

## Wartime Newspaper Reports.

Merton Heritage and Local Studies Centre holds a range of local newspapers from 1939 - 45.

The editions covering August to November 1945 feature many reports about returning combatants, local Victory celebrations, street parties and public opinion regarding the end of World War II.

This small display features just a sample of the reports which can be viewed at the Centre.

Those referring to POWs and local servicemen are particularly poignant. Some of the men had been held captive by the Japanese since the early part of the war.

It took many years before details of their courage and suffering were finally revealed.

We hope you find the articles interesting.

## Augur's Survey

# THE ATOMIC BOMB —AND AFTER

Now the secret is out. The Americans have used the new atomic bomb against Japan. The rod which British and Americans for years have been preparing for their enemies has struck, and, though peace will now return, the world will never be the same again, for a new force of unlimited energy is given to mankind. For better, for worse, we have begun a tremendous adventure.

Fancy, if you can, 1,000 block-busters of Bomber Command exploding all at once on the same pin-pointed target. That is the atom bomb as used against Japan. In the last days of July a final solemn warning was issued by the United States and by Great Britain; the Japanese were told to surrender immediately or to take the consequences. These, of course, were the utter havoc the atom bomb would cause, endangering the very existence of Japan. But surrender did not follow, so the atom bomb went into action.

### Hidden Energy

The war of 1914-18 did not put an end to the persistent attempts by the chemical experts to produce more powerful, and ever more powerful, explosions with which to confound an enemy. But it was felt that the methods which has placed at our disposal ordinary gun-powder, then dynamite, and finally the famous TNT, had reached their practicable limit of application. Further improvements could be achieved (this last war brought us several), but something entirely different would have to be discovered before any sensational increase in explosive power was obtained. That brought scientists to consider the use of the energy which was supposed to be hidden in the atom.

For many centuries men of science have suspected that all material bodies finally consist of infinitely small particles held together by what they described as molecular forces. The particles themselves were called molecules, that is, atoms. In chemistry the atoms are the smallest particles in which the elements combine either with themselves or with each other, and thus are the smallest quantity of matter known to possess the properties of a particular element.

That sounds obscure to you? I cannot help that. For that is how men of science define that invisible thing—the atom. Scientific methods permit in any special material to count the number of particles (atoms) which form an aggregate characteristic of that material.

Anyhow, for many years now the scientists have held the view that, if by some method it were possible to "split" the atom, gigantic energy would be released of a sudden.

The problem was seen to be: first, to split the atom; and, secondly, to control the atomic energy liberated in the process.

### Back-Room Professors

Long ago it was realised that success could be achieved, if ever, only by the use of electricity; but in peace-time science had not at its disposal gigantic sums as in war-time. The professors worked with funds scraped together, or with money provided by individual benefactors. All that was very little when compared with the magnitude of the task. Still, a vast amount of research was being done in several countries. In Great Britain experimental work with atomic energy went on in a special

laboratory in Cambridge. Some of you may remember some ten years ago the mysterious incident of Kapitzka, the Russian mathematical genius, who came to work in that laboratory and then was spirited away back to Moscow, never to return. The Americans and the Germans were busy, too, with similar experiments. In fact, the race between nations for the discovery of ways and means to release and control atomic energy had already begun.

It was left finally to the partnership of Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Churchill to bring matters to a head. Mr. Churchill placed at the disposal of our Allies the specialists who in this country had achieved so much already. Mr. Roosevelt did his share by backing the work with all the wealth and industrial power of the United States. Five hundred millions of pounds were spent—a fantastic sum—before atomic energy finally was released from that rare metal uranium. That was contributed by Canada which, fortunately, possesses large deposits of minerals in which uranium is present in extractable quantities.

### To-day's Solemn Question

Japan will be blasted. The war will come to a sudden end. But atomic energy will remain. How is humanity going to use it? To what purpose? The prospects are mind-shattering in their immensity. Can atomic energy, for example, be harnessed to do the work of coal? Mr. Churchill, in his statement (published now by Mr. Attlee), speaks of "awful" possibilities. And so they are. For better, for worse, the world cannot be the same place again.

Mitcham News & Mercury

10 August 1945



### **VJ Day Party, Braemar Avenue, Wimbledon Park, 1945**

This photo shows local residents celebrating the end of the war in Japan. The Japanese surrender marked the end of the Second World War.

It was a day for celebration for many, but also a difficult time for the families of nearly 400,000 British men and women who lost their lives during the war. Over 60,000 of those killed were civilians, many of them as a result of German bombing raids on London and other major cities.

On the night of 20th October 1940, Braemar Avenue had suffered a devastating attack when a number of high explosive bombs were dropped on the street and surrounding area. Numbers 53 to 67 and 54 to 68 were wrecked. The combined attacks that night left 9 dead and 12 seriously injured. 140 were rendered homeless and were taken to the Central Hall shelter station



## Augur's Survey

# THE CONDITIONS OF PEACE

THE world war which the Germans started and the Japanese carried on is at an end. Japan joins Germany in total defeat. The event causes jubilation. But we cannot delay celebrating. For, right in front of us, the return to peace in the world bristles with obstacles. Hard fighting is before us. There may not be loss of life, but tempers may become frayed and essential principles may be in danger. Post-war diplomacy—the atomic diplomacy of a new era—is faced with a difficult task. We dare not sacrifice the high motives for which we have fought the Power of Evil personified by Hitler. That apart, we will have to tack and change between the rocks and whirlpools menacing to cut our ship off from the peaceful haven of a final settlement for world affairs.

### Need for Balance

The collapse of Japan in so sudden a manner is a great relief. Yet also it may become the source of embarrassment to a world all set to carry on total warfare for months, if not for years. Self-restraint and a clear understanding of the situation are badly needed to prevent mistakes being committed for which we would have to pay with years of acute discomfort. For it is not possible, as if by waving the magician's wand, to transform our war effort — hey presto — into its equivalent of an effort for peace. Millions of men and women are on the point of losing their war-jobs. Peace-jobs can be had, but the transfer into them cannot be achieved in a matter of days. Yet the transition has to proceed in an orderly fashion, or chaos will be born. Gigantic war industries have to close. But the mechanical potential created for their use remains. It cannot be made to disappear. How to make it fit in with post-war labour conditions is

an immense problem by itself. United States and Great Britain cannot have a repetition of the shock of massive unemployment, which followed the boom-years after the first world war. The working masses fear that most of all. That is the reason incidentally at the back of the surprising turnover of votes at our last General Election.

### First Essential

The United States and Great Britain, united in the war, remain joined by the bonds which seem unbreakable. For one thing the sharing of the secrets of the atomic bomb represents a link stronger than any diplomatic alliance or arrangement. But other reasons, in the domain of economic arguments chiefly, exist to render the Anglo-American partnership an absolute necessity for both English-speaking nations.

As we look upon the post-war world we see first this indissoluble partnership. After that as the next step to world-wide pacification comes the Big Three combination of the United States and of Great Britain and Russia.

The need for that was demonstrated by the war, and nothing has happened since to make it less necessary. The Big Three are the guardians of the world's peace. The San Francisco Charter confirms that privileged position.

But the democratic formula at all levels of the organisation of human society demands a perpetual balance between privilege and obligation, that is, between rights and duties. Democracy cannot survive if people not only have rights, but also are conscious of having them, if they not only have duties, but also are ready to fulfil them.

That is true in a nation. That is equally true in a commonwealth of nations. From those to whom more is given, more is demanded.

The Big Three are given the right of preserving the peace. That implies the duty to exercise that right, even at the cost of personal sacrifice.

With the Anglo-American partnership and the Big Three combination as the foundation of a world-wide organisation of the United Nations as foreseen in the San Francisco Charter, the principles of the latter have a chance of receiving a practical application. That must be done. For it would never do to rest until all the nations without a single exception join the international body, or until a single nation, be it the smallest, stands out of the community. So the task before us is beset with difficulties. The peaceful harbour is in sight. But our ship cannot enter it straight away.

### A Winter of Test

The war has destroyed stocks in a frightful manner and has prevented their immediate renewal. Transport is shockingly disorganised. The international markets are in ruins. The money systems are tottering. Demand everywhere exceeds supply. We are warned of a tragic winter coming to Europe. The new post-war era starts in tragic circumstances. Yet the difficulties can be overcome, provided we all put our hand to the task. When we fought Hitler we did not inquire about a man's politics. Similar conditions must prevail now. For the problems facing us have nothing to do with creed or party. So let us celebrate the final victory, but afterwards turn towards the heavy task which is before us. Those who go on celebrating will die as certainly as does the butterfly playing about in the warm, but treacherous breezes of autumn. Only the provident will outlive the winter which is coming up fast. That applies not only to individuals, but to whole nations, also.

Wimbledon Borough News

17 August 1945

# WOMEN QUEUE FOR VICTORY SHOW

## Attraction was Couponless Clothing at Make-do-and-Mend Stall

AN hour before the opening of the Victory garden show organised by the Warden's Social Service, "C" Area, at Woodland-way, Mitcham, on Saturday, women were queuing outside the pavilion which housed the make-do-and-mend stall where couponless garments could be bought. When the show was opened there was a rush to buy goods from the stall, which was quickly cleared.

Held in the large pavilion at Woodland-way, it was Mitcham's most crowded summer show. Both pavilions were packed, and entertainment stalls and games were carried on outside. It is expected that the Wilson Hospital will benefit by about £100 as a result. This was the first effort organised by "C" Wardens since their re-organisation, although since their formation they have raised nearly £400 for the Red Cross.

The wardens staged an unusual opening for their show. The platform curtain was rolled up to reveal the Mayor and Mayoress (Ald. and Mrs. A. H. Bailey), Mr. C. P. Newman (chairman), Col. S. Chart (chairman of the Wilson Hospital), the Rev. J. G. R. Stott, AM, J. R. Beaumont, and Mrs. Hodges, sitting before a background of flags, bunting and flowers.

Opening the show, the Mayor said he thought it a good example of the efficiency of the wardens. He was particularly gratified that they had decided to preserve the comradeship established during the war.

Mr. R. Burgess, who with his vegetables, pears and tomatoes won six first prizes, one second and three thirds, was awarded the silver cup as the best exhibitor at the show. Although the allotment holder who grew a runner bean almost two feet long did not win a prize, his exhibit drew a great deal of attention. So, too, did the miniature gardens of Miss P. Harris. A stamp exhibition came in for much attention from both old and young, and a crazy clock made by Mr. A. J. Waltham from odds and ends won admiration. In the competition, people with the winning numbers 621, 1316 and 7702 should claim their prizes.

The judges were Mr. Glew (producer), Mrs. Glew (women's section), and Mr. Anderson (general). The prize-winners were:-

Jar of home-made jam.—1. Mrs. Ball; 2. Mrs. Barrett; 3. Mrs. Peever.

Jar of home-made jelly.—1. Mrs. C. E. Gaston.

Jar of pickles.—1. Mrs. Spurdens; 2. Mrs. Cox; 3. Mrs. Lyell.

Jar of chutney.—1. Mrs. Arnold; 2. Mrs. Peever; 3. Mrs. Winder.

Six small cakes, own recipe.—1. Mrs. Hill; 2. Mrs. Hayler; 3. Mrs. Ball.

One cake, war-time recipe.—1. Mrs. Hayler; 2. Mrs. Rickford.

Three hen eggs, white.—1. Mrs. E. Lane.

Three hen eggs, brown or speckled.—1. Mrs. E. Lane; 2. Mrs. Rickford.

### Section C (open exhibition).

Collection of vegetables.—1. E. E. Penegar; 2. G. Martin; 3. Mrs. E. Martin.

Six kidney potatoes.—1. G. R. Madgwick; 2. F. T. Penegar; 3. G. Hind.

Six round potatoes.—1. Mrs. E. Martin; 2. A. E. Ford; 3. G. Hind.

Twelve runner beans.—1. J. Faulkner; 2. E. Pocock; 3. G. R. Madgwick.

Two cabbages.—1. Mrs. E. Martin; 2. E. Pocock; 3. G. Hind.

Three onions.—1. A. E. Ford; 2. B. Ambrose; 3. E. E. Penegar.

Three carrots.—1. E. E. Penegar; 2. G. Martin; 3. Mrs. E. Martin.

Three parsnips.—1. E. E. Penegar; 2. F. T. Penegar; 3. G. R. Madgwick.

One pair marrow.—1. E. Pocock; 2. G. Martin; 3. Mrs. E. Martin.

Six tomatoes, outdoor.—1. R. Burgess; 2. Mrs. Burgess; 3. F. F. Pilcher.

Six tomatoes, indoor.—1. J. Phillips; 2. B. Ambrose; 3. W. G. West.

Three beet.—1. A. E. Barrage; 2. Mrs. E. Martin; 3. F. E. Pilcher.

Three turnips.—1. F. T. Penegar.

One pair cucumbers.—1. Mr. Rickford.

Twelve shallots.—1. G. P. Hind; 2. E. Pocock; 3. J. L. Smith.

Collection of salad vegetables.—1. G. P. Hind; 2. E. E. Penegar; 3. Mr. Arnold.

Three apples, dessert.—1. W. Jackson; 2. E. Pocock; 3. B. Ambrose.

Three apples, culinary.—1. Miss Warr; 2. E. Pocock; 3. Miss A. Jones.

Three pears, dessert.—1. Miss Wilkes; 2. E. Pocock; 3. Miss A. Jones.

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## 28 YEARS SERVICE IN THE NAVY

Left the "News" to  
Join Up in 1917



Way back in 1917, Able Seaman J. E. Rickard, 42, Palmerston-road, Wimbledon, left the "Boro' News" printing works in St. George's-road, to join the Royal Navy.

Last week he was demobilised after the long span of 28 years' continuous service.

He saw service in the last war in the North Sea and Atlantic convoys, was one of those who saw the surrender of the German Fleet, and during the peace years was at stations in the Mediterranean, West Indies, East Indies, China, Atlantic Fleet and Palestine.

He had only a few more weeks service to go before being placed in reserve, when war broke out in 1939, and his services were again required.

He served in the Atlantic, Mediterranean and East Indies once again.

All this time he has been very lucky, particularly at Singapore, from where he escaped just before the Japanese arrived.

In all he has served six years over his reserve time.

Now he hopes to settle down with his family, a wife and four sons at Sheerness.

Wimbledon Borough News

17 August 1945

## *Back from Burma*



**MAJOR ROBERT** McKERROW, only son of the late Mr. Robert Harry McKerrow, chartered accountant, of Worple-road, and Mrs. Dorothy McKerrow, 1, Thornton House, Thornton Hill, has arrived back in London from Burma.

Major McKerrow joined the London Rifle Brigade (T.A.) a few weeks before the outbreak of war, but was transferred to the Royal Artillery, being too young to go abroad (he is now aged 23). He was given a commission in the R.A. at the age of 20, and went to India with his regiment in 1942.

Just before sailing, he married the eldest daughter of Mrs. Mallet, of Clapham Common. Major McKerrow is a nephew of the late Mr. John Luxford, O.B.E.

Wimbledon Borough News

28 September 1945



never worth its price."

## **"Browned Off" But Happy**

### **Men Awaiting Return from Far East**

Mrs. Olive Corbett, of 74, Hardy-road, Wimbledon, who will be remembered by our readers as Miss Farrell, "the Keep Fit" instruc-



**Pte. Kenneth  
A. Corbett**

tress and leader of the Youth Club movement, has just received news from her husband, Pte. Kenneth Corbett, of the Sherwood Foresters, who was a prisoner-of-war in Japanese hands for 3½ years, being taken captive at the fall of Singapore, that he is on his way home.

Pte. Corbett writes from Thailand:

"We are looking forward to being home soon. Moving has started by plane to-day, and we all on our toes wondering who is next to go. As far as we know we are going to Rangoon first, and then to Bangalore onwards.

#### **"BROWNE OFF."**

"I am fit—fitter than at any time since I was a prisoner-of-war. I am regaining the weight I lost some time ago, when I went down to 10 stone. I hope when we get on to European food to get back to normal weight. Everybody is browned off with rice and stew that we have been living on. The Red Cross food that we have received (very little) was much appreciated."

Wimbledon Borough News  
28 September 1945



THE WIMBLEDON HOSPITAL  
ENTERTAINMENT COMMITTEE

Beg to announce

A Victory  
Celebration  
DANCE

AT THE TOWN HALL  
On FRIDAY, OCTOBER 5th

*Full details will be announced later*

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*This space kindly presented by Messrs. Johnston-Carlton, Ltd.*

Wimbledon Borough News

28 September 1945

# ON THE WAY HOME FROM CAPTIVITY

## One of Five Sons who Served in the Army, Navy and R.A.F.

Mr. and Mrs. J. Lucock, have received the good news that their son, Ernest John, who was in the Police Force at Hong Kong, when the city fell into Japanese hands, has been released from internment, and expects to go to Manila on his way to England.

Three of the other four sons of the family are still in the Forces, and the other, Albert, who won the



Ernest J.  
Lucock

D.S.M. while serving in the Navy, has recently been discharged on medical grounds.

Claude, who was in the Manchester Regt., was taken prisoner at Singapore. His parents received a postcard last month, which was written in February, stating that he was all right, but since then they have received no further news of him and are anxiously awaiting information.

### FINE FAMILY RECORD.

Laurie is in the R.A.F., and the youngest son, Edward, is in the Navy.

All five sons have therefore seen service in many parts of the world, a splendid family record.

Mr. and Mrs. Lucock received official intimation from the War Office that Ernest, their third son, was released from the internment camp at Hong Kong last week, and on Saturday they received a letter from their son dated August 30.

In it he writes:—"Excitement here is plentiful, as the Union Jack was hoisted at 5.30 p.m."

"The fleet sailed in at 11 a.m., and you can guess we were very thankful to see it. There is so much I wish to say that I shall confine myself to things of greater importance. I have been through three years and eight months of confinement, and the thought of seeing you again has kept me going."

"There is talk of sending us all to Manila for ten weeks' medical treatment, and then home, but nothing is certain. I will try to keep you informed, and if I come don't look for a strapping man, as I am afraid I am rather thin and have hardly any teeth left. However, I feel all right, and sincerely hope you are the same. I hope my brothers are the same. I have practically nothing. My clothes were supplied by the Red Cross but saving nothing does not worry me; to see you all again is my great desire. I had no letters from you

at all for three years, then I received the first, dated February 44, on February 16, 1945. I had many anxious moments, but I prayed and trusted in the Lord. It will be better for me to tell you all when I see you, as it would take miles of paper to do it. Things will be different from tomorrow. Keep your spirits up and rest assured I am constantly thinking of you and pray that our re-union will not be far distant.

"Thank those friends and neighbours who sent their love and regards to me, and tell them I sincerely hope to see them all soon. To my brothers my heartfelt thanks for being a small unit in that great mass which has brought freedom to the world, and may they know that everything they have done was a great help to the cause."

Mr. and Mrs. Lucock wish to thank the many friends who from time to time have made inquiries concerning their two sons in captivity.

## Ill Health and Bad Company

### Mothers Plead for Their Sons

Pleading guilty at Surrey Quarter Sessions to housebreaking, John Butler (aged 27), hawker, Warple-road, Wandsworth, was given six months' imprisonment; and Thomas Edward Ward (aged 22), dealer, of Wandsworth, was sentenced to detention at a Borstal institution.

It was charged against Ward that in June he broke into the house of Margaret P. Richard, Berkeley-place, Wimbledon, and stole property worth £157, and that both men were concerned together in breaking into the house of Mr. W. J. Walker, St. Aubyn's-avenue, Wimbledon, on August 23, and stealing property worth £17.

Det-Sgt. T. Denham said there were six previous convictions against Butler, but none against Ward.

Mrs. Butler said her son was a good boy, and she attributed his downfall to ill health.

Mrs. Ward said her son had been a good help to her, and she felt that his downfall arose from bad company.

Oscar Johnson (aged 40), Ship's Fireman, Wentworth-street, Aldgate, a Norwegian, fined 5s. at Wimbledon, on Friday, for being drunk and incapable, was said by P.C. Bird to have been lying in the gutter at London-road, Morden.

Wimbledon Borough News  
28 September 1945



**VJ Celebrations at Woodlands,  
Elm Walk, Raynes Park.**  
Wimbledon Borough News,  
28 September 1945





Capt. Arthur Walker, R.A.

## OFFICER AMBUSHED IN SAIGON

### *Kills 8: Saves Civilians*

Capt. Anthony Walker, Royal Artillery, whose parents live at Hillside, Wimbledon, fought with a Sten-gun, single-handed, for three hours against Annamite rebels who ambushed French women and children outside Saigon—killing eight of the attackers.

The French party, who, had been rescued from up-country, were in a motor convoy with British and American officers and an escort of Jap troops.

They were ambushed in the market-place outside Saigon, and the two leading cars failed to get through.

Snipers opened fire from street corners and houses, one of them using a shot-gun loaded with nails.

The Jap officer in command of the escort, who was wounded, refused to order his men to fire.

Capt. Walker and the rest of the party had between them three Sten guns, two revolvers and one rifle, but all the Stens jammed, and the other men were wounded one after another.

Capt. Walker placed the women and children in a Jap lorry. Surrounded by Annamite forces, he had to guard all four sides in turn to keep them off.

Annamites, carrying long knives, once reached the lorry in a sudden rush and stabbed the wounded, but did not kill any. Capt. Walker killed two of the attackers as they tried to get away.

All through this battle, fought by the light of flickering oil lamps in the houses, Capt. Walker time and again jumped on the lorry to quieten the children, who thought it was fun.

Wimbledon Borough News

5 October 1945



Mr. R. F. Guest,

## *Saved from the Japs*

Eldest son of Mr. and Mrs. R. J. Guest, Parkside-gardens, Wimbledon, Mr. R. F. (Bob) Guest is expected to leave for home shortly—after 3½ years' captivity in Japanese prison camps.

In a letter to his wife, Mrs. D. V. Guest, 38, Reynolds Close, Carshalton, he states that he is now safe in Australian hands, and that the A.I.F. have been dropping food supplies.

He anticipates being back home by the Christmas festivities.

*Cris on the Jap*

Wimbledon Borough News

5 October 1945



**Gunner E. C. Cowper, prisoner-of-war in Siam for three years and a half, arrived home, 46, Alexandra-road, this week-end, when he was given a hearty welcome by the family. Among the decorations is the Troop Flag of St. Cuthbert's Boy Scouts, of which he was a member for several years.**

Wimbledon Borough News

19 October 1945





Happy party at the Victory celebrations in Goodenough-road, Wimbledon.

Wimbledon Borough News

14 September 1945