

# Acton Gazette

## AND West London Post

FRIDAY, APRIL 25, 1941

### FOUR HOMES WIPED OUT BY BOMB

Wardens Search Among  
Debris All Night

CRATER BIG ENOUGH TO  
HOLD A BUS

A HIGH-EXPLOSIVE bomb pulverised four houses in a London suburb on Saturday night. It left a crater big enough to hold a bus. "When I heard the 'swish,'" a woman living opposite told the "Acton Gazette," "I said 'This is it!' and dived under the table. Then it seemed as if the house came down on top of us. I did not hear the explosion."

There was only one incident immediately within the Southfield Park Triangle area. Early on Monday 18 January 1943 an anti-aircraft shell crashed through the roof of 18 Alexandra Road and exploded in the ground floor scullery wrecking "the lower rear portion of the house". The tenants of the downstairs flat, the Amersons, were slightly injured and spent Monday night in hospital, but the women who lived upstairs was detained with facial, wrist, arm and hip injuries.

Much more serious incidents occurred close by. On a Saturday night, 20 April 1941, a high explosive bomb "pulverised" numbers 70-74 Greenend Road, creating a "crater big enough to hold a bus". The Gazette's report follows the typical wartime pattern of trying to maintain morale, admitting there had been fatalities, including a whole family, but not giving numbers.

The worst incident took place on Monday 26 June 1944, when a flying bomb, a V1 or "doodlebug", one of the seven which fell on Acton, hit the corner of Southfield Road, where the road takes a right-angled bend. Because it hit during the daytime there were fewer casualties than there might have been when people were sleeping, but there were certainly a number of fatalities. The site of the thirteen houses that were destroyed, twenty-six households, is now occupied by three small blocks of flats.

Just before the outbreak of WWII, the Acton Gazette was reporting preparatory measures that were being taken in case of war. First aid posts and the evacuation of children were planned, volunteers recruited for the auxiliary fire brigade, and trenches dug as protection for people caught in the streets during air raids, including space for 900 in Southfield Road Playing Field.

Evacuation of the children, school by school, took place between 1 and 4 September 1939. The children from Southfield School went to Dorset, and later that month the Acton Gazette carried a report that the children were "happy and well cared for".

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 1939

### LATEST NEWS OF SOUTHFIELD CHILDREN

Happy And Well-  
Cared For

The following is the latest news from the Southfield School party in Dorset: The region in which the children are is a typically rural one, and the kiddies are billeted in houses overlooking quiet and peaceful Dorset farms.

Although regular schooling has not yet commenced, teachers have been very busy. Chief among their present duties is the visiting and inspection of children's billets. In all cases, they have been able to report that the children are happy and well cared for. The response of the local residents has been truly magnificent.

The head teachers wish to assure parents that there is nothing for them to worry about. Every child is visited regularly, and the utmost care is taken to ensure his happiness and well-being. The waiting interval has been profit-

FRIDAY, JUNE 30, 1944

### FLYING BOMB CRASHES IN LUNCH HOUR

A FLYING bomb demolished houses and caused a number of casualties at lunch time on Monday.

People heard the roar of the bomb beginning to dive. They jumped up: there was a second's pause, a flash, and a crash.

I joined a stream of people running towards the rising cloud of dust a quarter of a mile away, writes a reporter. You could tell the direction by the dust blowing into your eyes.

I ran past the women standing at their front gates along pavements scattered with glass and over the railway footbridge. Some houses were wrecked.

It looked like the site of an old bomb. Everything seemed utterly dead and covered with

dust. Then I saw that a fire engine had arrived. Ambulances and rescue men were just driving up. There was a jeep which took away sitting casualties, and the pavement round a tree stripped bare by the blast was covered with green leaves.

#### THE VICTIMS

Wardens were calling for stretchers, and one by one I saw six elderly people brought out, unconscious, black with dust, and one old man, as he sat in the ambulance looking down at the back of his hand covered with blood.

A woman with her white hair down put up her arm in a torn sleeve to tidy it as she told a warden "I'll wait just a little, to make sure he's not here."

Two clergymen, one the vicar of the parish, were already on the site, and I met two free church ministers who had hurried there on their bicycles.







When the children at the Hatfield and Alexandra-roads and St. George's-avenue victory party had had enough, the mothers sat down to tea.

## *Their Finest Hour*

VE (Victory in Europe) Day was on Tuesday 8 May 1945, and the following Friday's Acton Gazette and its subsequent editions were full of reports of celebratory street parties.

Alexandra, St George's and Hatfield Roads got together to hold one in Hatfield Road on Saturday 19 May:

"Pink and blue paper hats and pink and blue wavers (sic) brightened the victory party for 71 children of Hatfield Road on Saturday. Cakes, all home-made, and sandwiches and a two-tiered victory cake with white icing were provided by the mothers. When the children had finished, there was so much left that the mothers sat down at the tables and had another tea... After the party three large untouched sponge cakes were sent to the children's ward at Acton Hospital. The children's share of the party ended at 9.30 pm when they were sent home, each with a two-shilling [10p] piece. The grown-ups went on dancing until midnight."

Southfield Road held its party on 26 May



## Southfield Road

Southfield-road " celebrated VE-Day on Saturday with a first-rate party. Through the kindness of the officials it was held in the Rescue Centre in Southfield-road, which made an ideal setting for the function. Mr. Judge was the Chairman of the organising committee, and other members were Mr. and Mrs. Charles Hellis, Mr. and Mrs. Lippiatt and Mr. Gillett. Games and competitions occupied the youngsters during the earlier part of the afternoon, when there was a break, and many of them changed into fancy dress. The Rev. W. G. de Lara Wilson, Vicar of St. Peter's, Mrs. Pedley and Mrs. Hellis had a difficult time judging the dress parade, but their decisions were warmly applauded.

David Aldridge won the first prize as "Piece," a clever costume in the national colours all in pieces; Bryan Saunders also gained a first with his representation of all good mothers dressed for shopping complete with a ration book; Pamela Fletcher made a charming "Old English Lady" complete with poke bonnet, crinolin, and very much laced "belows"; and Rosemary Chandler made a dashing pirate, with cutlass and pistol, and the inevitable black patch over one eye. These took second places. The costumes were so good that consolation prizes were awarded to Sheila Monk as a page boy, Joan Wilson in Russian costume, and little Ann Palfrey as "An answer to my prayer"—holding a large bunch of bananas (alas, false ones!)

Mr. H. G. Thomas, of Clovelly-road, and Mr. C. Savory, of Somerset-road, provided the music and loudspeakers, and later Mr. George Packham and his band played for the dance. The tea was a sumptuous affair with a magnificently iced cake made by Mrs. Stanton, of Southfield-road, and a second made by Mrs. Monk. The committee specially desire to thank Messrs. Wilkinsons for their generous donation towards the expenses and all friends in Southfield-road. Mr. H. G. Thomas acted as M.C. at the dance, which went on till late.

