

LOCAL HISTORY RECORDS

altered every seven days – 0800 to 1630, 1630 to 2330, 2330 to 0800 – with a day between each changeover, and a four day 'stand down' at the end of the spell of night watches.

I didn't find it easy. The work was hard. To work a Bombe properly took all one's concentration. Accuracy was of the highest importance. We worked in pairs, were given a 'menu' and had to set up the drums on the front of the machine which would be checked by your partner. I found coping with the multitude of wires and dangling plugs on the back of the machine terrifying! You had to be accurate as a Bombe operator. You didn't have to be a brilliant scholar, but you did have to be very, very accurate.

The 'huts' often became very noisy, hot and smelly. If it had been raining and your shoes were wet you often got horrible shocks from the Bombe! Every now and then a Bombe would show that 'something' had come up. We were always told if our station had been successful – and then everyone would feel that what we were doing really was worth while.

It was very much a combined ops situation; the wrens operated the Bombes and the teleprinters at the various outstations (Bletchley Park being the nerve centre). We had RAF mechanics always with us to put the Bombes right when there were problems, which was quite often, and our guards were marine police.

After a few months at Eastcote a friend and I decided that we would like a transfer to an outstation nearer Bletchley, as we very much wanted to go there. Early in the Spring of 1944 we were sent to Gayhurst Manor. What a lovely posting it was – a lovely house and beautiful countryside. Our 'watch' was accommodated in what had been the ballroom! We went to Bletchley Park several times, and this gave us a fuller understanding of the part we were playing in 'breaking the code.'

In June the war in Europe ended. Soon after this, Gayhurst closed down and we were all sent to different stations. I ended up in Colombo! It really was a fascinating time to be alive – having done a job we believe was a very important one – and we never did talk about it. I think we really were some of Winston Churchill's 'geese who didn't cackle!'

KENLEY'S NEW DEEP SHELTER

County Council Chairman at Opening Ceremony

Caterham Times & Surrey County Mail 19th June 1942

Contributed by Gwyneth Fookes

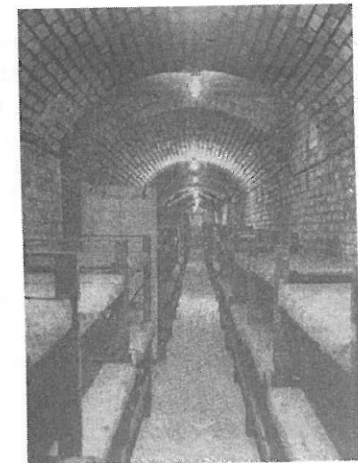
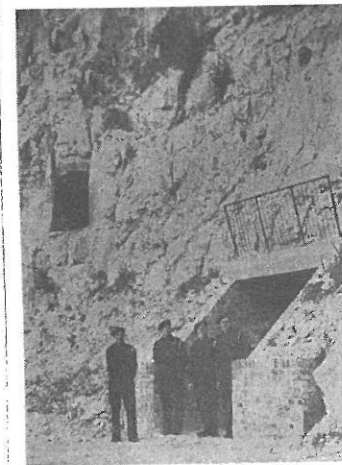
'SO FAR AS HUMAN knowledge can tell, this shelter is safe from all bombing' said Mr F H Jones, chairman of the Surrey County Council at Kenley on Saturday, when opening the new deep shelter which has been cut into the heart of the chalk under Riddlesdown.

Mr Jones had invited the chairman and councillors of Coulsdon and Purley, together with their wives, to inspect the shelter, and afterwards to have tea, which was served in the shelter canteen.

FRIDAY, JUNE 19th, 1942

TWO

NEW BOMBPROOF DEEP SHELTER



DESCRIBED by the Chairman of the Surrey County Council as "bomb-proof," a new deep shelter, cut into the heart of the chalk at Riddlesdown, was opened on Saturday. Three long galleries run 240 feet into the hillside, with sleeping accommodation for 1,200 people.

CONVENIENCE AND SAFETY

'We are anxious that the convenience and safety of this place shall be made well known to the public', said Mr Jones in a speech welcoming the guests. 'The district is exceedingly fortunate in having such a shelter, which is proof against the biggest bomb yet

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known. The most powerful bomb that we can conceive could not penetrate even half-way through the earth above the part nearest to the surface, and could only penetrate one-tenth of the way over the deepest part.'

He said they were indebted to the Corporation of the City of London, who had placed the site at their disposal freely and unconditionally. He then went on to tell the guests something about the lay-out and features of the shelter.

The principal features were three long galleries, running for 240 ft direct into the hillside, connected by four other intersecting corridors, each 200 ft long. All these corridors were lined with bunks in two tiers running down each side, giving comfortable sleeping accommodation for 1,500 people.

He was addressing the 100 guests in the central hall of the shelter, adjoining which was the canteen. This, said Mr Jones was fitted with electrical apparatus for cooking, and the whole shelter was electrically lit, with running water, for both cooking and sanitary use. Referring to the somewhat chilly atmosphere of the place, for there was no heating, he said the temperature of the place would be raised materially when, instead of being empty, it contained 1,500 people.

VENTILATION CONTROL

There was, he continued, a well-equipped ventilation system, so arranged that the temperature throughout the various corridors could be equalised. There was a fan that could remove 6,500 cu.ft of air per minute, with baffle doors, as in a mine so that any parts could be shut off at will.

The whole shelter would be in sole charge of a shelter marshal, with headquarters near the entrance. During the 'off-blitz' times, said Mr Jones, the marshal would lead rather a lonely existence.

The guests were then conducted around the shelter, tea being served by WVS personnel of the Council & Purley Centre, arranged by Mrs Neville Howard MBE, the Surrey County Organiser of the WVS.

Coun F G Kerswell, chairman of the Coulsdon & Purley District Council, Mr Ernest King, clerk to the Council, the councillors and

KENLEY'S NEW DEEP SHELTER

their wives and friends, expressed themselves as being exceedingly pleased with all that they had seen.

AMPLE ROOF COVER

Here are some additional details of this shelter which, with the exception of one other of the same capacity, is the biggest in the county. It has ample cover over the minimum of 40 ft which is allowed for these shelters. The cover at the entrance is over 60 ft above the roof of the tunnels, and at the extreme rear the cover has been increased to 130 ft. The shelter has a sleeping capacity of 1,500 people and is equipped with water sanitation, forced ventilation, a canteen, and a medical aid post.

Fresh air is drawn in through the entrances and ejected up the ventilation shaft, which has been bored at the far end of the shelter remote from the entrance. The actual air intake to the fan mechanism is at the intersection of the centre gallery and the back gallery. By means of baffle doors and air current is deflected to this point by a circuitous route, which ventilates the whole shelter. The size of the ventilating shaft is 21" diameter.

Immediately under this shaft is the fan room, which houses the fan, electric motor to drive it, and an auxiliary petrol engine to be used as an emergency power plant. A cooling tank has been supplied in connection with this auxiliary engine. In order to be ready to meet an emergency with this petrol auxiliary engine this tank must be kept full of water. In addition, at least 4 gallons of petrol, 1 gallon of oil and one spare sparking plug will be kept in stock. The fan is designed to expel 6,500 cu.ft per minute or 250 cu.ft per head per hour.

The self-contained canteen is situated on the centre gallery near the entrance. The equipment supplied by the Ministry of Food consist of a 17½ gallon water boiler, electrically heated including a 9 gallon soup container (5 kw); a 10 gallon domestic water boiler electrically heated (3 kw); a 5 gallon insulated urn; two 2 gallon pouring cans; three plywood confectionery cases and hot water cupboards for snacks.