

PREPARING FOR WAR



Gas masks



Sandbags and shelters



Wardens



The Blackout

Gas Masks

Why were people given gas masks during the war?

Everyone in Britain was given a gas mask in a cardboard box, to protect them from gas bombs, which could be dropped during air raids.



What were the gas masks like?

The masks were made of black rubber, which was very hot and smelly. It was difficult to breathe when wearing a gas mask.

When you breathed in the air was sucked through the filter to take out the gas. When you breathed out the whole mask was pushed away from your face to let the air out.

Posters instructed people how to put their gas masks on.

Why did people think a gas attack would happen?

Gas had been used a great deal in the First World War and many soldiers had died or been injured in gas attacks.

There was a fear that this time it would be used against ordinary people at home in Britain (civilians).

By September 1939 nearly everybody in the country had been issued with a gas mask (38 million).

Many lamp-posts in London were painted with a special chemical that turned yellow when gas was detected. Unfortunately it also went yellow when dogs urinated on lamp-posts. This caused a lot of false gas attack alarms.





**A teacher teaching a class to children with gas masks on.
What would you have felt like
having lessons taught like this?**



A husband and wife with their baby in a special gas mask that required another person to pump the air in. This was because a baby's breathing wouldn't be powerful enough to pull the air through the filter.



A woman walking her with her toddler in a pram, the toddler is obviously old enough for a normal gas mask to be fitted to him.

ARP Wardens

What was the job of the ARP Wardens?

ARP (air raid precaution) wardens supervised the Blackout.

The main role of the ARP Wardens was to report the extent of bomb damage and assess the local need for help from the emergency and rescue services.

Wardens also enforced the blackout rules, making sure that all sources of light were blacked out completely or dimmed.



The ARP Wardens also organised and staffed air raid shelters, and used their knowledge of their local areas to help find and reunite family members who had been separated in the rush to find shelter from the bombs.

There were 1.4 million ARP wardens in Britain, most of who were part time volunteers who had full time day jobs.

How could you recognise a Warden?



An ARP warden sets the time for the blackout to commence that night.



An ARP warden helps to carry a wounded man from a bombed-out building during the Blitz.

Fire Wardens

A Fire Guard wearing the official 'uniform' of armlet and steel helmet with A.R.P. blackout lamp and axe worn on the belt. The respirator is carried in a black metal tin.

Whistle at the ready to warn of the fall of incendiaries, our guard holds an incendiary bomb scoop with stirrup pump and supply of sandmats (modified sandbags designed to be placed directly on incendiary bombs to smother them) close at hand.

The dustbin lid was used as a heat shield when approaching burning incendiary bombs.



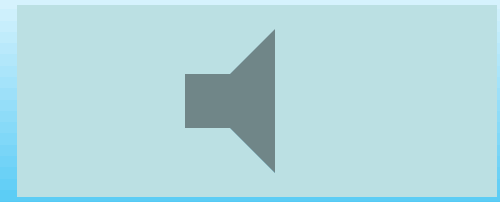
Shelters and Sandbags

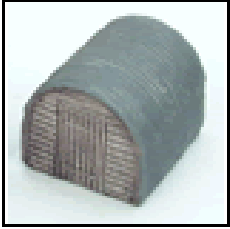
Why were Air Raid Shelters built?

People needed to protect themselves from the bombs being dropped by German aircraft.

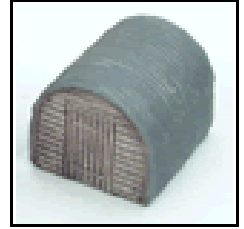


As the night raids became so frequent, many people who were tired of repeatedly interrupting their sleep to go back and forth to the shelters, virtually took up residence in a shelter.





Anderson Shelters



What were Anderson Shelters?

These shelters were half buried in the ground with earth heaped on top to protect them from bomb blasts. They were made from six corrugated iron sheets bolted together at the top, with steel plates at either end, and measured 6ft 6in by 4ft 6in (1.95m by 1.35m). The entrance was protected by a steel shield and an earthen blast wall.

By September 1939 one and a half million Anderson shelters had been put up in gardens.

What were Anderson Shelters like?

The Anderson Shelters were dark and damp and people were reluctant to use them at night. In low-lying areas they tended to flood and sleeping was difficult as they did not keep out the sound of the bombings.

How much did they cost?

Anderson shelters were given free to poor people. Men who earned more than £5 a week could buy one for £7.





Woman: "Is it all right now, Henry?"
Man: "Yes, not even scratched."

Morrison Shelters

When was the Morrison Shelter first introduced?

The Morrison Shelter was introduced in March 1941, for people without gardens. The shelter, made from heavy steel, could also be used as a table. People sheltered underneath it during a raid. The Morrison shelter was named after the Minister for Home Security, Mr. Herbert Morrison.



The Morrison shelter was approximately 6 feet 6 inches (2m) long, 4 feet (1.2m) wide and 2 feet 6 inches (0.75m) high.

The Morrison shelter was rarely as effective as the Anderson shelter, which it was said could withstand all but a direct hit.

London Underground

What other places were used as air raid shelters?

On September 21, 1940 the London Underground started to be used as an air raid shelter. On the busiest night in 1940, 177,000 people slept on platforms. Many bought sandwiches, thermos flasks, pillows and blankets.

Since there were no toilets all the waste was kept in a bucket. People would set up their beds as far away from this bucket as possible because all it took was one careless person to kick it over.

To start off with, the London Underground bosses wanted to stop people from doing this, but they couldn't stop the people from buying a half-penny platform ticket and refusing to come off the platform!



The use of sandbags



Why were sandbags used so much?

Sandbags were used so extensively because they absorbed some of the force from the exploding bombs, they also stopped things from catching fire because sand doesn't burn.



Sandbags were stored around the bottom of lamp-posts on street corners in London for fighting fires with. But, once again, dogs did what they are inclined to do on them, so consequently, when people came to pick them up the sand stank and fell out of the bottom of the rotting bags.

The Blackout

When did The Blackout begin?

Britain was blacked out on 1st September 1939, two days before the outbreak of war.

What was The Blackout?

During the war, everyone had to cover their windows and doors at night with heavy blackout curtains, cardboard or paint.

Why did people have to cover their windows and doors?

They needed to prevent any glimmer of light from escaping and aiding enemy aircraft during their bombing raids.

What about other sources of light during the blackout. Were they covered too?

Street lights were switched off or dimmed and shielded to deflect their light downward. Traffic lights and vehicle headlights were fitted with slotted covers to deflect their beam down to the floor.

The blackout warden made sure all the houses were blacked out properly

Blackout curtains

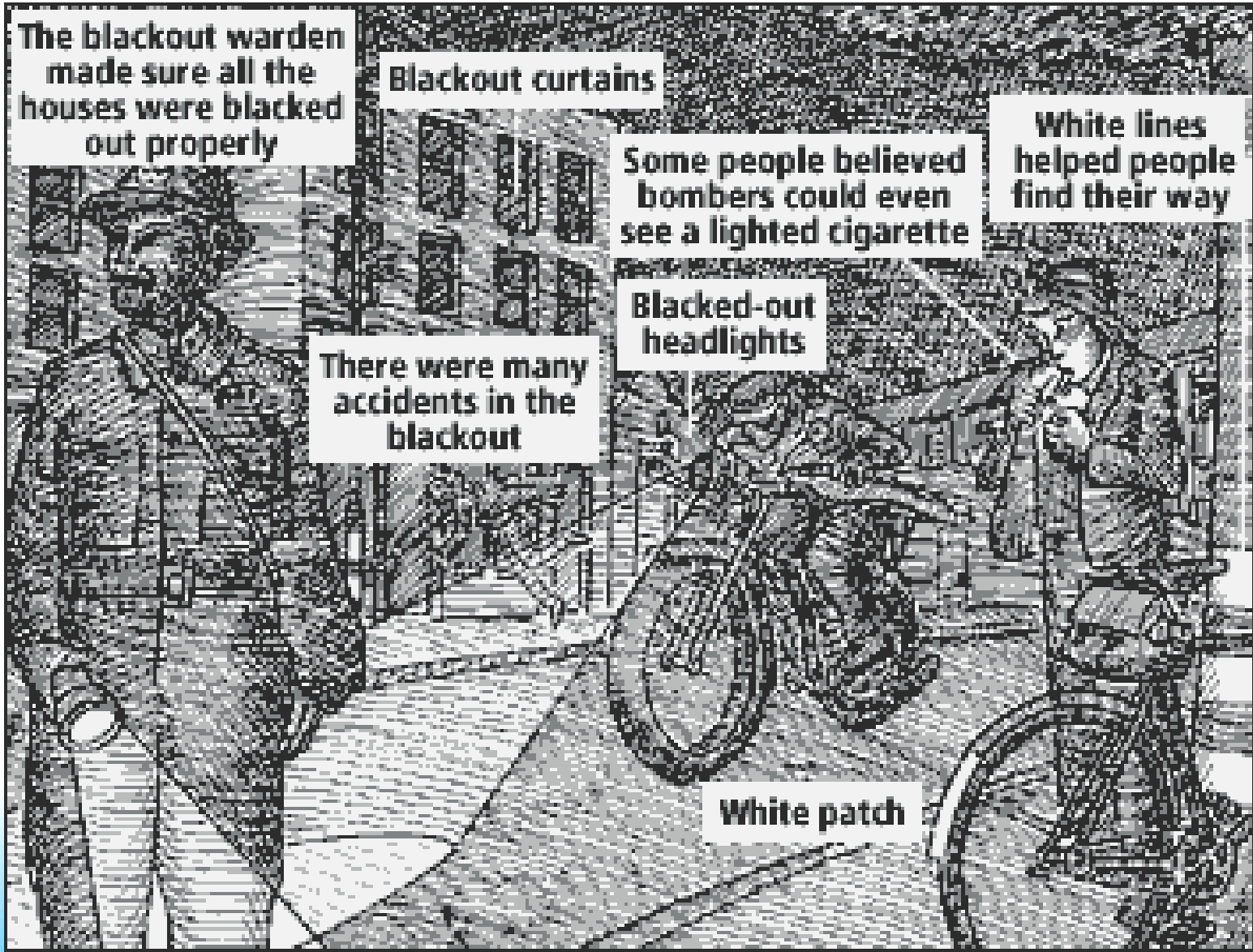
Some people believed bombers could even see a lighted cigarette

White lines helped people find their way

There were many accidents in the blackout

Blacked-out headlights

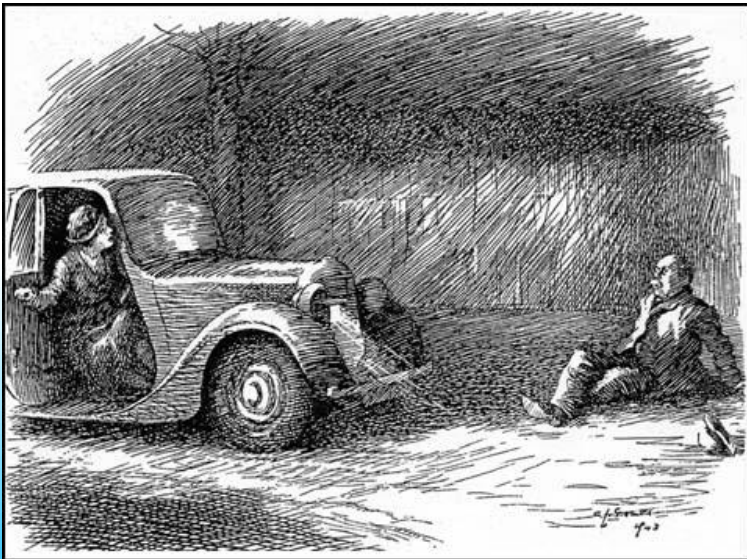
White patch



What effect did the Blackout have on people's lives ?

Thousands of people died in road accidents. The number of road accidents increased because of the lack of street lighting and the dimmed traffic lights. To help prevent accidents white stripes were painted on the roads and on lamp-posts. People were encouraged to walk facing the traffic and men were advised to leave their shirt-tails hanging out so that they could be seen by cars with dimmed headlights.

Other people were injured during the Blackout because they could not see in the darkness. Many people were injured tripping up, falling down steps, or bumping into things. To remedy some of these problems the government ordered white stripes to be painted on the edges of steps.



KS: Use sources of evidence to deduce information about the past.



Churchill made many wartime speeches to inspire the nation.

What list of instructions might he have told them in order to prepare for war and keep themselves and others safe?

Use the ‘Pictures of Preparation for War’ and your notes to make an information page about the preparing for war for an Encyclopaedia of WW2. Think carefully about layout before you start.

You will need a double page. Divide your double page into four sections.

- An introduction about air raids, shelters
- Blackouts
- Gas Attacks
- Wardens

| Preparing for War | |
|---|--------------------------|
| Introduction about why people needed to prepare for war – bombs, etc Air raids/air raid shelters | Gas attacks Gas masks |
| Wardens Fire wardens | Blackouts |

Air Raids

Gas Attacks

**PREPARING
FOR WAR**

Wardens

Blackouts



**Hitler will send
no warning –
so always carry
your gas mask**

ISSUED BY THE MINISTRY OF HOME SECURITY

OFFICIAL INSTRUCTIONS ISSUED BY THE MINISTRY OF HOME SECURITY

GAS ATTACK

HOW TO PUT ON YOUR GAS MASK

Always keep your gas mask with you – day and night. Learn to put it on quickly.

Practice wearing it.



1. Hold your hands. If fitted mask is front of face, with mouthpiece facing up.
2. Place chin and forehead into mask, pull straps over head as far as they will go.
3. Run fingers round forehead taking your head straps on, not inside.

IF THE GAS RATTLES SOUND



1. Hold your hands. Put on mask immediately. Gas rattle.
2. If out of doors, take off hat, put on your mask. Turn quickly.
3. Put on glasses or keep hands in pockets. Make room to retreat quickly.

IF YOU GET GASSED

BE CAREFUL IN Keep your gas mask on even if you feel discomfort. If discomfort continues go to First Aid Post.

BE CAREFUL IN

- | | | | |
|---|--|--|---|
| 1. Do not rub the splash with hands or hat. Then remove handkerchief. | 2. Rub No. 1 Ointment on wall into splash. | 3. If you can't get Ointment on Goggles within 3 minutes wash face with soap and warm water. | 4. Take off all unnecessary garments splashed with gas. |
|---|--|--|---|

Air Raid Wardens **WANTED**



IF YOU ARE BOMBED OUT
and have no friends to go to



ask a
POLICEMAN
or your **WARDEN**
where to find your
REST CENTRE

MADE BY THE GOVERNMENT OF GREAT BRITAIN



Andersen Shelters



Morrison Shelter





WHAT TO DO IN — BLACKOUTS

* HOUSEHOLDERS

1. Stay at home.
2. Put out lights in rooms not blacked out.
3. Use no matches or lights outdoors.
4. Let no light escape from your house.

* PEDESTRIANS

1. Walk carefully, don't run.
2. Keep close to buildings and away from curb.
3. Don't smoke
4. Use no matches or flashlights.
5. Cross streets at intersections.
6. Get under cover.

* MOTORISTS

1. Park at curb — at once.
2. Put out all lights.
3. Seek shelter.

* WARNING:

Emergency blackouts will be enforced by the police, assisted by Air Raid Wardens. Carelessness in observing these precautions may invite disaster.



DON'T GIVE 'EM A TARGET!

MASSACHUSETTS COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY



UNTIL YOUR EYES
GET USED TO
THE DARKNESS,
TAKE IT EASY

LOOK OUT IN THE BLACKOUT



IT'S DANGEROUS TO FLAG
A BUS WITH YOUR TORCH

