cost was not suffered'; it should not be obscured in vague notions of spirit, a 'Disneyfied version of war' with so little space for the dead (CWGC 2020b).

APPENDIX 9

PETWORTH: BOMBS AND REMEMBRANCE

The covering of bare shrouds in flags and attendance at mass funerals of civic, religious and military dignitaries, amounted to ‘a whole politics of burial’ (Noakes 2020, 175-185), where civilian loss is enveloped in ritual, language and symbols familiar from military remembrance. Noakes describes events in Petworth in September 1942 after bombs killed 32 and destroyed the Boy’s School.

Drawing on local press coverage, she describes the long cortege for 22 pupils, their headmaster and an assistant teacher, flanked by Canadian soldiers who had helped in rescue efforts, winding its way through the crowded town, passing the site of the school, to the local cemetery. The cortege stopped, for a 2-minute silence at the WWI cenotaph, reinforcing the indivisibility of the home front and military sacrifice (2020, 173-174).

Today, the political pageantry long departed, the grave site has a forsaken air, its long trench marked with the faded names of the dead on concrete kerbs; pristine Portland Stone was not the chosen material for the grey cross at the grave’s head. The site was refurbished in 2009, by boys from the new school (IWM 2021/WMR 43466 & 56604).



Since 2000, a memorial stone and plaque mark the site of the former school, now a residential development, and the 30 school fatalities. Plaques, with a newer appearance than the stone, on either side, name all 32 who died,

including a Mr Adsett who succumbed in 1943 to his injuries; he is buried next to the cemetery cross and mass grave.

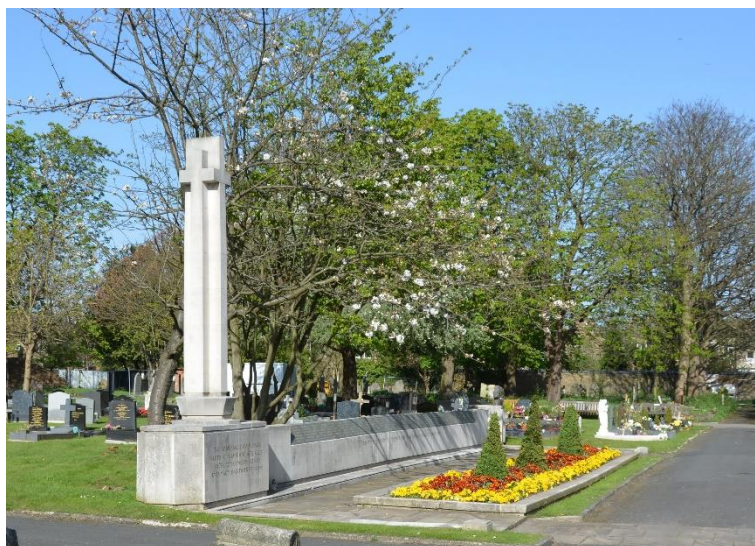


Here in this small town, 'its heart ripped out' (Noakes 2020), there was no escape from the notion that civilian loss, dressed with military flourishes, would act, in the common good, to lift spirits and project the inclusivity of the home front with the wider national service of armed forces. The commemoration at the cemetery, after the political show had been staged, shows a disappointing materialisation of remembrance. The newer memorial, overcomes the distancing of the cemetery memorial, in its location at the site of the tragedy.

APPENDIX 10

CEMETERY MONUMENTS

Westminster



St Pancras



Islington



APPENDIX 11

CORONATION AVENUE AND ABNEY PARK

Stoke Newington's death toll was relatively low by the standards of neighbouring districts. It would have been lower still, were it not for one incident in 1940, when a direct hit on a block of flats at Coronation Avenue killed at least 160 people. Many of the dead were Jewish and some were refugees from Nazi-occupied Eastern Europe (Jack 2001, 94). Brooks' compendium of home front relics includes the graveside memorial, erected by the Borough of Stoke Newington in 1948, to their citizens killed by enemy action. Brooks shows a drab memorial in poor condition (2011, 98-99) and Jack references neglect and a general impression of being unloved (2011, 94).

The memorial stands in the cemetery of Abney Park, established in 1840, as one of the so-called 'Magnificent Seven, to release pressure on London's churchyards. Half a mile or so south is Coronation Avenue. On the 13th October 1940, a huge bomb exploded at Coronation Avenue, a block of flats fronting Stoke Newington Road, killing over 160 people sheltering in the basement. This disaster is covered by Camilla Loewe in her 2012 memoir, *Just like the end of the World*, through the moving personal testimony of survivors and relatives; in her memoir, the graveside memorial is even more woebegone (2012, 22). The superscription is almost unreadable and the four panels, containing the names of 113 victims (plus a reference to 9 unidentified casualties), are disappearing beneath creeping algae. The borough crest sits atop the cracked rectangular pediment. It was never a grand piece of work but, in the conditions of Abney Park, where nature is allowed to take its course, its accretions add to the downbeat nature of such a monument.

In 2012, Lawrie Edison, 12 at the time of the disaster, observed that the civilian memorial was in poor condition relative to the well-maintained military memorial, a short distance along the path (2012, 81). Betty Perkins, aged 26 in 1940, lost two sisters and her mother to the bomb. Appalled by the condition of the memorial, she added that 'if memorials are not kept up, people will forget about the war, about the Blitz and about all the innocent people that were killed' (2012, 85). Seven bombing incidents and their casualties are shown in the name panels; in sum there are 122 victims, of which 113 are named. The

majority, by far, are listed under 'Coronation Avenue' covering almost 3 of the four panels; 88 named casualties plus the nine un-nameable dead, from this one incident. This is of course not just a memorial; it is a mass grave. The monument is on the right hand edge of a south-north path, Dr Watt's Walk, which starts at the southern Church Street gate and leads past the civilian memorial, the War Memorial with its Cross of Sacrifice, to the Gothic-style Chapel, with its 120 foot spire, where other cemetery paths converge. It is not entirely clear where the actual places of interment are. The CWGC listing of civilian war dead for Stoke Newington has 222 entries of which 122 are named on the monument. Its dedication, on the monument's pediment, is inclusive of all who died:

To the memory of all those who lost their lives through enemy action in the borough during World War 1939-1945 and in particular of those whose names are inscribed on this memorial

Burials of other victims are visible elsewhere in East London with one as far afield as Streatham (Loewe 2012). Indeed, in a neglected part of the Manor Park Cemetery, Newham, the humble grave of Ada and Mary Hosier was still visible in January 2017; plans for this section of the cemetery, to be cleared and restored for commercial use, are under consideration (BBC News 2021).

Coronation Avenue still exists. The tenements, not fully repaired until 8 years after the war, are at 157-161 Stoke Newington Road, at the junction with Victorian Road, which runs west. Coronation Avenue comprises two tightly-packed, five-storey, brick-built blocks, enclosing an open area, the Avenue. The blocks runs north-south, parallel to Stoke Newington Road.

In 2010, a local community initiative, the Coronation Avenue Campaign, was established with three objectives. The first was the installation of a memorial plaque on the side of the apartment block, on the corner of Victorian Road and Stoke Newington Road. This was achieved in 2011. The second element was Loewe's book (2012), which portrays, through oral testimony, moving stories of personal loss and heartbreak. Relatives drew attention to the poor state of repair of the memorial at Abney Park. Generating support for the refurbishment of the memorial was a consistent theme throughout the book.



The book and its attendant publicity enabled the fulfilment of the campaign's third aim. In 2013, supported by a grant from War Memorials Trust, reparations to the memorial were completed. The memorial was re-dedicated on Remembrance Day, the same day as in 1948, when a memorial service also took place in the Town Hall (War Memorials Trust 2014, 8-9). The image on war memorials online shows the memorial pre-refurbishment:

<https://www.warmemorialsonline.org.uk/memorial/141339/>



Heritage England listed the memorial on 4 July 2014 citing an importance vested in its 'dignified and poignant reminder of the impact of Second World War bombing on the community': <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1419855>

The IWM listing shows the restored memorial in 2013:

<https://www.iwm.org.uk/memorials/item/memorial/11940#>

My own picture, above, from 13th February 2015, above, shows how speedily woodland nature is reasserted. That said, the superscription is readable and there are two, cleared forecourt flowerbeds, with the two plain urns. There was a Christmassy floral wreath and, alas, a temporary notice informing the public that the forecourt plants had been stolen! The name panels are now readable.

In the achievement of its objectives, the campaign linked the tragedy that befell hard-working, immigrant-based, mixed-faith people with the needs and intentions of today's similarly cosmopolitan community. It demonstrates how remembrance serves not just the bereaved but also reinforces local societal bonds. A lengthy quote sums up the role of remembrance:

'Some whose lives had been directly touched [...] do not need a memorial to remind them : they carry it with them every day of their lives. But it is important for them to know that people still care and their loved ones will not be forgotten. Others who know less about it [...] believe that their community should honour the memory of the dead' (Loewe 2012, 14).

A recent blog exposed the still raw emotion of the families of the bereaved, some citing the trauma of unidentified burial (Whitehead 2018). It is to be hoped that some comfort may be drawn from the campaign and a final observation. A contributor to the book noted that history focusses mainly on great events and important people to the exclusion of ordinary people whose enterprises and struggles inspire tales of mutual support and resilience. They should be remembered and celebrated as well (2012, 85).

APPENDIX 12

COVENTRY-RECONCILIATION AND REMEMBRANCE

Coventry suffered 41 raids and 373 alerts in the war; the final attack was in August 1942. The city's war however is defined by the attack of November 14th 1940, the destruction of the Cathedral and the death of 568 civilians (*The Tragedy of Coventry* 1940). The prominence given to this Blitz has obscured other costly raids. In April 1941, over two nights, another 450 died in the city's 'forgotten' Blitz (Gibbons 2016). One estimate for the overall death toll in WWII, appearing on an online memorial page for the city's Blitz victims, exceeds 1200 (Hewitt 2021). The CWGC count for the Coventry County Borough is 1104, although this excludes those who died outside of the registration district.

Coventry has three main institutions of war remembrance, each with a well-defined role. The first is the memorial and garden at the London Road Cemetery, dating from 1952, the place of burial for over 800 of the city's casualties (Hewitt 2021). The inscription on the memorial at London Road is specific to those buried, so the overall remembrance of civilians requires consideration of the second institution, located two miles south of the city centre, in the suburb of Stivichall. Coventry War Memorial Park has a formal layout; tree-lined paths radiate from a central space on which stands a striking tower. Inaugurated in 1927, this monument met the new city's desire for fitting remembrance of the 2587 victims of WWI. Soaring art-deco pinnacles of white Portland stone attain a height of 27 metres and enclose, behind sturdy metal doors, a ground-floor room, the Chamber of Silence, in which a book of remembrance was placed. After WWII, from c.1960, a second roll of honour was added, listing 817 military, 115 civil defence and 1085 civilian casualties (Historic England 2021/1410358; IWM 2021/WMR17407). An adjacent information board informs visitors that, today, the chamber stands not only silent but empty; for safekeeping, the books of remembrance are now in the city's Herbert Museum, just yards away from the third institution of remembrance.

Coventry's 14th century church of St Michael, was gutted by fire on the night of 14th November 1940. Coventry had been a cathedral city only since 1918, the new diocese created in response to the Victorian/Edwardian industrial transformation of the city (Clark 2015, 23). St Michael's is the only Anglican

cathedral lost to the Blitz but it represents more than prominence as an 'architectural casualty' (2015, 7). Initially, after the devastating raid, its tower and spire rallied a rattled city and, soon after, the ruins came to symbolise resurrection and reconciliation, powered by a defiant national radio broadcast on Christmas Day 1940 by Provost, Richard Howard (Coventry Cathedral 2021). Less certain was the fate of the ruins, still strewn with rubble until 1947, despite the early presumption that they would be incorporated in some way in the fabric of a new cathedral (The Archaeological Press 1945, 15). After vigorous debate, the walls, tower and spire were retained and re-consecrated, with an altar constructed from recovered church stone. Coventry Cathedral Memorial Ruins, dedicated to the courage of the city's people, were established in 1951, coinciding with the appointment of the architect, Basil Spence (Clark 2015, 30-35). His new cathedral, dedicated in 1962, has its High Altar in the north. A glazed south wall opens to a curved canopy and a flight of stairs up to the ruined shell of St Michael's.

Coventry Cathedral and Memorial Ruins.



The monumental use of the former cathedral space reflects the clerical and civic mission of reconciliation, inspired by the Provost's clear message (Kaczka-Valliere & Rigby 2008); by 1947, links with Kiel had been established and in 1959, three years before the dedication of the new cathedral, Coventry had 'twinned' with Dresden (Coventry City Council 2021). The changing meanings of Dresden's Frauenkirche, a ruin and a reconstruction in its post-war afterlife

(Moshenska 2015a, 81-85), highlights Coventry's more consistent memorialising of the bombing. Rigby asserts that the curated ruin has held a clear, uncontested meaning, since 1962, in partnership with the 'new' cathedral, both with 'eloquent references' to the desire to promote 'world peace and post-war reconciliation' (Rigby 2009, 86). In this process, earlier meanings have been submerged. The Cathedral's propaganda value, exemplified by Piper's painting (Piper 1940) and the allusion to Gernika in a 1940 newsreel, as *The Martyred City*, were salient, in the immediate aftermath of the bombing, when the city's morale was at its most fragile (Reardon (2011, 30).

The monumental and memorial culture in the ruined cathedral is fragmented; the nave and walls, crowded with relics and plaques, have the feel of an open-air gallery or museum. The Blitz experience of the city is silently addressed in the testament of the ruins and through a visitor 'experience' which looks at Coventry's people as war approached and how they coped in the aftermath. This is housed in a crypt in the south-east corner. It is an experience from which carnage is absent from the wartime memorabilia. Is it possible that the relentless messaging of reconciliation finds the brutal facts of the raids in 1940 and 1941 too difficult to weave into a narrative of peace for a wider world? Manned by volunteers, the Blitz Experience, openings are unpredictable and its distancing, underground, does not intrude on the sacred role of the nearby Altar and Sanctuary, where the uncontested meaning of reconciliation is directly addressed. Here a plaque, unveiled by HM Queen Elizabeth, The Queen Mother, on 14th November 1990, commemorates the 50th anniversary Service of Remembrance; these services take place each year. The Sanctuary holds a concrete statue of Christ, a copy of the original at Blundell's School in Devon, created in 1938 by a pupil, later to die serving in the RAF. A headmaster of the school, Neville Gorton, later Bishop of Coventry, arranged for this memorial '...to those who lost their lives in the war'.

On the site of the former High Altar is a rectangular table of broken building stone on which stands a burnt cross. The words 'Father Forgive' are on the wall behind these symbols of resurrection (IWM 2021/WMR 17718). Each Friday, at noon, a Litany of Reconciliation is recited in front of the cross. These symbols are accompanied by information boards and explanatory tablets which reiterate the message of peace and reconciliation which has defined the post-war

ministry of the Coventry diocese. On the south wall, surrounded by empty window tracery and roofless walls, stands Jacob Epstein's massive figure of Christ, *Ecce Homo*, sculpted in 1934. It was given to Coventry Cathedral in 1969 by Epstein's widow. Prayer, scriptures and guild plaques encircle the walls, as once did stations of the cross.

Coventry Cathedral Ruins: Restored Altar and Charred Cross.



Turning to the North Wall, a kneeling couple, in bronze, embrace atop a reconstructed table tomb. This was a gift of Richard Branson in 1995, marking the 50th anniversary of the end of WWII. Entitled 'Reconciliation', the sculpture

by Josefina de Vasconcellos, has an identical copy in Hiroshima's Peace Garden. The words of reconciliation are in English and Japanese.

At the West Wall, in the shadow of the bell tower, is a low-level 2 metre diameter circular memorial, unveiled by H.M. The Queen, in 2000, with waist-high barriers. On the central lozenge is a dedication to 'all those who served on the Home Front during the Second World War'. It honours those in Home Guard and Civil Defence services rather than civilians in general.

Home Front Memorial, Coventry Cathedral Ruins. 2000.



It stands next to a study of elongated, two-foot tall figures with featureless heads and amorphous bodies. The Choir of Survivors stand on a metre-high plinth. Dating from 2012, the 50th anniversary of the foundation of the new St Michael's, this is a gift of the Foundation Frauenkirche of Dresden, the work of sculptor, Helmut Heinze.

Choir of Survivors, Coventry Cathedral Ruins. 2012.



Two final items of remembrance sit outside the ruined walls. In a small lawned area on Priory Row, close to the west wall of the new cathedral, is a small plaque on a low wedge of concrete. It names the five victims of an IRA bomb in nearby Broadgate, on 25th August 1939, civilian deaths of a different kind of war, so close to WWII (Lockley 2016).

Across the path, on the outside of the north-west corner of St Michael's is a 2 x 1 metre rectangular slab, which reads UNKNOWN CIVILIANS KILLED IN WAR. It looks out of place, as if discarded from the cathedral ruins, yet its slight elevation confirms its deliberate placing; none can miss it approaching the Cathedral from the city centre. It is the culmination of an extraordinary journey, the gift of a peace foundation in Massachusetts. The one-tonne stone, represents 'voiceless, innocent victims of wars who perished through no fault of their own' (Peace Abbey Foundation 2021). Peace Abbey established a pilgrimage project, Stonewalk, with the first erected in the early 1990s after visitations to significant places in the USA such as Arlington in Washington,

where access to the National Cemetery was denied. It eventually found a better welcome in 2004 at Ground Zero, New York City. The means of movement is human power, dragged on a carriage by volunteer 'stonewalkers', from city to city. The ready symbolism of the prone stone excited international interest. In 2000, a second stone was shipped to Trinity College in Dublin and walked 100 miles to Corrymeela, Ballycastle, Northern Ireland. After exhibition, it was shipped to Liverpool and then pulled the 125 miles to its current home in the Cathedral precinct, dedicated in 2001 to signify innocence of civilians in the bombing of their city (Friends Meeting of Washington D.C. 2021; War Memorials Online 2021/ 2270484).

Peace Abbey Stone, Coventry Cathedral Precinct. 2001.



This enigmatic link between the citizenry and the church is dependent on an appreciation of the stony symbolism of the fallen and the crossing of the walls from the church estate to the people's city. Its subtlety is characteristic of the metaphor of the ruins, an indirectness in interpreting Spence's 1951 dedication of the ruins to the courage of the people of Coventry. It took until 2011 for the Cathedral more directly to redesignate the ruins, albeit globally, as a memorial

to 'all civilians killed, injured or traumatised by war and violent conflict worldwide' (Clark 2015, 53; Coventry Cathedral 2021; Patrick 2009). The memorial catalogue in the Cathedral ruins is fragmented and indirect, in addressing the civilian history of the city, while rigorous in delivering, through varied commemoration, the message of reconciliation. The references to the deadly experience of the city's people are, without exception, tangential, perhaps overly nuanced. Were it not for the annual acts of remembrance, the lack of specific reference to the city's civilian dead, in the building that defines them in the metaphor of ruin, would be troubling; memories are kept alive in the social interactions of the religious observance. This is an institution with memory in its mission that, after resurrection, comes reconciliation and after them both, peace. It complements the city's other institutions of remembrance.

APPENDIX 13

CHRIST CHURCH GREYFRIARS

Date

Late 17th C, over earlier friary

Setting and Location

North side of Newgate Street; junction with King Edward Street.

Form/Materials/Dimensions

Coursed rubble and Portland stone. Particularly fine west tower and steeple, the urns replaced in fibre-glass. Only 5 bays of north wall of church and a fragment of the south wall remain. See sources below.

Timeline/Hist Context/Biography

Listed since 1974; scheduled monument. Site of London Greyfriars, Newgate Street, Farringdon Ward of City of London:

<https://historicensland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1002002>

Monument includes 1359217: Christ Church, remains of. 1677-91 Sir Christopher Wren. Tower 1704.

Neo-Georgian brick offices to south of tower, on site of vestry offices date from 1981. In 1989 the garden was laid out.

Observation: garden layout reflects the intention of the Architectural Journal (1945); the stumps of nave pillars marked by tree planting. The 'pineapple' urns at foot of tower are those replaced in fibreglass.

Sources/Photo Refs

Heron. I., 2018. About. *The Civilians' Memorial*. Weblog 10 January. Retrieved from World Wide Web: <https://theciviliansmemorial.wordpress.com/about/>

War Memorials Online 272121: Christ Church Greyfriars Garden:

<https://www.warmemorialsonline.org.uk/search?keyword=christ+church+greyfriars&search=1>

'Rose gardens in bombed-out church and yard' and '.... largely destroyed by bombing during Second World War The decision was made not to rebuild the church; the ruins are now a public garden'.

Map Ref/GPS

TQ 31973 81374

Map from Historic England site:

https://mapservices.historicensland.org.uk/printwebservicehle/StatutoryPrint.svc/2038/HLE_A4L_NoGrade%7CHLE_A3L_NoGrade.pdf

Updated 14-6-2021

APPENDIX 14

ST JAMES' PICCADILLY- WWII GARDEN OF REMEMBRANCE

Small garden space to west of restored Wren church. Dedicated to the people of London to commemorate their courage in WWII. A 'neatly constructed board commemorates the fortitude of the people of London' (Kent 1947, 122-123).

Inscription

On wooden plaque in garden: *The garden on this bomb damaged site was given by the late Viscount Southwood on behalf of the Daily Herald to commemorate the courage and fortitude of the people of London in the Second World War 1939-1945.*

On church wall: *The garden on this bomb damaged site was given by Viscount Southwood to commemorate the courage and fortitude of the people of London in the Second World War 1939-1945*

Date

Garden: April 1946: Attended by HM Queen Mary & Bishop of London.

Southwood Memorial: 1948

Setting and Location

Garden in Churchyard west of Church

Type

Garden with plaque, statue and figurative fountain.

Form/Symbolism/Materials

Garden and oval stone ornamental pool inscribed with the name of Viscount Southwood, the donor, with two figures of children riding dolphins.

Timeline/Hist Context/Biography/Other memorials

Garden was given by Viscount Southwood,(1873-1946) chairman of Odhams Press and the Daily Herald

War Memorials Online:

<https://www.war memorialsonline.org.uk/memorial/135601>

Grade II Listed as Southwood Memorial in St James's Churchyard:

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1031599>

WMR Ref: 53570: <https://www.iwm.org.uk/memorials/item/memorial/53570#>

Kent, W., 1947. *The Lost Treasures of London*. London: Phoenix House.

Map Ref/GPS

OS Grid Ref: TQ 29403 80506

Updated 14-6-2021

APPENDIX 15

NATIONAL FIREFIGHTERS MEMORIAL

Background

Memorials dedicated to the fire service, on the War Memorials Register of the Imperial War Museum, are difficult to identify given the wide variation in listing styles. A search under 'Fire Service' yields 165 hits; in a database of almost 90000 records, a best estimate of a national inventory of fire memorials.

Title

Blitz in 1991; National Firefighters Memorial, since 2003.

Inscription

THE HEROES / WITH GRIMY FACES / WINSTON CHURCHILL / IN HONOUR AND MEMORY
/ OF THOSE FIREFIGHTERS WHO / GAVE THEIR LIVES IN THE / DEFENCE OF THE
NATION / 1939-1945 / THIS MONUMENT WAS COMMISSIONED / BY THE FOUNDER
MASTER OF THE / GUILD OF FIREFIGHTERS SUPPORTED / BY PUBLIC AND SERVICE
DONATIONS / MCMXC / SCULPTOR= JOHN W MILLS ARCA FRBS / THE MEMORIAL WAS
RE-DEDICATED / THE UNITED KINGDOM / FIREFIGHTERS NATIONAL / MEMORIAL / AND
UNVEILED BY / HER ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCESS ROYAL / (PATRON OF THE
FIREFIGHTERS MEMORIAL CHARITIES TRUST) / 16 SEPTEMBER, 2003 / THIS MEMORIAL
WAS UNVEILED / BY HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH / THE QUEEN MOTHER ON 4
MAY 1991

Date

Unveiled 4th May 1991, attended by HM Queen Elizabeth, The Queen Mother.

Rededicated 16th September 2003, attended by HRH, The Princess Royal.

Setting and Location

South side of St Pauls, at Carter Lane/Sermon Hill.

Form/Materials/Dimensions

Three sculptured/cast Bronze figures and deep pedestal carrying multiple name inscriptions; c. 4m high

Notes: Timeline/Hist Context/Biography

Remembers all firemen lost on active duty, in war and peace nationally.

Appropriated a monument to the dead firefighters of the WWII named 'Blitz'.

Clumsy, combined inscription. Carries over 2000 names.

Sources/Photo Refs

National Firefighters WWII, WMR Ref: 11777:

<https://www.iwm.org.uk/memorials/item/memorial/11777#>

War Memorials Online ID: 194548

The National Fire Service Memorial: <http://www.firefightersmemorial.org.uk/>

Map Ref/GPS

OS Grid Ref: TQ 32026 81071

Updated

28-04-2021



APPENDIX 16

PEOPLE OF LONDON TABLET WWII

Inscription

REMEMBER BEFORE GOD THE PEOPLE OF LONDON 1939 - 1945

Date

11 May 1999: HM Queen Mother

Setting and Location

Outside North Door, St Paul's Cathedral Churchyard

Type

Circular tablet with inscription on side and top

Form/Materials/Dimensions

Polished limestone and slate tablet. 1m high, 1m diam. Paved block 3m diam. surround.

Notes: Timeline/Hist Context/Biography

Evening Standard campaign; originally intended to commemorate VE Day 1995. Coincided instead with 60th anniv of start of WWII. Reader funded. Dedication to London's fortitude on 6 inch diameter adjacent floor plaque:

London Remembers: <https://www.londonremembers.com/memorials/people-of-london-small-plaque>

Sources/Photo Refs

War Memorials Register:

<https://www.iwm.org.uk/memorials/item/memorial/17959>

Map Ref/GPS

OS Grid Ref: TQ 32035 81148

Updated

22-04-2021

APPENDIX 17

BETHNAL GREEN INTERVIEW NOTES

1. Sandra Scotting and others

Notes of meeting with Hon. Secretary, Stairway to Heaven Memorial Trust on 28th September 2015, after a request at a memorial service in March 2015. In addition the meeting was attended by Sandra's husband, Lee, who is the Hon. Accountant for the Trust, Mrs Babs Clark and Mr Ray Lechmere. Babs' and Ray's survival stories are in the campaign's oral history book (Butler 2015).

The Bethnal Green Memorial is the monument's description on the signage which leads from the underground platforms to the stairway, where the tragedy took place in 1943. There are still 19 steps down from Roman Road; where the stairs disappear below ground is a plaque, dating from 1993, with a brief outline of the tragedy. It is affixed on the left side of a sill, next to a rectangular emergency warning display.

This, until the new memorial, partially completed in 2015 at the time of the interview, was the only public acknowledgement that 173 people died at this place. People, moving swiftly on their descent, have little time to see, much less read, the inscription and appreciate the enormity of the event it remembers. Harry Paticas, a local architect, noticed the plaque, and quickly formed an idea for a memorial in keeping with the tragedy.

I met Sandra and the others at the memorial and we soon adjourned to Nico's coffee shop, Cambridge Heath Road, a traditional café, a 'cuppa char and bacon sarnie' place, buzzing, warm and friendly. It was almost three years since the snaking white base and plinth were put in place along with the dedication plaques for all who died and some specific ones which include a namesake, Richard Sharrock, a local policeman, who with doctors, ARP and others helped to extract the dead and injured.

I explained the background to my research, the sort of information I was after and secured the requisite informed consent forms from my four respondents. The main purpose of the meeting was to learn about the foundation of the project, its team and processes and the rationale behind what is a significant memorial initiative for a single, albeit costly, incident. It became clear that

Sandra was a major influence on the direction the project, its public tone and its professional organisation. Lee, Babs and Ray chipped in with comments but these notes are dominated by the emphasis that Sandra provided. They follow the headings of my outline questionnaire.

2. Memorial Status

a. Why a Stairway?

The project name is from the local paper's response to an idea, accompanied by his outline monumental sketch, from Harry Paticas, a local architect. Officially the memorial is the Bethnal Green Memorial, but the Stairway was more campaignable and adopted after the first public meeting in late 2006.

b. Project Formation & Status

The meeting in 2006 arose because, after initial silence, Alf Morris replied by letter to Harry's request in the paper. After they met, they set up a public meeting, advertised with local signage, flyers and press coverage, which, unlike the original news item, drew significant local interest. The church hall of St John's was full and engaged. The idea of a monument, in memory of the event and its victims, despite an outline costing approaching £1m was endorsed by the meeting and marked the start of the project. Within a few months a team had formed and charitable trust status had been confirmed by the Charity Commissioners in March 2007.

Paticas was appointed with a budget of c. £600. Visits were made to London memorials to shape the brief. *SS enlarged on this in a lengthy email of 29th September* reprinted in the thesis chapter. The project team, driven by motives explored below, did not blanch at the many obstacles, experienced by some of these schemes and, with an unwavering confidence, plunged into a round of planning, financial and stakeholder engagement to deliver a statement monument.

At the time of meeting, some 9 years after the initial meeting, the expected final cost is £525,000 and the target date for completion is March 2016. The original project timing was for 2013. Although not achieved, there was substantial completion of the ground work, the sinuous base and the vertical plinth. At the 70th anniversary service, for the first time, wreaths and bouquets did not have to

left on the park railings on Roman Road. After a service in the church, volunteers, victims' families, firemen and Pearly Kings and Queens, were able to stand at the partially-completed memorial to hear the blessing from the rector of St John's. All of the names were on a plaque on the vertical plinth and along the base are smaller inscriptions telling some of the personal stories. Even without the wooden stairway canopy it was an impressive sight.

c. How do you feel about a view that a more modest memorial would have served the community's need?

Question received a thoughtful and polite response. The main points are:

East End not investable earlier and recalling the past now needs a bigger statement.

Wanted to be unique to right past wrongs with distinction and prominence. This paraphrases the most animated part of the discussion which spoke of cover-up, community guilt, anger, ignorance and neglect.

Temporary nature of existing memorial: inadequate, an insult.

Suffering of victims, relatives and rescuers not acknowledged; the Hillsborough of the day where the victims get the blame.

As an aside: Not a reclaiming of 'old' East End identity in the post war borough with its multicultural changes after slum clearance and dispersion. Presented as an initiative for all communities within the borough, evidenced by multi-faith services and support, particularly, since 2010, from the sitting MP, Rushanara Ali, who grew up and was educated in Bethnal Green. The project received early support from Tower Hamlets council under the controversial leadership of Lutfur Rahman, later barred from public office for attempts at vote manipulation. Rahman was also a vocal supporter of the Columbia market proposal. Bethnal Green & Bow MP from 2005-2010 was George Galloway who also voiced support for the project.

3. Meaning

The monument design has overt symbolism through the empty stairs high above the site of the tragedy. It includes 173 conical holes in the teak canopy through which sunlight will project on the stairs around midday during the year.

The original plan would have had the empty stairs directly above the actual staircase. This was ruled out after long discussions with TFL who remained diffident throughout the project lest they became too associated with a safety-issue tragedy.

a. What does the memorial mean to you?

Seen as a vindication of the survivors and relatives of the dead, rising above the ascription of panic, loss of control and guilt. It ends the silence as did Ivy Brind's interview with Libby Purves; acting as 'my mother's catharsis' (Pers Comm Sandra S). Ray felt it was about time that the story was told.

b. How and why did you get involved?

Ray Lechmere, very private man, never talked about it but his niece, Susan Clapp, wanted her mother's story told: She had rescued a baby, Margaret and it wasn't until 2013, because of the project, that the two families had met. *There is a BBC film (Real Lives-Reunited 2014) on a similar story related to the heroism of PC Penn.*

Babs' family had always talked about their collective experience of separation, survival and later reunion. She was also aware of local paper reporting of the campaigning of Alf Morris from the early 2000s and the memorial services.

SS responded to the call of the public meeting having been aware of the story and the impact on her family since the 1993 anniversary.

c. What makes this a fitting memorial?

It symbolises what happened.

It is personal: all are named, specific examples of valour and loss are called out.

All encompassing: Remembers the dead AND the bereaved, the injured and the rescuers.

It is immovable and prominent.

Its size is commensurate with the scale of the tragedy and the degree of distortion in the telling, interpretation and remembrance of this local history.

Its scale and the achievement in its delivery can resonate in a wider, national consciousness of war memory.

d. Why now? What about the view that its all too long ago?

Need to have their story told for closure, casting off of guilt, recognition of cover up and vindication of the project aims. Never too late for a truth to be told and the world and the community, as it is today, in all its contrast with 1945 and multi-culturism, have embraced that truth (Brooke 2019).

4. Who and How

a. When did the campaign get going?

The project started with an idea for a cast of the stairway space, elevated above the entrance like a canopy. HP sent in a note to the local paper, the East London Advertise, with an outline sketch of the proposal, to see whether there was interest in reviving memories of the tragedy. The paper dubbed HP's proposal as a Stairway to Heaven, a sobriquet that has become the public shorthand for the memorial. Indeed, Google Maps marks it as the Stairway to Heaven, Bethnal Green Monument.

Initially, as I also heard from Harry, there was no response. As Sandra described it, it took a couple of weeks for the newspaper to find its way, via his sister, to a former resident of Bethnal Green, Alf Morris in Hornchurch, Essex. Alf had been telling the story of the tragedy and his rescue for several years (*Disaster on the Tube* 2003; Lack 2003; Morris 2005) and his response was to reach out to Paticas. In their first meeting (see HP notes) the frustration that the event had been forgotten led to an unusual partnership which in turn led to a public meeting in 2006 to see if they could get people interested in a project to build a memorial. It took place in November 2006 (Harry suggested October). The meeting was a success, the St John's Church hall was full and was an emotional occasion as many had bottled up feelings for years. Sandra, Lee, Babs and Ray all supported the project from that night. SS, with experience in charity fund-raising, was instrumental in setting up a charitable trust, the STHMT which was established by end March 2007. Alf Morris was appointed Chairman, Sandra as Hon Secretary and Derek Spicer (Hon. Treasurer). Derek and Sandra had lost family members in the crush and Alf, as will be shown, was a survivor. The original committee all had some direct link with the disaster.

Joining them were the Rev. Alan Green, Rector of St. John on Bethnal Green, registered as trustee and spiritual adviser. Members were added over the years but the five founders saw the project through to completion.

b. Financing

The original costing of the Paticas vision, in bronze, approached £1m. Settling on the stone and wood approach was budgeted at £525,000 although HP suggested £600k. Original fund-raising from the community had yielded only £25k so a well-organised funding plan was needed and adopted. The cornerstone of the campaign was in securing national and local government support and local business pledges, including from Canary Wharf. Tower Hamlets Council has supported the project from the start with at least £150k and an early Government waiver of VAT was achieved. There were publicised donations from Boris Johnson as London Mayor and others, listed on the STHMT web pages.

However, the sums soon made clear that other resources needed to be drawn upon and the project embarked on what transpired to be a 10 year journey of home-grown methods from raffles, cockney nights, bucket collections, local sponsorship.

c. Publicity

There was no funding for a PR professional but the team and co-opted members had good contacts and an East End celebrity book that included Barbara Windsor, Cheryl Baker, Harry Harris, Len Goodman and Tommy Walsh. Hard-hitting articles appeared in the Mail, Express and on BBC News. A momentum was created and the project had pledges of 320k by 2010.

5. First Plaque

It is clear from print and web sources that the tragedy had been the subject of community concern and action many years prior to the Paticas vision and the formation of the Trust. In 1993, on the 50th anniversary of the tragedy a plaque had been installed where it can be seen today. It was after the interview, through previous press and video coverage (After Effects 2010; Purves 1993;

Real Lives-reunited 2014) that it became clear that the 50th anniversary had created an opportunity for victims, who had remained silent for years, to start to tell their story.

a. Why did it take 50 years to get any kind of memorial?

RL: No appetite for remembering, slum clearance and the dispersion of the war-time community and its close ties of family and kinship (Willmott & Young).

SS: post-war remembrance was generally limited unlike after WW1.

b. Do you know how the first plaque came about?

In 1993 Kofi Appiah was the Liberal Democrat mayor of Tower Hamlets who had responded to local concerns that no recall of the disaster had taken place officially. He promoted the idea of a memorial service in St John's and the erection of the plaque on the stairs. Funding prevented his doing more. He remained a friend of the project, later becoming a patron, although no longer a councillor. This is how the STHMT website covers his appealing initiative:

We should also like to thank Kofi Appiah, who was the first ever Mayor of Tower Hamlets to campaign to have a plaque placed over the stairs on the 50th anniversary in 1993. He organised a special Memorial Service and was able to install the plaque above the entrance stairs of Bethnal Green tube station where everyone died. Although the plaque was later lost by TFL it turned up at an auction house in Kent and was fortunately spotted by the family of one of the victims and handed to the charity to raise funds. A replacement plaque was eventually put above the stairs but it is difficult to read nowadays. This is just one of the reasons why we needed a fitting Memorial to be built next door to where the tragedy occurred. One that could not be lost or moved.

The memorial service which takes place on the nearest Sunday to 3rd March has been a fixture since 2007 and has continued since. There was one in 2003 for the 60th anniversary. Upwards of 450 attended the service in 2008, the 65th anniversary. A virtual service was broadcast in 2021 and the firemen stood silent vigil at the memorial.

c. Is the first plaque an adequate or a fitting memorial?

See above. Was lost and a replacement was provided only after badgering by the Campaign. SS: an insult.

6. The Disaster

a. Is the name of the lady who tripped known?

Yes. SS unable to divulge but confirmed that she survived but her child died. The lady was interviewed by Dunne and is hence in the transcript of the inquiry. She is also portrayed in Kops' film (1975) which can be seen on various YouTube outlets; it is a clear portrayal of the accident and its unfolding from one trip on worn, damp, badly-lit stairs, with no handrails.

b. When did the campaign know of the original but suppressed requests for improvement?

It is known from 1945 press material (Daily Herald 1945) and the release of the Dunne report that requests for improvement by the council were turned down by the Civil Defence organisation in London. Dunne was critical of both parties but attributed the accident to human causes. The 'findings' in Fountain (2012), which exposed limitations in Dunne's inquiry evident in hitherto unpublished detail, influenced the stridency of the campaign after 2012, at a time when fundraising issues were critical. The campaign materials and output became openly critical of Morrison after this and emphasized how the authorities had covered-up, wriggled free and left the people of BG to take the blame. The sense of victimisation declined, in public at least, as funding issues eased.

c. Who was to blame or was it a ghastly (unavoidable) accident

SS reeled off the list of contributory factors on the stairs themselves, the influences of the rocket battery, the narrowness of the entry, the size of the crowd, the fear of German retaliation. She noted as did RL and BC that there was no police presence at the opening; as Dunne reported a constable should have been on duty.

Panic had been dismissed as a cause in the accidental death verdict of the inquest later in March 1943. My respondents, in the same way, rejected panic as the cause and deeply resented the 'loss of control' phrase advanced by Dunne. RL: people were caught in the wrong place at the wrong time.

d. Near riot of 1940?

Question and its nuance re crowd behaviour not understood; incident not known.

e. Was the disaster and/or cover-up discussed when growing up?

SS: no. Not till 1993 did her Mum open up. BC: her family, who were all unscathed, talked about it a lot. Not clear that a cover-up was ever talked about. Ray repeated that he never discussed it at school or after; suppressed.

6. The Community

a. What are local people saying about the memorial?

SS pointed out the full support of TH Council and the Inter-faith Forum, adding that doubters of the wisdom of this scale of investment were won round when they saw it. Ray felt it was overdue, about time! He and Babs commented on the ways of the old East End, invoking the methods of the Krays, as an example of 'can-do' mentality. Apparently one of the Krays had danced with Babs and he was very good!

b. How have locals been engaged and got involved?

Talks at schools and local clubs have spread the word and engendered local support and fund-raising initiatives. The community, through its people and institutions, will continue, after completion, with tending the garden and as confirmed in a talk with Harry Paticas (2018) the local authority with the help of local volunteer 'guardians' will have the important task of curation and custodianship after the installation.

c. Project Opposition?

Surprisingly little. Some letters suggesting money could be put to better use. No concerted campaign opponents. See Times letter of 2007 and Alf Morris' reply.

SUMMARY

The campaign has promoted family reunions, more open discussion of the shared past and pride in the community; well-attended public events of remembrance, including the 2013 blessing of the memorial, should they continue in the Covid aftermath, will act to retain some cohesion in the

widespread community of the disaster survivors and bereaved families. The project has come a long way but when we met, in late 2015, despite Sandra's positive spin, there were concerns. The main concern was finance; the partially built memorial was not yet paid for and a final verdict on the VAT free status was outstanding. A media coverage review shows that 2015 was a big year with no let-up in the stream of publicity and press. There were still hurdles in health and safety, planning and operational delivery to be confronted and resolved. No hint of the challenge or any wavering was evident in my meeting.

Some dissonance had arisen from the character of its founders amid a broadening of its communications. The project's investment in emotional and sometimes angry declarations on the tragedy and strident calls of cover-up clashed with an emerging emphasis on the community impact. Around the time of my meeting, Mr Morris, the founder, had been replaced as Chairman. It was perhaps inevitable, yet nonetheless sad, that the original partnership of Harry's vision and Alf Morris's belief that he was the last to be pulled out, should end. Alf was still able to cut the ribbon in 2017 beneath the completed memorial.

APPENDIX 18

CIVILIAN MEMORIALS-BETHNAL GREEN

1. Bethnal Green War Memorial

Plinth and cross in front of library with all-encompassing remembrance message. No date but after WW1. Plaque from 2013-2014. Linked with books of remembrance and memorial window in the library. Within sight of Stairway Memorial.

War Memorials Online:

<https://www.war memorials online.org.uk/memorial/160160/>

London Remembers: <http://www.londonremembers.com/memorials/bethnal-green-library-war-memorial>



2. Civilians Garden of Remembrance

Stone wall with name plaques (9m x 2m). City of London Cemetery, Aldersbrook Rd, Manor Park, Newham E12 5DQ. Site of communal grave for 230 residents of the City, Stepney and Bethnal Green. 1950.

WMR 12342: <https://www.iwm.org.uk/memorials/item/memorial/12342>



The panel on the extreme right of the memorial wall is for 45 named and 9 unidentified Bethnal Green casualties. Only one of those named died at the tube station. Eleven of the victims of the Columbia Market shelter tragedy are remembered here. On the left are two plaques for Stepney including 70 of the 76 who died at Peabody Mansions on 7th September 1940.

3. Hughes Mansions, Vallance Road

Last V2 Attack on London. Plaque on low concrete plinth. No date. **WMR 12602**. Flats named after Mary Hughes, daughter of Thomas Hughes who wrote Tom Brown's School Days. She established a hostel for the homeless nearby. Wing destroyed May 27th, 1945, killing 134. No names on plaque. See Demarne 1980, 88.

4. London's First Flying Bomb

Blue plaque. Railway Bridge pier, Grove Road, Bethnal Green. 1985. **WMR 40047**. First V1 casualties. Undignified setting. No names on plaque.



5. Bethnal Green Disaster

Nowy-headed, wall plaque bearing Borough Arms and inscription. No names. 1993. Above entrance stairs. **WMR 12606**.

WMO/258229: <https://www.warmemorialsonline.org.uk/memorial/258229/>

6. Columbia Market Memorial

Ground-level granite plaque. In a rose garden, Ravenscroft Park, Columbia Road, Bethnal Green. 2015. **WMR 70487**.

7. Bethnal Green Tube Shelter Disaster Memorial

Freestanding monument: Stairway to Heaven. Adjacent to Roman Road tube station entrance in corner of public gardens. 2017.

WMR 70373: <https://memorials.iwm.org.uk/memorials/70373#>

WMO 159790: <https://www.warmemorialsonline.org.uk/memorial/159790/>

APPENDIX 19

PORTSMOUTH CIVILIAN COMMEMORATIVE MATERIAL

On 6/5/2021 the Imperial War Museum's War Memorial Record (WMR) held 409 records of which 11 are related to civilian remembrance. Guided fieldwork has isolated a further 5 references. The WMR numbers will direct to the relevant page at: <https://www.iwm.org.uk/memorials/search>

The 16 references range from 1941 to 2019.

1. Scouts, Bramble Road Shelter. Wall Plaque. Church of the Holy Spirit, Fawcett Road. 1941.



2. Red Cross Ladies. Wall Plaque, Cathedral. 1947. **WMR 21532.**



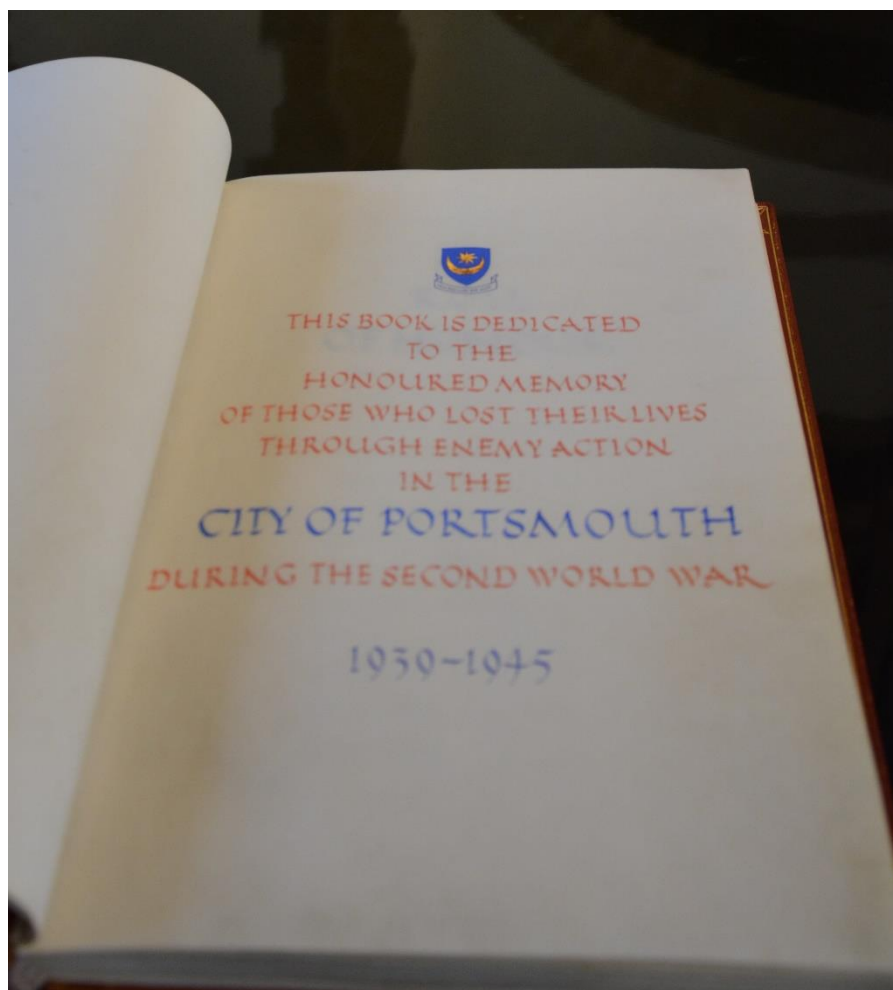
3. Grave Monument and Plaques, Kingston Cemetery West. 1951. **WMR 21447.**



4. Grave Monument and Plaques, Kingston Cemetery East. 1951. **WMR 21446.**



5. Civilian Book of Remembrance, Portsmouth Cathedral. 1952. **WMR 40552.**



6. Portsmouth Police. Plaque. Inside Guildhall. 1952. **WMR 86894.**

An inclusive board with named service casualties since the Boer War; 8 policemen killed by enemy action are separately listed:

<http://www.memorialsinportsmouth.co.uk/city-centre/police.htm>

7. CWGC Civilian Roll of Honour (Portsmouth Extract) 1957; see WMR 40552.

A product of long correspondence between Dame Elizabeth Kelly and the Imperial War Graves Commission. It was handed to the Cathedral during a special service of dedication.

8. Fire Service, Wall Plaque Roll of Honour, Somers Road FS, Southsea. 1950s; specific date unconfirmed. **WMR 49516.** The Memorials in Portsmouth website confirms that this 14 Fire Force plaque covers a wider area than Portsmouth, extending, for example, to the Isle of Wight. The 21 who died in the

city are now remembered by the Fire Brigade Union on a dedicated plaque (2019) located in the Historic Dockyard:

http://www.memorialsinportsmouth.co.uk/others/fire_station/index.htm

9. Portsmouth Coop WWI & WWII. Plaque. St Mary's Ch. 1950s. From Fratton Coop 2018. Duplicate in Guildhall Square. 2016. **WMR 66601**.

The replica of the plaque was placed in the square, adjacent to the WWII memorial, in tribute to the 100 anniversary of the Battle of the Somme. The names include four civilian employees who died by enemy action. One of these is Miss Marjorie Thorne who worked in a branch pharmacy (G. Lewis pers.comm. 25 September 2019). She is also one of the 8 Red Cross ladies remembered in the Cathedral. Unfortunately her name is not on the CWGC record nor the memorial wall.



10. Men and Women of Portsmouth Stone WWII. 2000. **WMR 40556**:

http://www.memorialsinportsmouth.co.uk/old-portsmouth/men_and_women.htm



The stone stands on Grand Parade just outside the entrance to the Royal Garrison Church. The church's ruined nave is recorded on the WMR at 49315; it is specifically dedicated to 'service men'.

11. City of Portsmouth WWII. The 2005 cenotaph and 2016 military/civilian wall of names. **WMR 96619**. See 21430 for WW1 Cenotaph.



12. Doctor Mulvany. Plaque. Mulvany Court, Cumberland Road. 2008.

<http://www.memorialsinportsmouth.co.uk/others/mulvany/index.htm>



13. 101 High Street. Cathedral Precinct. 2011. **WMR 94045.**



14. Besant Road School Shelter, Wall Plaque, Garage corner of Arundel and Holbrook, Fratton. 2011. <http://www.memorialsinportsmouth.co.uk/city-centre/besant-road-shelter.htm>



15. Daley Memorial, Stained-glass window, St Colman's RC Church, Cosham. 2011.



16. Fire Brigade. Plaque. Boathouse, HM Dockyard. FB Union. 2019. **WMR 86349.**

Located within Portsmouth Historic Dockyard at Boathouse Number 7. It commemorates the 21 firefighters who gave their lives during WWII.

APPENDIX 20

PORTSMOUTH WOMEN: CHAMPIONS OF REMEMBRANCE

Introduction

The 2016 completion of Portsmouth's WWII memorial wall, adjacent to the Guildhall, was the culmination of 27 years of persistent campaigning by the latest in a line of formidable women whose work is visible in the remembrance archaeology of the city. Since 1989, aged 56 at the time, Mrs Jean Louth has sustained a second career, undaunted by its tortuous path and longevity.

She follows in the footsteps of Margaret Daley (1912-2004) whose unwavering support, as Lady Mayoress, throughout WWII, was important for the morale of a badly-shaken city (Catholic Portsmouth 2011). A stained-glass window, dating from 2011, on the west wall of the Lady Chapel in St Colman's Church, Cosham, pays tribute to the private Daley School founded in 1917. It depicts Margaret, Lady Daley, leading children away from the blazing city, beneath an image of St Therese of Lisieux; extracts from her notebook record the plight of some of the many families and individuals that she had helped in some way. A pre-arranged photo opportunity, through Parish Assistant, Tess Pritchard, had put me in touch with a parishioner, Mrs Julie Scarborough, who had influenced the installation as a fundraiser and in the inclusion of some design elements. In a long telephone call on 4th November 2016 she explained the window's inception, its reflection of the parish's high esteem of the Daley family and a belief that their contribution had largely been forgotten.

The Lord Mayor through the wartime years was former Royal Marine, Dennis Daley. He was knighted after the war for services to Civil Defence. He was a rallying point after the damaging raids in the Blitz and can be seen accompanying the King and Queen in *Smitten City* (Portsmouth Evening News 2010 [1945], 2) after the heavy raid of 10th January 1941. His rousing statement, on the day after the raid, is the epigraph of Chapter 10. Daley was accompanied throughout by his wife, Margaret. She can be seen with Mrs Churchill amidst the ruins. Her relative youth, she was in her late-20s, and vivacity, shines out of the press photos (2010 [1945], 47).

Daley was Lord Mayor again in 1950 and participated in one of the early Anglo-German twinning of cities, 'so that the post-war reconstruction would see not

only buildings, but also relations between the two nations rebuilt. In 1950, the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress, Sir Denis and Lady Peggy Daley, signed the Golden Book of Duisburg at the city's Town Hall' (Portsmouth City Council 2021). In the post-war years the Daleys, along with much of the damaged city they had supported, disappeared from view.

Mrs Scarborough (JS) was born in Portsmouth in 1936. She attended the Daley school, in 1943, after 2 years as an evacuee. Her direct association with the family continued, when qualified as a teacher, until the school closed in 1962. She retains a deep respect for the family and maintains contact with the children of Sir Dennis and Lady Margaret. The Daley family, as she understood it, arrived 'penniless' from Ireland in 1912 and later seemed to have become 'successful'. In 1917, Kathleen, a former nun, decided to open a school. A resourceful woman, she developed a successful school from modest beginnings, in a flat above a newsagent in North End, via a house near Copnor Bridge, to a successful transition to Kingston Crescent. As JS tells it, Kathleen gave the school away and it is now subsumed within Oaklands School at Waterlooville. Margaret came from a 'well-to-do' background. However, for unclear reasons, when she died, the family was, by then, not well-off.

The honouring of the Daleys in the church was part of a wider campaign to adorn the church with new stained-glass windows that started in 2006. JS became the promoter and fundraiser for the Daley Family Memorial Window. JS felt they should have a memorial as their school and wartime achievements had disappeared from view. The installation was in 2011. The image in **Appendix 19** shows the striking colours and the rather over-wrought imagery of the emergence from smoke and flame. Nonetheless, the Church congregation, with financial support from the glass company, nudged and pushed by JS, has delivered a fine tribute to a popular institution and its family. The window is dedicated to St Therese as she was 'Miss Daley's saint'. The family fortunes may have waned but the reputation for caring for others continues.

An example is in Sarah Quail's book on the lives of Portsmouth women who have played essential roles in the struggle for equality (2018). Margaret Daley, led the WVS during the war, establishing The Lady Mayoress Clothing Depot, to provide practical help to those who had lost home and effects through the

bombing. This had many eminent visitors, including Harry Hopkins, special adviser to Roosevelt (Hind 2019).

Quail also singles out a second wartime 'heroine', Elizabeth Kelly, who led the City Council's social services provision. She is an important figure in Portsmouth's civilian remembrance; she inspired the preparation of the 1952 vellum roll of honour, placed in the Cathedral. She ensured the inclusive nature of the list (WMR 40552) which included citizens of the city who died in other registration districts such as Gosport, Fareham and Chichester and those service personnel who died with their family members. Later, in 1957, her persuasive nature was brought to bear on the IWGC in the provision of a second book of remembrance. Elizabeth Kelly led a life of public service, having managed Portsmouth's War Relief Committee during WWI, for which she received the CBE. In 1920 she became the city's first lady magistrate and engaged in the campaign to extend women's suffrage. In 1939 she established and managed a Citizen's Aid Bureau, ensuring that over 1,700 volunteers were recruited and trained to help with the destitution caused by the bombing. In this, she worked closely with Margaret Daley in the establishment of the clothing depot. Elizabeth Kelly attained a Damehood after the war (Quail 2018).

The final champion is Dr Eva Mary Mulvany MBE (1890-1987). She was a general practitioner, living in Fratton, who travelled almost 3 miles across the city, during every air raid, to her first-aid post in Old Portsmouth. She is pictured attending a casualty in *Smitten City* (Portsmouth Evening News 2010 [1945], 59). She is remembered with a small plaque at Mulvany Court in Fratton. See **Appendix 19**.

Summary

These women represented their city through their war service; their great example is publicly recognised within the small catalogue of civilian commemorations, listed in **Appendix 19**. There, they are joined by the eight nurses, whose death in service, was remembered in one of the city's earliest civilian memorials, installed in 1947, in the Cathedral Baptistery (IWM 2021/WMR21532).

APPENDIX 21

BATH CIVILIAN COMMEMORATIVE MATERIAL

1. Bath City Police Force 1939-1945

In November 1947, a plaque was unveiled in the Police HQ, then in Manvers Street, recording those killed on active service and the 9 who died in air raids. Eight of these were special constables who died outside the Scala Cinema, Oldfield Park (War Memorials of Bath 2014). The plaque is now out of the city at Avon Police HQ, Portishead (IWM2021/7224).

2. Queen Square Lawn

1948. A land gift to the city dedicated to citizens lost to enemy action. See Bath Heritage (2020): http://bath-heritage.co.uk/queen_square_gateposts.html

3. Bath Abbey Book of Remembrance 1939-1945

1950. A list of 417 civilians in book shared with the city's service casualties. See WMO115987: <https://www.warmemorialsonline.org.uk/memorial/115987/>

Another book is in St John the Evangelist Church, South Parade, Bath.

4. Haycombe Cemetery

1950. Memorial and grave site for over 200 of the victims of the April raids. Two rows of communal graves but marked by individual stones. Each row has a stone with plaque. A brief description on WMO 251342 suggests, incorrectly, that it forms part of the adjacent WWII CWGC plot:

<https://www.warmemorialsonline.org.uk/memorial/251342/>

5. Queen Square-Francis Hotel

Destroyed 1942 and rebuilt by 1953; plaque on wall. It does not mention the several fatalities. http://bath-heritage.co.uk/queen_square_francis.html

6. Dyrham Park

Purchased in 1956. A rare success for the Dalton National Land Fund (Rickwood 1987). See WMO 152102:

<https://www.warmemorialsonline.org.uk/memorial/152102/>

2004 plaque reads: In memory of those who gave their lives for their country 1939-1945. WMR 61171:

<https://www.iwm.org.uk/memorials/item/memorial/61171>

7. Bath Blitz Memorial Garden

1992. Located on Shaftesbury Road, Oldfield Park, this garden and plaque was the first civilian commemoration since the 1950s. It marks the 50th anniversary of the Baedeker raids of April 1942. War Memorials Online states that it commemorates the site of the bombed shelter on Third Avenue, in front of the Scala Cinema; in fact, this was not mentioned until a change in plaque, recorded in 2020, image below. WMO 116090:

<https://www.warmemorialsonline.org.uk/search?keyword=116090&search=1>

The memorial is also known as Bath Air Raids WW2 on WMR 7212:

<https://www.iwm.org.uk/memorials/item/memorial/7212>

Bath Heritage (2020) describes it as Baedeker Raids-Shaftesbury Road: heritage.co.uk/shaftesbury-road.html



8. Bath War Memorial-WWII Dedications

1995. At the time of the addition of the names of the service dead of WWII, two new explanatory plaques were added: http://bath-heritage.co.uk/war-memorial_dedication.html. The service dead included some categories that

might be deemed civilian. The city's civilian dead were mentioned in the context of their books of remembrance at the Abbey and another Bath church. WMO 116027: <https://www.warmemorialsonline.org.uk/memorial/116027/>

9. Catherine Place Gardens

Gardens refurbished in 1995. Plaque on railings dedicated, in 1996, to the 'Civilians of the City of Bath':

<https://www.iwm.org.uk/memorials/item/memorial/65728>

10. Bath Air Raids Casualties

2003. Plaque with over 400 names adjacent to the plaques for service dead of both world wars. Equal honour on the city cenotaph 'funded and erected by the Bath Blitz Memorial Project, April 2003'. Achieved five years after the project's formation in 1998.

WMO 100140: <https://www.warmemorialsonline.org.uk/memorial/100140/>

11. Bath Labour Exchange

2016. Former Labour Exchange converted into office and student accommodation, unveiled with a BBMP plaque about the Baedeker raids and the 417 civilian dead. See Wyatt 2016:

<https://bathnewseum.com/2016/11/17/new-role-for-battle-scarred-labour-exchange/>

The final formal act of the project was the memorial service in April, 2017.

12. Roseberry Road Memorial

2019. At Mary's Walk, Twerton, Bath. Fulfilment of an ambition by a local man, Chris Kilminster, to remember his family and others who died when the street was destroyed by two bombs that fell short of the intended target, an adjacent rail junction.

WMO 276133: <https://www.warmemorialsonline.org.uk/memorial/276133/>

APPENDIX 22

HEROES SHRINE, ALDERSHOT

In a dell at Manor Park, off Church Hill, is a garden of remembrance containing fragments of bombed buildings from 18 cities and 34 boroughs. An illuminated record of the places of origin is preserved in a glass case in the adjacent parish church of St Michael the Archangel.

The memorial, with a claim to national remembrance through the metaphor of the stones, has a statue of Christ overlooking two grass squares. The Portland stone statue is carved from a block rejected by Sir Christopher Wren for St Paul's Cathedral.

It was unveiled in May 1950, by the Duchess of Gloucester, with the Bishop of Guildford attending to a congregation of 2000, military bands, several choirs and the regular symbols of remembrance services (Cole 1980, 252-253). Thirty of the towns had sent their mayors, including London's Lord Mayor (1980, 252-253). Aldershot's mayor dedicated the memorial to hallow 'the memory of those [...] in defence of their country and their homes, in battle on the sea, on the land, in the air or in the burning cities of our land, gave their lives that we might live' (1980, 253).

In a 1988 refurbishment, the rockeries were deconstructed and the stones were inset in the surround of the rectangular grassed areas. Not all are still readable. New memorial plaques were inset in the curtain wall and a new head for the statue was carved.

Inscription

1939-1945 / TO THE GLORY OF GOD / AND IN TRIBUTE TO THE MEN AND
WOMEN / OF BRITAIN WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES IN / THE HOUR OF NEED /
FIFTY FOUR BOROUGHES SENT THEIR STONES FOR / THIS ROCKERY
FROM RUINS OF CHURCHES / AND HISTORIC BUILDINGS DESTROYED IN
/ THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN / SPECIAL HONOUR IS PAID TO THE PEOPLE /
OF OUR DEVASTED CITIES AND TOWNS / WHO IN THE DARK DAYS OF
INVASION / BY AIR MAINTAINED UNFAILING COURAGE / CHEERFULNESS
IN ADVERSITY THEIR / FAITH IN GOD / MANY THOUSANDS OF OUR
YOUNG MEN AND / WOMEN WHO HAD THE MILITARY TRAINING / IN

The Memorial

Local sources describe the statue and garden as Aldershot's National Memorial to those who lost their lives in the Second World War (1980, 265). The main inscription, shown above, tells the story of the ruins and destruction in 'the Battle of Britain', without the use of the term 'Blitz', and combines the heroism and loss of the citizens, of 'our devastated cities', with the sacrifice of the many thousands of young men and women who did their military training in the town before defending the homes and heritage of the men and women of Britain.

This is a well-meant memorial, inclusive of men and women, civilian and soldier. In a town with scores of memorials to branches, divisions, regiments and battalions of the Army, the idea came from the local branch of the Royal Air Forces Association, whose President, Mr J.E.A. Thomas, proposed the idea of stones from air damage as a tribute to those who took part in the Battle of Britain and from the 'blitzed' cities.

His ideas were adopted by the Borough's War Memorial Committee with the addition that the shrine should take the form of a National memorial and 'considered it fitting that such a memorial should be erected in [...]the home of the British Army and one which escaped the full force of enemy attacks (1980, 266).

Aldershot, despite its concentration of military training facilities and personnel never came under concerted attack in WWII. In 9 raids there were four civilian deaths and 77 injuries; a small number of military casualties from bombing were also sustained. Aldershot was spared the terrible destruction and carnage of other towns and cities and 'was thankful' (1980, 238).

The monument was re-dedicated in 2003. The park is well cared for by the local authority and apart from the natural weathering of the stones the condition in 2014 and 2020 was good.

This memorial, with a distinctive central monument and engaging symbols of the shared destruction of 56 cities and towns, has many credentials to meet the national ambition set for it. There is however no stone from Scotland or NI;

other notable absentees are Birmingham and, alone of the Baedeker cities, Bath.

In a town, managing armed forces restructuring and decline since the war, there is no sign that that it has followed up on its potential and formed the setting for acts of national remembrance.

The illuminated testimonies, bound into the memorial book, located in the adjacent parish church, were prepared by early 1950 and reflect sentiments acknowledging loss yet declaring hope for the future. The Portsmouth page confirms the death toll of 930 and Bethnal Green does not mention the tube shelter tragedy.

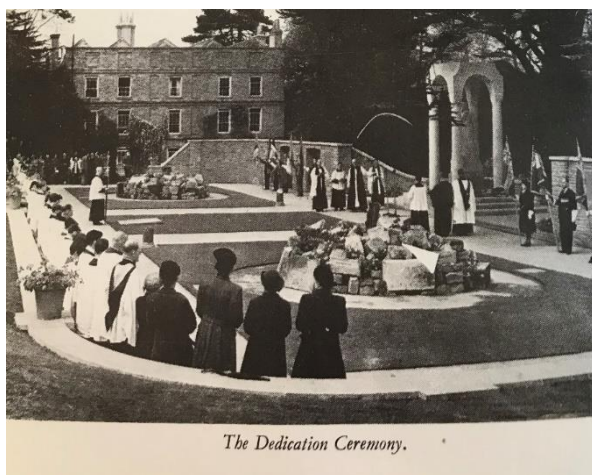
Sources/Photo Refs

Cole, H. N., 1980. *The Story of Aldershot*. Revised Edition. Aldershot: Southern Books.

WMR Ref 21478: <https://www.iwm.org.uk/memorials/item/memorial/21478#>

Rushmoor Council <http://www.rushmoor.gov.uk/historicsites>

Map Ref/GPS: SU 870 499



Source: Cole 1950, 224-225



Author Photograph 2014

APPENDIX 23

PARTICIPANTS

Bath

Harry Hemming, Bath Blitz Memorial Project

Chris Kilminster, Independent Activist

Bethnal Green-Columbia Market Memorial

Geoff Twist, Founder.

Trevor Wood MBE, Chairman.

Bethnal Green Memorial Project

Dr Toby Butler, University of East London.

Bethnal Green Tube Shelter Disaster/Stairway to Heaven Memorial Trust

Mrs Babette Clark, Survivor.

Mrs Judy Fielden, daughter of Dr H. Yarrow, one of the first responders.

Ray Lechmere, Survivor.

Harry Paticas MBE, Architect.

Mike Pattinson, Chairman.

Ms A.C. Reid, Committee Member.

Lee Scotting; Hon. Accountant.

Mrs Sandra Scotting MBE, Hon. Secretary.

Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Ms. Mel Donnelly, Commemorations Policy Manager.

Michael Greet, Assistant Archivist.

Crockham Hill

Rev. Sue Diggory, vicar of Crockham Hill.

Mark Hancox, Chairman of CH Memorial Committee.

David Gilmour, Local Historian.

Kev Reynolds, Local Historian.

Peter Findley, Survivor.

Christ Church Greyfriars

Ian Heron, Founder of Civilians' Memorial project at Christ Church.

Firemen Remembered

Mrs Stephanie Maltman, Co-founder & Chair at Firemen Remembered.

Imperial War Museum

Callum Brogan, Project Manager, War Memorials Register

Portsmouth

Mrs Maggi Bridgman, Church of the Holy Spirit, Fawcett Road, Portsmouth.

Tim Burnett, Administrative Assistant, Portsmouth Cathedral.

Gareth Lewis, Chairman, and Chris Pennycook, Pompey Pals Charity.

J.J. Marshallsay, Founder, Memories of bygone Portsmouth.

Gerard O'Brien, Cemeteries Manager, Portsmouth City Council.

Ms. Tess Pritchard, Parish Assistant, St. Colman's Church, Cosham, Hants.

Robert Rowe, Independent Activist, Besant Road Shelter Memorial.

Mrs Julie Scarborough, Parishioner, St Colman's and co-organiser of the Daley Memorial Window.

Dave Yates, School-teacher; attendee at memorial service.

Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park

Kenneth Greenaway, Cemetery Park Manager, Tower Hamlets.

Ms Diane Kendall, Trustee, Friends of Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park,

APPENDIX 24

FIREMEN REMEMBERED-PLAQUES

Civilian remembrance has been characterised by its relative scarcity in a crowded memorial landscape. In addition, the thesis has reviewed memorial initiatives of a national/metropolitan scope that have struggled to meet tests of meaning and social engagement. Effective commemorative initiatives with strong local credentials are also relatively rare but where they combine cause, community and place they can achieve durable and meaningful remembrance. A legacy of commemorative material, championed by a small team of an aging, veteran, fire service community exemplifies this. A charity, Firemen Remembered, through sustained, voluntary commitment, without formal affiliation to fire service organisations, emerged in the mid-1990s around a desire to counteract the inevitable oblivion of the events that bound them.

The group's focus for almost 25 years has been the remembrance of the firemen and firewomen of London during WWII, with an emphasis on the Auxiliary Fire Service, during the most intense phase of the Blitz from September 1940 until May 1941. Its visible output is a series of commemorative plaques marking incidents and their victims at the location of the event. Firemen Remembered (FR) is representative of post-war communities shouldering the burden of stories untold, loss unacknowledged and memories unshared. It can be placed within the upsurge in interest and action in memorialising, dateable to about 50 years after the war's end, a widespread phenomenon of a 'memory boom' (Winter 1995). FR bears scrutiny as a campaign, organised on charitable lines, dedicated to remembrance, not of a specific event, such as the Bethnal Green Memorial, nor of a specific site as at Wapping (Civilians Remembered). Its programme can boast over 20 commemorations.

The Auxiliary Fire Service (AFS) was set up as a reserve national firefighting force under the Air Raid Precautions Act 1937 (Ingham 1992, 6). Volunteers, from a range of occupations and a broad social spectrum, signed up for training alongside regular fire brigades. In London, on the outbreak of war, the AFS had a strength of 23,000 men and women, alongside the 2,700 regular members of the London Fire Brigade. Together, they operated through the most testing time of the war. This manifestation of the AFS lasted until 1942 when all brigades,

some 1,600 nationally, were unified into a National Fire Service (Ingham 1992, 6). The heroic responses of civilians generally and the 'civilian' fire brigade in particular are essential elements of the Blitz legend. In 1943 two films were released which established firefighters as ordinary folks, responding to enormous odds, with extraordinary courage. Both contributed to the war's evolving narrative of citizen resilience. The first, *The Bells go down* (1943), based on a 1942 diary of an anonymous AFS man (Anon. 1942), explored tensions between regular and volunteer colleagues. In a different approach, an eminent film director, Humphrey Jennings (Petley 2006) cast serving AFS men in an action film, juxtaposing documentary footage, with a scripted plot (*Fires were started* 1943). It still divides opinion (Aldgate & Richards 2007), with some questioning its documentary authenticity; for others, the casting of real auxiliary firemen, albeit writers and actors in real life, is a master touch (Callenbach 1961; Jackson 2004; Malcolm 1999; Matthews 2000; Merralls 1961; Millar 1969; Richards 1995; Sansom 1961; Winston 1999). One of the leading 'actors' in Jennings' film, Fred Griffiths (IMDb 2021), had a considerable influence on the participation of a retired school teacher in the establishment of Firemen Remembered. Stephanie Maltman was a co-founder and has stayed with the programme for over 25 years.

Leveraging the bravery and service of the fire service was important in 1943 as the new NFS was still in its formative stage. The national reorganisation was a measured response to the needs of the war but it inevitably obscured the exploits and tragedies of the AFS. In the early 1990s, a hitherto neglected diary would precipitate a chain of events that would lead to the above concerns being addressed. Frank Somerville discovered an enigmatic note in his late father's wartime log: 'Station in mourning'. The desire to discover what this referred to and his father's wartime experience, as an auxiliary fireman, uncovered a terrible tragedy at Old Palace School in St Leonard's Street, Poplar. In the early hours of April 20th 1941, 32 men and two women of the AFS were killed when a land mine destroyed the school, in use as a sub-station, just as fire crews from Beckenham and Hackney converged on the school playground. The firewomen, in the watch office, were killed immediately and neither of their bodies was recovered. The dead included 21 men of Beckenham, drafted from Kent to help

out local crews. Beckenham had already suffered in two previous incidents at the cost of 9 lives (Maltman 2001).

It took five years, with support from Tower Hamlets Borough Council, to achieve public remembrance of the tragedy, the worst to befall the fire service in WWII, with the unveiling, by the influential, former fire chief, Cyril Demarne, of a plaque at the rebuilt school site in 1997 (Maltman 2001). Frank Somerville's campaign had attracted former firefighters, their families and friends, all mindful of the need for stories to be told of other incidents in London, in places unmarked, with personal tragedies, publicly unrecorded. The sadness of the losses was matched by disappointment that 'so little had been done to create more public awareness of men and women who lost their lives not in a "foreign field" but in our own streets' (Maltman 2001, 52).

Stephanie Maltman was part of the support group that gathered around the Old Palace School campaign and its requirement for detailed research at a local level. The aim was to establish permanent, material remembrance, in places where the deaths occurred, creating sites where memories could be recalled and made public. Winter's 1995 study of 'collective remembrance' has clearly inspired the project, the interlocking of people and place, each element reinforcing their respective meaning and significance. However, the task is more than identifying and marking the place, it is about recording the context in which people died in service of others, 'to instil a sense of continuity and meaning in the concept of remembrance' (2001, 52).

The War Memorials Register (WMR) holds a record of 19 Firemen Remembered plaques which are listed below. The quality of the entries is variable; the more detailed benefit from access to material from FR.

1. WMR Ref: 53170

Fire Service Personnel WW2. Plaque. Old Palace Primary School, St Leonards St, Bromley-by- Bow, Tower Hamlets, E3 3BT.

Inscription: *In memory of the 13 London firemen and women and 21 Beckenham firemen killed on the night of 19th April 1941 when a bomb destroyed the old school building being used as a sub-fire station. This is the largest single loss of fire brigade personnel in English history. Details of this tragic incident were recorded in the wartime diaries of Mr W Sumerville, an off*

duty member of the Homerton crew. It is to him and the many thousands of men and women that made up the A.F.S. and N.F.S 1939-1945 that this plaque is also dedicated.

This was the first FR plaque, although not in the characteristic oval, example below, of those that followed. The personal toll on Beckenham is explored in several references (Chiddicks 2017; London Fire Brigade 2016; London Fire Journal 2014).

2. WMR Ref: 39169

Henry Cavendish Primary School WW2 Auxiliary Fire Service Memorial. Plaque/Roll of Honour with names. Hydethorpe Rd, Streatham Hill, Lambeth. Unveiled: 7th November 2000. Limited description migrated from UKNIWM on 03-11-2014. No mention of FR. This followed the Old Palace School memorial, above, and was the first to mention the charity, Firemen Remembered. See Maltman 2001, 111.

3. WMR Ref: 47497

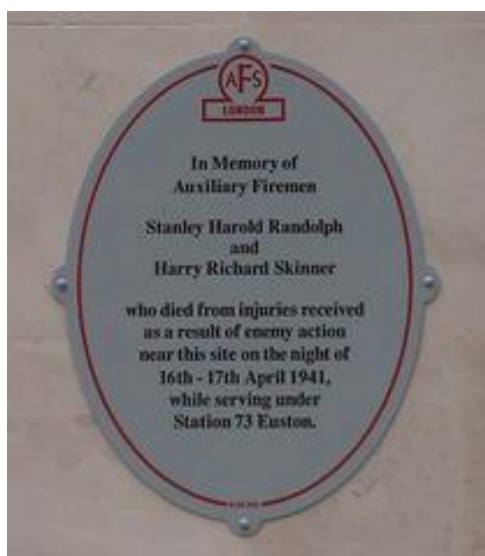
London and Mitcham Auxiliary Firemen 10th-11th May 1941 (Surrey Theatre Emergency Water Supply Disaster). Oval metal plaque with incised inscription in green lettering. Incised red painted badge of the London Fire Brigade is depicted at the top centre of the plaque flanked by the badges of the London Auxiliary Fire Service and the Mitcham Auxiliary Fire Service. McLaren House, Blackfriars Rd at St Georges Circus (nr Elephant and Castle), Lambeth. Inscription: *In memory of eleven London Auxiliary Firemen, a Sub Officer of the London Fire Brigade and five Mitcham Auxiliary Firemen, killed by enemy action while relaying water from the basement of the demolished Surrey Theatre, which stood on this site and was then in use as an emergency water supply, to fires at the Elephant and Castle on the night of 10th/11th May 1941.* 17 names/ranks of the dead then follow. Unveiled: 10 May 2001. Sponsor: The Charity 'Firemen Remembered'.

4. WMR Ref: 63140

On the wall of Woburn House, Upper Woburn Place, on the junction with Tavistock Square, is an oval plaque dedicated to two AFS men, Messrs Randolph & Skinner, from the nearby Euston Firestation, killed on the night of 16th/17th April 1941, the raid known as 'The Wednesday'. The plaque dates from

2002. The site is opposite the British Medical Association where the 7/7 bus explosion killed 12 people in 2005. Author's photo: 2007.

Record reads: Oval plaque with single line border and AFS badge at the top.



5. WMR Ref: 58502

Fireman A Lewis: Plaque; In foyer, Trinity House, Trinity Sq., Tower Hill, City Of London, EC3. Unveiled 6th July 2003.

Lewis was one of many Jewish members of the AFS. The history of their service is in Sugarman (2016). Contributory research input was provided by the co-founder of Firemen Remembered, S. Maltman.

6. WMR Ref: 70626

Corps of Canadian Firefighters-Wimbledon Memorial. Metal Plaque with a floral emblem of Canada Fire fighters at the top and the AFS Badge at the bottom. Telegraph Public House, Telegraph Road, Putney Heath, Merton, SW15 3TU.

Inscription: *In memory of three members of the Corps of (civilian) Canadian Firefighters: Fireman J.S. Coull (Winnipeg) who died as a result of enemy action when a V1 flying bomb fell on part of Wildcroft Manor, adjacent to this site on 3rd July 1944, also/ section leader A. Lapierre (Montreal) who died in a road accident in Bristol on 30th April 1943 and section leader L.E. ("Curly") Woodhead (Saskatoon) who died while training in Hampshire on 16th June 1944. The corps of (civilian) Canadian fire fighters comprised 406 firefighters who volunteered to assist the National Fire Service in the defence of Britain*

between 1942 and 1944. These men were stationed in the four port cities of Southampton, Portsmouth, Plymouth and Bristol and their headquarters were located at 10-14 Inner Park Road, Wimbledon.

Installed by the Charity Firemen remembered (sic). Presented: 2003.

The Canadian Fallen Firefighters Foundation journal features an article on the deployment to England and the fate of the three who died (Kirkpatrick 2007). This indicates that the Corps were deemed to be a branch of Canadian military but the Canadian contingent fell-in alongside their UK civilian counterparts and were classed as a civil defence organization. However, these three firefighters are not recorded on either the service or civilian CWGC databases. In an interesting turn of events, the 2003 re-dedication of *Blitz*, the National Firefighters Memorial, permitted the addition of their names.

7. WMR Ref: 53175

Aux Firemen G. J. Cook, H. Feldman and J. J. Munday.

Inscription: *In honour of Auxiliary Firemen George James Cook, Hyman Fieldman (sic) and John James Munday who died from injuries received in Dod Street, Limehouse on the night of 19th/20th March 1941*

Dedicated: 20th June 2004. Rededicated on rebuilt incident site in 2019.

8. WMR Ref: 59426

There are two installations at Wandsworth Fire Station on West Hill. Both are covered on this record. The first is on the station forecourt at ground level and is recorded as 'Wandsworth Firemen'. It comprises a dark polished tablet with incised inscription and 6 names. An Auxiliary Fire Service (AFS) badge surmounts the inscription at the centre top of the tablet. The inscription reads: *In Memory of (6 Names) who died on duty, 16th November 1940*. No date for inauguration is noted on this file which migrated from UKNIWM on 03-11-2014. London Remembers attributes this memorial to the Wandsworth Station's Old Comrades Association; a partner memorial, in the same form, remembers a post-war fatality of a colleague. In between the two tablets is a case with a printed news extract inside.

Nearby, on the station wall, is the second plaque, installed by Firemen Remembered in 2004, commemorating the same six firemen, killed by a direct

hit. The firemen's graves are in Streatham Cemetery, alongside other AFS who are remembered by FR at Henry Cavendish School.

9. WMA Ref: 56549

Abbey Road Depot ARP and AFS Personnel.

Oval plaque with local council coats of arms above and below inscription, fixed to the gate of the Depot. Bridge Road Depot, Abbey Rd, West Ham, Newham. Inscription: *In memory of 13 members of the Air Raid Precautions and the Fire Service killed at Abbey Road Depot on the 7th September 1940 (Names). At the start of World War II, part of Abbey Road Depot was in use as an Air Raid Precautions Cleansing and Ambulance Station. On 7 September 1940, known as Black Saturday, the Blitz on London began. At 7.15pm the depot received a direct hit, thereby becoming one of the first places in West Ham to be bombed. Lest We Forget*

Unveiled: 08-09-2005. In care of: London Borough of Newham Heritage Service. FR not mentioned.

10. WMR Ref: 56413

West Ham AFS Gainsborough Road Sub Fire Station 16. Oval plaque with West Ham coat of arms and badge of the AFS West Ham above inscription. Above entrance: Gainsborough Primary School, Gainsborough Rd, West Ham, Newham, E15 3AF. Inscription reads: *In memory of nine members of the West Ham Auxiliary Fire Service and one West Ham Fireman who died as a result of enemy action while on duty at Gainsborough Road School, then in use as Sub Fire Station 16, when the school suffered a direct hit from a high explosive bomb on the night of/ 8th/9th December 1940. (Names). Unveiled: 08-12-2005. Carries the 10 names of those killed on the site. Described as being in the care of London Borough of Newham Council (Gainsborough Primary School) and Firemen Remembered Remembrance Group.*

In a note WMR refers to a gravestone in the nearby East London Cemetery. This names all 10 men killed although only seven are buried there; three were interred privately. The men are also commemorated in the naming of roads around West Ham: <http://www.iwm.org.uk/memorials/item/memorial/56413>

The West Ham Auxiliary Firemen grave is recorded as follows at **WMR 39134**:

an inscribed scroll-shaped headstone incorporated in brick backing at East London Cemetery, Grange Rd, Plaistow, E13. It reads:

Killed by enemy action in execution of their duty on Sunday 8 December 1940 at Gainsborough Road School, No 16 Station AFS West Ham E15. The 10 names follow with the addition of the Station Padre/ARP Warden who died of injuries received in a different incident in March 1941.

11. WMR Ref: 56591

Aux Fireman A E Arber. Oval grey plaque, AFS London badge at top Black lettering within a red-line border. St Pauls Church, St Stephens Rd, Bow, Tower Hamlets, E3 5JL. Inscription : *In Memory of/ Auxiliary Fireman Albert Edward Arber who served under Station 32 Bow R and who died as a result of enemy action buried by falling masonry at the Junction of St Stephens Road and Athelstane Grove on the night of 19th/20th March 1941 when a high explosive bomb demolished two houses near this site. This plaque remembers also Auxiliary Fireman David William Carson (1912-2006) who served on Bow Fire Station's ground in World War II and through whom this memorial was made possible.*

Unveiled: 19-03-2007. Responsible for the memorial: The Church and "Firemen Remembered" Group.

12. WMR Ref: 55179

Y Green-Plaque. Grey oval aluminium plaque with thin red border. Black AFS London logo at top. Inscription in black printed letters. On wall opposite church, across Old Church Street, Chelsea, Kensington and Chelsea, SW3.

Inscription

In Memory of Auxiliary Firewoman Yvonne Green who died near this site killed by enemy action on duty with four others as Firewatchers at Chelsea Old Church on the night of 16th/17th April 1941. All five names are remembered together on a memorial stone in the entrance to Chelsea Old Church.

Memorial funded by Firemen Remembered. Unveiled: 29 June 2007 by Yvonne Green's daughter, granddaughter and great grandson. The Department of Documents at the Imperial War Museum holds a collection of material relating to Yvonne Green, including 46 letters written to her mother between May 1940 and April 1941.

A WMR Blog <http://ukniwm.wordpress.com/2007/07/02/yvonne-green/> covers the poignant story of a lady who had swapped duty with Yvonne. She had lived to almost 100 and her funeral was the day before the memorial unveiling. The blog confirmed this to be FR's 15th installation. The stone in the church entrance is described at **WMR 47552** and dates from the re-opening of the church in 1958.

13a. WMR Ref: 57545

London AFS and ARP Medical Services Personnel of Sub Fire Station 35U. Oval plaque of grey-painted aluminium with thin red border around the inscription. Red Auxiliary Fire Service badge at top. Inscription in black letters. Mounted on outside wall to right of main entrance door. St Luke's CE Primary School, Saunders Ness Rd, Millwall, Isle of Dogs, Tower Hamlets, E14 3EB.

Inscription Recorded

In Memory of Auxiliary Firewomen (Names) who died on this site as a result of enemy action on the night of 18th/19th September 1940 when the school then in use as sub fire station 35U received a direct hit from a high-explosive bomb. In memory also of 24 members of the ARP/Civil Defence Services who died with them. (Names) Auxiliary Ambulance Drivers (Names) Stretcher Bearers (Names) Doctor/Nurses (Names) Warden.

Memorial funded by "Firemen Remembered". Unveiled: 08 December 2008. Attended by Local Clergy/Dignitaries and by Standard Bearers from London Fire Brigade and AJEX, Officers and Members of London Fire and Ambulance services, Fire Service Preservation Group, pupils from the Jewish Free School, Kenton, London and teachers and pupils of St Luke's C of E Primary School (which in 1940 was Saunders Ness Road School). Source: Programme/ Order of Service/Invitation to Unveiling ceremony. Update 18/10/2017.

Lemmerman, M., 2021b. The WWII Bombing of Cubitt Town School. *Isle of Dogs: Past Life, Past Lives*. Weblog 21 March. Retrieved from World Wide Web: <https://islandhistory.wordpress.com/2021/03/21/the-wwii-bombing-of-cubitt-town-school/>. [Accessed 12 May 2021].

13b. WMR Ref: 60455

Auxiliary Firewomen and Members of the ARP Civil Defence Service. Oval plaque bordered with a red line. AFS logo in red at the top centre of the border. Inscription in black. This is a duplicate record with emphasis on the two AFS women, Joan Fanny Bartlett and Violet Irene Pengelly. The recovery of their bodies is covered in Regan-Atherton, A., 2015. *Heavy Rescue Squad Work on the Isle of Dogs: Bill Regan's Second World War Diaries*. London: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform.

14. WMR Ref: 61902

Auxiliary Fireman Sidney Alfred Holder. Standard oval 'Firemen Remembered' plaque with AFS London badge at the top. Wall of Goldman Sachs office, Shoe Lane, City of London, EC4A 2BB.

Inscription: *In Memory of Auxiliary Fireman Sidney Alfred Holder who died as a result of injuries received from a collapsing wall while fighting fires on this site in World War II on the night of the City Blitz 29th/30th December 1940.*

Unveiled 11th August 2011 by Mr Roger Tolson. Dedicated, same date: Local Clergy/Dignitaries. See Commonwealth War Graves Commission:

<https://www.cwgc.org/find-war-dead/casualty/3122542/holder,-sidney-alfred/>

Aged 33, Civilian War Dead, Fireman, A.F.S.; of 49 Cool Oak Lane, Hendon, Middlesex. Injured at Wine Office Court; died same day near St. Bartholomew's Hospital. 29th December 1940.

Shoe Lane is a narrow street on the north side of Fleet Street. Holder's death was marked by a celebrated war artist and part-time fireman, Leonard Rosoman (1913-2012) who captured the moment in a painting, displayed in the Imperial War Museum, London: *A House Collapsing on Two Firemen, Shoe Lane, London, EC4* (Rosoman 1940).

The artist was fighting the flames with friend William Sansom, writer and AFS fireman, who later appeared in *Fires were started* (1943). When the wall fell they miraculously survived (Ingham 1992, 123; Sansom 1944) but their colleague did not. In a tragic twist, a 2005 film included testimony from Rosoman in which he mentioned the death of a second, un-named firemen (*Blitz: London's Firestorm* 2005). There was a second fatality but not of a

fireman; a passing soldier stopped to help, only to die, unidentified (Hunnisett 2020; S. Maltman pers.comm.14 January 2019).



15. WMR Ref: 61950

Poplar AFS Fire Station. Above entrance. Poplar Fire Station, 161 East India Dock Rd, Poplar, Tower Hamlets, E14 0BP.

Inscription: *In Memory of fifteen members of the Auxiliary Fire Service killed by enemy action in World War II near this site on the night of 9th/10th September 1940 (Names). Unveiled: 17-11-2011.*

16. WMR Ref: 64167

Oval white plaque, inscription in black lettering within a red oval and with logos (top and bottom) also in red. On side wall of Plaistow Cafe, on west side of Plaistow Rd and approx. 200yds north of Plaistow Underground Stn., 163 Plaistow Rd, West Ham, Newham, E15.

Inscription: *In Memory of five members of the Beckenham Auxiliary Fire Service and one West Ham Auxiliary Fireman killed by enemy action in World War II near this site on the night of 19th/20th March 1941 (Names). In memory also of Chief Officer Cyril Demarne O.B.E. West Ham Fire Brigade and National Fire Service 1925-1955. And with thanks to After the Battle Publications.*

At bottom in logo: AFS/WEST HAM/FR 2013.

Unveiling 19 March 2013. The incident is described by Maltman (2001, 50-51); the 5 Beckenham firemen were en route to deployment to West Ham. **WMR 40431** covers the naming of 5 apartment blocks at Oakwood Ave, Beckenham.

17. WMR Ref: 63318

Chelsea Firemen. Oval plaque with a line border mounted on brick wall.

Inscription and border in red. Mounted on external wall, Chelsea Fire Station, Kings Road, Kensington and Chelsea, SW3 5EH.

Inscription: *In Memory of Twelve London Firemen who lost their lives protecting the district of chelsea (sic) in peacetime and war:*

No unveiling date added. FR acknowledged with link to defunct website:

<http://www.firemenremembered.co.uk>.

18. WMR Ref: 76530

Beckenham Auxiliary Firemen WW2. Oval shaped wall mounted metal plaque bearing the Auxiliary Fire Service Beckenham badge. At Beckenham Fire Station.

Inscription: *In memory of thirty Beckenham Auxiliary Firemen who died as a result of enemy action in 1941. March 19th, Plaistow Road, London, E15 (names), April 16th, Court Downs Road, Beckenham, Kent, April 20th, Old Palace School, Bow, London, E3 (names). Inauguration not noted. FR not acknowledged.*

WMR also records (**17871**) the Beckenham Firemen - WW2 memorial, a plain wooden board with white painted inscription, from the 1960s, at former Beckenham Fire Station. The inscription records 21 names and reads: *AFS. Killed in action 19-20th March 1941 (names), 19-20th April 1941 (names). This memorial to Auxiliary Firemen was placed here on the closure of the West Wickham Fire Station in 1968*

This memorial was moved when the station closed in 1968 to St John the Baptist Church, West Wickham. It was then moved to the newly-built fire station in Beckenham in April 1999.

The same names are inscribed on Beckenham's WW1 cenotaph which has plaques for WWII service and civilian casualties; it also shows the breakdown into men, women and children (**WMR 3842**).

This FR plaque is under threat with a modern replacement reflecting, as the *Blitz* memorial, all fire personnel victims (S. Maltman pers.comm April 2021). **WMR 12768** at Elmers End cemetery is a low stone wall close to the graves of 19 of 21 killed at Old Palace School. At St John the Baptist, West Wickham there is a plinth and small cenotaph for the five local AFS men killed in Plaistow (**WMR3855**). .

19. Invicta Primary School, Blackheath

Unveiled: 16 March 2017. Commemorates events at the school on 14th/15th November 1940 when the then vacated school premises were in use as London Auxiliary Fire Service Sub-Station 54X; 12 London Auxiliary Firemen and three civilians were killed when the school received a direct hit from a parachute mine. No record yet on WMR.

20. Euston Fire Station

A FR plaque was unveiled and blessed in a ceremony on November 12th 2015. On a visit in 2019 it was nowhere to be seen. Subsequent correspondence with SM confirmed that for a variety of reasons it was never installed and it sits at her home waiting on issues to be resolved.

21. Rathbone Place

September 2021: From S Maltman on Facebook: *Two plaques installed today in Rathbone Street, Soho, one to commemorate seven wartime firemen who died there on the night of September 17th/18th 1940 when the sub-station they were sheltering in received a direct hit from a high-explosive bomb and the second in honour of AFS fireman Harry Errington who was awarded the George Cross (the civilian equivalent of the VC) for gallantry, for his brave action on that same night. The official unveiling of the two, however, cannot happen until COVID restrictions are eased.*

For Errington's deeds and citation, see Hissey 2008.

22. Ricardo Street, London, E14

Ceremony on 1st November 2021, delayed from last year, to mark the death of four AFS men and one woman on 1st November 1940. The site is one block north of Poplar Park on the East India Dock Road. School in use as a sub fire station. Source: S. Maltman via Facebook.

