

Serving the City
Cardiff County Borough in the Second World War

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This thesis is submitted to Cardiff University in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Welsh History.

Summary

Even before the conflict began, the British government was aware that the Second World War would be a bombing war, and that the civilian population was at risk, as never before. In order to combat this threat it looked to physical means of protection, by way of air raid shelters, and called into being a massive volunteer defence force, intended to deal with the effects of bombing raids on the general public. While it put in place a network of twelve Regional Commissioners, with wartime responsibilities, instead of creating a new regional administration to manage these novel tasks, it chose to place the necessary organisation in the hands of the existing local government machine. Local authorities such as Cardiff County Borough were obliged to take responsibility for providing shelter accommodation and overseeing the Air Raid Protection (ARP), or Civil Defence Force, and also expected to provide practical input to campaigns such as those for salvage, Dig for Victory, Holidays at Home and National Savings and the British Restaurant initiative. Historians have given much attention to the ARP aspects of the Second World War, but the contribution of the local authorities to its organisation, and to the work of the propaganda campaigns, has received much less consideration. In looking in detail at the wartime activities of a single authority, the thesis probes overlooked elements of the civilian war, and considers the tasks that a local authority was called upon to perform, as a practical organisational bridge between central government and citizens. It makes a case for the role of local government to be given greater attention than has previously been offered, thereby opening the way for a new approach to the perception of wartime local authorities, if other similar studies, in other areas of the country, were to follow.

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Abbreviations

AMC = Association of Municipal Corporations.

HE= Heavy Explosive

HO= Home Office

MAF= Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries.

MoI= Ministry of Information

NALGO = National Association of Local Government Officers

RHS =Royal Horticultural Society

Red Cross =The British Red Cross Society

SRO= Senior Regional Officer

St John = The Order of Saint John of Jerusalem

TGWU = Transport and General Workers Union

UXB = Unexploded bomb

Acknowledgements and Dedication

My grateful thanks to my supervisors, Dr Stephanie Ward and Professor Bill Jones, not least for their patience with a project that took far longer than was ever intended. Also to Professor Chris Williams, for stepping in when he was needed.

My appreciation to the staff of the Cardiff Heritage Library, the Cardiff Central Library and the Glamorgan Archive for their help, and to the Department of History, Archaeology and Religion for financial assistance towards research trips to the National Archive.

I also wish to acknowledge the many friends who have given me their unstinting support, on what turned out to be a marathon journey.

The thesis is dedicated to my parents, who lived through those times.

Serving the City: Cardiff County Borough in the Second World War

Introduction

Writing on the Second World War occupies a huge place in the UK publishing industry. The volume of work on all aspects of wartime Britain, from general overviews to specialist topic studies, is immense, and shows no sign of abating. In fact Jeff Hill provocatively suggests that, 'Picking over the entrails of "the People's War" has become something of a historians' growth industry, which has itself contributed to the national fixation with the war, or at least what we imagine the war was like.'¹

The "People's War" is a term coined to describe a war which involved the civilian population on an unprecedented scale, as targets of attack and as a work force for essential armament manufacture. It was used by Angus Calder as the title of his magisterial study of the Home Front. 'In 1940 and the years which followed, the people of Britain were protagonists in their own history in a fashion never known before.'² Calder disclaims knowledge of where the expression originated, suggesting that it was by no means a universally accepted term, but that its influence on contemporary media and propaganda was enormous. It became a cliché, but one with a multitude of meanings.³ Even so, Noakes suggests that some wartime contributions have been marginalised in memory, with the dead male soldier privileged in commemoration. At the time, it was necessary to convince people that they had a stake in the war, and that their contribution mattered. Noakes indicates that this could be done by involvement in war industry, particularly in areas such as Wales, where heavy industry had been affected by the depression.⁴ Marwick cites the bombing that put ordinary people in the front line, and their direct participation in all aspects of the national effort, as justifications for the term 'People's War'⁵

¹ Jeff Hill "Postscript – A War Imagined" in Nick Hayes & Jeff Hill (eds.) *Millions Like Us? British Culture in the Second World War*, (Liverpool, 1999) p. 324

² Angus Calder, *The People's War – Britain 1939 -1945*, (London, 1969) p 17.

³ Ibid.p.138.

⁴ Lucy Noakes, *War and the British - Gender, Memory and National Identity*, (London, 1998). pp. 3,11

⁵ Arthur Marwick, *The Home Front – The British and the Second World War* (London, 1976) p 180

Whatever the origins of the expression, it sums up a pervading influence from contemporary papers, and subsequently developed by historians. This war would be different, outside most current human experience, because of the advent of the bomber aircraft. The government knew that civilians had to be protected and encouraged. The means of achieving this was the provision of air-raid shelters, the recruitment of a force of civil defence workers, who would deal with the effects of bombing, and the promulgation of a variety of propaganda, designed to maintain morale and foster involvement. Such was the scale of work involved in civil defence that a mass civilian army of volunteers had to be recruited to operate it, although this was not the only way that the civilian could “Do their bit”. Participation in the war might come through the services or war work. It might also come through involvement in this volunteer effort, but volunteer effort had to be organised and focussed. People did have to be helped to help themselves.

Studies of the war range from complex academic examinations to popular histories which record anecdotes and memoirs of ordinary people who participated. Government directed the big picture – setting down policy and structure. Volunteers, justifiably feted by contemporaries such as journalist Richie Calder and poet and essayist Stephen Spender, provided raw manpower. Much attention has been paid to both ends of this spectrum. Much less attention has been given to how the two were brought together. The role of local authorities as a bridge between the centre and the street has been significantly overlooked. In considering Cardiff County Borough in the Second World War the thesis identifies and examines some of the areas where local authorities were active, but which have not received detailed scrutiny.

Local authorities were the chosen mechanism through which the government brought machinery for dealing with the civilian population into operation, and kept it operating. As such they were essential to the war effort, but in the past their role has largely gone unheralded. Terence O’Brien, the official war historian of civil defence, acknowledges the contribution expected from local government, and its independent nature, although under direction from the centre, noting, ‘If civil defence and other war functions had introduced a new degree of central control, they had also enlarged the local bodies’ responsibilities and status.’ O’Brien also comments, ‘The conflict, as well as the cooperation, between Whitehall and these authorities forms, therefore, an underlying theme of this narrative.’ He adds ‘Inevitably the Government, through the grant sanction, exercised increasing control over

local administrative arrangements. But in operational matters the local authorities, being bound to deal immediately with any attack within their local resources, held the initiative.’⁶

Despite this early acknowledgement of the local authority function, this has not featured heavily in subsequent studies, and on occasions when there has been attention from historians this has often been negative, focusing on specific failures in some authorities, which led Angus Calder to comment that the traditional system of local government, ‘was patently inadequate’.⁷ Other studies give attention to local authorities only in general and in partial consideration, an overview based on a small sampling.⁸ Nearly a decade ago, in an article in *History Compass*, Martin Johnes suggests that local government was not a ‘fashionable’ topic amongst historians and, in consequence was an under researched area.⁹ The situation has not changed radically in the interim, although in some recent works the position of the local authority is beginning to be explored a little more. In *The Bombing War: Europe 1939-1945* Richard Overy makes reference to the involvement of local authorities, using material from Hull and Newcastle. He acknowledges, ‘Two factors were of critical importance in explaining how British society coped with the Blitz. The role of the state and the local authorities in managing the consequences of bomb attack was a major test of Britain’s capacity to survive its effects.’¹⁰ Daniel Todman also uses material from local authority sources in *Britain’s War: Into Battle 1937 – 1941*.¹¹

Much of the focus of the history of the bombing war has been on London, massively and continuously attacked for months on end, or cities such as Coventry, intensively bombed over a handful of nights. This thesis takes a single provincial authority, Cardiff County Borough, and looks in-depth at the three aspects that were particularly matters delegated from central government to local government in war – air raid shelters, civil defence, and five campaigns, Dig for Victory, salvage drives, National Savings, Holidays at Home, and the provision of British Restaurants, some of which are themselves not widely known. The thesis develops the connection identified by Overy, looking at the way in which the Council acted to connect

⁶ Terence O’Brien, *Civil Defence History of the Second World War: United Kingdom Civil Series*, (London, 1955), p313.

⁷ Calder, *People’s War*, p18.

⁸ O’Brien himself only consulted three. (*Civil Defence History*, p xvi)

⁹ Martin Johnes, ‘For Class and Nation: Domestic Trends in the Historiography of Twentieth Century Wales’, *History Compass*, 8(11), p. 1258.

¹⁰ Richard Overy *The Bombing War in Europe 1939 – 1945* (London: 2014) p182

¹¹ Daniel Todman *Britain’s War: Into Battle 1937 – 1941*, (London, 2016).

central government with the population in the street, using the Council's networks within the city, and considers how the Council took direction from central government and how that direction was passed on, considering both the quality and the quantity of achievement.

In the course of the war the situation in relation to the civilian population changed considerably. Government expectation at the onset was for gas attack, heavy casualties and panic. Arrangements had to be put in place to deal with the real situation – night-time bombing with heavy explosive and incendiaries, and the need to maintain a semblance of normal life. The thesis therefore also considers the war chronologically in parts, to disclose the journey on which the Council travelled, exploring how development and learning became an essential component of the war effort. The war that was expected in 1939 was not the war that gradually unfolded, and which continued to unfold during the course of six years. At central and local government level the ability to adapt and regroup became a necessity. The government was part of the learning process, adjusting and sometimes executing what would now be termed a U-turn in policy, with consequent effect on the tasks local authorities were called upon to perform. It was a war where everyone learned as they went along.¹²

By providing an insight into the war from a different level and perspective, the thesis offers a tangential glimpse of what the war was like for the ordinary civilian, extending potential to appreciate the title 'People's War'. It is hoped that future similar studies of other cities would allow the possibility of comparing and contrasting. As will be shown, Cardiff Council's performance was characterised by determination and persistence, if not always appropriate action or success. Other authorities may have had a very different profile. Cardiff's experience of war was not particularly unusual – restrictions, shortages and unfamiliar demands and routines, punctuated by intermittent bombing raids – replicated in many towns and cities throughout the country. The situation in Wales, at least in urban areas, was probably not noticeably different from that in many other parts of the UK. In *Wales Since 1939*, Martin Johnes presents a picture of entwined Welsh and British identities, with common war experiences – people living under the same threats, the same privations and feeling the same sense of solidarity and pride – without major differences between Wales and

¹²The National Archive, (Hereafter TNA), INF1/533 Commercial Relations Division and the Home Front contains a press cutting dated 27/5/40 on observations from an ARP Officer in Clacton when a German mine laying bomber crashed and exploded. As a result of this experience changes were made to various civil defence systems which did not work. The point was made that all resources had been brought into play in one spot, which would not happen in a multiple raid. The cutting was presumably saved as an example of adapting from experience.

the rest of Britain,¹³ If there is little in the way of an exclusively Welsh dimension to the conflict, other than in very specific topics, such as evacuation, a study of a local authority in Wales has elements of nationwide application.

Historiography

The literature dealing with the Home Front in the Second World War is vast and varied, ranging from academic overviews and analysis to eyewitness accounts. In domestic matters attention tends to polarise on the two sides of domestic concerns. On one side the decisions of government, dealing with a war that contained a Home Front – a phenomenon barely experienced previously – and the defensive structure it necessitated. On the other side, the civilian input – Civil Defence or Air Raid Precautions as well as other war efforts – which uniquely drew swathes of the civilian population into the task of protecting themselves, and each other, and participating to advance the cause of war.

The role of the local authority, between the two and acting chiefly as a facilitator, appears under explored. Where the local authorities have been noticed, this has principally been on occasions when things have gone wrong. The resulting critical comment perhaps contributes to a general underrating of local authority involvement. On the basis of a single authority it would be reckless to attempt to refute the criticism of all authorities, and there is at least one instance where the situation in the Cardiff air raid shelters is compared to the worst deficiencies of a notorious London Borough, but the canvas occupied by local government was broad, with room for competence as well as failure. This thesis will throw light on the potentially pivotal role of the local authority, considering the activities of one city in key aspects of the civilian war. Based on experience of Cardiff County Borough, it will suggest that despite a backdrop of criticism of post raid services, local authorities undertook a wide range of other tasks, and so had a greater part in the conduct of the domestic war that has previously been appreciated. In so doing it will offer an additional dimension to the work which has preceded it.

The first, chronologically, of the studies which present an overview of the war are the multivolume official histories, produced within a decade at the end of the war and with access to official documents not then publicly available. In the case of local authorities, the volumes on social services, buildings, food, and agriculture are all relevant, but of most application to

¹³ Martin Johnes, *Wales Since 1939*, (Manchester, 2012), pp. 1-34.

this thesis are *Civil Defence*, by Terence O'Brien, and *Problems of Social Policy*, by Richard M Titmuss.¹⁴ Titmuss examined evacuation, hospitals and care of the homeless, in a study which led Jose Harris to commend him as, 'still perhaps the most influential and imaginatively compelling historian of the domestic and civilian theatre of war.' He is, with O'Brien, still much referenced.¹⁵ Both give considerable attention to local authorities, including financial matters, but O'Brien indicates that only three councils were consulted – Westminster, Oxford and Dover.¹⁶

Angus Calder's *The People's War* and Juliet Gardner's *Wartime* belong to this group of wide ranging overviews, recently augmented by Daniel Todman's *Britain's War: Into Battle 1937 – 1941*.¹⁷ In all these consideration of the local authority is fairly brief, and often critical. Calder focuses on the failure of certain authorities to provide adequate rest centre care after bombing, leading him to comment, 'It will already be clear that London local government emerged discredibly from the Blitz. An inordinate number of examples of squalor and neglect can be culled from the annals of Stepney and West Ham... something more than traditional competence was now required.'¹⁸ Gardiner points up criticism also, although sharing out the blame, 'There was much (often justified) criticism of officials, local authorities, and of the government for the ways in which they had bungled and "let the people down"'.¹⁹ Daniel Todman's so far partial examination of the war, begins to open up other layers in the picture, with some local government material involving financial elements, and attention to the savings campaigns, but he also notes, 'Local authorities came in for a good deal of criticism, both from beleaguered citizens and from central government, while the Blitz was on, but even when ARP leadership was sound, the challenges faced during an attack were profound.' He has hard words for local politicians, citing the case of the Town Clerk of Swansea, taking charge after the raids of 19 – 21 February 1941 and earning

¹⁴ Terence O'Brien, *Civil Defence* : Richard M Titmuss, *Problems of Social Policy: History of the Second World War: United Kingdom Civil Series*, (London, 1950).

¹⁵ José Harris, 'War and Social History Britain and the Home Front during the Second World War', *Contemporary European History* 1 (1992), pp. 17-35: O'Brien is referenced, for example, in Richard Overy's *Bombing War*, p.115.

¹⁶ O'Brien, *Civil Defence*, p. xvi.

¹⁷ Calder , *People's War*: Juliet Gardiner, *Wartime - Britain 1939-1945*, (London, 2004): Todman, *Britain's War*.

¹⁸ Calder, *People's War*, p. 192.

¹⁹ Gardiner, *Wartime*, p.351.

criticism of elected members for failing to call a committee to discuss his actions. ‘Whatever else had been damaged, the pettifogging self importance of some local politicians had obviously managed to survive.’²⁰ Richard Overy, in *The Bombing War*, acknowledges the part played by local authorities in respect of civil defence, in his chosen topic, bombardment, with the caveat that capacity was not a certainty. ‘The strength of the British wartime system rested on the clear ligaments linking local and central government and the fortunate absence of duplication of effort, but its success rested a great deal on the capacity of local civilian officials to respond to the strenuous demands of war, and this could by no means be taken for granted.’²¹ Overy also gives attention to post bombing provision, rehearsing the case where local authorities were found wanting, as in Southampton.²² The thesis will consider such provision in Cardiff, which also had a shaky start. It will also provide a potentially new perspective, by illustrating other duties that local authorities performed with more success. These, if in future examined over a range of authorities, might open up the possibility of challenging some expressed views.

David Edgerton, in *Warfare State Britain 1920 – 1970*, puts a counter view to the concept of the “People’s War”, suggesting that histories have suffered from ‘civilianisation’, or an over emphasis on the civilian viewpoint.²³ In *Britain’s War Machine*, he explores the idea that the term was not associated at the time with the British war in particular, but used in an international context as a synonym for total war, and the breakdown of differences between soldier and civilian.²⁴ The British government certainly appreciated the unprecedented involvement of civilians. The tasks entrusted to local government and explored in this thesis serve to confirm that, at the time, central government’s attention was substantially turned towards the civilian, whatever the terminology used.

A very large group of historical works on the war consider specialist aspects. Bombing, and the Blitz – the bombardment suffered by London – is a popular choice in Joshua Levine’s *The Secret History of the Blitz*; Juliet Gardiner’s *The Blitz: The British Under Attack* and Angus Calder’s *The Myth of the Blitz*. Morale is another, in Ian Maclaine’s *Ministry of*

²⁰ Todman, *Into Battle*, p.509. As will be shown later, the Swansea Town Clerk was held in high regard for his competence, by the Welsh Regional Officer.

²¹ Richard Overy, *Bombing War*, p.129.

²² Ibid p 151

²³ David Edgerton, *Warfare State Britain 1920 – 1970*, (Cambridge, 2006), p. 13.

²⁴ David Edgerton, *Britain’s War Machine Weapons Resources and Experts in the Second World War*, (London, 2011), p. 152.

Morale, Clive Ponting's *Myth and Reality* and Robert MacKay's *Half the Battle: Civilian Morale in Britain During the Second World War*.²⁵ These themes provide a backdrop for examination of Cardiff and again the thesis provides an extra dimension, revealing the experience of bombing in a provincial city and how some of the propaganda exercises intended to energise the population played out on the ground. The studies by Calder and Ponting (with others), focus on the proposed fragility of "wartime spirit", using negative illustrations such as looting, trekking and instances of panic. MacKay challenges this as an overcorrection, finding these factors, although present, were not on a scale to invalidate the orthodox picture of active commitment among the people. The findings of the thesis suggest that evidence from Cardiff, such as the response to the saving campaigns, assists MacKay's more optimistic view, although looting, trekking and antisocial behaviour did take place.²⁶

Another group of volumes exploring the Home Front captures the voices of the civilian population, in reminiscence and anecdote. Possibly this is the set in which the themes of the thesis most closely belong, developing the role of the local and the civilian, illustrated in such works as Norman Longmate's *How We Lived Then – A history of everyday life in the Second World War*, which showcases the 'mundane' and 'everyday' as well as the major and well known – the Battle of Britain and the Blitz. Raynes Minns' *Bombers and Mash*, Susan Briggs' *Keep Smiling Through - The Home Front 1939-1945*, Marion Yass', *This is Your War – Home Front Propaganda in the Second World War* and *Parachutes and Petticoats: Welsh Women Writing on the Second World War* from Leigh Verill-Rhys and Deirdre Beddoe all deal with the war on the domestic front, with emphasis on the female perspective.²⁷

Again in these texts there is little or no acknowledgement of any part for local authorities, but the thesis begins to fill the gap, by supplying a picture of the organisational side of the

²⁵ Overy, *Bombing War*: Joshua Levine, *The Secret History of the Blitz*, (London, 2015): Juliet Gardiner, *The Blitz: The British Under Attack*, (London, 2010): Angus Calder *The Myth of the Blitz*, (London, 1991): Ian McLaine, *Ministry of Morale – Home Front Morale and the Ministry of Information in World War Two*, (London, 1979): Robert MacKay, *Half the Battle: Civilian Morale in Britain during the Second World War*, (Manchester, 2002): Clive Ponting, *1940 - Myth and Reality*, (London, 1990).

²⁶ MacKay, *Half the Battle*, pp.248 – 264.

²⁷ Norman Longmate, *How We Lived Then – A history of everyday life during the Second World War*, (London, 1977): Susan Briggs *Keep Smiling Through -The Home Front 1939-1945*, (London, 1975): Raynes Minns *Bombers and Mash*, (London, 1980): Marion Yass, *This is Your War – Home Front Propaganda in the Second World War*, (London, 1983): Leigh Verill-Rhys and Deirdre Beddoe, *Parachutes and Petticoats: Welsh Women Writing on the Second World War*, (Dinas Powys, 2003).

civilian's work— as a volunteer in ARP, and as a resident collecting salvage and investing in National Savings.

Two specific studies of Cardiff in war, Dennis Morgan's *Cardiff: A City at War* and John O'Sullivan's *When Wales Went to War*, provide a picture of the city which is based in parts on council activity and council records.²⁸ Mark Connolly, in *We Can Take It*, sounds a word of caution over local histories, suggesting that while the provincial blitz could reveal as many local government shortcomings as that in London, there will possibly be less criticism of civic government and more emphasis on local heroism.²⁹ These two Cardiff studies do reflect problems experienced in the city and the thesis will present a local study to sit alongside these accounts, in a more formal setting, discussing both achievement and deficiencies. A wartime account which most closely approaches an examination of issues in a similar way to the thesis, using Council and National Archive records, is JR Alban's *The Three Nights' Blitz*. In this study, which explores events surrounding the bombing of Swansea in February 1941, Alban concentrates on effects of bombing and post-raid care.³⁰ The aspects of the thesis dealing with these matters offers a complement to this detailed study of another major Welsh city, and also opens up other areas of local authority responsibility.

Historical studies specific to Wales, such as Kenneth O Morgan's, *Rebirth of a Nation – A History of Modern Wales* and John Davies' *A History of Wales* have little material on the Second World War, beyond some exploration of nationalism and pacifism, considering elements of continuity and contrast on these issues between this and the Great War, but neither of which have major overlap with the local authority in Cardiff.³¹ Morgan suggests, in *Modern Wales*, that, 'The Second World War in many ways did not generate the kind of crisis of conscience for Welshmen that the war of 1914 had done.' He finds that although nationalists did not see it as a Welsh war, generally Welsh sentiment largely supported it, with a wish to oppose fascism.³² Certain specialist studies, such as John Welshman's examination of evacuation, give prominence to events that did mark out the Welsh wartime

²⁸ Dennis Morgan, *Cardiff - A City at War*, (Cardiff, 1998); John O'Sullivan, *When Wales Went to War 1939 – 45* (Stroud, 2004)

²⁹ Mark Connolly *We Can Take It – Britain and the Memory of the Second World War*, (Harlow, 2004) p. 148.

³⁰ J R Alban, *The Three Nights' Blitz Reports relating to Swansea Air Raids of February 1941* (Swansea 1994).

³¹ John Davies, *A History of Wales*, (London, 2007); Kenneth O Morgan, *Rebirth of a Nation – A History of Modern Wales*, (Oxford, 1998).

³² Kenneth O Morgan, *Modern Wales - Politics, Places and People*, (Cardiff, 1995) pp.106, 109.

experience, but in many instances lack of differentiating material may be a factor for this period in Welsh history being overlooked.³³ In the preface to *Britain in the Century of Total War*, Marwick comments that separate war time statistics for Wales are harder to come by than those for Scotland, and notes the absence of secondary works.³⁴ Even in *Wales at War*, Cragoe and Williams, writing of the Second World War, note that, ‘a conflict of enormous significance, it has yet to draw substantial attention from professional historians.’³⁵ In *Wales At War – the Experience of the Second World War in Wales*, Stuart Broomfield asserts, ‘As far as Wales is concerned, a significant overview of the Second World War years has not yet been created’.³⁶ This thesis contributes a study similar to the chapters on specialist topics that Broomfield includes in that volume. In considering a major Welsh authority it illuminates wartime Wales at a level between government and ordinary resident; but during the war Cardiff Council was also London-centric and central government facing. Central government did not differentiate. Cardiff County Borough was subject to the same governmental pressures and legal obligations as were the County Boroughs of Brighton or Carlisle. The thesis therefore has a potential contribution to make on the general subject of local government in World War Two,

In the vast number of publications, a selection of which are named above, dealing with the Second World War in Britain, relatively little exists which addresses the role of the local authorities. This might be considered surprising, given their ubiquitous presence in the country and the extent to which they were the agents for delivery of war time services. Many large and comprehensive books on the Home Front, which might be expected to include some study of the activities of local government — such as Norman Longmate’s *How We Lived Then – A history of everyday life in the Second World War* — make only limited references to the activity of the local council. Various suggestions might be made as to the reasons for neglect of local government, ranging from lack of interest and lack of understanding — and local government still remains to a large extent an invisible service — to lack of realisation of the potential richness of the sources. However, the issue goes further than simple neglect.

³³ John Welshman, *Churchill’s Children: The Evacuation Experience in Wartime Britain*, (Oxford, 2010).

³⁴ Arthur Marwick, *Britain in the Century of Total War – War, Peace and Social Change 1900 -1967*, (London, 1970) p.9.

³⁵ Mathew Cragoe & Chris Williams, *Wales and War Society, Politics and Religion in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, (Cardiff, 2007) p.8.

³⁶ Stuart Broomfield, *Wales at War – the Experience of the Second World War in Wales*, (Stroud, 2009) p.12.

Local councils have been severely castigated by historians for their wartime performance. To connect with previous scholarship, this neglect and condemnation needs to be addressed.

It can be strongly argued that historians have simply picked up and recorded contemporary opinion. There was certainly intense criticism of the work of some local authorities during the conflict. Allegations of catastrophic failure on the part of local authorities in providing post air-raid services, in particular, were made at the time. Undoubtedly instances of poor performance exist and censure is deserved. Against such a backdrop – an impression of inept local government, universally condemned – local authorities may appear an unpromising object for investigation. This thesis, in considering events and actions in Cardiff, looks in more detail at the war-time tasks placed upon local government, and some which they assumed, to probe how far the aura of incompetence might be open to challenge.

In terms of historiography, these expressions of a poor opinion of the performance of local authorities possibly begin with the official history of social elements of the war. *Problems of Social Policy*, by Richard M Titmuss, stigmatises local authorities as an army of book keepers ‘all busily and conscientiously engaged in transferring and re-transferring items of expenditure.’³⁷ Possibly this contributed to a view that there was little to be said about local authorities, which were too preoccupied with dull minutiae. The major work by Angus Calder, *The People’s War* finds ‘the traditional system of local government patently inadequate’.³⁸ Calder’s view is particularly based on council performance in respect of post-raid services, and will be examined in more detail later. More recent general volumes, such as Juliet Gardiner’s *Wartime - Britain 1939-1945*, and *The Blitz: The British Under Attack*, respect the legacy of Titmuss and Calder, while taking a slightly cooler view of the incompetence of local authorities, but do not offer any overview of the responsibilities the authorities had to shoulder.³⁹ Recent larger works, notably Richard Overy’s *The Bombing War: Europe 1939-1945*⁴⁰, are beginning to look at local authorities, using specific examples, and suggesting that the previous picture may not be universally applicable, but the overall impression from historians still remains that of dereliction and incompetence. This

³⁷ Titmuss, *Social Policy*. p215

³⁸ Calder, *The People’s War* p 18

³⁹ Gardiner *Wartime; The Blitz*.

⁴⁰ Overy, *The Bombing Wa*

thesis, examining governance at a local authority level in a provincial authority, provides the opportunity to go beyond the classic set pieces of the Battle of Britain and the London Blitz, which frequently dominate UK wide accounts, and travel down to more day to day struggles, making a connection with the local banalities of life on the Home Front. The catalogue of deficiencies remains comprehensive and vivid, however.

Arthur Marwick in *Britain in the Century of Total War*, found that ‘too small, too poor, bogged down in pettifogging local pedantries, many authorities simply could not cope with the war emergency.’⁴¹ Angus Calder, setting bureaucracy in contrast to volunteering, asserts, ‘With parliament muted, with the traditional system of local government patiently inadequate, with the army conceding the soldiers’ rights to reason why, with the traditional basis of industrial discipline swept away by full employment, the people increasingly lead itself . Its nameless leaders in the bombed streets, on the factory floor, in the Home Guard drill hall asserted a new and radical popular spirit. The air raid warden and the shop steward were men of destiny, for without their ungrudging support for the war it might be lost; morale was in danger.’⁴²

Historians considering more specialised aspects of the war have put forward similar views on local government as those exhibited by general historians. Clive Ponting, examining the so-called ‘myth of the blitz’ focuses, as many others, on the performance of London Boroughs, ‘Lethargic one-party administrators that had lost contact with the local community long before the war.’⁴³ Also commenting on the activities of local authorities, Stuart Hylton suggests that the provincial Blitz revealed just as many local government shortcomings as that of London. Small cities were often overwhelmed by disaster, morale undoubtedly fell and those in responsibility failed to do their duty effectively ‘and with fortitude’.⁴⁴ Ian Maclean, looking at the history of the Ministry of Information and considering the matter of wartime morale, records that the Ministry uncovered a surprising degree of complacency amongst local authorities. Plymouth ‘appeared to have envisaged nothing on the scale of what actually did happen. The authority was carrying on, on an expanded peacetime basis, rather than on the expectation of being a frontline headquarters’ and in Portsmouth the chief official was hostile to the idea of communal feeding, particularly of those earning more than he

⁴¹ Marwick *Total War* page 279

⁴² Calder *Peoples War* page 18

⁴³ Clive Ponting *Myth and Reality* p167

⁴⁴ Stuart Hylton *Their Darkest Hour The Hidden History of the Home Front 1939-1945*, (Stroud, 2001). p148

was.⁴⁵ James Hinton, examining the role of women in the war, refers to the role of Lady Reading and the WVS to ‘ginger up’ local authorities. ‘It was therefore quite natural that the Home Secretary would turn to her when he decided, in May 1938, that a drive to recruit women to assist in Air Raid Precautions (ARP) would be a good way to ginger up local authorities who were refusing to take seriously the need to prepare for war.’⁴⁶

These are the views of historians on the actions of local government in respect of the two major war time tasks placed upon local government – provision of air raid shelters and Civil Defence. The thesis also considers other elements, relating to morale and propaganda, the subject of specialist studies, including Anthony Ostley’s *Persuading the People: Government Publicity in the Second World War*; Robert MacKay’s *Half the Battle: Civilian Morale in Britain During the Second World War*, and Mark Connelly’s *We Can Take it: Britain and the Memory of the Second World War*⁴⁷. These can be joined by specific treatments of the phenomenon of the “Blitz Spirit”, such as that from Clive Ponting, whose *Myth and Reality* questions the universality of this spirit, suggesting that it was not a united and pervasive phenomenon, because of the number and variety of ways that people did not adhere to the ideal. In *The Myth of the Blitz*, Calder uses similar material, but is at pains to point out that use of the term myth should not be taken to equate to untruth, but more to the concept of a legend or story, a narrative of the war to which people were encouraged to subscribe, commenting that Ponting’s book ‘While not without its uses for enquiring minds,’ commits the error of writing ‘as if exposing scandalous untruths and cover ups’ when ‘virtually nothing’ in his books was not known about in the 1960s.⁴⁸ In a more recent study, as part of a wider consideration of the bombing war from both sides, Richard Overy’s *Bombing War* includes a treatment of the ‘Blitz Spirit’ which moves on from Calder and Ponting’s proposition that the ‘spirit’ was a myth, to suggest that stoic fatalism in face of raids may be one of the factors responsible for heavy casualties among the civilian population – with one of the others being the alleged inadequacy of local authority shelter provision. Morale has

⁴⁵ McLaine, *Ministry of Morale* quoting TNA INF1/292 Home Intelligence Weekly Report 7-14 May 1941 p117

⁴⁶ James Hinton *Women, Social Leadership and the Second World War – Continuities of Class*, (Oxford, 2002) p 21

⁴⁷ Anthony Osley, *Persuading the People - Government Publicity in the Second World War*, (London, 1995); Robert MacKay, *Half the Battle Civilian Morale in Britain during the Second World War*, (Manchester, 2002); Mark Connelly, *We Can Take It – Britain and the Memory of the Second World War*, (London, 2004).

⁴⁸ Calder *Myth* p xiii

also been linked to the duty of the civilian to make a contribution to the war effort, as part of being a good citizen – an aspect examined by Sonya O Rose in *Which People's War? National Identity and Citizenship in Wartime Britain 1939-1945* and Morgan and Davies *The Battle for Britain – Citizenship and Ideology in the Second World War*⁴⁹

Local authorities feature much less in these volumes on morale and attitudes, probably because ostensibly they do not have a place in the discussion. In chapter four of the thesis, however, the role that a local authority played in practical terms in a number of government initiatives, and the way in which they impacted on the residents of the city, are explored. It will be shown that local government does have a place in the historiography of propaganda and morale, as one of the mechanisms by which theoretical aspects of propaganda were turned into concrete actions, and were delivered. This is a new place for study of local government in war-time to occupy, which nevertheless brings it into the historiography of this aspect of the war, and which might benefit from further study.

The Second World War does not feature significantly either in the historiography of local government. Possibly because of the stasis in the democratic process, the extensive regime of central government wartime controls and the pause in many of the regular local government functions, historians have devoted more attention to Victorian and Edwardian expansion, and then to the major changes brought about by post-war social reform, as more fertile areas of exploration. Wilson and Game identify the period peaking in early 1930, when multi functional authorities provided major services, such as utilities and transport, to their citizens, financed predominantly from rate income as, 'a high watermark' of local government. The war is noted as a point in a decline that gave way to the loss of power and responsibilities resulting from the Labour government's legislative programme, which removed many responsibilities from local government.⁵⁰ Chandler too views the war years as a time when modernisers were preparing for major restructuring of service provision and organisation of the means of supplying it, seeing such things as transport and utilities as matters for national not local control, with local government re-oriented back towards social service type provision, although the social reforms of Beveridge were also focussed on a national framework. Aside from these national social reforms, various reports and proposals for

⁴⁹ Sonya O Rose *Which People's War? National Identity and Citizenship in Wartime Britain 1939-1945*, (Oxford, 2006); David Morgan and Mary Evans *The Battle for Britain Citizenship and Ideology in the Second World War* (London, 1993)

⁵⁰ David Wilson & Chris Game *Local Government in the United Kingdom* (Basingstoke, 2011) pp 59 &60

restructuring and reorganisation local authorities, in the later part of the war, did not result in anything decisive, although pressure for reform was gaining attention and momentum.

While the wartime contribution of the local authorities to national defence is noted by Chandler, local government is not found to be particularly suited to these duties, requiring the installation of the Regional Commissioners, although it is acknowledged that these posts did not make great impact on the working relationship between local and central government – borne out in Cardiff by the Borough's willingness to take matters direct to Whitehall, when there was felt to be a need. Chandler sees this time as one of intense supervision from the centre, particularly by Morrison as Home Secretary, although shelter catering and British Restaurants are initiatives singled out for special mention. As peace approached, new legislation and successive restructuring became the order of the day in the following decades.⁵¹ Stewart, in *The Nature of British Local Government* identifies post war expansion of Councils into social services and town and country planning as powerful responsibilities, despite loss of health services and utilities.⁵²

Peter John, considering the resilience of local government, finds that local authorities in the mid twentieth century were not emasculated, or sent into decline, acquiring new functions. He points to the continuing power and control of a political elite, which will be shown to be the case in war time Cardiff, although here it was not attached to one political party. Even with the professionalising of service in the decades after the war, the role of committee chairmen in particular continued to be one of status and influence.⁵³ The position in Cardiff, with the Council strongly providing services and leadership in wartime, from a position of confidence and experience, forms part of the continuity John identifies, providing a robust base for post-war development of services, in particular housing provision, which never ceased to be a matter of concern to the authority, before and during the conflict. Rather than being a time that could and should be skated over, the war years in Cardiff reveal the importance of stability, continuity and energy in the local authority. The ability to take on new duties outside their remit should perhaps be given more credit when considering post-war development. The general view of historians, that war time local government performed

⁵¹ Chandler *Explaining Local Government Local Government in Britain since 1800*, (Manchester, 2007). pp158 - 165

⁵² John Stewart *The Nature of British Local Government* (Basingstoke, 2000) p 35

⁵³ Peter John *The Great Survivor: The Persistence and Resilience of English Local Government* *Local Government Studies* Vol40 204 Issue 5 pp. 687 – 704. Despite the article title, Johns notes that the ideas and concepts could be readily applied to local government in Wales.

poorly, may perhaps have coloured the historiography of local government. Indeed, Chandler does make some reference to this, but as will be seen, on the example of Cardiff, this view is open to challenge. The position of the thesis within the historiography is one of augmenting and illuminating previous studies. Using the approach of a local case study it offers new perspectives on the Home Front, making visible aspects of hitherto overlooked components of the civilian war, and signposting paths for the future.

Sources

The principal sources used throughout the thesis are the volumes of minutes for Cardiff County Borough, 1938 to 1945, now lodged in the Cardiff Heritage Library at Cathays in Cardiff. The Committees of the Council directly concerned with the war effort were the Air Raid Precautions (ARP) Committee, the Emergency Committee, and the Watch Committee. The Council's activities across the board were examined, however, not simply those associated with civil defence, to provide a broader picture of the Council's proceedings in wartime.⁵⁴ The minutes are an admirably full record of the proceedings, but still offer only a partial picture. Written agenda and reports of officers, on which discussions and decisions would have been based, do not appear to have been preserved. The minutes, however, provided the lead for the research and are the core of the thesis.

The second most significant body of source material was the official government records, in particular files of wartime government departments, housed at the National Archive at Kew in London. These range from collections of government circulars to the internal proceedings of departments, such as the Ministry of Information, which dealt with propaganda and matters of morale. These National Archive files also contain information on the Womens' Voluntary Services (WVS), which was a government sponsored body. Files present government minutes and correspondence, including reports from the Regional organisation, which was based in Cardiff. The comments and opinions of these officers are sometimes in frank and startling conflict with impressions presented by the Council. The bulwark of Ministerial authority and financial control run as a subtext to much of the material, exhibited in the confidently expressed views of the writers; internal correspondence can be waspish on occasion. Again there are gaps, where only partial sequences of notes or correspondence

⁵⁴ The minutes of the Education Committee, under the Local Education Authority, which are bound in a separate series, have not been considered for the thesis.

survive.⁵⁵ The government files present the central policy and direction that was passed down to the Council – the framework in which the Council had to operate. This was often tightly prescribed and heavily managed, with regular reporting mechanisms in place. The element represented by these files is essential to the examination of the Council's actions.

Municipal Journal and *The Local Government Chronicle*, professional publications – the latter having been in existence for over one hundred years – put Cardiff County Borough's activities into a national local government context, and provided information on national issues.⁵⁶ Welsh newspapers the *Western Mail*, the *South Wales Echo* and the *Cardiff Times*, provide reactions from the city's residents to events of the war and the activities of the Council, particularly via the correspondence columns. Much of the attention of all the papers is given to the national situation, however, with local news mainly focused on human interest elements – criminal investigations, the proceedings of the law courts, reports on weddings, divorce proceedings and the details of wills, with advertisements, some sport and entertainment listings. The *Cardiff Times* is particularly useful in occasionally reporting events at Council meetings, proving a much livelier view of proceedings than the records of the minutes. The *Western Mail* and *Echo* are champions of the Savings Weeks, with extensive reporting on the entertainment offered and the reactions of the city.

Some contemporary publications, such as Richie Calder's *Lessons of London* and *Carry on London* supply a glimpse of events from an eye witness to the London Blitz, with personal reaction to the effect of bombing. Calder was an investigative journalist with the left wing *Daily Herald*. He was much impressed by the attitude and courage of ordinary people, but had many criticisms of central and local government, particularly in bombed areas early in the war, finding provision for the homeless 'niggardly and inadequate,' although admitting, 'the almost impossible burden of civil defence which the government had imposed on local authorities.'⁵⁷

Various items and ephemera from the Glamorgan Archive and Cardiff Central Library, such as event programmes and proceeding of local organisations, provided a valuable voice on

⁵⁵ Many of the retained records relate to London. It appears likely that a certain amount of selection has been in process in the past and records for Wales may not have been retained. References to quantities of forms which were regularly completed, for example, suggest volumes of paperwork that must have been generated, but not kept. E.g. MAF39/108

⁵⁶ John Stewart, *The Nature of British Local Government*, (Basingstoke, 2000) p. 23

⁵⁷ Richie Calder, *Lessons of London*, (London, 1941) p. 24: *Carry on London*, (London, 1941) p.59

behalf of residents, who were at the receiving end of government policy and Council delivery. A series of wartime letters between a young Cardiff woman and her future husband, then serving in the RAF, now lodged in the Glamorgan Archive, provide insights from the perspective of a consumer of services.⁵⁸ There are also a number of partial memoirs (anonymous) and log books for the Fire Guard Service, which show how the service operated from night-to-night.⁵⁹ The records of various local organisations and businesses, held at the Cardiff Heritage Library, provided information on the Councillors' relationships within the city. These were useful in providing a brief glimpse of wartime life and also on the networks which gave the Councillors channels of communication into the city. On-line records of the WVS recount activity at a local level and those of Mass Observation – the social survey set up prior to the war – supply some local voices in a number of reports from observers in the Cardiff area.

Aim

The aim of the thesis is to explore how the County Borough delivered service to the city during war time, the nature of what was provided, and how the city received that service. The three areas chosen for examination are the provision of shelter from bombing, Air Raid Protection (ARP) also known as Civil Defence, four government propaganda campaigns, and a government advocated initiative to provide low cost public catering. Such was the scope of local authority activity in wartime that a process of selection had to be exercised in choosing topics for examination. The thesis focuses on those elements in which the Council was most closely connected with central government and in which Whitehall kept a consistent interest. These were specific wartime tasks – the obligation to organise shelter provision and civil defence volunteers, and the expectation of participation in the propaganda initiatives that the government sought to advance.

Such selection inevitably omits essential but commonplace elements of the local authority war – the maintenance of regular services that were unavoidably touched by events, but not rendered in any way unnecessary by war. These essential and backroom services had to carry on – committee servicing, rent collection, licensing approvals, water and power supply,

⁵⁸ The Glamorgan Archive, (Hereafter TGA) DXGC263, Leversuch Correspondence.

⁵⁹ Cardiff Central Library (Hereafter CCL), MS4.1285 *Spotters' Logbook*: MS4.1286 *Fire Watchers' Log*.

police services, transport. As the *Local Government Chronicle* highlights, ‘The ordinary administration by the council of their peace time tasks must still go on, and not be ignored or lost sight of through undue pre-occupation with warlike matters.’⁶⁰ Transport was a notable example, a wartime essential which expanded in use and need and which was subject to almost constant review in the face of many restrictions on resources and personnel.⁶¹ Across the city loss of personnel was a major issue. The Council fought many battles to retain the services of specialist staff, and lost most of them.⁶² Constant attrition and pressure on those who remained increased as the relentless acceleration of the age of conscription cut up through the ranks of the Council’s male staff, creating massive gaps in the establishment.⁶³ There was a proliferation of female appointments, albeit on temporary contracts, only intended for the duration. These necessitated major policy shifts and abandonment of bastions of tradition, most notably the removal of the prohibition on employing married women and ultimately, as a consequence, to the creation of a rudimentary system of maternity provision.⁶⁴ War assailed the Council on major fronts; the thesis treats the most visible and compelling, although the day-to-day struggles are ever present in the Council’s minutes. Through it all, the Council kept going. Certainly in Cardiff there was much more going on than many historians have credited. The thesis will amply demonstrate this.

Approach

As will be shown, Cardiff County Borough minutes are extensive and detailed and the thesis has been led by them, with a counterpoint, and often an alternative view, from government files and occasionally from local press. While there is some brief reflection on the political composition of the Council in the thesis, largely based on the work of Davies and Morley, such was the breadth of the records that a conscious decision was taken to focus on the actions of the Council, as a corporate body, represented by its minuted decisions, rather than

⁶⁰ *Local Government Chronicle*, 6/12/41, p. 1015.

⁶¹ CHL Transport Department Annual Report 1942. Comparing 1939 with 1942 showed a 37.22% increase in passengers and a 24.66 % decrease in mileage: Cardiff Heritage Library (Hereafter CHL), Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41 Transport Committee 6/2/41 p 260 min 1870: CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1942/43 Transport (Service Operations) Sub Committee 12/1/43 p212 min 1435

⁶² CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40 ARP Emergency Committee 5/12/39 p216 min 1415: CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41 Smallholdings and Allotments Committee 16/6/41 p 634 min 4468; 15/9/41 p 818 min 5721: Transport Committee 11/6/42 p661 min 4442

⁶³ By 1943 the fourth assistant solicitor was acting first solicitor. CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1942/43, Finance Committee 4/1/43 p. 176 min 1155

⁶⁴ An allowance equivalent to six weeks sick pay was agreed. CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1943/44 Finance Committee 8/5 44 p 506 min 3589 :Establishment Committee 7/6/44 p581 min 4169

political exchanges.⁶⁵ The minutes present the recorded viewpoint that prevailed during debate, which became the official will of the Council. Investigation suggests that in Cardiff County Borough in the war years, unlike many other authorities in Wales, no party had an overall majority. This must have required a greater extent of collaborative working than might have been the case elsewhere. Ward representation was often across the political spectrum, necessitating cooperation in the many activities that the Council passed to the ward Councillors for action.

The approach adopted in this thesis has been to consider the Council as a corporate, decision-making body. That said, the story of the Council at war fits into wider and ongoing scenarios, which should be briefly acknowledged. The most obvious of these is the political scene. An analysis of the political composition of the Council during the war years is attached as Appendix F, which includes information on the caveats which must be applied over its production. On the basis of the assumptions made there, the Council during the war years comprised a fairly close split between three political groupings and a large contingent of Ratepayer and Independents. While the Labour Party was the largest political group, with 15 members, the other political groups, if combined, outweighed it (Liberal 12, Conservative 10). In the late 1920s and early 1930s there had been an Anti-socialist Pact/Coalition (with two Aldermen during the war who were survivors of this grouping) indicating that other parties had been prepared to subscribe to this approach. On this basis it is problematic to make assertions on actions and policy creation on political lines, with a balance which included a small body of Independents, at 5 members (which it may not even be possible to class as a group) and a Ratepayer contingent that equalled that of the Liberal party, at 12 members. The largest proportion of the Council – Independent and Ratepayers combined – was not politically affiliated in the conventional sense. Hence the decision for the thesis to look at the Council as a corporate entity.

Stepping outside this approach, there is scope for an alternative examination of the Council in the Second World War, looking at the Councillors as individuals, considering background, age, class and political affiliation, which are only lightly touched on in this thesis. Such a study could include a forensic examination of the Council's decision-making process. This would need to be conducted through an analysis of the nature and success of motions moved

⁶⁵ Sam Davies & Bob Morley, *County Borough Elections in England and Wales 1913 – 1938: A comparative Analysis. Volume 2 Bradford – Carlisle* (Aldershot, 2000) pp 509-584.

at Council, coupled with the identity of the movers, which can be retrieved. While the minutes do not record a breakdown of voting, and the local press sampled for this thesis did not give prominence to political divisions – which is not to say such reports do not exist, simply that they were not found in this instance – there would be research material for a very different study, getting deeper under the surface of the Council, which would be a welcome and illuminating parallel.

Evidence, which has been presented here, suggests the Council in the war years did act in a collegiate fashion. Whether this is entirely true may, of course, be open to question, although the thrust of policies – maximum provision of air raid shelters, improvement of post bombing services, provision of information bureau, the enthusiastic prosecution of the various propaganda campaigns – suggests concerted movement in pursuit of measures seen to be for the good of the city. There is also some evidence to support the idea that Councillors, on occasion, acted from personal moral positions rather than on any party policy lines, illustrated by the corporate Council's thwarting of repeated attempts by individual Councillors and officers to introduce Sunday cinema performances in the city. The minutes suggest strong views were held. The issue was also subject to heavy lobbying from special interest groups. This is one fragile example. There may be more. It hints at a gateway for further exploration. Given the overarching magnitude of the struggle for survival represented by the war, and the fragmented political composition of the Council, the idea of corporate action pursued over party lines has certain plausibility, but a more intense examination might well challenge this view.

Another thread that an examination of Councillors as individuals might permit is the idea of the Council as a patriarchy. The overwhelmingly male composition of the Council in war makes this an obvious choice for consideration, along with the long standing occupation of the Council's power positions – the committee chairmanships – by the same individuals before, during and after the conflict. The Council might be said to exhibit the characteristics of Old Power, identified by digital activists Henry Timms and Jeremy Heimans in their book *New Power*, as closed, hierarchical, inaccessible, leader driven and jealously guarded.⁶⁶ The interplay of this, and possibly the power wielded by those occupying the role of Aldermen, alongside political affiliation, might be illuminating. It is interesting that both the female nominees to fill wartime vacancies on the Council came from the Labour Party. That both

⁶⁶ Henry Timms & Jeremy Heimans *New Power* (London 2018)

had a history of unsuccessful attempts at the position, at the hands of the electorate, perhaps implies the city had a degree of acceptance of the male dominated situation. A further study exploring the juxtaposition of guarded male power over political position would again be interesting.

Another topic which would have been an integral part of the mindset of the Councillors of the time, and indeed of residents of the city as a whole, is the attitude to race. This issue has only been briefly touched on in the thesis, but this small examination does suggest a general level of ingrained and unquestioning racism. Anthony Roberts in *Churchill – Walking with Destiny*, provides some context for such attitudes. ‘Biological racism – the Social Darwinian belief that mankind is organised hierarchically by race, with whites at the top – was considered scientific fact when Churchill was growing up in the late nineteenth century. Even solidly left wing figures such as Beatrice Webb, Hugh Dalton and H G Wells subscribed to it, just as earlier in the century Karl Marx had too.’⁶⁷ Given the probably age profile of members of the Council, it is feasible that Councillors had also imbibed this view. How far officers might be influencers of the views of the Council, or simply reflect them, is difficult to precisely determine, but the Chief Constable certainly held strong views on the matter of mixed-race relationships, which were voiced to the Watch Committee in January 1929. Concern was expressed at the growth of ‘cafe’ culture in Bute Town, where liaisons between black men and white women were said to be fostered, with resulting mixed race offspring. The Chief Constable’s concern was focussed on the product of such unions, in his words, the ‘evil’ of their children, reported by Simon Jenkins, ‘The progeny or half caste, with the vicious hereditary taint of the parents’.⁶⁸

Criticisms based on race are significant in the chapter on air raid shelters, when indignation was expressed at city centre shelters being used – and allegedly abused – by foreign seamen from the docks. While there was an expectation that people would shelter close to their home, the nature of the comments suggests prejudice operating. Overall the dominant impression from the limited material which was examined in researching this thesis was a general attitude of casual disregard and what can only be described as low expectation. The multiracial population of the docks was characterised as behaving in a certain way and un-citizen like behaviour appears to have been the expectation, thrown into contrast where

⁶⁷ Roberts *Churchill* p 976

⁶⁸ Simon Jenkins (2014) *Aliens and Predators Cultural and Social History* Vol 11.4, pp575 – 596

instances of action against supposed type are drawn out for comment and note, such as the nationality of ARP volunteers reported in the newspaper.

A Council with no overall control implies cooperation. Members apparently socialised and there was cross-party membership of external organisations. WT Mainwaring Hughes, an ex-Mayor of Swansea who had been a Councillor for forty years and Father of the Council, maintains in a memoir that in that city political differences did not affect cross-party friendships and relationships, as there was an expectation, 'Never to allow political differences in the Council to affect off duty relationships with other members of either party.'

⁶⁹A J Green, examining decision making within the Cardiff Education Authority from 1944 to 1970, notes that in reviewing the immediate post war period, all Councillors emphasised that the interests of elected representatives centred on the provision of services in the city and consideration of problems arising in their constituencies, and these transcended party ideology. A Cardiff resident, whose family was involved in the Cardiff Labour Party as senior councillors and Aldermen, is quoted as saying these men were 'more concerned with the city than their parties ... They were basically men of the City of Cardiff, not men of politics. They were jealous of Cardiff and their sole interest was in local development. This was, I think, a phenomenon peculiar to Cardiff.'⁷⁰ E L Hasluck, writing in 1950, suggests that this was in fact a common occurrence'

'Local government is a wide and useful training ground for national affairs. In the large towns most of the leading councillors are eager politicians and some of them afterwards become candidates for Parliament. But in most local Councils the members forget politics, and they are completely satisfied with the interesting work of directing local affairs, and in the feeling that they are doing useful public work.'⁷¹

These comments confirm the impression gained from the Cardiff wartime minutes. The thesis deals with the action of the Council, as represented by majority decision, recorded in the minutes, and should be read on that basis.

⁶⁹ WT Mainwaring-Hughes, *Kicks and Kudos – Candid Recollections of Forty Years as a Councillor* (Swansea, undated) p11

⁷⁰ AG Green, *Decision Making in Relation to Secondary Education in the Cardiff Education Authority 1944 – 1970*, PhD Thesis June 1979, pp112 & 113.

⁷¹ E L Hasluck *Local Government*, (London, 1950) p55

Structure

Chapter One is constructed in three sections. It first presents background on the city, and then the government and council machinery, looking at the three components that contributed to service delivery, the government, the Regional Organisation and the Council. Examination of the Council looks at its membership, structure and composition and the networks that members maintained within the city, by virtue of their membership of local organisations.

The next section looks at the pre-war period, in which the local authorities were very active, and sketches an overview of the passage of the war, which greatly affected the type of service needed, and delivery. The third section considers some of the overarching themes of the local authority war, including outlines of the bombing patterns of the UK as a whole and then in Cardiff, the role of the volunteer, and the pressure on finance, which need to be understood to fully appreciate the practice based accounts in later chapters. As well as the new burdens of war, the Council also had to keep normal services running, in conditions that were far from normal. A short examination of the city's transport system, a part of routine business which was even more vital to a city in war, illustrates the problems and the Council response. The Chapter has three appendices – firstly an examination of a draft Emergency Powers Bill, which would have constricted the usual committee processes, had it reached the statute book, and which illustrates the scrutiny to which local government was subjected in the first weeks of the war. The other appendices are a fully detailed exploration of bombing in the city and a case study of interaction between government and authority over the provision of cleansing and depot facilities in the Parks, which draws together several of the themes of the chapter.

Chapter Two examines Civil Defence or Air Raid Protection (ARP), exploring the initial recruitment, training and equipping phase, the modifications made in response to the passage of the war, and the winding down process. It considers the establishment of the Fire Guard – a late and essential creation to meet the threat of incendiary bombs – and the provision of services after bombing, including Rest Centres and Information Bureaux, and the way the Council chose to deal with destruction of homes, by re-housing. It has an appendix detailing the effects of bombing and the provision of Rest Centres in the city.

Chapter Three looks at provision of Air Raid shelters – the types available, the choices both the public and the Council made, and issues of quantity, represented by the virtually blanket coverage of the city that the Council achieved, and quality, the likening of the City's shelters to the poorest conditions in London. This Chapter also examines the phenomenon of trekking, a self help measure of leaving an urban area at night. It concludes with the creation

of the shelter colonies, settlements of shelters constructed on the edge of the city, discussing their link to trekking and whether they were unique to Cardiff.

Chapter Four considers four government promoted campaigns –Dig for Victory, Salvage, National Savings, Holidays-at-Home– and the British Restaurant initiative, looking first at background issues such as morale and the concept of citizenship, then examining some of the components of campaigns, such as exhibitions and parades, before exploring delivery and reception from Cardiff residents. It has an appendix on the official programme for the ‘Salute the Soldier’ celebrations in 1944.

The Conclusion of the thesis considers the characteristics exhibited by Cardiff Council during the war, assesses the nature of its service to the city, and considers what the findings might suggest about local government in World War Two.

Conclusion

Many histories, of all types, deal with government policy on civil defence and morale and on the unique creation and experiences of the civilian army. There has been much less attention on how the two were brought together, and made to work. The thesis offers new perspectives on themes that have been well rehearsed in a general way, and offers the possibility of much more extensive comparison in the future. The role of the local authority was closely tied to government directive. Cardiff made a few notable departures, but largely it obeyed and conformed. The thesis will show how policy, directive and expectation were translated into practice – the choice, adaptation and construction that went into the provision of shelters, the recruitment and training and material supplies that the local authority organised on the government’s behalf for volunteers. It will also show what happened when the government’s requirements in September 1939 – heavy emphasis on gas protection, preparation for massive casualties and panic – had to be revised to reflect night-time bombing, with campaigns to engage participation rather than exhort or offer reassurance. From the point of view of the volunteer, it will show the means by which the sense of obligation and the enthusiasm of a collection of individuals were fashioned into a coherent force. ARP was always referred to as a local service – the Council was the component that enabled local delivery.

In the chapter considering the propaganda campaigns the government instituted, an examination of delivery in one city provides depth on some essential but lesser-known elements of the civilian war, and also a picture of how the campaigns were received by the

ordinary residents of the city. In the future, if there are sufficient similar studies to this, valid comparison between authorities will be possible, assessing differences of approach. A brief examination of the minutes of Preston and Southampton County Boroughs, for example, suggests varied levels of activity that would repay further study, and in which the examination of Cardiff would take its place.⁷² While the thesis does ultimately venture to use the example of Cardiff as an illustration of the actions local authorities in general *might* be undertaking, more studies of local government in wartime would provide the chance to re-examine the views of some historians about the performance of local authorities.

⁷² Minutes for Cardiff County Borough are satisfyingly detailed and informative. Minutes of other authorities sampled in the course of research for the thesis were frequently found to be briefer and less wide-ranging. Those of Preston County Borough ARP Committee, for example, are generally much briefer and by the end of the war had reduced to notes of receiving reports from the Chief Constable and approving general reports on expenditure. Lancashire Record Office CBP/53/16 Minutes of the ARP and Emergency Committees 1939-1945

Chapter One

The City and the County Borough – Relationships and Wartime Challenges

Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of Cardiff, the Council and the relationships which were essential to the functioning of the local machinery for protecting civilians. It outlines the pre-war period and the passage of the war. It also sets out three themes that ran through the conflict, which are essential to an understanding of the local authority war – the way in which bombing affected the city, the significance of finance issues and the role of the volunteer. It is divided into three sections and contains a necessary element of narrative and exposition, which have bearing on understanding how the Council performed during the war.

The first section of the chapter looks at the city, and the organisation and relationships of key bodies. After a short scene-setting portrait of Cardiff, the section moves to governmental structures, local and national, including the regional administration set up by central government to be its outstation in war time. It then looks at the Council and its committee structure, including a vignette of an occasion when the Council went its own way, over the appointment of a war time committee considered essential by government, in contradiction of government requirements. This section will end with some consideration of the make-up of the Council and an exploration of Councillors' relationships with residents of the city, both personal and formal.

War began early for local authorities, and section two of the chapter will look at events running up to the war, including the Munich Crisis, which provides an early illustration of the extent to which local government was an essential part of the government's war planning. It is an important time, warranting attention because a great deal of preparation went on, even though the country was still at peace, and councils were heavily involved. Much of that preparation proved useless, however, as the war that developed from 1940 bore little relation to the government's predictions. Government had to make many changes, from the provision of shelters, to the funding of the work. Local authorities were obliged to make abrupt and major adjustments to accommodate new directions in policy. After Munich, these section

next moves on to an outline of the passage of the war, which necessitated those changes. An essential theme here is the way that experience of actual conflict, rather than incorrect expectations, came to shape action from central and local government. This reshaped the demands made on councils, particularly in respect of shelter provision.

The final section deals with themes that recur throughout the thesis, which impinge on civil defence, shelter provision and wartime campaigns. Firstly the effect of bombing, the circumstance that made all the precautions necessary, with details of the bombing campaign on Cardiff, set in context of the rest of the country. Next is finance – always a key issue in the relationship between central and local government. Financing the protection of the civilian population in war was no exception. It had a key impact both on the adequacy of war preparations, and the subsequent changes which fitted protection to circumstances. The section concludes with consideration of the concept and importance of the volunteer.

Volunteers were an essential part of the massive civil defence machinery that the government called into being to combat the effect of war on the civilian – neighbour assisting neighbour – when the bombs dropped. Alongside the extra demands placed on the Council by war, it was still necessary to maintain the regular tasks of the County Borough. The maintenance of at least a semblance of normal life was considered important in preserving morale. While much of the Council's attention was focussed on the special responsibilities of wartime, the city still had to function. One of the most essential of Council activities was to keep the city moving. An account of the continuing pressure of providing the transport system is included here, as an example of the Council continuing regular work alongside its new wartime impositions.

The Chapter has three appendices. Appendix A looks at a government proposal for an Emergency Powers Bill that would have significantly impacted local authorities, had it been introduced, and which indicates the degree of control over authorities the government contemplated, but did not enact. Appendix B provides a detailed picture of dates and effects of the bombing in Cardiff. Appendix C is a case study of negotiations with central government over the provision of Decontamination Depots in the parks, which illustrates some of the issues raised in the chapter – financial wrangling, the attitude of the Region to the Council, the involvement of central government in the affairs of a single local authority, the changes that were made to specifications as the reality of war became apparent and the insouciance that the Council could sometimes display in the face of government demands.

This chapter provides background and context for those that will follow, which deal with the new wartime responsibilities that government required local authorities to assume, or wished them to engage with. It reveals at this stage that the local government war was by no means a static affair – a matter of fulfilling central government’s wishes, with no further obligation. The unanticipated elements of the war forced change. The Council had to adapt, to meet the needs of the city.

Section One: The City and the County Borough

The nature of the City

Situated on the Bristol Channel, at the mouth of the River Taff, and granted city status in 1905, Cardiff’s rise to prominence as one of the U.K.’s major ports was based on coal and commerce, rather than on the naval importance of such locations as Southampton, although by the eve of the Second World War trade in Cardiff was in decline. The population in 1939 stood at 227,659.¹

One of eighty three County Boroughs in the UK in 1931, the seventeenth largest and one of only four in Wales, it lay between the Channel coast and a rural hinterland, circled by satellite towns under the control of rural and urban district councils, within but not part of the Glamorgan County Council. The County Borough was part of the national local government scene by virtue of its membership of the Association of Municipal Corporations. It bears elements of what Chandler ranks as the features of large municipalities – an industrial and commercial elite, characterised by magnificent town halls and civic pride, often coupled with strong religious conviction, displaying ‘complex bureaucracies closely intertwined with the commercial and social life of the communities.’²

The city was a significant centre for trade, retail and manufacturing. It had good transport provision – buses, trams, local and national rail links, and an airport – all but the trains being

¹ Historical GIS University of Portsmouth Cardiff County Borough through time /Population Statistics/total Population/ A vision of Britain through time; http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/unit/10158965/cube/TOT_POP

² Chandler, *Explaining Local Government*, p. 70.

provided by the County Borough. With an early instance of a multicultural population, as a result of the influence of the port, and a strong nonconformist tradition, it boasted an impressive City Hall – a ‘baroque palace’ in a civic centre that also housed the museum and university.³ Water supply and infrastructure – roads, bridges, street lighting and a number of markets, were the responsibility of the Council as well as were various licensing and regulation regimes. Utilities were a matter for the Council, with Cardiff being the first town in Wales to have electricity, in 1885.⁴ The Council supported schools, hospitals and institutions and social housing, with the Watch Committee overseeing the provision of police and fire services. The city was well provided with leisure and recreation facilities – parks, swimming pools, libraries, sports fields, allotments, theatres and cinemas – with many of these amenities either provided by the Council, or subject to licensing by them. Social activity, such as the wartime Holidays-at-Home Campaign, providing entertainment to discourage holiday travel, frequently centred on the city’s profusion of parks and open spaces. These open spaces in the city were a source of pride, credited by many with helping to ameliorate the effects of bombing. An anonymous account of the raids in Cardiff includes a report on the radio news which mentions the survival of the city as being down to its open spaces and wide streets, resulting in ‘wasted’ bombs.⁵

Prior to the outbreak of war, the County Borough’s minutes provide a pen picture of a well regarded city with a forward outlook. Already operating power, water and transport services, in late 1937 the Council was considering the possibility of a municipal bank.⁶ The city was also under consideration for the establishment of a Government Forensic Science Laboratory and had the only Welsh location for a Radium and Deep X-ray Therapy facility, at the Infirmary.⁷ The city was also showcasing its interest in up to date modes of transport. Arrangements were being discussed for a London to Cardiff Air Race, to take place in September 1938.⁸ As a port the city had a cosmopolitan background, with an impressive network of international connections; the Docks boasted consuls and vice consuls from

³ Gwyn A Williams, *When was Wales? A History of the Welsh*, (London, 1985), p. 223.

⁴ John Davies, *A History of Wales*, (London, 2007), p.546.

⁵ Cardiff Heritage Library, Cathays, Cardiff, (Hereafter cited as CHL), LC94053 046 WAR, The War - An account of the war begun on 3rd September 1939: Vol 2, (Date and source unknown.).

⁶ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1937/38, Council, 6/12/37, min 20.

⁷ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1937/38, Watch Committee, 17/11/37, p30, min 200: Health Committee, 17/11/37, p38, min246.

⁸ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1937/38, Airport Committee, 23/3/38, p454, min 2962.

Argentina, to Yugoslavia, including Siam, Panama and Latvia.⁹ The Council was aware of the need to maintain its position by developing alternative avenues of trade, including with Australia and New Zealand, to replace declining coal and heavy industries.¹⁰ As a County Borough – a single tier unitary authority – the city was responsible for a vast range of activities and services within the city. When war was declared it also became responsible for almost the entire range of wartime provision entrusted to local government, with the exception of evacuation, in which it had minimal involvement.

On the eve the Second World War Cardiff presents as a thriving city, despite the general economic gloom of the 1930s – established, forward-looking and ready to celebrate its achievements. In the late months of 1938 and throughout 1939 the Council was planning for the celebration of the centenary of the West Dock which would have taken place in September.¹¹ While rural areas and the Coalfield towns struggled during WH Auden’s ‘low dishonest decade,’ as a result of the decline in agriculture and coal and heavy industry, and the failure of the “land fit for heroes” to materialise after the Great War, Cardiff appeared to have suffered less, despite the domino effect of decline in the coalfields on its docks and transport.¹² As has been pointed out by historians, although the 1930s were bleak for many, this was not a universal picture.¹³ Those in work were fuelling a boom in consumerism. More and more households had a wireless. Some had a telephone or even a private car and there was a growth in demand for entertainment in cinemas and on holidays.

In the inter war years large employers outside the docks included the Dowlais Cardiff steel works, the Guest, Keen and Baldwin iron works and Spillers and Bakers flour and bread producers, as well as the Council itself, with 2,100 employees in 1919.¹⁴ The possibility of another war was actually fuelling local economic growth. New and revitalised war-related industry was drawn to South Wales as an area thought to be out of range of air attack from mainland Europe. The Council was awake to opportunity, even that presented by war. In the

⁹ The Glamorgan Archive (Hereafter cited as TGA) DCOMC/1/8/163. Annual Report of the Cardiff Incorporated Chamber of Commerce 1942, p23.

¹⁰ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1937/38, Development Committee, 23/11/37, p57

¹¹ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39, Development Committee, 20/9/39, p1158, min 7365.

¹² Stuart Broomfield *Wales at War – the Experience of the Second World War in Wales*, (Stroud, 2009), pp15,16.

¹³ Juliet Gardiner, *The Thirties – An Intimate History*, (London, 2010) p. xiii.

¹⁴ Sam Davies & Bob Morley, *County Borough Elections in England and Wales 1913 – 1938: A comparative Analysis. Volume 2 Bradford – Carlisle*, (Aldershot, 2000), p. 515.

expectation of bombing, the Council's Development Committee discussed the transfer of industry and diversion of shipping from the east to the west coast in the event of war, concluding that the government should be urged to particularly consider South Wales, 'which, in the event of an emergency, would enjoy comparative immunity from attack', and that industrialists should be advised accordingly. It was agreed that the Development Agent and a member of the Committee would travel anywhere required to pursue this with industrialists, demonstrating an outgoing attitude to seeking whatever openings might become available.¹⁵ In 1940 the Royal Ordnance Factory acknowledged in correspondence to the Council that the progress made with the factory was 'in no small degree' due to the co-operation of the Council and its officials and the factory looked forward to continuing 'the happy relationship which now exists.' Appreciation was again expressed in 1942, this time for the assistance of the Transport Department in conveying workers, which had contributed, 'in no small measure' to excellent production results.¹⁶

Stuart Broomfield indicates that between March and September 1939, 56,000 new jobs were created in Wales, attributable to rearmament. Ministry of Labour figures for early 1940, reported to the Development Committee, indicated employment in the city had greatly increased in recent months.¹⁷ Even so, the Council was sensitive to the issue of unemployment and the Council's preference for offering work to the unemployed, where this was possible, was a regular theme throughout the war. A motion to Council on 8 May 1939, summed up the Council's wishes,

That, in view of the fact that there are thousands of unemployed men who have not done any work for many years, many [sic] of whom are ex Servicemen, the Council appeal to the Minister of Labour not to impose any restriction upon the employment upon ARP work in Cardiff of men over the age of 30 years.¹⁸

As a County Borough Cardiff Council had responsibility for the entire city – central area, docks and suburbs – but the city was not an homogenous whole – different areas experienced the war in different ways and had different needs. The major division was that between the city centre and the docks area. The docks and rail yards were the source of Cardiff's growth

¹⁵CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1937/38, Development Committee, 11/10 /38, p.1025, min. 6930.

¹⁶ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40, Special Council, 4/11/40, p.1135, min. 7951; Cardiff Council Minutes 1942/43, Transport Committee, 10/12/42 p.118, min 743.

¹⁷ Broomfield *Wales at War* p18; CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40, Development Committee, 19/3/40, p.484, min. 3299.

¹⁸ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39, Council, 8/5/39, p.709, min 4476.

to a position of power and prosperity. The docks had its wealthy and influential commercial centre in the impressive buildings clustered around Mount Stuart Square. The Docks Savings Committee for Salute the Soldier Week in 1944 met at the Exchange ‘for the purpose of discussing the procedure to be adopted to draw the attention of all Docks Firms and the Docks public generally to the need for assuring the greatest possible success to “Salute the Soldier” Week,’” with invitations to be involved extended to ‘the gentlemen who so successfully carried out their duties during “Wings for Victory” Week’, together with a few additions. Members whom it is thought would like to be associated with the present effort.’¹⁹

The wider area – Bute Town and Tiger Bay – housed a transient, shifting and multicultural population. The Council’s attitude to the dock population is open to question, as will be seen in Chapter Three. In the city at large, on the basis of occasional comments, there seems to have been a sense of otherness about the docks. Participation of a multi cultural population in ARP duties seems to have been viewed as something of note. The *Cardiff Times* reported that ARP meetings at Loudon Square were a ‘league of nations’ with men and women of ten different nationalities represented.²⁰ An anonymous account of the raids in Cardiff includes an extract from the *Methodist Recorder* (although stigmatised by the diary keeper as ‘abounding’ in mistakes) which lists wardens from the dock area as two from Malta, one from Bengal and two from Arabia, all volunteers and all loyal British subjects.²¹ An account of morale in Cardiff in the face of air raids, assembled by the Cardiff library service from a file of Home Office Intelligence Reports from the National Archive, which relates to the summer of 1940, points up a perceived contrast between city residents and foreign European crews in the docks. Morale there is said to be poor and ‘apathetic to our cause’. It was not thought that there would be panic, but morale was ‘definitely poor in comparison to that current in the City’. Among ‘coloured alien seamen, morale good, so far’. Panic had been expected from this quarter, but this was not happening – official shelters were being used and singing was keeping up morale, although there was a pessimistic caveat that it was difficult to anticipate what would happen in heavy bombing.²²

¹⁹ TGA DCOMC/1/8/163 Records of National Savings Committee Region 12. Minutes of Cardiff Docks Committee 17/4/44.

²⁰ *Cardiff Times*, 18/11/39, p 5.

²¹ CHL, LC94053 046 WAR, The War- An account of the war begun on 3rd September 1939: Vol 2, (Date and source unknown.).

²² CHL, Cardiff Air Raids 1939 – 45 An Information Source Book pp. 97 -99, quoting from the National Archive file, Intelligence Reports 2/7/40, HO199/424.

Ironically the docks – the factor that put Cardiff on the list of targets for bombing attack – escaped relatively lightly from raids, with the exception of the bombing of the San Felipe, the first occasion in which there was a loss of life during a raid on Cardiff. As in other cities built around docks it was the residential areas, particularly those with closely packed working-class housing, which bore the brunt of bombing and were often the most difficult to serve. As noted in papers from the Ministry of Home Security, ‘The enemy’s aim in the past appears to have been to restrict the working of the ports more by attacks on the homes of the dockers, on the general life of the town and on the railway communities serving the docks, than by accurate bombing of the port itself.’²³ Harold Carter points out that in the past, with a ‘journey to work’ unknown, housing had grown up close to the workplace, a factor that came to be significant in bombing raids, which caused major destruction in working class districts.²⁴ The Cardiff Air Raid Wardens’ Organisation Report 1945 – which contains some history of the service – confirms that the worst hit locations were ‘undoubtedly’ the Riverside and Saltmead areas. Areas where attack might be expected, such as the docks and city centre, suffered relatively little damage. In general, residential areas suffered the brunt of bombing, the city centre comparatively little.²⁵ The unfairness of bombing of residential areas was a frequently aired theme when such attacks occurred, as in September 1940 when the Council recorded appreciation of the work of the wardens, voluntary workers, Auxiliary Fire Service (AFS), First Aid and Rescue Parties and the Police, ‘who contributed so much to the protection and comfort of the persons who suffered from the indiscriminate bombing of a residential area of the city, which was in no sense a military objective.’²⁶

In areas like Riverside and Grangetown the Council was hampered in attempts to provide facilities such as garden shelters and allotments, because of lack of space. The major air raid shelters were the Castle Walls and a large basement in Westgate Street, some distance from the denser areas of housing, which must have required residents without private shelter

²³ TNA HO186/927, Blitz Papers – Preparations for Heavy attack. Lessons Learned. Report on preparations for heavy attack in the winter of 1941/42, Ministry of Home Security, August 1941. This was the case in Cardiff, when attacks bore on the city rather than the dock area. The report emphasised that dock workers should be protected, not dispersed by distribution of homes and haphazard evacuation. Shelter needed to be close to home with accessible homeless billets. The effects of bombing on areas such as Riverside and Grangetown were appreciated by the Council, but re-housing could, of course, only be achieved where there was available property.

²⁴ Harold Carter, *The Towns of Wales – A Study in Urban Geography*, (Cardiff, 1965), p. 311.

²⁵ CCL, 948.2 (268.8) CAR, Cardiff Air Raid Warden Organisation Report, 1945, p.7,

²⁶ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40, Full Council, 9/9/40, p.942, min. 6535.

accommodation to travel to reach them. Riverside was particularly hard-hit by bombing, resulting in problems in providing civil defence services as so many volunteers were displaced from their homes.²⁷

These areas produced high rates of casualties and destruction, but other areas of the city were not immune, as witnessed by the damage in the suburb of Llandaff, including the cathedral, in the raid in January 1941, and the threat to the prestigious buildings of the Civic Centre in Cathays, subject to incendiary attack in March 1941 and saved by the action of rooftop fire fighters. There was often debate over the status of suburban areas of the city, and how far they were actually part of it. Alan Duval, in a manuscript account of the war in Wales, written in 1992, points out the bombing damage ‘to people and property not immediately engaged in the war effort’ and the ‘terrible destruction which befell the houses of ordinary people.’²⁸ Duval lists the residential suburbs of Whitchurch, Rhiwbina and Lisvane as suffering damage and casualties ‘probably as part of the raids on the city of Cardiff.’²⁹ The situation relating to Whitchurch, one of the outer suburbs, was a particularly contested one. A body of local opinion, led by the County Borough, considered Whitchurch to be part of the city. Despite the suburb being included in a Provisional Order that extended the city’s boundaries in 1920, Government opinion still ranked it as part of the rural district hinterland.³⁰ In discussions on First Aid Posts in December 1938, use of a school in Whitchurch was ruled out, as this came in the area covered by the County.³¹ Home Office correspondence with the Region on the disposition of Rescue Parties includes Whitchurch in Glamorgan County provision.³² The *Cardiff Times* reported early in 1940 that a proposal for shelters in Whitchurch had been turned down by the Rural District Council as the area was considered safe. The proposal was deemed ‘wasteful and an indication of panic’ by one of the Councillors.³³ The matter came up again a month later, when concern was expressed that provision made by the County was only for people passing through and did not provide for locals.³⁴

²⁷ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41 ARP Committee, 20/6/41 p 646 min 4575; 4/7/41, p. 700, min 4892.

²⁸ CCL, 5.202, Alan Duval, *South East and West Wales at War 1939 – 1945*, Chapter 2, p12.

²⁹ Ibid. Chapter 6 p3 .

³⁰ CHL, Cardiff Air Raids 1939 – 45 An Information Source Book p. 112, quoting from National Archive file, MH96/162.; *Cardiff 1889 – 1974 The History fo the County Borough* (Cardiff, 1974) pp 42,133 The transfer was not actually official until the Cardiff Order 1966.

³¹ TNA, HO 207/1123, Cardiff County Borough Rescue Decontamination and Repair Services. Notes of meeting at Home Office, ARP Section, Horseferry Road, London 19/12/38.

³² TNA, HO 186/759, War Establishment Personnel. Letter of region to Ministry, 20/8/40.

³³ *Cardiff Times*, 6/1/40 p. 5.

³⁴ *Cardiff Times*, 10/2/40, p.1.

The County Borough and other Local Authorities.

The County Borough maintained co-operative relationships with other authorities. Before war began, at the suggestion of the Home Office, a conference was held at Glamorgan County Hall to discuss mutual assistance between authorities. A scheme was agreed for co-operating between the County Councils of Glamorgan and Monmouthshire, and the County Boroughs of Cardiff and Newport for mutual aid using mobile services of light and heavy rescue parties, Decontamination Squads, First Aid Parties and the ambulances working with them.³⁵ Angus Calder suggests that the role of the Regional Commissioner, the government appointee put in place to oversee the Region, was that of 'a man of national rather than local standing, who was expected to coordinate and if necessary override, the squabbling county councils and borough councils and to assume a quasi dictatorial control if and when the circumstances seemed to him to warrant it.'³⁶ The relationship of Cardiff County Borough with other authorities appears in the main to be more notable for cooperation than squabbles. Members made visits of inspection to London, to Bristol and also to Coventry, after the devastating bombing, to learn what they could.³⁷ There was joint working with both the Glamorgan County Council and the Cardiff Rural District Council, representing the hinterland of the city, particularly in respect of the fire service, with the County Borough providing it on behalf the RDC.³⁸ All three authorities concerned were in agreement, in opposition to government and the Region, that Whitchurch should be treated as a suburb of the city.

As well as links with other authorities the Council maintained connections with the national capital. The frequency of trips made to London by Councillors on official business reveals the close contacts that the city maintained, even in time of war. Lucas and Richards note that the great provincial cities tended to deal direct with Ministries, rather than making approaches through the local government associations.³⁹ There were visits for meetings, to inspect equipment and facilities, and to lobby. When the libraries began to experience

³⁵ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39, ARP Committee, 31/8/39, p.1074, min. 6805.

³⁶ Angus Calder, *The People's War – Britain 1939 -1945*, (London, 1969), p. 199.

³⁷ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41, ARP Committee, 22/11/40, p. 51, min. 371 & 376.

³⁸ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39, Watch Committee, 14/6/39, p.853, min. 5440: Special Transport Committee, 8/9/39, p.1093, min. 6947.

³⁹ Bryan Keith Lucas & Peter G Richards, *A History of Local Government in the Twentieth Century*, (London, 1978), p182.

difficulty in obtaining new book stock from regular suppliers the Committee authorised the Librarian to visit book stores in London ‘as expedient’ to make purchases.⁴⁰

Section Two

Government, Regional Administration, Council

Central Government

The two major official players in the civilian war were the government and the local authorities. The government provided policy, direction and finance – control and money. The local authorities supplied manpower and housekeeping services that kept the vast Home Front machinery operating in the localities.

Cabinet, Parliament, Ministries and Departments comprised the central offices of government. In the localities there were twelve regions, each under a government appointed Commissioner. The Department of Health had the major responsibility for local government, but the situation was a little more complicated in Region 8 (Wales), as the Welsh Board of Health also had responsibilities towards the local authorities. The Regional Commissioner and a staff of officials for Region 8 were based in Park Place in Cardiff, but accountable for the whole of the Principality. The Region exercised a considerable degree of control over local arrangements and managed the funds that the County Borough could call upon. In peacetime the Commissioners had no executive function, in war this varied according to circumstance, with ability to assume the powers of government in the event of breakdown.⁴¹ In Richard Overy’s *The Bombing War: Europe 1939-1945*, he acknowledges the part thrust upon local authorities, and the weight of the responsibility:

The decision was taken by the government that civil defence should be grafted onto the existing structure of local administration which meant placing a heavy burden on officials who had no necessary understanding of the problems involved in organising passive defences or in disciplining their population to collaborate and conform.

⁴⁰ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1942/43, Libraries (Finance and Books) Sub Committee, 7/9/43, p. 806, min. 5809; Libraries Annual Meeting, 23/11/43, p. 51, min. 382.

⁴¹ TNA, CAB 21/776, Civil Emergency Organisation Appointment of Regional Commissioners. Extract from *The Times* 19 April 1939.

He suggests Regional Commissioners as a necessary link 'to compensate for the difficulties local authorities might experience.'⁴² In Cardiff, and presumably elsewhere, much of the responsibility for training volunteers was undertaken by the Regional Training Officer. (See Chapter Two).

At the outset of war there were expectations in some quarters that the government would use regional mechanisms to take direct control, although given the size of the operation involved, it is difficult to see how this might have been managed, unless the regional administration also took over the machinery, structure and personnel of the local authority. Terence O'Brien, official war historian of Civil Defence, comments, 'Local control, in spite of its obvious drawbacks, had made local patriotism and material resources of all kinds available to the government, and averted the need to create a large new administrative machine.'⁴³ At a lunch attended by the Lord Mayor of Cardiff, held at the Dorchester in London in late summer 1940, for the National Defence Public Interest Committee, Sir John Anderson, the Lord Privy Seal, in charge of ARP arrangements, referred to doubts expressed by many over the government decision to base the Civil Defence organisation on local government machinery. The experiment had worked. 'I do not think that the public yet realise how much they owe to the devoted labours of members of the local authorities and their staffs.'⁴⁴ (This was, of course, before the great test of the Blitz and intense provincial bombing raids.)

It should be noted that there would have been strong traditional connections at political level between central and local government. A classic gateway into Parliament at this time was by way of local government service and the first war time Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain; Herbert Morrison, later Home Secretary, and Clement Attlee, member of the war time cabinet and post war Prime Minister, were just three who had travelled this route.⁴⁵ R.E.C Jewell notes this traditional entry point, with Lucas and Richards recording that slightly over one third of MPs elected between 1945 and 1970 had been council members.⁴⁶ There would therefore have been a level of familiarity over the resources and capabilities of local councils

⁴² Richard Overy, *The Bombing War in Europe 1939 – 1945*, (London: 2014), p.129.

⁴³ Terence O'Brien, *Civil Defence History of the Second World War: United Kingdom Civil Series*, (London, 1955), p.345.

⁴⁴ *Local Government Chronicle*, 31/8/40, p. 841.

⁴⁵ Chamberlain had been Mayor of Birmingham, Morrison the Leader of the London County Council and Attlee Mayor of Stepney.

⁴⁶ R.E.C Jewell, *Local Government Administrative Practice*, (London 1975), p. 21; Bryan Keith Lucas & Peter G Richards, *A History of Local Government in the Twentieth Century*, (London 1978), p. 101.

within government, possibly even a degree of confidence in their likely performance, although not necessarily a special bias in their favour.

The Council's relationship with central government came mostly on paper, but sometimes in person. The habitual communication link between central and local government was the local government circular – sequentially numbered and dated departmental papers, containing information and instruction – issued to all local authorities or to selected groupings, according to the powers they held. The volume of circulars escalated dramatically in the run up to war.⁴⁷ Paper continued to pour out of Whitehall, prompting journalist Richie Calder to complain of glassy eyed local officials being anaesthetised against circulars. 'There were times when I wished devoutly that Whitehall would issue a circular to cancel all circulars including the circular to cancel all circulars!'⁴⁸

Wartime demands were not confined simply to Civil Defence under control of the Home Office, later the Department of Home Security, but stretched across multiple government departments –the Ministries of Agriculture and Food exhorted on allotments and public restaurant facilities and the Ministry of Labour and National Service posed an increasing hazard, as war progressed, to the Council's manpower. The Ministry of Information had expectations in regards to morale and propaganda. The government often made demands on Councils which were not directly linked to any of their services and in which the County Borough often had (or was intended to have) little practical involvement – the new Food and Fuel Control Committees required the Council to provide staff and premises, while it was expected to have little input over matters being considered.⁴⁹ In October 1939 the Watch Committee was advised that the Council would be responsible for servicing the Aliens Tribunal, providing accommodation and staff.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ TNA, HO 208/2, Home Office and Ministry of Home Security: Air Raid Precautions & Home Security Circulars. In the month of August 1939 the Air Raid Precautions Department of the Home Office sent out in excess of forty Circulars to local authorities in England and Wales, on matters such as Remote Control of Air Raid Warning Signals and War-time Lighting Regulations for Shops. Nothing was too large, or too small to receive attention, from the contents of first aid boxes to arrangements for mutual support between local authorities.

⁴⁸ Richie Calder, *Lessons of London*, (London, 1941), p. 49.

⁴⁹ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39, Special Meeting Full Council, 5/9/39, p. 1075 &1076 mins. 6807 & 6808: Food Control Committee, 20/10/39, p.1298, min. 8253.

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, Watch Committee 11/10 39, p.1252, min. 7969.

Attempts at micromanagement are sometimes surprising, with detailed monitoring of specific expenditure, such as that illustrated in the case study at Appendix C. Government departments maintained demanding expectations for supply of information. Morgan and Evans have pointed out that during the war the government exercised previously unthinkable levels of intervention in people's lives.⁵¹ Local government often fared no better. The *Local Government Chronicle* called on a number of occasions for greater latitude, such as in June 1941, when an editorial complained of the growing mass of Circulars, with expenditure checked and certified down to the smallest sums.⁵² There was a high level of requisitioning, particularly of land and buildings. The requisition of premises, which began even before war was declared, proved difficult to resist in respect of Council owned property, and there were often problems over competing demands as government, the armed service and the County Borough all had eyes on the most suitable buildings, not to mention the existing owners/users. This manifested itself when the Council was looking for premises to convert to British Restaurants.

The Regional Administration

Prior to war there was speculation that the government would introduce new machinery to manage ARP – the creation of a new regional bureaucracy. Instead Regional Commissioners were appointed, with a small staff of departmental officials. The Commissioner and Regional staff never exerted direct control over the Council, but nevertheless were a powerful factor in war time arrangements. The Region was where day-to-day matters that involved government departments were handled, and the Council was obliged to seek approval for plans and expenditure here. The Commissioner chaired the multi disciplinary meetings that took place after bombing raids, and was a source of advice and, on occasion, an avenue for appeal. It is important to explore the regional structure here, and establish its nature, as this regional presence is a constant factor in the background of both shelter and Civil Defence provision.

There was predictable alarm from local government at the idea that a regional system would take on the functions that were actually entrusted to local authorities. The published history of the local government union, NALGO, draws attention to 'muddle and mismanagement' at the time of the Munich Crisis, that had caused press and public to question whether 2,000

⁵¹ David Morgan and Mary Evans, *The Battle for Britain Citizenship and Ideology in the Second World War*, (London, 1993), Frontspiece from Professor Robert Moore & p32

⁵² *Local Government Chronicle*, 21/6/41, p.563.

local councils could act with the 'unity, speed and decision that war would demand' and gave rise to calls for a separate, nationally controlled Civil Defence Force. The union's journal, *Local Government Service*, was adamant that 'however ill fitted local government might be to wage total war' the task of 'organising the defence of a nation from some thousands of county, town and village halls' could and must be undertaken by local authorities, 'if democracy was to survive'.⁵³ Before war began the Association of Municipal Corporations made it known that it strenuously opposed any proposals which would in peace time supersede or usurp the functions of local authorities, seeking assurances on consultations.⁵⁴ Richard Titmuss, the official historian for wartime social policy, notes that it *had* been in the mind of government to supersede the local authorities for civil defence purposes and 'employ their officials as agents of government' but that this was ultimately rejected. Instead the machinery of local government must be made to work.⁵⁵ In the aftermath of Munich, the Ministry of Health recorded, 'The view of the Ministry of Health is that the best arrangement will be that which leaves the maximum of executive responsibility with the local authorities.'⁵⁶

The government decision to appoint the small group of nominees to serve as Regional Commissioners, with the whole of Wales as one region, was also viewed in some quarters with suspicion, as an attempt to usurp the role of local government and assert direct control from the centre. Prominent Welsh nationalists, J E Daniel and Saunders Lewis, were sure of it, confidently predicting that a regional system would supersede local government in Wales, an idea they considered potentially detrimental to Welsh culture:

Moreover, there will have to be developed in the near future a complete bureaucratic regional government; the skeleton of such an organisation is, in fact, already set up, and its development and active working is only a matter of a few weeks. Local government as we have known it for a century must soon disappear.⁵⁷

While this foreboding was visible in pockets in Wales, given voice particularly in fears over the effect on the language of inward and outward migration – represented by evacuation and

⁵³ Alec Spoor, *White Collar Union Sixty Years of NALGO*, (London 1967), p. 210.

⁵⁴ TNA, HO 186/1084, Local Organisation of Civil Defence Representations from the Association of Municipal Corporations. Letter from the AMC to the Home Office 14/2/39

⁵⁵ Titmuss, *Social Policyp*. 152.

⁵⁶ TNA, HLG 7/61, Regional Organisation Crisis 1938; Ministry of Health Emergency Arrangements affecting the Outdoor Staff. Note from Mr West to Mr Bearn, 21/10/38.

⁵⁷ TNA, HLG 7/81. Copy of a letter from J E Daniel & Saunders Lewis to the Manchester Guardian, 8/9/39.

the mobility occasioned by war work – it does not seem to be a notable factor for the County Borough. While Dai Smith points out the inexorable link between language and the culture of Wales, this was not so much in evidence in an authority that conducted its proceedings in English.⁵⁸ These suspicions and rumours of regional take over were kept intermittently alive throughout the war by reports in the *Local Government Chronicle*.⁵⁹ The idea of retaining regional administration, or reorganising local government on a regional basis, continued to have some currency after the war. AJP Taylor laments the failure to make permanent the wartime regional system of Commissioners and regional staff, seeing it as a vast improvement, by providing an interface between Whitehall and the local authorities. Once war was over, however, the Commissioners stepped down and the regional machine faded away – and the ‘blessing’ of regional government was lost.⁶⁰

The Commissioner arrangement had, in fact, been tried out during the Munich Crisis, in great secrecy, which may perhaps have fed subsequent suspicion. The drawbacks of this secrecy were soon recognised – the Commissioners were in place, but unable to announce themselves officially to initiate action. Ministry of Health officials noted, ‘The veil of secrecy covering the organisation appears to have been one of the chief difficulties – it considerably hampered those concerned in their relations with local authorities and other bodies.’⁶¹ The matter was reviewed and mostly new appointments were made, with a low key peacetime role. Once it was clear that the declaration of war was coming, Commissioners took up their positions openly. O’Brien comments, ‘The Commissioners, in strong contrast to the secrecy which had enshrouded them at Munich, were now, in the main, familiar figures in their Regions, with functions to perform which were roughly understood.’⁶² The *Western Mail* pictured the Commissioner for Wales, his Deputy and Principal Officer, taking up their duties at their offices in Park Place, Cardiff, on 1 September 1939.⁶³

The role of the Commissioner in peacetime was limited to one of ‘influence’. Once the conflict began the position of the Commissioners was defined as, ‘for the purposes of

⁵⁸ Dai Smith *Wales – A Question of History* (Bridgend 1999) p 48 Cardiff’s concerns were those of local government as a whole – sensitive to intent to dilute or usurp functions, as shown by the difficulties over the appointment of Emergency Committees.

⁵⁹ *Local Government Chronicle* 4/1/41 p7: 8/11/41 p 935:7/3/42 p161: 18/4/42 p239: 6/2/43 p71: 3/4/43 p181:22/1/44 :6/1/45 p5: 23/6/45 p393

⁶⁰ A J P Taylor *English History 1914 – 1945*, (Oxford, 1965), p. 569.

⁶¹ TNAHLG 7/61. Regional Organisation Crisis 1938 Ministry of Health Emergency Arrangements. Report of the Chief Finance Officer of the Ministry of Health on the Regional Organisation Crisis,14/10/38.

⁶² O’Brien *Civil Defence History* p 288

⁶³ *Western Mail* 1/9/39 pp10 &12.

securing the co-ordination of measures for civil defence'.⁶⁴ They were intended as the government representatives in the locality, with power to act in the event of a region becoming isolated from central government as a result of breakdown in channels of communication, or invasion. In practice the Regional Commissioner had power to influence, control and approve a range of activities, particularly provision and financing of Civil Defence and air raid shelters.

Commissioners were appointed, rather than elected – men who, 'seemed to us to possess in the highest degree the qualifications necessary for their very responsible position.'⁶⁵ When the issue was debated in the House of Commons Emanuel Shinwell MP questioned why there were so many Lords in the list, and what the qualifications were for the role. The response indicated that nobility was not a factor; all had been selected after careful review of their qualifications and experience.⁶⁶ They were 'Persons who would secure the fullest co-operation with a team of local Heads of Service rather than names with popular appeal'. Ministries were canvassed for suggestions. The first Commissioner for Wales, after Munich, Lord Portal, was a nominee from the Ministry of Transport.⁶⁷ Lord Portal served in the position for a few months, from the declaration of war until December 1939, when he was appointed to another government post and was succeeded by joint commissioners, Col Gerald T Bruce and Mr Robert Richards M.P. Roberts was the Labour MP for Wrexham and a former Under Secretary of State for India. He was not prominent in dealings with the County Borough. References in minutes and reports of official functions relate most frequently to his Co-Commissioner. Lieutenant Colonel Gerald Trevor Bruce, CMG, DSO, who served in the post until the end of the war, appears to have taken the lead in relations with local government. He had local connections and would have been known to the Council, having been personal assistant to Lord Portal. He was a solicitor from Pontypridd, with a background of extensive military service.⁶⁸ He was said, with his deputy and Principal Officer, to be in close touch with the local authorities: 'There is no problem like that which arises in some of

⁶⁴ TNA, CAB 21/776, Civil Emergency Organisation Appointment of Regional Commissioners. The Regional Commissioners Act 1939.

⁶⁵ TNA, CAB 21/776, Civil Emergency Organisation Appointment of Regional Commissioners, Extract from House of Commons Report, Col 1307-0, 27/4/39.

⁶⁶ Ibid. Extract from Hansard, 18/4/39, pp170-173.

⁶⁷ Ibid. Letter of 20/9/38, and internal note, 21/7/38

the other regions of a local authority not recognising the position of the Regional Commissioner.’⁶⁹

By 1941 additional Deputy Commissioners were appointed. Most regions had two, one to take particular interest in civil defence and fire precautions, the other the measures needed to deal with the effects of heavy raids.⁷⁰ Wales appears to have been the only region to have a woman in the position of Assistant Regional Commissioner.⁷¹ Central Government kept an eye on the situation regarding the powers of the Regional Commissioners. In 1941 ‘an exhaustive examination’ was conducted over whether the Commissioners needed more powers over regional representatives of government departments or the local authorities. Ministers decided there was ‘no satisfactory alternative to the present position’.⁷² O’Brien suggests that, for the most part, Commissioners worked with authorities by co-operation and strength of personality, without recourse to legal powers.⁷³ Commissioners represented their regions to Whitehall and Whitehall to their regions.⁷⁴

Government departments also had to make adaptations to make war time systems work. A Home Office press release of February 1939 sets out the structure of the Regional Commissioner’s staff, comprising an ARP Regional Officer and representatives of all the government departments concerned with civil defence – Health, Transport and Food – linking the regional organisation with the existing machinery of government.⁷⁵ Richard Titmuss notes that the Ministry of Health, hitherto concerned with watching and supervising the work of local authorities, was now faced with the possibility having to administer and operate a large range of emergency services. The regional organisation and the Ministry set up mini ministries in the region. In August 1939 Civil Servants were sent to get experience of local

⁶⁸ Arthur Mee (ed), *Who’s Who in Wales 1921*, (Cardiff 1921) : *Cardiff Times*, 23/12/39, p.1.

⁶⁹ TNA, HO186/523, ARP Regional Organisation Visits No.8 Region. Note from an official of the Home Office visiting Cardiff 19 – 21 May 1941.

⁷⁰ TNA, HO186/927, Blitz Papers – Preparations for Heavy attack. Lessons Learned. Report on preparations for heavy attack in winter Ministry of Home Security, August 1941.

⁷¹ O’Brien, *Civil Defence* p 676

⁷² TNA, HO186/927, Blitz Papers – Preparations for Heavy attack. Lessons Learned. Report on preparations for heavy attack in winter Ministry of Home Security, August 1941. An amendment had been made to Defence Regulation 54 b to allow Ministers full power to issue instructions to local authorities on matters falling within the purview of the local authorities and this had been delegated to the Regional Commissioners, but they would be expected to consult with the Minister before use, except in dire emergency.

⁷³ O’Brien, *Civil Defence* p615.

⁷⁴ *Ibid* p.643.

⁷⁵ TNA, HO 186/1084, Local Organisation of Civil Defence Representations from the Association of Municipal Corporations. Press notice, 3/2/39.

conditions, meet and talk to local government officers and view premises.⁷⁶ The staff of regional officers, grouped around the Regional Commissioner, appears to have had responsibilities both to the region and to central government departments and a considerable amount of paperwork passed back and forth. The role of the region in respect of Cardiff County Borough was both a channel and a barrier – the regional operation was the route through which the Council achieved approval and funding but it was also the place where Council plans were thwarted. Most instrumental in day-to-day activity were the technical officers, who made up the support staff, the key position being the Senior Regional Officer (SRO). Peak involvement with the region was in the development stage, when volunteers were in training, and air raid shelters in construction, but these officers continued to have a role throughout the war, with that of gatekeeper for government approval being the most significant.

The Council and Committee Structure

This segment of the chapter looks briefly at the structure of the Council, then details the ways in which the government attempted to change this, and the Council's circumventing of the proposals. It is important as background on the mechanisms involved in decision making. The County Boroughs provided local government services to UK cities by way of elected and nominated members and a staff of paid officials, headed by a Town Clerk and heads of service, each with a corresponding department of 'officers and servants'. The County Borough was a unitary authority, responsible for services from collection of refuse to concerts in the parks. With the onset of war, regular elections were suspended and Councillors and Aldermen, who were nominated to the position, remained in post, with appointments made to fill vacancies as necessary.⁷⁷ The franchise for local elections at the time was not the same as for national and they were not brought together until the Representation of the People Act 1945. The local franchise was based on a property qualification, with the result that the interests of ratepayers were a matter for consideration, alongside those of the city's inhabitants in general. The Lord Mayor chaired the Council, had extensive civic and ceremonial duties, and was also a political presence. In Cardiff County Borough the role was a prominent and active one.

⁷⁶ Titmuss, *Problems of Social Policy*, p89 .

⁷⁷ Under the provisions of the Local Elections and Register of Electors (Temporary Provisions) Act 1939 to 43

With the onset of war there was an attempt by central government to reduce the number of committees within a local authority, by requiring the appointment of an Emergency Committee. Cardiff appointed this committee, but also retained its regular structure. The passage of an issue through that structure can appear Byzantine. The main theatre for conduct of detailed business was the subject committees and their sub-committees, the proceedings of which would arrive, eventually, at full Council. While the majority of decisions would pass unquestioned, the Council could decline or amend a decision or apply a range of other options, the most popular of which was to refer back for further consideration, with the implied subtext that the committee should rethink its proposed course of action. Theoretically no committee decision could be enacted before getting full Council approval. In matters of urgency, the Chairman could act.

There was clearly some concern within government over possible delay, arising from what was seen as unwieldy arrangements for local government decision making. Discussion within the Ministry of Health, immediately after Munich, suggest use of chairman's action for urgent matters, together with the powers of the Defence Regulations, to avoid slow and cumbersome administration, but without any formal putting on one side of the local authority:

It is therefore suggested that the disturbance of existing machinery and the loss of efficiency involved by the transfer of responsibility from the local authorities or the creation of new services of supplementary local authorities need not generally be faced.⁷⁸

In March 1939 the government attempted to intervene in the committee structure of local authorities, insisting on the appointment of an Emergency Committee, which was intended to be small, with just three members, flexible, to meet changing conditions, and to have wide ranging powers.⁷⁹ In Cardiff the introduction created considerable controversy amongst Councillors, particularly in relation to control of expenditure. From a local press report there appears to have been concern over potential for extravagant spending on ARP by this Committee. Clearly resented by the other committees as a usurper of their functions, the Emergency Committee had a difficult start.

⁷⁸ TNA, HLG7/61, Ministry of Health Emergency Arrangements. Note of Mr West to Mr Bearn on Emergency Arrangements affecting the Outdoor Staff 21/10/38.

⁷⁹ TNA, HO208/1 Home Office Circular, 57/1939 :21/3/39

At the meeting of the three man Emergency Committee on 15 September 1939, members called for a weekly report on expenditure, to be considered by that committee.⁸⁰ At the Finance Committee on 23 September, it was agreed that copies of the Circular creating the Committee should be sent to all Councillors and that Committee *also* appointed a sub committee to review the Council's expenditure every week, taking financial control out of the Emergency Committee's hands.⁸¹ The Chairman of this newly constituted Finance Sub Committee, appointed to scrutinise ARP expenditure, was reported in the press as being of the view that too much responsibility had been placed on the Emergency Committee.⁸² At the Emergency Committee on 26 September, that Committee's frustration may have come through, when it resolved to seek a deputation to the Regional Commissioner for a ruling on the status of the Committee and the desirability of increasing the membership.⁸³ The situation did not improve at full Council, on 2 October, when the minutes of the Emergency Committee were not adopted, but referred to the various committees concerned.⁸⁴

A lengthy report in the *Cardiff Times* recounts heated debate in the Council Chamber, during which the Emergency Committee and the ARP Controller (the Town Clerk) were apparently stigmatised as 'dictators'. The small size of the Committee was an issue. The Chairman of the Emergency Committee was reported as pointing out the Home Office instruction for membership of no more than three, and that the Regional Commissioner, when applied to, had indicated that the Emergency Committee superseded the ARP committee, so there should be no further meetings of that Committee. Debate was clearly long and fraught, with the opinion apparently expressed that the Council could carry on its business without interference from the Emergency Committee, and that the Council was not prepared to accept the Commissioner's decision on local government.⁸⁵

Clearly this situation could not continue. Presumably discussions took place behind the scenes to reach an accommodation. At the next meeting of the ARP Committee, on 17 November, it was resolved that the full ARP Committee should constitute the ARP Emergency Committee, in accordance with the Ministry of Health Circular of 21 March 1939, that it would meet fortnightly to receive the report of the Controller, in consultation

⁸⁰ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 19/38/39, ARP Emergency Committee, 15/9/39, p. 1138, min. 7199.

⁸¹ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39, Finance Committee, 23/9/39, p.1184, min. 7530.

⁸² *Cardiff Times*, 23/9/39, p.8.

⁸³ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39, ARP Emergency Committee, 26/9/39, p.1206, min. 7661.

⁸⁴ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39, Full Council 2/10/39 p1216 mins 7726 & 7727

⁸⁵ *Cardiff Times* 7/10/39 p3

with the Executive Officers and that a rota of members would be drawn up to make periodic inspections of the work carried out under the Committee.⁸⁶ Thus the controversy was settled, although any inspections that took place were evidently not of a nature to show up the deficiencies in shelter provision that were later highlighted by a visit from a Parliamentary Secretary. (See Chapter Three) Elements of discontent surrounding the position of the Controller may have still have been evidenced in a motion to Council on 25 October to appoint a second Deputy Controller ‘who would be in touch with the public’, although this was defeated.⁸⁷

The saga of the Emergency Committee graphically illustrates attempts by central government to intervene in Council processes, comprehensively defeated in Cardiff. There is no indication that there were repercussions from the Council’s decisions and the ARP and Emergency Committees operated side by side for the remainder of the war. (The official war historian, Terence O’Brien, indicates that Cardiff members were not alone in their discontent, and Emergency Committee membership was increased in other parts of the county also.)⁸⁸

As an addendum to the matters covered in this section, Appendix A outlines the contents of National Archive file HLG 68/64, containing paperwork on a projected Local Government Emergency Powers Bill. This was being considered in the Home Office in the early weeks of the war. If enacted, it would have greatly extended the power of the Emergency Committee. The bill did not proceed. If it had, there seems little doubt that Cardiff Council would have had strong objection to its provisions. That it was being considered reflects the position local authorities occupied in government planning for the domestic front.

Council Members

This section provides a profile of the members of the Council and the connections which served to embed them into the various networks of the city. The first full Council meeting of Cardiff County Borough, following the declaration of war on 3 September 1939, took place on 2 October 1939. All the members listed as present at that meeting were men, although this did change fairly soon as Mrs Helena Evans was nominated under the provisions of the Local Elections and Register of Electors (Temporary Provisions) Act 1939 to replace a Councillor

⁸⁶ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40, ARP Committee, 17/11/39, p.53, min. 315.

⁸⁷ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39, Full Council, 25/10/39, p.1310, min. 8325.

⁸⁸ O’Brien, *Civil Defence*, p314.

who had resigned.⁸⁹ She was joined in 1944 by Mrs Anna Kerrigan, who had previously been an advisory member of Libraries Committee. Women also occupied advisory positions. The Billeting Committee had women representatives in 1940. The make-up of the Food Committee was specified to include two women among external representatives but the composition of the Council was preponderantly male. All the Committee chairmen were men and remained so, through the war and after.⁹⁰

A number of the Councillors were very old, even by current standards of longevity, and had served on the Council for a considerable period of time. In June 1943 the Chairman of the Parks, Baths and Allotments Committee celebrated his eighty fifth birthday, while in the same month another member was seventy nine.⁹¹ Sir Charles Melhuish is recorded in 1945 as being eighty five.⁹² In June 1945, Alderman Hill Snook achieved his eighty seventh birthday.⁹³ A report on the death of Alderman Sir Charles Heyward Bird in 1943 referred to him as Father of the Council, who had been a member for nearly fifty years.⁹⁴ When Alderman John died in 1944 it was noted that he had been Chairman of the Transport Committee for fourteen years.⁹⁵ In October 1941 the Chairman of the Waterworks Committee drew attention to his thirty years service, while in November 1941 the Chairman of the Public Assistance Committee retired from the post after forty years.⁹⁶ In November 1942 the Chairman of the Parks, Baths and Cemeteries Committee celebrated twenty four years in the role, during which time he had never missed a meeting.⁹⁷ In September 1944 Chairman of the Waterworks Committee marked being a member of the Council for forty five years, of the Library Sub-Committee for forty four and the Chairman of the Waterworks Committee for thirty three.⁹⁸

⁸⁹ *Cardiff Times*, 28/10/39, p.2 & 4/11/39 p.3. Cllr Mrs Evans is reported as the first woman member for some years.

⁹⁰ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39, Full Council, 2/10/39 & Local Government Exhibition Programme, October, 1945; Special Meeting Full Council 5/9/39 p1075 min.6807 : Full Council 30/10/44 p.947 mins 6694,6695,6616

⁹¹ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1942/43, Parks, Baths and Cemeteries Committee, 8/6/43, p.616, min.4231: Full Council, 7/6/43 p 606, min. 4206.

⁹² CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1944/45, Waterworks Committee, 18/6/45 p. 652.

⁹³ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1944/45 Civil Receptions Committee, 8/6/45 p. 621, min. 4316.

⁹⁴ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1942/43, Health Committee, 23/6/43 p. 652, min. 4538.

⁹⁵ CHL, Transport Department Annual Report, 1944.

⁹⁶ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41, Waterworks Committee, 13/10/41, p. 911. min. 6344: Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42, Annual Council, 10/11/41, p. 7, min. 46.

⁹⁷ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1942/43, Parks, Baths and Cemeteries Committee, 17/11/42, p. 39, min. 270.

⁹⁸ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1943/44, Libraries (Finance and Books) Sub Committee 12/9/44 p805 min 5760; Waterworks Committee, 18/9/44, p. 799, min. 5723

Research by Morley and Davies indicates that in certain wards the same three Councillors were returned in rotation at least as far back as 1928, and in a number of instances Councillors were returned unopposed.⁹⁹ With continuity of membership and the age and service profile of the members, the Council would appear to have had a core of mature and long-standing members, well known to each other and in their respective wards, who had served together for some considerable time, gaining extensive experience of both the city and the workings of the Council. If Alderman Parker, who was Lord Mayor designate in 1944, is an example of the membership, they were likely to be locally based business men. Parker was a native of the city, who had risen from a compositor on the *South Wales Daily News* to having his own printing business and had been a Councillor since 1924.¹⁰⁰ Four of the Aldermen were titled/knighted, at least one for local government service.¹⁰¹

Unlike the Coalfields, Cardiff was not, at least during the war period, a Labour-controlled authority. The composition of Cardiff Council appears to have been very diverse. Morley and Davies record that there were Labour, Liberal, Conservative, Ratepayer and Independent members on the Council.¹⁰² It appears that politically the Council was in a position of having no overall control, which would probably have obliged Councillors to work together and across parties in many areas.

Attempting to derive a profile of the men who made up the Council – taking as a starting point the assumption that the majority of members were at least fifty years of age at the outbreak of war, they would have been born on or before 1889 – prior to the death of Queen Victoria in 1901. At least four members had birth dates on or before 1860, prior to the Boer Wars. These men had therefore grown up and enjoyed their formative years in the Victorian and Edwardian eras, and had gone through the Great War. Lucy Noakes suggests that attitudes were fashioned by the memorialising that followed – the Imperial War Graves cemeteries, the Cenotaph and the two minutes silence, ‘officially created, high status sites of public memory’ in which Councillors would be extensively involved.¹⁰³ They were firmly

⁹⁹Sam Davies & Bob Morley, *County Borough Elections*, pp.509-584.

¹⁰⁰ *The South Wales Echo*, 1/8/44, p.4.

¹⁰¹ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1937/38, AGM 9/11/37. The retiring Lord Mayor was knighted.

¹⁰² Sam Davies & Bob Morley, *County Borough Elections*, pp.509-584

¹⁰³ Lucy Noakes & Juliette Pattinson (eds), *British Cultural Memory and the Second World War*, (London, 2014) p.6.

within the century which Thomas Dixon characterises as that of the ‘stiff upper lip’.¹⁰⁴ Both these factors may have shaped attitudes. They had been Councillors during the Great War, running the Council and managing the Home Front – although it should be said that the nature and conduct of World War II on the domestic front was a very different phenomenon and on a very different scale. After the ‘war to end all wars’ they had survived the devastating flu epidemic of 1918, had witnessed the depression of the 1930s and the campaign for women’s suffrage, with an outcome that was barely ten years old. Closer to home, they had seen the heyday and now the beginnings of decline of the city’s docks and railways. The spread of the telephone, the wireless and the private car, the possibility of air travel and the perfecting of the tank and the bomber as instruments of war, had all taken place within their lifetimes. They were men with considerable life experience, much of it gained during their service to the Council. Many of them had long standing relationships within the city with other organisations and with constituents.

Relationships with Residents

This relationship is important because wartime protection of the city had to be based on a partnership between the County Borough and the residents. The residents provided the manpower for the Civil Defence machinery, but their cooperation was also necessary for the many other volunteer initiatives. Residents would have known the Councillors through their involvement in everyday life of the city. External contacts served to create links and networks into the wider community, keeping the Councillors in touch with the world outside the Council.

Members were actively involved in local organisations which reflected personal interests – members of varied organisations of varied types – business, church and chapel, charities, professional networking organisations, such the Rotary and the Freemasons. As notable persons in commerce and social life of the city, Alderman and Councillors held positions in

¹⁰⁴ Thomas Dixon, *Weeping Britannia: Portrait of a Nation in Tears*, (Oxford, 2015) pp 3, 208, 243. Dixon suggests that the era of the ‘stiff upper lip’ reached its ‘zenith’ and ‘apotheosis’ during the two World Wars. The emphasis on impassive restraint in propaganda, frequently repeated, contributed to a belief that this was a British trait.

these organisations, often with membership cutting across political party lines, as mentioned by Mainwaring.¹⁰⁵

Councillor Muston was President of the Ely and District C.P Domestic Poultry Club, while another member was a member of the Splott and Pengam Allotment Management Committee¹⁰⁶ Councillor A J Martin was pictured in the Echo, handing over a cheque for £700, on behalf of Grangetown Jubilee Club, raised for the 'Sportsman Fund' of the Infirmary from a membership 'largely drawn from the industrial classes.'¹⁰⁷ Alderman Purnell was a member of the St John Ambulance.¹⁰⁸ Councillor George Williams was Chairman of the National Industrial Development Council of Wales and Monmouthshire.¹⁰⁹ When Alderman Parker was appointed Lord Mayor in 1944 it was noted that he had been Chairman of the Board of the AFC when they won the cup in 1927.¹¹⁰ Councillor DT Williams was the honorary consul for Turkey.¹¹¹ Cllr J H Morgan was Chairman of the Cardiff Small Investors Committee.¹¹² Councillor Frewer and Alderman Bird were subscribers to the temperance movement in the city.¹¹³ Individual Councillors were prominent in their chosen church or chapel.¹¹⁴

Professional officers of the Council featured as members of the Rotary, including the Municipal Water Engineer, the Public Assistance Officer, the City Treasurer and possibly the Borough Librarian. The Lord Mayor was an honorary member and there were also some familiar names from the Councillor ranks. Membership of the organisation in general comprised professional and business interests –representatives of large retailers, funeral directors, charities, building societies, the legal profession, shipping, insurance and academia, which placed the Council, at officer and member level, in contact with the professional

¹⁰⁵ W.T. Mainwaring-Hughes WT, *Kicks and Kudos – Candid Recollections of Forty Years as a Councillor*, (Swansea, undated), p. 11.

¹⁰⁶ *Echo*, 7/7/44, p.2: CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1937/38, Smallholding and Allotment Committee, 14/2/38, p. 324.

¹⁰⁷ *Echo* 7/7/44 , p.3.

¹⁰⁸ *Western Mail*, 8/7/44, p.3.

¹⁰⁹ *Western Mail*, 11/7/44, p.4.

¹¹⁰ *Echo* 1/8/44 p4

¹¹¹ *Cardiff Times*, 2/12/39, p.1.

¹¹² TGA, *The Pioneer South Wales National Savings Magazine*, September, 1944, no 39.

¹¹³ CHL, *South Wales Temperance and Band of Hope Union Annual Report 1939/40*.

¹¹⁴ *Cardiff Times*, 18/11/39, p.2: 7/10/39, p.3. Councillor Henry Johns was a member of Tabernacle Welsh Baptist Church and Councillor Frewer officiated at Llandaff Cathedral.

circles within the city.¹¹⁵ Councillor Frewer was reported as outgoing President by the *Cardiff Times* in July 1939.¹¹⁶

Perhaps one of the most powerful male networking organisations within the city was the United Grand Lodge of England – the Freemasons. Links between the Council and the various local lodges in the city were on record before the war. On the occasion of the installation of a new Provincial Grand Master, in February 1938, VIP visitors were received by the Lord Mayor, with five hundred Brethren entertained to lunch at City Hall.¹¹⁷ In March 1939 Bute Lodge ‘invited a number of Masonic Brethren actively associated with Civic Life in Cardiff’ to attend a meeting.¹¹⁸ The exchange of hospitality was a characteristic of civic life. A luncheon, with a select guest list, was often a feature of events such as the savings weeks, and an invitation to the Lord Mayor’s Parlour a mark of honour. In this case, there were strong ties between the Freemasons and the councillors. Aldermen and Councillors were lodge members, holding office – Aldermen Purnell and Sir Ilyd Thomas are recorded as Masonic veterans¹¹⁹, Councillor Cazenave, was a Superintendent of Works.¹²⁰ W C Howell was Junior Warden and J H Jeans Deputy Grand Superintendent.¹²¹ The names F H Llewellyn, A S Weston and T E Gough also appear in Lodge lists.¹²² Llangottock Lodge proudly recorded that membership had included three Lord Mayors of the city – Sir Charles William Melhuish in 1931, James Griffiths in 1942 and James Ferguson in 1946.¹²³

This strong representation within the organisation from the ranks of Councillors confirms the position of Council members as firmly embedded in the power networks of the city, as well as demonstrating the potential influence of this organisation. It also illustrates that external memberships brought together Councillors of different political affiliations, as membership stretched across political parties – of the three Lord Mayors, for example, one was a member

¹¹⁵ CHL, Cardiff Rotary Roster Book 1939. The names Frewer, Howell and Gough match sitting Councillors.

¹¹⁶ *Cardiff Times*, 1/7/39, p.11.

¹¹⁷ Museum of Freemasonry, Freemasons’ Hall, London, (Hereafter, Freemasons’ Museum), *A Province at War A Record of Freemasonry in the Second World War in the Province of South Wales (Eastern Division)* Compiled by W. Bro Keith Flynn OBE p. Prov ADGC, p. 366.

¹¹⁸ Free Masons’ Museum, Bute Lodge No 960 1863 – 1963 Regular Meeting, 7 March 1939, p. 28.

¹¹⁹ Freemasons’ Museum, BEW 156 Sou Ed S Wales ED 1939-43 p.11.

¹²⁰ *Ibid* p.13.

¹²¹ Free Masons’ Museum, BEW 156 Sou ED Yearbook 1944- 45: *A Province at War* Flynn, p. 353.

¹²² Freemasons’ Museum, Glamorgan Lodge no 36 p 104: Howardian Lodge 5317 p 155: St John’s Chapter 36 p.122.

¹²³ Freemasons’ Museum *The Reason Why A History of the Masonic Province of South Wales* published by South Wales Masonic History Group 2012, p.207 .

of the Anti Socialist Coalition, one from the Labour party and one a Liberal.¹²⁴ Councillors were of significance within the city, aside from their elected office, and had connections which brought them into contact with residents, although admittedly often in a more rarefied atmosphere than the local streets. Contact with constituents in local wards supplied this. The Council placed a high value on use of the ward system for local organisation. Ward Councillors were expected to chair meetings and manage ward based activities.¹²⁵ In early ARP recruitment, as well as inviting Councillors themselves to enrol for ARP, the Watch Committee asked for meetings to be arranged by Councillors and Aldermen for citizens in their wards, ‘for purposes of enrolment and training of volunteer Special Constables, Auxiliary Firemen and Air Raid Wardens.’¹²⁶ The use made of the ward system as a focus of activity in recruitment meetings, for organisation of information services and for the entertainment provided for Stay-at-Home holidays indicates a network that took Council and Councillors into the city on a street by street level. Ward Councillors were used as a local resource and fund of local knowledge; those for Glan Ely ward were drawn into the search for a site for a British Restaurant. All ward Councillors were asked to take action in attempts to remedy poor take-up of the cash-and-carry service of the British Restaurants, which provided meals to take away. The opinions of ward Councillors were sought on the amusements in the parks for Holidays-at-Home. The newly formed Information Bureaux were under the direction of ward Councillors.¹²⁷

Value was placed on seeing and being seen in official capacities. At the suggestion of the Chairman the ARP Emergency Committee agreed to a rota of members to visit various stations ‘with the object of ensuring that people who are doing voluntary work should come into contact with the Committee under whom they are working.’ It took a short while to organise, with several intervening appearances at committee, but was finally approved in late January 1940.¹²⁸ There does not seem to have been any formal mechanism for reporting

¹²⁴ Davies & Morley, *County Borough Elections*, pp.509-584

¹²⁵ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39; Smallholdings and Allotment (Agricultural) Sub Committee, 5/10/39, pp 1286 & 1287 min 8210

¹²⁶ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1937/38, Watch Committee, 13/12/37, p. 141, min. 890 & Council, 10/1/38.

¹²⁷ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40, Special Sub Committee Re Suggested Establishment of Citizens’ Advice Bureaux, 14/9/39, p.1135, min. 7169; Development Committee, 20/9/39, p. 1158, min. 7366; Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42 Special Kitchens etc Committee 26/11/41 p68 min 529; Cardiff Council Minutes 1942/43 Special Kitchens etc Committee 3/6/42/p 635 min 4275; Parks etc., Committee 5/5/43/p 553 min 3698

¹²⁸ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40, ARP Emergency Committee, 5/12/39, p.218, min. 1429 & 26/1/40, p.324, min. 2189.

results. The Parks, Baths and Cemeteries invited members of the Council to attend Saturday dances at City Hall ‘with their ladies.’¹²⁹ Possibly the presence of elected members would have been considered to add tone to the proceedings. Certainly local resident Pat Cox found ‘an exceptionally nice crowd of people there.’¹³⁰

Wartime produced new roles in the community, or enhanced old ones. The chairman of the ARP Committee was the Operations Officer.¹³¹ Councillor Robson was appointed voluntary welfare officer of the reception camp, was superintendent of air raid shelters and chair of the Civil Defence Welfare Committee.¹³² On the death of Councillor Beecher it was recorded that he had been a long standing and enthusiastic volunteer special constable.¹³³ Alderman Hellyer was chairman of the Cardiff and District Council of Allotments Holders Associations.¹³⁴ The chairman of the Parks Committee organised the Borough’s Wings for Victory concert and sought the views of fellow Councillors on how much to charge for tickets.¹³⁵ Councillor Manley helped out at ARP central stores.¹³⁶

Councillors were particularly in evidence in connection with the propaganda campaigns. Elected members chaired Council sponsored events. Members of the Allotment Committee formed a rota for charring lectures given as part of the Dig for Victory campaign¹³⁷ If not charring, they might be speaking. Three ward representatives attended a public meeting in Llandaff on food production. Further meetings were agreed, to include committee members and ward Councillors to address the gatherings.¹³⁸ Members of the ARP Committee and ward Councillors attended meetings to recruit for civil defence.¹³⁹ Councillor Griffiths lectured at the Central Library during Warships Week.¹⁴⁰ A different elected member was delegated to

¹²⁹ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40, Parks, Baths and Cemeteries Committee, 9/1/40, min. 1698.

¹³⁰ TGA, DXGC263 Leversuch Correspondence, D/D Xgc 263/4/2/1 letter 7/3/ 41.

¹³¹ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40, ARP Committee, 24/5/40, p.682, min. 4703.

¹³² CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41, ARP Committee, 8/8/41, p.773, min. 5415: Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42, ARP Committee, 6/11/42, p.16, min 65: Cardiff Council Minutes 1942/43, 5/2/43, p. 285, min 1932.

¹³³ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1942/43, Watch Committee, 9/9/43, p. 761, min. 5421.

¹³⁴ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1943/44, Allotments and Smallholdings Committee, 22/5/44, p.546, min. 3897

¹³⁵ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1942/43, Parks, etc. Committee, 11/5/43, p545, min 3767.

¹³⁶ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1942/42, ARP Committee, 4/12/42, p. 114, min 695.

¹³⁷ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39 Smallholdings and Allotment Committee 5/10/39 p 1287 min 8210

¹³⁸ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40 Horticultural Committee, 8/3/40, p466, min 3136

¹³⁹ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40, Wardens’ Sub Committee, 14/6/40, p.758, min 5217,5218.

¹⁴⁰ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1934/42 Library Committee, 27/1/42, p.253, min. 1758.

open the Dig for Victory exhibition each day.¹⁴¹ Members were invited to offer opinions on the programme for Holidays at Home.¹⁴²

The impression gained from the minutes is of regular interaction between the County Borough and the city, and a willingness to engage. Approximately 2,000 people, including policemen, the staff of local businesses and Council Departments, and members of the public, assisted in assembling gas masks on the weekend of the Munich Crisis.¹⁴³ Members of the Cardiff and District Pharmacists' Association helped to identify medical items which were locally available for purchase, to equip First Aid posts.¹⁴⁴ After war began, community involvement took on a new slant. With their co-operation, the lorries of local coal carriers were tested for suitability for carrying water tanks for emergency supplies for domestic use.¹⁴⁵

Section Two

Forward Planning and the Munich Crisis

Central government was considering Civil Defence only a few years after the end of the Great War. The official historian, O'Brien, records that the Air Raid Precautions Sub Committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence, under the chairmanship of the Permanent Under Secretary of the Home Department, met for the first time on 15 May 1924, with a wide brief that covered all the matters that came to be known by the initials ARP. The Sub Committee received reports on the expected heavy bombing. Involvement by local authorities was expected, but was not heavily emphasised, and the focus was on keeping industry working.¹⁴⁶

The story of local government in war began early too, well before the declaration on 3 September 1939. Various methods of dealing with ARP were considered. O'Brien notes that by March 1933 it was 'decided, with small hesitation, in favour of the local government structure – a decision which, though to meet with many difficulties of application, laid a

¹⁴¹ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42, Dig for Victory Exhibition Sub Committee, 6/5/42, p574, min. 3883.

¹⁴² CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1942/43, Parks, etc. Committee, 5/5/43, p.553, min. 3698.

¹⁴³ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1937/38, Watch Committee, 12/10 /38, p.1031, min. 6988: Council, 3/10/38, p. 997, min. 6721.

¹⁴⁴ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1937/38, ARP Committee, 23/9/38, p. 994, min. 6707.

¹⁴⁵ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39, ARP Emergency Committee, 26/9/39, p. 1207, min. 7672.

¹⁴⁶ O'Brien, *Civil Defence*, pp 12 &13, 21, 24

permanent cornerstone.’¹⁴⁷ Local authorities were now part of the ongoing plans. Defence of the civilian population was to be organised locally, closely allied to the local authorities’ existing functions, and not involving ‘any appreciable financial outlay.’ Councils would be expected to produce an ARP Plan, under government guidance.¹⁴⁸

The first government circular to local authorities setting out expectations for air raid protection was issued in 1935, to all local authorities, except parish councils, and was available to the public at the price of 2d. O’Brien terms the Circular an invitation to local authorities and private employers to co-operate with the government in creating Air Raid Precautions machinery and for the public to learn about ARP, and to volunteer. It marked, he suggests, a shift of emphasis – with planning at the centre becoming of secondary importance to organising at the circumference.¹⁴⁹ In Cardiff, the Council was visibly making preparations by 1937. The Air Raid Precautions Committee was in the list of Council Committees appointed at the Cardiff Council’s Annual General Meeting on 9 November. The Watch Committee received a report in December 1937 on the response to advertisements appealing for volunteers. The Committee also looked to the Council’s own resources, resolving that eligible members of the Council be invited to enrol and that Aldermen and Councillors should organise meetings in their respective wards ‘for purposes of enrolment and training of volunteer Special Constables, Auxiliary Firemen and Air Raid Wardens.’¹⁵⁰

The Munich Crisis, at the end of September 1938, precipitated by German attempts to annex Sudetenland in Czechoslovakia, was the first test of both the Council’s preparations for war, and its willingness to respond to government direction. The Home Office issued a Circular of precautionary measures on 24 September. These required the assembly and distribution of respirators to the public and the construction of trench shelters within three days for ‘say, 10 per cent of the population,’ with arrangements for public shelters and first aid posts. Significantly it was indicated that all these measures would be eligible for grant funding.¹⁵¹

Munich provided a taster for events to come. In Cardiff gas masks were assembled and distributed on a ward basis throughout the city and trenches were dug in parks and open

¹⁴⁷ Ibid. p. 43.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid. p. 59.

¹⁴⁹ Titmuss, *Problems of Social Policy*, p. 6. (Circular 700216/14 9 July 1935) ; O’Brien, *Civil Defence*, p. 56.

¹⁵⁰ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1937/38, Watch Committee, 13/12/37, p.141, min. 890.

¹⁵¹ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1937/38, ARP Committee, 26/9/38, p. 994, min. 6710.

spaces by hastily recruited crews of unemployed men. Trenches and shelters had been discussed by the Home Office and the local authority associations in April 1938.¹⁵² C M Kohan, the official historian for Works and Buildings, indicates that now, ‘local authorities in densely populated areas throughout the country, many of whom had previously enquired whether they should begin digging trenches, and had been dissuaded, were advised to do so forthwith.’ The aim was to provide protection from blast and splinter within ten days, using volunteer or paid labour, on Council land or with the consent of landowners. Various systems were suggested for trench design, an area that was to become a growth industry in the months between Munich and the declaration of war.¹⁵³ Cardiff City Council dutifully dug in the Crisis, but was considering re-filling as early as November 1938, because of damage to public open spaces and flooding.¹⁵⁴ A BBC radio broadcast on 26 September 1938, outlining the preparations being made, a year before actual war, gives a vivid insight into the central role local authorities were expected to adopt in distributing gas masks, digging trenches and enrolling volunteers.¹⁵⁵

Meeting in special session on 26 September, the ARP Committee was advised of action which had already been taken, with those departments with direct labour contingents offering them for trench construction. The Committee agreed a flurry of activity, in accordance with the government instruction, in resolutions peppered with urgency. Action was to be ‘immediate’ or taken ‘forthwith’.¹⁵⁶ The Finance Committee met earlier on the same day to consider the financial implications of what the ARP Committee would later consider at their special meeting, approving expenditure in the order of £35,000.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵² O’Brien, *Civil Defence* p. 150

¹⁵³ C M Kohan, *Works and Buildings: History of the Second World War: United Kingdom Civil Series*, (London, 1952), p.355; TNA, HO 208/1, Home Office and Ministry of Home Security: Air Raid Precautions & Home Security Circulars.

¹⁵⁴ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39, ARP Committee, 25 January 1939, p296, min. 1886.

¹⁵⁵ www.bbc.co.uk/archive/ww2outbreak/7909.shtml In a 4 minute 45 second broadcast on 26/9/38 listeners are advised that local authorities will be distributing gas masks and have been given ‘a free hand’ in choosing whether this should be through collection from depots or distribution through the warden service. They would also be arranging for trenches to be dug in parks and some were appealing for volunteers for ARP duties. The public was also advised that a leaflet would be delivered to every home on the operation of the ARP and the preparation of a refuge room.

¹⁵⁶ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39, ARP Committee, 26/9/38, p. 994, min. 6710.

¹⁵⁷ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39, Finance Committee, p. 969 min. 6587. At full Council on 3/10/38, p.997, a motion was moved to refer this back, with instructions to apply to the government to bear the whole cost. It was defeated.

O'Brien and Mavis Nicholson both suggests that possession of a gas mask improved public confidence during the Munich Crisis and in the early part of the war: 'Every British adult civilian, for the first time in history, entered war with an article of personal defensive equipment.'¹⁵⁸ Nicholson provides a personal slant, 'Gas masks, even though we thought them utterly ghastly, made us feel important and cared for.'¹⁵⁹ Neither gas masks nor trenches stood the test of time. Mercifully respirators were never needed. Trenches were soon found impractical for the nature of the bombardments suffered – but the events of that weekend laid down some patterns that were to remain throughout the war. The supply of equipment from central government (for adults - the supplies of masks for children and babies were much slower in arriving); onward handling of these supplies by the County Borough, once they were in the city; the organising of a large number of volunteers who assembled the masks; the offer of work digging trenches to the unemployed, and the whole being followed by the official recording of fulsome praise and thanks, after the crisis was over.¹⁶⁰ While the Council might congratulate everyone on the achievements of a hectic weekend, the deficiency of the protection offered to the city was apparent and trenches were not considered to be the answer.

The rehearsal for war that the Crisis represented drew out a number of threads which developed when war actually came. The Council responded with alacrity, as did the city, with willing volunteers coming forward. The Council also made use of experience gathered, and took initiative, dismissing the use of trench shelters for the city, although the government continued to promote it. In October the *Municipal Journal* was celebrating the manner in which local authorities had met the threat of Munich. It was judged a test for ARP and for the flexibility of civic administration and democratic local government. Councils had risen to the occasion rapidly, with energy and without panic, while still maintaining normal activities. *Municipal Journal* reports, 'Local authorities have the satisfaction of knowing, in this first outstanding test, the machine of ARP, as the Home Secretary indicated in the debate in the House of Commons on Monday, worked well.'¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁸ O'Brien, *Civil Defence*, p.330.

¹⁵⁹ Mavis Nicholson, *What Did You Do in the War Mummy? Women in World War Two*, (London, 1995), Preface.

¹⁶⁰ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39, ARP Committee, 26 /9/38, p. 994, min. 6710: Finance Committee, 26/9/38, p.969 min. 6587: Full Council, 3 /10/38, p. 997, min. 6721.

¹⁶¹ *Municipal Journal*, 7/10/38, p. 2197.

The Timeline of the War

The gas masks and trenches of Munich forced unpleasant truths on the population and proved to be a watershed. From this point on, preparations for war intensified. The changing attitude within Government files and a steady acceleration in demands on local authorities reveal the shift of gear. It was recognized that it was not now a matter of *if* war came, but *when*. The enacting of the Air Raid Precautions Act 1937, early in 1938, had put in place the formal framework. By the summer of 1939 local authorities were instructed to form Emergency Committees, to give priority to ARP work, and not to allow the traditional period of the summer recess to interfere with action.¹⁶² Central government continued to revise its demands, without accepting full financial responsibility. Then came the period which has become known as “the phoney war” – in the opinion of Londoner and local government officer and diarist Anthony Heap – ‘dull and duller’.¹⁶³ Councils’ emergency arrangements were stood down, ARP establishments trimmed. Authorities adjoining Cardiff were reverting to normal operation.¹⁶⁴ The *Local Government Chronicle* reported councils returning to business as usual.¹⁶⁵ The Prime Minister was proclaiming that ‘Hitler had missed the bus.’¹⁶⁶

The tempo of the war changed significantly after the evacuation of Dunkirk, in June 1940, and the effect on Cardiff is obvious even in a formal record like the Council’s minutes – not simply in reports of bombing raids with damage and casualties, but in the sudden upsurge in demand for Anderson shelters, the spontaneous creation of Volunteer Force/Home Guard Units in Council Departments, to combat the threat of invasion, and the Council’s efforts to improve its shelter provision and provide for those who lost their homes. The *Local Government Chronicle* reported in an editorial on changes to powers of direction over local authorities in the Defence Regulations, asserting local government’s importance and willingness to play its part:

All that can be said is that local authorities will do their utmost to carry out speedily and efficiently anything that they are ordered to do. It has at last been realised that

¹⁶² CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39, ARP Committee 24/3/39 p 554 min. 3543; 24/4/39, p641, min. 4094. The Committee agreed that all officers should give priority to Civil Defence over normal duties, and the Town Clerk was empowered to engage additional temporary staff when considered essential.

¹⁶³ London Metropolitan Archives, City of London, ACC/2243, Wartime Diaries of Anthony Heap, 1939, 8/11/39.

¹⁶⁴ TGA,GC/CC/8/70, Glamorgan County Council Minutes, 21/12/39 min 43.

¹⁶⁵ *Local Government Chronicle*, 24/2/40, p.168.

¹⁶⁶ Andrew Roberts, *Churchill–Walking with Destiny*, (London, 2018), p. 488, quoting David Butler, *British Political Facts*, p.268.

they are instruments as essential for the successful prosecution of the war as the armed forces.¹⁶⁷

The hectic events of the latter part of 1940 – the Battle of Britain, culminating in the winter of bombardment in London – known as the Blitz – painfully revealed the inaccuracy of expectations and the inappropriateness of many of the preparations that had been made at the behest of government, prompting some significant changes in government attitudes. After the invasion of Norway and the fall of France, with the prospect of bombing in all parts of the British Isles, and of invasion, military chiefs of staff apparently advocated removal of civil defence, including the police, from local authorities to the control of the Minister for Home Security, exercised through the Regional Commissioners, but this did not take place. A number of measures were passed under the Defence Regulations to combat the threat of invasion and the Local Defence Force, later the Home Guard, was created, but this was not part of the local authority responsibilities.¹⁶⁸ The increased bombing threat moved attention to shelter. O’Brien indicates that the government, ‘while not prepared to admit that existing financial arrangements were a legitimate cause for delay, took further steps to decentralise approval of schemes.’¹⁶⁹ The period 1940 – 1941 saw focus move to different types of shelter provision — with increased comfort and facilities that had previously been resisted – and emphasis on improved provision for the after-effects of bombing.

In 1942 - 1943 direction moved again, the focus now being on keeping working populations functioning, maintaining moral and boosting financial and material resources for the war effort, with salvage drives and war savings. The preparations for the Normandy landings in 1944 were very apparent in the Cardiff area, with build up of troops, particularly from America. As the campaign to re-take mainland Europe began to achieve success, the Council was first intent on keeping the population alert, just in case, and then on preparing for the celebrations which would attend a victory and allow the Council to indulge its capacity for display and the indulgence of civic pomp and pride. Throughout it all the Council and its volunteers maintained a service to protect the city. According to the report produced in 1945, when the Warden Service was stood down, from 2 September 1939 to 30 November 1944,

¹⁶⁷ *The Local Government Chronicle*, 1/6/40, p.524.

¹⁶⁸ O’Brien, *Civil Defence* p355, 356, 357

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid* p. 367

Cardiff's 94 Warden Posts were manned by day and night with 'long hours of duty cheerfully carried out.'¹⁷⁰

Section Three

This section looks at major themes that recur throughout the thesis. It provides an important overview, to be borne in mind when considering the tasks examined in subsequent chapters.

Finance

Money was a big issue in Council preparations for war, most notably the balance between costs that the authority would pay, and those to be met by government. Government requirements for determining responsibility and recharging monies to the correct place, which created a multiplicity of book keeping transactions, may also have been influential in some of the adverse opinions expressed about authorities, which were stigmatised as obsessed with minutia.

Responsibility for funding war preparations was a source of tension before the war and in the early part, only receding when the reality of bombing loosened government hold on the purse strings. Historically the Ministry of Health's role, as the responsible Ministry for local government, had been to restrain rather than stimulate local expenditure. At first this viewpoint was not rapidly shaken off, and later in the war local authorities had to be convinced that they could spend government money: 'At the back of the minds of Councillors and officials there was still the fear that, because of some circular or regulation they had overlooked or did not understand, the burden would eventually fall on the rates.'¹⁷¹ This showed in Cardiff when the Council asked for clarification that the cost of construction and equipping all types of shelter would be reimbursed for contracts let after 19 October 1940.¹⁷²

O'Brien points out that before the war, 'Public opinion, or more precisely the public attitude to another war, was a cardinal factor in peacetime planning of civil defence, even during the earlier phase when this planning was being conducted in secret,' with the result that, 'neither

¹⁷⁰ CCL, 948.2 (268.8) CAR, Cardiff Air Raid Warden Organisation Report 1945, p.5.

¹⁷¹ Titmuss, *Problems of Social Policy*, p. 170.

¹⁷² CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40, ARP Committee, 25/10/40 p.1122, mins. 7875 & 7876.

the material resources nor the will for rearmament were readily available.¹⁷³ The part played in the late 1920s of the so-called ten year rule – that there was no possibility of a major war within ten years, and that the ten years always begins today – was a powerful curb on preparations for defence and especially on financial provision.¹⁷⁴ Although abandoned by November 1933, its memory tended to linger in the hesitation of government over committing to financing civil defence.¹⁷⁵

When Civil Defence planning began, local authorities were in the uncomfortable position of making preparation in peacetime for a war which the country was doing its best to avoid. The Government was determined that a percentage of costs would be borne from the Councils' own coffers and grant aid for war preparation was fixed at 60 to 70 per cent of expenditure. Local authorities, particularly in the run-up to war, believed the government should bear the total cost. In late 1936 the Association of Municipal Corporations was demanding the government meet 100 per cent of the cost of ARP.¹⁷⁶

Unease over the burden on ratepayers loomed large at many Cardiff Council meetings. Cardiff City's Treasurer and Controller raised concerns over finance early in 1938, when the Council's forthcoming budget was under consideration, with the potential costs of ARP as one of the issues causing uncertainty. He reported an increase in expenditure of £1,139 on estimates for the Police and Fire Brigade on the 28 February 1938, in part due to Air Raid Precautions, and flagged up a warning for the future. The Finance Committee was advised, 'In "Air Raid Precautions Schemes" and the development of the health and education services alone one may foresee expenditure which will make sufficient demand in the very near future on the financial resources of the Corporation.'¹⁷⁷ In response, perhaps under the influence of the Ratepayer contingent on the Council, the Finance Committee urged strict economy on Committees and Heads of Departments, and the avoidance of any spending: 'not immediately necessary for good management and government of the city.'¹⁷⁸

When asked to consider ARP provision, initially the automatic response was to protest the way in which the cost was to be allocated, with demands that the government meet the whole.

¹⁷³ O'Brien *Civil Defence* pp. 3& 6.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid* p.33.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.* pp. 46 & 47.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.* P. 73

¹⁷⁷ CHL, Minutes of Cardiff City Council, Finance Committee, 28/2/38, p.405, min. 2634.

¹⁷⁸ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1937/38, Finance Committee, 28/2/38, p. 407, min. 2634.

The ARP Committee resolved to send representations to the Home Secretary, local MPs and the AMC in February 1938, when the AMC was pursuing the issue, but at full Council on 7 March the Council agreed to protest only to the Home Secretary. In July 1939 the Council did protest the iniquity of the allocation to the AMC.¹⁷⁹ The lack of clarity over the amount of grant approval that the government would permit caused problems with settling the Council's Annual Budget in 1939. Discussions had to be held with the Home Office before the budget could be finalised.¹⁸⁰ When the Council's expenditure estimates for 1940/41 were considered it was on the basis of reducing projected expenditure, 'to an irreducible minimum necessary to carry on the essential services of the Council.'¹⁸¹ Once the Government conceded that shelter expenditure would be met by government, debate moved on to reimbursement for expenditure undertaken prior to Home Security Circular 262/1940.¹⁸²

At the base of expenditure planning and the setting and maintaining of budgets, were the local authorities' fiscal responsibilities to their electorate. AJP Taylor sees local authorities as predominantly the instruments of national policy, with two fifths of income in 1930 coming from government grant.¹⁸³ Chandler indicates that in 1919, 23 per cent of revenue expenditure was funded by grant, but by 1939 this had risen to 39 per cent.¹⁸⁴ These proportions, although significant, still leave the preponderant financing with the ratepayer. More recently Todman points out that although between 1900 and 1930 the proportion of English and Welsh local authorities expenditure from central grants increased from 12 to 26 per cent, most of the local authority's activities were paid for by the ratepayer, not the tax payer, and principles of local autonomy and accountability were still generally accepted as fundamental to the functioning of the British state.¹⁸⁵ In Cardiff a number of Councillors

¹⁷⁹ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1937/38, ARP Committee, 11/2/38, p.319, min. 2049; TNA, HO 186/1084, Local Organisation of Civil Defence Representations from the Association of Municipal Corporations. Letter from AMC dated 14/2/39: CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39, Full Council, 10/7/39, p. 951, min. 5922

¹⁸⁰ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39, Finance (Estimate) Committee, 5/1/39, p.429: Finance (Estimate) Committee, 27/1/39, p.432, min. 2748 and 17/2/39, p. 434, min. 27602.

¹⁸¹ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40, Finance (Estimates) Sub Committee, 15/2/40, p.437, min. 2956.

¹⁸² CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41 ARP Committee 3/1/41 p 178 min 1237: CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41 ARP Committee 17/1/41 p204 min 1456

¹⁸³ A J P Taylor *English History 1914 – 1945* (Oxford, 1965) p.257. Taylor suggests this held local authorities under central control without need for legal sanction.

¹⁸⁴ J A Chandler, *Explaining Local Government: Local Government in Britain since 1800*, (Manchester, 2007), p.149 .

¹⁸⁵ Daniel Todman, *Britain's War: Into Battle 1937 – 1941*,(London, 2016), p. 25.

were ratepayer representatives, with a more intimate link to those who elected them than that between central government and tax payer. The *Municipal Journal* reported in September 1938 on a Ratepayers Association conference, when an item for discussion was to bring pressure on the Ministry of Health and MPs not to put fresh burdens on the rates by way of new legislation and limit the debt incurred by any authority.¹⁸⁶

Local authorities also had to respect government rules of accountability, which might explain an apparent obsession with the paper trail of relatively small sums, often associated with evacuees, highlighted by Titmuss and AJP Taylor.¹⁸⁷ Titmuss fully recognises that ‘the task of the district auditors, for long a power in the land of local government, was to see that the precepts and regulations of the central departments had been followed with rectitude and precision.’¹⁸⁸ The official historians particularly highlighted the difficulties involved. Ferguson and Fitzgerald, the wartime Social Services historians, note the problem of applying ordinary local authority book keeping, in which expenditure for a person who was not residing in their own district had to be recharged to their home authority, or recovered from some person considered to be responsible. In war, need did not respect local authority boundaries and provision had to be made, among others, for migrant expectant mothers, both married and unmarried, and evacuated nurseries. In order to satisfy external audit, income and expenditure had to be accounted for, but mechanisms laid down in peacetime did not necessarily meet the circumstances of war, earning local authorities a reputation for niggling bureaucracy. Ferguson and Fitzgerald suggest, ‘The exchange of thousands of small charges and counter charges between hundreds of local authorities was one of the peculiar growths of war time social administration.’¹⁸⁹ Titmuss notes the problem of trying to distinguish costs for equipment provided for local homeless from the costs for those from other areas, who were also using it.¹⁹⁰

Small sums were continuously being transferred from the books of one authority to another with ‘an army of book-keepers, all busily and conscientiously engaged in transferring and re-transferring items of expenditure.’¹⁹¹ It all took time and energy, and could easily appear

¹⁸⁶ *Municipal Journal*, 9/9/38, p.1977.

¹⁸⁷ Titmuss, *Problems of Social Policy*, p.215: Taylor, *English History 1914 – 1945*, p.455.

¹⁸⁸ Titmuss P.235.

¹⁸⁹ Sheila Ferguson & Hilde Fitzgerald, *Studies in Social Services: History of the Second World War: United Kingdom Civil Series*, (London, 1954), pp. 58, 101,102.

¹⁹⁰ Titmuss, *Problems of Social Policy*, p. 53.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.* pp.153,154,215

pettifogging when the country was engaged in mortal conflict. Possibly this type of reference in the official histories has contributed to drawing local authorities into disrepute with subsequent historians. There are acknowledgements from government departments of the difficulty relating to audit and accountability, within National Archive files. In discussion of the arrangements for financing the activities of the WVS, for example, mention is made of the possibility of issues being raised by an auditor.¹⁹² The *Local Government Chronicle* was not above a jibe at the contrast between local and central government:

It is obvious to everybody that the meticulous control which the Treasury insists on imposing on local authorities is not imposed on the War Office. This is emphatically a civilians' war as well as a soldiers' war, and local authorities can be trusted not to waste public money.¹⁹³

In the edition on the 28 June 1941 "Notes of the Week" deplored officials being in a position that they, 'must be in doubt every time they make an entry in a ledger for fear the necessary authorisation is not to hand.'¹⁹⁴

The Bombing War and its impact on Cardiff

It was clear from the outset that a major issue of this war – possibly *the* major issue – would be the mass bombing of the civilian population, both to demoralise the population and to disrupt war production.¹⁹⁵ Using examples of the Zeppelin raids on Britain at the end of World War I, which were as devastating but less widespread than those now anticipated, the experiences of the Spanish Civil War, and even examples from as far away as China, the government had no doubts and a great deal of pessimism – mass casualties and potentially mass hysteria were anticipated – thousands dead, and the expectation that attack would

¹⁹² TNA, HO186/314 General File, WVS, Internal departmental correspondence, 2/5/40.

¹⁹³ *Local Government Chronicle*, 24/8/40, p.832.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.* 28/6/41, p.582.

¹⁹⁵ Titmuss, *Problems of Social Policy* pp.4 & 12-14. The weight in heavy explosive of possible enemy attack, prepared by the Air Ministry and passed to Government departments, via the Committee of Imperial Defence, was speculative, based on assumption and conjecture, but statements of possibility came to be accepted as statements of fact. Compounding the problem, the multiplier for casualties kept escalating, until an estimate of 72 casualties per tonne of high explosive was expected, 24 dead, 24 seriously and 24 slightly injured, with 36 needing hospital treatment: Overy *The Bombing War* pp. 25, 26. Overy asserts that after World War I there was widespread realisation among Europe's population that there was no possibility in any future war of civilian immunity. He suggests that scaremongering literature of the inter war years, written by soldiers, ex-soldiers, scientists and engineers 'paraded their expertise to the public to give their conclusions greater weight,' and fed the anticipation of an 'annihilating' level of damage.

include chemical weapons.¹⁹⁶ Overy notes, 'Cities in particular were expected to become sites of anarchic chaos,' but in fact 'did not in any meaningful sense breakdown.'¹⁹⁷ File correspondence between civil servants in the National Archive and marked 'secret' and 'to be kept under lock and key' includes instructions concerning massive casualties and vast numbers of dead.

It is apprehended by the Home Office that the number of the dead may be so great as to necessitate unusual methods not only of collection but also of disposal, and it is essential that in any such case Regional Officers should see that necessary action is taken and cover the responsibility for its unusualness.¹⁹⁸

The shape of the war which developed was very different from that anticipated, and the adaptations which had to be made as a result are one of its most interesting threads. Government inclination always favoured dispersal of the population, moving as many as possible out of danger zones. Initial policy heavily reflected this – the movement of children away from the areas expected to be most severely tested, and an emphasis on sheltering in small and familial groups, in or close to the home, dissipating the possibility of massive casualties from a single strike, as well as the danger of contagious hysteria. As the reality of remorseless night raiding became apparent, rethinking was necessary.

The prospect of war had brought this entirely new duty to those already performed by local authorities – protection of the public from aerial bombardment on a major scale, by the provision of air raid shelters, and a massive civil defence organisation, to deal with the aftermath of raids. An army of volunteers was need to care for their fellow residents in all stages of attack or potential attack, ranging from enforcing blackout, to offering a place of refuge from a bombed-out home. The government's depressing conviction that, 'the bomber will always get through,' became the mantra of government preparation.¹⁹⁹ War casualties were expected to be rapid and massive and those not killed or injured might be mentally shattered by the experience, a danger to themselves and others. There was an expectation that gas would be used, and that raids would be short and intensive and take place in daylight. In

¹⁹⁶ Robert Mac Kay, *Half the Battle Civilian Morale in Britain during the Second World War*, (Manchester, 2002), pp.21 & 39.

¹⁹⁷ Overy, *Bombing War*, pp. 616 & 617

¹⁹⁸ TNA, CAB 21/776 Civil Emergency Organisation Appointment of Regional Commissioners. Briefing Document and cover letter 29/9/38.

¹⁹⁹ The quotation was said to originate from a speech in Parliament by Stanley Baldwin on 10 December 1932, which came to be used to encapsulate the conviction, frequently restated thereafter, that attack was inevitable.

everything except the fact that bombing took place, these expectations were wrong, but this was the scenario that local authorities had to work with in the preparation for war.

In Cardiff the Council was not called upon to cope with repeated and devastating destruction, and this needs to be given some weight when judging its performance, balanced with awareness that at the time there was no certainty. It gradually became apparent that the County Borough would not need to provide for the amelioration of daylight carnage.

Historian Lawrence Thompson picks up this need to adapt to experience:

For the Blitz, as it developed, the authorities in spite of their elaborate plans were ill-prepared. They had an amplitude of shrouds and papier maché coffins, a million burial forms, thousands of hospital beds. For the obstinately unwounded living they had not planned so well.²⁰⁰

Instead of hospital beds, coffins and shrouds, the Council had to provide reasonable standards of protection, on an ongoing basis, to allow the populace to manage their wartime lives. Any night might be the one when the bombers came in devastating numbers, but quite possibly it might not. And not the next night, either. As Levine comments, 'The Blitz amounted to an unknown –and unknowable –prospect.'²⁰¹

In the first year of the war, South Wales had the doubtful distinction of being visited by enemy aircraft on more occasions than anywhere else in Britain. Representatives from civil defence organisations from London and other cities came to Cardiff to learn how the city was coping.²⁰² After September 1940 – the start of the London Blitz – Cardiff did not suffer bombardment on the scale of some other UK cities, and certainly not on the scale, or for the duration, suffered in London. Overy indicates that as a port, Cardiff was on a list of priority targets to forward the German food blockade strategy and also features as number 14 (in a total of 16 – just above Belfast and an “others” category) in total and weight of bombs in a table of major night raids between 12 August 1940 and 26 June 1941 (the duration of the

²⁰⁰ Laurence Thompson, *1940 – Year of Legend, Year of History*, (London, 1966), p.215.

²⁰¹ Joshua Levine, *The Secret History of the Blitz*, (London, 2015), p.58.

²⁰² Dennis Morgan, *Cardiff A City at War*, (Cardiff, 1998), p.47.

Blitz). The city was one below Swansea, although very far from the totals for London.²⁰³ (See Table below)

Table 2. Extract from table of Major Night Raids on the British Isles and Weight of Bombs (Tonnes) 12 August 1940 – 26 June 1941

	HE (Heavy Explosive) Bombs	Incendiaries	Number of Attacks
London	14,754	1,135	79
Swansea	363	103	4
Cardiff	273	63	3

Source: Richard Overy *The Bombing War in Europe 1939 – 1945*²⁰⁴

Commenting on the activities of local authorities, Stuart Hylton suggests that the provincial Blitz revealed just as many local government shortcomings as that of London. Small cities were often overwhelmed by disaster, morale undoubtedly fell and those in responsibility failed to do their duty effectively ‘and with fortitude’.²⁰⁵ Cardiff suffered attack, but was never tested to extremes. The city escaped relatively lightly in terms of number of raids and ferocity – it was not a target for ‘Coventration’²⁰⁶ The impact of the raids on the local economy was 'modest' and the effect on infrastructure rapidly made good.²⁰⁷ This is not to say that the results of any of the assaults might not have been much worse, particularly the night of 2 February 1941, when an incendiary on the roof could have caused major damage to City Hall, were it not for the fire watcher stationed on the roof.²⁰⁸ Later in the war the presence of a number of decoy SF (Starfish) sites in the locality may have drawn off attack.²⁰⁹ On at least one occasion – 4 March 1941 – a raid was apparently diverted to one of

²⁰³ Overy, *Bombing War*, pp 106, 107 & 112; J R Alban, *The Three Nights Blitz*, (Swansea,1994) p.7. Alban cites a German War Directive of 29/11/39 which identified Swansea and Cardiff as economic targets, because of their importance for coal.

²⁰⁴ Overy, *Bombing War*, p.112

²⁰⁵ Stuart Hylton, *Their Darkest Hour*, p.148.

²⁰⁶ Juliet Gardiner, *Wartime - Britain 1939-1945*, (London, 2004),p. 301. ‘The severity of the raid on Coventry, on 14/15 November, would add a new word to the lexicon of war in both Germany and Britain: *Koventrieren* or to Coventrate – to lay waste by aerial bombardment.’

²⁰⁷ Overy, *Bombing War*, 114.

²⁰⁸ John O’ Sullivan, *When Wales Went to War 1939 – 1945*, (Stroud, 2004). p.16.Ronald Brignall, fire watcher, was commended for saving City Hall from the effects of incendiaries.

²⁰⁹ Ivor Jones, *Wartime Bombing Decoys in Wales*,(UK, 2015) pp.11,12,14,15,21,49,51,53. Originally manned by the services, operation of these national decoy sites gradually passed to civilian crews. There were different

the decoy sites and in the opinion of the Regional Commissioner, a raid in the area of Penarth on 4 March 1941 would have inflicted much more damage if the bombers had not been diverted to a decoy site which was heavily bombed.²¹⁰ The city experienced a number of minor and three major raids. No area was left unscathed – 600 buildings were destroyed and 30,000 damaged, and while Cardiff did not experience attack on a scale with Coventry, Plymouth or Swansea, 355 people died and 502 were seriously injured.²¹¹ Cardiff was put on red alert (raiders overhead) 585 times between June 1940 and May 1944.²¹² The city was not devastated, but it suffered sufficiently on a number of occasions to test the competence of its precautionary services. In particular, attack by incendiary bombs was an ever present concern. Alerts, even when not followed by raids, could cause severe disruption.

The details of dates, severity and locations of sixteen raids between 20 June 1940 and 5 May 1941, with supplementary notes on the last raid in May 1943, appear at Appendix B.

The Concept of the Volunteer

In order to deliver a service that encompassed air raid wardens, medical and rescue, a massive workforce was necessary, based on use of volunteers. The Home Front in World War II has been portrayed by a number of historians, with justification, as the time when the volunteer was king – or queen. Richie Calder, writing in *Carry on London*, in 1941, praises, ‘ordinary blokes’ who volunteered, ‘because they thought they ought to.’²¹³ He lists Cardiff among the cities whose courage was tested.²¹⁴ Overy points out in *The Morbid Age*, that there was a tradition of volunteerism embedded in British public life, with a proliferation of committees, associations and societies for various causes in the inter war years.²¹⁵ MacKay,

types - QFs were fire decoys, QLs dummy towns and later S. F. or starfish sites, which created the illusion from the air of a target hit by a successful attack. The initial assumption was that there would be no need of sites in the West, but once Wales came within reach of the bombers Q kits were rushed to Newport, Cardiff and Swansea. By late 1940 Cardiff had three decoy sites, initially QF fire decoys, and later the larger starfish, incorporating a variety of devices to imitate burning buildings and different types of fire. Starfish sites could not be used on a clear or moonlit nights but in the right conditions were very effective, larger than the original QF sites, in rougher and more remote terrain. Cardiff’s 3 decoys were at Peterstone, which apparently took at least one hit, Lavernock and Leckwith. There were also 8 sites around Newport and 3 RAF sites at St Athan.

²¹⁰TNA, HO186/536 Regional Commissioners’ Monthly Reports Region 8, Report for 15/2/41 – 15/3/41.

²¹¹ Dennis Morgan *Cardiff – A City at War*, (Cardiff, 1998), p.70.

²¹² Ibid. P. 44.

²¹³ Richie Calder, *Carry on London*, (London 1941), Preface, pp. ix & xii.

²¹⁴ Ibid. P. 158.

²¹⁵ Overy, *Morbid Age*, p377

in *Half the Battle*, suggests volunteering as a ‘litmus test’ of robust civilian morale and commitment to the war.²¹⁶ The history of Cardiff County Borough prepared at its abolition in 1974 notes, ‘the voluntary spirit of service to the community was well evidenced in the city’.²¹⁷ The sheer number of people involved in the civil defence machinery overwhelmingly supports the view that volunteers were an essential part of the war effort – the fourth arm. Journalists and historians have lauded this example of citizen taking care of fellow citizen. Stephen Spender records, ‘For over five years a citizen’s army of a kind without precedent in the world’s history has stood to its tasks.’²¹⁸ Volunteers were an essential part of the multifaceted civil defence arrangements, but their efforts had to operate within a framework. The framework was organised, facilitated and resourced by the local authority, as agent and under direction from central government, providing practical local structure, but there has not been any in-depth consideration from historians to date on the local authority role.

Wartime volunteering, like many aspects of the conflict, was somewhat more complex than it might appear. When the Home Secretary and Minister for Home Security, Herbert Morrison, visited Cardiff in November 1940, he expressed pleasure in meeting so many Civil Defence workers, ‘in such a large city as Cardiff, the large number of volunteers was unique.’²¹⁹ Some of the reason for that claim to uniqueness lies in the wartime concept of volunteering, which was somewhat different from the way the term is understood today.

In contemporary use the term volunteer equates with an individual who undertakes a task from motives of altruism, without payment. The Oxford dictionary provides a corresponding definition, ‘Volunteer – a person who freely offers to do something; a person who works for an organisation without being paid.’²²⁰ There were many people in wartime Cardiff who were doing exactly that, but the contemporary definition *then* seems to have been more in the nature of an antonym of ‘conscript’. Some of the volunteers were full-time and paid. In other cases there was an assumption that individuals would volunteer because of the nature of their peacetime work. There is also evidence of a certain amount of moral or peer pressure, the expectation of “doing the right thing”. There was certainly an assumption from government

²¹⁶ Robert MacKay, *Half the Battle Civilian Morale in Britain during the Second World War*, (Manchester, 2002) p. 128, & 132.

²¹⁷ *Cardiff 1889 – 1974* p68

²¹⁸ Stephen Spender, *Citizens in War and After*, (London, 1945), p.5.

²¹⁹ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41, ARP Committee, 13/11/ 40, p. 19, min.113.

²²⁰ The Compact Oxford English Dictionary Second Edition 2003

that local authority employees would make up the bulk of certain sectors of the civil defence machine. Instructions from the ARP Department of the Home Office in October 1939 indicated that it was expected that Decontamination Squads would be largely local authority employees and that many ‘duty staff’ of Control Centres should also be the authority’s own staff, supplemented by volunteers, as necessary. This would also apply to Report Centres – a nucleus of local authority staff would be supplemented by part time volunteers, to ensure continuous manning.

As war dragged on, however, the concept of the local volunteer became somewhat eroded. The *Local Government Chronicle* was actually pressing the idea of compulsion in civil defence in the summer of 1940.²²¹ Pete Grafton, examining *The People Out of Step with World War II*, by way of a series of vivid interviews, asserts that the ‘war effort was maintained on the basis of threat and coercion, rather than on any volunteer spirit that prevailed amongst the majority of the population’²²² This may be an overstatement, but there was change taking place. O’Brien suggests that instead of the idea of the volunteer, ‘the principal of universal responsibility and universal participation,’ became substituted.²²³ The reorganisation of the fire service effectively nationalised it; conscription was used to recruit for the Fire Guard; freezing orders allowed volunteers to be prevented from leaving and the use of direction to such services as the Home Guard, challenged the concept of volunteer, as did the National Service Act 1942, which required everyone between the ages of 18 and 60 undertake some form of national service.²²⁴

Volunteering did not have to directly involve the council sponsored ARP structure. Some organisations which already existed, such as the St John Ambulance, the Red Cross, the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides, took on expanded roles in wartime. The records of the Freemasons record that at the end of 1939 there were twenty lodges meeting in the city with memberships well into three figures. Brethren served in the Home Guard, Civil Defence, Special Constables, Observer Corps, Auxiliary Fire Service and as evacuee and food and health inspectors; 340 members were in the Home Guard and over 1,000 in the Civil Defence and

²²¹ *Local Government Chronicle*, 6/7/40, p.643: 20/7/40 p. 692.

²²² Pete Grafton, *You, You, You – The People Out of Step with World War II*, (London, 1981) p. 169. The sample is a small one, a total of forty nine interviews.

²²³ O’Brien, *Civil Defence*, p.548.

²²⁴ Gardiner, *Wartime*, p.508.

Police.²²⁵ The Women's Voluntary Services for ARP (WVS) was called into existence by government solely for the purpose of mobilising women for the war effort, which Katherine Bentley Beauman suggests was the first time a voluntary organisation was used as part of the machinery of government.²²⁶ At first a vehicle for recruitment, under its formidable leader, Lady Reading: 'whose organisation seems to promise unlimited numbers of suitable women,' the WVS rapidly expanded into many other areas, featuring as field workers in many campaigns and services, including salvage and the various public food schemes, as well as Rest Centres.²²⁷ In many ways the WVS came to epitomise the wartime volunteer, 'the army Hitler forgot.'²²⁸ Local authorities were urged by government to make full use of the organisation. 'Local representatives should work under the direction of and in the closest co-operation with the responsible officers of the Authority.'²²⁹ It was expected that women would fill care and domestic elements of the civil defence service – nursing and catering. In Cardiff the WVS provided the workforce for the caring and catering roles that went with post-bombing services and also in feeding the city, in crisis and in the special provision that the County Borough made, to provide regular wartime meals for workers, the British Restaurants. Canteen, counter and transport staff came from the volunteer ranks of the WVS.

While the bulk of volunteers were part of the civil defence provisions, not all were. There were ad hoc organisations which were reviving structures that had been in place in the Great War, such as savings committees. Others gave new purpose to movements already in existence, such as allotment societies, which received fresh impetus and structure from the Dig for Victory campaign. Volunteering could and did overlap between services, with individuals taking on multiple roles, a fact of which government departments were well aware:

We have the impression that the WVS are rather loosely organised and, in common with other voluntary organisation in the country, consists of certain members who

²²⁵ Freemasons Museum, *A Province at War A Record of Freemasonry in the Second World War in the Province of South Wales (Eastern Division)* Compiled by W. Bro Keith Flynn OBE p. Prov ADGC 1988 p 382, p.25.

²²⁶ Katherine Bentley Beauman, *Green Sleeves – the Story of the WVS/WRVS*, (London, 1977), p.8.

²²⁷ TNA, HO 186/152, *Local Authorities: Preparation of National Register in an emergency*. Note prepared by Sir Sylvanus Vivian for use of the Lord Privy Seal in the Parliamentary debate on the National Register for the 1941 Census, 20 December 1938.

²²⁸ Bentley Beauman, *Green Sleeves*, p.39.

²²⁹ TNA, HO186/314 General File WVS, ARP Department Circular, 3/2/39.

make it their full time service together with a great number who belong at the same time to one or more other organisations in their locality.²³⁰

This excess of willingness and enthusiasm could cause its own problems. One of the reasons recruitment into the Fire Guards proved difficult may have been because in 1941 the resource of potential volunteers had already been heavily tapped – although the nature of the work and the night shifts involved would have played their part.

Regular Service: Keeping Things Running –The City Transport System

The normal working of the city still required, and received, attention, even with the additional demands of war. Transport was an important feature of the Council's war time work, to ensure the efficient functioning of the workforce. Always a vital element of city life, buses, trollies and trams were provided by the County Borough, under the control of the Transport Committee. In war the County Borough was faced with the task of maintaining this normal service in circumstances that were vastly different from normal. The city's transport was as essential in war as it had ever been, and serves as an example of the exigencies faced by the Council, and the way they were overcome, or accommodated. Many things militated directly against the operation of a normal service – the blackout, petrol restrictions, loss of personnel, and the effect of bombing. Just keeping everything going was a task that aided the war effort, regardless of the additional duties that war imposed. As with so many matters, normal service was linked to maintaining morale. When considering the effect of bombing in Manchester, Beaven and Thomas indicate that Mass Observation had noted that, 'The importance of transport in keeping up morale cannot be over emphasised.'²³¹

Cardiff Council was advised a few days prior to the war of the implications of any conflict for a key part of the transport system. If war was declared, fuel for omnibuses would be reduced by fifty per cent. Suspension of services and reorganisation would be needed, to deal with the effects of this, and with loss of staff to call up.²³² Once war was declared, curtailment and review of services was again discussed.²³³ At full Council on 11 September the reorganisation of services was referred back, but when it was again considered at

²³⁰ TNA, HO186/314, General File WVS. Note dated 7/2/40 from the War Office to Home Security in response to a round robin of 30/11/40 on what the WVS does for the Army.

²³¹ B Beaven & D Thomas *The Blitz and Civilian Morale in Three Northern Cities 1940 – 1942 Northern History* 32 (1996) pp195-203

²³² CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39 Transport Committee 25/8/39 p1067 min 6755.

²³³ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39 Special Transport Committee 8/9/39 p1093 min 6949

committee, the previous decision on 25 August, to reorganise, was confirmed. A Traffic, Fares, Uniforms and Depots Sub Committee was set up to deal with supervision and re-organisation.²³⁴

In the first year of the war bus revenues were down, although tram revenues were up.²³⁵ The following year passenger numbers were up, and mileage also increased. Problems caused by bombing strained resources, and the service was also providing transport for people being moved out of blitzed areas.²³⁶ Passenger numbers continued to increase as war progressed.²³⁷ In a letter written on 14 November 1941, local resident Pat Cox mentions having to push to get on public transport.²³⁸

During 1941 and 1942 major changes to conditions of service and the composition of the workforce had to be faced. In February 1941 the Transport Committee agreed to an extension of the working week to overcome labour shortages, and also approved the employment of female labour where it was deemed necessary.²³⁹ In April the Committee was advised that it was now necessary to employ female conductors²⁴⁰ In May agreement was given to employ female cleaners.²⁴¹

By 1942 problems were arising because of the age of the fleet, all the trams being over sixteen years old. One hundred and fifteen vehicles were being maintained for the Ambulance and Casualty service as well as transport for the British Restaurants and mobile canteens.²⁴² By 1944 record numbers of passengers were being carried, including service men and women and special contracts for factories, which had increased by twenty five per cent. Extra services were provided for Holidays-at-Home in August. The Department had secured some

²³⁴ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39 Full Council 11/9/39 p 1101 min 6986; Transport Committee 21/9/39 p1192 mins 7582 & 7583

²³⁵ Bus services had had to be reduced. The fare to and from the town centre was one penny and one and a half pence maximum for a through journey. CHL Transport Department Annual Report y/e March 1940

²³⁶ CHL Transport Department Annual Report 1941

²³⁷ In 1942 the service carried 80,021,875 passengers against 70,072,581 in 1941, but mileage increased by 110,387 miles. 21,708,230 more passengers were carried against the last full year, pre-war against decreased mileage of 1923,622. Comparing 1939 with 1942 showed a 37.22% increase in passengers and a 24.66 % decrease in mileage. CHL Transport Department Annual Report 1942

²³⁸ TGA DXGC263 Leversuch Correspondence D/D Xgc 263/4/8/1

²³⁹ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41 Transport Committee 6/2/41 p 260 min 1870

²⁴⁰ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41 Transport Committee 10/4/41 p 448 min 3196

²⁴¹ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41 Transport Committee 8/5/41 p531 min 3788

²⁴² CHL Transport Department Annual Report 1942

new buses.²⁴³ In the final year of the war, passengers had increased yet again, with reduced mileage.²⁴⁴ These relentless increases illustrated pressure on Council resources.

Following Dunkirk, raids on the city had become more disruptive, occasioning debate over what Council services should continue once an alert was sounded. Provisions relating to transport were particularly sensitive. Drivers expressed reluctance to carry on in the blackout, after the siren had sounded. Letters to the *Echo* drew a contrast between what was being asked of drivers and the shops and City Hall, which closed, when buses were expected to continue.²⁴⁵ The blackout also presented other difficulties, not always in ways that might be expected. Residents in Splott had issues over the potential breach of the blackout represented by a lighted bus, taking to the streets to attempt to halt journeys. Drivers had difficulty continuing on their routes after the sounding of an alert, prevented by the ‘hostile attitude of certain residents of the area.’ After discussion it was agreed that police protection should be requested for drivers and conductors of trams and buses in Splott and Grangetown and elsewhere if necessary, to enable them to operate, and that Fire Watchers be instructed that the lights on vehicles were in accordance with lighting regulations and they must not interfere with the service or insist lights are extinguished. Notices would be displayed on tram standards and elsewhere, as well as publicity in the press, to this effect.²⁴⁶

By 1943 services had to be reorganised again. A revised list of bus stops was agreed with the Regional Transport Commissioner.²⁴⁷ At the request of the Commissioner further economies were introduced shortly after, to save fuel and rubber, reducing mileage after 8pm.²⁴⁸

An unexpected hazard arose after the arrival of American troops in the city. The Transport (Service Operations) Sub Committee was advised when it met on 15 February 1944 that so many trams had been damaged in collisions with US Army vehicles that this had ‘seriously

²⁴³ CHL Transport Department Annual Report 1944

²⁴⁴ 98,902,317 passengers against 77,846 mileage. CHL Transport Department Annual Report 1945

²⁴⁵ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40 Special Transport Committee 2/10/40 p1041 min 7283; *The Echo* 4/10/40 p2 & 5 /10/40 p5

²⁴⁶ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42 Transport Committee 11/12/41 p 112 min 823 .

²⁴⁷ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1942/43 Transport Committee 14/1/43 p212 min 1435 The stops were at a ratio of approximately four per mile and authority was given for appropriate advertising.

²⁴⁸ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1942/43 Transport Committee 11/2/43 p295 min 2032; Transport (Service Operations) Sub Committee 13/4/43 p 482 min 3724 Services would be organised to connect, with as little disruption to passengers as possible.

depleted the number available for service.²⁴⁹ On some occasions the Council took the initiative. Before the end of the war a system of Pay As You Enter (PAYE) was introduced for the Corporation public service vehicles.²⁵⁰

Winter weather was a risk to be expected, although some of the winters of the war years were exceptionally harsh, with conditions in January 1945 proving exceptional and the Transport Committee agreeing steps to defend its staff from complaints voiced in the press.²⁵¹ Whatever the circumstances, transport had to continue, in adversity and victory. The Transport Committee agreed transport would run on the day selected for the victory celebrations.²⁵²

Conclusion

This chapter surveys components which underpin the wartime responsibilities of the County Borough, which are explored in the following chapters. On the eve of war Cardiff was a municipality at a relative high point, aware of economic change in the offing and seeking means to ameliorate it. It was a city of contrasts – the centre and the docks – which will be of significance in the chapter on air raid shelters. The government set the agenda, through its local mechanism, the regional organisation. It exerted control over finance, a source of friction which ebbed and flowed throughout the war, as reality overtook expectation. Councillors were embedded in their neighbourhoods, expected to be local leaders. A core of the most influential – the committee chairman – were long established and experienced in their roles. They were ready to act at the time of the Munich Crisis and able to call upon a body of volunteers. The volunteer was an essential part of the government plan for passive defence, which it was the job of the Council to mobilise, as will be seen in Chapter Two.

The Council had broad existing responsibilities outside the massive additions of ARP, shelter provision and government campaigns. It coped and adapted to meet the fluctuations of war in a city that was not heavily bombed, but which suffered sufficiently to challenge the

²⁴⁹ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1943/44 Transport (Service Operations) Sub Committee 15/2/44 p286 min 2037: Watch Committee 28/3/44 p 406 min 2898 The Committee agreed on strong representations to the appropriate authorities and a reference to the Watch Committee, where the Chief Constable reported he had taken the matter up.

²⁵⁰ Credited to Alderman WH Parker, chair of the Committee and reported in the Echo 1/8/44, p4 when Parker was Lord Mayor designate. The Transport Department's Annual Report of 1944 indicates that interest was being expressed in the system from other parts of the country. CHL Transport Department Annual report 1944

²⁵¹ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1944/45 Special Transport Committee 8/2/45 p 249 min 1794.

²⁵² CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1944/45 Transport 10/12/44 p 90 min 677.

provisions made to protect the residents. The Council showed itself confident and independent, making its own choices over such things as trench shelters, the Emergency Committee and the Decontamination Depots, organising affairs to suit itself rather than the dictates of government. It maintained regular services, in the face of difficulty, although these might be in truncated form. This was the broad picture, the foundation from which the Council had to take on two completely new war time tasks – Civil Defence and shelter provision – and to adapt existing expertise to participate in war time campaigns that mixed issues of morale with practical outcomes.

Chapter Two – Civil Defence

Introduction

Civil Defence has been chosen for examination in this chapter because it was an essential part of the World War II Home Front, and one in which the local authority was a critical component. It was a completely new service and a completely new responsibility for local government, necessitated solely because of the war. Central government chose local authorities to organise it and imposed a legal obligation to do so. It involved recruiting ordinary people and shaping them into a domestic defence force to cope with the effect of air attack on a local community. This chapter looks at how this was made to work. In concentrating on one city, it provides a more detailed and intimate picture of the practical organisation of the civilian army than is possible in the large number of studies of the war which focus on the general and the national. This is its chief contribution to furthering knowledge of the history of the war.

Air Raid Precautions, or Civil Defence, was the term used for the services and the many contingents of personnel required to deal with the effects of bombing on civilian targets – control rooms and report centres, air raid wardens, medical and rescue services, the fire service, the Fire Guard, and rest centres. The official war historian, Terence O’Brien, notes that ARP was the service developed in peacetime by the Home Office, which in wartime became Civil Defence under the Ministry of Home Security, a much wider and less defined term, covering existing services and those in development. He comments, ‘The civil defence of the UK during World War II grew into an affair of great complexity and the area which its history might cover is immense.’¹ Vast and expensive provision was initially made to protect from gas, with much less consideration of the effects of fire on urban areas. Casualties had been expected to be to human life, not buildings. Raids that mixed heavy explosives with incendiaries resulted in post-raid devastation of physical structures – city centres with dislocated transport, damaged utilities, dangerous structures and fires, ruined houses and disruption from unexploded bombs. This chapter gives a view of the local machinery that would deal with this devastation. It examines the way in which the Cardiff Council interacted with government officials and local inhabitants, and the care provided for bomb victims.

¹ O’Brien, *Civil Defence*, Preface xv, & p.301. In practice, in Cardiff the term ARP continued to be extensively used.

The expansion and contraction of the civil defence service followed the contours of the war. This chapter will adopt a similar pattern, beginning with an outline of the ARP structure and the speed with which Cardiff County Borough filled the role expected of it. In the run-up to the war, and the first months, emphasis was on recruitment, training, premises and equipment. Cardiff's experience in these areas illustrates how a local authority interacted with the government machine and the manner in which the government's framework deployed on the ground. Recruitment was about building up numbers; training and equipment about ensuring recruits functioned effectively. The chapter then moves on, to chart how the service was re-shaped to meet the fluctuating demands of war. Almost immediately after the declaration of war the government began to reorganise. Consideration of the effect of adjustments and amalgamations on the service in the early to mid point of the war is followed by a short section which deals with informal arrangements in the city – self help by residents – which the Council appears to have facilitated. The Council's actions were directed by government and could not have been delivered without the involvement of residents, but residents' responses needed a framework, even on an informal level. The chapter next looks at the Fire Guard, a direct reaction to the use of incendiary bombs. This was a new service, introduced late in the war, which involved large numbers of residents, not always willingly. This form of attack had considerable significance in Cardiff, as the major raids suffered later in the war were of this type. The risk of fire was a particular sensitivity for the Council, which kept alert to possible threats within the city.

An important section deals with services provided after a raid, which have been subject to criticism from historians. The thesis will examine post-raid Rest Centres in Cardiff, and the method that the Council chose to ensure that Centres served their intended purpose as short stay facilities, by rapidly re-housing those people bombed out of their homes. Associated with this, the section will also look at the Council network of information bureaux, another area where local authorities have been classed as deficient in some wartime studies. The penultimate section of the chapter will return to the chronology of the war and the winding down of the service, with personnel being re-assigned to other roles and other parts of the country to meet need, before the conclusion, assessing these various aspects of ARP in the city.

The massive requirements of ARP could never have been delivered in the form that was adopted without major involvement of volunteers. ARP was to be a service to the local

community, not a national service.² Presented variously as neighbour assisting neighbour; the fourth arm of defence; the community working to help itself, the chance for the non-combatant to contribute to the war effort by “doing one’s bit”, the obligation of the citizen to sacrifice time and comfort – ARP was whatever suited the circumstances.³ O’Brien comments, ‘Total War would be met, in the first instance, by democratic self-help, with responsibility placed squarely on each local community and factory to take a major part in organising its own civil defences.’⁴ Richard Overy confirms that civil defence transformed the Home Front into, ‘a potential front line manned by ordinary people in their own defence.’⁵ Robert MacKay draws attention to the government’s belief that ARP was about morale, as well as protection, with a reference to the need to ‘ensure the country against panic’ in the Home Secretary’s speech during debate on the ARP Bill.⁶

This emphasis on local responsibility was a large part of the story, but it was not the total picture. ARP, like shelter accommodation, was a war service that the Council was obliged to provide. The Council prepared and submitted an ARP plan, which was subject to government approval.⁷ Recruitment, training, choice of premises – all were responsibilities for the local authority, but in practice the government exercised a significant degree of control, particularly in financial matters, exercised through the regional apparatus. Regional personnel oversaw the training, approved the location and style of premises, and authorised expenditure on matters from cupboards in warden posts to the erection of buildings. Government set parameters on establishment, and large amounts of equipment were supplied from the centre.

The government kept a hold over the framework, but it was local people, on the ground, who coped when a raid was in progress. This chapter will show how central government could not

² TNA, HO 186/1084 Local Organisation of Civil Defence Representations from the Association of Municipal Corporations, Notes of a meeting between the Lord Privy Seal and representatives of the Association of Municipal Authorities, 10/3/39. The Lord Privy Seal indicated that civil defence was considered essentially to be the business of helping people protect themselves, a local service in which expense had to be shared between government and local authorities, not financed centrally, as the fighting services.

³ CHL, *Cardiff Air Raids 1939-1945* An information source book p. 32, quoting the *Echo*, 4/9/40. In an interview in the *Echo* a post warden commented on the team spirit of the wardens, and that their desire to help fellow residents was thought of as a ‘service’.

⁴ O’Brien, *Civil Defence*, pp. 283 & 284.

⁵ Overy, *The Bombing War*, p.621.

⁶ Robert Mac Kay *Half the Battle Civilian Morale in Britain during the Second World War* (Manchester, 2002), p.31

⁷ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40, Emergency Committee, 5/12/39, p.218. A revised ARP Scheme for Cardiff was approved by the Regional Commissioner at the end of 1939, with a copy sent to every member of the ARP Committee.

have put in place the structures that it did, without input from the local authorities. Using the example of Cardiff it will illustrate the little explored role of the local Council as a vital bridge between government and the civilian volunteers. These services were completely outside any previous local authority responsibility in type and scale – a factor that is perhaps overlooked in assessing how local authorities managed the work that was thrust upon them. The government, acting through the local authorities, called into being a volunteer army of more than twice the size of the regular fighting forces combined, with no pre-existing organisation and equipment, initially with rudimentary training, with no system of command, other than the warden service, and with no traditions and little discipline. This was the material which shaped the civil defence service.⁸

Civil Defence Services –Recruitment, Training, Equipment, Consolidation

In late 1938 twenty seven Rescue Parties and twenty seven Decontamination Squads were approved for the city by the Lord Privy Seal, with a substantial number of trained reserve personnel requested.⁹ The Council was proposing forty eight first aid parties, but the Ministry wanted ninety.¹⁰ On 21 March 1939 Circular ARP 57 laid down that every ARP Scheme was to appoint an ARP Controller.¹¹ Harrison points out the key nature of this post, heading local ARP organisation.¹² During a raid, the Controller was the centre point in coordinating action in the city. Cardiff Council moved rapidly to appoint the Town Clerk, with other senior officers in relevant posts.¹³ (After the death of the Town Clerk in 1942, the Chairman of the Emergency and ARP Committees succeeded to the role.)¹⁴

There were two strands to the hierarchy of the civil defence administration laid down by government – administrative and practical. The administrative side was headed by the

⁸ O'Brien, *Civil Defence*, p. 203.

⁹ TNA, HO 207/1123, Cardiff County Borough Rescue Decontamination and Repair Services. Correspondence, 21/12/38.

¹⁰ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39, ARP Committee, 25/1/39, pp.296 – 297, min. 1891.

¹¹ O'Brien, *Civil Defence*, p. 217. The Controller would act in war, under instruction from the Home Secretary or his authority's Emergency Committee, with overall responsibility for the conduct of ARP, most notably in its acute phase, the bombing raid, with no executive function in peacetime, except to coordinate the preparations of other officers heading ARP sections.

¹² Tom Harrison, *Living Through the Blitz*, (London, 1976), p.33.

¹³ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39, ARP Committee, 24/3/39, p. 555, min. 3543. The Town Clerk was appointed, although there was an attempt at Council to substitute the Chief Constable in the role. Council, 3/4/39, p.582, min. 3698.

¹⁴ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1942/43, ARP Committee, 27/11/42, p.89, min. 571.

Controller, with a control room staff, who were highly dependent on an adequate telephone system to receive situation reports from all parts of the city. The ability to communicate during alerts and raids was vital, which led to the creation of a network of new telephone installations throughout the city, both to link municipal and ARP facilities and to enable key workers to be contacted in emergencies. Approving the supply of suitable phone lines to various premises was a frequently recurring item on early ARP Committee agenda.¹⁵ The function of the Control Room was to monitor, record and coordinate, collecting details of bomb strikes to enable appropriate action to be taken on the street. The staff of the Control Room came, predictably, from the administrative staff of the Council.

The Chief Constable handled the practical and physical side – the warden and fire services and specialist units such as medical, rescue and demolition. The warden service was responsible for the organisation on the ground. In the absence of raids, wardens patrolled to enforce the blackout. In alerts and raids they marshalled people to shelters, relayed information to the control room and worked with specialists to deal with the effects of bombing in their sector. The wardens worked a shift system under a Chief Warden, out of posts and depots, close to the place where they lived, with a particular value being put on local knowledge. O'Brien, notes the motley force of male and female citizens reporting for duty at the outset of war; many middle aged and more, giving service near home, not necessarily able bodied, of every class and occupation, some trained, others not – a national service, locally recruited and administered.¹⁶

The term Warden Service is often used to encompass all the varied provisions of Civil Defence, but wardens were actually only a part of the machinery. Many publications refer to the Service or the individual warden – as a martinet enforcing the blackout, or a pillar of the neighbourhood when the bombs fell – but there is less detail on how they came to be organised and on the street. Other than to note they were part of a huge volunteer army, there is often limited acknowledgement of the steps and structure which lay behind their presence, and that of the units that provided the specialist services. By focussing attention on a single authority, the thesis allows room for the infrastructure of ARP, and the influences that formed it, to be explored. The more specialist services had special requirements – qualified medics in

¹⁵ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1937/38 & 1938/39, Watch Committee, 21/9/38, p.942, min. 6402: ARP Committee, 11/11/38, p.37, min. 146 : ARP Committee, 24/4/39, p. 640, min. 4091 : ARP Committee, 24/3/39, p.553, min. 3538: Finance Committee, 27/3/39, p.563, min. 3606: Watch Committee, 19/7/39, p.1004, min. 6446.

¹⁶ O'Brien, *Civil Defence*, p.340.

senior posts on the casualty side and on the rescue and demolition side Council employees from direct labour units, augmented where necessary by the local building trade. Volunteers were trained in first-aid and as ambulance drivers and casualty transport was predominantly in the hands of volunteers, primarily the Women's Voluntary Service.

The government had realised early in its war preparations that women would have to be mobilised on the Home Front. A circular from the Home Office in June 1938 indicated that 'A Women's Organisation has been created called "The Women's Voluntary Services for ARP"', the primary purpose of which was 'to assist and co-operate with Local Authorities in the enrolment of women for ARP services and for the expansion of hospital services that would be necessary if an emergency arose.' James Hinton puts a somewhat stronger gloss on the role of Lady Reading and the WVS, suggesting it was natural for the Home Secretary to turn to her, 'when he decided, in May 1938, that a drive to recruit women to assist in Air Raid Precautions (ARP) would be a good way to ginger up local authorities who were refusing to take seriously the need to prepare for war.'¹⁷ The new organisation was funded directly by government, with a London Headquarters, and Lady Reading was understood to occupy a role with the status of a Deputy Under Secretary of State. Councils were expected to assume responsibility for local arrangements. A second circular in November expressed the expectation that the local authorities would provide accommodation, administration and equipment in their own premises or, if necessary, outside them, and reasonable expense would qualify for grant funding.¹⁸ Under the redoubtable Lady Reading the organisation developed and became one of the indispensable elements of volunteering. In Cardiff it was heavily involved in Casualty Services, in staffing Rest Centres and in public feeding, including the British Restaurants.

The Fire Service was firstly the local authority peacetime paid establishment, then supplemented with the addition of the Volunteer Auxiliary Fire Service and finally reorganised under government direction into the National Fire Service, and out of local authority hands. Cardiff's Chief Constable did not welcome this, stating that he was, 'not

¹⁷James Hinton, *Women, Social Leadership and the Second World War – Continuities of Class*, (Oxford, 2002), p. 21.

¹⁸ Beauman, *Green Sleeves*, p.8: TNA, HO186/314, General File WVS, Note dated 2/5/40. The WVS had a government grant of £25,000 per quarter for salaries of Regional Administrators, local organisers and other similar expenditure. The administration costs of the Headquarters of £12,000 were a charge to the Home Office.

aware of anyone in Wales who has fuller knowledge or wider experience in organising or handling fires in the Principality than myself. ¹⁹

On the elected member side, policy and decision-making on civil defence was chiefly in the hands of the ARP and Emergency Committees and their sub committees, and to a slightly lesser degree, the Watch and Finance Committees.²⁰ An Air Raid Protection Officer was appointed early in 1938.²¹ The government made it clear that matters were not to be left just to the post holder, reminding authorities that ARP was viewed by government as a service to the community not ‘a matter extraneous to the ordinary functions of local government.’²² As this point, before war was declared, Cardiff Council was active in putting the components of the service in place, but recruitment was slow, and responsibility for finance was a contentious matter, as indicated in Chapter One The Civil Defence machine required a large number of premises, of all types – from warden posts to specialist cleaning facilities – all over the city. A Joint Sub Committee of the Finance and Civic Buildings Committees considered whether a proposed new building at Cathays, to the north of the Law Courts, which was to accommodate various Council Departments, should have a basement and sub basement for use as an ARP Head Quarters. The Chief Constable was pressing for construction of the basement to proceed in advance of the rest of the building. The Home Office indicated that if the Council intended to apply for ARP grant, it would need to see the plans.²³ This plan was not proceeded with. After the experience of Munich, the Chief Constable had wished to site the ARP Headquarters out of the city centre, at Insole Court. This was resisted by the Town Clerk on the grounds that the main report centre and the HQ should be located together, and the former was to be at City Hall, although it was accepted that Insole Court would have use for training, social and storage purposes.²⁴ The building was subsequently used for ARP purposes.²⁵

Much of the demand for premises was met by use of municipal buildings – schools and leisure facilities, supplemented by public halls of various types. Pressure on buildings was

¹⁹ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41 Watch Committee 10/9/41 P 804 min 5623: Quotation from: Shane Ewan, ‘Preparing the British Fire Service for War : Local Government, Nationalisation and Evolutionary Reform 1935 – 41’, *Contemporary British History*, 20:2: 2006, p. 223.

²⁰ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39, ARP Committee, 24/3/39, p.555, min. 3543.

²¹ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/9, ARP Committee, 13/1/39, p.256, min.1606.

²² O’Brien, Civil Defence, p 181 .

²³ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39, Joint Finance and Civic Buildings, etc. Sub Committee, 9/3/39, p.500, min. 3163.

²⁴ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39, ARP Committee, 11/11/38, pp. 28-36, min. 140.

²⁵ CCL, 948.2 (268.8) CAR, Cardiff Air Raid Warden Organisation Report 1945, p.2.

great, with the Council in competition with the military and government departments. This was particularly highlighted in 1941 when the Council was seeking locations for British Restaurants.

Peacetime recruitment was problematical for a war that few wished to contemplate. On receiving a poor response to an early campaign, the Council looked to its own. In late 1937 the Watch Committee agreed that members of the Council be invited to enrol.²⁶ By the spring of 1938 efforts to recruit escalated. The Watch Committee agreed to spend £50 on publicity.²⁷ The ARP Committee agreed immediate steps to recruit for those posts that were not a matter for the Watch Committee, with advertisements in the press and posters.²⁸ Alongside these preparations the ARP Committee was looking at the government's requirements under the ARP Act 1937 for other types of protection – the preparation of an ARP General Precautions Scheme and an Air Raid Fire Precautions Scheme. The Committee considered financial provisions of the Act inadequate, expressing the opinion that the whole cost should be borne by the state and that this should be made known to the Home Secretary, the local MPs and the Association of Metropolitan Authorities. Even so the Committee did request further reports, and that staff should be trained in anti-gas measures.²⁹

By July 1938 things were progressing, with the ARP Committee considering a lengthy agenda and making a raft of resolutions, shaping the Council's ARP preparations and moving them forward. The Council was fulfilling its obligations, even though it objected to paying for them. There was little of the apathy or sluggishness with which authorities were often charged. A Draft Air Raid (General) Precautions Scheme was approved in principle, together with the appointment of the ARP Officer, with the Clerk and the Lord Mayor attending the ARP Department of the Home Office to discuss the terms of the appointment.³⁰ The Committee showed awareness of the practicalities that would be involved, discussing the positioning of warning sirens around the city, and telephone communications for sites that would be report centres and posts. Heads of Department were immediately to plan and cost the elements of the Scheme relating to them, for forwarding to the Home Office, and a Sub Committee was appointed to deal with Casualty Services, with power to include representatives of the Red Cross and St John, indicating the important position that local

²⁶ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1937/38, Watch Committee 13/12/37, p. 141, min. 890 and Council 10/1/38.

²⁷ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1937/38, Watch Committee, 9/3/38, p.420, min. 2707.

²⁸ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1937/38, ARP Committee, 4/4/38, p.515, min. 3348.

²⁹ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1937/38, ARP Committee, 11/2/38, p.319, min. 2049.

³⁰ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1937/38, ARP Committee, 1/7/38, p.782, min. 5247.

voluntary organisations would occupy in the plans for the city. Matters were now considered of such significance that when these minutes were approved at full Council three days later, a resolution was added that a copy of the Draft Scheme should be sent to all members.³¹

By the end of the month ARP arrangements were considered of such importance that permission was granted for the minutes of the meeting on 22 July to be reported to full Council on 25 July, instead of waiting until the next cycle, after the summer recess.³² The Council approved resolutions relating to first aid training, enrolment of medical practitioners, a Headquarters for the ARP Services and the detailed arrangements for appointing the ARP Officer.³³ At this point the escalation of the Council's preparations is notable. The Council was acting under government direction, but the extent of the provisions and the urgency involved suggests a commitment beyond mere acquiescence.

Enrolments of those positions that were a matter for the Watch Committee began to pick up as summer approached, and the Chief Constable was commended for the intensive enrolment campaign.³⁴ The position continued to improve with further increases reported to the next meeting.³⁵ Copies of the ARP Handbook were placed in all libraries.³⁶ In September 1938 the Chief Constable reported that, 'He had commenced a scheme of house-to house canvassing by plain clothed officers with a view to inducing citizens to enrol.'³⁷ The government planned a lavish national recruitment campaign to run from 3 – 8 October 1938, with emphasis on volunteering as a civic duty³⁸ It was intended to recruit a second half million ARP volunteers nationally. The Home Office supplied posters and leaflets. Displays of ARP equipment were also suggested, with a parade. Cardiff did not respond at this time, owing to lack of equipment.³⁹ (The parade later became a feature of wartime propaganda efforts and Cardiff County Borough embraced the concept then with enthusiasm.) The scale of local recruitment efforts is illustrated by a public meeting at the nine-thousand-seat

³¹ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1937/38, ARP Committee, 1/7/38, p.782, min. 5247; Full Council, 4/7/38.

³² CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1937/38, ARP Committee, 22/7/38, p. 871, min. 5940.

³³ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1937/38, Full Council, 25/7/38, p.875m min. 5931: ARP Committee, 22/7/38, pp.871-873, mins. 5907 – 5913: ARP (Casualty Services) Sub Committee, 27/7/38, p.991.

³⁴ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1937/38, Watch Committee, 15/6/38, pp. 707- 712, min. 4743.

³⁵ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1937/38, Watch Committee, 15/7/38, p.831, min. 5572.

³⁶ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1937/38, Library (Books) Sub Committee, 5/7/38, p.806, min. 5435.

³⁷ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1937/38, Watch Committee 21/9/38, p.942, min. 6402.

³⁸ O' Brien *Civil Defence*, p. 129.

³⁹ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39, ARP Committee, 23/9/38, p.992, 6702.

Greyfriars Hall, addressed by the Under Secretary of State for Home Affairs and the Inspector General of the ARP Department, facilitated by the Chief Constable.⁴⁰

Meanwhile the Munich Crisis had intervened. After the scare of Munich the Council had a taste of what might come. Attention was still focussed on training – in anti gas and skills necessary for the Casualty Services. Arrangements were made for first aid trainees to take the examinations of the Red Cross or St John Ambulance and for night driving for ambulance drivers.⁴¹ There was considerable debate over the location of first aid posts. The Government's wish was that these should not be located in schools, but the Council's arrangements all depended on use of buildings already in the Council's ownership, as the only suitable locations, which were principally schools and libraries. The only alternative was a costly building programme, which the Council did not wish to pursue.⁴² An ARP Officer was appointed in January 1939 and the ARP Committee was soon being advised that the ARP Department required reorganisation as soon as possible, and would include engagement of staff and purchase of equipment.⁴³

Even with the steady rise in recruits – in February 1939 there were 4,002 wardens and in March 4,536 – there were still problems.⁴⁴ The Council was under pressure to take steps towards realising Home Office plans for warden posts.⁴⁵ The scheme for first aid posts in the city was formally approved by the Welsh Board of Health in May 1939 and a satisfactory establishment had been recruited for them. There were only 206 volunteers for First Aid Parties, however, against a required establishment of 756.⁴⁶ Other recruitment had not improved in June, with warden numbers slightly decreased – 4,518, and ambulance drivers and attendants and stretcher bearers well below the necessary establishment.⁴⁷ There was a general shortfall of 900 across the warden, police and fire services.⁴⁸ The ARP Committee

⁴⁰ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1937/38, ARP Committee, 23/9/38, p.993, min. 6703.

⁴¹ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39, ARP Committee, 11/11/38, p. 27, mins. 138 &139.

⁴² CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39, ARP Committee, 11/11/38, p. 28. Min. 140(1).

⁴³ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39, ARP Committee, 13/1/39, p.256, min. 1606; ARP Committee, 6/2/39, p.336, min. 2124.

⁴⁴ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39, Watch Committee, 8/2/39, p.357, min. 2267; Watch Committee, 8/3/39, p.485, min. 3061.

⁴⁵ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39, ARP Committee, 24/3/39, p. 554, min. 3542; ARP Committee 24/4/39, p.642, min. 4101.

⁴⁶ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39, ARP Committee, 19/5/39, p. 752, min. 4782.

⁴⁷ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39, Watch Committee, 14/6/39, p.852, min. 5430; ARP Committee 26/6/39 p903 min 5774.

⁴⁸ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39, ARP Committee, 26/6/39, p.903, min. 5773.

discussed contacting all the women drivers in the city, inviting them to volunteer.⁴⁹ There were still hopes for peace, which could have been a damper to recruitment. When Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain visited the city in July 1939, he was still speaking of strength in armaments to ensure peace and his ‘calm confidence in growing strength.’⁵⁰ In the same month the *Cardiff Times* reported on a meeting between the Regional Commissioner and the local authority at City Hall to discuss progress on ARP. The establishment was still under strength and an appeal was to be launched in cinemas for the ARP as well as RAF and National Service.⁵¹ In the difficult situation of preparing for war in peacetime, the Council had showed itself willing and active, even with a sense of urgency, in putting into effect the demands the government was putting on it. That these efforts were hampered by disappointing levels of recruitment do not negate the effort involved.

War was coming. O’ Brien sets the context, ‘By the end of August, when the government began to put passive defence on a war footing, a large part of the nation had reached a state of mental preparedness for large-scale assault from the air.’⁵² In Cardiff the Council was taking action – immediately prior to war being declared, agreements were signed for the use of 32 premises for use as warden posts, with agreements for 48 more to follow.⁵³ Days before the outbreak of war the whole permanent and temporary staff of the Council’s Works department had been formed into rescue parties. Local contractors had also volunteered help with rescue and repair and could be used as a reserve.⁵⁴ The ARP Committee was brought up to date on the situation relating to warden services – 356 sectors had been established, with 90 posts, and measures were in hand to site the remainder and install telephones. Anti gas and refresher training was being given.⁵⁵

There were still problems getting cars for use as ambulances. A public appeal was made, with a familiar incentive of first aid instruction to volunteers.⁵⁶ Such was the situation that the

⁴⁹ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39, ARP Committee, 26/6/39, p.903, min.5774.

⁵⁰ *Cardiff Times*, 1/7/39, p.2.

⁵¹ *Cardiff Times*, 29/7/39, p.2.

⁵² O’Brien, *Civil Defence*, pp. 283-4.

⁵³ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39, ARP Committee, 31/8/39, p. 1073, min. 6790.

⁵⁴ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39, ARP Committee 31/8/39, p. 1071, min. 6781.

⁵⁵ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39, ARP Committee, 31/8/39, p. 1073, min. 6796.

⁵⁶ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39, Emergency Committee, 19/9/39, p.1161, min. 7393.

Committee was considering an approach to local funeral directors.⁵⁷ When it was reported that there were still insufficient wardens, the choice of action was to ask employees not yet doing any additional duties.⁵⁸

Once war began vacancies filled, predominantly with unpaid volunteers. In November 1939 the authorised war establishment for Cardiff for civil defence was 3,406. The volunteers, ‘actively now reporting for duty’ were 2380 men and 1050 women, a total of 3430. Only 27 men were whole time paid recruits, against a potential establishment 545. The Chief Warden was particularly proud of maintaining the organisation on a voluntary unpaid basis, while other cities, such as Bristol, Sheffield and Newcastle, had large groups of paid workers.⁵⁹ Collecting recruits was only the first step, however. The men and women who came forward had to be shaped into some form of coherent force, a matter in which the Council was soon found wanting by the regional establishment. The government also was considering the civilian force it had called into being and was already looking at manning levels. In late September 1939 Regional Commissioners were invited to comment on a draft circular on modification to ARP establishments, with a view to economy on manpower and expenditure.⁶⁰

In the first nine moribund months of the war, with nothing much happening, although Cardiff was said to be more visited by bombers than anywhere else in the country, there was backlash against the elaborate structures that had been put in place.⁶¹ The absence of any significant enemy action, along with the warden’s unpopular role in enforcing the blackout, fuelled complaints over a self-important, over-paid and over provided service, even though in Cardiff the majority were unpaid, part time volunteers. Public comment on the iniquities of the warden service coincided with government reassessment of the major financial drain of large numbers of paid recruits. The *Cardiff Times* reported on the ‘comb out’ of un-needed staff

⁵⁷ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39, Emergency Committee, 3/10/39, p.1227, min. 7795: ARP Committee, 24/10/39, p. 60. Min. 363: Emergency Committee, 14/11/39, p.67, min. 427. On 14 November the local association came back with an emphatic refusal.

⁵⁸ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39, ARP Committee, 12/10/39, p.1263, min. 8054.

⁵⁹ TNA, HO 207/1065 Cardiff Warden’s Organisation. Letter from Chief Cardiff Warden Gilbert Shepherd to Commander Hodson Inspector General, 2/11/39 quoting the statistics for Cardiff set against Bristol’s 501, Sheffield’s 731 and Newcastle’s 530 paid staff.

⁶⁰ TNA, HO 186/759 War Establishment Personnel. Comments dated 26/9/39 of Lord Portal, Commissioner for Region 8 (Wales) on draft circular dated 24/9/39.

⁶¹ Morgan, *City at War*, p. 47.

from the ARP Service and axing of paid staff, citing public outcry at the expenditure.⁶² In the first winter of the war, kudos came in reducing the structure, not in adding to it.

Training had to be an essential part of ARP preparations, given that this was a civilian force, with a significant female membership – although many older male recruits would have served in the Great War and might have been looking forward to using that experience. As in other matters relating to issues of war, there appears to be an initial contradiction over priorities for training. Although the Council seemed to be aware of the threat posed by bombing, and particularly incendiaries, the initial focus was on anti-gas training, and then first aid, offered with the involvement of the Red Cross and St John Ambulance.⁶³ Late in 1938 fourteen separate anti-gas classes were being held on weekdays and evenings, and thirteen on Fire Brigade work.⁶⁴

Relations with the medical profession concerning Casualty Services were often a source of difficulty. This manifested even before war began, when a sum of in excess of £3,000 was being debated between the Finance and ARP Committee to pay for the cost of training. The matter was considered so vital that the training was already in progress, but the ARP Committee was unhappy over the fees being charged by the doctors providing the training, and made this known. Apart from the cost, the Committee objected to a breach of the voluntary aspect of ARP duty, which was a deeply embedded aspect of the service.⁶⁵ In the spring of 1939 the scope of training provision was widened, with programmes for decontamination squads, nursing auxiliaries and police reserves. In early training anti-gas dominated, but chemical weapons were never used. O'Brien confirms:

It was to be proved, in the event, that large quantities of manpower, materials and money were spent on preparation against attacks from the air which either were not made at the time and in the form in which they were expected, or were not made at all.⁶⁶

⁶² *Cardiff Times* 7/10/39, p.8: 14/10/39, pp. 2&3: 21/10/39, p.1. The letters page of the *Echo* also reflected hostility with ARP, stigmatised as a haven for 'dodgers'.

⁶³ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1937/38, ARP Committee, 11/2/38, p.319, min. 2049: ARP Committee, 4/4/38, p.515, min. 3348.

⁶⁴ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39, ARP Committee 11/11/38, p.35, min. 141.

⁶⁵ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39, ARP Committee, 24/3/39, p.554, min. 3539 .

⁶⁶ O'Brien, *Civil Defence*, p.282-3.

The government never entirely lost its focus on potential gas attack, despite the fact that the threat never materialised. It was still pursuing anti-gas measures throughout 1941, with Cardiff among the local authorities visited to discuss a specialist training campaign.⁶⁷ The public was not carrying masks and Councillors were appealed to, as role models.⁶⁸

Much of the early anti-gas training concentrated on training the trainers. Staff attended the Government's school at Falfield, returning to pass on this knowledge, with 2,005 members of outside organisations and 420 from the police and fire service trained by mid June 1939.⁶⁹ With the focus on gas and medical training, there is little information in Council minutes on other types of practical instruction of Civil Defence personnel. Details of this come from reports of the Senior Regional Officer (SRO), recorded in National Archive files. It is here that issues of readiness and quality are highlighted. Locally, the Chief Warden was confident in the service, corresponding with the Inspector General over an 'excellent organisation' and seeking his endorsement.⁷⁰ Home Office files note that the city 'Prides itself on having the most effective wardens' organisation, with the smallest proportion of paid members of any similar town in the country.' Approval concentrated on the proportion of volunteers, and the amount of time that recruits were willingly giving up, rather than how well trained they were. The Regional Officer was not so impressed.

In a report in July 1940, the SRO points out that he does not share the Ministry's view of the Warden Service. He would not call the service: 'anything very wonderful. I know the Chief Warden thinks so.' He considered the standard of warden posts very low, with no new construction, but has refused to approve wooden buildings: 'The matter of their protection has taken second place to their comfort. I have had to accept what I found.' The report states that training and instruction are deficient, with no instruction whatever given to anybody from September to the end of December 1939. Incendiary bomb instruction was not started until 1940, but was now making rapid progress. The SRO believes that ARP instructors had done nothing when returned to the authority and time was wasted. Uneven distribution of Ambulance and First Aid Parties meant, 'Their eggs were all in two large baskets, with little

⁶⁷ TNA, HO 186/924 Region 8 Cardiff Training and Progress Reports. Reports for 7/3/41, 3/5/41, 13/9/41, 7/11/41, 3/4/42.

⁶⁸ CHL: LC940 53 CAR Loose correspondence. Letter from the Lord Mayor to Councillors. 5/2/41.

⁶⁹ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39, Watch Committee, 14/6/39, p.852, min. 5430.

⁷⁰TNA, HO 207/1065 Cardiff Warden's Organisation. Letters: Hodsell to Shepherd 20/11/39 & 25/11/39: Shepherd to Hodsoll, 22 November 1939 & 27/11/39.

or no protection.’ The Officer sums up, ‘Cardiff City were, it is agreed, very much behind hand; but they have a first rate chairman of their ARP Committee, a keen Deputy Controller and a keen Deputy Medical Officer of Health.’⁷¹

Also, they were now apparently getting live practice. The report notes, ‘Since the events of the last ten days, they have realised what it all means and what is essential. Admittedly there is much that I want to see altered: but I have to accept what I found, and endeavour to get amendment where possible.’ He has some praise, ‘They are ready to listen and accept advice and as they have had three “Action” warnings in fourteen hours, the personnel are being kept busy.’⁷² The Council was clearly willing to learn, and having direct practical experience of the worth of their training must have helped recruits to focus on what they were being taught. There was real threat to the city evident, and they were playing their part in combating it, although it was not on the scale of later raids.

The regional approach to training initiated by the SRO was strongly focussed on day-to-day-depot practice and on enforcing programmes in accordance with approved manuals and syllabuses. In April 1940 both turn-out and results were said to be much improved with work ‘now of a much better quality than it was two months ago.’ Routine and drill at First Aid Party and Rescue and Decontamination depots were being improved and personnel of Rescue had been ‘completely overhauled’. There were great difficulties in getting volunteers for First Aid Parties and a shortage of transport, but the Regional Officer admits, ‘The Authority are taking all the steps they can to remedy the position.’ Overall, the officer was cautious in his commendation, ‘In my view it has taken some time for this Authority to appreciate completely the principles underlying the Training Plan, but I feel more satisfied now that the Scheme is proceeding on the right lines.’ Cardiff is not of the standard of Swansea, however. ‘Training is proceeding very satisfactorily in this County Borough where there happen to be exceptionally keen Heads of Service.’⁷³

⁷¹ TNA, HO 186/759, War Establishment Personnel. Minute sheet from SRO to Ministry 12/7/40.

⁷² TNA, HO 186/759, War Establishment Personnel. Minute sheet from SRO to Ministry 12/7/40.

⁷³ TNA, HO 186/924, Region 8 Cardiff Training and Progress Reports. Report on April 1940 from Senior Regional Officer, dated 13/5/40.

In June training lagged. That month's report records, 'So many members of the different services have been "standing by" as a result of air raids.' Enthusiasm had been maintained, however. As a result of public meetings and lectures there had been more volunteers. Since 20 June there had been several attacks in the region, but apparently not of a magnitude to be a 'real test', although those parties called out were said to have carried out their duties, 'with commendable efficiency'. The regional report of July notes, with an air of irritation, that attacks have interfered with the normal training programme. With some re-arrangement it has been possible to make better progress, and three public meetings had attendance of between three and seven hundred. In the autumn of 1940 Cardiff was experiencing regular disruption, with 65 warnings and 2 raids. A report filed for September/October is very general, possibly because of this, with complaints about lack of equipment and helmets. The officer reporting records the comment - 'A very bad effect upon the temperament of the very large number of volunteers who form the ARP Service in this region'.⁷⁴

Subsequent reports are a catalogue of training given and improvements the Regional Officers consider they have effected recording: 'The value of a well considered Training Programme is now thoroughly accepted by all the Scheme Making Authorities.'⁷⁵

In the matter of training, as will be seen later in relation to shelters, it took input from an outsider to see deficiencies. The Council had availed itself of opportunities offered by the government training school, but with the focus on gas there was a mismatch between what was offered and what was actually needed, which the Regional Officer appreciated. The Council was apparently willing to learn, as were the recruits. This was where the transition was made between volunteer and trained personnel. It was affected by the Region, being the place with the appropriate expertise. The Council's role was that of facilitator. The Region would have been hard pressed to have managed the assembly, housing and equipping of a civilian volunteer force without a much larger establishment than it had. No doubt local knowledge available to the Council assisted too, even if it was not capable of providing specialist training. The arrangement was a necessary partnership.

As had been noted by the Regional Officer, properly equipping the volunteers was important. Erratic provision of many sorts of equipment was a theme of the war, and a source of

⁷⁴ TNA, HO 180/924, Region 8 Cardiff Training and Progress Reports. Report on June 1940, dated 5/7/40; Report for July dated 6/8/40; Report for 15/9/40 to 15/10/40

⁷⁵ Ibid. Report of the Training Officer, dated 9/11/40

disruption, as recorded by the Officer. It should be noted that much equipment and uniform was supplied by the government. Anderson shelters, helmets, even sandbags, came from central supply. Local supply, if the items were meant to be available centrally, sometimes involved special approval. Delay, insufficiency and problems with storage were all consequent irritations which took up time and attention.

Equipment began to be amassed in Cardiff during 1938, with large amounts coming by way of allocation from central government. Successive months from late 1938 and throughout 1939 saw the accumulation of training equipment, blackout electronics, office equipment and 750,000 sandbags.⁷⁶ Sandbags loomed large on the agenda of the Committee meetings. By June 1939 ARP equipment was arriving, including a large amount of protective clothing, but the sand had all been used and more was needed. In August this issue became more pressing when government approval was given for sandbags to be used on buildings other than those designated for ARP purposes, with 250,000 being needed. With a declaration of war, matters reached crisis point, with an estimated one million needed for the Report Centres, as a matter of urgency. In 1941 sandbags again became essential for dealing with incendiaries. There were complaints over deficiencies, especially at Warden Posts. Officers were asked to ensure supplies of sand at every street in the city with new bags for the posts, pending further enquiries as to a supply of bins for future use.⁷⁷

Immediately before the declaration of war, the ARP Committee was advised of a Circular from the Lord Privy Seal stating that uniforms should be provided for volunteers and authorities would be given the opportunity to purchasing them under contracts placed by the government.⁷⁸ Progress was slow and a few days before the beginning of hostilities the Chief Constable appropriated helmets and protective clothing for the wardens from stocks intended for the AFS and volunteer constables.⁷⁹ Just prior to the declaration permission was abruptly given for local purchase of equipment for First Aid and Rescue Parties.⁸⁰ War began with a flurry of activity that encompassed filing cabinets and camp beds, electric fires and kettles,

⁷⁶ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39, ARP Committee, 24/3/39, p.554, min. 3541. The City Engineer reported that 750,000 were about to be delivered, which required storage to be rented. The *Cardiff Times* later reported the arrival of 1,750,000. *Cardiff Times*, 22/6/39, p.11.

⁷⁷ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41, ARP Committee, 31/8/39 p1073 min 6784; 12/9/41, p. 810, min. 5668.

⁷⁸ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39 ARP Committee 24/7/39 p 1044 min 6684.

⁷⁹ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39, ARP Committee, 31/8/39, p. 1073, min. 6796.

⁸⁰ TNA, HO 208/2, Circular 192/39 25/8/39 & Circular 202/39 29/8/39

haversacks and water bottles.⁸¹ Once war was declared the situation deteriorated. Attempts to obtain blankets for use by the homeless at rest centres became an on-going saga, with supplies of poorer quality, costing more or simply being unobtainable.⁸² Equipment was not just tin helmets and oilskins. Among the supplies required, for training courses, were a black board, coloured chalk, dusters and a skeleton and stand, and for the warden posts notebooks, whistles, hand-bells and rattles.⁸³

In the summer of 1940 the question of equipment became more acute, with raids on the city causing destruction and casualties. The issue of protective helmets to air raid wardens was a simple and basic provision, but one that created a litany of exchanges between government and Council. The problem arose as the city now had many more wardens on its establishment than the initial complement of 2725, on which the allocation was based. Alerted to the problem, the Watch Committee agreed to press the Ministry of Home Security for supplies and borrow from the AFS allocation.⁸⁴ Complications arose when the Ministry, rather than producing more helmets, requested the return of 720 which were alleged to have been over issued. The Committee's response was that the helmets were in use and it was essential they be retained.⁸⁵ George Gator, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Home Security, visiting in November 1940 noted, 'The average volunteer attached far more importance to a steel helmet than he did to a respirator.'⁸⁶

A large amount of equipment provision and procurement had to be approved by the Regional staff. Often this approval was not forthcoming, even for relatively minor items such as a broom, pick and shovel for each warden's post. The Senior Regional Officer did not see the need.⁸⁷ This decision was partially reversed a few weeks later, however, when a pick, shovel and fifty feet of rope was approved for each post, presumably because it had been realised that properly equipped wardens could take action in minor cases, or in advance of the arrival

⁸¹ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39, 15/9/38, p. 1138, mins. 7202 & 7204; 19/9/39, p. 1161 min 7392.

⁸² CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39, Central Contracts Committee, 20/9/39, p.1159, min. 7378: 30/9/39, p.1213, min. 7712: 4/10/39, p.1229, min. 7806: 10/11/39, p.18, min. 35.

⁸³ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1937/38 ARP, (Casualty Services) Sub Committee, 27/7/38, p.991: 19/8/38, p.992, min. 6700: ARP Committee, 24/4/39, p.643, min. 4103 (C) and (D).

⁸⁴ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40, ARP Committee, 2/8/40, p.912, min. 6337.

⁸⁵ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40, ARP Committee, 16/8/40, p.915, min. 6368.

⁸⁶ TNA, HO186/523, ARP Regional Organisation Visits No.8 Region. Note on visit November 1940.

⁸⁷ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40, ARP Committee, 11/10/40, p. 1066, min. 7452.

of formal rescue squads.⁸⁸ During 1941, as experience of the reality of raids grew, equipment needs reflected the changes in the way that the war was developing. When the Chairman of the ARP Committee reported on attending a conference on Rescue provision where attention was drawn to the need to provide sleeping accommodation, the Committee agreed to purchase of beds and pillows.⁸⁹ Obtaining and keeping equipment often took on the appearance of a cat and mouse game between central and local government. O'Brien emphasises that the tactical struggle between local government and the centre was in no way extinguished by war. 'If civil defence and other wartime functions had introduced a new degree of central control, they had also enlarged the local bodies' responsibilities and status.'⁹⁰ He concludes, 'The conflict, as well as the cooperation, between Whitehall and these authorities forms, therefore, an underlying theme of this narrative.'⁹¹ While government held the purse strings, local authorities held the initiative in operational matters and were prepared to defend it. Deficiencies in equipment were irritations which reflected badly on the Council. At worst, they were potentially dangerous.

Uniforms were also an issue, one which had emotional as well as protective significance, by fostering a sense of involvement, as did badges and other insignia. O'Brien asserts that the public saw mass issue of uniform as a waste of money.⁹² Recent historians suggest that the regard in which uniform was held should not be undervalued. James Hinton suggests that uniform marked the WVS out as a disciplined auxiliary service, setting it apart from many established voluntary organisations.⁹³ When Lady Plymouth inspected the ATS in the city, the *Cardiff Times* reported her comment 'Our uniform is the King's uniform.'⁹⁴ Another report in the newspaper on the WVS commented on 'the attractive uniform.'⁹⁵ Stephen Spender, in *Citizens in War and After*, mentions the value of dressing up (in this case donning gas masks) to prompt people to act in a special way.⁹⁶

⁸⁸ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41, ARP Committee, 29/11/40, p. 66, min. 502.

⁸⁹ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41, ARP Committee, 13/6/41, p. 631, min. 4444 : Full Council, 7/7/41, p. 694, min. 4853: ARP Committee, 11/7/41, p. 715, min. 5029.

⁹⁰ O'Brien, *Civil Defence*, p.313.

⁹¹ Ibid. p. 313.

⁹² Ibid. p.350.

⁹³ Hinton. *Women, Social Leadership*, p. 35.

⁹⁴ *Cardiff Times*, 29/7/39 p.1.

⁹⁵ *Cardiff Times*, 14/10/39, p.5.

⁹⁶ Stephen Spender, *Citizens in War and After*, (London, 1945) p.19.

The attention given to marks of office was also noticeable. At a meeting between Councillors and Wardens, shortly after the outbreak of war, wardens suggested that the Regional Commissioner consider a special badge for unpaid volunteers, as a stimulus to recruitment.⁹⁷ When the ARP establishment was reduced in October 1939 and the services of some full time volunteers were being dispensed with (although they were to be invited to remain as reserves) it was particularly noted that they would be ‘entitled to retain their badges.’⁹⁸ Uniform created a visible mark of belonging. It may also have allowed a recollection of old glories. In 1942 bus conductresses who had worked in the Great War asked for a badge acknowledging this, and a shoulder strap in the department’s service colours was approved.⁹⁹ (Employment of women conductresses was not novel to this war.) A history of local Freemasons lodges notes that some members took advantage of their membership of the Home Guard to wear uniform to lodge meetings.¹⁰⁰ By late 1940 the warden establishment was over 6,000, one third of them women, and there was pressure from the organisation for suitable uniforms in accordance with Home Office Circular 274/1939.¹⁰¹ Deficiencies in providing ARP uniform were an annoyance. Overy comments that government was slow to pick this up, probably on grounds of cost, but volunteers expected uniform to be provided.¹⁰²

Insignia too played a part. The King was ‘graciously pleased’ to allow the design for the ARP badge to be incorporated into signs for wardens’ post and houses, expressing the value these signs would represent – in effect, of being in the King’s service, however remotely.¹⁰³ Marks of royal appointment or favour probably helped convey the sense of being part of an army, in the way that the regular services were – volunteers were also serving the King. The Council too felt the need to make an imprint. In Cardiff the Special (Purchase of Motor Vehicles) Sub Committee decided that private cars belonging to the corporation and used for ARP Duties should bear the coat of arms, or the words ‘Cardiff Corporation,’ and ‘ARP’.¹⁰⁴ It was not just the Council who expressed pride. The crew of Bomber ‘C – Cardiff’, many of whom

⁹⁷ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39, ARP Emergency Committee, 26/9/39, p.1207, min. 2779.

⁹⁸ TNA, HO 186/759 War Establishment Personnel. Letter from the Ministry of Home Security to Local Authorities on Review of ARP Services – ARP Departmental Circular 275/1939 dated 19/10/39.

⁹⁹ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42, Transport (Service Operations) Sub Committee, 8/9/42: Transport Committee 10/9/42, p. 843, min. 5713.

¹⁰⁰ Free Masons Museum, A Province at War A Record of Freemasonry in the Second World War in the Province of South Wales (Eastern Division) Compiled by W. Bro Keith Flynn OBE p. Prov ADGC, p.11.

¹⁰¹ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41, ARP Committee, 8/1/40, p. 10, min. 40.

¹⁰² Overy, *Bombing War*, p.134.

¹⁰³ TNA, HO208/1. Circular 33/1939

¹⁰⁴ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40, Special (Purchase of Motor Vehicles) Sub Committee, 2/10/40, p. 1041, min.7281.

were from the city, requested permission to display the coat of arms on their aircraft.¹⁰⁵ A letter from a soldier printed in the local press, praised the city's Salute the Soldier efforts, 'I am proud too, to be a Cardiffian.'¹⁰⁶ The significance of all these marks of recognition may be dismissed as distracting detail, even an affectation, but it was clear that things went deeper. A mark of belonging, however small, was recognition, fostering the sense of belonging and boost to pride towards which so much government propaganda was directed.

In Cardiff the issue of manpower ebbed and flowed during the war, moving through reduction, amalgamation and consolidation, with targeted recruitment for services or particular locations in the city where specific deficiencies were identified. In the absence of the much heralded 'knockout blow'; the size of the organisation came under scrutiny both locally and on a national scale. Almost immediately after the onset of war cuts to whole time volunteers were implemented, but these volunteers were not to be demobilised, but invited to remain on the establishment in a reserve position.¹⁰⁷ Cardiff was part of the reviewing, redistribution and reduction of personnel, in which costs were an important consideration.

TABLE 2

Scheduled review of ARP and AFS Organisational Costs in Cardiff – December 1939¹⁰⁸

	Before Review	After Review	Saving
ARP Cardiff	£2,677 per week	£1,888 per week	£788 per week
Total per annum for ARP and AFS Cardiff, Glamorgan, Merthyr Tydfil, Newport and Swansea.	£733,304	£502,654	£230,650

¹⁰⁵ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1943/44, Development Committee, 22/3 /44, p. 378, min. 2716.

¹⁰⁶ *Echo*, 4/7/44, p 2.

¹⁰⁷ TNA, HO 186/759, War Establishment Personnel. Letter from the Ministry of Home Security to Local Authorities on Review of ARP Services – ARP Departmental Circular 275/1939, dated 19/10/39.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.* Letter from Regional Commissioner, Lord Portal to Sir George Gator, Home Office, 1/12/39

Major adjustments had to be considered to meet what turned out to be the reality of war – not constant intense action, at fever pitch and out in the open – but long tedious periods of duty, waiting at the post, in poor facilities. The first winter of the war – the months between the declaration and the German invasion of Denmark and Norway, was a difficult time for ARP. With the volunteers and public geared to meet massive and immediate attack, when no such attack occurred the service appeared overstaffed and the requirements over onerous. O’Brien notes:

Large numbers in the civil defence services and amongst the public were learning that passive defence was more than an affair of unpleasant duties to be performed under the stimulus of bombardment and included waiting in a state of readiness to counter a distant threat.¹⁰⁹

The arrangements for staffing fluctuated, sometimes from month to month, as different parts of the establishment were adjusted to meet circumstances. In February 1940 a review of whole time personnel in Cardiff resulted in a request for an increase/adjustment of 24 men and 147 women to 36 men and 108 eight women for Ambulance Service.¹¹⁰ In April 1940 further national reductions were proposed to the warden service: ‘The aim should be to revert to the utmost extent practicable to the principle of an unpaid service.’ These changes were of ‘so substantial a character’ they needed to be communicated to local authorities direct and Government Circular was considered necessary. The sentiment behind the Circular was that people should still be willing to contribute to their own area and local authorities should ‘make full use of this spirit.’¹¹¹

On 7 June 1940 the ARP Committee received information from the Regional Commissioner that the first quarter of the year certain ARP stations were under strength. A sub committee was appointed to consider local and targeted recruitment. The Regional Commissioner was asked to increase the establishment of the wardens’ organisation from 2,725 to 5,000. On 14 June the Sub-Committee agreed proposals for recruiting more volunteers in underrepresented areas – particularly Splott and Ely – involving public meetings, advertisements and drawing

¹⁰⁹ O’Brien, Civil Defence, p.298.

¹¹⁰ TNA, HO 186/759, War Establishment Personnel. Letter dated 17 February 1940, Principal Officer on the Review of Whole Time Personnel.

¹¹¹ Ibid. Letter from Ministry of Home Security to Regional Commissioners, dated 17/4/40, accompanying Circular HSC 58/40.

in the assistance of local churches.¹¹² Despite these increases, ARP Committee was concerned over uneven provision in the warden service, requesting a ‘bird’s eye’ view of each post to look at deficiency and over manning.¹¹³

By mid 1941 the pattern of Civil Defence was shifting – attention was turning to rescue and repair. Rescue Party personnel were being increased.¹¹⁴ In May 1942 moves had again been made nationally to reduce the Civil Defence Establishment. The Regional Commissioner was asking for a reduction of one third in the total personnel, under the provisions of Circular HSC88/42.¹¹⁵ Amalgamation of medical and rescue crews became a particular focus nationally – and proved a particular sticking point in the Welsh local authorities. Refinements to the Civil Defence provision, focussing on inter-changeability of personnel, became a controversial issue in Wales in relation to the position of medical staff.¹¹⁶ While Rescue Parties were embracing cross training early in 1942, and undertaking training, First Aid Parties were not, although by April the personnel were said to have come round to the idea. Opposition was still being voiced by the Medical Officer of Health.¹¹⁷ In January the ARP Committee discussed the provisions of Home Security Circular 16/1943, which required the Rescue and First Aid Parties to amalgamate, and subsequently agreed proposals.¹¹⁸

Management of volunteers brought new challenges. When disciplinary issues arose in the First Aid Parties a Disciplinary Committee had to be set up.¹¹⁹ There had been awareness

¹¹² CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40, ARP Committee, 7/6/40 p729 min 5007&p.730, min. 5009;14/6/40 p758 mins5217 & 5218.

¹¹³ CHL, ARP Committee, 26/6/40, p. 785, min. 5417.

¹¹⁴ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42, ARP Committee, 24/1/41, p. 234, min. 1692:26/9/41 p871 min 6067 Recruiting for the rescue parties was difficult. The Council’s approved paid establishment in late 1941 was 180, but was only 110. It was agreed to ask the Ministry of Labour to allow volunteering in this service as well as First Aid parties.

¹¹⁵ CHL, Council Minutes 1940/41 ARP Committee, 8/5/42, p. 555, min. 3734.

¹¹⁶ TNA, HO 186/759 War Establishment Personnel. The attitude of the medical contingent appears to have been a serious hindrance to the Ministry’s attempts to streamline and amalgamate branches of Civil Defence An undated, unsigned note on the file to O C Allen, the Acting Deputy Under Secretary, probably from Inspector General Wing Commander Hodson, expresses the view that South Wales is extremely keen on First Aid but, except in the mining districts, not too fond of Rescue Services, with South Wales doctors doing all they can to discourage First Aid Parties from training in Rescue. The writer has got the Ministry Of Health to apply pressure and indicates an intention to make himself a nuisance until the matter is settled. A further note, from Hodson to the Region, enquires if there has been any change of heart on the part of the Welsh doctors as a result of the representations he got the Ministry of Health to make, as it was very important to get the balance adjusted.

¹¹⁷ TNA, HO 186/924, Region 8 Cardiff Training and Progress Reports. Report 1/1/42 and 3/4/42: HO 186/759 War Establishment Personnel. Letter from Regional Officer to Ministry of Home Security, dated 4/3/42.

¹¹⁸ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1942/43, ARP Committee, 29/1/43, p.263, min. 1790: 5/2/43, p. 284, min. 1916: 9/5/43, p. 542, min. 3746.

¹¹⁹ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41, ARP Committee, 27/6/41, p.690, min. 4827: ARP Committee, 10/10/41, p.908, min. 6325. The difficulty of applying sanctions in the case of volunteers was highlighted,

among local authorities, even before war began, that provision would need to be made for some form of social activity for volunteers, in the interests of keeping up momentum, holding recruits' interest and keeping them attached to the organisation. As early as November 1938 the ARP Committee noted that the Council in Newcastle upon Tyne had purchased two mansions for use as social centres for its civil defence organisation, to include the construction of a ballroom.¹²⁰ Cardiff Council showed no desire to follow this lead, but attention was given to social activities, and measures of passing waiting time when on duty.

Government expectation was for recreational provision on modest lines. It was suggested that members of the public might want to contribute wireless sets, books, magazines and indoor games, if this was made known locally. Social Service organisations might co-operate with more organised recreation and exercise. Reasonable expenses for recreational equipment would be eligible for grant.¹²¹ Cardiff Council took advantage of this provision, funding such things as medals and trophies for darts matches.¹²² At the request of the Chief Warden the ARP Committee agreed to make available the sum of one pound per post – around £100 in all – to fund social activity among wardens.¹²³ At least one appeal was made in the local press, for books for the First Aid Post in Splott to occupy volunteers in long periods of standing-by.¹²⁴ In due course the government recommended creation of Comfort Committees and in Cardiff provision for ARP workers became the responsibility of a specially appointed Welfare Committee.¹²⁵ Social interaction was encouraged, but some form of occupation was also considered. As early as 1941 the ARP Committee noted that personnel appeared to have time on their hands when not required for their duties. Chief Officers were delegated to prepare a suitable work scheme.¹²⁶ It was agreed that Rescue Squads might assist with grave digging, at the same pay and conditions as the regular grave diggers.¹²⁷ The government also looked to what was called 'productive work' to keep volunteers occupied. Arrangements

however, when the Committee was advised that the withdrawal of travel warrants, issued under Circular HSC149/1941, could not be used as a disciplinary measure.

¹²⁰ CCL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/1939, ARP Committee, 11/11/38, p.31, min. 140(4).

¹²¹ TNA, HO 186/759 War Establishment Personnel. Letter from the Ministry of Home Security to Local Authorities on Review of ARP Services – ARP Departmental Circular 275/1939, dated 19/10/39

¹²² CCL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/1939, ARP Committee, 12/1/40, p.281, mi. 1856.

¹²³ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40, ARP Committee, 20/3/40, p. 525, min. 3575. (misprinted as 2575)

¹²⁴ *Echo*, 3/10/40, p.2.

¹²⁵ TNA, HO186/927 Blitz Papers –Preparations for Heavy attack. Lessons Learned. Report of the Ministry of Home Security August 1941: CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41, ARP Committee, 5/9/41, p. 794, min. 5553: 12/9/41, p. 812, min. 5682: 26/9/41, p.871, min. 6070.

¹²⁶ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42, ARP Committee, 13/2/42, p. 301, min. 2057.

¹²⁷ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42, ARP Committee, 27/2/42, p. 350, min. 2377.

were made by the Ministry of Production with local firms, under the provisions of Circular HSC 173/1942, for work to be undertaken in the ARP Depots.¹²⁸

A recurring theme of both civil defence and sheltering was the gap between what was anticipated and what actually happened. A disagreement over equipping of warden posts illustrates the extent to which the Regional Office exerted control over seemingly minor issues of equipment, but also reveals the gap between the expectations that most of the warden's work would be out on the streets, against the reality of long hours on stand-by. The region did not support making posts too comfortable. They were to be regarded as places of work, not social centres and National Archive files record exchanges over such minor items as the provision of cupboards, crockery and tea towels.¹²⁹

The Council had done what was required of it in terms of recruitment to official forces, and adjusted when it was considered necessary. Its training arrangements had not been satisfactory, but it had offered co-operation when measures to correct this were put in place. It had coped with the ramifications of abruptly acquiring a vast volunteer staff. Even with all the official mechanisms in place, there was still room for action by the unaffiliated, and that action was prompted by the threat of fire, which also precipitated a final round of civilian recruitment, after two years of war.

Self Help – Residents in Action

There appears to have been a strong culture of informal self help among Cardiff residents during raids, possibly as a response from those who, for various circumstances, were not able to be part of the organised forces. The government could be ambiguous over such developments, despite the contention that the individual not engaged in other service should 'perfect himself, in his own home, in his ARP functions.'¹³⁰ At first an element of disquiet appears in government files over the 'disturbing development of organisation of amateur ARP service'. At that time – July 1940 – issues over the use of warning sirens were giving

¹²⁸ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1942/43, ARP Committee, 5/3/43, p. 380, min. 2557.

¹²⁹ TNA, National Archive HO 207/1065 Cardiff Warden's Organisation. Letter, Major Lidbury to Home Office, 30/5/41. Internal notes in file to Dr Miller from WS Burton, 5/6/41. Internal notes in file to Dr Miller from WS Burton, 5/6/41. Letter, Major Lidbury, 9/2/43. Letter from Town Clerk to Major Lidbury on 6/2/43. Letter Alderman Purnell to Region, 1/11/43. File note 4/11/43

¹³⁰ TNA, INF1/250 Home Morale Emergency Committee. Report from the Emergency Committee to the Ministry of Information Policy Committee, 4/6/40.

rise to unofficial neighbourhood warning parties, ‘absolutely ignoring’ the official organisation.¹³¹

In the first major raid in Cardiff, in January 1940, however, the efforts of those who were outside the official machinery of Civil Defence were especially highlighted in government files. Comments there on the effectiveness of local residents in dealing with incendiary devices come from several sources. National Archive files record, ‘The eagerness and enthusiasm with which the citizens of Cardiff sought out and destroyed incendiary bombs was a feature of the night’s operations and did much to limit the advantage of the enemy of this form of attack.’¹³² Health officials in the city noted:

There is no doubt that “unofficial” service by members of the civilian population did much to promote smoothness and efficiency in dealing with the emergency. It is known that fire bombs were quickly extinguished by all sorts and conditions of people of both sexes and of varying ages and this without doubt made the attack on the City much less severe than it certainly would have been had beacons been allowed to develop.¹³³

The Council does not seem to have had qualms over an element of self help amongst residents. The ARP Committee noted the many citizens not directly connected with any organisation, whose skill and devotion to duty in, ‘most perilous’ circumstances had been the object of widespread admiration.¹³⁴ Jane Hampton notes that Girl Guides were among those helping to tackle night time fires and the warden was said to be, ‘Proud to have them in my sector.’¹³⁵ In *Listening to Britain*, Addison and Crang’s exploration of the Ministry of Information’s daily Home Intelligence reports for the summer of 1940, groups operating stirrup pumps are noted in the report from Cardiff on 16 July. By September morale was

¹³¹ CHL, An Information Source Book p.97, quoting from National Archive file, HO199/424 Intelligence Reports, 2/7/40.

¹³² Ibid.p. 90, quoting National Archive file, HO 199/151 Raid report, 2/3/ January 1941.

¹³³ TNA, MH96/162, Emergency Services Cardiff Air Raid Reports and Subsequent Action. Account of the raid on 2/1/41, from Dr C.W Anderson of Cardiff City Health Department and WG Richards Assistant Hospital Officer.

¹³⁴ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41, ARP Committee, 3/1/41, p.174, min. 1234: Transport Committee, 6/1/41, p. 180, min. 1267: Watch Committee, 8/1/41, p. 191, min. 1338: Waterworks Committee, 20/1/41, p. 206, min. 1478: Electricity Committee, 20/1/41, p. 209, min. 1501: Full Council, 13/1/41, p.186, min. 1308.

¹³⁵ Jane Hampton, *How the Girl Guides Won the War*, (London, 2010) p.101.

reported as good, and pumps were in great demand, following ‘self help’ propaganda, but were hard to get.¹³⁶

The Council had actually anticipated and facilitated efforts in respect of incendiaries, by supplying sand. Depositing sandbags at every lamppost to be used against fire had been hampered by interference from local children, but the distribution of three quarters of a bag to each household was an apparent success, with deliveries to 47,000 houses in the city.¹³⁷ Certainly the sand was used, and the Council then faced the difficulty of replacing it and accepted assistance from the military.¹³⁸ Dennis Morgan notes the distribution of sand and the use of stirrup pumps, indicating that 500 streets organised fire patrols on a rota basis, following an appeal from the Chief Constable for a brigade on every street.¹³⁹

As indicated by the Home Intelligence reports above, as in many other instances, Government attitude seems to have changed. Considerable attention was apparently being given in the Region to the formation of Informal Street Associations. The official line was that these were to be encouraged and in large scale raids it was suggested that an officer of the local authority should establish himself at an Incident Post to give advice and assistance on the spot to homeless people. Visits to parts of Cardiff damaged by the raids of 2/3 January, ‘brought home very forcibly’ the problems faced and the potential value.¹⁴⁰

It was not just the spontaneous response to raids that indicated an element of citizens’ action. There appears to have been a change of atmosphere after the evacuation of Dunkirk, when the city anticipated heavier air raids and when invasion began to be considered a real threat. Specific types of volunteering occurred among Council employees. Individuals identified a local need that they might meet – groups helping their community, and also themselves, by protecting their places of work and livelihood. At the Isolation and Llandough Hospitals male employees set up rotas for sleeping on the premises to be on hand in an emergency.¹⁴¹ Employees of the Transport Department formed themselves into a branch of the Local

¹³⁶ Paul Addison & Jeremy A Crang (eds), *Listening to Britain – Home Intelligence Reports on Britain’s Finest Hour May – September 1940*, (London 2010), pp. 236, 415.

¹³⁷ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41, ARP Committee, 20/12/40, p. 154, min. 1114; ARP Committee 7/2/41 p 266 min 1910

¹³⁸ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41, ARP Committee, 10/1/41, p.194, min. 1375: ARP Committee, 7/3/41, p.361, min. 2555.

¹³⁹ Morgan, *A City at War*, p.41.

¹⁴⁰ TNA, HO 186/924, Region 8 Cardiff Training and Progress Reports. Report 7/3/41

¹⁴¹ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40, Hospitals Sub Committee, 10/7 40, p.854, min. 5917 and p. 857, min. 5937.

Defence Force Volunteers (later the Home Guard) for protection of garages and depots.¹⁴² Those of the Water Department, the Electricity Department and the Parks Department did the same to protect their own departments' assets. A small rifle range was set up at the Wood Street Depot for practice.¹⁴³ The Annual Report of the Transport Department in 1942 noted that there was a Mobile Ambulance Unit manned entirely by members of the Transport Division.¹⁴⁴ Electricity workers in the Ninian Park Road depot formed themselves into a St John Ambulance Brigade within the department.¹⁴⁵

These moves illustrate the spirit of the volunteer, in possibly its most essential form, not the impulse to be part of a massive and diffuse force, as those who responded to general recruitment drives, with an altruistic desire to be involved, but the more intimate impulse to defend the home, the street, the place of work. The Council seems to have appreciated it, and been prepared to facilitate it, and to benefit from it.

Fire Watching and the Fire Guard.

Fire watching became one of the key issues in 1941, on the national and local stage. With the massive threat presented by incendiary attack, the government was obliged to address yet another problem that not been fully foreseen. Overy notes, 'The one factor responsible for a large part of the damage was fire, and the extent of incendiary bombing was one of the aspects of the bombing campaign that had not been anticipated or adequately prepared for.'¹⁴⁶ Cardiff suffered particularly from fire attacks in early 1941 and in mid 1943. The raid in March 1941 was named locally as one of the greatest fire raids of the war. The Chief Constable commented, 'I doubt if any town has had more incendiary bombs showered upon it in one raid'.¹⁴⁷ The implications of fire raised a new set of issues. Open areas that had possible sources of fire in them, and premises which were unattended at night presented a risk. The hazard of fire required two methods of approach – suitable means to deal with it – the fire service - and attempts to prevent it – which gave rise to the Fire Guard service.

¹⁴² CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40, Transport Committee, 13/6/40, p.756, min. 5204.

¹⁴³ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40, Waterworks Committee, 9/7/40, p.826, min. 5702: Electricity Committee, 15/7/40, p. 839, min. 5802: Parks, etc. Committee, 10/9/40, p. 956, min. 6650: Transport Committee, 11/7/40, p.848, min. 5896: Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41, Transport Committee, 10/4/41, p. 450, min. 3207.

¹⁴⁴ CHL, Transport Annual report 1942

¹⁴⁵ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40, Electricity Committee, 22/1/40, p.295, min. 1969: Finance Committee, 29/1/40, p.321, min. 2147.

¹⁴⁶ Overy, *Bombing War*, p.165

¹⁴⁷ CHL, An information source book, p.43 quoting the *Echo*, 4/3/41.

The Fire Service was an essential part of the passive defence armoury, but its peacetime origins were insufficient. O'Brien states, 'Fire risks in wartime presented a problem of such alarming dimensions that the peacetime conception of adequate protection was not in the same realm of discussion as the emergency planning.'¹⁴⁸ Other than the London County Council, no local authority was under an obligation to provide a fire service. Those that existed were often fragmented and sketchy, especially in rural areas, with mismatched equipment and no mechanism for overall coordination in time of need.¹⁴⁹ The government had begun to give the matter a degree of attention before the war. In March 1938 the ARP (Fire Schemes) Regulations kept the matter in the hands of the local authorities, but began the development of emergency brigades. The Auxiliary Fire Service, (AFS) made up of volunteers, a large number of them women, supplemented the regular force. Such was the magnitude of the problem that eventually, in August 1941, at the instigation of Home Secretary, Herbert Morrison, the National Fire Service was created, and the matter of professional fire fighting moved out of the hands of the local authorities for the remainder of the war: 'The gain shall be great, especially as regards the machinery of control.'¹⁵⁰

The other measure for dealing with incendiaries was prevention – fire watching. The Fire Guard, patrolling the rooftops to combat the threat, was the last phase of Civil Defence and possibly the most difficult to manage, coming as it did when the war had entered its mid phase – the long hard slog towards victory. Recruitment was at first on a voluntary basis, but recruitment in the latter part of 1941 was difficult, at a time when the available pool of potential volunteers was shrinking. The job was demanding, uncomfortable and unpopular. Difficulty in recruitment for this new and arduous service might be therefore be expected, given problems experienced in recruiting for First Aid Parties and Decontamination Squads.¹⁵¹ Even before Cardiff's heavy raid of 2/3 January 1941, where much damage was done by incendiaries, the threat of fire caused concern. Unattended houses where there was no chance of access were considered a particular problem and the ARP Committee considered a scheme for duplicate keys to be left at police stations or similar.¹⁵² After the

¹⁴⁸ O'Brien, *Civil Defence*, p.250.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid. p. 239.

¹⁵⁰ TNA, HO186/927, Blitz Papers –Preparations for Heavy attack. Lessons Learned. Report of the Ministry of Home Security, August 1941.

¹⁵¹TNA, HO 186/924 Region 8 Cardiff Training and Progress Reports. Report on April 1940 from Major Lidbury dated 13/5/40 and Circular Letter from Regional Office (Circ no 17/1941) to ARP Controllers Wales Region from the Principal Officer, Regional Office, 20/5/41.

¹⁵² CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41, ARP Committee, 6/12/40, p. 109, min. 759.

January raid Committee Chairmen were gathered for a special conference on fire watching on corporation property.¹⁵³ As a result, each department Chief was required to take immediate steps to appoint voluntary fire watchers for properties under their control.¹⁵⁴ Experience of a fire raid made the Council hyper aware of potential threats. Two timber stores in a residential part of the city and a store of material said to be flammable were investigated.¹⁵⁵ There was concern over a piece of open land covered with thicket. The Council had no power to require its removal and agreed to make representations to the local MPs with a view to appropriate authorisations being given to local authorities by the Ministry of Home Security.¹⁵⁶ Fire watchers in Pengam drew attention to the potential threat from Pengam refuse tip.¹⁵⁷ The lack of protection of churches and chapels raised concern as did storage of films at Green Farm in Ely¹⁵⁸

Recruitment was a very much a local issue. Recruits needed to know the building they guarded. The *Echo* newspaper of September 1941 carried an advertisement explaining that the work was often dull and dangerous. Even so, 'Our heart and soul is in it – Britain shall not Burn.'¹⁵⁹ The Council had to recruit in respect of its own property and also had responsibility for enforcement for premises across the city. The Council had considerable difficulty meeting its own obligations, to the extent that a Special Fire Watching (Corporate Property) Committee was set up. Difficulties began to be reported from specific departments early in 1941. The problem extended over a number of months, despite a declaration that the Council expected employees to do their duty, unless exempt, while the Committee attempted to devise a solution¹⁶⁰ More than one Committee had to employ a watcher, if only temporarily.¹⁶¹ The Libraries Committee appointed a Special Sub Committee on Safeguarding Libraries with a public meeting to recruit watching parties.¹⁶² The Borough

¹⁵³ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41, ARP Committee, 10/1/41, p.194, min. 1371.

¹⁵⁴ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41, ARP Committee, 24/1/41, p. 234, min. 1688.

¹⁵⁵ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41, ARP Committee, 17/1/41, p. 206; ARP Committee, 25/4/41, p.492, min. 3525: 14/3/41, p.375, min. 2676: ARP Committee, 13/6/41, p. 631, min. 4445.

¹⁵⁶ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41, ARP Committee, 4/4/41, p. 435, min. 3091:ARP Committee, 18/7/41, p, 746, min. 5266.

¹⁵⁷ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41, Works etc Committee, 19/6/41, p. 640, min. 4527.

¹⁵⁸ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41, ARP Committee, 21/3/41, p. 393, min. 2807: Cardiff Council Minutes 1942/43, Estates Committee, 14/1/43, p. 210, min. 1424 .

¹⁵⁹ *Echo*, 10/9/41, p.2.

¹⁶⁰ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41, Estates Committee, 30/1/ 41, p. 255, min. 1819.

¹⁶¹ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41, Waterworks Committee, 10/3/41 p.365 ,min.2591: Civic Buildings, Markets, etc Committee, 18/3/41, p. 380, min. 2709 & 2710: 22/4/41, p. 474, min. 3408 .

¹⁶² CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41, Special Sub Committee on Safeguarding Libraries, 7/2/41 & 14/2/41, pp. 301 – 303: Library Committee, 18/2/41, p. 303, min. 2188 & 2189.

Librarian approached other Council Departments for help.¹⁶³ Even the cemeteries had problems, asking if wardens could assist, and the Transport Committee sought the intervention of the Chief Constable in ensuring staff reported when on a rota for duty.¹⁶⁴ At the meeting of the Special Fire Watching (Corporate Property) Committee on 11 March 1941, the Committee was advised that the Regional Commissioner had made fire watching compulsory, but the Corporation was still having difficulty recruiting, because so many staff was already involved in Civil Defence.¹⁶⁵

Such was the general problem of recruitment that local authorities were warned by government that no one was to be allowed to evade their responsibilities, even those who might be known to be untrustworthy because of previous offences. Care was to be exercised in deciding where to post them.¹⁶⁶ The government gave attention to training – volunteers had to be able to identify the type of bomb they were dealing with, how and when to deal with it, and when to leave it alone. National Archive files contain instructional posters aimed at the Fire Guard, emphasising both the need for training and the practicalities, with heavy emphasis on safety, preparation and correct procedure – ‘Don’t be a half trained Harry.’¹⁶⁷

The threat was one that encompassed the whole city and the records give a sense of the extent to which the community was involved. The duty was a financial as well as a practical liability. Cardiff District Women’s Liberal Association recorded the cost of providing it at its premises in St Andrew’s Crescent as, ‘a heavy charge for us to meet.’¹⁶⁸ When the Masonic Hall suffered a hit from an incendiary the caretaker dealt with it, in recognition of which he was paid five pounds.¹⁶⁹ Fire watching was an added burden on local business. The Council had to act on attempts by local employers to require staff who were wardens to take on the

¹⁶³ CHL: LC 940 53 CAR Loose correspondence relating to Cardiff libraries during World War Two. Letter of 13/2/41 Librarian to Treasurer and Treasurer’s response. ‘Owing to depletion of our male staff on account of demands upon them for military service and civil defence duties we are finding it impossible to provided from the staff the necessary personnel for fire watching at the Central and branch libraries.’ The Treasurer’s reply was that all available male staff was engaged. 14/2/41

¹⁶⁴ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41, Parks, etc Committee, 4/3/41, p 354, min. 2502: Transport, 6/3/41, p.357, min. 2537.

¹⁶⁵ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41, Special Fire Watching (Corporate Property) Committee, 11/3/41, p. 367, min. 2606.

¹⁶⁶TNA, HO 158/33, Circular 862,405/6 10/10/41.

¹⁶⁷ TNA,INF2/73 With clear, coloured illustrations and instructional text, the posters are striking, and include one – ‘Britain’s Fire Guard is Britain’s Defence – of a size that suggests it was intended for hoarding sites

¹⁶⁸ CHL, Cardiff District Women’s Liberal Association 17th Annual Report 1941, p.6.

¹⁶⁹ Free Masons Museum, A Province at War A Record of Freemasonry in the Second World War in the Province of South Wales (Eastern Division) Compiled by W. Bro Keith Flynn OBE p. Prov ADGC p19. The financial reward produced an upturn in interest in fire watching amongst the membership. ‘Whereupon there was a sudden surge in the number of volunteers coming forward for fire watching’.

duty.¹⁷⁰ The pressure from this obligation could manifest in other ways. Shortage fed demand. On more than one occasion civil defence workers were found to be moonlighting, for money.¹⁷¹

Issues arose at some of the Transport Depots, with the Regional Commissioner being drawn in to rule on the position of civil defence workers who were being requested to fire watch. Transport employees refusing to fire watch were reported to a special Sub Committee.¹⁷² Workers in the Electricity Department had also refused.¹⁷³ Perhaps it is relevant that these two Council departments would have been under considerable pressure, attempting to keep normal service running in the city – were they exploiting their value, or exhibiting an element of “battle fatigue”? Workers could be dismissed for such a refusal.¹⁷⁴ Sometimes whole areas of the city suffered from shortage of personnel. There were problems with getting fire watchers in Riverside because of the destruction from bombing. Civil Defence personnel were no longer living in the area.¹⁷⁵

As with other civil defence services, the government conducted periodic reviews. In late summer 1941 the Ministry of Home Security turned its attention to the development of the fire watching service. Home Security Circular 174/1941 provided for the new designation of Fire Watchers as Fire Guards and the affiliation of this with the Warden Service. Under the provisions of the Civil Defence Duties (Compulsory Enrolment) Order 1941, persons between the ages of eighteen and sixty were required to register for enrolment. The Regional Commissioner had made the Order applicable to the city. Registration was delegated to the Town Clerk, with additional staff, if needed.¹⁷⁶ Responsibility for registration later shifted to the Ministry of Labour and National Service.¹⁷⁷ A letter of thanks to all those who had previously volunteered was drafted, with the hope that they would continue in the service.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁰ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41, ARP Committee, 24/1/41, p. 235, min. 1702; 7/2/41, p. 267, min. 1918.

¹⁷¹ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41, ARP Committee, 3/10/41, p. 900, min. 6243; ARP Committee, 24/10/41, p. 954. Min. 6649.

¹⁷² CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42, Transport Committee, 12/2/42, p.299, min. 2041.

¹⁷³ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41, Electricity Committee, 23/6/41, p.650, min. 4609.

¹⁷⁴ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41, ARP Committee, 21/3/41, p. 396, min. 2836.

¹⁷⁵ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41, ARP Committee, 6/6/41, p. 617, min.4333.

¹⁷⁶ *Echo*, 5/9/41. The front page gave details of compulsory registration. CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41, ARP Committee, 8/8/41, p. 773, min. 5419; p 774, min. 5422 & 5423

¹⁷⁷ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41 ARP Committee, 22/8/41, p. 778, min. 5459; ARP Committee, 29/8/41 p. 782, min. 5486.

¹⁷⁸ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41, ARP Committee, 15/8/41, p. 776, min. 5445.

After the Fire Guard Scheme came into operation early in 1942, the Committee was able to put matters in hand for a more ordered structure, with buildings requisitioned and equipped for headquarters and the appointment of depot superintendents and assistants.¹⁷⁹ With the acquisition of buildings attention could be given to recreation and welfare, with approval for equipment.¹⁸⁰ In spring of 1942, however, there were still recruitment problems. Across the Council's estate – municipal buildings, hospitals, markets, libraries, law courts, parks and other premises – 4,111 guards were needed. There were only 1,290 – a shortfall of 2,821. The ARP (Fire Guard of Corporate Property) Sub Committee asked for reports on various courses of action.¹⁸¹

In another review, under the provisions of Home Security Circulars 23 & 29 1943, the Minister of Home Security re-organised the Fire Guard, separating it from the Warden Service. Members considered a Fire Guard Plan. Successful representations were made for the service in Cardiff to remain connected to that of the Wardens.¹⁸²

Despite the problems of recruitment, Sonya O Rose notes there was a national outcry against women being required to fire watch, with considerable debate, and correspondents to the press seeing the idea as a reflection on their manhood.¹⁸³ Cardiff apparently adhered to the view that it was not a job for a woman. The Librarian's request was for male recruits, and the shifts at the libraries were all male. Log books of two of the services protecting the Central Library provided a small insight into the experience – first the Aircraft Spotters, and then Fire Watchers/Guards. The Spotters' log – covering 1941 to 1944 – records low key and somewhat sporadic activity, with one or two male spotters on the roof of the building.¹⁸⁴ The situation recorded in the Fire Watchers' Log, which covers the period March to September 1944, reveals more intense action. The duty was now compulsory and Cardiff had

¹⁷⁹ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42, ARP Committee, 9/1/42 p196 min 1398 : Contracts Committee, 14/1/42, p. 202, min. 1443.

¹⁸⁰ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42 ARP Committee 16/1/42 p211 min 1510 :ARP Committee 6/2/42 p288 min 1964

¹⁸¹ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42, Transport Committee, 16/4/42, p. 471, min. 3223: ARP (Fire Guard of Corporate Property) Sub Committee, 17/4/42 p.471,min. 3229 & p. 472, min. 3232.

¹⁸² CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1942/43, ARP Committee, 19/2/43, p.316, min. 2204: 5/3/43, p.381, min. 2558 : 30/4/43, p. 524, min. 3616: 7/5/43, p.541, min. 3739: 9/7/43, p 699, min. 4868.

¹⁸³ Sonya O Rose, *Which People's War? National Identity and Citizenship in Wartime Britain 1939-1945*, (Oxford, 2006). p111.

¹⁸⁴ CCL, MS4.1285 Spotters' Logbook. Many of the alerts were of short duration with the record 'no planes seen and no alarm given,' being a regular entry.

experienced heavy fire raids.¹⁸⁵ While the log records only the comings and goings of those on shift, it does illustrate the level of commitment expected, and received, in defence of the city, its library resource and possibly the jobs of those concerned.

The regular battles to keep the Fire Guard up to strength notwithstanding, when the establishment in the city was reviewed by the ARP Committee in March 1944, it was noted that there were three times more personnel than the minimum required by the Regulations.. The County Borough was tailoring its provision to the perceived need of the city, rather than the letter of requirements. The Council was able to confirm to the Regional Commissioner that the Fire Guard Plan could be put into operation in the city centre, which decision was accepted by the Commissioner.¹⁸⁶ In the autumn of 1944 Fire Guard duties were relaxed. The units guarding the city's rooftops were stood down.¹⁸⁷ The pressure exerted by the task was noted in the local press and the effect of the responsibilities, 'which have become a boring and, except in a few coastal areas, over prolonged duty which after five years have become a strain on tempers and vitality.'¹⁸⁸

Post Raid Services

The care given to the victims of bombing has come to be one of the salient points in judging how well war time Councils served their citizens. There was extensive criticism at the time of the way in which local authorities met the challenge of a massive bombing raid. This has been echoed since by historians in studies of the war. One of the biggest mismatches of provision, and one that particularly exercised critics such as journalist Richie Calder, was the failure to provide sufficient Rest Centres, where the bombed out could find refuge, with sparse facilities in those that were provided. Writing from first-hand experience during the war, and observing the effects of the London Blitz, Calder was critical of central and local authority: 'The local authorities had a lot to answer for. So had the Government.' They made, 'extravagant provision for the *dead*' while provision for the homeless was, 'ludicrously

¹⁸⁵ CCL, MS4.1286 Fire Watchers' Log. The log is a snapshot of a watcher's night, when between three and six men would sign on for shifts of eight to twelve hours between the hours of 7 pm and 8 am, with a later start and end time on the shorter spring and summer nights. Some men signed off early on uneventful nights, but at least one remained on duty until 8am. The shifts came up roughly once a week and the men turned out consistently and on a regular basis.

¹⁸⁶ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1943/44, ARP (Fire Guard Organisation) Sub Committee, 17/3/44, p. 386, min. 2778: 24/3/44, p.386, min. 2779: 21/4/44, p. 468, min. 3322.

¹⁸⁷ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1943/44, Waterworks Committee, 18/9/44, p. 800, min. 5730: Libraries Committee, 19/9/44, p.807, min. 5783: Civic Buildings etc Committee, 17/10/44, p.908, min. 6448.

¹⁸⁸ *Echo* 7/9/44, Man About Town column, P.2.

underestimated.’¹⁸⁹ It seemed it was necessary for local authorities to learn by grim, first-hand experience. Calder decried this, but acknowledged it had taken place by the end of the war. Something of this pattern appears in Cardiff, although in some respects, such as the provision of information, the Council was on top of the matter from the beginning.

Richard Titmuss, the official historian of wartime social policy, indicates that the concept of care for the bombed homeless as a national responsibility was slow to develop. It ‘struggled painfully to emerge during the winter of 1940-41, and it did not gain full acceptance until after the main attacks had ceased.’¹⁹⁰ Titmuss notes instances of patient day to day improvisation, which could not have happened without resilience, willingness to learn and intense activity from officials from government departments, regional officers, local councils and voluntary bodies. He suggests that it was surprising that the services worked as well as they did, ‘conceived without much thought and less money.’¹⁹¹

In the earliest days of the war, Ministry of Health Circular 1860 2 February 1939 laid down financial terms for helping the homeless, with distinctions between ‘native’ and ‘refugee’. The bombed out had to be classified and expenditure apportioned. At first even the provision of blankets was controversial, both for fear this would encourage people to stay in the centres, but also that they might be used by ‘native’ homeless, for whom the local authority was responsible, rather than by ‘refugees’. Local authorities were not allowed to requisition premises in advance, so it was difficult to obtain and equip when attack came. Facilities of a kind were available, but the Ministry of Health had discouraged local authorities from elaborate provision.¹⁹² The bombers created a class of fit, able and working homeless, which had not been foreseen. Rest Centres were expected to be short stay posts, where limited rest and refreshments could be available for brief periods, before those attending moved on elsewhere. The concept of assistance was still deeply enmeshed in the mindset of the Poor Law. A mental shift was necessary when confronted by citizens who had nowhere to go, but were not destitute. The absence of bedding, full-scale catering and above all information, were repeatedly highlighted by critics. Even the publication of the local government union,

¹⁸⁹ R Calder, *Lessons pp.* 21 & 23,24.

¹⁹⁰ Richard M Titmuss, *Social Policy*, p. 45.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.* p. 300.

¹⁹² *Ibid.* pp. 53, 252, 255 .

Local Government Service, commented on, ‘unreadiness, inadequate arrangements, unimaginative treatment of the homeless, pettifogging bureaucracy’.¹⁹³

Richard Overy, in *The Bombing War in Europe*, highlights the difficulty of provincial towns in coping with raids. ‘The problem was in some respects worse in the smaller cities outside London where a heavy raid could destroy much of the civil defence structure and dislocate a higher proportion of the population.’¹⁹⁴ Cardiff was fortunate in not experiencing the long attrition of London or the short devastation of Coventry, Southampton and Swansea, but did suffer periodic raiding, with loss of life and damage to property. On three occasions raids were intensive – the first in January 1941, the second in March 1941 and the third in May 1943. These were at a time when some understanding had been gained elsewhere on correct procedures, but even so the city had to find its own way, through experience. In practical terms, post bombing assistance required firstly immediate short term help, then long term housing provision, if this was needed. Immediate assistance came in the form of an adequate place to shelter, with food and blankets. Long term provision centred on re-housing or repair of property.

While Cardiff Council made attempts to equip Rest Centres immediately after war was declared, correspondence between the Board of Health in Cardiff and the Ministry of Health in London in the latter months of 1939 and early in 1940, suggests an element of confusion, particularly over arrangements for emergency feeding. At this stage of the war, without expectation of heavy bombing in Wales, arrangements seem to have been proceeding in low key. Eighteen months into the war, and with the experience of the Blitz, there is still an air of experimentation in relation to Rest Centres. Early in 1941 the Ministry was in correspondence with the Chairman of the Welsh Board of Health, concerning a recent survey: ‘You have, unfortunately, had experience of the working of the Rest Centres at Cardiff and Swansea and will probably have gained some idea of the sufficiency of the provision.’ The Ministry was expecting provision for four per cent of the population, and was considering protection from gas, with a gas proof room if possible, and protection for food and cooking equipment from contamination.¹⁹⁵ The official war historian of food, RJ Hammond, indicates that rest centres in Cardiff and Swansea almost collapsed after raids early in 1941, not because of damage to

¹⁹³ Alec Spoor, *White Collar Union Sixty Years of NALGO*, (London, 1967) p. 213.

¹⁹⁴ Overy, *Bombing War*, p.150.

¹⁹⁵ TNA, HLG 7/365 Rest Centres in Region 8. Letter from Ministry of Health to Chairman of the Welsh Board of Health, 10/3/41

premises, but because inadequate arrangements had been made for replenishing food supplies. Centres were said to be poorly equipped, with some in Cardiff without blackout and cooking facilities. There was said to be ‘an air of helplessness among workers at the rest centres,’ with the Food Executive Officer and his staff stepping in to take over.¹⁹⁶

In the summer of 1941 the Welsh Board was seeking clarification from the Ministry on a matter relating to rest centres, this time on the supervision of the centres by Medical Officers for medical and sanitary arrangements, as there appeared to be no regulation relating to this. The response indicated that there were no detailed arrangements or requirements – the review of rest centres had asked for information and it had been understood that there was no problem in Wales. It was suggested that it should be the responsibility of the local authority and the local Sanitary Inspector – a matter for local arrangement.¹⁹⁷

With the approach of winter, the Welsh Board sent out a lengthy and prescriptive letter on Rest Centres. Cardiff and Carmarthen were noted as recipients, but it is unclear whether it went to any other Welsh authorities. Possibly these two authorities were considered to have particular needs, for some reason. ‘In view of the approach of longer hours of darkness and the consequent possibility of an intensification of enemy aerial attacks’, the Board considered it of ‘paramount importance’ that responsible authorities should satisfy themselves that provision for first essential needs in the way of food and shelter for persons rendered homeless was ‘adequate in extent and satisfactory in nature,’ especially in areas likely to be subject to heavy raids. Advance planning was advocated, so that a Committee of the Council ‘shall be giving constant attention to the development in detail of the Rest Centres in the area, to the arrangements for the comfort and well being of the homeless in the centres and to the promotion of plans for providing at very short notice adequate staff to carry out billeting for the Centres.’

The letter draws attention to the Ministry of Health Circular 2453 11 August 1941 which suggests the appointment of a Welfare Officer, and asks for information as soon as possible with proposals. Existing schemes should be reviewed in detail to ensure that centres were still available and that sanitation, washing facilities, equipment for cooking, feeding and sleeping

¹⁹⁶ R J Hammond, *Food Volume I Growth of Policy: History of the Second World War: United Kingdom Civil Series*, (London, 1951), p. 339.

¹⁹⁷ TNA, HLG 7/365 Rest Centres in Region 8. Letter from Roberts, Welsh Board to Howell E James, Ministry of Health 22/7/41. Response 24/7/41 There is indication in the file that the query arose from some request or situation pertaining in Carmarthen.

were available and to check capacity, taking urgent steps to remedy deficiencies especially to ensure that there was adequate staffing: ‘It is essential that a responsible male person, with a deputy to undertake alternate shifts, shall be placed in full control of each centre and its staff.’ The key to successful organisation of a rest centre is said to be that everyone concerned, ‘shall be perfectly clear in advance where they are to function and what they are to do.’ Reserves of volunteers need to be on call for relief. At least one sanitary closet needs to be provided for every twenty five people. Authorities should draw up and circulate a memorandum of instruction – the scheme outline, names of officers and staff arrangements and arrangements for getting supplies. The Board indicates that it would like to see these. It was proposed to invite representatives to a meeting to discuss the measures and hold a conference on co-operation.¹⁹⁸ At this point the National Archive file moves to 1944, so there is no Ministry commentary on follow up. Presumably the Board was taking action as a result of the failures documented by Hammond.

A Home Office review of provision against attack for the winter of 1941/42, prepared in August 1941, indicated that intensive raids in the winter of 1940/41 had shown inadequate organisation. Efficiency of emergency relief depended on the interest shown by the responsible Committee of the local authority. Unless that Committee recognised the importance and difficulty of the problem of homelessness, arrangements would not be adequate. The importance of constant and active review of the situation was being impressed on local authorities by the Ministry of Health.¹⁹⁹ In many cases the local authority machine did not respond quickly enough to the heavy calls upon it. Regional Commissioners had already been asked to ensure that after heavy attack available resources for welfare, repair and reconstruction were fully and promptly employed.²⁰⁰ With the volume of business transacted by the ARP and Emergency Committees, Cardiff Council could not be said to be inactive, but the effects of bombing were an unknown, even if researched or planned for Cardiff, like many others, had to learn from its own experiences.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid. Letter of 28/8/41 from DJ Roberts at the Welsh Board, to the Town Clerk of Cardiff. A slightly different version, to Carmarthen Council, is also on file, but there is no indication whether it was a general circulation to all Welsh authorities, or just to these two.

¹⁹⁹ TNA, HO186/927, Blitz Papers –Preparations for Heavy attack. Lessons Learned. Report of the Ministry of Home Security August 1941. Memorandum from the Ministry of Health and Department of Health in Scotland.

²⁰⁰ Ibid: Report of the Ministry of Home Security on preparations for air attacks in winter, August 1941.

Rest Centres, Re-housing the Displaced and Information Services.

Cardiff Council showed early awareness of the potential needs of those made homeless, agreeing to purchase blankets for Rest Centres a few weeks after war was declared.²⁰¹ Obtaining these proved unexpectedly difficult, with much exchange of correspondence between the Welsh Board of Health and the Ministry. Eventually the Council was instructed to borrow supplies, or find them in existing institutions before purchasing any.²⁰² The Council made efforts at fact finding. Visits were rapidly made to Coventry to learn from that city's experience.²⁰³ The Council had also comprehended that casualties at First-Aid posts might be there for some time and would need refreshment – the provision was modest – malted milk – but at least the matter received attention from the Committee.²⁰⁴ In the first significant raid on Cardiff, in January 1941, however, at least one Rest Centre arrangement misfired, with large groups of people being directed to City Lodge, which was in the main area of bombing. Police apparently directed 2,500 people there, as a designated Rest Centre. This was an error that hampered the effectiveness of the hospital, which was almost overwhelmed.²⁰⁵ The error suggests that Cardiff Council suffered to an extent from the unpreparedness identified by Richie Calder in *Lessons of London*, finding itself, initially 'under the weather'.²⁰⁶

After this, there was apparently improvement. William Mabane, Parliamentary Secretary for Civil Defence (Welsh Region) was reported to have been impressed after a visit to Wales. 'I heard Mr Mabane speak in high praise of the work done after air attacks both in Swansea and Cardiff. He mentioned these two when discussing matters that had gone wrong in other areas.'²⁰⁷ Even so, local historians recount a story of chaos in Cardiff on the night of 29 April 1941, when 250 people bombed out in Cathays were left to fend for themselves. Directed to a

²⁰¹ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39, Central Contracts Committee, 20/9/39, p.1159, mins. 7375 & 7378.

²⁰² TNA, HLG 7/365 Rest Centres in Region 8. Letters between DJ Roberts from the Welsh Board of Health and CJ Martin in the Ministry of Health, 11 January 1940

²⁰³ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41, ARP Committee, 22/11/40, p.51, min. 376.

²⁰⁴ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40 ARP Committee, 9/2/40, p.352, min. 2381.

²⁰⁵ CHL, Cardiff Air Raids 1939 – 45 An Information Source Book. P.110 quoting from National Archive file, MH96/162: Welsh Board Notes on Casualty Services; raid on 2/1/41; Emergency Services Cardiff Air Raid Reports and Subsequent Action.

²⁰⁶ R. Calder, *Lessons*, p.28.

²⁰⁷ TNA, HLG 7/56. Note from Howell James, Ministry of Health, Whitehall to Mr Armer Welsh Board of Health, 7/4/41.

school, there was no one there to receive them. This breakdown in communication was said to be kept secret by the ARP Committee, for fear of damaging public confidence.²⁰⁸

Appendix D gives full details of the raids and Rest Centre provisions throughout the war, assembled from National Archive files and work done by the Cardiff Heritage Library. Cardiff County Borough provided the centres, information, re-housing and repairs. It attempted to learn. When the government offered training in help for homeless people at the Civil Defence Staff College, the Deputy Director of Public Assistance attended.²⁰⁹ The Rest Centres were staffed by the WVS and certainly later in the war throughput was fairly rapid. Reports varied on the nature of what was provided. A report in January 1941 in the *Echo*, from a reporter visiting a rest centre in a church hall, which accommodated several hundred men, women and children, comments that the room was cosy, with blankets, recording that ‘War stained civil defence workers served hot tea’.²¹⁰ In October 1941 however, an inspection of thirty eight Rest Centres in Cardiff by the Regional Staff of the WVS, during an exercise entitled See Saw, found extensive deficiencies. Some centres were judged insufficient, with women workers having other duties as well as the centres and problems with cooking facilities and lack of nurses and messengers. The Wardens were judged to be not well aware of the addresses of the nearest centre, especially if this was in a different sector. Overall the opinion on the Civil Defence Service was that they ‘did not seem to enter into the spirit of the exercise’ being ‘slovenly moving into action’ and with general indifference being prevalent.²¹¹ Whether the situation would have been different in the case of an actual raid, rather than an exercise, is an unknown. It is difficult to judge between subjective opinions. Certainly the praise given at the end of the war to Alderman Purnell, firstly as Chairman of the ARP and Emergency Committees and Civil Defence Officer and then as ARP Controller, highlights his dedication, and suggests that by that point Rest Centres were operating satisfactorily, under his surveillance. He had shown ‘inspiring leadership’ during his time as Controller, and his concern for victims had led him to ‘devote much of his time and energy to perfecting the post raid services’. At the end of a raid he would go straight to the Rest Centres where homeless people were temporarily

²⁰⁸ Morgan, *City at War* p 65; O’Sullivan, *Wales went to War*, pp. 23.

²⁰⁹ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42, Public Assistance Committee, 26/3/42, p. 431, min. 2953.

²¹⁰ CHL, Cardiff Air Raids 1939-1945 An information source book, P.39, quoting the *Echo* 3/1/41.

²¹¹ TNA, HO 186/924 Region 8 Cardiff Training and Progress Reports. Report on See Saw exercise, 19/10/41

accommodated, ‘in order to satisfy himself that everything possible was being done to alleviate their distress.’ The tribute was glowing: ‘To Alderman Purnell, the grave national emergency became an opportunity to serve his fellow citizens to the full measure of his capabilities.’²¹²

The aftermath of mass bombing of city or district must have been one of the starkest experiences of the war. Local authorities were initially ill equipped. They did not know what to expect, how to organise to meet an unknown, and had been denied funding to provide what might have been useful, had they thought of it. In *The Road to 1945*, Paul Addison shares blame for deficiencies between local and central government, in the same way as Richie Calder, who was writing at the time. Addison comments, ‘The Home Secretary and Minister for Home Security, Sir John Anderson, had been severely criticised in the opening weeks of the London Blitz (which began on 8 September) for the chronic failure of local government to organise emergency services.’²¹³ Experiencing heavy but not devastating raids, Cardiff did not exhibit catastrophic failure. There is sufficient anecdotal evidence to support the impression that the Council was not initially as well prepared as it might have been, but it *had* shown some foresight in making attempts to provide blankets and modest refreshments. Notwithstanding the detailed letter from the Welsh Board of Health, there is no other indication in government files that the situation in the city was a cause of particular concern, but these are not always a full picture. Appendix D suggests a pattern of sufficiency and improvement in moving people on. The praise given to Alderman Purnell suggests that Rest Centres were taken seriously in the city by the end of the war. It seems probable that Cardiff followed the pattern in other authorities— initial uncertainty, then improvement when experience and resources became available. As the city was not subject to heavy raids, any deficiencies did not show up too severely.

Examining the three major raids suffered by the city reveals both the city’s experiences and the Council’s ability to learn from them, over time. The heavy raid on the night of 2/3 January 1941 – the first to approach anything like the ferocity visited on London or Coventry – hit the city hard. The Transport Department lost its central office and the bulk of its records to fire.²¹⁴ A mass burial was attended with full ceremony from the Council.²¹⁵ Both

²¹² CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1944/45, Council, 9/7/45, p.732, min. 4988.

²¹³ Addison, *The Road to 1945*, p.123.

²¹⁴ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41, Transport Committee, 6/1/41, p.179, min. 1266.

²¹⁵ Morgan, *City at War*, p..59.

Llandough and the Isolation Hospitals suffered extensive damage.²¹⁶ The Citizens Advice Bureau fielded numerous enquiries.²¹⁷

Committee after committee recorded thanks and appreciation to volunteers, organisations and residents for their efforts and courage, excellent spirits and willingness, culminating in the speech of the Lord Mayor at the Council on 13 January. With, ‘heartfelt sympathy’ for those who had lost relatives, he expressed admiration for the way they had borne sacrifice and loss, wished the injured well and gave his highest admiration for the magnificent work done by all the voluntary services, ‘who had so splendidly co-operated in defence of the City.’ Special attention was given to many citizens not directly connected with any organisation whose skill and devotion to duty in ‘most perilous’ circumstances had been the object of widespread admiration.²¹⁸ The incendiary element of the raid particularly highlighted efforts of those who were not part of the organised hierarchy of Civil Defence. Some advance actions taken by the Council paid off. Supplying sand to households was an apparent success.²¹⁹

Lesson were indentified and mulled over at Committee. Arrangements were agreed to store blankets to be used by the homeless at the rest centres where they would be used, removing the need for transport.²²⁰ Difficulties with the parking and dispersal of buses intended to ferry the bombed out to rest centres were exhaustively examined and a new plan put in place.²²¹ The Parks, Baths and Cemeteries Committee thanked the Cemetery Superintendent for the ‘excellent manner’ in which the mass burial had been handled and, moved by the plight of the homeless, turned a request for a concessionary rate for use of the Council bath facilities into agreement for free use.²²²

After the raid on 21 June 1940 a special meeting of the ARP Committee was called, on 24 June, to receive reports and discuss the defence of the city, with the Regional Commissioner asked to attend a meeting to report on the lack of warning for the raid. Further raids over the

²¹⁶ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41, Hospitals Sub Committee, 8/1/41 p.218 & 219, min. 1558.

²¹⁷ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41, Development Committee, 17/1/41, p.202, min. 1442

²¹⁸ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41, ARP Committee, 3/1/41, p.174, min. 1234: Transport Committee, 6/1/41, p. 180 min. 1268: Watch Committee, 8/1/41, p. 191, min. 1338: Waterworks Committee, 20/1/41, p. 206, min. 1478: Electricity Committee, 20/1/41, p. 209, min. 1501: Full Council, 13/1/41, p.186, min. 1308.

²¹⁹ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41, ARP Committee, 20/12/41, p .154, min. 1114.

²²⁰ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41, ARP Committee, 10/1/41, p196, min. 1391.

²²¹ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41, ARP Committee, 3/1/41, p,178, min. 1235: Special Transport Committee, 6/1/41, p. 180, min. 1267: ARP Committee, 10/1/41, p, 196, min. 1390: Transport Committee, 16/1/41, p. 199, min. 1417.

²²² CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41, Parks, etc Committee, 8/1/41, p. 183, mins. 1293 & 1296.

summer, which included the first with loss of life, prompted attention to a number of issues. The ARP Committee proposed that weekly reports on raids be made to the Committee and, if the Regional Commissioner approved, daily bulletins for inspection by members at the Council Offices. Deficiencies in shelter provision were acknowledged, with representations made to the proper authorities that domestic shelters should be provided for all citizens without delay. In the light of experience members considered the need for smaller receptacles for the clearance of small items of debris, overalls and a mobile canteen for the Rescue and Demolition squads. Admiration was expressed both for the ‘splendid’ work of the Civil Defence volunteers and for those made homeless in the raids. The Food Committee stepped in with special arrangements for food supplies for the homeless in Roath after the raid on 3 September.²²³

What was to eventually prove to be the last major raid on the city on 17/18 May 1943, after a long hiatus, revived the kind of entries in the minutes that had not been seen for some time. The role of the Fire Guard was appreciated, with thanks recorded by the Civic Buildings and Markets and Libraries Committees.²²⁴ With experience, the Council’s arrangements apparently swung smoothly into operation, with a local reporter commenting, ‘The Local Authority put into immediate use their rest centre scheme.’²²⁵ All Rest Centres were cleared six days after the raid.²²⁶ It was reported on 25 May that “first aid” repairs had been done on 75 per cent of the houses damaged and 714 men engaged in the work.²²⁷ Exploration of the response to the three major raids in the city, one of them quite late and after a long gap, suggests progress. The Council now had a system, learned from experience, and knew how to operate it.

One of the prime concerns in caring for the homeless was availability of food, particularly hot food. A lengthy and comprehensive report on public feeding was submitted to the ARP

²²³ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40 ARP Special meeting 24/6/40 p781 min 5387; 5/7/40 p810 min 3597; 19/7/40 p881 min 6135; Full Council 8/7/40 p 817 min 5630; 9/9/40 p 942 min 6535; ARP Committee 13/9/40 p969 min 6751; Food Control Committee 4/9/40 p 936 min 6507

²²⁴ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1942/43, Civic Buildings, etc, 18/5/43, p. 556, min. 3880: Libraries Committee, 18/5/43, p. 559, min. 3901: ARP Emergency Housing Sub Committee, 25/5/43, p.596, min. 4139.

²²⁵ CHL, An information source book, p. 48 quoting the *Echo*, 18/5/43.

²²⁶ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1942/43, ARP Committee Emergency Housing Sub Committee, 25/5/43, p. 595, min. 4128

²²⁷ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1942/43, ARP Emergency Housing Sub Committee, 25/5/43, p. 595, min. 4136.

Committee on 5 September 1941, setting out a full account of Rest Centre procedure in Cardiff. If the arrangements detailed were implemented as indicated, they were a long way from the halting provision made in the early part of the war. Following a raid the homeless were collected and bussed to Rest Centres. There were 66, in church and school halls, under the control of the Director of Public Assistance. Each was intended to be self contained and provided there was water, able to function for at least twenty four hours. All were opened at the warning, but not staffed (by the WVS and volunteers) until there was need. Each centre was fully stocked with food and beverages, but these were only available when staff was present. The Centres were only a temporary measure until people made arrangements or were billeted. The majority of users were there because of unexploded bombs, which meant a return home once these were dealt with. Stretchers and blankets were available for sleeping. For the first twelve hours no meat or vegetables were available, 'but a good cooked meal should be available during the next day.' Facilities for light refreshments were available, but measures were stressed to be temporary. Food and rest could be provided for 10,000 persons, but there would be insufficient volunteers for all to be used to capacity. Arrangements for medical care and daily visits by the Queen's Institute of District Nursing were arranged, with special attention to children and babies. Every effort was made to ensure that workers could return to work as soon as possible. To the date of the report, 7,000 people had been accommodated in rest centres, of whom 1,500 had been compulsorily billeted. There was co-operation between the Welsh Board of Health, the Assistance Board, the WVS and the Public Assistance Department to deal with 'the many varied problems which affect persons rendered homeless and destitute.'²²⁸

By late summer 1941, of the thirteen million homes in the UK an estimated 115,000 had been destroyed or were un-repairable and two million repairable, with ten per cent uninhabitable and ninety per cent mostly first stage first aid repairs, done by the local authority or contractors. The issue was recognised as one affecting morale.²²⁹ The Council in Cardiff seems to have made an early decision that the best solution for the bombed homeless was rapid return to a repaired home or relocation to alternative accommodation. Possibly this was because housing was an area in which the Council was already involved and interested – an example of the war situation allowing the County Borough to play to its strengths. The

²²⁸ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41, ARP Committee, 5/9/41, p. 791 – 794, min. 5552.

²²⁹ TNA, HO186/927 Blitz Papers –Preparations for Heavy Attack. Lessons Learned. Report of the Ministry of Home Security August 1941Memorandum from the Ministry of Health and Department of Health in Scotland.

history of the County Borough, prepared on its dissolution in 1974, stresses the attention paid by the Council to its housing programme and its pre-war expansion, indicating that by 1940 6,689 houses, flats and shops had been built by the Council, with the capital expenditure involved 'outstripping all other services in its financial importance'.²³⁰

The Council was considering the issue of housing the bombed-out homeless throughout 1940 and beyond. An early but abortive attempt to get government approval to complete partially built houses for use of the bombed-out was followed by a comprehensive scheme to provide homes through renting, with early recognition that arrangements would also have to be made for furniture and possessions. Action on this may have been prompted by looting. Juliet Gardiner cites a report from the Regional Officer of the War Damage Commission that indicates houses and gardens in Cardiff were being stripped, not just of possessions but fittings and plants, with a skill that implied it was not the vandalism of irresponsible youth. Depredation extended to Council repair work, which the Council seemed helpless to stop, despite police vigilance.²³¹ Fear of looting made residents reluctant to leave bombed homes, so may have added urgency to the Council's provision of storage. Measures to store furniture and let people know that storage was available were agreed in October 1940, and eventually a manager was also appointed.²³² In successfully re-housing the bombed-out the Council achieved something that was acknowledged to be difficult. Titmuss points out:

The installation of one family in a requisitioned house often demanded smooth co-ordination between five or six local departments and agencies at a time when the means of physical communications were disturbed and unreliable.²³³

The post bombing challenge fell into two parts – repair of homes that could be repaired, so called, 'first aid' for houses, and the re-housing of those whose homes were beyond repair. Repair and replacement of housing potentially involved three different types of displaced person – Council tenants, private tenants and house owners. For a time the ARP Committee, looking at the city as a whole, and the Estates Committee, considering matters relating to

²³⁰ *Cardiff 1889-1974* p 42

²³¹ Juliet Gardiner, *The Blitz: The British Under Attack*, (London, 2010), p.329.

²³² CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40, ARP Committee, 11/10/40, p. 1063, min. 7433 : Finance Committee, 27/1/41, p. 255, min. 1815: ARP Committee, 14/3/41, p.375, min. 2674: CHL Cardiff Council minutes 1941/42, ARP Committee, 23/1/42, p. 248, min. 1714: 30/1/42 p. 258, min. 1798.

²³³ Titmuss, *Social Policy*, p.281.

Council tenants, were operating in parallel to each other, and the intricacies of the Committee decisions could become confusing and somewhat contradictory. What did not change was the need which the Council attempted to address.

Attention was first applied to the repairs aspect. In January 1940, well in advance of any significant bomb damage in the city, the Council was considering amassing plant, materials and tools required for “first aid” repairs. By April tenders had been received for the materials needed. Approval was given to place the order and arrange storage.²³⁴ In August the ARP Committee was notified of householders whose houses were unfit for habitation as a result of bomb damage and who were unable to carry out the repairs themselves. The Committee agreed to take it on, under the provisions of the Housing (Emergency Powers) Act 1939.²³⁵ Possibly efforts were spurred on by a report that the Rest Centre in Windsor Place was still in use for evacuees on 30 September, presumably from the raid on the 15 September. Officers were asked to organise re-housing.²³⁶

At the meeting on 6 September the Committee was advised that the Council had asked for enquiries, with a report, on the possibility of pooling labour and materials over a wide area for more rapid demolition, repair and rebuilding of premises damaged or destroyed by enemy action.²³⁷ With the increase in destructive raids during September, there was soon a long list of properties which owners could not repair and the ARP Committee noted the need for a procedure to deal with applications.²³⁸ At the end of September the City Engineer reported on a possible way of speeding up repairs by involving outside contractors.²³⁹

At the ARP Committee in October 1940 the Committee discussed what type of repairs might be carried out to houses. The decision was that glazing and lighting should be done

²³⁴ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40, ARP Committee, 12/1/40, p. 279, min. 1842; 19/4/40, p.576, min. 3951.

²³⁵ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40. ARP Committee, 23/8/40, p. 917, min. 6390. When this was reported at Council, members took the matter further, asking for immediate representations to government for a speedier method of repairing and rebuilding homes of citizens rendered unfit by war damage. Copies were to be sent to the City’s MPs and the AMC for prompt and vigorous support. Full Council 9/9/40 p 944

²³⁶ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40, ARP (Emergency Housing) Sub Committee, 30/9/40, p. 1043, min.7290.

²³⁷ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40, ARP Committee, 6/9/40, p.939, min. 6529; 13/9/40 p 971 min 6780

²³⁸ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40, ARP Committee, 20/9/40, p. 997, min. 6974.

²³⁹ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40, ARP Committee, 27/9/ 40, p.1037, min. 7237.

immediately, and if landlords agreed, permanent repairs also, at the landlord's expense.²⁴⁰ Temporary staff were also taken on.²⁴¹ Delay was said to be occurring because of the need to submit proposals to the Welsh Board of Health. The Committee agreed that authority should be given for repairs up to £100 in value, and until houses were repaired, non essential work was to stop.²⁴² The Council did not always fulfil expectations, however – there was complaint in the local newspapers over delay in repairing bombed houses.²⁴³ The extent of damage to buildings needing repair in the city by 1942 is evidenced when a new additional filing cabinet had to be procured to store the paperwork. The existing one was 'filled to capacity'.²⁴⁴

While the ARP Committee was looking at repairs, the Estates Committee had also begun to consider replacement housing, endeavouring to re-home bombed-out Council tenants. The Committee looked first to its own provision – there were no vacant Council properties, but there were sixty houses which were partially completed to the level of the damp proof course, construction of which had been halted because of the war. The Committee resolved to apply to the Ministry of Health to complete them.²⁴⁵ It would probably be naive to imagine that the Council would not have welcomed the opportunity to add to the housing stock, or that the Ministry would not suspect this as part of the motive, given the suspicion with which the pavilions in the parks were viewed by the Home Office. Despite a number of attempts, including member level lobbying at Whitehall, the Welsh Board of Health was not persuaded to agree.²⁴⁶

Alongside the deliberations of the Estates Committee, the ARP Committee was also considering means of re-housing. The Chairman of the Committee suggested a plan that empty properties on the north side of the city should be listed, with a view to the Council purchasing and furnishing a stock, keeping them ready for those obliged to leave their homes.

²⁴⁰ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40, ARP Committee, 11/10/40, p. 1063, min. 7427.

²⁴¹ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41, ARP Committee, 31/1/41, p.255, min. 1823.

²⁴² CHL, Council Minutes 1940/41, ARP Committee, 16/5/41, p. 552, min. 3943.

²⁴³ *Echo*, 1/9/41, p.2 & 9/9/41, p.2. Letters complained of a rosy picture being given on the repair of bombed houses, when in reality there was delay and inadequate repair, the writer having been waiting 8 months.

²⁴⁴ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42, ARP Committee. 1/5/42, p. 521, min. 3567: Cardiff Council Minutes 1942/43, ARP Committee, 3/9/43, p. 754, min. 5358.

²⁴⁵ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40, Estates Committee, 5/9/40, p. 952, min. 6613.

²⁴⁶ CHL, Council Minutes 1940/41, Estates (Allocation of Houses and Repairs) Sub Committee, 30/10/40, p.25, min. 151: Estates Committee, 9/1/41, p. 193, min. 1368: 30/1/41, p. 255, min. 1815 : Estates (Allocation of Houses and Repairs) Sub Committee 15/5/41, p 613.

The Committee appointed a sub committee with plenary power to act.²⁴⁷ What became the ARP (Emergency Housing) Sub Committee wasted no time. Minutes of its meeting on 30 September were considered at Finance Committee on the same day, when it was agreed to requisition and furnish thirty houses and keep a list of fifty others that could be requisitioned immediately. Approval was to be secured from the Welsh Board.²⁴⁸

In parallel, the Estates (Allocation of Houses and Repairs) Sub Committee was also looking at re-housing. Having discovered that allocations were being made to tenants on the regular waiting list, the Chairman had instructed that tenancies should go to the bombed homeless.²⁴⁹ The Sub Committee resolved that immediately after a raid the Treasurer should be informed, to offer a tenancy of a vacant Council house.²⁵⁰ At this point the request of the ARP for a list of properties in the north of the city was raised. The Sub Committee then resolved that the Treasurer prepare as soon as possible a list of all empty houses and shops in the city, street by street, for this purpose.²⁵¹ Presumably discussions went on behind the scenes, as the decision was quickly rescinded on the grounds that the ARP Committee was dealing with the matter and the Estates Committee was concerned only with Council houses. At the same meeting the Sub Committee agreed that a Depository for tenants' furniture should be set up, with insurance, when they were forced to leave their homes.²⁵²

At the end of October the ARP (Emergency Housing) Sub Committee considered a temporary scheme for those irrevocably dispossessed and those who might return to their original dwelling once full scale repairs were done. The plan included requisitioning of houses, compensation to owners and arrangements for furniture.²⁵³ The Central Contracts Committee and the Director of Public Assistance were drawn into the sourcing of furniture, the latter reporting to the former on steps taken over furnishings, with the Chairman

²⁴⁷ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40, ARP Committee, 20/9/40, p. 997, min. 6975.

²⁴⁸ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40, Finance Committee, 30/9/40, p. 1017, min. 7117. Production of a pamphlet for displaced householders was agreed, with the help of the WVS sought in sourcing furniture.

²⁴⁹ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40, Estates (Allocation of Houses and Repairs) Sub Committee, 24/9/40, p.1052, min. 7339.

²⁵⁰ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40, Estates (Allocation of Houses and Repairs) Sub Committee, 24/9/40, p. 1052, min. 7340.

²⁵¹ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40, Estates (Allocation of Houses and Repairs) Sub Committee, 24/9/40, p. 1053, min.7341.

²⁵² CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40, Estates (Allocation of Houses and Repairs) Sub Committee, 30/9/40, p.1053, mins. 7357 & 7358.

²⁵³ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40 ARP, (Emergency Housing) Sub Committee, 25/10/40, p. 1121, min. 7873. It was agreed that information would be collected on the 'status and financial position' of families to be accommodated for setting weekly rent in accordance with financial circumstances. Terms and conditions would be those of other Council tenants and more than one family might be accommodated in one house.

authorised to approve purchases and the WVS and City Engineer asked to assist with arranging blackout for requisitioned houses.²⁵⁴ When one house had been furnished the ARP Committee had the chance to inspect it, before any more were done.²⁵⁵

The requisitioning of houses was underway when the ARP Committee met on 1 November. The Chairman of the Welsh Board had approved requisitioning of 22 properties, with twelve to be furnished as shelter stations in accordance with the Ministry of Health Circular 2154. The Town Clerk was authorised to requisition sufficient to ensure that ten small dwellings always remained available.²⁵⁶ The requisitioning of houses confirms the seriousness with which the Council took the problem, the powers it was prepared to exercise and the resources it was prepared to commit to dealing with it. The possibility of purchasing houses was floated also, but did not proceed.²⁵⁷

The scheme was in effective operation after the major raid of 2/3 January 1941 and the ARP Committee was soon receiving reports on its operation.²⁵⁸ The heavy raid of 17/18 May 1943 was the last time the Council was called upon to re-home people because of large scale bombing. The ARP Emergency Housing Sub Committee requisitioned fifteen houses, with fifteen more expected to be confirmed almost immediately. Eighty one families had been accommodated and approximately twice that number remained.²⁵⁹ By late 1944 arrangements were already winding down. At the ARP Emergency Housing Sub Committee on 10 November members were advised that the Welsh Board had indicated that the necessity to requisition houses for those bombed out was now passed and except in exceptional circumstances, no more requisitions would be approved. The Committee requested a report on the number of people waiting to be accommodated in the properties available.²⁶⁰ The issue of those who had lost their homes through bombing continued to exercise the ARP Committee even after VE day. The Emergency Housing Sub Committee was still meeting and considering items in October 1945, expressing dissatisfaction at not receiving a report on

²⁵⁴ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40, Central Contracts Committee, 30/10/40, p.1130 min. 7923.

²⁵⁵ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40, ARP Committee, 1/11/40, p. 1132, min. 7928: CHL, Council Minutes 1940/41, ARP (Shelters) Sub Committee, 8/11/40, p. 11, min. 47.

²⁵⁶ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40, ARP Committee, 1/11/40, p. 1131, min. 7926.

²⁵⁷ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40, ARP Committee. 1/11/40. P. 1132, min. 7929: Council Minutes 1940/41, Estates (Allocation of Houses and Repairs) Sub Committee, 19/11/40, p.101, min. 682.

²⁵⁸ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41. ARP Committee, 17/1/41, p. 203, (Minutes of Emergency Housing Sub, 15/1/41): ARP Committee, 21/2/41, p.316, min. 2264, Minutes of Emergency Housing Sub Committee, 17/2/41

²⁵⁹ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1942/43, ARP Emergency Housing Sub Committee, 25/5/43, p. 595, min. 4128.

²⁶⁰ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1944/45, ARP Emergency Housing Sub Committee, 10/11/44: ARP Committee 1/12/44, p. 62, min. 476.

a survey of vacant accommodation and seeking reports on houses earmarked for enemy attack homeless being requisitioned for persons inadequately housed.²⁶¹

Lack of information, especially for those subjected to bombing, was another deficiency highlighted in the performance of some Councils. Clive Ponting identifies this as a failure on the part of local authorities.²⁶² Gardiner confirms: ‘The Blitz had shown what people in such extraordinary conditions needed was not strictures or exhortations but information, and that was what was often so sadly lacking – not just from local authorities and government but from the press and radio too.’²⁶³ The Council in Cardiff was early off the mark in accepting the need for some sort of information service. The *Cardiff Times* reported on 9 September 1939 that the Council had appointed a sub committee to consider the matter of Information Bureau, on the suggestion of the National Council for Social Services²⁶⁴ This was a measure that was recognised and supported by the local government union, NALGO, which urged its branches to assist.²⁶⁵ When the Sub Committee met on 14 September, it was agreed to recommend the Council set up Information Bureau in each ward in the city, under direction of the ward Councillors. The appointment of a Citizens’ Advice Bureaux Committee of fifteen Councillors, to co-ordinate the work, with power to co-opt other appropriate bodies, was recommended. Steps were to be taken immediately to communicate with members of the Council and bureaux should, as far as possible, use Council buildings, with a small sub Committee to consider accommodation. The British Legion offered its help.²⁶⁶

A newspaper report a few weeks later confirmed the Citizens’ Advice Bureaux Committee under the chairmanship of Sir George Williams would deal with enquiries arising because of war conditions. There would be a central office at City Hall and local offices staffed by volunteers, under the control of ward representatives.²⁶⁷ The Council had understood a problem that was likely to arise and moved quickly to deal with it, with the ward

²⁶¹ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1944/45., ARP Emergency Housing Sub Committee, 12/10/45. P.1001, min. 6869 & 6870.

²⁶² Ponting, *Myth and Reality*, p. 170.

²⁶³ Gardiner, *Wartime*, p.350.

²⁶⁴ *Cardiff Times*, 9/9/39, p.

²⁶⁵ Spoor, *Sixty Years of NALGO*, p .211.

²⁶⁶ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes, 1938/39, Special Sub Committee Re Suggested Establishment of Citizens’ Advice Bureaux, 14/9/39, p.1135, min. 7169: Ward Bureau Development Committee, 20/9/39, p.1158, min. 73.

²⁶⁷ *Cardiff Times*, 23/9/39, p.3

arrangements another indication of the duties expected of Councillors as local agents, and importance of the ward system in maintaining services and networks within the city.

The newspaper was clearly interested in the working of the new facility. Under the headline ‘They will solve all your war time problems’ it reported in early October that these bureaux were opening all over Wales and announced the opening of a Cardiff central office at City Hall and branches, which would be opened in each ward by the end of the week, at libraries, various schools and for the Riverside area at City Lodge.²⁶⁸ With the pressure on accommodation the Council would probably have been obliged to locate the offices wherever they could, but these public buildings would have been known to many of the local populace, and the Central Ward office was in Westgate Street, the location of one of the largest air raid shelters. While the locations for the bureaux may have been well chosen for visibility, the quality of advice on offer may have been less robust. The work of the CABs was not without controversy within the Council. It was reported in the press that one Councillor felt their function was being usurped; another had doubts about ‘well dressed young ladies’ giving advice. The bureaux were defended by the Committee chairman, although it was admitted that they were not as well known as would be wished.²⁶⁹

These comments raise a familiar tension between quantity and quality, with difficulty in deciding how far comments on quality are valid. A network of offices had been set up but, as with any arrangement based on volunteering, the service was dependent on the competence of the recruits. Presumably there would have been topical information available in the form of government publicity and advice, and party members would have contacts and some knowledge of the working of Council services, but these were not professional information staff, and there is no confirmation within the Council records, or elsewhere, that any training was given. There was a local structure for the Ministry of Information, but no evidence that they were acting in the same way as the Regional staff was in the case of Civil Defence, with an approved programme, although the South Wales and Monmouthshire Council of Social Services offered its cooperation to the Council, which was welcomed.²⁷⁰

The Citizens’ Advice Bureaux Committee, meeting on 12 December 1939, was advised that nineteen ward bureaux had now been established in premises provided free of charge, staffed

²⁶⁸ Ibid 7/10/39 pp.2 & 3.

²⁶⁹ *Cardiff Times*, 11/11/39, p.3.

²⁷⁰ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40 ARP Committee 12/12/39 p170 min 1077..

by volunteers. But at the meeting in March 1940 it was suggested that large numbers of citizens did not know about the bureaux. A sub committee was appointed to consider publicity.²⁷¹ Visibility seems to have been an issue. The Committee gave lengthy consideration to a number of items when it met on 15 October 1940, with publicity being prominent. It was agreed to circulate details of the bureaux to churches and chapels, that notices should be displayed on trams and busses, at City Hall and the Electricity Showroom, and advertised in any publications issued to ratepayers by corporation departments as well as the local press.²⁷²

Although the city had been without major bombing incidents for over a year, in 1942 the Libraries Committee set up subsidiary Information Bureau in the branches to supplement the facility at City Hall in the event of an emergency.²⁷³ Female staff members who had volunteered were enrolled, ready to serve as required.²⁷⁴ In 1944 a surplus Civil Defence trailer was converted into a mobile Information Centre, for use after raids, at the request of the Town Clerk. The Welsh Board agreed to a six month experiment.²⁷⁵ Had the city been subject to any more heavy raids, it should have been invaluable in getting service to the heart of bombed areas.

At the meeting of the Citizens' Advice Bureaux Committee on 1 March 1945 members reviewed the operation of the bureaux and recommended to Council that the ward branches be closed, with all enquiries referred to the Central Bureau at City Hall. The Committee recorded its appreciation of the 'splendid services rendered voluntarily by the many public spirited citizens who have manned the several Ward Information Bureaux.'²⁷⁶ The Citizens' Advice Bureaux Committee was not re-appointed for the 1945/46 municipal year, its duties being transferred to the Development Committee.²⁷⁷ The bureaux had operated throughout the war, on the basis of volunteers, and as in other cases, under the auspices of the ward Councillors. Visibility seems to have been a recurrent issue and without any reporting of quantity or quality it is difficult to assess their value, but it can be said that the Council had

²⁷¹ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40, Citizens' Advice Bureaux Committee, 12/12/39, p.170, min. 1076: 8/3/40, p.463,min. 3114.

²⁷² CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40, Citizens' Advice Bureaux Committee, 15/10/40, p. 1078, min. 7582

²⁷³ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42, Libraries Committee, 23/6/42, p. 687, min. 4650.

²⁷⁴ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42, Library Committee, 14/7/42, p. 752, min. 5107.

²⁷⁵ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes, 1943/44, ARP Committee 21/4/44, p.468, min. 3325.

²⁷⁶ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1944/45, Citizens' Advice Bureaux Committee, 1/3/45, p 315.

²⁷⁷ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1944/45, General Purposes Committee, 6/11/45, p.1037, min. 7093.

made a strong attempt to provide a service that had been identified as of vital importance during war.

Winding down of Civil Defence

After the Normandy landings the wind down of Civil Defence in the city was marked. Personnel were dispersed to other duties, or other parts of the country where there was still need. In Cardiff Rescue Parties had already assisted with the Book Drive in 1943.²⁷⁸ Now they were acting as stretcher bearers for military casualties from hospital trains arriving with the wounded from the Allied landings on the Continent.²⁷⁹ Personnel were being loaned to London, suffering under attack from V1 and V2 bombers. After an appeal for squads for temporary transfer to help with first aid repair of houses, 35 men volunteered.²⁸⁰ While the Ministry of Home Security had made announcements on the curtailment of hours of standby duty for part time unpaid Civil Defence personnel, Cardiff was not prepared to act precipitately. The ARP Controller pointed out to Committee that such was the importance of Civil Defence communications, with limited personnel available it was not possible yet to apply this to Report and Control Centres staff, pending instructions from higher authority. The Committee approved the Controller's action in writing to staff to that effect.²⁸¹

The messages now from central government on fire watching and civil defence were for relaxation of requirements and arrangements to stand down, although even as late as autumn 1944, officers were still being sent on training courses.²⁸² In September 1944 Fire Prevention Circular No 14 16/9/44 signalled the complete relaxation of all fire guard duties under Fire Guard Orders, from noon on Tuesday 12 September.²⁸³ Home Security Circular 115/19/9/44

²⁷⁸ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1942/43: Public Works and Town Planning Committee, 18/2/43, p. 313, min. 2182.

²⁷⁹ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1943/44, ARP Committee, 15/9/44, p. 799, min. 5719. Vehicles had travelled 27,540 miles in June July and August and whole time paid personnel and part time volunteers of the Ambulance Transport Service had given 3,267 hours of service in off duty periods.

²⁸⁰ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1943/44 Public Works Committee, 20/7/44, p. 710, min. 5054.

²⁸¹ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1943/44, ARP Committee, 15/9/44, p. 798, min. 5717.

²⁸² CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1943/44, ARP Committee, 15/9/44, p. 798, mins. 5713 & 5714.

²⁸³ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1943/44, ARP Committee, 8/9/44, p. 772, min. 5469.

set out provisions for reducing Civil Defence staff, setting out the procedures for Scheme Making authorities to be worked through with the Regional Commissioner.²⁸⁴ Proposals were received from the Commissioner and a conference arranged for October at which reduction in the Ambulance and First Aid Posts, Wardens, Rescue, Report and Control Centres were agreed, with the revised establishment coming into effect on 16 November.²⁸⁵ Civil defence remained amongst the responsibilities of local authorities after the war, but by 1945 the machinery of crisis was being dismantled. Buildings were being returned to their regular use, equipment returned to stores. The Ministry of Home Security fixed 2 May 1945 for the disbandment of the Civil Defence War Organisation.²⁸⁶ The Cardiff Air Raid Wardens' Organisational Report for 1945 looks back at the history of the service, opening with a letter of thanks from Chief Warden, Gilbert Shepherd: 'Cardiff is unique in having been the only large city in the Country where the wardens' work has been carried out on a voluntary and unpaid basis....The consequent saving of local and national expenditure should earn the thanks of the citizens of Cardiff.'²⁸⁷

Conclusion

In examining some of the key elements in civil defence in a single city, this chapter provides insight into the variety and breadth of the task and the relationships between local authorities and central government and between local authorities and local residents. Civil defence was a local service centrally directed. The framework and requirements were set squarely by government. Local authorities were expected to comply. The various reporting systems recorded in surviving government files, which have been drawn on in writing this chapter, indicate the level to which the centre expected the localities to account for themselves. In respect of the warden and associated services, the Council's chief job was to provide the raw materials – people and premises – and follow direction, with extensive involvement of the regional apparatus in the way that things were shaped. Even so, a sense of ownership emerges

²⁸⁴ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1943/44, ARP Committee, 22/9/44, p. 835, min. 5942.

²⁸⁵ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1943/44 ARP Committee 29/9/44 p 853 min 6062; 6/10/44 p 886 min 6258; 20/10/44 p 929 min 6568

²⁸⁶ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1944/45, ARP Committee, 4/5/45, p. 521, min. 3641.

²⁸⁷ CCL, 948.2 (268.8) CAR Cardiff Air Raid Warden Organisation Report 1945. Letter dated 30/6/45. The authorised establishment was 545 whole time paid staff. At the outbreak there were 45, then 23, then 14 by 1943/44. The voluntary unpaid total was never less than 4,098 persons.

from the Council records. The Council was committed to the defence of the city. Clearly there was a lag between the Council's perception of what was being provided and that of others –the Regional Officer in particular – but the authority does appear to have cooperated, with prompting. Even within a set framework the Council exerted a level of independence, illustrated by holding on to the helmet supply.

Elements of the establishment of the Fire Guard echo the pattern of civil defence as a whole – difficulty in recruiting, remedied in this case by early use of conscription, the provision of facilities and the organisations of pools and rotas, slipping into routine. Despite the difficulty of recruiting, the records give a strong sense of involvement from those concerned, possibly prompted by the city's direct experience of fire attack, and perhaps also by the realisation that in this case visible positive prevention could be achieved by a civilian force. The Council seems to have had no qualms over tapping into non-official forces for fire fighting, although it must be noted that government publicity material urged caution in meddling with devices, if untrained. Assessment of the Council provision of Rest Centres is subjective, but there does seem to have been an early understanding that Centres might become more than short-term transit stations, signified in the provision of modest comforts and the early focus on re-housing. The latter showed a particular appreciation that a raid could spell disaster that was not accompanied by destitution, and that attending to repairs and relocation would hasten the throughput of Rest Centres. As with everything, experience and readiness grew as war progressed. In holding property in advance of demand, and storing furniture, the Council also made a financial commitment to the problem. The Information Bureaux appear to have been extensive and well-organised from the start, although again quality is subjective. The bureaux were an example of volunteering that was not part of the civil defence procedure and a service rooted in the ward system, a favourite Council practice.

Overall the Council fulfilled government expectations with what seems to be a reasonable level of competence, and in some cases a degree of enthusiasm and initiative. The government appeared satisfied with the service it had conjured out of nowhere and the performance of the local authorities, although admitting to initial doubts. The Order of the Day on the demobilisation of the Civil Defence Service praised 200,000 full and one and a quarter million part time staff, with the comment that before the first attack no one knew how the organisation would work or the service respond. The Order acknowledges, 'Once the attack started the issue was never in doubt.' 'The local authorities and their officers did their

share magnificently, and local government justified to the full the confidence that had been placed in it.’²⁸⁸

This examination of Civil Defence in Cardiff opens up understanding of the war on the Home Front, by adding detail and depth to the national and general treatment in many histories. While it does not refute Richie Calder’s portrait of initial deficiencies, it does show that in a less intensively bombed provincial city the situation was less dire, and confirms that the government was culpable in preparedness and finance. It reveals the extent of unacknowledged activity that may well have been taking place in many other parts of the country and records the capacity of a local authority to learn. Hopefully future similar studies of other cities will establish how far Cardiff was representative of war time councils, and allow a more nuanced and diverse portrayal of the local authority at war than the catalogue of failure so frequently presented.

Issues raised in this chapter are, in the judgement of later historians, some of the most contentious of the war, particularly surrounding post-raid services. It is on failures in this area that a view of general incompetence in wartime local authorities has significantly been based. Horror at the plight of displaced and underserved Londoners, in the poorest parts of the city, passed from eyewitness journalist Richie Calder to his historian son, Angus Calder, from whose compelling work other historians have taken their lead, seem to have coloured assessment of local government as a whole. On this basis Angus Calder can assert,

‘In general nothing emerges more forcibly from the Blitz than the contrast between laggard councillors, obsessed with their own prestige and the self-sacrifice of the volunteers who strove indefatigably to remedy the position which Bumbledom had created.’²⁸⁹

That quote reveals a tendency, visible in other accounts of the civilian war, to treat the issues surrounding the bombing assaults in binary terms. While it does admit that local government had a place, the impression is created that the volunteers were a self contained entity, succeeding despite local government, possibly even in opposition to it, an impression reinforced by the inclusion of anecdote and reminiscence which emphasises the personal, the comic and the poignant. Yet all over the country councils had been obliged to produce ARP

²⁸⁸ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1944/45, ARP Committee, 4/5/45, p. 521, min. 3642.

²⁸⁹ Calder *Peoples’ War* page 193

and Fire Service plans on which the work of those volunteers would be based. These plans were where organisation and administration lay.

The thesis has demonstrated the essential role of the local authority in bringing the whole together. Local authorities were a key component of making a collection of amateurs into a functioning domestic assistance force. This fact often seems to be overlooked, but if equipment, buildings and training were in place in Cardiff, they were in place everywhere. Every town and city that coped with an air raid called on the structure that had been created, of which local authorities were the local architects. That the execution could be deficient did not negate the existence of the structure. The potential effect of a sense of safety and well being created for city residents by an interlocking panoply of mitigation measures, aside from Civil Defence – rest centres and information bureaux, and the Fire Guard stationed on the city rooftops – was probably not much considered at the time, or measured, but the background knowledge that these arrangements existed, may well be classed on a par with the sense of well being said to derive from possession of a gas mask.

Once war became a reality, the residents of Cardiff came forward to be part of the volunteering self-sacrifice. That an establishment existed into which they could be welcomed, that they were uniformed and equipped (after initial difficulties), accommodated, trained, included in parades, provided with recreation and had their contribution recognised, made it clear that volunteering mattered. However much a sense of wartime spirit, camaraderie and obligation might be stirred by government propaganda, and much effort went into seeing that it was, it was the almost unacknowledged edifice provided by the local authority that enabled that contribution to be made. The skill and status afforded by membership of the ARP allowed the ordinary resident, otherwise unremarkable, to have a part in shaping their own and their community's safety and demonstrating active citizenship. That the local authority was the means of realising this, with its probable contribution to morale, for both participant and recipient, has not been given appropriate weight.

That all this happened in Cardiff suggests that it may well reflect the picture elsewhere. Such activity would undoubtedly have been manifest in different ways, to different degrees, and with differing levels of success. Unlike the studies of parts of London and of Southampton, where the actions of councils were identified as catastrophic, Cardiff, revealed in the thesis, was an example of an authority that mostly got it right. As such, this study provided a

prototype for examining other authorities and a potential yardstick for measuring performance, to revisit the tarnished image of wartime local government.

Chapter Three

Air Raid Shelters.

Introduction

Air raid shelters were the second wartime service that the local authorities were obliged by government to administer or provide, what C M Kohan, the official war historian of Works and Buildings, terms, ‘The vast, inchoate air raid precautions programme of the Home Office.’¹ It is important because, like ARP, it was a completely new departure for the local authority, although perhaps not quite such an imposition as civil defence, as the authority had construction experience in its house building programme, which was halted for the duration. The initiative for protecting themselves lay with the individual and the householder. The bulk of the means, those that were not improvised within the home, lay with national and local government. The Government supplied family scale domestic shelters – Andersons for back gardens, and later Morrisons for use in the house – free to those who met appropriate criteria. The Council was responsible for distribution and ensuring installation. All other shelter provision was up to the Council, including surveying, strengthening and, in some cases, building the necessary constructions. Government approval, by the regional apparatus, was necessary for site and grant consent, but shaping the scheme was the responsibility of the Council, revised extensively once the real nature of war became apparent.

Shelter provision is important, as an essential element of the local authority war, part of the new responsibilities thrust upon it by government. While provision of shelters has formed a significant element in social studies of the war, these are almost invariably on a national scale. This chapter, in taking the examination down a layer, and looking in detail at one authority, provides new insight into how the provision of massive civilian protection worked in practice – the considerations which had to be taken into account, the wishes of shelterers, the disruptive effect of government policy revisions and the innovative way at least one local

¹ C M Kohan, *Works and Buildings: History of the Second World War: United Kingdom Civil Series*, (London, 1952), p. 354.

authority dealt with the bombing threat, suggesting that local government may not have been the sluggish and unimaginative organ that some historians have suggested.

As the provision of shelters was an evolutionary process, adapting during the progress of the war, the chapter follows a loosely chronological structure. It looks first at pre war preparation, types of shelter, at government expectations and at the Council's views on them, on choices made by the public of ways in which they wished to shelter and on what the Council provided. Next, it examines the elements of the scheme that can be measured and the impressive numbers that Cardiff Council achieved. Making high numbers was not a guarantee of quality, however, and the unexpected uncovering of a damning report from a government minister, in the National Archive files, illustrates how far Cardiff's provision apparently fell short in 1941. As in other cases in the war, government policy changed as events developed. The chapter will outline the changes that came about after the onset of the London Blitz, when the concept of sheltering transformed from an expectation that shelters would be used for short-term emergencies to an acceptance that sheltering could be a nightly event, needing provision for sleeping and eating. The chapter moves on to discuss the manner in which Cardiff provided for this change – the creation of shelter colonies – consisting of new build shelters on the outskirts of the city which included canteens and recreation. It will take in the phenomenon of trekking, which may have had an unexpected influence, and examine whether the concept and creation of out-of-town shelter colonies is peculiar to Cardiff. The chapter closes with a brief look at the problems of theft and vandalism and the decline in demand for shelters, with a conclusion reflecting on the authority's ability to learn and adapt.

The chapter as a whole provides a snapshot of one authority's response to government requirements. Shelter provision was almost entirely a matter for the Council, except for residents who purchased their own Anderson or Morrison shelters (supplied by the government) or created domestic refuge spaces. A minimal volunteering element was confined to those who took some responsibility for the later control and social and welfare provisions within the shelters. This is in contrast to Civil Defence, which deeply involved volunteers and the community. The Council was ambitious in its provision, although clearly not always in touch with how that provision was being used. As in Civil Defence, the Council was the conduit for transmission of government policy into the community, while itself shaping how the policy would be delivered.

Shelters, civil defence and post raid services were the areas of wartime activity which formed the most immediately visible proportion of the County Borough's war effort, absorbing a large share of time, attention and resources. Shelter provision was the bedrock of the Council's passive defence provision. It was a government requirement, not to be avoided, placed upon all local authorities, except parish Councils. Examination in this thesis of how a provincial authority approached the task, through the whole passage of the war, provides a counterpoint to overviews such as Juliet Gardiner's *Wartime*, or Terence O'Brien's detailed and lengthy study, which forms the volume of the official war histories dealing with *Civil Defence*. These volumes deal on broad brush scale, following developments over the time line of the war, with attention to government action and policy making. Most secondary literature focuses primarily on London, understandably, as London was the most prominent and consistent target for bombing throughout the war. The nature of the bombing in London often prompted government action, such as accepting responsibility for the cost of providing shelters, and initiating measures to provide essential facilities, which were subsequently rolled out to the rest of the country. Some recent publications are beginning to explore levels lower in the hierarchy, such as Richard Overy's *The Bombing War*, which uses material from Hull and Newcastle.² J R Alban's *The Three Nights Blitz Reports relating to Swansea Air raids of February 1941* is one study, using contemporary records, of a specific incident that is one of the major milestones in the Second World War in Wales.³

This chapter is a single city study. While it makes an important contribution to understanding of the executive level of war activity in a Welsh city, it has scope to form a piece in a much wider canvas. Perhaps in future similar examination of individual provincial authorities will allow a picture to be drawn of local authorities across the country, which will enable regional performance, often thought to lag behind London, to be assessed alongside that of the capital.

Pre-war preparations and Options for Sheltering

Early consideration of the practicalities of air raid shelter provision appear in various correspondence contained in Government files for 1937 and 1938, which discusses experiments with accommodation levels of trench shelters, the problems of them not being gas proof, and the possible use of the Tube network.⁴ The Air Raid Precautions Act 1937,

² Gardiner, *Wartime*: O'Brien, *Civil Defence*: Overy, *The Bombing War*

³ J R Alban *The Three Nights Blitz Reports relating to Swansea Air raids of February 1941*, (Swansea, 1994).

⁴ TNA, HO45/17588, Shelters.

which became effective on 1 January 1938, laid a duty on local authorities to submit ARP schemes to the Secretary of State, with what O'Brien, terms, substantial but not all costs being met by government. County Councils and County Boroughs were the principal scheme making authorities, authorised to incur expenditure, with the Secretary of State empowered to pay grant aid of 60 to 75 per cent. Finance continued as a sensitive issue before and in the early months of hostilities, fading only when government, in the face of the London Blitz, agreed in October 1940 to accept the full cost of materials, labour and equipping of shelters. Even then, there was still tension, with authorities who had taken action early and spent accordingly, lobbying for retrospective application.⁵

In general at this time, preparations made by local authorities were not judged impressive. Comments on the pre-war situation by Kohan and Calder are representative. Both ARP organisation and the public were said to be 'largely unprepared'. Air raid precautions were 'manifestly inadequate'.⁶ Against a backdrop of niggardly resources and half-hearted peacetime preparations, this is not especially surprising. The government's initial expectation was for short, sharp, daylight raids. Provision was concentrated on trench shelters, for those caught in the open, with some strengthening of basements. People were not expected to remain in the shelters for any significant length of time. This was the type of provision made during the Munich Crisis. Cardiff City Council dutifully dug in the crisis, but was considering re-filling as early as November 1938, because of damage to public open spaces and flooding.⁷ The experiences of Munich shaped some of Cardiff Council's later choices.

Shelter choices and rationale

Sheltering was a complex issue. The Air Raid Precautions Act 1937 ended two and a half years of voluntary arrangements, imposing an obligation on local authorities to submit schemes for ARP arrangements in their areas. Circular 158, issued in August 1939, announced the passing of the Civil Defence Act, which allowed local authorities to provide domestic shelters and public ones for people caught in the street, and who could not be provided for at home. The powers of the Act were expected to be used, 'with energy' but 'with discretion'. Suitable – and suitably distributed – buildings, which could be readily available, must be selected. Authorities were cautioned not to focus on large spaces, such as

⁵ O'Brien, *Civil Defence*, pp. 107, 510.

⁶ Kohan, *Works and Buildings*, p. 355; Calder, *People's War*, p. 31.

⁷ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39 ARP Committee 11/11/38 p33 min 140; 25/1/39, p. 296, min. 1886.

car parks, which were too capacious and posed ‘catastrophic risk’. One car space was estimated to accommodate thirty people, who would presumably be standing.⁸

The government’s first preference for sheltering was dispersal – sending the vulnerable, such as women and children, out of the danger zones. (Cardiff Council was only peripherally involved in the Government Evacuation Scheme.) Shelter should be provided close to home for those who remained, ensuring that large assemblies of people were not offered as targets. Home Office notes stress, ‘We must, however, maintain both on merits and for a number of other reasons, our policy of dispersal, and oppose the suggestion that large aggregates of population in industrial centres should aim at an elaborate system of bomb proof shelters in the heart of their locations, constructed during peacetime.’⁹ The Civil Defence Act 1939 introduced the legislative framework for providing shelter. Government files indicate that provision was not to be on an elaborate scale. ‘The first and salient point is that the government will not provided public bomb proof shelters and should never recommend such provision in view of the astronomic cost involved.’ Shelters for those caught in the street should not be better than those provided at home, ‘Otherwise everyone will want to rush out to the public shelters, instead of staying put’.¹⁰ Such was the distrust over public reaction, and the preoccupation with dispersal, the local authorities were not asked to build public shelters until a few days before war broke out.¹¹

Even when it became apparent that the short, sharp, daylight raid was not how bombing would be conducted, it was still small-scale sheltering at home – in Anderson shelters in the garden, or safe rooms under the stairs, or later, under a Morrison shelter inside the house – that was expected to be the first line of defence. Sheltering at home provided ease of access, fewer casualties in the event of a direct hit, and much less opportunity for the panic which it was feared would overcome many civilians during bombing. Edgerton indicates that that the government did not want to ‘over invest,’ so many measures were more propagandist than practical. The bulk of the population was expected to look after themselves.¹² It was not until

⁸TNA, HO208/1, Circular 158/39 3/8/39.

⁹ TNA, HO45/17588, Shelters. An internal briefing note to Sir Alexander Rouse, 9/4/38

¹⁰ TNA, HO45/17588, Shelters. Note by Wing Commander Hodson, Inspector General, dated 15 November. No year, but probably 1938.

¹¹ Calder, *People’s War*, p.179.

¹² David Edgerton, *Britain’s War Machine Weapons Resources and Experts in the Second World War*, (London 2011, p.36.

war dragged on and the disruption of waiting, uncomfortable and sleepless, for the bombers to arrive, became more of a potential burden than an actual raid, that focus changed.

It was not always clear what the people themselves wanted in the way of shelters, or indeed if they wanted to shelter at all. Calder offers statistics to suggest that, particularly as the war went on, the majority of people remained at home in bed, even after the sounding of the sirens, not seeking shelter until they could hear evidence of a raid taking place.¹³ An anonymous account of the raid on Cardiff on 2/3 January 1941 recounts that the author and sister 'retired with rugs, coats and dressing gowns to the cellar'.¹⁴ Not all Cardiff residents necessarily felt safe in their home refuge rooms. One Mass Observation diarist, a few days into the war recorded, 'Some talk of approaching the local authority to be allowed to use the public shelters in the event of a raid.'¹⁵ Shelter options included this making do at home, sheltering as a communal experience, and deep sheltering – use of underground tunnels, perceived to be bombproof, which was satisfied in London by the nightly invasion of the Tube network. Sheltering at home appears to have been the majority option, frequently preferred, even if deep shelter was available. Fielding, Thompson and Tiratsoo suggest, 'For most the Blitz was a private familial experience.'¹⁶ Juliet Gardiner indicates that only about 4 per cent of Londoners ever used the Tube during the months of the Blitz.¹⁷ Facing the threat as part of a community, sheltering with others, did appeal to some – a practice apparently approved by the British Psychological Society. 'The presence of crowds and shelter officials reduced anxiety.' and 'The provision of communal shelters rather than individual ones, is in general, the best policy.'¹⁸ The Horder Committee, charged by government in September 1940 to look at conditions in shelters as a matter of urgency, found that many people who had

¹³ Calder, *People's War* p. 181. Statistics for November 1940 indicate less than 50 per cent of Londoners were using shelters, although Calder points out that some would have been on duty and that sleeping at home might still involve make-shift protection.

¹⁴ CHL, LC94053 046 WAR, *The War An account of the war begun on 3rd September 1939 Vol 2* (Date and source unknown). The document is hand written, a mix of diary, first person account of events in Cardiff (in chapters), details of overseas battles and press cuttings. There is no indication of the identity of the author, but internal evidence suggests an adolescent boy. An account of the attack on 2/3/January 1941 refers to watching the raid from the study and father and brother going out 'on patrol'.

¹⁵ Mass Observation Online Files, Diarist 5156, 8/9/39.
Massobservation.amdigital.co.uk.abc.cardiff.ac.uk/Documents/Images/Diarist 5156/8

¹⁶ Stephen Fielding, Peter Thompson, Nick Tiratsoo, *England Arise, The Labour Party and Popular Politics in 1940s Britain*, (Manchester, 1995) p.25.

¹⁷ Juliet Gardiner, *The Blitz: The British Under Attack*, (London, 2010), p.85.

¹⁸ Joshua Levine, *The Secret History of the Blitz*, (London, Undated), pp 60-61.

Anderson shelters were not using them, but using communal ones instead.¹⁹ In Cardiff later in the war large numbers of residents used communal shelters.²⁰ When the shelter colonies were operative, the Council was advocating this.

The Ministry of Information was keen to encourage a sense of community, if this would improve morale, advocating, 'joining up with the other fellows' to play a part in passive defence also, 'In some places unofficial committees of housewives are being formed to make life comfortable in street shelters. Your wife might well join one of these. They look after the children and keep the shelters clean and tidy.'²¹ After the experience of the London Blitz, ideas shifted. Following a visit made by the ARP Inspector General, Wing Commander Hodsoll, to Shoreditch, where flats had been demolished with loss of life, but a shelter in the courtyard had stood up well, a more nuanced approach was being suggested at the Home Office, 'a little more positive in our advocacy of shelter particularly of the domestic type' rather than the stay at home message.²² Whatever the Cardiff population's attitude to sheltering – and this fluctuated during the course of the war - the story of the County Borough's air raid shelters is one of stubborn determination to provide something for every inhabitant of the city and later of encouraging the inhabitants to use what was provided, with ever more elaborate facilities.

Cardiff County Borough made, or considered, provision across the spectrum of shelter models, in a slow but unwavering drive, which extended for almost the full term of the war. Except for a short flirtation with the concept of deep shelters – never especially high on the central government agenda – the County Borough followed the lines laid down by government. Measures of any success in this area therefore must focus on how big a task the Council faced and how it delivered. For the two major passive defence tasks – shelter provision and air raid services – a loose pathway can be traced during the course of the war. First a rapid learning curve, from an initial position of inadequacy – although in shelter provision this might not necessarily be as a result of poor preparation; the inappropriateness

¹⁹ Laura Dawes, *Fighting Fit: The Wartime Battle for Britain's Health*, (London, 2016) p 108

²⁰ CHL, Cardiff Air Raids 1939-1945 An information source book, p. 42 quoting the Echo 27/2/41. An observation from a reporter in February 1941 about the calm of the people as they made their way home from 'packed air raid shelters in the centre,' confirms that numbers of Cardiff residents were using the communal shelters. The majority of these may have been residents whose properties were not suitable for Anderson shelters, but given that many Andersons were subject to damp and flooding, there might also have been residents exercising a preference.

²¹ TNA, INF 1/251 (MoI) Planning Committee. Speakers' notes 'Raiders Overhead', 11/7/40.

²² TNA, HO 186/1213 Publicity – Shelters. A note of 27/4/ 41, signed SCL, to Sir George Gator, referring to Hodsoll's visit.

of the government's expectations has already been rehearsed. There was also the problem of uncertainty – there was no knowing when, or if, the city would be a target. Delay and hesitancy in complying with potentially expensive government requirements might therefore be understood, if not necessarily condoned.

The next phase was one of expansion and adaptation. National and local government realised the true nature of bombing and adapted. Mid war brought plateau – settling down to the long haul, with a focus on combating grey routine, boredom, and wavering commitment. In the last phase of the war, when there were actually few raids, Council provision reached a zenith, providing facilities for replicating the elements of normal life while sheltering, until finally the wind down and the descent to VE and VJ day. The Council's provision began with the official plans required by government of all counties and county boroughs, and then followed the ebb and flow of the war. The Council largely complied with the government approved programme, occasionally using its own judgement. It did have great determination, as witnessed in the relentless pursuit of providing shelters for all the residents of the city and the determined execution of the colony project.

Attack was anticipated in three types - gas, heavy explosive (H.E.) and incendiary bombs. As has already been indicated, before the war and in the early months, operations concentrated heavily on gas attack.²³ Measures to meet the other types of attack, shelter and aftercare, received much less attention. The three major issues relating to shelter provision were finance, availability of manpower and materials and decisions on what would be provided, which had to be in line with government policy. Interestingly, manpower did not seem to be a major problem for the County Borough, although there were issues with materials. The government gradually relaxed its hold on the purse strings, but retained its preference for dispersal, as Richard Overy points out:

The government remained committed throughout 1940 to the argument that it was better to have the population dispersed in small, mainly domestic shelters than gathered together in large public bunkers, where there were greater health risks and problems of public order.²⁴

²³ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1937/38 23/9/38, p. 992, min. 6701; Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39, ARP Committee, 11/11/38, p. 35, min. 141; Watch Committee, 14/6/39, p.852, min. 5430. .

²⁴ Overy, *The Bombing War*, p.137.

Central government was disinclined to attempt the type of shelter that might have brought complete peace of mind to the populace – deep and totally bombproof. Overy comments that totally bomb proof shelters were unfeasible in practice. ‘Central government and local authorities alike appreciated that this was the counsel of perfection.’²⁵ This did not stop the desire for them being expressed, or Cardiff Council considering the proposition.

The government was profoundly wary of the lobby for deep shelters, which carried implications for morale – the fear of the development of a troglodyte shelter mentality – as well as issues of construction technique and potentially massive demands on manpower and materials. Angus Calder notes that while the government strongly resisted the idea of deep shelters in the early years of the war, and discouraged the idea of making such provision, it eventually experienced a change of heart and constructed eight deep shelters in London.²⁶ These were not completed until July 1944, when the worst of the Blitz was passed.²⁷ Writing in 1941, Calder’s father, journalist Richie Calder, saw the deep shelter mentality claim as an invention, an excuse for not providing expensive deep shelters.²⁸ Before war broke out the government was defensive about its intention to rely on Andersons and strutted basements, rather than constructing deep shelters. Ministry of Information files indicate that while not mounting an anti propaganda campaign, the opportunity should be taken to make, ‘a positive contribution to the public appreciation of our shelter policy’. A special letter to the local authorities, to try to get facts over to the public, is suggested, with a warning against false local prophets. ‘In this Branch we see constantly evidence of little people with loud voices in the provinces posing as experts and running down the approved shelters’.²⁹ In November 1940, in the midst of the London Blitz, the Ministry of Information considered details of a proposed leaflet on the deep shelter controversy – a re-print of a broadcast given by Home Secretary and Minister for Home Security, Herbert Morrison, on 3 November, ‘to counter the Communist propaganda among working class population about shelters’.³⁰

The first suggestion of interest in deep shelters in Cardiff appears in a motion to Council in March 1939:

²⁵ Ibid. p.127.

²⁶ A. Calder, *People’s War*, p.187.

²⁷ *Western Mail*, 8/7/44, p.1.

²⁸ R Calder, *Carry on London*, p. 55.

²⁹ TNA, HO186/1213 Publicity – Shelters. Note of June 1939.

³⁰ TNA, INF 1/251, Planning Committee. Note 19/11/40

That this Council urges HM government to provide from National Funds adequate protection for the civilian population by means of deep and efficiently constructed bomb proof shelters and the work be done by paid labour using as many as possible of the 2,000,000 unemployed for the task. The present plans, depending mainly on voluntary labour are totally inadequate.³¹

An amendment removed the reference to deep shelters. The motion, even as amended, illustrates some of the fundamental interests of the Council – the insistence on government funding, adequate protection for the civilian population, and work for the unemployed. These themes surface frequently in the early part of the war. The un-amended motion gives a preview of the Council's later flirtation with deep shelters. The mention of bomb proof shelters is perhaps an early indication of the determination that will later hold out for blast and splinter proof construction in the negotiations over cleansing stations in the parks.

Cardiff Council considered deep shelters again in 1940, prompted by a visit to the city of the deep shelter expert and advocate, J B S Haldane. Professor Haldane was an eminent biologist who became chairman of the editorial board of the *Daily Worker* in 1940, and whose operational research on the effects of decompression in sub mariners involved actively experimenting, using himself as a guinea pig.³² Notwithstanding the impression of eccentricity created by the latter, Professor and Mrs Haldane had been called upon by the Home Policy Committee of the Ministry of Information in September 1939 as expert witnesses, with experience of air raids during the civil war in Spain. His campaigning for deep shelters was therefore based on a degree of experience not shared by many before the outbreak of war. The Professor's advice on bombing was recorded as being based on information, facts, normal life and ordinary people, including humour. He viewed the control of public morale to be as important as the control of military operations. He was subsequently commissioned to produce a draft statement about allaying panic and assisted the committee on other topics on several occasions.³³

A totally bombproof shelter was the ideal, although it is questionable whether such a thing was actually feasible. The deep shelter appeared to come close. In the run up to war the deep

³¹ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39, Full Council, 7/3/39, p.470, min. 2922: Full Council 12/6/39, p.827, min. 5245.

³² Calder, *Peoples' War*, p. 465.

³³ TNA, INF 1/316 Home Policy Meetings. Minutes of Home Publicity meeting on 6/9/39.

shelter lobby, led by Haldane, had gained some traction after the scare of the Munich Crisis, prompting consideration of the concept by local authorities. The County Borough received correspondence from other authorities and articles appeared in professional journals. A letter received from the local authority in Barrow in Furness on the subject was reported to the ARP Committee. *Municipal Journal* carried an account, just before the Munich Crisis, of a paper given by E J Goodacre, Borough Engineer of Poole, to the International Housing and Town Planning conference, which proposed 'double cities' above and below ground, a refuge in danger and a solution to traffic problems in peace, with car parks, hospitals, casualty clearing centres, museums, shelters. Places of public entertainment could be below ground, as they normally used artificial light, mechanical ventilation and sound proofing and would double for use as shelters during bombardment.³⁴

Local residents also raised the deep shelter issue, some citing the Professor.³⁵ Haldane's issue with the dispersal policy was that people sheltering in small groups increase the possibility of *someone* being hit, and that the policy was rooted in the government's reluctance to pay for deep shelters. In 1938 he had published his own plan for tunnels under London, in a book entitled ARP. The book was one of many printed immediately before the war by Gollancz on war themes, and was a popular title, with a print run of 54,000.³⁶ The government's response was a White Paper, in April 1939, the outcome of the work of the Hailey conference 'a not a very independent commission of experts' which rejected Haldane's proposals, with the time taken for construction being one of the issues.³⁷ Dispersal, strengthened basements and Andersons were the government's answer.

Cardiff County Borough, prepared to be open-minded, met with Haldane when he visited the city on a speaking engagement in November 1940.³⁸ The conclusion reached in that meeting, with Haldane's concurrence, was that Cardiff was not suitable for construction of deep shelters.³⁹ Happily this coincided with Lord Hailey's view that such shelters, although

³⁴ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40, ARP Committee, 18/10/40, p.1106, min. 7776: *Municipal Journal*, 2380, Volume 47, 9/9/38, p.1977.

³⁵ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40, ARP Committee, 11/10/40, p. 1066, min. 7454; 1/11/40, p.1134, min. 7946. Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41, ARP Committee, 15/11/40, p. 29, p.198: ARP Committee, 13/12/40m p.122, min. 859.

³⁶ Richard Overby, *The Morbid Age Britain Between the Wars*, (London, 2009), p. 184.

³⁷ Levine, *Secret History of the Blitz*, pp. 49 & 50.

³⁸ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40, ARP Committee, 1/11/40, p. 1134, min. 7946 .

³⁹ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41, ARP Committee, 16/11/40, p.29, min. 202.

possibly appropriate in some specialist cases, should not be provided to the general public, principally on the grounds of diversion of labour from other war preparations but also on grounds of accessibility. A shelter needed to be close, reachable within the seven minutes warning time of a raid and easy to exit and enter without congestion or panic.⁴⁰ Hailey's conclusion, that it was more important for morale that there should be equal standards of protection in areas exposed to equal danger, drew a line under the deep shelter question at that point. Cardiff County Borough, having entertained the expert, had no need to disagree with the government on the issue, or make any moves in that direction.

One of the first official options for shelter was the trench, dug in open ground at the time of the Munich Crisis and intended for persons caught away from their proper place – at home.⁴¹ The Government continued to advocate for them, with a volume of communications putting forward various design options.⁴² With the experience gained during the Crisis, Cardiff Council turned its back on them. They were dismissed as dangerous, prone to water logging and a waste of money. All but those in Sophia Gardens were filed in soon after Munich.⁴³ The approved choices for sheltering on a small and domestic scale, if not using a home refuge room, were the back garden Anderson (later the indoor Morrison) or, if necessary, the strengthened basement or the surface shelter. These were either communal, serving a set of houses where personal shelters were impractical, usually on grounds of space, or public shelters for those caught in the open during the raid. The distinction and purpose of the latter two seem to have become somewhat blurred at practical level. As the war progressed and the enemy's preference for sustained night attack became clear, policy evolved to permit shelter accommodation to be available during the hours of darkness, allowing the worker to emerge in a fit state to work the next day – the dormitory shelter. The government approved facilities for sleeping, eating and recreation, enabling a degree of normality to be maintained. In the course of the war Cardiff County Borough provided all these types of shelter.

⁴⁰ A justified reservation that was sadly confirmed on 3 March 1943 when 173 people were killed in a crush on a narrow staircase while seeking shelter at Bethnal Green underground station. Gardiner, *Wartime*, p.526

⁴¹ Gardiner, *The Blitz*, p.53,

⁴² TNA, HO 208/1, Home Office and Ministry of Home Security: Air Raid Precautions & Home Security Circulars: 2/1939 – 159/1939,; ARP Circular 5/1939 January 1939. Also 30/1939 and 79/1939.

⁴³ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39, ARP 11/11/38, p. 32, min.140, (Shelter Section of the Report/Minute): ARP Committee, 25/1/39, p.296, min. 1886: Works Sub Committee, 22/ 3/39, p.552, min. 3536.

There was considerable work on shelter provision in the city before war began. This phase, while expenditure was still an issue, was particularly governed by Home Office requirements and the need to reach accommodation with the Regional Commissioner and his technical staff, in matters of finance and on the nature and location of shelters. The focus was on planning and negotiation. Early in 1938, after the passing of the ARP legislation, the ARP Committee was advised of its duty to select sites for shelters and prepare plans for the Home Office. Authority for a survey of basements was given, but consideration of any new construction was deferred.⁴⁴ The Council would distribute Steel Garden Shelters – Andersons – and provide communal and public shelters, for which the initial focus would be basements. In November 1938 the Committee was advised that the survey of basements in the city had been virtually complete by the time of Munich, although it was noted that a considerable amount of strengthening and improvements would be required.⁴⁵

In January 1939 the ARP Committee authorised a survey of sites for construction of shelters where these were considered essential, asking for discussions with the Home Office.⁴⁶ The Committee had already recognised that it was in possession of ‘one of the finest ready-made air raid shelters in the country’ in the double walls of Cardiff Castle.⁴⁷

In February 1939 a major exercise was undertaken to obtain information for the Home Office on households which met the financial criteria for qualifying for free garden shelters, which involved a house-to-house canvass. The ARP committee gave approval for Sanitary Department staff to cover the congested areas of the city and volunteers the remainder – an amalgamation that was a hallmark of wartime civil defence organisation.⁴⁸ On the basis of experience elsewhere, it was estimated that 20,000 free shelters might be needed. The ARP Committee approved associated expenditure and projected costs for above ground public shelters.⁴⁹ At its meeting on 19 May 1939 the ARP Committee discussed accommodation in the Castle and basements. The Home Office recommended accommodation for 10 per cent of

⁴⁴ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1937/38, ARP Committee, 4/4/38, p.515, min. 3349.

⁴⁵ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39, ARP Committee, 11/11/38, p. 32, min 140, (Shelter Section of the Report/Minute).

⁴⁶ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39, ARP Committee, 25/1/39, p.296, min. 1886: ARP Committee, 13/2/39, p.368, min. 2351.

⁴⁷ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39, ARP Committee, 11/11/38, p. 32, min. 140

⁴⁸ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39, ARP Committee, 13 /2/39, p. 367 min. 2345: 15/2/39, p. 368 min. 2353. It was subsequently agreed that six unemployed workers voluntarily attached to the Chief Constable for ARP work would be paid to undertake the survey, with twenty more needed.

⁴⁹ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39, ARP Committee, 27/2/39, p.458, min. 2872.

the population in residential and 15 per cent in business areas, which in Cardiff entailed shelters for 29,500 people. The Engineer reported that the Corporation was required to make a survey of the whole of the basement and cellar accommodation in the city, with a view to strengthening those capable of being adapted. Construction of shelters adjacent to the walls of the gaol and on land owned by Great Western Railway, using the railway retaining walls, were an addition to the plans.⁵⁰ A few weeks before the declaration of war, the ARP Committee was advised that the Home Office had approved the design for the erecting of 50 public shelters, to accommodate 2,500 persons, on footways, adjoining railway retaining walls, etc., with the cost ranking for grant.⁵¹

With the possibility of war now imminent, the ARP Committee was advised on 31 August 1939 that work had begun on public shelters, further sites were being considered, and arrangements were in hand to call the Castle Walls into use.⁵² Work was also progressing on strengthening and adapting domestic basements and the services of the local professional bodies of engineers and architects and local contractors had been offered to assist.⁵³ It was estimated that 30,000 Andersons would be needed, and cost of erection would be £45,000. Materials had been obtained for strengthening basements.⁵⁴ The Public Works Committee was advised on 20 September that with the cessation of other work all personnel were now engaged on ARP, erecting of Andersons and public shelters, or dealing with sandbags.⁵⁵ At the meeting on 10 October 1939 the ARP Committee agreed to prioritise construction of surface shelters over strengthening basements in vulnerable areas, where Andersons were not suitable.⁵⁶ Broomfield records that there were 150,000 shelter spaces in the city in 1939.⁵⁷

Clearly concerned over public shelter provision, the ARP Committee expressed dissatisfaction with a scheme for public shelters that had been approved by the Regional Technical Adviser in October 1939, which culminated in a request that officers prepare plans for a complete scheme for public shelters for the city, including the suburbs, with a view to

⁵⁰ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39, ARP Committee 19/5/39, p.751, min. 4780: 26/6/39, p.902, min. 5767.

⁵¹ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39, ARP Committee, 24/7/39, p. 1041, min. 6669.

⁵² CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39, ARP Committee, 31/8/39, p.1071, min. 6778.

⁵³ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39, ARP Committee, 31/8/39, p.1071, mins. 6779, 6780,6781.

⁵⁴ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39, ARP Emergency Committee, 15/9/39, p. 1139, mins. 7212, 7216.

⁵⁵ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39, Public Works Committee, 20/9/39, p. 1170,

⁵⁶ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40, ARP Committee, 10/10/39, p.56, min. 330.

⁵⁷ Broomfield, *Wales at War*, p. 74.

submitting an amended scheme to the region.⁵⁸ The City Engineer presented a ‘long and detailed’ report on the policy of the Council in respect of the provision of shelters and requested instructions. The Committee decided that a copy should go to every member and appointed a sub committee to report.⁵⁹ A resolution of the ARP Committee late in 1939, to seek a meeting with the Regional Technical Officer to discuss the question of shelters from all angles, with a view to getting a definitive shelter policy, proved somewhat disappointing in the execution. The reported result was only to record the Home Office’s objection to Andersons being used as communal shelters and a proposal from the Engineer to continue with adapting basements and erecting Andersons, with concreting against flooding, which the full Council later resolved should be on an experimental basis for 20 shelters.⁶⁰ Although the city had experienced enemy raids, the sense that nothing was happening during the ‘Twilight war’ of the winter of 1939/40 was having an effect - some residents were dismantling their Andersons and asking that they be removed.⁶¹ While action was taken against offenders, and the public reminded of the continued need for shelter provision, the Council was also looking at better facilities in communal shelters and experimenting in 20 locations by equipping them with gates and toilets.⁶²

Andersons, Basements and Surface Shelters – Numbers

If counting success came in terms of numbers, Cardiff County Borough could congratulate itself on steady progress before and throughout the war, up to a point, in July 1942, where all but a few of the city’s residents had a shelter place – and even then the Council had not given up efforts to supply those who were still without.⁶³ Even before war was declared it was becoming clear that while Andersons might be a domestic provision for an individual household, the householder could not be expected to undertake all the work involved. When in April 1939 the Home Office confirmed that 65 per cent of the actual cost would be met centrally, the County Borough approved the engagement and training of 50 men as

⁵⁸ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40, ARP Emergency Committee, 17/10/39, p.56, min. 349: ARP Committee, 24/10/39, p.60, min. 372.

⁵⁹ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40, ARP Emergency Committee, 15/12/39, p. 215 min 1405

⁶⁰ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40, ARP Emergency Committee. 20/12/39, P. 234, mins. 1543,1545: Council, 8/1/40, p.249, min. 1623.

⁶¹CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40, ARP Committee, 26/3/40, p.525, mins. 3577, 3578.

⁶²CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40, ARP Committee, 19/4/ 40, p.576, 3947.

⁶³CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42, ARP Committee, 31/7/42, p. 812, min. 5455 : 9/10/ 42, p. 939: CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1942/43, ARP Committee, 22/1/43, p. 251, min. 1713: 5/2/43, p. 285, min. 1918: 11/6/43, p. 626 min.4368;17/9/43 p803 min 5780

construction crews.⁶⁴ Shelters were soon being erected at a rate of 85 per week.⁶⁵ By May 10,113 had been delivered, more were on order and another 50 men were employed, although there were delays, with authority given to employ more men. .⁶⁶ The *Cardiff Times* reported on 9 September 1939 that a Councillor complained that Anderson shelters were not being constructed fast enough. The Chairman of the ARP Committee indicated they were being erected at a rate of 330 to 400 a day.⁶⁷

Details of progress for Anderson and Morrison shelters in 1939, 1940 and 1941 appear in **Table 3** below.

⁶⁴ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39, ARP Committee, 24/4/39, p.641, min. 4095. The public were to be encouraged to see to the covering of the shelters themselves, by means of press publicity.

⁶⁵ CHL ,Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39, ARP Committee, 19/5/39, p.750, min. 4778.

⁶⁶ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39, ARP Committee, 19/5/39, p.750, min. 4778: ARP Committee, 26/6/39, p. 902, min. 5768

⁶⁷ *Cardiff Times* 9 /9/39, p.3.

Table 3 Progress in completing installation of Anderson and Morrison Shelters in 1939, 1940 and 1941.

1939	Delivered	Sites marked out	Erected by Works Department	Erected by Householders	To be removed	Men employed.	Ref.
30/3/39	2218						⁶⁸
24/7/39	16932	8339	6522	1322	600	443	⁶⁹
31/8/39	22312	13255	11181	1524	951	397	⁷⁰
2/10/39			18547	3218		328	⁷¹
9/10/39			19196	3286		290	⁷²

1940	Erected	Awaiting erection	Awaiting removal	Total	Ref.
7/6/40	29,099	120	379	29,598	⁷³

Andersons August 1941				
Required	Demanded	Erected	Re-delivered	Ref.
34,000	33,000	32,719	3886	⁷⁴

Morrison August 1941							
To be delivered	In City	Delivered to Cardiff	Delivered to Whitchurch	Applications for free shelters	To purchase	Applications from Whitchurch	Ref.
7,000	5,413	4613	96	5103	572	700	⁷⁵

In May 1941 approximately 189 men were engaged in concreting Andersons against damp.⁷⁶

⁶⁸ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39, ARP Committee, 31/3/39, p. 579, min. 3674.

⁶⁹ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39, ARP Committee, 24/7/39, p.1040, min. 6664.

⁷⁰ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39, ARP Committee, 31/8/39, p.1073, min. 6791. Expenditure to 17 Aug was £15,093 1s 9d.

⁷¹ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39, ARP Emergency Committee, 3/10/39, p.1227, min. 7798.

⁷² CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40, ARP Committee, 10/10/39, p.54, min. 329. Numbers were falling as shelters were now being erected in isolated cases in scattered locations. Concreting was taking place, against water logging.

⁷³ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40, ARP Committee, 7/6/40, p.728, min.5000.

⁷⁴ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41, ARP Committee, 29/8/41 p779 min.5462

⁷⁵ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41, ARP Committee, 29/8/41 p779 min.5462

⁷⁶ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41, ARP Committee, 30/5/41, p. 604 min. 4254.

Attention was shifting to indoor shelters, suitable for homes with limited outside space. In the summer of 1940 the Government was moving away from the supply of Andersons, but in Cardiff a great number of applications were still coming in, possibly stimulated by the unheralded raid of 21 June. An inspection of garden shelters was authorised when the Ministry of Home Security issued a requirement that those not erected or properly covered should be removed and stored.⁷⁷ The ARP Committee agreed that any more shelters that were obtained should be allocated to those without, that in the case of householders where shelters that were waterlogged and for which provision had been made in alternative communal shelters, shelters retrieved should be re-distributed to those requiring them in more favourable locations, with further summons for those who had not erected them or failed to cover them.⁷⁸

In April 1940 Home Office Circular 68/40 had indicated that distribution of Andersons was being discontinued, leaving the County Borough in July with 7,500 households still eligible for some sort of domestic provision.⁷⁹ The ARP Committee asked for provision of public shelters to be investigated, but at Council it was resolved to make an urgent request to the proper authorities for domestic shelters for all citizens, without delay.⁸⁰ The Council had the matter of shelters well in hand, in numerical terms, having provided shelter accommodation for 155,000 people, praised by Denis Morgan as, 'A remarkable achievement in such a short time.'⁸¹ Although the supply of Andersons was meant to be ending, more were finding their way to the city and now 29,678 had been erected, with allocation being done by order of application rather than by priority.⁸²

The ARP Committee appeared intent on the Council providing some form of shelter for all residents of the city, but it was not government policy that everyone should have free provision. Those whose circumstances allowed were expected to provide for themselves – which may perhaps have had a bearing on many households choosing the under-the-stairs option. On receipt of Home Security Circular 163/40 in July, which allowed the Council to assist householders with advice and materials, the Committee agreed to proceed, as per the

⁷⁷ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40, ARP Committee, 14/6/40, p.759, min. 5219.

⁷⁸ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40, ARP Committee, 28/6/40, p. 807, min. 5574.

⁷⁹ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40, APR Committee, 19/4/40, p.576 min. 3948: APR Committee, 5/7/40, p.810, min 5597.

⁸⁰ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39, ARP Committee, 5/7/40, p.810, min. 5597: Full Council, 8/7/40, p.817, min. 5630.

⁸¹ Dennis Morgan, *A City at War*, p.4.

⁸² CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40, ARP Committee, 26/7/40, p. 894, min. 6217.

Circular.⁸³ In a response to correspondence from the Council on shelters, the Ministry pointed out the duty of residents to provide for themselves, drawing attention to the booklet ‘*How to Make Your Home an Air Raid Shelter*’. The Committee resolved to put the provisions of Home Security Circular 163/40 into operation as soon as possible, with notices in the press and appeals to neighbours to share Andersons.⁸⁴ A lengthy minute of the Finance Committee set out provisions for making loans to householders for this purpose.⁸⁵ There was little interest among residents of the city in these loans to purchase Anderson shelters, however, with only 20 effective applications and 100 enquiries.⁸⁶

By October 1940 30,248 Andersons had arrived in the city, with 30,211 erected. Although supplies were supposed to have been discontinued a consignment of 770 more was promised, of which 550 had arrived.⁸⁷ The 200 needed to complete the allocation was expected ‘any day’.⁸⁸ Cardiff was progressing with its shelter programme, but the *Local Government Chronicle* was calling for greater trust in local authorities: ‘Is it necessary that a county borough should go to Whitehall, or even the Regional Commissioner’s staff, every time they want to convert a public house cellar to a shelter for ten people?’⁸⁹ Although supplies of Andersons continued to arrive, the Regional Technical Advisor indicated that it was possible that there would be no more supplies, and the Council should proceed on the assumption that there would not be.⁹⁰

Protection for individual households was moving towards the indoor Morrison shelter. In early December 1940 the ARP Committee agreed that the new domestic shelters would be provided where possible in ‘congested’ areas of the city with strengthened and adapted houses where possible in the remaining. Where neither was suitable the provision would be for communal or dormitory shelters. It was agreed that the Senior Regional Officer should be so advised.⁹¹ Domestic shelters of both types were still coming into the city – the new indoor shelters and large Andersons, which it was decided would be distributed to larger families

⁸³ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40, ARP Committee, 26/7/40, p.894, min. 6218.

⁸⁴ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40, ARP Committee, 2/8/40, p.907, min. 6332.

⁸⁵ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40 Finance Committee 2/9/40 p 925 min 6433 & 6434.

⁸⁶ CHL *Cardiff Air Raids 1939-1945 An information source book*, p.31 quoting the *Echo* 24/8/40, p.3.

⁸⁷ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40, ARP Committee, 11/10/40, p. 1065, min. 7442.

⁸⁸ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40 ARP Committee, 18/10/40, p.1104, min. 7760.

⁸⁹ *Local Government Chronicle*, 12/10/40

⁹⁰ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41, ARP Committee, 8/11/40, p.11 min.42.

⁹¹ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41, ARP Committee, 6/12/40, p.107 min.733.

and those with the most children.⁹² The Committee's thoughts appeared to be moving towards future provision being communal, as the Engineer was asked to eliminate all cases where the cost per head of providing indoor domestic shelters was greater than that for communal shelters, except in special circumstances.⁹³ .

The Ministry of Home Security laid down that householders should erect their own indoor shelters but the ARP Committee agreed on the same policy as for Andersons, that the Council would do it. An offer was subsequently received by a contractor to do it for five shillings per shelter, which was accepted.⁹⁴ By May 1942, 430 persons remained who qualified for free shelters, but for whom no practical means of provision had been found. The Officers were investigating solutions.⁹⁵

While work progressed in the city's gardens and back yards, attention was also given to public sheltering, with reports on progress on strengthened basements and proposals for building surface shelters at various locations.⁹⁶ In June 1940 reinforcing of shelters was being held up because of shortage of steel. In view of the urgency of the situation, the ARP Committee agreed that fences belonging to Parks Committee properties should be 'handed over'. The Parks, Baths and Cemeteries Committee was not happy with this suggestion, but when the urgent need was explained it was left to the Chairman, Deputy and officers to deal with the matter.⁹⁷ In the event 120 tons of railings were accumulated, 100 ton of which went to reinforce communal shelters.⁹⁸ In May 1940 the Committee was advised that resources were left from providing public shelters, sufficient to construct another 80, to accommodate

⁹² CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41, ARP (Domestic Shelters) Sub Committee, 24/12/40, p.173, min. 1218; ARP Committee 28/2/41 p 351 min 2471

⁹³ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41 ARP Committee 28/2/41 p351 min 2473

⁹⁴ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41, ARP Committee, 23/5/41, p.581, min. 4142: 30/5/41, p. 604 min. 4256.

⁹⁵ CHL, Council Minutes 1941/42, ARP Committee, 8/5/42, p. 554, min. 3731.

⁹⁶ CHL, Council Minutes 1938/39, ARP Committee, 26/6/39, p. 902 min.5767: 24/7/39 p.1041, min. 6669: 31/8/39, p.1071min. 6778: Parks, etc Committee, 12/9/39 p.1112 min. 7030 : ARP Committee 31/8/39, p.1071 min. 6779, p 1072 min. 6788.

⁹⁷ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40, ARP Committee, 21/6/40, p.780, min. 5374: Parks, etc. Committee 26/6/40 p793 min 5480

⁹⁸ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40, Parks, Baths and Cemeteries Committee, 10/9/40, p.957, min. 6654.

4,000 people. The Committee decided this money should be used for 100 communal shelters.⁹⁹

Public shelters were proliferating, to the extent that those in streets with more than one were numbered.¹⁰⁰ Even so, the Council was not satisfied and there was clearly a sense of urgency. When the ARP committee requested a report on the provision of more public shelters and the minutes appeared before full Council for approval, the Council asked for urgent representations to be made.¹⁰¹ In July the ARP Committee considered the provision of 62 further public shelters, with a sub committee to prioritise sites.¹⁰² In September the Chairman was discussing sites for public shelters with the Regional Commissioner.¹⁰³ Attention turned to basements which could be used as public shelters, with a list of possibilities submitted which included the basement of the Ministry of Labour Offices in Westgate Street.¹⁰⁴ The Senior Regional Officer approved 40 out of 52 proposed sites for public shelters.¹⁰⁵

Numbers were important to the Council as a measure of achievement, and the achievement is impressive. By July 1942 shelter accommodation had apparently been provided for every inhabitant of the city, barring 23 residents in Orchard Place, Canton, where there seems to have been an intractable problem over finding a site where a shelter might be located. The issue was still ongoing however, and continued to be into 1943, when, demonstrating persistence, the Council was still pressing for local communal provision, even though there was accommodation in other shelters in the area.¹⁰⁶

The location and supply of shelters could be a matter of contention between the Council and the Regional machine. The Council habitually leaned towards making provision, with the Region being more circumspect. Residents frequently pressed for action. This situation was particularly noticeable in relation to areas away from the centre and in the suburbs of the city. When complaints were received at delay in erecting Andersons in Ely, the Committee was

⁹⁹ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40, ARP Committee, 24/5/40, p.682. min. 4702.

¹⁰⁰ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40 ARP Committee, 12/7/40 p 833 min 5754.

¹⁰¹ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40, Council, 8/7/40, p.817, min. 5630.

¹⁰² CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40, ARP Committee, 12/7/40, p.832, min. 5749.

¹⁰³ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40, ARP Committee, 6/9/40, p.936, min. 6511.

¹⁰⁴ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40, ARP Committee, 26/7/40, p. 893, min. 6213, 6214.

¹⁰⁵ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40, ARP Committee, 30/8/40 p 919 min.6410.

¹⁰⁶ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42, ARP Committee, 31/7/42, p. 812, min. 5455: CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1942/43, ARP Committee, 9/10/42, p. 939: 22/1/43, p. 251, min. 1713: 5/2/43, p. 285, min. 1918: 11/6/43, p. 626, min. 4368: 17/9/43, p. 803, min. 5780.

advised that this was due to pressure of work, 302 men were erecting shelters and employment of more would significantly increase cost. The Committee resolved that more labour should be employed.¹⁰⁷ A Councillor drew attention to the dearth of shelters in the Riverside ward and action was promised. The Llanishan Ratepayers Association complained of inadequacy of shelter provision in the district. The matter was deferred to the Shelter Sub Committee, but at Council this was replaced by a resolution to ask the Regional Commissioner to re-consider his decision regarding shelters in Llanishan.¹⁰⁸ At the meeting of the Council on 28 October 1940 a direct appeal to the Minister of Home Security was agreed, asking to be allowed to erect shelters in suburban areas of Cardiff which had been agreed by the ARP Committee but disallowed by the Regional Commissioner.¹⁰⁹ The Lord Mayor and members were appointed to meet the Commissioner.¹¹⁰ The positive results of this meeting were reported on 6 December.¹¹¹ After a long struggle, the needs of residents of Whitchurch were acknowledged when Morrison shelters became available. Special arrangements were made to ensure supplies of these shelters were allocated to Whitchurch, at the request of the Senior Regional Technical Officer.¹¹² While the Council could show the volume of what they had provided, quality proved a more difficult matter.

Dormitory Shelters – Issues of Quality

Quality issues around Anderson shelters centred around damp and flooding –issues which were not peculiar to Cardiff. The Home Office considered measures to combat damp and cold, with information sent to local authorities on the best methods of dealing with flooded Andersons and those with insufficient covering. Local authorities were to review and, in consultation with their Region, take steps ‘for curing the mischief as quickly as possible’.¹¹³ The most significant issues concerning quality related to the new development – dormitory shelters catering for large numbers of people. With the experience of intense night bombing

¹⁰⁷ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes, 1938/39, ARP Committee, 26/6/39, p. 902, min. 5768.

¹⁰⁸ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40, ARP Committee, 4/10/40, p. 1045, min. 7310: Full Council, 7/10/40, p. 1049, min. 7326.

¹⁰⁹ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40, ARP Committee, 25/10/40, p.1122, min. 7877: Full Council, 28/10/40, p. 1127, min. 7904: ARP Committee 1/11/40, p.1132, min. 7934.

¹¹⁰ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41, ARP Committee, 22/11/40, p.50, min. 358.

¹¹¹ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41, ARP Committee, 6/12/40, p. 106, min. 729. The Commissioner approved shelters in Rhydypenau and Heathwood Road, but not Fairwater.

¹¹² CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41, ARP Committee, 30/5/41, p.602, min. 4244.

¹¹³ TNA, HO186/927 Blitz Papers –Preparations for Heavy attack. Lessons Learned. Report of Ministry of Home Security August 1941.

and overnight sheltering, the government had realised that provision had to change. In autumn 1940, London was experiencing the Blitz.

From October 1940 reviews by the government's Civil Defence Committee and the new Standing Committee on Shelter Policy, with the amassing of more data about conditions in shelters, led to a rethink on the nature of the shelter. Local authorities were given permission to install seating and lighting in communal domestic shelters.¹¹⁴ In *Churchill on the Home Front*, Addison suggests that the Prime Minister's emphasis on physical needs being linked to morale, and dissatisfaction with measures to deal with raids, led to the appointment of 'expert municipal fixer' Herbert Morrison, to the position of Home Secretary.¹¹⁵ Early in 1941 Department of Health took over responsibility for the interior of shelters, although Home Security remained responsible for numbers, location and construction. Sanitation, bunks, heating, lighting, ventilation, catering and control of behaviour and public order became possibilities, with responsibilities devolved to Regional Commissioners and with action in the hands of the local authorities, and also the shelter users themselves.

O'Brien points out in *Civil Defence* that the energy and efficiency that local authorities brought to these tasks varied greatly, with even the best being hampered by a shortage of materials and labour.¹¹⁶ Eventually even welfare and entertainment became possible, although 'The Ministry of Home Security approached welfare activities with some apprehension, lest shelters should be made too attractive and the fundamental dispersal policy endangered.'¹¹⁷ In August 1941 preparations were being made for the forthcoming winter – with a review of preparations for heavy raids by the Home Defence Committee. The document was secret, kept under lock and key in the department, but it was shared with the regions in late August. The position was expected to be better than in 1940/41 because of work to improve responses, but there was a need for action plans, frequent inspections and exercises, with special arrangements for ports. Amenities such as ventilation and sanitation for shelters outside London were said to be not very far advanced and measures were being

¹¹⁴ TNA, HO 208/3 Home Office Circular, HSC 201/40 1st August 1940

¹¹⁵ Paul Addison, *Churchill on the Home Front 1900 – 1955*, (London, 1993) p. 337.

¹¹⁶ O'Brien, *Civil Defence*, p.515.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid* .p.519.

taken to accelerate action. The preparation of bunks for Andersons was behind hand because of a shortage of galvanising facilities, steel and timber.¹¹⁸

Moves had already been made in Cardiff in 1940 to provide improved conditions. Smoking had been prohibited in non domestic shelters.¹¹⁹ The County Borough was ready to take advantage of changes in government attitudes, although was cautious where money was involved. When the ARP Committee received a report on Circular 249 /40 of the Department of Home Security, confirming that the whole cost of construction and equipping all types of shelter would be reimbursed for contracts let after the 19 October 1940, subject to agreement locally with the Regional Commissioner, nothing was taken on trust. The Committee asked for a report on 'exactly' what could be done.¹²⁰

The ARP Committee was considering equipping shelters for overnight stays. At the special request of the chairman of the ARP committee, the reason for which he explained, but which is frustratingly absent from the minutes, a report was requested on provision of bunks in shelters. This report was agreed at the Shelter Sub Committee, and the full committee agreed that a copy be sent to the Regional Commissioner. On 22 October 1940 provision of bunks in 8 communal shelters, at a cost of £1,720, was agreed.¹²¹ (In this the Council was somewhat ahead of central government, which did not issue formal arrangements for several months.) Work had been approved on strengthening basements to be used as dormitory shelters.¹²² The Regional Technical Officer was of the view that future communal shelters should be designed to take bunks.¹²³ In December came what might be characterised as a breakthrough change in central policy – the acceptance of the concept of dormitory shelters. Scheme-Making authorities were asked to state their requirements for the provision of bunks.¹²⁴

¹¹⁸ TNA, HO186/927 Blitz Papers –Preparations for Heavy attack. Lessons Learned. The document was dated 15/8/41. It was sent to the regions on 20/8/41.

¹¹⁹ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40, ARP Committee, 5/7/40, p.810 min.5603.

¹²⁰ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40, ARP Committee, 25/10/40, p.1122 mins. 7875,7876.

¹²¹ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40 ARP 25/10/40, p.1123 min. 7880: Shelter Sub 1/11/40, p.1132 min. 7933: CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41, ARP Committee, 22/11/40, p.51 min.363.

¹²² CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41, ARP committee, 15/11/40, p.28 min.187.

¹²³ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41, ARP Committee, 6/12/40,p.107, min. 739.

¹²⁴ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41, ARP Committee 20/12/40, p 156, min, 1129.

On 17 January 1941 the ARP committee confirmed an order for 1070.¹²⁵ The condition of the shelters and possible impact on health was also coming under scrutiny, consequent on the deliberations of the Holder Committee, appointed by government to examine the matter.¹²⁶ Cardiff County Borough's ARP committee approved the cost of disinfection of shelters in December 1940 and the Borough Engineer was asked if he was satisfied with the number of employees on shelter cleaning. If not, more should be provided.¹²⁷ After receiving a deputation from Cardiff Trades Council and Labour Party, it was suggested that ward members be asked to appoint shelter marshals to co-operate with the police. A further report was requested.¹²⁸ The committee also considered a suggestion that unemployed men might be recruited from the Labour Exchange to act to shelter marshals, ensuring the shelters were in good condition and good order. The Chief Constable was also asked to consider the role being taken on by ARP wardens.¹²⁹ In January 1941 the Chief Constable was asked to provide a rota of potential marshals.¹³⁰ These decisions indicate that the Council was aware of issues of health and acceptable conduct in the shelters, although later events, examined below, show that they were some distance from achieving them.

Numerical achievement was one measure of success, but quantity gave no indication of the quality of what was being provided. The Council was recording success in the matter of numbers, but in this criterion of quality, which is possibly of even more importance, the local press and national records present a far from satisfactory picture. The first intimation that all might not be well with the Council's shelter provision appears in an editorial in the South Wales Echo of 5 October 1940, reporting a complaint from one of the Councillors at a Council ARP Committee, about people of all nationalities from the docks occupying city shelters at night. Another Councillor drew attention to Belgian refugees, said to be

¹²⁵CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41, ARP Committee, 17/1/41, p.203 min.1447.

¹²⁶Gardiner, *Wartime*, p.326. Lord Holder was doctor to King George VI, tasked with looking at conditions in shelters above and below ground. Many of the recommendations for improvements to shelters emanated from recommendations of this committee.

¹²⁷ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41, ARP Committee, 6/12/40 p107 min.73; 20/12/40, p.154 min. 1110.

¹²⁸ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40, ARP Committee, 11/10/40, p.1063, min. 7425.

¹²⁹ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41, ARP Committee, 6/12/40, p108 min. 744; 20/12/40 p154 min.110

¹³⁰CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41, ARP Committee, 17/1/41 p.203 min. 1447.

monopolising a shelter at Penylan, which had been referred to the Chief Constable.¹³¹ These allegations are refuted in letters from two city residents, one professing to be an ARP Warden, indicating that those using Westgate Street are British subjects and seamen and there is no suitable shelter on the docks for them, and questioning why the Belgians cannot have shelter accommodation after the horrors they have endured, alleging the city to be inadequately provided with shelters. Another correspondent indicates on visiting the shelter found few foreigners, and other shelterers confirmed this.¹³²

It appears that the Council had a poor grasp of conditions in the shelters at night, confirmed during an official visit from a government representative. The claim concerning occupation by people from the docks, said to be using the shelters as ‘doss houses’, was apparently the official line, repeated to Ellen Wilkinson, Parliamentary Secretary at the Ministry of Home Security, when she visited Wales on 13 -16 March 1941. Ellen Wilkinson, MP for Jarrow, was appointed Parliamentary Secretary at the Ministry of Home Security with special responsibility for shelter matters, on 3 October 1940. The allegation about Cardiff shelters being used as doss houses by men from the docks was apparently also made to another official visitor about Cardiff and Swansea, a few days earlier.¹³³

The Parliamentary Secretary arrived in Cardiff on 13 March, accompanied by Lord Horder, the chairman of the committee appointed by the government in 1940 to consider conditions in shelters in London.¹³⁴ Miss Wilkinson compiled a detailed report on her entire visit, the culmination of which is shocking, when she likens conditions in Cardiff to the worst excesses of the Tilbury shelter.¹³⁵

¹³¹ Echo, 5/10/40, p.5.

¹³² Echo, 7/10/40, p.2.

¹³³ TNA, HO 186/523, ARP Regional Organisation Visits No 8 Region. Report of 4/3/41 by William Mabane MP

¹³⁴ TNA, HO186/523, ARP Regional Organisation Visits No.8 Region. Report, 18/3/41: CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41, ARP Committee, 28/2 /41, p.352, min. 2480. A projected visit from Lord Horder for 4 March was reported to the ARP Committee. No mention in the minutes is made of the Parliamentary Secretary being included in the visit.

¹³⁵ Gardiner, *The Blitz*, p72: Calder, *The People's War*, pp.182-3: Tom Harrisson, *Living Through the Blitz* p.117. The Tilbury Shelter, under the railway arches in Stepney, was ‘the most notorious’ in London, part shelter, part margarine store and warehouse loading yard, it was raucous, overcrowded and insanitary. A refuge used in the Great War, it was ‘perhaps the most unspeakable of all London shelters.’ It was in one of the poorest parts of London. Only part was classified as a shelter, the rest was private premises, but thousands of people congregated there at night.

Her report opens with an account of meeting the Regional Commissioner, the Lord Mayor and local officials and touring the shelters, when they were advised that there were few health problems arising from dormitory use of the shelters. The night-time population was said to be around 160 people and: ‘most of those were down-and-outs from the docks, who use the shelters as doss houses.’ The visiting party found people preparing to spend the night in the shelters, but these were not dossers, but what she calls a ‘nervous minority’.¹³⁶ The Council Engineer admitted to her during the visit that there was a problem with flooding in the domestic Andersons, with high demands for waterproofing work, with applicants at his office resembling a football match queue. Shelters were also left un-erected because of shortage of labour. (This contradicts the Council’s later progress with shelter construction, although might have been a matter of priorities.) At this point Miss Wilkinson concludes: ‘The general impression left by our official tour of the Cardiff shelters was that the position was reasonably satisfactory, that dispersal had been reasonably achieved and there was no considerable demand for dormitory shelter’.

The inspection party then moved on to Swansea, where the situation was found to be satisfactory. (Swansea consistently achieved more favourable reports on progress and standards than Cardiff throughout the war, with Mr Lang Coath, the Town Clerk, being held in particularly high esteem.)¹³⁷ Miss Wilkinson returned to Cardiff on the evening of 14 March, remaining in the city overnight. Whether she felt unease at the picture presented on behalf of the Council, or simply desired to observe for herself, or both, she ventured out at 9.30 p.m, while a raid was in progress, for an informal visit to the shelters recording that, ‘The Alert had been sounded and there were planes overhead and a good deal of gunfire.’ The result was an excoriating report, completed on her return to London, making the devastating comparison with Tilbury.

The situation she found in the shelters now was very different. At the Castle Walls the Minister was ‘horrified at what she found’. Some sections were empty, others overcrowded,

¹³⁶TNA, HO 186/523, ARP Regional Organisation Visits No 8 Region. All quotations on the formal and informal inspections are from the Report of Ellen Wilkinson on a visit to South Wales and the South Wales Region 13 -16th March 1941, dated 18 March 1941.

¹³⁷ TNA, HO 186/924, Region 8 Cardiff Training and Progress Reports. Report on April 1940 , from Senior Regional Officer, dated 13/5/40. Mr Mabane also expressed the view that it was difficult to speak too highly of Mr Lang Coath. TNA, HO 186/523, ARP Regional Organisation Visits No 8 Region. Report of 4/3/41 by William Mabane MP

with people being turned away. People were sitting, standing and dancing to the music of a concertina with every available inch of space filled. In the absence of shelter wardens, the police were attempting to keep order. 'The atmosphere [presumably air quality] was appalling.' She found the Westgate Street shelter was 'as bad, if not worse.' Again, 'shockingly overcrowded' with bunks full and people standing, with a mixture of races, a considerable element of the dock population but also shelterers from the general public, including a large number of children, 'looking flushed and sleepless'. Again the atmosphere was bad and there was a great deal of noise. Her assessment was damning, 'The whole thing – except that chemical closets were available – could be compared only with the Tilbury at its worst'. Following up on the allegations of invasion from the docks, Miss Wilkinson then went to look at the places these people had allegedly come from, and found a ready answer. Except for one shelter, which had been taken over by a family with a stove, communal shelters were found to be empty, cold, wet and filthy. They had 'evidently had no cleaning or attention whatever and were quite unusable'. The public shelters in the docks were also visited – many were full and users reported that they were in use every night until the All-Clear in the early hours. Children and workmen were unable to sleep and it affected their performance the next day. The Minister then returned to the city and spoke with the Principal Officer in the Regional Commissioner's office, finding that there was no intention to mislead. 'They simply had not visited the shelters by night and did not know of the conditions that actually exist'. The Principal Officer then returned with her to the Castle, where the dancing had ended and the young people involved had gone, but the lower chambers was still overcrowded and uncomfortable, with the upper ones empty. 'The Principal Officer was genuinely astonished to find these conditions and promised a report to the Commissioner immediately'.

The Parliamentary Secretary, in summing up, concluded, 'It is clear that there is a great deal that ought to be done in Cardiff and ought to be done quickly. What I saw in those night visits was uncannily reminiscent of the London shelters last September and October and nobody seemed to be worrying about it much'. The Minister's prescription for change was the provision of more bunks, control by issuing admission tickets and the appointment by the Region of a welfare officer, 'to do for Cardiff what the London Regional staff have done for the London shelters'. The report concludes that the matter was mainly one for the Welsh Board of Health and that a copy would be sent to the Minister. Copies were in fact sent to

George Gator, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Home Security, Lord Horder, the Minister of Health and a number of departmental officials.

Both National Archive records and those of the Council are frustratingly meagre on outcomes. The Regional Commissioner's monthly report for the time records the visit of Miss Wilkinson and Lord Horder on 13 and 14 March 1941 to inspect shelters, without comment. A record of a visit of Sir Alexander Rouse to Cardiff and Swansea on 15 April to inspect shelters and discuss provision with the Regional Technical Adviser and the Commissioner was presumably a follow up, but again no detail is given.¹³⁸ The report from Ellen Wilkinson was a damning assessment by an experienced observer who had knowledge of the conditions that had prevailed in London, and the action taken to ameliorate them. The situation she reports is unexpected. With the Council focussed on quantity, the quality of the provision does not seem to have arisen. It is not reflected in the Council minutes, and government officials clearly also had no knowledge – to all intents and purposes the situation had been satisfactory. Miss Wilkinson's report indicated quality issues on a massive scale – both with the Anderson shelters – the Engineer's admission about flooding, which was acknowledged in Council minutes, and in the public and communal provision, which was not. It is interesting that the Minister focuses on the Regional organisation and the Welsh arm of the Department of Health, as those responsible for corrective measures, rather than the Council – possibly because these are departmental officials, within her remit.

The core issue of problems with the public and communal shelters appears to be one of control, both in the conduct in the shelters and in the matter of inspection, with such deficiencies as *were* perceived being passed off as the fault of the users themselves – the alleged dossers. The Council had considered marshals, but any system that was in place was obviously not working as it should. No-one in an official capacity in the city appears to have had a true picture of night time shelter use. Members of ARP Committee were asked to inspect facilities, but shelters at night time were apparently omitted. It took an experienced, curious and forceful outsider, without any other obligations on the night, in the person of the Parliamentary Secretary, to expose the situation.

¹³⁸ TNA, HO186/536, Regional Commissioners' Monthly Reports Region 8. Report for 15/3/41 – 15/4/41. Visit of Sir Alexander on 15 April.

Unfortunately the government files in the National Archive do not provide any more information on follow up action that resulted from the Parliamentary Secretary's visit. There was no immediately visible reaction to the Wilkinson visit and the conclusions of her report in the Council minutes either – no special meeting of Council or ARP Committee. The latter's attention was fixed at the time on the action it wished to pursue against the trekkers deserting the city. A communication from the Chairman of the Welsh Board of Health, considered at the ARP meeting on 28 March, which asked that attention to be given to fitting bunks in the Castle Walls, looks as if it may have been a reaction from the Board to the Wilkinson visit. The Medical Officer of Health had prepared a detailed report on a general policy for provision of bunks. The Committee decisions that were presumably based upon it – to request permission for provision of bunks for the Castle and for the compartments used there and at Westgate Street to be reserved as dormitory shelters, with the Medical Officer authorised to appoint ten additional shelter marshals, in uniform, with admission to bunks by ticket only, plus the adoption of the Medical Officer's recommendations on sanitary provision, fit closely to the items identified in Ellen Wilkinson's report.¹³⁹ There is no mention of any specific provision for the dock communities, but possibly this was subsumed in the initiative for colony shelters.

After this the ARP Committee's attention in relation to shelters focussed chiefly upon indoor shelters and the dormitory colony shelters. At the ARP meeting on 28 March members were informed that a sample of the indoor shelters had arrived and been put on display in a property in Richmond Road. Five hundred were being supplied. The Committee agreed to invite applications from those who presently had no shelter and that no more than 10 per cent of each consignment should be available for public sale.¹⁴⁰ Echoes of the Parliamentary Secretary's report can be heard in the minutes. The Sanitary inspector reported on the condition of certain communal shelters. It was agreed they be taken over where necessary and classified as public.¹⁴¹ Supervision of the shelters was at the root of Ellen Wilkinson's complaints and now the Medical Officer of Health proposed the appointment of a Shelter Superintendant. Provided the Welsh Board agreed, the post would be advertised.¹⁴²

¹³⁹ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41 ARP Committee, 28/3/41, p.422, min. 3010.

¹⁴⁰ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41, ARP Committee, 28/3/41, p.421, min.2997: 4/4 /41, p.434, min. 3080.

¹⁴¹ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40, ARP Committee, 2/5/4, p. 520, min. 3694.

¹⁴² CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41, ARP Committee, 9/5/41, p. 525, min. 3810: 6/6/41, p. 616min. 4326.

Development of Facilities in Shelters

Now that shelters were becoming surrogate homes for many night time shelterers, much more attention was needed to considerations of health, comfort and good order, at both national and local government level. In *The Bombing War*, Richard Overy notes, ‘The state had learned much since the start of the Blitz, but there had been much to learn’ – for delivery of improved facilities and welfare – ‘much still depended on the initiative and resourcefulness of local authorities’.¹⁴³ The Wilkinson report had shown that Cardiff did have things to learn, but matters were in hand. Early in June the Committee again discussed the appointment of a Shelter Superintendent for the whole city, agreeing that a suitable person was needed as soon as possible, with the ARP Controller authorised to make an appointment.¹⁴⁴ In the public provision attention continued to focus on issues of health and public order, elements highlighted by Ellen Wilkinson. The Medical Officer reported on the difficulty of recruiting shelter marshals, recommending the appointment of a St John or Red Cross nurse at the Castle and Westgate Street.¹⁴⁵ The Chief Constable had been unable to supply a uniformed officer for Westgate Street. A special constable was suggested, but the Welsh Board was of the opinion a uniformed officer was necessary. The Committee agreed to defer the decision until a gate had been fitted at the shelter.¹⁴⁶ When the Welsh Board of Health issued model rules of the shelters these were adopted.¹⁴⁷

When the Ministry of Home Security reviewed preparations for heavy raids for the forthcoming winter of 1941/42, all regions were pressed to deal with shelter amenities as a matter of urgency before winter, ensuring that sanitation, ventilation, heating and lighting were satisfactory and that where necessary provision for feeding facilities, medical aid posts and welfare services were provided.¹⁴⁸ Shelter provision was shifting into a new phase - out of the initial urgency and emergency mode and into an arrangement to keep life as normal as possible, albeit with a night spent in the shelter as part of it. Although it is not articulated directly in the Council minutes, it must be assumed that the Council members had grasped the fundamental point of keeping ordinary life functioning as far as was practicable, and the

¹⁴³Overy’s *The Bombing War*, pp 156, 152

¹⁴⁴ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41, ARP Committee 13/6/41 P.630 min. 4438: ARP Committee, 8/8/41 p773 min 5415. Councillor Robson was appointed to the post.

¹⁴⁵ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41, ARP Committee, 13/6/41 p 360 min 4439 : 11/7/41 p 717 min 5035.

¹⁴⁶ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41 ARP Committee 13/6/41, p631 min. 4440.

¹⁴⁷ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41 ARP Committee 13/6/41 p631 min 4441

¹⁴⁸ TNA, HO186/927 Blitz Papers – Preparations for Heavy attack. Lessons Learned. Report of the Ministry of Home Security August 1941.

bedrock necessity of keeping the war machine going and the workers in efficient work, and were taking progressive steps to achieve this. This was not a matter of initiative on the part of the Council – the government was still setting the agenda – but the Council was taking up the challenges as they came.

After sleeping arrangements, food was an essential for maintaining normality. The Government was looking at provision for feeding large numbers of people in a variety of circumstances in the autumn of 1940, including the scheme that gave rise to the British Restaurants and food in shelters. ‘Certain experiments to test demand and gain experience have been made and it has been decided to proceed, as a matter of urgency through local authorities with a comprehensive programme for the establishment of facilities for refreshments inside shelters.’¹⁴⁹ A Shelter Feeding Branch of the Ministry of Food was set up in November 1940. The Sale of Food (Public Air Raid Shelters) Order 1940 allowed the Ministry of Food to licence food sale in, or in the vicinity of, public shelters in which people normally slept.¹⁵⁰ In March 1941 Regional Commissioners were circulated by the Ministry of Health for information on facilities for local authorities for installation of canteens in shelters – types of shelter, the nature of the fixtures, canteen equipment and responsibility for organisation. The Commissioners were asked to submit the names of towns to be included in the Statutory Order as soon as possible. It was then proposed to circulate those authorities with particulars on installation, equipment, licences and recipes for snacks, ‘and with general information of the organisation of simple shelter feeding schemes in the light of the experience gained in the London area.’ This would be followed up by visits to give advice.¹⁵¹ Supply of food in shelters was on the basis of light refreshments and hot drinks, not full meals, to be provided at dormitory shelters at night.¹⁵²

A report to the War Cabinet on progress in April 1941 indicated great variation in response from Regional Commissioners to the Ministry of Health’s Circular PRO/16, inviting Commissioners to nominate areas for inclusion. At this point Wales was one of three areas where the Regional Commissioner indicated that he did not propose to nominate. Meetings

¹⁴⁹ TNA, MAF 156/282 War Time Meals December 1940- December 1941. Memorandum 19/10/40 on Communal Feeding

¹⁵⁰ Statutory Rule & Order 1940 No 1964

¹⁵¹ TNA, MAF 156/282 War Time Meals December 1940- December 1941. Report to the War Cabinet for March dated 10/4/41

¹⁵² TNA, MAF 156/282 War Time Meals December 1940 - December 1941 Report for October 1941 .

were to be held between Ministry officials and the Commissioners, which it was hoped would result in extension to a number of cities, including Cardiff and Swansea. It was noted that in general the provinces were well behind London in providing amenities, although in many areas there was not much dormitory use, even in raids. This might, of course, have been linked to lack of amenities, but this does not appear to have been considered. Amenities and conditions were noted to vary greatly from authority to authority.¹⁵³ The report in May 1941 to the War Cabinet on progress again drew attention to the difficulty of extending shelter feeding to the provinces, due to a great extent to the failure of Regional Commissioners to nominate areas for inclusion in the Statutory Order. Wales was one. Meetings had been held to clarify policy and discuss any special problems, but as yet there were no results.¹⁵⁴

The provisions of the Order were finally extended in June 1941 and Cardiff was now in the scheme of places where shelter feeding would be permitted.¹⁵⁵ The city was one of those visited by officials of the Shelter Feeding Branch and assisted to draw up schemes for submission to their Emergency Committees and if necessary the Regional Commissioner.¹⁵⁶ The monthly report to the War Cabinet, from the Ministry of Food, covering September 1941, confirms that the order allowing shelter feeding was extended to Cardiff on 25 June 1941.¹⁵⁷ Two days later the Council's ARP Committee requested a report on implementation, and then in August one that would address all aspects of communal feeding.¹⁵⁸ This lengthy and comprehensive report was submitted on 5 September. Canteens were being provided in public shelters with bunks and the Ministry of Food had inspected, and pronounced the Castle and Westgate Street suitable. The Welsh Board had also visited. The facilities would not be elaborate, and would probably be run by a local caterer. Difficulties were being experienced with the new shelter colonies which were being constructed on the periphery of the city. The Ministry of Food was pressing to have canteens installed, but the Welsh Board of Health had turned down proposals, an attitude, 'unexplainable and untenable'. After some pressure,

¹⁵³ TNA, MAF 156/282 War Time Meals December 1940 - December 1941 Report to War Cabinet for April dated 17/5/41

¹⁵⁴ TNA, MAF 156/282 War Time Meals December 1940 - December 1941. Report to War Cabinet on Shelter Feeding in May, dated 11/6/41

¹⁵⁵ TNA, MAF 156/282 War Time Meals December 1940- December 1941. Comment proposed for inclusion in the report to the War Cabinet for June from the Statistics and Intelligence Division of the Ministry, dated 18/7/41

¹⁵⁶ TNA, MAF 156/282 War Time Meals December 1940 - December 1941 Cardiff was listed in the authorities visited which were reported to the Cabinet in August, report dated 13/8/41 p5

¹⁵⁷ TNA, MAF 156/282 War Time Meals December 1940 - December 1941 report to the War Cabinet for September 1941 dated 9/10/41 p 4.

¹⁵⁸ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41 ARP Committee 27/6/41 p 690 min 4830: 22/8/41 p 778 min 5458

modified proposals had been agreed and plans had been submitted to them. These would also be in the hands of caterers.¹⁵⁹

The national report to the War Cabinet in September on shelter feeding indicates that in Cardiff there were five shelters with a capacity over 200, with 189 fifty unit brick built surface shelters and seventeen shelter colonies. There were no feeding schemes at present but the Council had agreed internal canteen installations in one shelter of two hundred capacity, and in the Castle Walls shelters, which between them housed a total capacity of 1,730 persons. No action was proposed in respect of 50 unit brick shelters, as these were below the capacity for a canteen. The authority was working on a scheme for one canteen per 250 persons in the shelter colony units. A note indicated that on 18 September the Divisional Officer Shelter Feeding for South Wales reported approximately 250 people using shelters per night.¹⁶⁰ The Council pressed on with arrangements for catering, which were particularly necessary in the fully equipped shelter communities it was busy creating on the edge of town.

Trekking

There was one way of avoiding bombs, which did not involve air raid shelters, which was treated with extreme distrust by the authorities, but which had an interesting resonance in Cardiff. Ordinary urban residents who distrusted protective measures available to them in the event of a raid, or who hoped for some uninterrupted rest, but who were of necessity obliged to remain close to the city, had one means of self help available – the phenomenon known as trekking. This was the practice of leaving a high risk bomb ravaged urban area at night, to sleep in the surrounding countryside, sometimes with friends and relatives, sometimes sleeping rough. It occurred all over the British Isles – ‘a strictly private, unrecognised unled daily mass migration.’¹⁶¹ In Coventry, Home Office estimates suggests between 70,000 and 100,000 people were sleeping outside the city and coming back to work after the catastrophic raid of November 1940.¹⁶² Plymouth was said to have up to 50,000 trekkers in the April raids of 1941.¹⁶³ In Hull, after raids in spring of 1941, possibly one third of the population left

¹⁵⁹ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/42 ARP Committee 5/9/41/p791 min 5552

¹⁶⁰ TNA, MAF 156/282 War Time Meals December 1940 - December 1941. Report to the War Cabinet for September 1941 dated 9/10/41 p4

¹⁶¹ Harrison, *Blitz*, p. 167

¹⁶² Levine *Secret History*, p108

¹⁶³ Calder *People's War* p212

the city.¹⁶⁴ An estimated 100,000 trekkers took to the countryside outside Belfast following heavy raids in April and May 1941.¹⁶⁵ After the raid on Pembroke Dock on 11 May 1941, ‘It is estimated by the Police that only about 250 (or 3 per cent) of the population slept in the town on the night following the raid.’¹⁶⁶ In Swansea diarist Laurie Latchford recorded that after heavy raids in September 1940, ‘refugees come from Swansea to sleep in summer tents or huts around the bays of Gower.’¹⁶⁷ Swansea resident Joan Bevan saw hundreds of people waiting at bus stops after intense raids. Joan travelled with her father by car to Llanelli to spend the night, returning for work the next morning.¹⁶⁸

Trekking became an issue, because the authorities set their faces against it. With the hindsight of history, it appears a pragmatic solution to the threat of a raid – ‘extreme commuting’ – offering the possibility of sleep, or at least a less nerve-wracking night, in order to work the next day, on a par with Londoners’ nightly invasion of the Tube.¹⁶⁹ It was, however, in opposition to the government’s ‘stay put’ instruction. The Government did favour dispersal, but of an ordered kind, under its own terms, such as the evacuation scheme, or the use of small family size shelters. Trekking raised fears of damaged morale, and absent workers. As such, local government had an interest, as local keepers of order and providers of protection. When the phenomenon appeared in Cardiff, in 1941, the Council reacted strongly, seeing it as an example of cowardice and poor morale. In London the authorities eventually accepted and accommodated the use of the Tube. In Cardiff, although it was never acknowledged as such, the Council eventually adopted its own version of trekking, creating the shelter colonies outside the city. The government wanted nothing done to encourage trekking. Historians suggest that the government policy was, in effect, to have no policy – an absence of acknowledgement, rather than concerted efforts to discourage. It was treated as though it wasn’t happening. The Home Office review of provision for heavy raids in the winter of 1941/42 specifically indicates, in accordance with conclusions arrived at by government, that no official arrangements were to be made for persons who were not homeless but who left target areas nightly in order to sleep in safer districts. Expanded rest centre provision would,

¹⁶⁴ Harrison *Blitz*, p267

¹⁶⁵ Calder *People’s War* p 413

¹⁶⁶ TNA, HO 186/924 Region 8 Cardiff Training and Progress Reports. Reports of Senior Regional Officer 29/5/41

¹⁶⁷ Kate Elliott Jones & Wendy Cope (eds.) *The Swansea Wartime Diary of Laurie Latchford 1940-41* (Newport, 2010) 6/9/40 p145

¹⁶⁸ Sally Bowler, *Swansea at War* (Stroud, 2006) p 105

¹⁶⁹ Levine *Secret History*, p65: Harrison *Blitz* p 167

however, enable temporary accommodation to be given to those persons in the first few days after a heavy raid, until the homeless could be distinguished from the non homeless who may have been admitted to the rest centres.¹⁷⁰ (Todman suggests that the government did eventually accept trekking as inevitable, setting up ‘cushion zones,’ with accommodation.)¹⁷¹

When it happened in Cardiff after the heavy raid on 3 March 1941, the Council viewed the trekkers as cowards and deserters. A report on use of Rest Centres after the raid noted that small groups were observed going out of town in the evening by bus and other conveyance, some said to be travelling as far as Mountain Ash and Bridgend.¹⁷² The Chief Constable also noted that ‘substantial numbers of persons desert or decamp from the city at nightfall’. With some this was nightly, but there was a significant increase when there was an alert. The nightly evacuation was having a very bad effect on street fire watching parties in some parts of the city. Citizens of influence and social standing were said to have locked up their houses and taken up continuous residence in safe un-bombed areas, causing resentment. The use of petrol for trekking was noted in a report from the Chief Constable to the Home Office, ‘It is suggested that a dramatic reduction in the petrol allowance for such cars as are found by the police being used for such purpose would soon put an end to cowardly evacuation and would have a beneficial moral effect.’¹⁷³

From the Council’s point of view, it should be said that there were practical considerations attached to nightly desertion of cities, along with fears about morale. Large-scale absence could have implications for the number of civil defence workers available to turn out, and premises left unattended were potential fire hazards in an incendiary raid. The County Borough may have had these valid factors in mind in their reaction to trekking, but the focus of their attempts to stop it was on the failure to act in what was considered to be the proper manner – exhibiting behaviour that was not that of a good citizen. The government might attempt to ignore the trekkers, but Cardiff County Borough attempted to shame them. At its

¹⁷⁰ TNA, HO186/927 Blitz Papers –Preparations for Heavy attack. Lessons Learned. Report of the Ministry of Home Security on preparations for air attacks in winter August 1941. Memorandum of the Ministry of Health and Department of Health in Scotland.

¹⁷¹ Todman *Britain’s War*, p511.

¹⁷² TNA, HLG7/385 Care of the Homeless Region 8. Note of a message from AT Thomas from the Welsh Health Board to the Ministry. 5/3/41

¹⁷³ TNA, HLG7/385 Care of the Homeless Region 8 (Wales) report to the Home Office Police Duty Room – copy of an extract from a fortnightly appreciation report by the Chief Constable 16/3/41

meeting on 7 March 1941 the ARP Committee decided on its own local propaganda campaign, based around a doggerel verse:

To those who pack and run away,

And have not got the guts to stay,

If all were cowards such as you,

My God, what would poor England do?

The rhyme was intended to be extensively promulgated throughout the city, by way of five thousand notices to be printed and handed to the warden's organisation for use.¹⁷⁴ The matter was raised again on 21 March, with an additional five thousand notices requested.¹⁷⁵ By 28 March the Committee was becoming impatient, asking that the 'Notice to Deserters' should be immediately distributed.¹⁷⁶ At the Council meeting on 7 April, however, a substitution was proposed.

Car-quitters and Householders who leave for the open country on an Alert are reminded of their duty to their City. No house should be left unprotected. Fight fear and the fire bombs.

This motion was lost, but the Lord Mayor was asked to publish an appeal in the local papers urging residents not to leave.¹⁷⁷ At the ARP Committee on 4 April members were growing irritated that the notice had not been issued. The Committee was informed that the City Treasurer had considered it advisable to delay printing of the notices until after the Council meeting, although the Committee, as an Emergency Committee, had given instructions. The Committee recorded its objection to the action of the Treasurer and directed that the attention of the Petroleum Officer be drawn to the practice of people leaving, with a view to investigating the source from which such people were getting their petrol.¹⁷⁸ On 25 April the Committee was advised that the Petroleum Officer had responded on steps that might be taken, and the ARP Controller had the matter in mind.¹⁷⁹ At Full Council on 5 May it was agreed to delete the censure to the Treasurer from the minutes.¹⁸⁰ At this point debate stopped and the matter seems to have faded out of the attention of the Committee, with no further

¹⁷⁴ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes, 1940/41, ARP Committee, 7/3/41p 363 min 2580

¹⁷⁵ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes, 1940/41, ARP Committee 21/3/41 p 393 min 2809

¹⁷⁶ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes, 1940/41, ARP Committee 28/3/41 p 421 Min 2996

¹⁷⁷ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes, 1940/41, Full Council 7/4/41 p430 Min 3053

¹⁷⁸ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes, 1940/41, ARP Committee 4/4/41, p 436 min 3102

¹⁷⁹ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes, 1940/41, ARP Committee 25/4/41 p493 min3535

¹⁸⁰ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes, 1940/41, Full Council 5/5/41 p512 Min 3648

appearances in the minutes – somewhat surprising in view of the determination with which the matter was pursued over a few weeks, to the extent of disciplining a senior officer for failing to act. It was a curious incident, an interesting example of the Council taking an independent stand over conduct in the city. Although the Council never seems to have acknowledged it as such, the later initiative of providing the shelter colonies, away from the centre of the city, embodied the same principle of moving out for protection, with the prospect of sleeping in relative peace and safety. The Council had appropriated the practice of trekking and given it an official status.

The Shelter Colonies

The final and most complex phase in the Council's shelter provision – which might be classed the apogee of normal living while sheltering – was the creation of the dormitory colonies, large clusters of new build shelters on the periphery of Cardiff, which must have almost amounted to the creation of small villages on the edge of the city. The final project amounted to 209 fifty-unit brick surface shelters of eight to twenty units per group.¹⁸¹

Discussions of large scale proposals for shelter construction appear first at the ARP Committee during May 1941. A report was considered on erection of shelters in groups of 10 – 12 on open spaces on the outskirts of the city.¹⁸² The provision of shelters to accommodate 48 persons, with seating and bunks, was one of the items considered at the meeting of the Shelter Sub Committee on 16 May. Two were approved, with a note that other sites would be viewed. At this point the accommodation was said to be for persons rendered homeless by enemy action, but at a subsequent Council meeting this was deleted.¹⁸³ At the end of May thirteen shelter estates were approved and in June contracts for one hundred and three shelters and a Clerk of Works.¹⁸⁴ The first intimation of the impact of this building project for

¹⁸¹ TNA, MAF 156/282 War Time Meals December 1940 - December 1941 Report to the War Cabinet for September 1941 dated 9/10/41 p4

¹⁸² CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41 ARP Shelter Sub Committee 8/5/41 p534 min 3799

¹⁸³ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes, 1940/41, Shelter Sub Committee 16/5/41 p551, min 3935; Council 9/6/41 p608, min 4279

¹⁸⁴ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41 ARP Committee 23/5/41 p582 min 4150; 27/6/41 p690 mins 4822 & 4823

dormitory shelters on green field sites was a protest from the War Agricultural Committee, the government appointed body charged with increasing local arable food production, objecting to the sites the committee had chosen. The ARP Committee gave instructions to proceed, despite the opposition from this influential body, in view of the urgent necessity for the shelters, underlining the level of commitment to the project.¹⁸⁵ Arrangements were also made with the Waterworks Committee for early installation of metered water supplies.¹⁸⁶ At the Smallholdings and Allotments Committee on 14 July approval was given use of land at Llandaff Fields for erection of sixteen shelters which needed to be completed before winter.¹⁸⁷ At this point they appear to have been referred to as shelter estates; use of the term colonies appears when the Regional Commissioner gave approval for additional dormitory shelter colonies at several sites.¹⁸⁸ The project was complete when approval was given for the dormitory colony of nine shelters, with canteens and other offices, at Highmead Estate. By August 1941, the Regional Commissioner had given agreement for 217 shelters on 17 approved dormitory colony sites.¹⁸⁹ Shelter provision was taking on element akin to organising a dispersed alternative city.

In late August the Shelter Sub Committee considered the administration of dormitory shelters, the hours of opening, the appointment of shelter committees, and recreation, as well as the comprehensive report on feeding.¹⁹⁰ Given the doubts expressed over the construction of shelters in some areas of the country, and the problems of obtaining men and materials, it is difficult to know how robust these dormitory shelters in outlying areas would have been in the event of bombardment.¹⁹¹ Presumably much was achieved by moving people out of areas which were more likely to be hit, creating a feeling of safety, so people could sleep and work. That construction was going on at all is noteworthy, as a review of preparations for

¹⁸⁵ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41 ARP Committee 4/7/41 p 701 min 4900; The War Agricultural Committee objected to three more sites later that month. ARP Committee 18/7/41 p745 min 5261

¹⁸⁶ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41 Waterworks Committee 14/7/41 p718 min 5044; ARP Committee 18/7/41 p 744 min 5254 & 1/8/41 p771 min 5399; Waterworks Committee 15/9/41 p 814 min 5700

¹⁸⁷ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41 Smallholdings and Allotments Committee 14/7/41 p 721 min 5073. The ARP Chairman attended the Parks etc.. meeting on 26/6/41 to make the case for release of land. The Parks etc Committee agreed, with the matter then being passed to the Allotments etc Committee. Parks etc Committee 26/6/41 p 670 min 4733

¹⁸⁸ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41 ARP Committee 18/7/41 745 min 5261

¹⁸⁹ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41 ARP Committee 15/8/41 p. 774 min 5424

¹⁹⁰ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes, 1940/41, ARP Committee 22/8/41, p778 mins. 5455 and 5458

¹⁹¹ Gardiner, *Wartime* p309 A direct hit on a public shelter in Southwark on 27/12/40 killed 50 people.

heavy raids during the winter by the Home Defence Committee considered whether the shelter programme might have to be curtailed, due to lack of labour and materials.¹⁹²

The location of shelter colonies created a domino effect of related issues, including transport. Whole families needed to travel to the shelters, often with small children and elderly relatives, and a certain amount of personal possessions. The Transport Committee, at the request of the ARP Committee, agreed the provision of prepaid bus tickets, to be distributed by caretakers and funded by the ARP Committee, although the Board of Health later vetoed this payment.¹⁹³ A report was requested on the storage of prams and bikes in shelters, for which there was currently no provision.¹⁹⁴ Despite having previously approved ticket admission to shelters, when the Medical Officer of Health suggested that admission to shelters with bunks should be by ticket only, this was refused on the grounds that it was against the interests of the rest of the population – a reverse of the practice adopted in relation to Westgate Street, immediately after the Wilkinson visit.¹⁹⁵ In October 1941 54 of the dormitory shelters had been roofed, and the Council had averted loss of skilled men to call up.¹⁹⁶ Construction suffered a set-back when labour had to be removed urgently from the shelter colonies to construct 36 steel tanks as a supplementary water supply for the Fire Service.¹⁹⁷

Occupation of the colonies was moving closer. The Welsh Board of Health requested that a skeleton staff be appointed, and paid a retainer, before the appointment of shelter wardens. Cleaning materials were to be requisitioned and stored, and a cleaner appointed for each colony. Catering contractors were sought, and airing lines provided.¹⁹⁸

Government expectation for the winter of 1941/42 was characteristically pessimistic. ‘The improvement in our night defences is continuing, but we must prepare for worse air attacks than we have yet known. Heavier bombs than hitherto may be used.’¹⁹⁹ In Cardiff, by the

¹⁹² TNA, HO186/927 *Blitz* Papers –Preparations for Heavy Attack. Lessons Learned Review Paper.

¹⁹³ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41 ARP Committee 12/9/41 p 811 min 5678; Transport Committee 9/10/41 p 908 min 6318; ARP Committee 17/10/41 p 941 min 6556. CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42 ARP Committee 5/12/41 p 106 min 765

¹⁹⁴ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41 ARP Committee 12/9/41p 812 min 5679

¹⁹⁵ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41 ARP Committee 19/9/41 p 830 min 5804

¹⁹⁶ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41 ARP Committee 10/10/41 p 909 min 6329

¹⁹⁷ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42 ARP Committee 28/11/41 p 76 min 579

¹⁹⁸ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42 ARP Committee 9/1/42 p 197 min 1405

¹⁹⁹ TNA, HO186/927 *Blitz* Papers – Preparations for Heavy attack. Lessons Learned. Ministry of Home Security Report on preparation for Heavy Air alerts in August 1941.

start of 1942, facilities in the shelter colonies continued to expand. Approval had been given for a report on recreation facilities to be passed to the Shelter Sub Committee for consideration, but approval was refused for religious services.²⁰⁰ In May arrangements for catering were in place, ready to be put into action if and when an emergency occurred.²⁰¹

The Welsh Board of Health never seems to have given up its antipathy to canteens in the colonies. The ARP Committee was obliged to make representations to the Commissioner when the Board refused to supply furniture for them, or permit it to be purchased locally.²⁰² The new shelters were provided with full facilities, but the number of shelter users was declining, because of the absence of bombing alerts. Nationally, in 1942, with the change in the patterns of enemy raids, there was a general picture of declining use and an increase in vandalism, often attributed to children.²⁰³ In September 1942 the Cardiff ARP Committee heard of serious damage done by ‘irresponsible youth.’²⁰⁴ The interests of the population, and what the Council considered was in their best interest, were diverging. The Council clearly still felt that people were best served by nightly retreats to the shelters, an interesting appropriation of the trekking habit. Measures to make shelters even more attractive were tabled. Shelterers were encouraged to form recreation committees and permitted to use their own wireless sets, with the practical arrangements delegated to the committee which considered welfare matters.²⁰⁵ One hundred and fifteen allotment plots were also provided at the dormitory colonies, which would allow shelterers to try their hand at digging for victory.²⁰⁶

The shelter colonies were ambitious, and novel, but were they unique? Information from government files enables some consideration of the issue. The Home Office consistently monitored the progress in shelter provision in all regions of the country over a number of months in 1941 and 1942. Monthly reports from each region (as well as one from the Ministry of Food) enable progress in Cardiff to be assessed in comparison with other areas

²⁰⁰ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42 ARP Committee 12/12/41 p 120 min 879

²⁰¹ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42 ARP Committee 1/5/42 p 521 min 3575

²⁰² CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1942/43 ARP Committee 7/5/ 43 p 542 min 3748

²⁰³ HO 205/173 Shelter Progress Reports. Reports for May (30/5/42). A comment on the file on 5 December 1942 indicates that with no raids for months, the public was ‘taking little interest in shelters.’

²⁰⁴ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42 ARP Committee 4/9/42 p824 min 5538

²⁰⁵ CHL, Minutes of Cardiff Council 1941/1942, Air Raid Precautions (Shelters) Sub Committee 30/1/42

²⁰⁶ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42 ARP Committee 10/4 /42 p 462 min 3152; Smallholdings and Allotments Committee 20/4/42 p477 min 3266

and, in particular, some assessment of whether the Cardiff scheme of shelter colonies was as unusual as it appears. The report from the Welsh Region to the Home Office for July 1941 refers to dormitory colonies being erected, with discussions on the operation of canteens. The file contains a statement of Welsh Region policy for August 1941, which is for provision of public shelters only in business and shopping centres. When a new programme of construction was prepared, in accordance with Circular HSR 68/41, it was decided that as far as possible the limited labour force should be employed on dormitory shelters, to be erected mainly on the outskirts or perimeters of towns. It was felt that existing shelters gave reasonable protection and that provision of additional shelter was more urgent than strengthening existing shelters.²⁰⁷

In the monthly reports on shelter arrangements submitted from the Ministry of Food to the War Cabinet, there is mention of colonies in relation to Newport and Swansea, but Cardiff appears to be the only city putting the idea into practice. The Welsh Board of Health was reported to be considering groups of shelters on the periphery of Newport, to draw people from the central area, but the proposals were not far enough advanced to enable feeding arrangements to be considered. In Swansea the Council was said to be planning dormitory shelters on the periphery, as in Cardiff, but it would be at least six months before a 'shelter colony' plan was completed.²⁰⁸ The report from the Wales Region to the Home Office in September 1941 comments that the speed of erection varies greatly in the various Cardiff colonies. The best progress was being made in Crystal Glen, where the full number of twenty should be completed by the end of the month.

Efforts were being made by the Borough Engineer to speed up progress, but by October there were problems in obtaining ballast. In view of this, work had temporarily ceased on some of the colonies, to concentrate on completing a proportion, rather than thinly spreading resources over all. Canteens were being erected.²⁰⁹ One of the issues being monitored by the Home Office was the potential effect of labour shortages, which would be of significance in the erection of the colonies, which were new-build. In fact Cardiff did not appear to experience the problem of shortage of labour which other regions identified. In May 1942 the

²⁰⁷ TNA, HO205/171 Welsh Statement for August 1941, dated 11/9/41 There was a shortage of bricks and bricklayers in Cardiff, so work was being carried out using reinforced concrete, was well in hand and would be completed by November.

²⁰⁸ TNA, MAF 156/282 *War Time Meals December 1940- December 1941* Report for September 1941

²⁰⁹ TNA, HO205/171 Welsh Region Report for Region 8. Report September 1941 dated 11/10/41 & October Report dated 11/11/41

Cardiff shelter colonies were reported as having heating, lighting, water and sanitation nearly finished. These were expected to be complete by the end of June, with all communal and seventy four public shelters also completed. The report for the region in August 1942 confirmed that there was no shortage of labour in the Welsh Region. The next report, for September, records that there was a reduction in labour in the region but the programme of work was mainly complete, especially in Cardiff.²¹⁰ Overall Cardiff's progress in shelter provision over the months covered by the government monitoring appears to be on a par with other regions. In June 1942 good progress on the strengthening of shelters was noted, with 70 being completed in a month.

It is difficult to determine whether any other region had anything quite like the Cardiff colonies. There were shelter communities in some towns and cities that may be said to resemble them, often provided as facilities for trekkers, or refuges set up in cave complexes, which could be popular with the public for giving the impression of depth and security. The report for the London region in August 1941 comments on what appears to be a community at Chislehurst Caves, where there were scout and guide troops operating, a CAB planned, and a library.²¹¹ In May 1942 some other areas, such as Birkenhead, were considering the use of tunnels outside towns. In July 1942 it was noted that in the Southern region people from a housing estate were travelling to Wymering Tunnels to shelter if they thought there would be an attack. 'Although they all have Andersons, or other types of domestic shelter, at their homes.'²¹²

The most developed arrangement to accommodate trekkers appears to have been that in Hull. The report of the North Eastern region for September 1941 first mentions amenities and welfare provision being provided for trekkers.²¹³ In June 1942 it was noted that trekkers were using school shelters available for them and, as in Cardiff, cultivating allotments, which suggests an established enclave of shelterers away from the city.²¹⁴ The potential difference between trekker facilities and the colonies was whether the local authority was encouraging use, or simply accommodating a spontaneous migration, which is not clear from the government reports.

²¹⁰ TNA, HO 205/173 Shelter Progress Reports Reports for 30/5/42 , 6/8/42 and 5/9/42

²¹¹TNA, HO205/171 Report for August 1941 for London Region dated 5/9/41

²¹² TNA HO 205/173 Shelter Progress Reports. May and July 1942

²¹³ TNA HO 205/173 Shelter Progress Report September Summary Report 1941

²¹⁴ TNA HO 205/171 Shelter Progress Reports Report on North Eastern Region June 1942

The two developments mentioned in the reports that potentially most resemble the Cardiff colonies, neither of which is specified to be for trekkers, are in Southampton and King's Lyn. The Southern Region report for August 1941 refers to six groups; each comprising forty two dormitory shelters, equipped with standard amenities, being constructed on the boundary of the Borough of Southampton, which when completed would accommodate 2,016 persons.²¹⁵ In July 1942 it was noted that permission had been given in the Eastern Region for forty *more* communal shelters in the King's Lyn area.²¹⁶ The information on these two new build enclaves is not detailed. Both, or either, may have been something approaching the Cardiff provision, although not named as such. The most notable characteristics of the Cardiff colonies appear to be intent and scale. Cardiff's developments were large and driven through with considerable determination. Their creation was pro-active rather than a reaction to trekking, where shelterers spontaneously chose to leave the city, although ironically they embraced some of the same principles. In Cardiff, the Council sponsored the nightly evacuation. The provision of extensive facilities suggests a commitment to making the colonies attractive to shelterers and to reproduce something approaching the amenities of home. It is probably inadvisable to claim they were unique, given that such developments appear to be Welsh policy, and that there were other areas where something similar was happening, but they were noteworthy – a concerted effort on the part of the Council to offer residents an approximation of normality.

As dormitory shelters became the night time home of many residents, both in the shelter colonies and the city, entertainment and welfare increased in importance. Early in the war the Ministry of Information had advice for keeping up morale when sheltering. Leaflets encouraged a neighbourly, "We can take it" spirit. 'Even an air raid shelter can provide a sense of community and solidarity.' Community singing was frequently suggested to boost morale. 'Tell actors that they are called upon to keep people cheerful, lead singing, etc. Have words of songs ready to hand round. Tell people to bring gramophones, games and toys.'²¹⁷ While a considerable volume of the work relating to maintaining morale involved persuading people to take part in some organised activity, any form of distraction was to be encouraged. Quiet pursuits and self-improvement were not forgotten: 'Many women will find it's a good idea to take their knitting to the air raid shelter – and men too, nowadays, for that matter.'

²¹⁵ TNA, HO205/171 Report from Southern Region August 1941

²¹⁶ TNA HO 205/173 Shelter Progress Reports July report dated 6/8/42. The report mentions a number of shelters and a canteen for persons moving out of town at night but does not specify location.

²¹⁷ TNA INF1/250 Home Morale Emergency Committee. First Interim report 22/5/40; Draft leaflet June 1940

Shelterers could take a book: ‘Not a serious one but something which will take you far away from this demented world.’²¹⁸ That most private of entertainments, reading, maintained the demand for the service of the libraries during the war. A Cardiff MO Diarist from early 1939 recorded himself shocked that he had not read a book for a week.²¹⁹ This situation did not last. Despite reduction in staff and opening hours, library issues regularly broke all records as the war progressed, with a significant upturn in borrowing in the very last months of the war.²²⁰ Most shelterers were probably reading from the lighter end of the spectrum, although the librarians made regular efforts to direct and elevate the tone, with hand lists and bibliographies of recommended books on topics such as “China - Our Far Eastern Ally” and “The USSR in Peace and War,” prepared for the guidance of readers.²²¹

By the time the dormitory shelters were in full use, emphasis had moved on from community singing to keep up morale, in an atmosphere of emergency, to more planned and organised leisure. Shelter committees were formed for provision of recreation and could supply wireless sets, at their own expense.²²² Shelter users in Westgate Street were prepared to provide one.²²³ The Ministry of Information had declared wireless sets in shelters to be important: ‘This is a vital propaganda point both as strengthening spirit and conveying information.’²²⁴ The BBC was encouraged to include in its programming frequent, ‘simple and direct programmes of English, Scottish, Welsh, Irish and Gaelic music, song, fiddling and piping.’²²⁵ The opportunity for a colony shelterer to listen to traditional music or a favourite programme before bed, or dig an allotment, gives an impression of a lifestyle a long way from the scenes which Ellen Wilkinson witnessed in 1941. Without any outside reference point, however, it is not possible to judge if that impression is a true one.

²¹⁸ TNA, INF 1/251 (MoI) Planning Committee; Draft leaflet ‘You can take it’ June 1940

²¹⁹ Mass Observation Online Files Diarist 5156 8/9/39.

Massobservation.amdigital.co.uk.abc.cardiff.ac.uk/Documents/Images/Diarist 5156/8

²²⁰ CHL, Cardiff Council 1941/1942, Libraries Committee 15/12/42 p137 min 894; Cardiff Council Minutes 1943/1944, Libraries Committee 20/6/44, p615, min 4434 CHL Cardiff Council minutes 1944/45 Libraries Committee 19/12/44 p 113 min 884; Libraries Committee 26/6/45 p 699 min 4787; 17/7/45 p 762 min 5238

²²¹ CHL, Cardiff Council 1942/1943, Libraries Committee 21/9/43 p807 min 5823: Cardiff Council Minutes 1943/1944 Libraries Committee 18/1/44, p.196min 1469

²²² CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41 ARP Committee 22/8/41 p 778 min 5455

²²³ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41 ARP Committee 29/8 /41 p 781 min 5477

²²⁴ TNA, HO262/12 Home Morale Report on Decline in Public Confidence. Report of the Sub Committee of the Duty Room on the decline in public confidence. Undated, probably December 1940

²²⁵TNA National Archive INF1/250 Home Morale Emergency Committee Planning Committee. 20/6/40 Action taken.

When shelters were in use for long stretches of time, standards of behaviour demanded attention. Not all shelter users were respectful of the facilities being made available for them – warnings were given over persons standing at the entrances and special constables were drafted in when electrics in several shelters were damaged.²²⁶ Rules governing behaviour were approved in June 1941 for the Westgate Street Shelter, which included enforcing silence after 11.30 pm, with bunks vacated by 8 a.m.²²⁷ Anti-social behaviour also arose from the general public. A Councillor complained to the ARP Committee in August 1941 over the unclean condition of a public shelter in Splott Park. It was agreed to call the attention of the Watch Committee to the ‘nuisance caused by persons in public shelters,’ with the police asked to take action.²²⁸ Revisiting the complaint voiced to Ellen Wilkinson, it was said the undesirables were sleeping in shelters. It was suggested that the police should visit to enquire about the permanent residence of such people.²²⁹

Winding Down- Shelters

Even as the colony shelters came into operation, the impetus to take shelter was already slowing. The Council began to adapt accordingly, reducing the number of shelter wardens from 7 to 3 and closing the Castle Walls as a dormitory shelter, transferring provision to Westgate Street.²³⁰ Management within the dormitory shelters was passing from the Council to the users, by way of the committees set up to supervise.²³¹ The responsibilities of shelter marshals were clarified, to correspond to those of wardens, although they did not act as such.²³² The Smallholdings and Allotments Committee was asked to cut grass that was encroaching on paths in the areas not in use for allotments at the shelter colonies, suggesting an element of neglect.²³³

²²⁶ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40 ARP Committee, 19/7/40 p880 min 6117:2/8/40 p907 min 6329.

²²⁷ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41 ARP Committee 20/6/41 p 647 min 4579

²²⁸ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41 ARP Committee 15/8/41 p775 min 5427

²²⁹ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41 ARP Committee 29/8/41 p781 mins 5478, 5479

²³⁰ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42 ARP Committee 15/5/42 p 571 min 3859

²³¹ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42 ARP Committee 26/6/42 p 706 min 4758.

²³² CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42 ARP Committee 17/7/42 p 777 min 5284. Shelter supervisors were advised to enrol as wardens, on the understanding that they would only perform the duties for which they had volunteered.

²³³ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42 Smallholdings and Allotments Committee 14/9/42 p855 min 5815

Although there was a jump in the use of shelters in early summer of 1943, possibly as an effect of the raid of 17/18 May, in general use was declining.²³⁴ The Council remained reluctant to relinquish the facilities, however. Misuse of shelters led the ARP Committee to recommend display of notices under Defence Regulation 23AB forbidding unauthorised entry.²³⁵ In February 1944, at the request of the Board of Health, the Shelter Superintendent obtained details of why people were still using the public dormitory shelters.²³⁶ By late spring of 1944 the shelter story was becoming one of misuse and theft, and public shelters were being frequently damaged by American service vehicles.²³⁷ Means of protecting the colony shelters were reviewed – access now to be by key, with encroaching undergrowth being cut down and discussions held with the Chief Constable over military traffic.²³⁸

With Wales out of the reach of the last phase of bombardment, by the V1 and V2 rockets, priority for protection was moving away from Wales and back to the vulnerable areas of London and the South. A warden from Ely suggested in the letter column of the *Echo* that the shelter colonies might be used to accommodate evacuees from these bombs, incidentally confirming the standard of accommodation that had been created. ‘These people would undoubtedly enjoy the position of having their own small community.’ The shelters were already fitted out with, ‘everything for comfort and the necessary utensils to feed a small community’.²³⁹

Traffic of supplies was briefly reversed. Morrisons and Andersons were returned to England, where civilians were still suffering attack.²⁴⁰ Activity on shelters in Cardiff was scaling down fast, with the closure of Westgate Street shelter and the return of lighting equipment hired from the Street Lighting department to its regular use, replaced by hurricane lamps.²⁴¹ Even with this scaling down the Council still wished to retain some provision. While the Welsh Board doubted the need to still keep shelters lit during the blackout, the Council was of the

²³⁴ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1942/43 ARP Committee 11/6 43 p 627 p 4376. People were staying in the shelter in Penylan Road.

²³⁵ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1942/43 ARP Committee 5/3/43 p 380 min 2560

²³⁶ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1943/44 ARP Committee 25/2/44 p321 min 2271

²³⁷ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1943/44 ARP Committee 21/1/44 p 218 min 1620. ARP Committee 19/5/44 p 542 min 3870; 26/5/44 p 571 min 4086; 2/6/44 p 574 min 4120

²³⁸ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1943/44 ARP Committee 19/5/44 p542 min 3870

²³⁹ *Echo* Letters 18/7/44 p2

²⁴⁰ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1943/44 ARP Committee, 18/8/44/ p767 min5433: 1/9/44 p772 min 5462: 8/9/44 p773 mins 5471 & 5472

²⁴¹ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1943/44 ARP Committee 8/9/44 p773 min 5477;29/9/44p 853 min 6063:22/9/44 p834 min5938

view that there was danger of damage if they were not, and agreed to continue.²⁴² The Board also decreed that there was no further need for 3 full-time shelter wardens and 2 full-time cleaners – cleaning could be done as part of normal activities. The Council was not prepared to give up its shelter provision quite yet and a tussle with the Welsh Board ensued, with the Board instructing that all public shelters and the Castle Walls were to close, subject to immediate reopening in alerts, with wardens and cleaners being dispensed with, and no repair of damaged light fittings. The Council reacted with strong representations that personnel be retained until it could be certain that the need for shelters was past, and a deputation to take up the issue, including the retention of the Shelter Superintendant who was still considered ‘essential’ but whose post was also threatened.²⁴³ The deputation was not successful - the Board insisted on closure of the shelters and the Castle Walls, with the removal of equipment to storage and the termination of staff, although the Council asked that they be retained until the end of the financial year, 31st of March 1945. The supervisor post was also to be terminated, but the post-holder, Council Robson, elected to continue in a voluntary capacity until all work was complete and therefore became the ‘honorary’ Shelter Superintendant.²⁴⁴ Thanks extended to Councillor Robson praised his ‘enthusiasm and enterprise’ and ‘efficiency and organising ability’ over three and a half years.²⁴⁵ This, together with the complements paid Councillor Purnell at the end of his service suggest that involvement of particular Councillors was effective in securing the level of service for both shelters and Rest Centres.

The Council was coming round to the inevitability of dispensing with the shelters. Continued vandalism, particularly at the Ely Old Quay shelter colony, resulted in a decision to remove the fittings and destroy this shelter, with removal of bunks, stores and fittings from all the shelter colonies.²⁴⁶ The time when sheltering was a way of life was coming to an end. In May 1945 Home Security Circular 43/45 set out policy for orderly closure of shelter accommodation, including notices to the press, with advice offered on demolition.²⁴⁷ In

²⁴²CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1944/45 APR Committee 1/12/44 p64 min 492

²⁴³ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1944/45 ARP Committee 1/12/44 p64 min 493: 29/12/44 p147min 1106.

²⁴⁴ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1944/45 ARP Committee 2/2/45 p236 min1708: 2/3/45 p327min 2294; 25/6/45 p 697 min.4768

²⁴⁵ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1944/45 ARP Committee 2/3/45 p 327 min 2294

²⁴⁶CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1944/45 ARP Committee 6/4/45 p430min 3002

²⁴⁷ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1944/45 ARP Committee 4/5/45 p519 min 3619 Home Security Circular 43/1945

Cardiff the Regional Controller was asked to approve the removal of public shelters situated on the street, and authority was given for minimum cleaning necessary to avoid nuisance, until steps were taken to prevent access. A list was submitted to Regional Headquarters of shelters to be demolished as soon as practicable.²⁴⁸ The sale of Anderson shelters to householders was also considered.²⁴⁹ Despite discussions on possible peacetime use of shelters, ideas were limited. One alternative use that was subject to requests by the public and received a level of attention was conversion of some shelters into bus shelters, retaining the WC facilities. At one point eleven were being considered, but in the end this was decided to be impractical, although the use of some shelter canteens for social purposes continued.²⁵⁰ The Council was already experimenting with demolition at the Crystal Glen dormitory shelter.²⁵¹ Other committees already had their eyes on sites for other uses, notably housing, and the Committee requested a report on demolition for the preparation of housing sites, and to remove traffic obstructions and also removal of Andersons considered a danger to health.²⁵² The Welsh Board of Health asked the Council to arrange disposal of bunks from public and communal shelters on behalf of the Ministry of Works. The City Engineer expressed interest in acquiring all supplies, on behalf of the Property Repairs Department.²⁵³ With the issuing of Circular 89/1945 authorising the dismantling of Anderson shelters, the era of sheltering came to a close.²⁵⁴

Conclusion

ARP shelters were the subject of quantities of direction from central government, through the regional representation. There were clear lines on what was expected, but these changed extensively, as did the financial provision, as war progressed. In terms of numbers, the Council's achievement appears to have been notable. It also saw and implemented opportunity, like the use of the Castle Walls, and was sufficiently independently minded to explore the idea of deep shelters, put forward by Professor Haldane. It would be interesting to

²⁴⁸ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1944/45 Public Works etc Committee 21/6/45 p 684 min 4684; ARP Committee 25/6/45 p 697 min 4767; ARP Committee 20/7/ 45 p 811 min 5595

²⁴⁹ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1944/45 Estates Committee 27/6/45 p 702 min 4827

²⁵⁰ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1944/45 ARP Committee, : 4/5/45 p 519 3620; Transport Committee 17/5/45 p540 min 3773; ARP Committee 1/6/45 p 620 min 4302 : 20/7/45 p 811 min 5596; Public Works Committee 31/5/45 p596: 21/7/45 p 684 min 4082

²⁵¹ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1944/45 ARP Committee 4/5/45 p 520 min 3630.

²⁵² CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1944/45 ARP Committee 6/7/45 p726 mins 4967& 4968

²⁵³ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1944/45 ARP Committee 7/9/45 p 833 min 5741

²⁵⁴ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1944/45 ARP Emergency Housing Sub Committee 12/10/45 p 1001 min 6875

know how Councillors would have proceeded if the judgement had been that Cardiff *was* suitable for deep shelters, and how far they would have gone in attempts to provide them.²⁵⁵

When labour was needed it was frequently specified that work should be offered to the unemployed, in accordance with Government practice, and the Council was doing this even before war was declared.

On issues of quality and care, the Council failed dismally in 1941. Efforts to improve conditions in dormitory shelters and the creation of the colonies should have redeemed this failure, but without any report of the calibre of that prepared by Ellen Wilkinson, it is difficult to confirm. While there are various decisions noted at intervals in the minutes, relating to appointment of members to make visits, and even the drawing up of rotas of inspection, there are no records of formal reports on any regular inspection regime. This is not to say that they did not take place, but if so, the results were dealt with without visible involvement of the Committee. The presence of a Councillor as Shelter Superintendant would presumably have provided a channel for any difficulties to be rectified. Later details on catering, wirelesses and drying lines in the colonies give the impression of a changed situation, but this is again, an impression. The regional reports in government files seem more concerned with accounts of numbers and construction progress, so quality may not have been particularly stressed, being more difficult to measure in an objective way and on large scale.

It is also difficult to determine how unusual the shelter colonies were. They appear to be most fully realised within Wales in Cardiff, and fairly unusual in the UK as a whole, on the basis of shelter reports from other regions. Similar provision in other places was often specified as for accommodating trekkers. In Cardiff it was a deliberate movement of people out of the city, facilitated by the Council. The Council set about construction with a will, and was successful, even in the face of national manpower and materials shortage. There seems to have been considerable determination behind executing the idea, and a degree of imagination in the range of amenities provided.

On balance, the Council's intention in providing shelters was sound and, in its persistence, even commendable, if lacking dramatically in execution at one point. Presumably, had Ellen Wilkinson not visited, the situation she found would have continued, and the city's shelter quality would have remained poor and perhaps gone unknown, but the Council does seem to

²⁵⁵Gardiner *The Blitz* p77. Finsbury Borough Council in London did pursue the idea, commissioning plans for 15 shelters to accommodate 7,600 – 12,700 people, deep underground.

have addressed the deficiencies. For its flexibility in the face of change, and the unusual nature of the colonies, it deserves commendation. The story related in the chapter is one chiefly of positive movement, the application of energy, and growth. The Council never lost sight of its responsibility to protect its residents, even when those residents were themselves less than engaged.

Were the air raid shelters provided by local authorities frequently squalid and badly constructed, or were many local authorities efficient and imaginative in providing for their residents? Historians have highlighted the former picture, and the squalor, if not the poor construction, must be admitted in respect of Cardiff, which was apparently able to produce conditions comparable to the worst that London had to offer at the start of the Blitz. As has been shown in the thesis, the shelter story was heavily governed by financial considerations and historians have made clear that once money was forthcoming, and the true nature of sheltering need became apparent, the situation was soon and significantly improved. Once this has been identified, and the potential for improvement acknowledged, attention from historians tends to fade. It is the flamboyant stories, such as takeover of Tube stations, which only ever served a small proportion of Londoners and had no bearing on the rest of the country, or the domestic images of families clustered in the entrance to the Anderson shelter which have come to represent war time air raid protection, and which dominate the historiography.

National Archive files record that local authorities were, however, conducting an ongoing programme of shelter provision, which was being carefully monitored by government in 1941 and 1942 and resulting in considerable building work, not least in the Cardiff shelter colonies. The Department of Home Security seems to have been satisfied with what was being done, without any major flags being raised over deficiencies. Reaction from residents, those whom the shelters were meant to protect, is harder to gauge. Declining interest in sheltering seems just as likely to have been due to the course of the war as the nature of the provision. The situation might have been very different had the V1 and V2 missiles had sufficient capacity to put the whole of the UK within range.

Possibly it is this awareness, provided by hindsight, that ambitious provision was never extensively needed, which has caused attention from historians to be focussed on the early part of the war. The findings in relation to Cardiff, particularly the provision of catering and the welfare arrangements, reveal the scale and the level of thought going into providing

shelter in 1941 and after. Historiography can be said, therefore, to present an unbalanced picture, weighted towards early deficiency. The situation in Cardiff and, from the Ministry reports, in other parts of the country, offers a more rounded image, which might form part of a new appreciation of the part played by local government in the war.

Chapter 4

The Council and the Government Propaganda Campaigns.

Introduction

Chapters Three and Four discussed the war duties that local authorities were obliged to assume – Civil Defence and the provision of air raid shelters. This chapter considers some less explored government initiatives, and the Council's involvement in them. It will look at the more diffuse responsibilities that war brought – projects which the government expected councils to support, which were bound up with propaganda and maintaining morale, and for which the co-operation and participation of residents was also vital. Its importance to study of the Home Front lies in showing another facet of the Council's commitment to the war and the city's response, as volunteers, participants, recipients and spectators. The four selected campaigns – Dig for Victory, Salvage, Savings Drives, Stay-at-Home Holidays/Holidays-at-Home, and the British Restaurants experiment, were heavily promoted by government, with elements of performance monitoring, but in general they were not compulsory, other than a certain amount of direction in respect of salvage.

They have been chosen as part of the thesis because of the interest and energy shown by the Council in pursuing them, producing a wealth of material in the minutes, across a number of committees, not simply those responsible for ARP. They represented the contribution that the Council at large found themselves able to make to the war effort. They were calls to action, to achieve specific outcomes – to stimulate food production, materials recycling and savings, and to reduce unnecessary travel, and to provide a low cost dining experience for ordinary people. They were also intended to promote unity and boost civilian morale. Councils had a choice over the extent and level of participation. In Cardiff the Council participated in all of them, with vigour. The four campaigns called for an extension of activities that the Council already undertook; they were easily understood, within the Council's capabilities and played to strengths and inclinations. The creation of the British Restaurants was a welfare experiment to provide a service to the city. Many historians of the war touch on these five activities, and they are a rich source of personal anecdote, showing how the ordinary citizen demonstrated commitment to the war, and even had fun doing it. This chapter of the thesis takes the examination deeper; exploring the government's lead and the authority's response.

It makes a significant contribution to study of the Home Front by revealing the structure and local organisation that lie behind the colourful and amusing anecdotes.

The chapter will first look briefly at two concepts which have greatly interested historians of the war – citizenship and morale. It will consider the Government and Council's use of propaganda tools and the role of two specific entertainment elements – the parade and the exhibition. It will then showcase the five initiatives that the Council supported. It will conclude with an assessment of the Council's performance in these largely discretionary elements of war time activity.

Campaigns frequently built on existing practice, but often the Council had to adapt and adjust, sometimes involving a complete turnaround of regular patterns. In some cases the Council's skills and experience were eminently suited to the additional tasks that the government placed upon it, and the County Borough embraced them, in tandem with residents, volunteers and local organisations. All of them involved attempts to influence residents' behaviour. At the core of the chapter are five government campaigns or initiatives, where morale and citizenship were a factor. The Dig for Victory campaign – probably the most famous campaign on the Home Front – sought to stimulate people to grow their own food, and was an extension of the Council's regular allotment provision.¹ Salvage campaigns were a new initiative, which turned the Council's refuse collection arrangements almost on their head, requiring collection rather than disposal and involving the Council in a policy about-turn, moving from objecting to the idea of collecting food waste, to enthusiastically supporting it. The National Savings movement and the successive wartime savings campaigns served to fill the government's war coffers. These saw the Council, in cooperation with a movement already established in the city, but augmented by war, turn entertainment into a powerful weapon for raising morale and funds, making use of tried and tested formula that were familiar to both Council and residents. The Holidays-at-Home campaign – repurposed the summer entertainment programme, using similar ingredients, which Marwick suggests allowed 'occasions for civic enterprise to provide cultural and leisure activities'.² Again action was based on volunteer infrastructure, but this time one initiated by the Council.

¹ Raynes Minns, draws attention to the prominence of this campaign using material from the official war history. Raynes Minns *Bombers and Mash*, p. 95

² Arthur Marwick is one of the few historians who makes reference to this little known campaign. Marwick *The Home Front*, p.148

Last is the government-sponsored scheme for municipal catering, the British Restaurants, which the Council embraced, but which ultimately proved to be the least successful of the five, both financially, and in providing a service that the public wanted. The conclusion will consider how far the Council's support of these campaigns can be judged successful as a service to the city.

Citizenship – the co-operation of the people

While volunteering is a keystone of Civil Defence, the notion of citizenship may be a factor in the government campaigns which relied on a different sort of contribution and participation. In digging an allotment, supporting National Savings and separating recyclable matter from refuse, a resident of the city was supplying a necessary public involvement which was not entirely that of the volunteer, although historians have seen citizenship as an important element in the post-war narrative and given its roots in the war time volunteering ethic. In looking at the term they have identified the difficulties attached to a word found to have a diversity of meaning. Matthew Grant, in a recent detailed analysis of citizenship in the post war context, quotes Kathleen Canning and Sonya O Rose – that citizenship is 'one of the most porous concepts in contemporary academic parlance'. He explores different modes of citizenship, suggesting volunteering to be a component, but also points out the fluidity of meaning in the term and changes of understanding over time.³ Possibly the war time campaigns which required not a volunteer, but a participant, might be part of the ambiguity.

The term citizen was in use in Cardiff Council minutes during the war years, but the County Borough's stance on citizenship is as ambiguous as that of historians. It is difficult to fully determine whether the term 'citizen' had any underlying ideological base, or was simply an easy portmanteau description for residents of the city – possibly it was both. There does seem to be a certain level of expectation in terms of behaviour, around which the term citizen can be applied – a transaction involving the provision of some benefit or requirement, for which a suitable response was expected. Cooperation from residents was necessary on many levels, which was where the term became important. The Council provided service. In return residents needed to be good citizens, by playing their part in the war effort. As far as war-time Cardiff County Borough is concerned, two basic definitions will serve – at its widest simply a collective noun for inhabitants of the city, but on occasion also a contract, in which

³ Mathew Grant 'Historicising Citizenship in Post War Britain', *The Historical Journal* 59.4 (2016) p1188.

belonging to the city implied an obligation to contribute for its well-being. A resident of Cardiff should be prepared, even eager, to assist.

Citizens might be volunteers – and this was the most visible and demanding means of showing participating – but it was not the only one. Sian Nicholas suggests that John Citizen was becoming an active citizen and quite possibly a “she”.⁴ Noakes suggests that active citizenship could be very gendered, with the female contributing by keeping house and maintaining her femininity, while the ideal male joined up and forgot class, status and politics in a common bond of masculinity.⁵ In the government’s campaigns women were as much targets as men, and expected to make a contribution. In the case of British Restaurants there was an element of assistance to the hard pressed female, juggling war work, volunteering and domestic responsibilities, although there was also an undercurrent of supplying a compensatory service, ensuring that the male war worker did not suffer the neglect of a cold hearth and a cold meal. While activities examined in this chapter focus on domestic matters, it was the domestic, rather than the expressly female that were important. Women could play a part, and in salvage and Dig for Victory were expressly targeted to do this.

There were instances where citizenship formed a Council committee agenda item. In March 1942 the ARP Committee agreed to investigate the provision of a Citizens’ Handbook that was being offered by a private company. The fact that the matter was subsequently dropped suggests that there was no particularly strong feeling for it, although financial considerations possibly played a part.⁶ At the end of the war the Committee agreed to purchase a copy of Stephen Spender’s *Citizens in War and After*. Whether the Councillors were expecting more in the way of a blueprint for action rather than the poet’s reflections on how the spirit of the volunteer might be carried on into peace, is not recorded, but this carry over was apparently a topic of wartime debate in local government circles. Sonya O Rose cites a meeting of leaders of Civil Defence organisations and others in Coventry in 1943, on how the spirit of Civil Defence might be translated into peacetime.⁷ The word was current in organisations in the

⁴ Sian Nicholas, ‘From John Bull to John Citizen images of National Identity and Citizenship in the Wartime BBC’, in Richard Weight and Abigail Beach (eds) *The Right to Belong Citizenship and National Identity in Britain 1930 – 1960* (London, 1998) p 46

⁵ Lucy Noakes, *War and the British - Gender Memory and National Identity*, (London, 1998). p64

⁶ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42 ARP Committee 20/3/42 p 413 min 2817 :10/4 42 p463 min 3157: 24/4/42 p 510 min 3471.

⁷ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1944/45 ARP Committee 1/6/45 p 620 min 4303: Stephen Spender *Citizens in War and After*, (London 1945): Sonya O Rose, *Which People’s War?* P 19

city, such as the South Wales Temperance and Band of Hope Union, who saw themselves as particular guardians of moral standards. ‘Total abstinence is an asset to health and efficiency, to citizenship and to serviceableness for the Kingdom ... Our contribution to individual and national well being, this is our service to the commonwealth.’⁸ It appeared in the Constitution and Rules of the Cardiff and District Women’s Liberal Association – the second object – ‘to promote just legislation for Women and the removal of all their legal disabilities as Citizens and to protect the interest of children.’⁹ Both cases suggest an awareness that obligations attach to the term, so possibly many of the city’s residents had knowledge of the concept, even if they were not perhaps always conscious of putting it into practice.

The word citizen and citizenship appear on occasion within the Council minutes. In 1937 the conferring of a knighthood on a retiring mayor is recorded as an honour, not just to the individual but for the city, the citizens partaking of some of the civic kudos.¹⁰ Volunteering was a mark of citizenship – meetings and house-to-house canvassing arranged by the Council to prompt enrolment in ARP were ‘to induce citizens to enrol’.¹¹ Wartime provision of facilities – domestic shelters, protection from aircraft, stirrup pumps – was ‘for citizens’¹². The use of the term featured in the morale boosting tactics of praise and official acknowledgement – elevation of those who performed their citizenship duties correctly. Appreciation for the ordinary citizen was expressed after the raid of 2/3 January 1941.¹³ A Lord Mayor’s certificate for citizen bravery was mooted, although the idea was not adopted.¹⁴ A group of members of the auxiliary service of the Special Constabulary, two of whom were over 80, was commended for outstanding service, an inspiration to fellow citizens.¹⁵ Citizens were reminded to have their typhoid inoculations and citizens’ railings were to be protected from metal grabs by central government.¹⁶ Support was sought from the Council and Citizens for the ‘Battle for Fuel’.¹⁷ Approval was given for a library bulletin on books on

⁸ CHL South Wales Temperance and Band of Hope Union Annual Report 1939/40

⁹ CHL Cardiff and District Women’s Liberal Association Fifteenth Annual Report 1939

¹⁰ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1937/38 AGM 9/11/37

¹¹ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1937/38 Watch Committee, 13/12/37, p. 141, min. 890: 12/9/38, p.942, min 6402.

¹² CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40, Full Council 8/7/40, p. 817, min. 5630: Full Council, 29/7/40, p.901, min 6257: ARP Committee, 9/8/40 p.913, min 6351.

¹³ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41 Full Council, 13/1/41, p.186, min.1308.

¹⁴ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41 Full Council, 28/7/41, p.762, min. 5357.

¹⁵ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1943/44, Watch Committee, 8/12/43 p.97, min. 710.

¹⁶ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41 Health Committee, 22/1/41 p223, min 1618: ARP Committee 19/9/41 p 829 min 5798

¹⁷ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42, Fuel Committee, 29/9/42 p.915, min. 6243.

‘Problems of Citizenship’ with a recommended reading list to accompany lectures on the topic.¹⁸ Residents also referred to themselves in such terms. Representations for the Council to arrange transport for the evacuation of the city at night indicated this was for citizens.¹⁹ A meeting of citizens protesting the release of Oswald Moseley from prison, requested a deputation to Council, which was refused.²⁰

Possibly the best-known use of the word, both then and now, is in the term “Citizens Advice” the information bureau set up to provide help and assistance to the general public and freely open to all. Cardiff set up a network of Bureaux, known as Information Bureaux, (although the controlling committee was the Citizens Advice Bureaux Committee) for the war, based on ward systems, involving the ward Councillors and operating through the work of volunteers. On the closure of the bureaux at the end of the war the ‘splendid services rendered voluntarily by the many public spirited citizens who have manned the several Ward Information Bureaux.’ was recorded.²¹ The work of Alderman Purnell as ARP Chairman and then Controller, is praised also as service to his fellow citizens. ‘To Alderman Purnell, the grave national emergency became an opportunity to serve his fellow citizens to the full measure of his capabilities.’²² The Council’s use of ‘citizenship’ does often seem to imply certain responsibilities – an expectation that inhabitants of Cardiff would “play the game”. The war time campaigns gave them the chance to do so.

Morale

The experience of war from the point of view of the ordinary citizen is probably best characterised as a time of discomfort and restriction, when the civilian population was controlled and directed as it had never been before, with daily life often reduced to long periods of boredom, interspersed with frightening interludes of hectic activity. Such a life was bound to take its toll. The direction, even the control, of the hearts and minds of the populace was as big a consideration to central government as was protection from bombs. Mass Observation, noted by Levine as, ‘the extra ordinary and controversial wartime barometer of public opinion’²³ constantly took the temperature of public fear and feeling. For the maintenance of public morale attention needed to be given to material comfort and mental

¹⁸ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1943/44 Libraries (Finance and Books) Sub Committee 7/12/43 p 114 mins 856,858. The list was approved but the lectures did not go ahead.

¹⁹ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41 Transport Committee, 10/4/41, p.450, min. 3205

²⁰ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1943/44 Full Council 6/12/43, p.89, min. 642.

²¹ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1944/45, Citizens’ Advice Bureaux Committee, 1/3/45, p 315.

²² CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1944/45, Council, 9/7/45, p.732, min. 4988.

²³ Levine p.4

resilience. Morale was one of the big words of the war. The government knew that this would be a bombing war, and that a bombing war would bring the mass of the civilian population into the front line. The state of the nation's morale was an ever present preoccupation for the wartime government, which has engaged historians ever since, becoming the subject of numerous studies.²⁴

In the run up to war, and the early months, the government harboured a deep fear of civil breakdown. Its morbid expectation was for chaos, panic and widespread collapse – a demoralised public unable to meet its part in a massive industrial effort which would be needed to prosecute the war. Much effort was expended to combat this collapse, including the creation of a new war time department, the Ministry of Information, responsible for posters, leaflets, films, radio broadcasts, all designed to stimulate a sense of involvement and keep people engaged in the war effort. Public attitudes were the subject of constant scrutiny: 'If the heart of the non-military people of England Breaks, all breaks.'²⁵ As war progressed apprehension lessened, but not the need to keep up the spirits of the population. By 1940 the Ministry of Information officials within the department were re-considering the approach to domestic propaganda; methods and phraseology were being debated. What is possibly a draft document went as far as to insist, 'Exhortation must as far as possible be abandoned. The word "morale" must not be used again. People must on no account be told to be brave. It is not likely that they will need any direct encouragement of this kind for the rest of the war.'²⁶

What they did require was entertainment and distractions, such as were offered by the Savings Weeks and Holidays at Home. 'Already the need for bands, military display and a greater amount of pageantry of war is beginning to be realised, and in some respects met, but there must be a lot more to do.'²⁷ The Savings Weeks in particular embodied these activities. The attention of government Ministries moved to campaigns that had purpose and would also serve to provide occupation and distraction. Local authorities were an integral part of those

²⁴ As explored by Paul Addison & Jeremy A Crang (eds.), *Listening to Britain Home Intelligence Reports on Britain's Finest Hour May-September 1940*, (London, 2010): Also in Ian McLaine, *Ministry of Morale*

²⁵ TNA HO262/12 Home Morale Report on Decline in Public Confidence. File note by RH Parker 4/12/40

²⁶ TNA, INF 1/251 (MoI) Planning Committee. Note for long term policy of the Ministry 24/8/40 There is no indication of author, intended audience or circulation. It could have been a draft or discussion document for a later report to the Departmental Planning Committee 30/8/40, where what may be a heavily revised version appears, 'The only form of exhortation which the Ministry should still press for is that provided indirectly by bands, parades and flags.'

²⁷ TNA, INF1/260 Home Morale – Entertainment and Education Winter 1940-41. Letter of 31/7/40 to MoI from Air Commodore A R Boyle.

campaigns. An undated report to the Planning Committee on a Home Morale Campaign stresses attention to simpler forms of patriotism. ‘Too much stress has been laid on abstraction like Liberty and Democracy, not enough on the things that people can see and hear – flags, brass bands, marching soldiers, the countryside, the home and garden. We should not feel ashamed of our pride in our families, homes, towns or counties, which we are now called on to defend.’²⁸

Cardiff Council was well versed in the trappings of celebration. Todman refers to those for the coronation of George VI in 1937, including a generous element of municipal celebration and featuring attractions that reappeared as features of the Savings Weeks.²⁹ Throughout government papers there is regular emphasis on the use of entertainment. ‘This is the moment to encourage communal singing and open air dancing, if possible. People are rather tired at present ... community fun and dancing and singing would be extremely popular.’³⁰ The deployment of these colourful displays and entertainments came to a peak in the successive War Weeks, which celebrated branches of the services, beginning in 1942. The National Archive file on the Salute the Soldier Campaign in 1944 indicates that a liaison officer was available to deal with the supply of bands and exhibitions and to offer advice on staging of parades.³¹

As well as entertainment, a great deal of discussion in government committees also focussed on keeping people occupied. A file on Commercial Relations Division and the Home Front in the National Archive contains a note entitled ‘Steps Necessary to Operate a Plan of Giving the Entire Public Something More or Less Useful to Do.’³² After Dunkirk there was considerable concern over the possibility of invasion. The public had to be ready, but not alarmed to the extent that morale was impeded. ‘The quickest and easiest way of quelling

²⁸ TNA, INF1/533 Commercial Relations Division and the Home Front and INF1/250 Home Morale Emergency Committee. Undated report (probably June 1940) to the Planning Committee on a Home Morale Campaign

²⁹ Todman, *Into Battle* pp. 11, 723, quoting *The Times* 13 May 1937 p 14

³⁰ TNA, INF1/250 Home Morale Emergency Committee. Planning Committee 20/6/40 : HO202/12 Home Morale Report on Decline in Public Confidence. Report of the Sub Committee of the Duty Room on the decline in public confidence. Undated, probably December 1940.: INF1/250 Home Morale Emergency Committee. Letter of 23/7/40 sent from the London Region of the Ministry of Information to the Ministry

³¹ TNA, NSC 7/174 Special Campaigns War Finance Campaigns 1939-45(Salute the Soldier 1944). Campaign Handbook and notes, February 1944

³² TNA, INF1/533 Commercial Relations Division and the Home Front. Note dated 22/5/40 signed JR Rodgers Deputy Director of the Commercial Relations Division.

fears and worries and creating determination and courage is to give the people something to do – preferably something that will be genuinely useful participation in the war.’ The suggestions on offer included measures for home fire fighting, thwarting parachutists, preventing enemy planes landing, a women’s auxiliary watching service to the volunteer armed forces against parachutists. ‘They might be kept busy by having them make their own sets of signal flags and rehearsing systems of communicating and signalling.’³³ Something to do might also encompass an allotment plot or running a savings group. The government was prepared to expend large sums on publicity – expenditure of up to one hundred thousand pounds was authorised by the Treasury for home publicity for two months from 8 June 1940.³⁴

The actual word ‘morale’ — the focus of so much discussion, and even agonising, amongst government departments and contemporary commentators – rarely appears in Council minutes, but there is persuasive evidence that Council members were aware of the value of providing occupation, diversion and entertainment. Ian McLaine, in *Ministry of Morale*, suggests that on a practical level morale can be linked to, ‘willingness to take action’³⁵ The government propaganda campaigns had plenty of action to suggest, often presented under a veneer of entertainment. Entertainment became, in its way, another instrument of war.

The government, via the Ministry of Information, had access to the sources of mass entertainment – cinema and radio – and used them, as well as providing direction to others. ‘Entertainment is important not only as helping people to work and enabling them to support the rigours of the dark winter, but as overcoming isolation.’³⁶ The department laid emphasis on the importance of ‘normal’ entertainment – theatres, concerts, exhibitions, bands, films, processions, flags and books.³⁷ All of these were available in Cardiff, and many were part of the Council’s repertoire of war activity. The local authority role was knitted into its community – local activity, appealing to local people. Cardiff County Borough took direction from the centre, but this appears to be one area in which the Council did not experience a

³³ TNA,INF1/533 Commercial Relations Division and the Home Front. Note dated 22/5/40 signed JR Rodgers Deputy Director of the Commercial Relations Division, Appendix A

³⁴ TNA,INF1/533 Commercial Relations Division and the Home Front. Copy of a minute from A F Waterfield Department Secretary to Sir Kenneth Clarke, 18/6/40

³⁵ McLaine, *Ministry of Morale*, p. 8&9

³⁶ TNA,INF 1/251 (MoI) Planning Committee. Note for long term policy of the Ministry 24/8/40 There is no indication of author, intended audience or circulation. It could have been a draft or discussion document for a later report to the Departmental Planning Committee

³⁷ Ibid.

major learning curve. Official records present, for the most part, a picture of confidence and engagement. This was something in which the Council was well versed. As with so much of the Home Front war effort, the government laid down expectations and offered possible tools. It was for the local authorities to consider how to use them. There was nothing particularly new for the local authorities – tried and tested habits simply acquired a wartime veneer, but the things being required *were* tried and tested, with capacity to play to the Cardiff County Borough's strengths and inclinations. In Cardiff many Council members had a wealth of experience to call upon, stretching back in some cases beyond the First World War.

Propaganda – posters, instruction leaflets, cropping plans, speakers' notes, and exhibition materials – all churned out of government departments, principally but not exclusively, from the wartime creation the Ministry of Information. The Ministry had a troubled early history, but initial hectoring and exhortation gradually settled into realisation that the general public wanted and responded to information more than bombast.³⁸ There was always awareness that ceremonial and entertainment were powerful tools – although the Ministry had some worries about becoming solely focussed on entertainment.³⁹ 'I am, as you know, concerned lest we become a Ministry of Entertainment in a fit of absent mindedness.'⁴⁰ Ceremonial and entertainment were two areas where local authorities had experience and resources. They had tools to deliver propaganda.

Current use of the term propaganda has taken on something of a pejorative note, carrying with it implications of manipulation, which were possibly less apparent during the war years. The word was in frequent use in government papers and appears on occasion in Council minutes, often in relation to paper-based government information, particularly that associated with the Dig for Victory campaign, for which large quantities of plans and leaflets were issued by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. There was never any recorded debate on the matter of morale and propaganda or any overarching plan from the Council of measures it would adopt; it was a consideration woven into the fabric of providing service to the city. The Council's role was extensively reactive – government initiated a campaign, the

³⁸ TNA, INF1/250 Home Morale Emergency Committee. The Second Interim Report of the Committee, 23/5/40: MoI Policy Committee, 4/6 40

³⁹ TNA, INF1/260 Home Morale – Entertainment and Education Winter 1940-41. Policy Committee 26/7/40.

⁴⁰ TNA, INF1/260 Home Morale – Entertainment and Education Winter 1940-41. Note, Deputy Secretary of the Ministry of Information to Mr Nicholson, 9/8/40

Council put it into practice on the ground – which did not mean that there were not elements of choice in the process.

Propaganda Tools used by the Council

The British Library exhibition in 2013 illustrated that propaganda was not confined to paper, but could take varied and nuanced forms, from monuments to mass produced images.⁴¹ The objectives of propaganda were identified in the exhibition as the need to make an impact and inflame passions, to discredit enemies, appeal to self-interest and create moral outrage – often using patriotic symbols. Knowledge of the intended audience was a key component, along with stimulating a sense of superiority and a sense of nation, sometimes embodying an element of personality cult and with objectives to inspire and reassure, as well as influence and change behaviour. Many of these techniques appear in Cardiff, following government initiatives and translated into local government vernacular. It is not possible to discern how far the Council consciously applied these methods, but it seems probable that there was an element of awareness when they used them. In *Patriots National Identity in Britain 1940 – 2000* Richard Weight sets items such as flags, holidays and festivals and public ceremonial, from large royal occasions to small civic pageants, into a traditional context for fostering loyalty to the state, from 1603 to 1940.⁴²

Use of personality on a national scale meant royalty or a government minister; the First Lord of the Admiralty and the Prime Minister were invoked to support Savings Weeks.⁴³ At local level Councils were exhorted to make use of the mayor. Use of a letter from the mayor was suggested to encourage householders to accept an evacuee and a draft was also prepared as part of the propaganda to maintain evacuation of children, stressing the need to keep them in the country and not to bring them back to the city for Christmas.⁴⁴ A Ministry of Labour Circular 112/21 on recruitment suggested the use of a personal message from the Mayor.⁴⁵ The *Local Government Chronicle*, in a defence against criticism of mayoral Spitfire Funds,

⁴¹ British Library, Propaganda–Power and Persuasion 17/5/13 – 17/9/13

⁴² Richard Weight *Patriots National Identity in Britain 1940 – 2000*, (London, 2002) p. 8

⁴³ TNA, NSC7/345 National Savings Campaigns. Note of 26/7/41, signed M, concerning the help to be given by the First Lord. This tactic had been used effectively in War Weapons Week, and would be applied again, trying just as hard to make Warship Week a success.

⁴⁴ TNA, HLG 7/127 Evacuation Circulars Draft Circular General Guidance memorandum: INF 1/316 Home Policy Meetings. Minutes of Home Publicity group 8/12/39

⁴⁵ TNA, HO208/1 ML Circular 112/21

drew attention to the wartime mayoral role, which mirrored that adopted in the Great War: ‘They are rightly regarded as leaders of their community and their assistance is required for all kinds of war and charitable objects.’⁴⁶ In Cardiff a letter from the Lord Mayor was part of the run up to the Salute the Soldier Campaign in 1944.

In national terms, war time symbols would be Churchill’s cigar, or the V for Victory sign. In local government terms such symbols would include robes and regalia, chains of office and municipal crests. A competitive streak and sense of superiority might be directed at other cities in the race to achieve National Savings targets, rather than at the enemy, but still nurtured a sense of participation and worth. The use of familiar civic ceremony reassured and reinforced involvement. These principles were applied by the Council, even if they were not always stated. Display was very much part of many of the war time campaigns. Local newspapers provided an important component. Display was not just for celebration – they could also be part of the process of memorial and grieving. Expressions of sympathy and attendance at funerals by civic dignitaries, freighted with symbols and publicised with photographs in local papers, marked honourable loss and sacrifice.⁴⁷

Presentation of certificates, plaques and trophies to acknowledge achievement, were a major part of both the Dig for Victory and Savings campaigns. Even the simple expression of thanks, or in some cases of sympathy, had value. The Council was punctilious in expressing thanks and appreciation, often highlighting bravery, willingness and self sacrifice. At the time of Munich unanimous approval was given to an expression of thanks to the volunteers, ‘who responded so willingly to the request to assist in the assembly, fitting and distribution of Civilian Respirators,’ and the ‘ready manner in which the unemployed accepted work in connection with the digging of trenches.’⁴⁸ Warm words were repeated at the Watch Committee, when the co-operation between Council staff, trained and untrained volunteers was referenced in the Chief Constable’s report.⁴⁹ One of the resolutions relating to the provision of Anderson shelters in the city required a letter to be sent to local papers, thanking

⁴⁶ *Local Government Chronicle*, 24/8/40, p.811

⁴⁷ The *Echo* of 3/1/41 carried a report on a mass grave and mass funeral for air raid victims, with a procession headed by the Lord Mayor, Town Clerk and members of the Corporation. ‘The Lord Mayor wore black crepe on his chain of office – the maces of the city mace bearers were ‘draped in the same sombre hue,’ with the earth to cover the grave swathed in the Union Jack ‘symbol of the spirit of Cardiff people’. CHL Cardiff Air Raids 1939-1945 An information source book , p 41

⁴⁸ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39 Council 3/10/38 p997 min 6721

⁴⁹ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39 Watch Committee 12/10/ 38 p1031 min 6988

everyone who has erected their shelter in accordance with the Defence Regulations.⁵⁰ Residents, volunteers and staff were all thanked for service. The Transport Committee placed on record its appreciation of the staff who had coped with the first few months of war and blackout, praising the skill and care of drivers and conductors of trams and busses.⁵¹ In June 1940 Wardens were thanked for their work in recent raids, including one for which no warning had been given.⁵² After raids in September 1940 the Council recorded appreciation of the ‘splendid’ work of the ARP services and ‘skill, devotion and undaunted courage,’ and to Military Traffic Control, the Salvation Army and YMCA, who had assisted. There was praise also for residents, expressing, ‘admiration for the conduct of those persons who had to be evacuated temporarily from their homes.’⁵³

A more tangible form of thanks was proposed by the Lord Mayor, in the form of a certificate for citizens of Cardiff who had shown ‘conspicuous bravery in the present war.’ The proposal did not find favour with other members, however. After some discussion and various motions on the matter being moved at Council, the discussion was adjourned, *sine die*.⁵⁴ Advice for organisers of the Salute the Soldier Campaign included the importance of expressions of thanks.⁵⁵ Gifts of food and clothing, canteen and ambulance vehicles were suitably celebrated with thanks to the donors, who were often from overseas – the Kabaka of Buganda presented a re-conditioned army van for use by the city, which was accepted with suitable ceremony outside City Hall.⁵⁶ Such events provided the chance for photo opportunities, which were to be encouraged. The WVS was keen for letters to be sent to donors ‘We cannot stress the value too highly.’ Photographs of canteens in action, clothes being distributed and worn were of ‘greatest possible value ... expressing our appreciation of the immense generosity shown to this country from overseas.’⁵⁷ The Council did its best to oblige, such as pictures of the Lord

⁵⁰ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39 ARP Committee 19/5/39 p750 min 4778

⁵¹ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40 Transport Committee 11/1/40 p268 min 1168. This was endorsed at full Council on 5/2/40 p336 min 2239.

⁵² CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40 ARP Committee 26/6/40 p 785 min 5418

⁵³ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40 ARP Committee 6/9/40 p 936 min 6517; Full Council 9/9/40 p942 min 6535

⁵⁴ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41 Full Council 28/7/41 p 762 min 5357

⁵⁵ TNA, NSC 7/174 Special Campaigns War Finance Campaigns 1939-45(Salute the Soldier 1944). Campaign Handbook February 1944

⁵⁶ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42 Special Kitchens etc p997 min 6797; CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1942/43 Special Kitchens etc 16/12/42 p 151 min 988; 28/10/42: Special Kitchens 3/2/43 p 272 min 1856; 17/2/43 p 309 min 2151

⁵⁷ TNA MH76/481 WVS Regional Food Stores. Note on WVS Circular CN.M.2/41 from WVS Headquarters 18/2/41

Mayor outside City Hall launching the first YMCA mobile canteen to serve small groups of troops in isolated areas.⁵⁸

None of the techniques was new – but they were familiar and relatively low-cost ways of keeping the mental sinews of the city strengthened. The government too was also sensitive to the need for acknowledgement and an element of reward. Trophies were available for presentation to local authorities, for savings achievements, with plaques and certificates for smaller units.⁵⁹ Certificates awarded for achievements of groups and individual savers were ornate and worthy of display, commemorating this ‘National Service.’⁶⁰ It was not simply certificates – wardens from one of the posts in the city with a savings group had their name placed on a new tank.⁶¹ Complex plans were also made during Wings for Victory Week, in 1943, to commemorate savings achievements by means of aircraft albums. Local Savings Committees were given the ‘privilege’ of presenting the Air Ministry with a number of specially produced ‘Log Books’ in which the Ministry would record details of actual operational flights, to be returned after the war, as a permanent record, although the complexity of this plan was ultimately scaled down.⁶²

While the emphasis was on spectacle and enjoyment, some elements of civic ceremony may also have used patterns and traditions on levels the Council would probably not have anticipated. The Council would no doubt have been startled to think that it was participating in a type of ritualised behaviour, but the repetitive and escalating ceremony of recording the latest savings total at noon each day, outside City Hall, presided over by dignitaries and celebrities, bears some suggestion of this. Public assembly, in a given place, at an appointed time, with an officiating ‘celebrant’ for the ceremony – in this case revealing and recording the activity of the last twenty four hours on a graph or barometer – have elements of ritual that had been used to draw people together for thousands of years – a sense of place, music, repetitive practices, symbols, ceremony and special dress. A reinforcement of order and reliability and shared values – the Council was providing a layer of involvement and

⁵⁸ Cardiff Times, 10/2/40 p3

⁵⁹ TNA, NSC 7/174 Special Campaigns War Finance Campaigns 1939-45 (Salute the Soldier 1944). Campaign Handbook February 1944: Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42 Full Council 27/7/42 p800 min 5400; Civic Buildings, etc Committee 15/9/42 p859 min 5841

⁶⁰ TNA, NSC7/345 National Savings Campaigns.

⁶¹ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1942/43 ARP Committee 13/11/42 p 35 min 238

⁶² TNA, NSC 7/171 Special Campaigns War Finance Campaigns 1939-45 (Wings for Victory 1943). Notes on file, one undated, one 7/12/46

reassurance along with excitement and achievement. Targets, as the government undoubtedly intended, played on civic and city pride, yet another involving tactic. The amounts raised nationally and by individual cities are startling, even by modern standards of charity fundraising, although in this case the donor deposited rather than relinquished the money.⁶³ In October 1940, with two days still to go before the end of War Weapons Week Cardiff passed the total of one million pounds in National Savings and the Mayor was pressing for this to be turned into two million⁶⁴

The Exhibition

Two of the key elements of the various campaigns were the exhibition and the parade. Exhibitions played an essential part of the life of the city at war – a source of entertainment, culture and knowledge. The public clearly had an appetite for them. In October 1939 the newly formed Contemporary Art Society for Wales mounted an exhibition at the National Museum, under the auspices of CEMA. In fourteen days (20 October – 3 November) seven thousand people visited, including sixty six school parties.⁶⁵ Cardiff National Museum remained open throughout the war, when attendance reached record heights and sometimes two or three temporary exhibitions were running concurrently.⁶⁶ Civic sponsored exhibitions were an integral part of the Council's approach to war on the home front. A display of RHS photographs of vegetable growing in the Central Library in May 1941 proved so popular, with nearly 3,000 visitors, that it was held over for a second week. It was repeated in October 1941 and February 1942.⁶⁷ The Food Week Exhibition at City Hall in 1941 featured demonstrations though the week to help the housewife prepare wartime meals.⁶⁸ After three

⁶³ National totals for Salute the Soldier Week in 1944 were reported in *the Echo* as £475,713,585 against 973 areas that had returned figures. *Echo* 1/7/44 p.3 A week later £483,923,449 against 1300 returns. *Echo* 8/7/44 p1 By the last week of the campaign, figures had risen to £506,187,519, equivalent to £14 17s 3d per head. 24/7/44, p3. On 29/7/44 p4. The figure per head was now being averaged at £14 15s 9d.

⁶⁴ *Echo*, 5/10/40 p1

⁶⁵ CHL Contemporary Art Society for Wales. First Report 1939

⁶⁶ Robert Richardson, 'Closings and Openings: Leading Public Art Galleries During the Second World War' in Pat Kirkham & David Thomas (eds) *War Culture: Social Change and Changing Experience in World War II Britain*, (London, 1995) pp. 92, 93.

⁶⁷ CHL: Minutes of Cardiff Council 1941/42 Libraries Committee 22/4/41 p 474 min.3399; 20/5/41 p 559 min 4006; 14/10/41 p928 min.6474; 27/1/42 p253 min 1760. The exhibit in 1942 was in the central library from 28/2/42 to 14/3/42. The Libraries (Finance and Books) Sub Committee was advised on 10/3/42 that the exhibition was open and had been "visited by the public in satisfactory numbers." Books and pamphlets were also on display, and a Dig for Victory film shown at two branch libraries, when "in both cases the lecture rooms had been filled." P415. After the exhibit closed it was reported that public interest had been maintained for the two weeks. The offer of the chance to host the exhibition again in September was accepted. Libraries Committee 24/3/42 p416 min 2857

⁶⁸ *Echo* 1/9/41 p3

days nearly five thousand people were said to have visited.⁶⁹ The social gossip column of the Echo 'by a woman reporter' noted, 'Cardiff folk it would seem are intensely exhibition minded, and the success of the Cardiff Food Week obviously shows that this fondness persists, even in war time.'⁷⁰

The Council was aware of favourable reactions to local exhibits, and of their usefulness. Exhibitions were regularly staged in the libraries and were said to be well received, with displays with titles such as *Books and Freedom* recorded as being well attended.⁷¹ Displays had a war time and international slant, including a display of books for "Free French" Week – an exhibition of photographs from the British Council on the Free French Forces in war.⁷² The Libraries Committee discussed the offer of a small British Council exhibition of Russian books and cartoons by Checkoslovak artists in September 1944.⁷³ The Ministry of Information, source of many of these exhibits, was aware of the importance of quality, even in small exhibitions. Ministry Committees discussed small portable exhibitions to be put into circulation, possibly every two months, with photographs linked by captions, 'to be devised by first rate writers such as Day-Lewis.'⁷⁴ The Ministry had a rolling programme on offer to local authorities. Cardiff was one of the cities that hosted an RAF Exhibition, which included photographs of the RAF in action and the ever popular display of weaponry. The city also had the opportunity to stage an exhibition and paintings relating to Balloon Command and a Salvage exhibition.⁷⁵

The Army Exhibition, which travelled the country, promoted by the Ministry of Information, came to Cardiff in the autumn 1944. The programme indicates that it ran daily, including Sundays, from 30 September to 31 October in Cathays Park, with free entry. Attractions

⁶⁹ Echo 4/9/41 p3

⁷⁰ Echo 6/9/41 p2

⁷¹ CHL Minutes of Cardiff Council 1940/1941 Libraries Committee 14/10/41 p 928 min 6473; CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42 Libraries Committee 16/12/41 p.131 min 972. The exhibition, staged between 8 – 20 December, was attracting people 'in good numbers'.

⁷² CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42 Libraries Committee 23/6/42 p 686 min 4648: Library (Finance and Books) Sub Committee 7/7/42 & Library Committee 14/7/42 p752 mins 5100& 5108

⁷³ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1943/44 Libraries Committee 19/9/44 p 807 min 5782

⁷⁴ TNA, INF1/250 Home Morale Emergency Committee. Planning Meeting 2/12/40 note on Exhibition programme.

⁷⁵ TNA, INF 1/133 Displays and Exhibitions Analysis of Activities at Home and Overseas January – May 1943. The RAF exhibition (December 1942) went to fifty two towns, averaging attendance of 30,000 in each place. The Balloon Command Exhibition was currently running in December 1942 and the city was on the future booking list for the Salvage exhibition. The file notes that the Army Exhibition, now competed, was the model for displays and that they should be staged in the heart of the city. The Civic Buildings.etc Committee selected the museum as the best venue of the painting exhibition for Balloon Command. CHI Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42 16/6/42 p670 min 4517

designed to amuse and inform, as well as stir pride and patriotism, included a Sherman tank, models of army vehicles and equipment, including a Mobile Bath Unit, a Mobile Dental Unit and a Field Butchery, and the latest war photographs. The cost of equipment in the exhibition amounted to £350,000. A note was included at the end of the programme: ‘People of Wales, the Army thanks you for the magnificent equipment you are producing’.⁷⁶ Permission was given for the use of land north of the Welsh Board of Health Offices for two months for the exhibition and an advertisement banner on the grass circle outside City Hall.⁷⁷ An exhibition was also the static centre piece of the War Week. The emphasis in these displays was on military hardware – the chance for the public to view the weapons and learn more about the war effort. Attention was paid to linking the money amassed with something physical, so that those responsible for organising events, and later those attending, could envisage what their savings were supporting. A poster for the Army Exhibition invited the public to enjoy what would now be termed interactive exhibits – operate a mine detector, test a portable wireless set and sight a twenty five pounder – such demonstrations serving both as attractions and a means of involving the civilian in the soldiers’ war.⁷⁸ As war came to an end another exhibition, this time celebrating local government, was one of the first things the Council considered. The Council was falling back on tested means of celebration. Perhaps it was hoping to revive and annex some of the lustre of the war time events on its own behalf.

The Parade

There was a long tradition of public parade in Cardiff. In *Claiming the Streets*, Paul O’Leary references a variety of marches and processions. These range from civic occasions – often connected with the association of the Bute family to the city, such as the opening of the East Dock and the coming-of-age and wedding celebrations for the fifth Marquess, with attendant bands, flags and civic display – to the processions of Friendly and Temperance societies, religious and church parades – including the annual children’s celebratory event of Corpus Christi – and even the occasional circus parade. Cardiff had an established processional culture by the 1870s, on which the Council was able and ready to draw. O’Leary characterises such events as something set apart from day-to-day experiences yet illuminating them; an opportunity for the mayor, corporation and others of the local elite to display

⁷⁶ CHL LC 10 940 53 061 4ARM Army Exhibition Programme.

⁷⁷ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1943/44 Civic Buildings etc Committee, 19/9/44 p 804 min 5764; Transport Committee 5/10/44 p 884 min 6234. Cardiff Council Minutes 1944/45 Civic Buildings Committee, 19/12/44 p 111 min 866.

⁷⁸ TNA, INF2/73, Posters for Army Exhibition July 1943

themselves to the wider population, and a mechanism to provide a sense of belonging, involving both participants and spectators, whose reaction was important.

Against a wartime background of privation and restriction, the spectacle of music, colour and festivity must, as the Ministry of Information contended, have presented a notable break from drudgery and stress. O’Leary suggests that the special circumstances of the parade, its dress, ornament and regalia were styled to represent an idea and an identity for an involved resident of the city.⁷⁹ In 1939 to 1945 that idea was the successful prosecution of war – the desired reaction, in participant and bystander, a sense of uplift and unity. This might extend beyond the few hours traffic in the street into an impulse to demonstrate that sense of unity by volunteering, digging an allotment, or saving.

In Cardiff celebrating with a parade was an accepted part of civic life, called on to mark many major occasions.⁸⁰ A frequent and vital part of the civic celebrations, it offered the opportunity for display and spectacle, with the involvement of large numbers of people with no particular skill required. It was not necessarily expensive for the organisers to present, with any effort and complexity centred on the organisation itself. Again, it was a place for volunteers, with the Council providing impetus and framework. It brought together participants and spectators – the city united and en fête, if only for an hour or two. It was a staple of the war repertoire.

Richard Overy also notes the importance of social and cultural events and parades as a celebration of shared identity.⁸¹ Events honouring Russia in particular were heavily celebrated in Cardiff, with parades for Anglo Soviet Friendship Week and Red Army Day. Todman refers to a ‘hunger’ for more information on the Soviet Union from the population, which was satisfied in Cardiff by library exhibits and reading lists.⁸² The potential

⁷⁹ Paul O’Leary *Claiming the Streets – Processions and Urban Culture in South Wales 1830 – 1880*, (Cardiff, 2012) pp.1,18,47,66-70,145,164.

⁸⁰CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39, Development Committee 17/4/39. 621, min 3976.: Development Committee 20/9/39 p. 1158 min 7365. The Council was planning extensive civic celebrations for the centenary of the West Dock, which should have taken place in the autumn of 1939. The celebration was cancelled at the Development Committee in September 1939,

⁸¹ Overy, *Bombing War*, p 191.

⁸² Cardiff Times 29/7/39 p3 : CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42 Full Council 8/6/42 p 641 min 4297 : ARP Committee 19/6/42 p 682 min 4607: Library Committee 13/10/42, p952 min 6523: CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1942/43 Civic Buildings etc 24/11/42 p 70 min 455 :Parks(Music and Recreation) Sub Committee 2/12/42 p 102 min 654 :ARP Committee 12/2/43 p 301 min 2082;AR P 26/2/43 p347 min 2408: Daniel Todman *Into Battle* p.689

association with Communism was a tricky issue for government. Sonya O Rose, suggests that the machinery of the Ministry of Information was thrown behind local events in order to press the distinction between admiration for Russia while downplaying communism. Morgan and Evans also note, ‘Throughout the war an effort was made to “contain” popular enthusiasm for the Soviet Union through officially sponsored events and celebrations which publically affirmed Britain’s friendship without implying approval of communism itself.’⁸³

There were also parades for Battle of Britain Sundays and, ultimately, VE and VJ days, and the standing down of the Civil Defence Force.⁸⁴ On the occasion of a visit to Wales by the King and Queen, in March 1941, shortly after a heavy raid on the city, the Regional Commissioner reported on the event, which included parades of the ARP and AFS: ‘There were large parades, over 3,000 being on parade in Swansea and about 5,000 in Cardiff. Throughout their visit they were enthusiastically welcomed by large crowds. There is no doubt that their visit will have an excellent effect upon the morale and spirits of the population.’⁸⁵

The Dig for Victory Campaign

The object of this campaign was to increase the amount of locally produced food at a domestic level – principally fruit and vegetables, but some poultry and livestock – by boosting cultivation of private gardens and allotments. Civilians growing their own food served the hybrid purpose of practical action combined with morale boosting involvement. The independent product of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, launched by its Minister in a radio broadcast on 4 October 1939, and following precedent from World War I, the campaign focus was on the individual, ‘the little man with his spade’, (and as time went on, the woman and the child) and the good they could do themselves as well as the contribution they could make in the national emergency.⁸⁶ Local authorities were charged with supply of land, advice and encouragement. Cardiff Council embraced the campaign

⁸³ David Morgan and Mary Evans *The Battle for Britain Citizenship and Ideology in the Second World War*, (London.,1993) p149; Rose, *Which People’s War?* p 48,49

⁸⁴ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1942/43 ARP Committee 27/8/43 p 754 min 5356: ARP Committee 17/9/43 p 803 min 5778: Cardiff Council Minutes 1944/45 Parks (Recreation) Sub Committee 10/4/45 p 454 min 3133: ARP Committee 4/5/45 p 522 min. 3643

⁸⁵ TNA, HO186/536 Regional Commissioners’ Monthly Reports Region 8. Report for 15/3/41 – 15/4/41 Royal visit on 19th March.

⁸⁶ TNA MAF 39/111 Circular 365 SG 10538 14/10/40 and Minister’s Speech at the Mansion House to Mayors from all over the country: MAF 39/119 Circular 1121 GP1136 23/11/42

enthusiastically. The history of the County Borough, compiled at its dissolution in 1974, singles out the efforts for Dig for Victory for special mention as part of the Council's war effort.⁸⁷

Cardiff Council's two most notable actions in response to the government initiative were its determined attempts to acquire land at Leckwith Moors to fulfil demand for allotments, which could not be met in the heavily developed areas of the city, and the staging of the Dig for Victory Exhibitions – encompassing key propaganda elements of celebration and competition. The Council worked with the city's allotment associations. These were local volunteer societies who undertook day-to-day management of sites and with whom there was an existing relationship, through their advisory membership of the Allotments and Smallholdings Committee. The Council directed, financed and facilitated the campaign, volunteers executed it.

The campaign structure matched that of other similar government initiatives throughout the war. The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries laid down the terms and provided the framework, producing publications and publicity material. Local authorities provided resources – in this case land for allotments, instruction and the exhibition. Dig for Victory was an example of local government being asked to expand and upgrade an existing provision. The supply of allotments and holding of lectures on crop growing were a regular part of the Council's pre-war activities.⁸⁸ With a declaration of war, local authorities, particularly those in urban areas, were expected to step up both land provision and practical assistance. As with the Holidays-at-Home campaign, this was often a case of continuing or adapting existing practice.

War created a new focus for the allotment movement. Before the war the Smallholdings and Allotments Committee did its best to create permanent allotments, defending sites against the predations of other Committees of the Council, particularly the Estates Committee.⁸⁹ Both the extent of land under cultivation and numbers of tenants had declined in Cardiff since the peak reached in the Great War.⁹⁰ Working from the example of the Great War, Cardiff

⁸⁷ *Cardiff 1889-1974* p68

⁸⁸ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1937/38 Smallholdings and Allotments Committee 14/2/38, p324 min 2086

⁸⁹ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39 Smallholdings and Allotment Committee 15/5/39 p 734& 735 min 4664

⁹⁰ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1937/38 Small Holdings and Allotment Committee 25/4/38 pp544 -546 min 3558.

County Borough was already considering promotion of allotments in the summer of 1939, before the declaration of war, which highlights the value of continuity of experience among Council members. It was anticipated that residents would be eager to participate: 'It is quite certain that, if war should break out, every citizen will be urged to grow as many vegetables as possible, and no doubt allotment holders will respond as determinedly and cheerfully as they did during the war of 1914 – 1919.'⁹¹

Once war was declared the Council responded with alacrity to the call to action. A programme of land acquisition was put in place, including that scheduled for building and held by the Council's Estates Committee.⁹² The Committee discussed a publicity drive and a request for allotments from the Girl Guides.⁹³ Lectures were organised, with a rota of Committee members to chair them.⁹⁴ Public meetings were proposed for different parts of the city, with members of the Committee in attendance and the Ward representatives to be present and address the meetings.⁹⁵ The Ministry was keen for the authorities to appoint an Horticultural Committee, which Cardiff resisted for some time, probably with some justification, given that it had an active Smallholdings and Allotment Committee.⁹⁶ The appointment of an Horticultural Instructor was considered. When it was found that the post would not be subject to wartime finance it was agreed proceed anyway, for the duration of the war.⁹⁷

⁹¹ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39 Smallholdings and Allotment Committee 15/5/39 p 734& 735 min 4664

⁹² CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39 Smallholdings and Allotments Committee 15/9/39 p1136 mins 7183 &7184.

⁹³ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39 Smallholdings and Allotment Committee 25/9/39 p1201 min 7638 & p1203 7639.

⁹⁴ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39 Smallholdings and Allotment (Agricultural) Committee 5/10/39 Pp1287 min 8210 ; 13/10/39 p1294 min 8225

⁹⁵ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40 Horticultural Committee 8/3/40 p466 min 3136

⁹⁶ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39 Special Smallholdings and Allotment Committee 25/9/39 p1201 min 7637: Smallholdings and Allotment (Agricultural) Sub Committee 5/10/39 p1286 min.8208: Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40 Smallholdings and Allotment Committee 20/11/39 p 77 min 486:18/12/39 p196 min 1272:Council 8/1/40 p 249 min 1620: CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40 Smallholdings and Allotments Committee 15/1/40 p 273 min 1807.

⁹⁷ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40 Smallholdings and Allotments Committee 15/1/40 p274 min 1818 & 12/2/40 p358 min 2420. Finance Committee 26/2/40 p414 min 2811: Smallholdings and Allotments Committee 26/4 /40 p589 min 4124/5

At the commencement of the first growing season after declaration of war there was demand for allotments all over the city. Demand and supply was keeping pace, except in certain built up areas – Splott, Adamsdown, PlasNewydd and Canton. This was the commonest difficulty faced by the Dig for Victory Campaign – demand was highest in urban areas where it was most difficult to satisfy. This was one of the reasons that the later years of the campaign shifted to the quality of what was grown, rather than stimulating demand that could not be met. In May 1940 the situation was 1899 applications, 2151 provided, 1833 let, 318 vacant and 66 not provided.⁹⁸ The Horticultural Committee adopted the Certificate of Merit for allotment holders, created by the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, for allotment holders who had reached a required standard.⁹⁹ The Council itself received acknowledgement for its efforts in 1941, awarded Viscount Bledisloe Silver Challenge Cup, presented by the National Allotment Society Ltd, for the authority or organisation which had done most to forward the allotment movement in the country.¹⁰⁰

The initial focus of government was on creating space and promoting cultivation in urban areas. By 1942/1943 it was becoming more difficult to find more capacity in both, and the campaign changed emphasis. Focus had already shifted in 1941 towards encouraging women and children and factory workers to get involved.¹⁰¹ Now attention realigned again, from quantity to quality, with a shift to instruction, display, competition and celebration. A libraries' booklet was produced 'From Garden to Kitchen,' for public distribution, with a list of books available at the library.¹⁰² Cardiff followed a similar path to that of other local authorities in 1942, staging an elaborate exhibition. The initial idea for a vegetable show quickly transformed into a Dig for Victory Exhibition. The Council aimed high, inviting the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries to open it.¹⁰³ Traders in town hosted information bureaux and displayed posters. Demonstrations of cooking and fruit bottling were arranged.

⁹⁸ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40 Small Holding as Allotment Committee 15/4/40 p558 min 3818; Small Holding and Allotment Committee 20/5/40 p 658 min 4535

⁹⁹ Cardiff Central Library: Minutes of Cardiff Council 1939/40 Horticultural Committee 28/6/40 p 798 min 5497

¹⁰⁰ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41 Smallholdings and Allotments Committee 15/9/41 p 816 min 5716.

¹⁰¹ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41 Smallholdings and Allotments Committee 15/9/41 P818 min5722

¹⁰² CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1942/43 Libraries Committee 23/3/43 p 420 min 2933

¹⁰³ Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41 Smallholdings and Allotments Committee 15/9/41 p 816 min 5717; Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42 Smallholdings and Allotments Committee 17/11/41 p29 min.249;15/12/41 p125 min.921

¹⁰⁴ Speakers were agreed and, given that the services of the Minister might not be forthcoming for the opening, authority was given to invite, ‘another gentleman interested in food production.’ The Ministry provided publicity material, including street banners.¹⁰⁵ The libraries hosted a display.¹⁰⁶ The Exhibition, although hailed as a success, made a small deficit, and the Ministry was asked to contribute to the administrative charges.¹⁰⁷ Another exhibition was agreed for 1943, with arrangements proceeding immediately.¹⁰⁸

For 1943, the Ministry mobilised other types of assistance for local authorities, as well as its own publicity machinery, including sponsored competition classes and the services of Mr C H Middleton, a renowned garden expert and broadcaster.¹⁰⁹ A display from the Ministry was on such a scale that a marquee was erected in front of City Hall to accommodate it.¹¹⁰ The Libraries produced another booklet of literature available in the library, ‘Food Production and Preservation.’¹¹¹ Almost immediately after the 1943 exhibition closed approval was given for a repeat in 1944.¹¹² With the end of the war in sight members looked to the future, proposing a ‘Cardiff and District Horticultural Show’ for 1945, approving outline arrangements for immediate action.¹¹³

Alongside the excitement of the show, the Cardiff campaign was having an effect on demand for allotments, which steadily increased. Difficulty was experienced in meeting it, particularly in the more densely populated parts of the city.¹¹⁴ In April 1942 a detailed report recorded that since the outbreak 4,475 allotments had been provided, including 115 smaller plots, rent free, at the dormitory colony sites. Demand was strong and sites filled quickly

¹⁰⁴ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42 Dig For Victory Exhibition Joint Sub Committee 20/5/42 p 665 mins 4471&4472

¹⁰⁵ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42 Dig For Victory Exhibition Joint Sub Committee 1/7/42 pp 742 &743 mins 5010,5011,5019,5020

¹⁰⁶ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42 Libraries Committee 14/7/42 p 753 min 5109

¹⁰⁷ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42 Special Smallholdings and Allotment Committee 8/10/42 p 944 min 6450: CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1942/43 Smallholdings and Allotments Committee 14/12/42 p 131 min 839

¹⁰⁸ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42 Special Smallholdings and Allotment Committee 8/10/42 p 944 min 6451: CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1942/43 Smallholdings and Allotments Committee 18/1/43 p200 min1504: Dig for Victory Sub Committee 25 /1/43 p301 mins 2104& 2105: 22/3/43 P492 min 3393

¹⁰⁹ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1942/43 Smallholdings and Allotments Committee9/4/43 p 493 min 3408

¹¹⁰ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1942/43 Dig for Victory exhibition Sub Committee 18/6/43 p 645 min 4476; Civic Buildings etc 22/6/43 p 649 min 4510

¹¹¹ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1942/43 Libraries (Finance and Books) Sub Committee 7/9/43 p 806 min 5807

¹¹² CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1942/43 Smallholdings and Allotments Committee 23/9/43 p 876 min 6234; Dig for Victory Sub Committee 23/9/43 p876 min 6235

¹¹³ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1943/44 Dig for Victory Sub Committee22/9/44 p902 min 6416

¹¹⁴ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42 Smallholdings and Allotments Committee 16/3/42 p 394 min 2669 & p395 min 2670

when they became available. Thirty plots at Sevenoaks Park and Greenway Road had attracted nearly two hundred enquiries. Grangetown and lower Canton were particularly sources of concern. There was no land ‘for the hundreds of people who have made application... and who are eager to be given the chance of “Digging for Victory”’. The lack of allotment facilities in the south of the city was ‘the most disappointing and disheartening feature’. It was at this point that the Council began its determined and protracted attempt to secure a large area of private land at Leckwith Moors for cultivation.¹¹⁵ The Council’s epic struggle to acquire the land, encompassing negotiation and legal proceeding, stretched over years.

Unable to produce results by negotiation, the Council agreed an order for compulsory acquisition on 12 May 1942.¹¹⁶ At the Smallholdings and Allotments Committee on 18 May directions were given that the Town Clerk proceed with greatest expediency to make a compulsory order. If necessary a deputation would wait upon the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries in London.¹¹⁷ A number of letters of support were received, including from the Canton Ward Labour Party, suggesting it was ‘useless to spend hundreds of thousands of pounds of public money on posters and other appeals to “Dig for Victory” unless these facilities now practically lying idle are provided.’¹¹⁸ From July 1942 to February 1943, when it appeared negotiations might be possible, the matter bounced around various Committees. Finally the Council returned to its decision for compulsory acquisition.¹¹⁹ Everything looked on course to provide allotments on the site, but this was not the case. The owners now claimed that the land had been offered to the Council for the duration of the war. The Ministry therefore considered compulsion unnecessary. The Committee instructed that particulars be sent to the Ministry, with a deputation if necessary.¹²⁰ The Ministry received

¹¹⁵ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42 Smallholding and Allotments Committee 20/4/42 p 477 min 3266

¹¹⁶ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42 Council 12/5/42; Smallholdings and Allotments Committee 20/4/42 p 549 min 3696.

¹¹⁷ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42 Smallholdings and Allotments Committee 18/5/42 P575 min 3887; 4/6/42 P637 min 4278

¹¹⁸ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42 Smallholdings and Allotments Committee 15/6/42 p 666.min 4484

¹¹⁹ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42 Full Council 27/7 42 p 799 (Agenda item 9) p802 min 5408; Smallholdings And Allotments Committee 14/9/42 p 853 min 5796; Cardiff Council Minutes 1942/43 Smallholdings and Allotments Committee 14/12/43 p 130 min 833; Council 11/1/43 p189 (Minute 833 of the Smallholdings and Allotment Committee); Smallholdings and Allotment Committee 18/1/43 p 219 min 1496; Finance Committee 1/2/43 p 267 min 1816; Full Council 8/2/43 p 278 min 1889; Dig for Victory Exhibition Sub Committee p 301 min 2107

¹²⁰ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1942/43 Special Smallholdings and Allotments Committee 4/5/43 p 531 min 3666

the deputation, which resulted in a date set for a Public Inquiry at City Hall on 30 September 1943.¹²¹ The Order for purchase was confirmed in November 1943.¹²² Even so, the matter was not concluded. The owners asked for an extension of at least six weeks to allow for an amicable settlement, with further lengthy delay.¹²³ The war was winding down, but the matter remained unresolved. At a special meeting of the Committee on 27 October 1944 members considered various issues relating to the proposed site.¹²⁴

The other problem that hampered success of the campaign was a perennial one – trespass, theft and vandalism. Allotment Associations looked to the Council for assistance.¹²⁵ As war dragged on the assistance was less forthcoming. Meetings between the Allotment Committee and the Watch Committee resulted in advice that responsibility for protecting crops rested with the plot holders themselves, although the police would co-operate as fully as possible and would be prepared to prosecute where evidence was available.¹²⁶ A reward of one pound was offered for information leading to a conviction, and notices prescribed by the Ministry of Agriculture were erected, dealing with damage by dogs.¹²⁷ An irate correspondent to the South Wales Echo was more forthright, suggesting the stocks for allotment thieves in Cathay's Park.¹²⁸ An appeal to the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries for local authorities to be empowered to institute proceedings for theft was merely noted, with advice to seek police assistance.¹²⁹ Notices and legal proceedings continued to be methods employed for the remainder of the war, with details of successful prosecutions being publicised on sites, as a

¹²¹ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1942/43 Smallholdings and Allotment Committee 13/9/43 p777 min 5598; 11/10/43 p 877 min 6241

¹²² CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1943/44 Smallholdings and Allotment Committee 15/11/43 p 23 min 164

¹²³ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1943/44 Smallholdings and Allotment Committee 10/2/44 p 260 min 1836.

The Cardiff Branch of the Co-operative party complained in April that the matter had not progressed. The Town Clerk was in communication with the Inland Revenue in May. 24/4/44 p 471 min 3349; 22/5/44 p 547 min 3910

¹²⁴ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1943/44 Special Smallholdings and Allotments Committee 27/10/44 p 946 min 6686

¹²⁵ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39, Smallholdings and Allotment Committee 13/10/39 p1288 Min 8215

¹²⁶ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41, Allotment Committee 21/4/41 p470 Min 3354; Watch Committee 11/6/41 p 624 Min 4387 A successful conviction was reported in the Echo 1/8/44 p4.

¹²⁷ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41 Smallholdings and Allotment Committee 16/6/41 p633 Min 4463 & p633 Min 4464

¹²⁸ Echo 9/9/41 p2 Letters

¹²⁹ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42, Smallholdings and Allotment Committee 17/11/41 p 29 min 247 In certain circumstances the Ministry indicated that it might authorise proceedings under the Defence Regulations, but this would be for trespass, not theft.

deterrent.¹³⁰ Despite the Council's efforts, theft was a regular and dispiriting problem, commented on in the local press.¹³¹

The Dig for Victory Campaign in Cardiff illustrated the Council successfully putting into practice the wishes of central government, albeit with some dissent and flourishes of its own along the way. Work was in tandem with local volunteers. The Council called on habitual skills in staging the exhibition, and demonstrated determination in its attempts to secure the land at Leckwith for allotments.

The War Savings Weeks

Staged to encourage mass public investment in government savings, ostensibly to finance the war effort, the Weeks became elaborate annual events which were embraced with full panache by the County Borough and with gusto by the population of Cardiff. The local press gave extensive and enthusiastic coverage, boosting the excitement and entertainment value of the efforts of local authority and volunteers. Angus Calder suggests that the real object of the campaigns was to combat inflation rather than boost savings.¹³² The excitement generated probably had as much to do with morale as finance. Norman Longmate, in *How We Lived Then*, details how pre-war entertainment was re-purposed, including parades and beauty contests, to be joined by the fund raising thermometer and the weaponry price list, all of which made an appearance in Cardiff.¹³³ The savings targets played on civic and city pride, another involving tactic. The object of the campaigns was saving in War Bonds and National Savings, not donations, although occasionally donations were made. Investment by local industry and public bodies counted towards totals.¹³⁴ Local groups recorded significant amounts. In Warships Week the Cardiff District Women's Liberal Association raised £417 against a target of £50, plus £550 in Defence Bonds, a total of £967.¹³⁵ In 1944 Salute the Soldier Week, £850 5s 0d was raised against a target of £100.¹³⁶ The Principality Building

¹³⁰ CHL Cardiff Council minutes 1941/42 Smallholdings and Allotment Committee 12/10/42 p946 Min 6461; Cardiff Council Minutes 1943/4 Allotment Committee 20/3/44 p 372 Min 2659

¹³¹ *Echo* 25/7/44 p2 Letter from resident of Llandaff complaining about stealing. Also a report in the *Western Mail* 11/7/44 p4 of schoolchildren raiding allotments and gardens

¹³² Calder, *The People's War* p356

¹³³ Longmate, *How We Lived Then* pp.381-385

¹³⁴ In Warships Week in 1941 the Docks contributed £1,645,769 to the city total of £4,455,717. CHL DCOMC/1/8/163 *Annual Report of the Cardiff Incorporated Chamber of Commerce* 1942 p23: CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1942/43 Finance Committee 3/5/43 p 528 min 3647; 28/6/43 p 673 min 4649 Cardiff Council Minutes 1944/45 Finance Committee 5/6/44 p 579 min 4148; 30/6/44 p 659 min 4689

¹³⁵ CHL Cardiff District Women's Liberal Association 17th Annual Report 1941 p8

Society recorded sums totalling £54,000 invested in various ‘Thanksgiving Weeks’ in South Wales and Monmouthshire.¹³⁷

National Savings were not a new phenomena, but the intense concentration of successive annual fundraising weeks, each focused on a different branch of the armed services, took things to a new dimension. Todman comments, ‘Rooted as they were in the civic spectacles of pre-war life, Savings Weeks encouraged involvement from an ever larger proportion of the population than those involved in regular weekly saving.’ Savings were marketed on ‘military hardware and moral virtue.’¹³⁸ Savings Committees were set up in residential streets, work places and Council departments, including the Women’s Liberal Association, the Freemason’s Amethyst Lodge, and the Council’s Transport Works Department.¹³⁹ The Rotary had a War Savings group, receiving a dividend on £40 on a 3 per cent Defence Bond.¹⁴⁰ Todman’s comment that, ‘As war went on, National Savings became increasingly difficult to escape,’ is confirmed locally.¹⁴¹ Cardiff resident Pat Cox writes in her letters of investing an insurance windfall in savings certificates. ‘More use there than buying stuff now.’ A later letter complains that now her mother is secretary of a Savings Group she gets ‘collared’ at the fire station where she works to buy saving stamps on pay day, and then again at home, so is saving more in the Post Office than she used to.¹⁴²

The war Savings Campaign was run as an extension of the pre-war National Savings Movement. Cardiff City was chosen as the location for launch of the new savings campaign a few weeks after the declaration of war. The Chairman of the National Savings Committee addressed a public meeting in early December 1939 – the first such meeting in Britain.¹⁴³

¹³⁶ CHL Cardiff District Women’s Liberal Association Annual Report 1944, p8.

¹³⁷ CHL Principality Building Society Annual Report 1945

¹³⁸ Todman, *Into Battle 1937 – 1941* p604

¹³⁹ CHL Cardiff and District Women’s Liberal Association Fifteenth Annual Report 1939: *Free Masons Library A Province at War A Record of Freemasonry in the Second World War in the Province of South Wales (Eastern Division)* Compiled by W. Bro Keith Flynn OBE p. Prov ADGC 1988 p380: CHL Transport Department Annual Report 1942: CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1944/42 Transport Committee 15/1/42 p 206 min 1470. When the formation of the last group was reported to the Transport Committee permission was given one of the tram drivers to have paid time on Friday afternoons to operate the scheme.

¹⁴⁰ CHL Rotary Annual reports 1943/1944, 44/45

¹⁴¹ Todman, *Into Battle* p 604

¹⁴² TGA, DXGC263 Leversuch Correspondence. D/D Xgc 263/5/8 letter 1/9/42: D/D Xgc 263/6/4 letter of 3/3/43

¹⁴³ *Cardiff Times* 2/12/39 p1

The Council accepted an invitation from the Cardiff Local Savings Committee to appoint representatives of the Corporation to attend a meeting at City Hall in January 1940 to discuss how the aims of the National Campaign (War Finance Campaign of National Savings Movement) could be promulgated.¹⁴⁴ Shortly after this the *Cardiff Times* reported that the Lord Mayor had inaugurated the Cardiff Savings campaign, with the launch of an augmented Committee for war campaigns.¹⁴⁵ There was great kudos for Cardiff as the first town in the country for the inauguration of the new war savings campaign.¹⁴⁶

As in other war time campaigns, although the grass roots organisation comprised volunteers, in this case, an established movement, the Council was deeply enmeshed in the arrangements. War Weapons Week in October 1940 was the initial experiment with this type of initiative. *The Echo* energetically took up the effort to decorate the city and double expected savings from one to two million pounds, including running a front page cartoon of the Mayor. The progress and success of the effort can be charted through the pages of the newspaper in the first week of October 1940.¹⁴⁷ The Ministry of Information's focus on flags and bunting was endorsed locally with a call to trades people to display them 'whipping up the public imagination to help in Cardiff's biggest war effort yet.'¹⁴⁸ An editorial, with exhortation from the Lord Mayor, featured in the edition of 5 October. The social news and gossip column 'by a woman reporter' proclaimed, 'Hurrah for some colour and excitement. About time too!' 'An opportunity to cheer and wave flags and get just a little hysterical.' Spirits were raised by the 'splendour and spectacle of war' as well as 'horrors and hardships.'¹⁴⁹

In July 1940 one of the many Committees of the Ministry of Information was looking at entertainment with two purposes in mind – as distraction 'not of the film or music hall order, but something to occupy people's minds,' and as a vehicle for propaganda.¹⁵⁰ The savings celebrations, reproduced on three more occasions, honouring each branch of the services in

¹⁴⁴ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40 Finance Committee 1/1/40 p 232 min 1526

¹⁴⁵ *Cardiff Times* 20/1/40 p3

¹⁴⁶ CHL Cardiff Times 10/2/40 pp 1&3

¹⁴⁷ *The Echo* carried reports on War Weapons Week in successive issues from 1/10/40 to 5/10/40.. The J C Walker Cartoon occupied a prominent place on the front page of the edition of 5/10/40, showing the big man and the little man and the Lord Mayor lifting a bomb marked one million pounds and the caption 'Let's raise 2 of 'em.'

¹⁴⁸ *Echo* 1/10/40 p5

¹⁴⁹ *Echo* 5/10/40 pp 2&4 Possibly the reference to getting hysterical might not have been in line with the expectations of the Ministry of Information.

¹⁵⁰ TNA, INF1/260 Home Morale – Entertainment and Education Winter 1940-41; Extract from Policy Committee 26/7/40

turn, fitted the brief. Although Calder brands the titles of the festivities as, ‘economic nonsense’, they epitomised all that was hoped for by the Ministry of Information – celebration, flags and bunting, patriotic fervour at local and national level, civic pride and rivalry.¹⁵¹ The ‘Weeks’ followed an accepted pattern for public celebration in Cardiff. In 1939 the Council had considered events to mark the centenary of West Dock, to include a tableau, costing £200, and a night time parade of decorated and illuminated vehicles. The Programme then was to be a Civic Week, the same format as later adapted for Savings Weeks.¹⁵² In the savings celebrations, based, as so much war effort was, on volunteers – an existing network of collectors and Savings Committees – the set piece staging came from the Council, using well tried formula that were just as effective in war as they were in peace: ‘An immense deal towards developing local patriotism and esprit de corps. They draw people together and strengthen the community spirit.’¹⁵³

For an activity that appears so celebratory and locally based, it comes as something of a surprise to discover, in the files at the National Archive, how heavily orchestrated, even policed, these campaigns were. Towns and cities were set targets, working on assumptions based on economic data and demographics.¹⁵⁴ Poor performance was noted.¹⁵⁵ Calder suggests that the Treasury disliked the misleading propaganda of the campaigns, and that the ‘monstrous’ targets for later weeks could be met without trouble, because of institutional investment, which may in fact have deterred the small investor.¹⁵⁶ Osley, however, points out the involvement of the Chancellor of the Exchequer in launching slogans: ‘Lend to Defend the Right to Be Free,’ and ‘Hit back with National Savings.’¹⁵⁷ Possibly views shifted as the

¹⁵¹ Calder, *People's War* p 356

¹⁵² CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39 Development (Civic Week) Sub Committee 23/5/39 p866; Transport Committee 15/6/39 p863 min 5505; CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39 Transport Committee 13/7/39 p983 min 6254

¹⁵³ TNA, NSC 7/171 Special Campaigns War Finance Campaigns 1939-45 (Wings for Victory 1943). Weekly campaign Circular No 77 13 March 1943 Editorial on the special weeks – which also had an effect of encouraging small savers, by a ‘vortex of enthusiasm’.

¹⁵⁴ TNA, File NSC 7/171 Special Campaigns War Finance Campaigns 1939-45 (Wings for Victory 1943) contains comments that certain sectors of the population in some areas should have ‘plenty of money’ to invest, with targets being based on previous results for Warship Week in 1942

¹⁵⁵ TNA, NSC 7/174 Special Campaigns War Finance Campaigns 1939-45 (Salute the Soldier 1944) in the National Archives contains detailed reports on areas of the country which failed to meet their targets.

¹⁵⁶ Calder, *People's War* p356

¹⁵⁷ Anthony Osley, *Persuading the People - Government Publicity in the Second World War*, (London, 1995) pp 66&67

campaigns progressed, or those of the Savings Movement and some elements of the Treasury differed.

The materials produced and activities promoted by government relied heavily on the flamboyant, patriotic and emotionally involving. In Wings for Victory week in 1943, celebrating the RAF, some of the measures proposed to link savings targets to events and equipment now appear somewhat chilling – the cost of a flight of bombers, a full load of bombs – and one for the cost of a bomber raid on Berlin.¹⁵⁸ Perhaps the most disturbing, to later sensibilities, was the ‘Bombs over Germany’ exhibit. Each local Committee got a bomb case for exhibition in city centres, close to an outlet for the public to buy savings stamps. These would then be stuck on the bomb, with the intention that the covered bombs would be filled with explosive and dropped on an enemy target. ‘There was a remarkable public response to this scheme and through it a total of £30,955 was raised as a gift for the nation.’¹⁵⁹ The exercise was done only once, however, being classed as an experiment with a certain propaganda value, but not worth repeating.¹⁶⁰ The Markets and Civic Buildings Committee gave permission to the Cardiff Wings for Victory Committee to place a bomb case at the St Mary’s Street entrance to the Central Market.¹⁶¹

The National Archive file on the last of the ‘Weeks’ – the 1944 Salute the Soldier Campaign – is extensive and detailed. By 1944 arrangements had been refined by experience and were well orchestrated. This campaign, which notably exceeded its predecessors in length, was to stretch from 25 March to 31 July, with cities and communities running their week within those dates. In February 1944 a Campaign Handbook was issued for local Savings Committees, with supplementary notes. The Regional Commissioners and their deputies were responsible for ensuring that regional plans were made well in advance. The twelve page handbook contained a mass of detail, from notes for speakers to quotes from public figures and slogans for use.¹⁶² In Cardiff the massive preparations for Cardiff’s Salute the Soldier

¹⁵⁸ TNA, NSC 7/171 Special Campaigns War Finance Campaigns 1939-45 (Wings for Victory 1943). Undated note

¹⁵⁹ TNA, NSC 7/171 Special Campaigns War Finance Campaigns 1939-45 (Wings for Victory 1943). The saving stamps would of course be lost with the bomb and not redeemable.

¹⁶⁰ TNA, NSC 7/171 Special Campaigns War Finance Campaigns 1939-45 (Wings for Victory 1943). National Savings Committee Commissioners Conference wash-up meeting 6/7/43

¹⁶¹ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1942/43 Markets and Civic Buildings etc Committee, 20/4/43 p 496 3431

¹⁶² TNA, File NSC 7/174 Special Campaigns War Finance Campaigns 1939-45(Salute the Soldier 1944)

week in 1944 were overseen by a volunteer Committee, but relied on the Council for supply of the venues for a concert, a swimming gala and an Anti Aircraft display, for donating the proceeds of a dance and arranging lighting for a marquee in the grounds of the Castle, an exhibition in the library and a decorated open top tram.¹⁶³ The menu of events was plundered enthusiastically. Displays and exhibitions in municipal venues were a core component – books and prints in libraries, weapons outside the City Hall and Central Market and a varied programme of entertainment. In everything the Council and Councillors were in evidence – at opening ceremonies; both giving and chairing well attended lectures, along with panels and brains trusts; entertaining visiting dignitaries and adding a civic lustre to the proceedings. A key point was that the celebrations extended over seven days, allowing for highlights, social events and the build-up of momentum. Appendix E gives details of the events of Salute the Soldier Celebrations, from the official programme. Such was the appetite for these celebrations that further ‘weeks’ were being discussed in the letters section of the Echo in July 1944.¹⁶⁴

Holidays at Home

Concerned at use of overstretched transport provision for non essential travel, the Government acted to discourage it. Rail companies published advertisements: ‘If fifty people don’t travel, one tank can.’¹⁶⁵ Even so, people could still enjoy themselves, but do it from home. The Council’s pre-war summer entertainment programme supplied the structure that was re-purposed to become Stay-at-Home Holidays in the summer of 1942 and Holidays-at-Home thereafter. While the value of a break from routine was appreciated – Mass Observation studies suggested that in the Great War holidays had had reduced sickness rates and increased output in munitions factories – holidaying at home meant unnecessary travel

¹⁶³ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1943/1944, Parks (Music and Recreation) 15/4/44 p.431 min 3062,: Parks, Baths and Cemeteries Committee 16/5/44, p. 526 min 3754,: Civic Buildings and Markets Committee 23/5/44, p. 550 min 3935: Electricity Committee 1/5/44 p. 494 min 3506,: Libraries Committee 23/5/44, p. 552 min 3955,: Transport Committee 18/5/44 p. 540 min.3852, Land north of the Welsh Board of Health Offices was approved for the Anti Aircraft Display. The Library Committee was asked to put on an exhibition. The Publicity Committee of the Cardiff Local Savings Committee asked for an open topped tram decorated with flags and bunting provided by them, to run about the city during the week.

¹⁶⁴ *The Echo*, 3/7/44 p2: 10/7/44 p2: 12/7/44 p 2 Suggestions included – The Yanks, The Navy, the Merchant Navy, Women’s Week

¹⁶⁵ Osley, *Persuading the People*, p79

was avoided.¹⁶⁶ The Council could provide a patriotic alternative to the traditional summer break, without leaving the city. The initial Stay-at-Home-Holidays focussed on entertainment in the parks, with the public invited to make suggestions, and a modest budget of one hundred pounds for events around the August Bank Holiday in 1942.¹⁶⁷ This was another example of the Council providing framework and finance for what developed into Holidays-at-Home, using volunteers who ran the programme, based on local ward Committees, provided with an allowance of £30 as seed-corn funding.¹⁶⁸ The Council took on the role of provider and enabler. Arrangements for Stay-at-Home-Holidays escalated in the late summer of 1942, when the financial provision was increased from £100 to £300. The Parks (Music and Recreation) Sub Committee conducted an extensive review of the entertainments organised around the Bank Holiday weekend on 3 August and professed itself gratified at the ‘outstanding results’.¹⁶⁹ It was immediately agreed to expand the scheme and a further programme was approved for the remainder of the summer to include Punch and Judy, a ventriloquist, and gymkhana, with a flower and vegetable show.¹⁷⁰ Age appropriate events took place in the Children’s Halls of the branch libraries – stories, competitions and quizzes, with prizes. Visits from school groups and individuals were recorded at over 14,000.¹⁷¹

Preparations for 1943 summer events began early in the New Year.¹⁷² The programme was even more varied, encompassing events outside August Bank Holiday week, with entertainment at Easter and extending for the whole summer. An Eisteddfod, sheepdog trials, the Welch Regiment Band, several choirs, gymkhanas, sports organised by the national Amateur Athletic Association, a brass band concert, a field day organised by the Civil Defence Welfare Committee, boating and swimming races, a marionette show, and bowling

¹⁶⁶ Mass Observation Online Files, report on Holidays, May 1941
massobservation.amdigital.co.uk.abc.cardiff.ac.uk/Documents/Images/File report 715/8

¹⁶⁷ Cardiff Central Library: Minutes of Cardiff Council 1941/42 Parks etc Committee 9/6/42 p647 min 4355

¹⁶⁸ Cardiff Central Library: Minutes of Cardiff Council 1943/1944 Parks (Music and Recreation) Sub Committee 15/4/44 p.431 min 3056

¹⁶⁹ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42 Parks etc Committee 7/7/42 p 729 min 4884; Parks (Music and Recreation) Sub Committee 13/8/42 p 827 min 5562.

¹⁷⁰ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42 Parks (Music and Recreation) Sub Committee 13/8/42 p 827 min 5563., .

¹⁷¹ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42 Libraries Committee 22/9/42 p 879 min 6024

¹⁷² CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1942/43 Parks (Music and Recreation) Sub Committee 8/1/43 p 200 min 1319

tournament were agreed, with printing of a programme to be sold by Boy Scouts.¹⁷³ Combining two of the Council interests, the Director and Organiser of Holidays-at-Home were asked to consider co-operation with the Anglo Soviet Friendship Council during Friendship week.¹⁷⁴

The 1943 programme was a success. The ward-based scheme of organisation was well established and rolling forward, although there was a hiccup when the Council was obliged to remind the local Committees that monies made had to be returned to the Council, not retained for their future use.¹⁷⁵ A banking arrangement involving the ward Councillors was eventually agreed, after some debate.¹⁷⁶ District Committees had already been asked to submit details of their proposed programmes, so that grants could be considered.¹⁷⁷ A grant of thirty pound per District Committee was subsequently agreed, plus their balance in hand.¹⁷⁸ A programme of events similar to previous years was agreed for 1944, including bands and concerts. Many events were in the tradition of a municipal county show—a gymkhana, sheepdog trails, pony races and sports.¹⁷⁹ Complaints were being made in the press, however, at the lack of refreshments at events and the positioning of deck chairs.¹⁸⁰ The entertainments themselves produced praise from a visitor to the city, particularly the altruism towards children enjoying the free Punch and Judy in the parks. ‘A splendid effort to give and not to take’.¹⁸¹

A tentative programme was agreed for 1945¹⁸² In November 1944 appointment of a full time officer to control and arrange activities for Holidays-at-Home was agreed.¹⁸³

Terminology was already moving away from the context of war; for 1945 the District

¹⁷³ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1942/43 Parks (Music and Recreation) Sub Committee 21/4 /43 p 533 mins 3679, 3680, 3681, 3682, 3685 ; Parks etc Committee 5/5/43 p 535 mins 3705, 3706, 3708; 11/5/43 p 545 min 3771 8/6/43 p 610 min 4252; Libraries (Finance and Books) Sub Committee ; 8/6/43 p 646 min 4515; Parks etc Committee 6/7/43 p 686; Parks Music and Recreation) Sub Committee 11/6/43 p 687 min 4753

¹⁷⁴ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1942/43 Parks etc Committee 5/5/43 p 535 min 3711

¹⁷⁵ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1943/44 Parks (Music and Recreation) Sub Committee 19/11/43 p 93 min 669.; 15/2/44 p 275 min 1946

¹⁷⁶ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1943/44 Parks (Music and Recreation) Sub Committee 21/1/44 p274 min 1932; Full Council 13/3/44 p 351 min 2487; Parks etc Committee 14/3/44 p 356 min 2525; Parks (Music and Recreation) Sub Committee 15/4/44 p 430 min 3054

¹⁷⁷ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1943/44 Parks (Music and Recreation) Sub Committee 21/1/44 p 274 min 1931.

¹⁷⁸ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1943/44 Parks (Music and Recreation) Sub Committee 15/4/44 p 431 min 3056

¹⁷⁹ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1943/44 Parks (Music and Recreation) Sub Committee 19/11/43 p 93 min 673; .Echo 2/8/44 p2: On 7/8/44 p2 ‘Stroller’ declared the sheepdog trials would probably be the most successful event of the programme.

¹⁸⁰ Echo 1/8/44 Stroller Column p2 Echo 4/8/44 letters p2.

¹⁸¹ Echo 4/8/44 letters p2

¹⁸² CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1943/44 Parks etc 29 /9/44 p 856 min 6085

¹⁸³ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1944/45 Parks etc 14/11/44 p p15 min 101

Committees were re-named ‘District Recreation Committees and the new organiser the ‘Recreation Officer.’¹⁸⁴ The *Local Government Chronicle* noted in March 1945 that although the war was ending, facilities for holidays away from home would still be limited; continuation of the programme was still valid and might be developed on a permanent basis.¹⁸⁵ Early in 1945 the Welsh Board of Health suggested re-naming the Cardiff events the ‘Summer Entertainments Programme.’¹⁸⁶ An arrangement that had successfully served the community during war, maintaining a sense of continuity and normality, carried on seamlessly into peace.

The Salvage Drives

Some services, such as rubbish collection, took on a new wartime livery. The salvage campaign had little to do with well-being or entertainment but became essential to the war effort. The collection of metal, rags, paper, bones and food waste for armament manufacture and animal feed was a significant campaign of the war and the subject of various propaganda initiatives. Henry Irving notes, ‘Although it tends to be overlooked within the broader history of the conflict, salvage formed an important part of life on the British Home Front.’¹⁸⁷ Many historians of the war provide a short account of the metal campaigns, which collected saucepans and railings, while skimming over other elements, but salvage was a much wider and more persistent concern for local authorities.¹⁸⁸ Salvage efforts became firmly embedded in everyday life of the city – an activity that only householders could undertake. It required a complete reversal of thought on the part of householders and the Council – the collection of waste not for disposal but for re-use. The Council was not enthusiastic about the idea at first, but underwent one of its learning experiences which converted it to an enthusiastic practitioner. Enthusiasm from residents of the city fluctuated. The Council had to work for its results.

The event habitually cited as the start of wartime recycling was the “Saucepans into Spitfires” campaign, launched in July 1940. The brainchild of Lord Beaverbrook, newspaper magnate and Minister of Aircraft Production, the campaign has been viewed as one that Gardiner

¹⁸⁴ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1944/45 Parks etc Committee 12/12/44 p 80 mins 594 & 595

¹⁸⁵ *Local Government Chronicle* 10/3/45 p153

¹⁸⁶ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1944/45 Parks(Recreation) Sub Committee 13/3/45 p 361 min 2470

¹⁸⁷ Henry Irving, Up Housewives and at ‘em - Recycling to Win the Second World War’ *History Today* Vol. 68 Issue 10 October, 2018, p.60.

¹⁸⁸ Marwick, *The Home Front*, p90: Calder, *People’s War*, p346

suggests, ‘exemplified the patriotic gesture – and the needless sacrifice’ as supplies of aluminium goods remained in the shops and the recovery of the metal was said to be impractical.¹⁸⁹ Irving indicates, however, that there *was* concern over supply routes after the fall of France and notes that the campaign marked a fundamental change of attitude to waste. Women in particular were targeted in this new form of war work. Men might be the heads of the household, but women with the guardians of its refuse: ‘A chance for you housewives to get right into the fight for freedom and to stay in it until we have wiped those Nazis and all they stand for off the face of the world’. Colourful posters of militant housewives marching, with their arms full of recyclables, feature articles, newsreels and a song by George Formby fed the initiative.¹⁹⁰

Change came to refuse collection in Cardiff a few months after the start of war, and the population was not happy about it. The collection cycle had been extended, and in November 1939 a number of substantial petitions were received from the South Wards of the city, asking that refuse collections be restored to the level offered before the outbreak of war, on grounds of menace to health.¹⁹¹ Petitioners were advised that services would be improved as soon as circumstances permitted. In fact, refuse collection arrangements in the city were about to undergo a profound change. The collection of salvage, rather than refuse, was about to begin. The same complaint was raised again early in 1940, requesting re-instatement of twice weekly collections. This time the Committee’s response was that this was not possible, but special collections of waste paper and scrap were now being arranged. The *Local Government Chronicle* offered encouragement to authorities with a series of articles, ‘The natural organisation – and far the largest one – for such collections is, of course, the widespread network of the salvage departments (or Cleansing Departments) of the local authorities throughout the country.’¹⁹² Angus Calder refers to local authorities being ‘sluggish’ in collection salvage, ignoring both the material and the revenue it might bring in, but that does not seem to be the case in Cardiff, once the Council applied itself.¹⁹³

¹⁸⁹ Gardiner *Wartime* p265

¹⁹⁰ Irving *Recycling to Win* pp.60,63

¹⁹¹ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40 Public Works and Town Planning Committee 23/11/39 p 102 min 657. The 8 petitions, comprising 400 signatures were submitted by the Cardiff Trades Council and Labour Party. There was also a letter from the Transport and General Workers Union (Women’s’ Guild).

¹⁹² CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40 Public Works, etc. Committee 15/2/40 p372 min. 2537; *Local Government Chronicle* 27/1/40 p54: 10/2/40 p127: 2/3/40 p 203 -

¹⁹³ Calder, *People’s War* p346

In February 1940 a conference was held at City Hall, addressed by the Minister of Supply, to stimulate interest.¹⁹⁴ While initially progress was slow, this marked the start of a campaign which engaged the Council for the entire war. Waste was the subject of successive government campaigns. Again, while the lead was given and the propaganda material supplied by central government, the activity had to come from the local authority and the householder, acting in concert. Cardiff's efforts began modestly in March 1940, with paper. The cost of the first collection was £128 5s. 6d., sold for £114. 2s. 0d. The Council agreed to carry on, despite the financial loss.¹⁹⁵ A notable instance of the Council showing willingness to adapt and learn was the major change of attitude towards the collection of food waste, an area of salvage not covered in great detail by many historians. In April 1940 the Public Works Committee was not in favour of collection for pig and poultry feed. Possibly they had the complaints over the restricted collection of refuse in mind, as well as potential cost implications.¹⁹⁶ The idea was turned down again in June.¹⁹⁷ Paper collection continued to be a difficult issue throughout the war, with expenditure and sale income always being delicately balanced, with ongoing issues around storage and transport and a fluctuating market.¹⁹⁸ It was no longer a matter of choice, however. Government decided that in this campaign, an element of compulsion was needed. In June 1940 the Works Committee was advised of a Ministry of Supply Circular indicating an intention to direct Councils to collect paper, metal and bones, with textiles, glass and tin apparently also under consideration.¹⁹⁹ The government monitored salvage totals, and the *Local Government Chronicle* reported that in July 1940 Cardiff had the lowest value per thousand population of the results reported.²⁰⁰ Possibly this prompted an analysis of the contents of the city's bins which was submitted to Committee in September

¹⁹⁴ *Cardiff Times* 17/2/40 p8 :Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40 Public Works and Town Planning Committee 15/1/40 p372 min 2538 .

¹⁹⁵ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40 Public Works and Town Planning Committee 27/3/40 p 493 min 3371

¹⁹⁶ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40 Public Works and Town Planning Committee 18/4/40 p 572 min 3925. The report advising the Committee of Circular 9 from the Ministry of Supply on Utilisation of Waste Food Stuffs suggested it would be expensive, that two collections a week would be needed in summer to avoid nuisance and danger to health and large quantities of swill were already collected by local pig farmers. The cost to the Council could not be justified.

¹⁹⁷ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40 Public Works and Town Planning Committee 20/6/40 p773 min 5342

¹⁹⁸ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40 Public Works and Town Planning Committee 23/5/40 p 668 min 4623

¹⁹⁹ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40 Public Works and Town Planning Committee 11/7/40 p829 min 5729 The Committee was advised of the requirements of the Ministry of Supply. Gratifyingly, the city had been collecting paper, metal, textiles, bottles jars and bones for some while. The only items mentioned in the Regulations not being collected were tins and the City Engineer suggested these be retrieved from the refuse tips rather than set up a collection. Collection levels were still being maintained and accounts were in credit.

²⁰⁰ *Local Government Chronicle* 14/9/40 p 881

1940. The exercise was intended to discover the amount of waste in ashbins which might be used as salvage.²⁰¹

As with other campaigns, demands and organisation escalated as war progressed. This was possibly the result of experience gained, combined with increasing demands of the war machine for materials and possibly also the need to overcome “campaign fatigue” fresh supplies having to be squeezed out of an ever decreasing pool.²⁰² In November 1940 the *Local Government Chronicle* was reporting disappointing results in respect of bones. ‘If every housewife would put out two ounces of bones per week – and put them out separately – it would make it unnecessary to import some 20,000 tons from abroad.’²⁰³

The Ministry of Supply was still pressing over a separate collection of food waste, and the Committee agreed to collect suitable material from one or two districts in the city, as an experiment.²⁰⁴ When the food waste trial was completed, the results were not hopeful. Twenty five per cent of households in Birchgrove had responded, but there had been considerable difficulty in disposing of the material, resulting in a financial loss, which if extrapolated over a year would be over £6,000. Coupled with difficulties in obtaining extra staff and vehicles to run a scheme, possible interference from children and animals, and the inclusion of non-food items such as razor blades and broken glass, the officers were not optimistic.²⁰⁵

²⁰¹ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40 Public Works and Town Planning Committee 19/9/40 p 985 min 6896 The analysis was repeated in October 1942, with a representative sample from six bins in five districts of the city. In one of two cases there was a considerable proportion of paper. The situation would be monitored, with a view to action if necessary. Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42 Public Works and Town Planning Committee 15/10/42 p968 min 6613

²⁰² CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40 Public Works and Town Planning Committee 16/10/40 p. 1094 min. 7685 Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41 Public Works and Town Planning Committee 21/11/40 p 45 Late in 1940 yields were reported to be down for the first time, with particular difficulty experienced over waste paper. The Ministry of Supply had suggested storing to build up amount for sale, but that was not considered cost effective. The Committee therefore agreed to drop collections to once a month. The Ministry was not happy with this, and asked for fortnightly collection to be reinstated and this was agreed, although there was difficulty in disposing of paper and all the materials collected (perhaps predictably) showed reduction in quality and value.

²⁰³ *Local Government Chronicle* 2/11/40 p. 1049

²⁰⁴ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41 Public Works and Town Planning Committee 13/2/41 p281 min 2045& 21/3/41 p 387 min 2763

²⁰⁵ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41 Public Works and Town Planning Committee 19/6/41 p 640 min. 4529. The Committee agreed to send a copy of the report to the Salvage Officer at the Ministry of Supply, for observations, and leave the matter in the hands of the Chairman and Engineer.

The Ministry continued to push for increased yields across the board. Various ideas for dealing with food waste were considered, and an experiment with communal bins was agreed.²⁰⁶ Under continued government pressure, a detailed report was presented in October, concluding that salvage was only being collected by a proportion of the population. There were large quantities of material that the present system did not recover.²⁰⁷ At this point it was probably clear to the Committee that government pressure was not going to remit, and a step change was needed. A number of ideas, including the appointment of Salvage Stewards and different collection methods were explored. Communal bins for food waste showed promise.²⁰⁸ In the next few months the Committee moved from scepticism and reluctance to a degree of enthusiasm, no doubt assisted by improvements in collection totals. Changes already put in place were having an effect. Collecting salvage alongside household refuse had increased the number of premises covered and improved quality.²⁰⁹ The value of salvage collected in January increased by over £300, the best total achieved so far.²¹⁰ Food waste collection had been re-visited, with a proposal for the waste to be received and treated at central depot before being passed to pig keepers. The Officers had researched other cities and visited Bristol. A proposal for a Cardiff Scheme, for which the Ministry of Supply would meet the capital costs, and including a waste compactor, was approved.²¹¹ In something of a turn around, the Council applied for finance for *two* concentrator plants, but received financial approval for only one. The Committee agreed to make provision for a second machine when laying out the site.²¹² By April, with yields increasing, the need for the concentrator was urgent.²¹³

²⁰⁶ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41 Public Works and Town Planning Committee 18/9/41 p 823 mins 5764.

²⁰⁷ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42 Public Works and Town Planning Committee 20/11/41 p 41 min 346

²⁰⁸ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42 Public Works and Town Planning Committee 19/2/42 p 312 min 2138; 19/3/42 p 405 mins 2755,2756 & 2757; 23/4/42 p 503 min 3423

²⁰⁹ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42 Public Works and Town Planning Committee 19/2/42 p 312 min 2140.

²¹⁰ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42 Public Works and Town Planning Committee 19/2/42 p 312 min 2139 The following month was nearly £150 down, but still the second highest since inception of the scheme. Public Works and Town Planning Committee 19/3/42p 405 min 2754

²¹¹ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42 Public Works and Town Planning Committee 19/2/42 p 313 min 2141.

²¹² CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42 Public Works and Town Planning Committee 19/3/42p 405 min. 2578

²¹³ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42 Public Works and Town Planning Committee 23/4/42 p 503 mins 3423& 3425

Not all collections were of refuse. A sub set of the salvage campaign, the Book Drive, was popular with the Directorate of Salvage and Recovery in the Ministry of Supply. A drive could boost yields in respect of paper, but called for special organisational arrangements as books were scrutinised for special bibliographical interest and also for potential to be reallocated overseas or to bomb damaged libraries. At the instigation of the Ministry, Cardiff prepared for its first drive, in January 1943, as part of a national campaign, with the services of the Libraries staff being recruited to assist and a target of half a million books, which was exceeded by over a thousand.²¹⁴ An increase in value of over £800 was recorded for salvage yields for January, almost entirely as a result of the drive.²¹⁵ Longmate refers to 1943 as a peak year for salvage, particularly paper, when collection made a substantial contribution to keeping imports, and the rates, down.²¹⁶ The drive was repeated in 1944 with the Westgate Street night shelter used for staff to scrutinise the collection.²¹⁷ The Book Drive was flamboyant, and had measurable results, which probably contributed to the Council's interest.

Another savage drive that has retained notoriety since the war was the removal of metal railings from gardens and public spaces. The Council may have responded to salvage campaigns, but the interests of citizens still came first. When the Ministry of Supply first mooted a survey of private railings and gates, the ARP Committee was blunt: 'The Ministry of Supply be informed that other sources of scrap should be investigated before calling on the Citizens of Cardiff to sacrifice their railings and gates for the purposes mentioned.'²¹⁸ Resistance did not last, however. Six months later, in March 1942, a schedule of all railings and similar items in the city had to be prepared.²¹⁹ Thus began a protracted process that featured on many subsequent Committee agenda, as Committees considered their own gates

²¹⁴ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1942/43 Libraries Committee 10/11/42 p20 min 90; Public Works Committee 20/11/43, p48 min 326; Libraries Committee 15/12/43 p 136 min 890; 19/1/43 p226 min.1559 Public Works and Town Planning Committee 21/1/42 p243 min1668;18/2/43 p 313 min 2182

²¹⁵ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1942/43 Public Works and Town Planning Committee 18/2/42 p 312 min 2177:

²¹⁶ Longmate, *How We Lived Then* p288

²¹⁷ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1944.45. Libraries Committee 14/11/44/p17 min 122

²¹⁸ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41 ARP Committee 19/9/41 p 829 min 5798

²¹⁹ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42 : Public Works, etc. Committee 19/3/42 p 404 min 2745; Full Council 13/4/42 p 457 min 3109

and railings²²⁰ The Cardiff Civic Society volunteered to assess the merits of choicer specimens.²²¹ In January 1943 the Kitchen Waste Concentrator was almost ready.²²² Once in operation, after some teething problems, the volume received was requiring double shifts. The Ministry of Supply was prepared to authorise a second unit.²²³ The Council's complete turn-around on this form of recycling, and its conviction that two units would be needed, proved justified. Value for March 1943 was up, solely due to kitchen waste.²²⁴ The second concentrator arrived early in September. Salvage value continued to increase. There were problems with the second machine, but the quantity of raw waste collected in the city was 1.31 tons per 1,000 population, against the Ministry of Supply standard of 1 ton per 1,000.²²⁵

In February 1944 the value of the Council's food waste recovery was down for the first time, attributed to several purchasers entering contracts with the military authorities to take waste from the local military camps.²²⁶ Cancelled orders were becoming a matter of concern when the Committee met in March, and it was agreed to alert appropriate government departments, as the machinery was not now running to capacity.²²⁷ After a meeting with the Ministry of Supply assurances were given that the cause of the decrease in supply of raw material would disappear within a few weeks, and the situation revert to normal, information which might have been of interest to enemy commanders, had they known.²²⁸ In subsequent months food waste processing kept up, but other supply lines were erratic.

The end of the war was in sight, but the not the need for salvage. In February 1945 press notices reminded householders that kitchen waste was still important for animal food.²²⁹ Once VE day was passed the public were clearly relaxing their salvage efforts, despite

²²⁰ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42 Parks etc Committee 15/4/42 p 467 min 3190 :Libraries Committee 28/4/42 p 517 min 3531;Libraries (Finance and Books) Sub Committee 12/5 42 p579 min 3931 Works Committee 4/5/42 p 535 min 365 & 8/5/42 p547 min 3687 : Parks Committee 12/5/42 P556 min 3750; Estates Committee 7/5/42 p551 min 3706

²²¹ Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42 Public Works and Town Planning Committee 21/5/42 p 597 min 4047

²²² CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1942/43 Public Works etc 21/1/43 p 242 min 1667

²²³ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1942/43 Public Works etc 18/2/43 p 313 min2179

²²⁴ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1942/43 Public Works etc 22/4/43 p516 min 3558

²²⁵ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1942/43 Public Works etc 16/9/43 p 790 min 5696

²²⁶ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1943/44 Public Works 24/2/44 p 316 min 2241

²²⁷ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1943/44 Public Works 22/3/44 p 380 min 2729

²²⁸ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1943/44 Public Works etc Committee 27/4/44 p 487 min 3456. Reported yield was still down in late May, but was now recovering. 25/5/44 p 560 min 4011. Kitchen wasted showed a 'gratifying' increase by the June report, and receptacles for bones had been placed in Roath. 22/6/44 p 632 min 4528

²²⁹ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1944/45 Public Works 22/2/45 p 297 min 2065.

exhortation from government that need remained undiminished. Applications were continually received for removal of street bins. There was continued interference. The Committee was advised that unless another method of for collecting waste was adopted, the amount from the general public would not warrant the cost of collection. The Committee agreed to having the street bins cleaned, effected by removing them to the Trade Street Depot, which was done as part of the regular refuse collection, owing to pressure on transport.²³⁰ In its support of the Salvage Campaigns the Council showed itself willing to adapt, and to pursue a somewhat unpleasant wartime duty, with more enthusiasm than was often shown by the citizenry. This was a war effort with which residents complied, but to which they did not show any marked attachment, once the pressure of war abated.

The County Borough showed itself willing to undertake government campaigns in these four cases, but it did not automatically do so. One campaign that the Council did not embrace was the 'Battle for Fuel' campaign, proposed in 1942, to encourage economy. Suggestions were offered on a fuel campaign, the ingredients of which are familiar – an exhibition, posters, banners. Detailed instructions listed a Committee, a three week campaign, an exhibition with opening ceremony and luncheon, demonstrations, a letter from the Lord Mayor to every citizen, local advertising, editorial, posters, stickers, an instruction leaflet, a loud speaker car, cinema slides, window displays, collection and sale of kindling for a local or national cause and a permanent Advice Bureaux. The Ministry would supply posters and some material, the cost of the rest would be for the Council to fund. The Council was not inspired. Probably the prospect of meeting the cost was a key influence. Possibly the members also appreciated that this might be a more difficult campaign to promote. Unlike Dig for Victory, or savings, or even salvage, the call to action here was negative rather than positive, with no easily measured, up-beat objective.²³¹

British Restaurants

Food and feeding were always recognised as a significant wartime issue, both as a supply issue and a factor in maintain morale. Rationing was one of the keystones of government policy on wartime food supply, designed to ensure equality in distribution of scarce supplies and operating on the rationale that in times of restriction a distribution system that appeared

²³⁰ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1944/45 Public Works etc 20/9/45 p 895 mins 6184 & 6187; 18/10/45 p 996 min 6839

²³¹ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42 Fuel Control Committee 29/9/42 p 915 min.6243; Council 5/10/42 p 922.min 6273

to be fair and equal went some way to dealing with the impact of hardship. One inequality that could not be avoided, however, was the ability of those with sufficient funds to eat out, off the ration.

After the exigencies of the Blitz, community feeding, of ARP workers, shelterers, the homeless, was becoming commonplace. Experts and government advisers advocated attention to public nutrition – supply of vitamins, minerals and protein. Community feeding allowed menus to deliver, ‘a substantial proportion of the nutrients essential for health,’ over the course of a week.²³² With increasing concentration on war production, married women with domestic responsibilities were entering the workforce, and the government recognised the need to support this new brand of worker. The government solution to these issues was to empower local authorities to set up restaurants or cash and carry – what would now be referred to as takeaway – where a simple nutritious hot meal would be available at reasonable cost.

Cardiff County Borough took wholeheartedly to the idea. The Council’s persistence in the face of a number of difficulties in providing facilities serves to confirm this. Restaurant food at accessible prices was a service the Council could provide to its citizens and a practical factor in maintaining morale. The British Restaurant initiative was a programme for stimulating local authorities to set up centres where the poorer sections of the population could obtain a meal cheaply. The official historian of Food quotes *The Times*, ‘One of the most interesting social developments of the war.’²³³ Cardiff Council took up the idea with alacrity, which suggests it struck a chord with members. Sadly it was the least successful of the five campaigns considered in this chapter, although this was not for want of will and enthusiasm.

The first intimation in Cardiff of what became the British Restaurant came early in 1941, when the Public Assistance Committee considered representations from the Ministry of Food, urging the establishment of what were then referred to as community kitchens and feeding centres. The Council was recommended to approve and set up a Committee.²³⁴ Full Council approved the setting up of a Committee to consider Community Kitchens and Feeding

²³² TNA, National Archive MAF 156/282 *War Time Meals December 1940 - December 1941* Confidential memo from Mr Drummond to the Minister on ‘Meals for Collective Feeding’ 11/8/40

²³³ R J Hammond, *Food Volume I Growth of Policy: History of the Second World War: United Kingdom Civil Series*, (London, 1951) p 410 quoting *The Times* 22/8/42

²³⁴ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41 Public Assistance Committee 23/1/41 p226 min 1631

Centres.²³⁵ A British Restaurant operated in two ways – a cafeteria, either self-service or occasionally with waitress service, where a midday meal of a main course and dessert, with bread and butter and tea, for the price of around one shilling, would be eaten on the premises, and a Cash and Carry, where customers collected a meal to eat at home.²³⁶ Calder suggests that local authorities were frequently sluggish or apathetic in pursuing the matter, but this could not be said of Cardiff.²³⁷ The Council quickly embraced the idea, soon seeking sites all over the city. The Food Control Committee was advised in July 1941 that arrangements were complete for a Shadow Kitchen at East Moors Hall operating a Cash And Carry, with others soon to follow.²³⁸ Despite a good reception initially, the Cash and Carry model appears to have been the one that proved most problematical for Cardiff. The meeting of the Special (Community Kitchens and Feeding Centres) Committee on 5 September 1941, marked the official start of the restaurant experiment in the city. A comprehensive report was submitted on a Cash and Carry service and the Feeding Centres, now called British Restaurants. Meals would be supplied from Cooking Depots at some distance from the city, in Tongwynlais and Llantrisant, capable of producing 3,000 meals, conveyed in thermostatic containers to the Restaurants, using equipment financed by the Ministry. The Lord Mayor and Town Clerk had visited establishments in Kensington, at the suggestion of the Ministry of Food, to see the concept in action. Premises in Neath and Swansea had also been visited.²³⁹

Finding sites, or agreeing their use, once identified, was difficult. Often premises were already in use for some other purpose. The first locations were in the dock area, and proved popular, but the Council was keen to achieve a balance across the city. Members of the Committee showed themselves ‘hands-on’ on the project, visiting premises to assess their suitability.²⁴⁰ This was not entirely unusual, but does indicate interest and commitment to the initiative. It was proposed that Restaurants be located at the Bute Dock Hotel, the Wagon Repairs Company Buildings, rooms at the Drill Hall and the old church premises in Tyndall

²³⁵ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41 Full Council 3/3/41 p340 min 2411

²³⁶ TNA,MAF 156/282 *War Time Meals December 1940- December 1941* Possibly a draft note, undated but probably 18/7/41, indicates ‘The British Restaurants cater mainly for the working and lower professional classes. A two course meal – main dish and sweet –is supplied for 8d.’

²³⁷ Calder, *People’s War* p386

²³⁸ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41 Food Control Committee 31/7/41 p 767 min 5383

²³⁹ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41 Special (Community Kitchens and Feeding Centres) Committee, 5/9/41, p 794.

²⁴⁰ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42 Special (Community Kitchens and Feeding Centres) Committee 23/12/41 p 161 min 1169; 28/10/42 p996 min. 6794

Street. All capital expenditure was borne by the Ministry and the operation was more or less formulated and directed by them, then handed to the Council to operate.²⁴¹ In September eight sites around the city were under consideration, and members asked for further proposals.²⁴² The *Echo* reported nine British Restaurants planned for Cardiff.²⁴³

Setting up the British Restaurants tested the Council's determination. While the Restaurants would be staffed by volunteers, a paid establishment would be needed. The ability to operate the service rested heavily on the provision of staff and this was a constant preoccupation. The majority of regular staff was from the WVS. They were in place by late 1941 and arranging for equipment. A WVS Handbook, provided detailed instructions for community feeding, from initial setting up to creating a 'homely atmosphere' for customers who were 'away from their own firesides' providing simple but nutritious meals using 'protective' foods.²⁴⁴

The Council had the appointment of a Catering Manager under consideration.²⁴⁵ This post, essential across the Council's feeding schemes, but particularly for the Restaurants, had a chequered history. A first attempt at appointing failed.²⁴⁶ The Council made an appointment, after advertising for a second time, only to lose the successful applicant to the call up in January 1943, despite determined attempts to hold onto him – another indication that the Council was committed to the service.²⁴⁷ Recruitment of specialist staff also proved challenging initially – finding chefs was so difficult the Committee considered appointing female cooks instead, although this was eventually averted.²⁴⁸ The Council wanted an even spread of provision across the city and docks, but it was difficult to find suitable buildings not

²⁴¹ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41 Special (Community Kitchen and Feeding Centres) Committee 5/9/41 p 794 -797 The depots at Tongwynlais and Llantrisant were nearly complete by October and permission to recruit was given. Special (Community Kitchen and Feeding Centres) Committee 3/10/41 p 889 min 6176

²⁴² CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1940/41 Special (Community Kitchen and Feeding Centres) Committee 3/10/41 p 887 min 6175

²⁴³ *Echo* 8/9/41 p3

²⁴⁴ CHL Special Kitchens, etc. 6/11/41 p 4 min.24; *Community Feeding in Wartime* Womens' Voluntary Service for Civil Defence (HMSO London)1941 Foreword and Chapter 4 p20.

²⁴⁵ CHL Cardiff Council minutes 1941/42 Special (Community Kitchen and Feeding Centres) Committee 6/11/41 p 4 min.25

²⁴⁶ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42 Special (Community Kitchens and Feeding Centres) Committee 26/11/41 p 67 min 522 .

²⁴⁷ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42 Special Kitchens, etc. 23/12/41 p160 mins 1165 & 1166; 30/7/42 p 807 min 5437; 9/9/42 p831; 14/10/42 p963 min 6589 Cardiff Council Minutes 1942/43 Special (Community Kitchen and Feeding Centres) Committee 11/11/42 p25 min.133; 29/12/42 p168 min 1112; 20/1/43 p 241 min 1655; 27/1/43 p 257 min 1750 & 258 min 1754

²⁴⁸ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42 Special (Community Kitchens and Feeding Centres) Committee 26/11/41 p 68 min 528; 10/12/41 p110 min 809, 810 &812; Full Committee 23/12/41 p160 min 1166

already in use, and some those selected were controversial. Existing users of halls which were chosen objected to being evicted, while other organisations supported the establishment of a Restaurant, or requested one in their area. Arrangements had to be made to reflect the fact that some locations were earmarked, at need, for Rest Centres. Attempts were made to satisfy residents' requests and objections and, as was the Council's habit, ward Councillors were involved in discussions.²⁴⁹ In September 1941 the *Echo* carried an item on the opening of the Cash and Carry kitchen in Grangetown. 'Grangetown folk with dishes under their arm flocked to St Patrick's Hall.'²⁵⁰ The monthly report of the Ministry of Food for December 1941 records that two restaurants were expected to open in Cardiff for dock workers, immediately after Christmas.²⁵¹ Presumably the docks were selected as having the most number of potential patrons. The George Street restaurant in the docks and the Luciana in the city ultimately proved the most successful. Opening ceremonies were civic occasions. Major Gwilym Lloyd George, Parliamentary Secretary for the Ministry of Food, was invited to perform the opening of the restaurants in the Wagon Repair Sheds and in George Street with the Lord Mayor acting as chairman.²⁵² On 20 January 420 people dined at the restaurant in George Street, and the service from the WVS was classed as most efficient.²⁵³ Early in 1942

²⁴⁹ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42 Special (Community Kitchens and Feeding Centres) Committee Scout and Guide Groups using Glanely Institute protested; inquiries involving the ward Councillors were authorised. 26/11/41 p 68 min 529; The Ely Labour Party expressed support of the Glanely Institute as a restaurant 10/12/41 p p111 min 820. Discussions over this site extended over a lengthy period, with alternatives sought including new build, which was not acceptable to government, and the use of a Myercrete prefabricated building, but they were intended for rest centres. Use of alternative halls in the vicinity produced objections in turn. The eventual decision was to pursue use of Ely Welfare Hall. Special (Community Kitchens and Feeding Centres) Committee 7/1/42 p 178 min 1288; Sub Committee 31/12/41 p 178 min 1289; Full Council 12/1/42 p188 min 1326;14/1/42 p 203 min 1451; 21/1/42 p 276 min 1897; Sub Committee 12/2/41 p309 min 2118; Sub Committee 18/2/42 p 310 min 2120;Estates (Ely Welfare Hall) Sub Committee 16/2/42 p 375 min 2502 Estates Committee 5/3/42:The Cardiff Caterers Association objected to the use of the Luciana Billiard Hall, (which became one of the most popular and successful restaurants) but the Council went ahead. 10/12/41 p 110 min 811, 31/12/41 p 179 min 1295 & 7/1/42 p180 min 1297. Agreement was given to the Regal Dance Hall to serve Gabalfa, but potential problems were indicated a few days later. It was deferred in mid February but taken up again when no alternative presented itself. Special (Community Kitchens and Feeding Centres) Committee 14/1/42 p 203 min 1454; 21/1/42 p 276 min 1897;Sub Committee 11/2/42 and full Committee 18/2/41 p309 min 2114;18/2/42 p 310 min 2122

²⁵⁰ *Echo* 10/9/41 p3

²⁵¹ TNA,MAF 156/282 National Archive MAF 156/282 *War Time Meals December 1940- December 1941* Monthly Report December 1941

²⁵² CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42 Special (Community Kitchens and Feeding Centres) Committee 7/1/42 p180 min 1297. In the event, the Wagon Repairs Co premises were not ready and Major Lloyd George was not available. It was agreed to go ahead with George Street on 16/1/42, with the Divisional Food Officer and the Lord Mayor. The opening would be advertised and transport provided for Committee member to attend. 12/1/42 p203 min 1452

²⁵³ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42 Special (Community Kitchens and Feeding Centres) Committee 21/1/42 p 276 min 1897

government was laying stress on Restaurants being self supporting and proposals for new restaurants were more carefully scrutinised. In contrast to Calder’s earlier findings, Hammond suggests, ‘some local authorities were guilty of an excess of enthusiasm.’²⁵⁴ Possibly Cardiff was one of these.

The Special (Community Kitchens and Feeding Centres) Committee received regular progress reports.

Table 4 Meals Served at British Restaurants February and March 1942

	Wagon Repair	George St	Whitchurch	Luciana, St Mary St	Reference
Week ending 10/2/42	1062	1181	740	Opening 10/2/42	²⁵⁵
Week ending 17/2/42	1164	1108	680	1280	²⁵⁶
Week ending 3/3/42	1299	1132	610	2032	²⁵⁷

Efforts were made to create a welcoming and cheerful atmosphere with touches such as art and posters, in the interest of morale.²⁵⁸ When correspondence was received from the Minister, Lord Woolton, with suggestions for decor, the Council was able to respond that these had been anticipated.²⁵⁹

An early intimation that financial concerns might play a part in the history of the Restaurants came May 1942, when the Catering Officer expressed concern that he did not have information to ensure that the Restaurants were covering their costs, as required by

²⁵⁴ R J Hammond, *Food Volume I* p 399 – 401

²⁵⁵ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42 Special (Community Kitchens and Feeding Centres) Sub Committee 11/2/42 p 309 min 2114

²⁵⁶ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42 Special (Community Kitchens and Feeding Centres) Committee 18/2/42 p 310 min 2122

²⁵⁷ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42 Special (Community Kitchens and Feeding Centres) Committee 4/3/42 p 366 min 2472 Whitchurch Senior School(222) Pentrych (96) Tongwynlais (64) Pontyclun (510) and Tonyrefail (380) had been added to the list.

²⁵⁸ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42 Special (Community Kitchen and Feeding Centres) Committee 5/4/42 p 539 min 3672 & 13/5/42 p 562 min 3800 .

²⁵⁹ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42 Special (Community Kitchen and Feeding Centres) Committee 3/6/42 p 636 min 4277

government.²⁶⁰ Cash and Carry operations were proving less popular in Cardiff than the restaurant provision. In June 1942 the Catering Officer pointed out that patrons preferred to eat on the premises, rather than, 'carry their plates through the streets, particularly during inclement weather.'²⁶¹

The search for additional locations continued. The Committee asked for investigations into sites in Ely, Cathays and Gabalfa.²⁶² Various properties were considered, including a new build. The Divisional Food Officer did not consider new Restaurants justified in the light of experience with those outside the city centre, but the Committee kept up the search, which included visits by Committee members.²⁶³ The Chamber of Commerce was keen to have a second British restaurant at the Docks, for office staff. Despite this interest and extensive discussions, the Council was not able to accede to the request, as the Restaurant in George Street was not being used to capacity.²⁶⁴ The standard of food was receiving unfavourable comment. Dennis Morgan reports that the quality of food at the Whitchurch centre was criticised in February 1942 after 400 meals were wasted in a week. However, the minutes of the Special Kitchens and Community Feeding Committee on 23 December 1942 records a communication from the Cardiff Incorporated Chamber of Commerce, disassociating itself from reports in the local press about the Restaurants, 'as they wanted to preserve the existing happy relationship with the Committee'.²⁶⁵

Another hint that the Restaurants were operating close to the margins came when the decision had to be made to increase the price of meals, to avoid making a loss.²⁶⁶ The Committee was looking to establish a restaurant in Crwys Road. The Ministry indicated that a Cash and Carry would not be approved, as Restaurants similarly situated were not serving enough meals. The Committee discussed use of the building as a central store. When the Treasurer reported on a meeting with the South Wales Division of the Ministry of Food to discuss the situation, the

²⁶⁰ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42 Special (Community Kitchen and Feeding Centres) Committee 13/5 42 p562 min 3800. The Catering Officer was concerned that as the scheme was new the results might be excellent, but the restaurants still might be uneconomic.

²⁶¹ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42 Special (Community Kitchen and Feeding Centres) Committee 3/6/42 p 635 min 4275

²⁶² CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42 Special (Community Kitchen and Feeding Centres) Committee 22/7/42 p 795 min 5374

²⁶³ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42 Special (Community Kitchen and Feeding Centres) Committee 23/9/42 p880:30/9/42 p 917 min 6250;7/10 42 p 931 min 6341; 14/10/42 p963 6583;28/10/42 p 996 min 6794

²⁶⁴ CHL, DCOMC/1/8/163 Annual Report of the Cardiff Incorporated Chamber of Commerce 1942 p22

²⁶⁵ Morgan *City at War* p.74; CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1942/43 Special Kitchens and Community Feeding Committee 23/12/42 p 167 min 1102

²⁶⁶ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1942/43 Special Kitchens etc 25/11/42 p 73 min 481; 2/12/42 p 102 min 645

Committee resolved to apply to the Ministry to have losses covered.²⁶⁷ Matters came to a head at the meeting of the Committee on 21 April, when representatives of the Ministry of Food were in attendance. While the Ministry would reimburse unavoidable loss, a Restaurant habitually running at a loss should be closed, regardless of the service it provided. The Committee was of the opinion that the Council should be reimbursed in full, or with a proportion of the loss in the period ended 31 December 1942, in view of difficulties experienced.²⁶⁸ The reference to costs and quality of service provided is perhaps an indicator of the Council's attitude to the Restaurants – as a necessary service. The Ministry subsequently declined to reimburse losses.²⁶⁹

The fate of the Restaurant at Ely was in the balance. The Committee held off briefly, hoping for better figures and asking for publicity in the local area.²⁷⁰ In July, in the face of continued losses, the decision was made to close the Ely, Eyre Street and Severn Road Restaurants.²⁷¹ The British Restaurant experiment was failing. At this point the Ministry of Food came forward with a proposal, delivered via the Chairman of the Committee, after a meeting in London, that it should take over the cooking depots and restaurants for three months, 'in order, presumably to ascertain whether it was possible for these to be operated on a self supporting basis or to show a profit.' The Committee accepted the offer. The stated aim of the Ministry was to put the undertaking on an efficient and profitable basis and leave it in that condition, with the staff operating at the date of the Ministry's relinquishing of control.²⁷² The transfer of the Tongwynlais Depot and the Restaurants in Cardiff took place on 15 November for three months.²⁷³

The results of the experiment were reported, prior to the hand back on 12 February, and an offer from the Ministry to continue with the George Street premises until management was satisfactory, was accepted.²⁷⁴ The George Street Restaurant was apparently a popular facility. In July 1944 it received an 'unsolicited testimonial' from a party of business people on the

²⁶⁷ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1942/43 Special (Community Kitchens and Feeding Centres) Committee 3/3/43 p371 min 2507; 10/3/43 p385 min 2608 ; 10/3/43 p 385 min 2611; 24/3/43 p421 min.2937; 14/4/43 p 478 min 3293.

²⁶⁸ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1942/43 Special Kitchens etc 21/3/43 p512 The difficulties are not specified.

²⁶⁹ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1942/43 Finance Committee 19/7/43 p 732 min 5113; Kitchens etc 21/7/43 p 737 min 5156 A direct approach to the Minister was authorised, with a deputation.

²⁷⁰ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1942/43 Kitchens etc 26/5/43 p 587 min 4093; 30/6/43 p 677 min 4687

²⁷¹ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1942/43 Kitchens etc 21/7/43 p 737 min5152

²⁷² CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1942/43 Council Special Kitchens etc 15/9/43 p782, min. 5639; Finance Committee 27/9/43 p 833 min 5965; 20/10/43 p 915 min 6494

²⁷³ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1943/44 Council Special Kitchens etc 17/11./43 p30 min 217. .

²⁷⁴ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1943/44 Council Special Kitchens etc 19/1/44 p 196 min 1473; 2/2/44 p 239 min 1727; Special Kitchens etc. 8/2/44 p 259 min. 1829;Finance Committee 8/5/44/p 505 min. 3582C

Docks, praising efficiency of staff and quality of food. In December 1944 regular users petitioned against possible closure.²⁷⁵

The Council minutes give no detail on the content of the report on the experiment, or any changes made or recommended by the Ministry, although it seems as if the issues causing difficulty related to staffing and management. It remains an intriguing interlude in the history of a project apparently dear to Council members which never quite fulfilled its potential. A few months later the Committee agreed that regular scheduled meetings should be discontinued, and would be called only as necessary.²⁷⁶ From here it was a history of successive closures, as particular restaurants became uneconomic.²⁷⁷ The Ministry of Food was not prepared to contribute to cover loss from the restaurants.²⁷⁸ The final meeting of the Committee took place on 9 July 1947 to deal with matters relating to the wind down and closure of the remaining cooking depots and British Restaurants.²⁷⁹

The Civic Restaurants Act 1947 allowed local authorities to provide refreshment facilities, but in Cardiff the experiment embraced by the Council was over. Although a petition of 1,000 signatures, as well as representations from the Cardiff Trades Council, regretted the closures and requested continuation of a civic restaurant, and a national Gallup poll in January 1945 returned a 60 per cent response in favour of restaurants being continued, general public support in Cardiff had never been sufficient to make the endeavour a success.²⁸⁰

The experiment does offer some interesting insights into the Council's attitude and motivation. In a contemporary situation a local authority would undoubtedly undertake some sort of feasibility study and assessment of the level of demand for the service before launching into it, and the wartime County Borough did do this on occasion in other cases. There is no evidence of this in the case of the British Restaurants – which does not mean that it was not done, just not visible, but enthusiasm does seem to have been the main driver. The

²⁷⁵ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1943/44 Council Special Kitchens etc 12/7/44 p 681 min 4806; CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1944/45 Council Special Kitchens 20/12/44 p 130 min 988

²⁷⁶ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1943/44 Council Special Kitchens etc 3/4/44 p 418 min 2966.

²⁷⁷ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1943/44 Council Special Kitchens etc 3/4/44 p 418 min 2971; 25/10/44 pp940 941 mins 6653 & 6654; 12/7/44 p681 min 4802

²⁷⁸ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1944/45 Finance 2/7/45 p720 min 4924

²⁷⁹ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1946/47 Special Kitchens 9/7/47 min in 1038

²⁸⁰ Stephen Fielding, Peter Thompson, Nick Tiratsoo, *"England Arise" The Labour Party and Popular Politics in 1940s Britain*, (Manchester, 1995) p 108; CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1946/47 Special Kitchens 9/7/47p.1038

fact that the Council launched the scheme so enthusiastically and showed a degree of persistence in encouraging it, even to the extent of stirring hostility over the use of premises, indicates its strong appeal to Council members. The continuation of a partial service, post-war, indicates continued commitment. Appreciation and regret expressed concerning closures confirms that the service was filling some needs, with the Council sufficiently in touch with its residents to appreciate this, but not sufficiently with the mass of residents to gauge that the plan was not going to work. The enthusiasm with which the Council greeted overtures from central government, the work and attention put in and the focus on wide provision across the wards in the city and docks support the impression that this was a matter which resonated with the Council. Unfortunately it did not resonate enough with the citizens to make it the success that the County Borough may have confidently expected. It was a comprehensive and very single-minded response. The Council took its obligations seriously. The bulk of the citizens did not choose to play their corresponding part, by supporting the service.

Conclusion

The campaigns identified in this chapter were often highlighted in the tributes paid in successive years to outgoing Lord Mayors. Movements to ‘further the national war effort,’ and promote the ‘well being of the citizens’ – Warships Week, the Dig for Victory Exhibition, the vast totals for National Savings, the Stay-at-Home Holidays Campaign, Wings for Victory, Red Army Day, the Book Salvage Drive, Salute the Soldier and the Army Equipment Exhibition.²⁸¹ These campaigns were matters to be noted, high spots in the municipal year and the life of the city.

The Council was obliged by government to provide shelters and organise Civil Defence. There was an element of choice in support for campaigns and initiatives like the British Restaurants, at least on the pitch of involvement. There was expectation on the part of the government but, except for salvage, no overt compulsion. Execution and level of commitment were largely at the discretion of the authority. These were therefore issues that mattered to the Council and attracted the interest of members, for which they had the tools to deliver. They were initiatives where the Council had agency, with outcomes capable of quantification – which may have been why they were promoted when the Battle for Fuel was

²⁸¹ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1941/42, 1942/43 & 1944/45, Annual Council 9/11/42 p 6 min 5: Annual Council 9/11/43 p.2, min.3 ; Annual Council 9/11/44 p 1min 3.

not. In that campaign the Council would have expended resources simply to be the mouthpiece of government; urging action, but not making it happen.

Supporting Dig for Victory would have been an easy choice for the Council – based on precedent from the Great War, it was a means of furthering efforts to create and retain allotments that the Smallholdings and Allotments Committee was championing well before the conflict. The Council had experienced officers in place and a network of volunteers with whom it worked closely to manage the city sites. The two items that made the campaign stand out were the exhibition, which seems to have won praise, and the dogged efforts to secure the land at Leckwith Moors, made necessary by success in stimulating demand. The latter was unsuccessful, but does illustrate the Council's determination to serve the city, and particularly its congested areas, for which new land was the only possibility.

Holidays-at-Home was similarly an extension of a programme that the Council had operated previously, although the creation of volunteer committees and invitations to the public to suggest events appear to be a new dimension. Salvage required a re-think of a service, enacted under repeated government pressure, but the Council did take initiative and stayed with it, through erratic financial yields. The about-turn over food recycling, particularly the immediate determination to have two plants, underlines commitment, once the decision was made. The Savings Weeks, with their stupendous totals and press acclaim, have to be judged a success, but are perhaps the least original of the five, following well established organisational paths, using familiar tried and tested tools, with an existing independent infrastructure in the local savings committees, and a considerable amount of directional input from government departments. Even so, it is difficult to fault the energy and enthusiasm that the Council exhibited.

The development of British Restaurants, so readily embraced by the Council, was the least successful – a service which elected members clearly thought the populace *should* want, but which they failed to support in sufficient numbers. Even so, the Council appears have been prepared to support it, even when loss making. The intervention of the Ministry in the running of the restaurants is intriguing, but it would seem that they too could not turn the organisation around – a service that too few residents wanted.

The campaigns were, in large part, the lighter side of wartime life, focussed on relaxation and entertainment. The Council put a considerable amount of effort and attention into them – more than they did into the condition of air raid shelters in 1941. They were an opportunity to

exercise familiar skills in tested ways and gain kudos. Councillors apparently had a fondness for showy expressions of war time spirit – the flags, bunting and marching bands – which they found plenty of opportunity to indulge. The Council put in time, effort and monetary resources, and absorbed a certain amount of financial risk, by participating in events for which the pay off was often in an unquantifiable commodity – morale.

As the campaigns are a lesser known part the war effort, the role played by Councils has been significantly overlooked. It is perhaps not entirely surprising that historians and commentators have not given much attention to local authority involvement, as little detailed consideration has been afforded to the campaigns themselves. Even the Dig for Victory campaign, while often referenced, has had little attention paid to its structure and development. In examining these five initiatives in more depth than has been offered them in other war studies, the thesis provides an insight into five neglected wartime activities. In examining Cardiff's response to the campaigns, it shows how the local council was at the heart of delivering them all.

Morale is a topic which attracted attention from government during the war and has not ceased to engage historians since. Many facets have been examined, and a number of theories constructed. There are layers of speculation and refutation over the existence and nature of the "Blitz Spirit" and the prevalence and strength of the much vaunted attitude that "We can take it". The debate has centred around the extent to which the universality and effectiveness of this spirit is a myth. Clive Ponting, for example, argues that class divisions, censorship, and anti social behaviour prove that it was. Others have seen it as a multilayered and nuanced question, with elements of a virtuous circle – maintaining a brave face was necessary because it was the thing to do, pride having a strong component in the heroic make up, but in turn, a belief in the myth bolstered courage. This choice of heroic mode has also been suggested by historians as part of the memorialising of the war and its subsequent use in the creation of national identity, particularly in later conflicts. Morale has been seen as a component in volunteering and an influence in the transactions involved in concepts of citizenship. There has also been interest in history and processes of the Ministry of Information, and its work in wartime propaganda.

All this is some distance from the streets of Cardiff and a passing parade. The campaigns explored in the thesis represent the practical realisation of the myth – the working out of the

copious planning of the Ministry of Information to maintain morale. Like many things in the war, assumptions were made at the start that did not manifest. Women did not run in hysterical panic in the streets, trekkers reported for work in the morning, shelterers did not become troglodytes refusing to leave their refuge. The campaigns, most of which came to full fruition a few years into the war, doubtless had less to do with any of this than did economic necessity. At this stage in the war they were as much a call to specific action and a maintenance measure as a defence against panic and depression.

A succession of exhibitions and a small container of sorted bones do not appear to be the essentials of winning a war. The thesis argues, however, that they did have a place. That they were of a more local and functional nature may be why they have attracted less notice from historians. This is to overlook their part in the *continuity* of maintaining morale. What the campaigns offered was physical comfort, from the British Restaurant meals and home grown vegetables; distraction, from the entertainments, with their opportunity to connect with fellow inhabitants of the city, and an element of agency in the chance to participate in action, however small. Exercising control, whether that might be taking on an allotment, running a savings campaign, joining a volunteer committee – even sorting refuse into reusable components – allowed a move away from the role of simple war victim. In a time when the population was more controlled and regulated than ever before, this element of autonomy must have been valued. It was a chance to become invested in an activity, a manifestation of continuity and a hope for the future, in crops next spring, or in savings released after the war. This was what the Council offered its residents, using simple ingredients. It was also a means for the Council to reinforce its position at the head of civic society in a traditional manner, a boost to prestige and influence. In focussing on these campaigns only briefly, giving attention only to their place as an expression of propaganda in action – an end product – historians have limited their appreciation of possible implications.

As in other cases, the question arises as to how far Cardiff was representative. Certainly there was much activity throughout local government in the matter of savings, illustrated by the inter city/town rivalries. An overview of salvage and Dig for Victory, and an examination of the range and success of holiday programmes and British Restaurants would add to the historiography of morale at a time when it had moved into a matter of maintenance, rather than a massive call to action in the face of crisis.

Conclusion

This thesis presents a picture of one Welsh County Borough in the years between 1938 and 1945 – the run-up and duration of the Second World War. It focuses primarily on the duties which the government required, or wished, local authorities to perform, to meet a war which would uniquely involve the civilian as target, volunteer/defender and war worker. These were the provision of air raid shelters, Civil Defence and propaganda campaigns stimulating war activity. There were doubts over the capacity of local authorities before the war and heavy criticism of performance of local authorities during the conflict, and Cardiff was by no means immune to the latter. The Council nevertheless made it through the war, and at its end the contribution made by local authorities was officially acknowledged, by the Ministry of Home Security:

You have saved human lives, cared for people in trouble, healed their injuries, rescued their possessions and done what you could to put their damaged houses in order. By fire fighting and salvage you have saved industries and stores from destruction. You have kept target areas alive, when the enemy intended that they should be dead or crippled. Your toil, your devotion and your courage will go down in history as a testimony to the greatness of a free people.¹

Despite this official endorsement, work on this thesis began from the knowledge that most histories of the war paid little attention to local government, and what attention there was, was often very critical. The thesis was also approached from the initial assumption that a study of a single authority could not allow generalisations on local government as a whole. These two considerations remain so – a work on one authority cannot wipe out criticism, and in any case, Cardiff was guilty of its own failures, and it cannot, of itself, represent a picture of every authority. As the work progressed, however, and the sheer volume of what the Council was doing began to be revealed, taking on vast, totally unknown tasks, on top of the regular responsibilities of keeping the city operating, a new perspective emerged. That sheer volume, and the vitality that went with it, allow a much wider possibility of a local authority having success in areas not previously examined. It also allows the chance to speculate on

¹ TNA HO208/7, Circular HSC112/44 dated 15/9/44. Battle of Britain Sunday, Order of the Day from the Minister of Home Security: Address to the Local Authorities on preparing to stand down.

whether what Cardiff was doing was being replicated in other parts of the country. It is the volume and scope of activity that leaves an overwhelming impression when reading the Council's war time minutes. If Cardiff was doing this, were other provincial authorities? It leads to the hope that other studies will follow, allowing the hypothesis that Cardiff may not be unusual, to be tested. Certainly the war time work of the *Local Government Chronicle* suggests that Cardiff was not totally unrepresentative. Should other studies reveal instead that much less activity was taking place elsewhere, then this would secure Cardiff's position as something special in the panoply of war time authorities. That is, however, for the future. For the moment, the qualities that the council brought to their tasks can be assessed.

In 1938 no one knew what to expect from the new kind of war, least of all the government. Its predictions, on which initial planning was based, were comprehensively incorrect, with major consequences for local authorities when the reality became apparent. War preparations at the time of the Munich Crisis leaned heavily on the role of the local authority, but a shadowy regional administration remained in the background. In the end the government took the chance and relied on local government to deliver the services it deemed necessary, albeit with small but influential regional administrations in place, and direction and monitoring from government departments. At first government insistence on a financial contribution from the local authority caused hesitation and distrust. When the government stepped up to the financial implications of Civil Defence, Councils were freed to provide what was needed, albeit subject to regional approval. Throughout impetus lay with the local authority. Richard Overy, in *The Bombing War in Europe* notes that even after the experience of the Blitz and the government change of direction, 'much still depended on the initiative and resourcefulness of local authorities'.²

This thesis considers how the Cardiff County Borough met the wartime challenge. It displays the Council's capacity and characteristics in meeting the requirements of government and the needs of the city. It illustrates the scope of the task that was set and the close relationships that were maintained. Direction came from the centre, but what was done locally was a matter for the Council. Government held both the reins of policy and the purse-strings, with sometimes intense inspection and reporting regimes, but local delivery remained local. The Munich Crisis, which set the tone for local authority action, occasioned no massive rethink of service delivery; there was never really an alternative. Regional machinery, although

² Overy, *Bombing War*, p. 152

powerful in conveying and policing government direction, was never large enough to do more than steer the structure that was called into being. ‘The view of the Ministry of Health is that the best arrangement will be that which leaves the maximum of executive responsibility with the local authorities.’³ There was a level of expectation and underlying confidence in local performance from government that Cardiff Council actively came forward to meet.

One of the first characteristics a wartime council needed was adaptability. Clive Ponting notes, not without justification, that there was no effective response of civil defence, shelter policy or emergency help until after the worst bombing attacks were over, but that is the judgement of hindsight; there was no way of knowing when bombardment was ending.⁴ Provision had to be made, and is not negated by the fact that its use was limited. It was only when the government learned by experience what was needed – knowledge that could only come by experience – that an appropriate response to air attack was possible. Once changes were made, local authorities were expected to respond promptly and with vigour. Everyone had to demonstrate the ability to learn.

In Cardiff the County Borough did keep up with the quite dramatic shifts of direction from government in relation to shelter provision and the fluctuating requirements of Civil Defence. It tackled problems in its own way. It made its own decisions on trenches and displayed an open mind on deep shelters. It showed an almost obsessive interest in numbers of shelters and also recruits, but could be careless of detail, such as conditions in shelters and levels of Civil Defence training. It provided sleeping, feeding and recreational facilities in its shelters, once given approval to do so. It created what might be an original provision, in the shelter colonies, which embodied all those facilities to what appears to be a high degree. It struggled somewhat in a difficult situation in relation to the Fire Guard, but eventually achieved equilibrium, dealing with a threat that was well recognised. The evidence so far discovered on the Council’s performance in areas that earned particular criticism for other authorities – post bombing care – does not yet support a definitive assessment on whether the Cardiff warranted similar judgement, being largely material from the Council side. In provision of information though, via its bureau, the Council made early and extensive provision, but again the quality of what was on offer is not readily apparent. Cardiff’s bombing war was not as

³ TNA, HLG7/61 Regional Organisation Crisis 1938, Ministry of Health note of Mr West to Mr Bearn on Emergency Arrangements affecting the Outdoor Staff, 21/10/38

⁴ Clive Ponting, *Myth and Reality*, p165

severe as experienced in other parts of the country, but all its services were tested, on more than one occasion.

The judgement of historians about the performance of local government as a whole during the war, often presents an impression of local authorities which were unable to cope. Based on notable instances of failure from some locations, Marwick and Calder find local authorities, 'Too small, too poor, bogged down in pettifogging local pedantries.'⁵ 'As helpless as a boy with a feather duster attacking a tiger.'⁶ A favourite word was 'sluggish.' It began in the files of Whitehall, with measures to ensure compliance from 'recalcitrant or sluggish local authorities' continued through the official histories and reappeared in Calder's condemnations of effort in such things as salvage.⁷ One charge that cannot be laid at Cardiff County Borough's door was sluggishness. The thesis shows the high degree of involvement, continuous effort and attention exhibited by Cardiff Council, demonstrated by the frequency of Council meetings and the volume of business transacted. The efforts of the County Borough to provide and keep services running were never allowed to diminish, whatever the circumstances. Whatever charges might be made against Cardiff County Borough, languor and apathy were not among them.

The exigencies of the bureaucratic process, with matters for action making the rounds of committees, or being batted from one to the other, was a downside of the democratic process, often rooted in financial considerations. It must be said too that the Council may have been vigorous, but it was by no means perfect. On balance, however, it does seem that its performance gives something of the lie to the condemnation that has been the lot of local government in general. Indeed, this concept has already been acknowledged by Titmuss. 'It is unfortunate that historians have dwelt on the deficiencies of Stepney, rather than the achievements of Hull in caring for its homeless.'⁸ In many respects, Cardiff can take its place with the most effective.

Another wartime characteristic displayed by the Council was that it played to its strengths – developing existing provision and building on established practice – doing the things that it was comfortable with, and with which it had experience and a track record. It rapidly

⁵ Marwick, *Century of Total War* p. 279

⁶ Calder *People's War*, p. 205

⁷ TNA HLG7/61 *Regional Organisation Crisis 1938*, Ministry of Health note of Mr West to Mr Bearn on Emergency Arrangements affecting the Outdoor Staff 21/10/38: Calder, *People's War* p346

⁸ Titmuss, *Social Policy* p316

appreciated that bomb victims would require re-housing, housing being one of the Council's particular interests, and inaugurated an energetic requisition programme, recognising the need to store possessions. Possibly the element that offered most continuity, and which the Council appears to have embraced with enthusiasm, and success, were the campaigns involving entertainment, notably the Savings Weeks. These worked to tried and tested patterns, with considerable government input, and were by no means unique to Cardiff, but the Council appears to have been well aware of what its public wanted.

Efforts were made to provide to meet demand. This might be parades and exhibitions, but it might also be land for allotments. The Smallholdings and Allotments Committee, using experience of the Great War, was poised to deal with an upsurge of interest even before war was officially declared. In both the savings and Dig for Victory campaigns concerted efforts were made, in cooperation with existing local movements. In the case of the British Restaurants efforts to supply a perceived need were unsuccessful – possibly the emphasis on Cash and Carry and the quality of the offer was an issue, but the popularity of some of the restaurants suggests a more complex situation, which might repay future study.

A significant quality that the Council exhibited was persistence. Once a concept was adopted, the Council appears to have been willing to go to conspicuous lengths to achieve the object – the determination for saturation coverage in shelter provision; the policy turnaround and avid pursuit of optimum food recycling, in the face of a certain amount of initial resident resistance; the focussed pursuit of the acquisition of allotment land at Leckwith, involving complex legal proceedings, against opposition, and coupled with what appears to be an apathetic if not antipathetic attitude from central government.

The origin of the most inescapable demand was the government. In terms of meeting its requirements the picture is mixed – the Council appears to have hit all the basic marks and shown itself willing in most of the areas where action was expected, but performance could be patchy – insufficient initially in shelter quality and training of civil defence workers, problematic in respect of British Restaurants, uneven in salvage, but spectacularly successful in respect of National Savings fundraising, although this was an activity in partnership with residents and based on existing local networks. The provision of air raid shelters and civil defence were novel tasks, grafted onto existing responsibilities. In Civil Defence the Council was called upon to provide something completely new, but in shelter provision the technical expertise of the Council's own building projects appears to have been brought into play. The

Council does not seem to have experienced any great level of difficulty in the new construction project of the shelter colonies, drawing on access to direct labour and established relationships with contractors. In encouraging allotments and acquiring land, the Council was pursuing a course that had been pressed on it by the allotments community before the war, and which the Allotments Associations continued to champion after it. In the entertainment based propaganda campaigns the government would have been well aware of the precedent to be exploited, and Cardiff did not disappoint.

One area where the Council could have difficulty was in relationships, particularly with the Regional administration in the pre-war and early months, when there was extensive involvement in planning and training, and the Council was found wanting. The Regional Officer could complain, 'I spent about three and a half hours last week going over with the City Engineer Cardiff his part in the Scheme. They are in a very backward condition and have so far not really got down to the job.'⁹ Later in the war, this situation improved. At the midpoint of the war the Home Secretary could claim, in respect of local authorities in general:

'The free and neighbourly human spirit which has always animated our Civil Defence services combined with the advancement of local authority organisation at its best, has been a model from which any society anywhere has something to learn, as have we, ourselves, perhaps, in other spheres of national life.'¹⁰

Relationships with residents were not always smooth, either en-mass as trekkers, or as individuals – the Holiday at Home volunteers keeping hold of the seed corn financing. On volunteering as a whole, a variety of which was an essential element of several of the government-led Council-delivered campaign programmes, as well as the more obvious Civil Defence, the Council embraced the concept, particularly when using the ward framework as a basis for action. That it was done this way suggests both confidence in the structure and the capacity of the ward Councillors, and in the case of Holidays-at-Home, residents appear to have offered a positive, even an over-enthusiastic, response. Contemporary commentators and historians have emphasised the selflessness of volunteers in difficult and arduous

⁹ TNA, HO 207/1123 *Cardiff County Borough Rescue Decontamination and Repair Services*, Letter from Regional Officer to ARP Department Home Office 24/5/39

¹⁰ Herbert Morrison, speaking to an audience in Burnley in 1943, reported in the Daily Mail of 15/11/43 and quoted in Stephen Fielding, Peter Thompson, Nick Tiratsoo, "*England Arise*". p81

conditions, which certainly pertained in Cardiff. The thesis has also offered a new view – that volunteering could involve fun – entertainment – and the much vaunted bunting and music.

As a contribution to the history of the war, the thesis opens up the layer between central policy and civilian experience and shows the value of stability, when so much was unfamiliar and threatening. It offers an element of challenge to those historians who have seen only failure on the part of the local authorities. This was the action of a single Council, which was by no means beyond reproach. The quality of much activity cannot be determined. It is easiest to show occasions when the Council did not perform adequately. One of these revelations was an accidental discovery, there may be others. Across the board, the local authority was at least attempting to fulfil its obligations to the war time city. There were procedural tussles and practical deficiencies along the way, but overall the Council produced its ARP, AFS and Fire Guard plans, and delivered them. The response of residents is not quite so easy to determine. Occasionally the Council and the city were at odds – such as in the wish to deter trekking and the failure of the British Restaurants to inspire support. Against these is the enthusiasm with which Council sponsored recreation was received, not simply the large set pieces of the Savings Weeks but the small exhibitions in libraries and the Punch and Judy shows in the park, and even the upturn in library borrowing.

Perhaps in the case of Cardiff a keynote achievement of the Council was continuity, through the war and into the peace. War did change things. Cardiff County Borough experienced some loss of possessions and powers. The post-war “Blue Book” for Cardiff notes the loss of the airport, while the electricity undertaking, hospitals and administration of poor relief passed elsewhere.¹¹ But in the immediate aftermath, the Council could look to its achievements. The authority had come through the war, and brought the city with it. It was not replaced by a regional regime, either during conflict, or after, despite suggestions to the contrary.¹² When it set its face towards the post-war world, it was a familiar one – characterised by traits that had held throughout the war, such as its particular interest in housing. The Council had set out its plans as early as December 1942, when the Estates Committee recorded its ambition to construct 10,000 municipal houses and 500 suitable for aged necessitous people, 5,000 to be constructed as soon as possible, with attention to

¹¹ TGA, ROC/42uc *City and Port of Cardiff Official Handbook (Cardiff Blue Book) of the Development Committee of Cardiff City Council*, (Cheltenham, undated, probably 1947/48)

¹² The *Local Government Chronicle* featured the debate on numerous occasions. 8/11/41 p 935: 4/1/41 p7:7/3/42 p161: 18/4/42 p239:6/2/43 p.71 : 3/4/43 p181:22/1/44 p. 5 :6/1/45:23/6/45

sunlight, the use of plastics and the fitments needed by a modern housewife.’¹³ Now it had the chance to make such ambitions a reality. The end of war was a time for celebration, and local government was ready to celebrate itself, as the *Local Government Chronicle* recorded:

For over five long years local authorities have been forced to abandon the tasks of peace and undertake a multitude of duties to save the people from the effects of war. Nevertheless, while they did this, they had to plan and prepare for the post war years and the duties which then awaited them. At last the time has come to tackle those great new tasks and treat them as of primary not secondary importance. Let the local authorities confident in their fine record, lead the revels of the people and then turn to the tasks of peace, so urgent and absorbing and so well worthwhile.¹⁴

The post-war world of local government was welcomed in a traditional way – by the staging of an exhibition. The local government officers’ union, NALGO, laid claim to pioneering the idea. ‘Its sole purpose was to spread knowledge of local government and increase public interest in the work of Local Authorities.’ This new use for the tried and tested format, well appreciated by both the Council and the residents of Cardiff, was adopted with alacrity by the Council. In October 1945 the exhibition came to the city, with all the elements that attended similar events in the war, but now celebrating peace. The programme for the exhibition shows that personnel had not changed; the names of Councillors featuring in the official programme were familiar from the Council committees before and throughout the war. All the Committee chairmen appointed after the first post-war election in November 1945 were men who had been in place at the first Council meeting after war was declared, in October 1939.¹⁵ In November 1945 the Council was still serving the city by offering the familiar and the traditional – stability in a time of change.

Even though it only looks at a single authority, the contribution made by the thesis towards study of the Home Front in the Second World War *can* encompass the wider local government canvas, as well as examining Cardiff. Many authorities would not have been as active as Cardiff County Borough, and different layers of the local government hierarchy had different responsibilities, commensurate with their size, but certain ideas can be suggested.

¹³ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1942/43 Estates Committee 10/12/42 p 112 min 757

¹⁴ *Local Government Chronicle*, 12/5/45 p302

¹⁵ Spoor, *Sixty Years* p. 438; Local Government Exhibition Programme October 1945 (author’s copy): CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40 Council meeting 2/10/39, p.977: First meeting after the declaration of war. CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1945/46 ; General Purposes Committee 6/11/45 p 1033 min 7089: Annual Council 9/11/1945. The election was for one third of the membership, some sitting councillors lost their seats and four women were elected.

The thesis reveals the breadth of the work undertaken by local councils and the weight of reliance placed by central government on local authorities. Historians have condemned local government, often on the basis of the narrow, albeit important, issue of Rest Centre provision. The scope of all the other things that councils might have been doing has somehow been lost. The thesis shows what local authorities were called on to do and how one of them did it, in a selected set of activities. It is to be hoped that it will open the way in the future to more detailed attention, both to these issues and to the many other things that councils did in the war, over a range of other local authorities.

The contribution made by the residents of the city – its citizens – also needs to be acknowledged. The Council could not have done it without them. Writers and historians, inspired by the cooperative volunteer spirit which they saw operating in war, speculated on a means of continuing it. Richie Calder ends his hymn to the war time volunteer, *Carry on London*, with a resolve that the people's newly discovered sense of purpose must not lapse, but must be harnessed in peace.¹⁶ Cardiff Council's purchase of the Spender volume, with similar themes, suggests that members may have entertained similar hopes. *Citizens in War and After*, is a perceptive eye witness record of the achievements of the people and the actions of their local authorities during war, which notes the financial constraints, the inappropriate preparation, the unexpected nature of the raids – a view of war from the streets, and the rank and file, of the routine, drudgery and terror. It celebrates the citizen army, which dedicated itself to care and protection of its environment and its community, and speculates how that impulse and energy might be taken forward into peace and regeneration. Spender characterises civil defence as an experiment in citizenship, optimistically seeing a breaking down of class barriers, suggesting 'Local patriotism and increased interest in local government are likely to result from those experiences'. The object of the book is said to be to raise questions, rather than answer them. 'We shall see how Civil Defence has brought people in touch with local government, and how it has made the local authorities more responsible than they were before the war.'¹⁷

Cardiff Council maintained its connection with its citizens by explaining and commending itself to them in a way they would enjoy – the exhibition. The foreword to the exhibition programme records, 'Cardiff is now a city of about 250,000 people, with one of the finest

¹⁶ R. Calder *Carry on London* p.159

¹⁷ Spender *Citizens in War and After*, pp.15&16

civic centres in the world and with a reputation for good government which has led the British Council to select it as the model municipality.’¹⁸ The war time connection was a three way one, government, Council, citizens. Government may have called the tune and, eventually, paid the piper. Local authorities were the ones who delivered. And in the end, the government expressed itself satisfied.

The part that local authorities have played in the nation’s war effort is one which they can rightly regard with deep pride. Always under the handicap of severe shortages of manpower and materials and often under the fire of the enemy, they have successfully operated major war services in addition to maintaining the normal services on which the stability and productive power of the Home Front have depended.¹⁹

¹⁸ Local Government Exhibition Programme October 1945, Foreword by the Lord Mayor.

¹⁹ CHL, Cardiff Council Minutes 1944/45 Council 9/7/45 p.729, min 4979. Letter of thanks from the Ministry of Health.

Appendix A Draft Emergency Powers Bill

The National Archive HLG 68/64 *Local Government Emergency Powers Bill*

A fascinating interlude, in the first few weeks of the war, reveals the attention paid by central government to the workings of local government. Within a few days of the declaration of war, government departments were looking at process and conduct of business of local authorities in a war situation, with the issue being handled at the highest level.

On 11 September 1939 the Ministry of Health was considering a rough draft of a Local Government Emergency Powers Bill, examining the committees of the Council which there was a legal obligation to set up. The aim was apparently the streamlining of Council business, by use of an Emergency Committee, with wider powers than those committees already in place to deal with ARP. Each type of business that a Council would have before it was considered in turn. The ‘biggest class’ was those committees to which certain matters ‘stand referred’ – those which could be delegated to act on behalf of the Council. The second class was where committees exercised ‘functions independently of the local authority,’ such as Visiting Committees under the Mental Treatment Act. (The proposal was for these to continue, with the Emergency Committee stepping in, as necessary.) It was not considered necessary to make special arrangements for a Finance Committee; it would still be an obligation, but an authority would have power to delegate its appointment, ‘and the doing of any other act in relation to it,’ to an Emergency Committee. The draft then sets out procedures for Councils to appoint an Emergency Committee and empower it.¹

Accompanying this draft is another which appears to be that of a letter or circular to local authorities, indicating that representations had been received from local authorities on regularising the position in relation to an Emergency Committee acting for the Council in all matters and recommending ‘power shall be conferred upon local authorities which would enable them to delegate their authority to an emergency committee appointed to act generally on their behalf – thus obviating the need for calling Council meetings in circumstances that might be difficult –and would remove any statutory obligations which there may be to refer

¹ National Archive HLG 68/64 *Local Government Emergency Powers Bill* Memorandum from the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel to T D Harrison in the Ministry of Health 11/9/39 The statutory responsibilities are listed as Maternity and Child Welfare, Education, Public Assistance, Smallholdings and Allotments, Agriculture and Care of Mental Defectives – with the caveat that there may be others.

any specific matter to any particular statutory committee,'² In this context, in response to representations relating to Emergency Committees, the Emergency Committee would take on all actions of the Council, going beyond the case of scheme making authorities for ARP, most of which had appointed an Emergency Committee before the outbreak 'with powers in time of war to act on their behalf in matters of civil defence'.³

Regulations were prepared, under great pressure, to allow an Emergency Committee to be able to do anything a Council could do, except make a rate, and suspending the existing provisions on statutory committees, including the Finance Committee, but not affecting the position of committees appointed under powers directly conferred by statute, such as the Watch Committee or the Visiting Committee for Mental Treatment.⁴ The issue then went to consultation, with multiple copies distributed to government departments. The Ministry of Agriculture, predictably protecting its war time stance on food production, asked for special provisions for Allotment Committees. The Treasury was unhappy over the Emergency Committee having borrowing capacity. The local government associations were consulted, raising matters of detail.

Then, a month later, even with all the effort that had been put in, minds were changed and the matter faded away.⁵ When enquiries were made on behalf of the local authorities, the Ministry responded that action had been taken 'in anticipation of conditions which might make Council meetings very difficult to hold. Unless and until these conditions materialise there is bound to be criticism of delegation of powers to Emergency Committees and a growing demand to return to more normal procedure. I fear, therefore, that you must take it as unlikely that the Government will proceed with the making of any such Regulations in the

² Ibid This draft is unacknowledged and undated. The file also contains debate over whether this action should be taken by a bill, or the Defence Regulations. A response from the Ministry of Health indicates a preference for the Regulations, on the grounds that a bill might be held up, the Labour party would wish to include travelling, subsistence and allowances for loss of time and there would be pressure to amend and extend it 'almost before it reached the Statute Book'. Letter from Sir John Maude, Minister of Health to Sir Granville Ram, Parliamentary Counsel's Office.

³ Ibid Report to the Home Policy Committee of the War Cabinet from the Ministry of Health 23/9/39. The proposals had firmed up in favour of use of the Regulations.

⁴ Ibid Letter of Ministry of Health to Sir Alexander Maxwell, Home Office 23/9/39

⁵ Ibid A note of 3/3/70 on the rear of a form requesting approval to open the file under the Public Records Act 1958 confirms that the idea was not proceeded with, and eventually dropped.

near future.⁶ A letter in mid November confirms that as things were going back more or less to normal, it would be a mistake to pursue the matter.⁷

What circumstances changed the mind of government remain unknown. Some references in the files to the possibility of ultra vires action and court challenges may perhaps have been more of an issue than appears. It is easy to speculate that there may have been lobbying behind the scenes against the proposal, despite the request apparently coming from local government.⁸ Central government apparently considered that the war situation was not such that the provisions were needed, although after only a month of war it is difficult to find the basis for that conclusion. The whole incident remains an illustration of the importance that central government attached to the proceedings of local councils, and that they should continue, if in truncated form, despite adverse circumstances, to the extent of investing resources at what must have been a hectic time – although the suspicious may have viewed it as an unsuccessful attempt to rein in local democracy.

Such provisions as were proposed may have initially looked apposite to Whitehall, particularly if an invasion should severely dislocate mechanisms of government at all levels and, as indicated in the file, some local authorities were asking for clarification. It might be expected, however, that other local authorities would have a different view of this condensing of Council business, which would not have seemed necessary in the stagnation of the Twilight War. Certainly Cardiff, being in the West of the British Isles, and at that point less in expectation of bombing, and where there had already been controversy over the actions of the local Emergency Committee, might have been sceptical.

⁶ Ibid Letter from Ministry of Health to Parker Morris Esq., Metropolitan Boroughs Standing Joint Committee 20/10/39 The letter suggests that those who have already done it would have to rely on ratification by Council to provide cover for their procedure.

⁷ Ibid Letter 14/11/39 from Ministry of Health to Sir George Gator at the Department of Home Security

⁸ Ibid In an undated and unacknowledged note, the request was indicated to come from the London County Council, and be in accord with the views of the leader.

Appendix B Air Raids in Cardiff

Air Raids on Cardiff – as compiled by Cardiff Central Library Local Studies Department and augmented by National Archive Home Office file HO198/195 *Air Raid Summaries of Occurrences 20/6/40 – 4/5/41*¹

27 June 1940 ²	Six HE bombs. No warning. Assumed target to be docks. No casualties
9 July 1940	Strike on San Filipe in Docks. 4HE bombs. First casualties
7 August 1940	Small night raid
13 and 16 August 1940	Small night raids. Casualties + building damage
3 September 1940	Albany Road and vicinity. Casualties + houses demolished, but occupants in shelters. (Home Office report indicates one warden and two pedestrians killed on street. Many people on the street in Albany Road.)
13 September 1940	Raid in Westgate Street area
15 September 1940	Orbit Street area. Casualties.
10 October 1940	Constellation Street. Houses destroyed
16 October 1940 and 1 November 1940	Light raids
2 December 1940	5HE and 100 Incendiaries (Home Office report indicates use of sand and stirrup pumps by wardens, householders and AFS)
2/3 January 1941	Heavy raid - Grangetown, Riverside, city centre and docks 150 HE and 1000 – 2000 incendiaries. 500+ dead and injured – Cathedral bombed. (Home Office report indicates casualties in Andersons. Instances of roofs of brick built surface shelters lifting. Damage, but no collapse.)
21/22 February 1941	Raid on City centre and rail line
26/27 February 1941	Violet Street and Albany Road. Casualties.
3 and 4 March 1941	Heavy raid, named locally as one of the greatest fire raids of the war, targeting city centre and docks. Between 100+ and 300+ dead and injured (sources differ). (Home Office report indicates 50 HE and large number of incendiaries on 3/3/41. 135 calls on fire service with 600 homeless as a result of damage +UXBs. On 4/4/41, 40 HE and thousands of incendiaries. Much HE fell on open land but damage to public buildings)
29/30 April 1941	Coldstream Terrace. Casualties.
17/18 May 1943 (See detail note below)	Last heavy raid of war 100+ dead and casualties and major damage to housing.

¹ Cardiff Heritage Library *Cardiff Air Raids 1939 – 45 An Information Source Book*. Cardiff Central Library Local Studies Department 2007. (Information assembled by library from multiple sources within the constraints on records of the time, due to censorship) + supplemented by reports from the National Archive Home Office file HO198/195 Air Raid Summaries of Occurrences 20/6/40 – 4/5/41.

² According to Council minutes this raid without warning took place on 21 June. ARP Committee 21/6/40 p 781 min 5384

Supplementary Notes

Raid on 21 June 1940

A Special Meeting of the ARP Committee was called on 24 June 1940 to discuss a raid on the city on 21 June, when bombs had been dropped but no warning sounded. The committee was ‘considerably alarmed,’ and asked to meet the Regional Commissioner and his staff.³

*Report to the Home Office, Home Intelligence Branch by ARP Controller Alderman O C Purnell on the raids 17/18 May 1943*⁴

Damage is recorded as mainly to housing and small shops – as so often primarily residential areas. An estimated 4,500 houses were damaged, with 140 shops. Five to six hundred homes were demolished or beyond repair. Bute Street Station had suffered a direct hit but two communal shelters nearby had survived. Both had been strengthened and it was considered: ‘this contributed largely to the good results obtained.’ Despite a long period of inactivity, when there had been no raids, and the severity of this attack, in many locations, the work of the Civil Defence service was classed as beyond all praise. Personnel had conducted themselves with thoroughness and efficiency. Rescue Services had recovered fifty people, with twenty one brought out alive, and assistance had been given by parties from neighbouring authorities. After the raid nine Rest Centres were opened, with an estimate of four hundred people using the service.⁵ One hundred and thirty seven retailers, two wholesalers and one cold store had been damaged. but eighty to ninety percent of the stock could be salvaged, owing to the foresight of traders not leaving stock in windows overnight. The Information and Administrative centre at City Hall had opened at an early hour, following the raid, staffed by representatives of the various Council departments responsible for post-raid services – billeting, war damage, the Ministry of Food, Assistance Board, furniture removal and re-housing. About forty families, involving three hundred people, had been re-housed and forty removals of furniture from bombed houses had taken place to date. Three thousand and fifty three enquiries had been received up until 5.30 pm on 20 May. A

³ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1939/40 ARP Committee 21/6/40 p781 min 5384; 24/6/40 p 781 min 5387. The meeting was held two days later when the Commissioner explained the circumstances. ARP Committee 26/6/40 p 785 min 5414

⁴ Cardiff Heritage Library *Cardiff Air Raids 1939 – 45 An Information Source Book* pp 102 - 109, quoting from National Archive file, HO199/154 *Report of Action 18/5/ 43 Home Intelligence Branch*, dated 21/5/43.

⁵ For details on Rest Centres, see Appendix D

bureau had also been set up by the Military Enquiry Officer to deal with issues of leave and pay.

Appendix C Case Study – Rescue and Decontamination/Cleansing Stations

This case study from Home Office file HO 207/1123 Cardiff County Borough Rescue, Decontamination and Repair Services details the protracted negotiations over the construction of depot facilities in Cardiff, which provide a practical illustration of a number of the points raised in Chapter One.¹

One major thread in this Home Office file, said to be, ‘about a foot thick’ and ‘rather alarming,’ is that which chronicles the negotiations between the Council and Home Office officials to secure suitable depot facilities in the Council’s parks for the County Borough’s Rescue, Decontamination and Repair Service.² Negotiations about provision and funding span the period November 1938 to April 1943. Discussions go back and forth, on paper and in person, as the Council argues its case for what it considers to be suitable buildings and an appropriate level of financial support from government for construction.

The buildings under discussion were intended, up until the onset of war, to be constructed as sports pavilions within the parks. The situation relating to funding was made more complicated as originally a 40 per cent contribution had been anticipated from the National Fitness Council and National Playing Fields Association. Once war was declared the NPFA was wound up, putting an end to that source of funding, although the application was, in fact, never made, the NPFA having ceased to function before the plans were ready.³ The withdrawal of a grant from the NPFA, presumably this, was reported in the *Cardiff Times* on 16 September 1939.⁴ The ARP squads involved comprised men from the Council’s labour force, supplemented by those from local construction contractors – a group which would be responsible for locating and rescuing people trapped in buildings demolished by bombs, removing bodies, making structures safe and carrying out emergency repairs and decontamination measures in the event of chemical attack. The buildings were intended to supply depot facilities for the men, mess and sleeping facilities and stores, and for cleansing

¹ TNA HO 207/1123 Cardiff County Borough Rescue Decontamination and Repair Services

² Ibid. Letter from region to Home Office 1/11/42: Letter Regional Commissioner to Home Office 22/8/42

³ Ibid. Letters of Regional Office to Home Office 25/11/39 and 4/1/40

⁴ *Cardiff Times* 16/9/39 p3

stations for decontamination. It appears that while protection from blast and splinter was applicable to the decontamination/cleansing stations, it was not so for any depot part of any construction.

Arrangements for First Aid and Decontamination Services in the run up to war were somewhat confused, particularly over levels of provision. Late in 1938 three decontamination depots were under consideration by the Council.⁵ These sites, in Trade Street, Railway Street and Wellington Street, were said to have been approved by the Regional Inspector.⁶ Officers of the Council were invited to meet with government officials in London in December 1938.⁷ Discussion at that meeting covered a variety of issues relating to Rescue and to First Aid Services, with 5 new-build Rescue Depots proposed. The wrangle over the depots in the parks centred on the issue of finance, and of the facilities to be provided, with the government side insisting that what the Council wanted was too lavish, and that substantial buildings were being proposed for cosmetic and aesthetic rather than practical reasons, so that they would blend with the surroundings in the park. In May 1939 the Regional Officer is not impressed with the Council: 'I spent about three and a half hours last week going over with the City Engineer Cardiff his part in the Scheme. They are in a very backward condition and have so far not really got down to the job.'⁸ The proposal not to pursue Trade Street and the other locations, said to be as a result of amended requirements by the Home Office, was reported to the ARP Committee on 26 June 1939, when the decision to proceed with the pavilions in the parks, which had already been considered by the Parks etc. Committee, was taken.⁹ In June 1939 the Council was apparently proposing buildings costing £2,500 each, stigmatised as, 'fantastic' by the Home Office.¹⁰

While not directly articulated in the file, it is not hard to assume that the civil servants suspected that as well as aesthetics the Council was attempting to get higher grade facilities,

⁵ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39 ARP Committee 11/11/38 p29 min 140(3)

⁶ TNA HO 207/1123 Letter from Town Clerk to Home Office 3/11/38

⁷ Ibid. Letter from Town Clerk to Home Office ARP Section Horseferry Road 13/12/38

⁸ Ibid. Letter from Regional Officer, Major C A Lidbury, to ARP Department Home Office 24/5/39

⁹ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39 Parks etc Committee 14/6/39 p856 min 5470; ARP Committee 26/6/39 p902 min 5771

¹⁰ HO 207/1123 Letter from Home Office to Regional Inspector 1/6/39 It is not quite clear that these were the pavilions. A sum of £10,404 was reported to the ARP Committee on 26/6/39 in respect of work on buildings in five locations. P 902 min 5771.

suitable for post-war use, rather than a basic war construction. The Council's stance was that its proposals were for buildings which would resist blast and splinter damage – considered essential by them for protecting staff who would be undertaking hard and difficult work, when they were eating and resting - a stand subsequently vindicated when the government's view on blast and splinter protection shifted.¹¹

In June 1939 the file returns briefly to the sites previously being considered. Of four potential depots discussed in December 1938, only one was considered in any way suitable by the Regional Inspector. The buildings were, 'crammed with stores' which could not be moved, and even if they were, the buildings were unsuitable: 'I am sure they could not have measured them up, or had no idea of the accommodation they had to find.' A letter of the same date to the Council asks for the matter to be given, 'special attention' as the Home office is disturbed at lack of progress.¹² In fairness to the Council, it should perhaps be noted that at this stage appeasement was still being pursued, and the Council would have been cautious about involvement and investment in war preparations.

At this point the Council decided that it needed face to face discussions, showing its willingness to take matters to the top by agreeing to send a deputation to London.¹³ A four hour, officer level meeting took place on 18 July, in London, where the main Report Centre and two sub centres for the city were also discussed. The outcome was an agreement for seven cleansing stations – Llandaff, Roath and the Marl, all with one hundred and twenty personnel each, Ely, Sevenach and Splott Park with seventy and Maindy Pool with one hundred and eighty.¹⁴ On 24 July the ARP Committee considered a detailed report on the matter, including the receipt of confirmation that the Lord Privy Seal agreed in principle to the seven Cleansing Stations. The Committee also had a report on the meeting at the Home Office on 18 July. Significantly among the resolutions agreed by the committee was that: 'strong representations be made to the Lord Privy Seal to approve the specification for the

¹¹ There appear to have been some discrepancies over the issue of blast and splinter protection. Before war was declared the provision of shelters with gas and splinter protection at the reservoirs and warden posts, with protection from blast and splinter, was being discussed. The latter was said to be at the request of the Home Office, which would seem to add some weight to the Council's argument in relation to these depots, even before the government position shifted. CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39 ARP Committee 24/4/39 p 640 min 4092 and 19/5/39 p752 min 4786

¹² HO 207/1123 Letter from Regional Inspector to Home Office 16/6/39 and to Borough Engineer, same date.

¹³ Ibid. Letter from Regional Inspector to Home Office 16/6/39

¹⁴ Ibid. Letter from Home Office to Borough Engineer 21/7/39

Cleansing Stations, Rescue Depots, etc, prepared by the City Engineer in order to make the whole of such buildings blast and splinter proof. (*Words underlined added at Council.*)¹⁵

The Borough Engineer submitted proposals for the Cleansing Stations on 31 July, along with the Council decision to make strong representations for the whole of such buildings to be blast and splinter proof. The Home Office file contains detailed notes on the proposals, suggesting in several instances that accommodation for sleeping, mess and stores was over large and should be reduced. A letter of 24 August 1939 from the Region to the Council, draws attention to the disparity between the Council's proposals and the Home Office view, with the Council said to be anxious to preserve the: 'amenities of the surroundings where the messing and sleeping buildings were to be put up.' The Home Office was not prepared to meet the cost.¹⁶ The Engineer's response repeated that the brick buildings proposed were not just for amenity, but to be blast and splinter proof: 'I would respectfully suggest that personnel of rescue parties, after returning from arduous work following an air raid, should be adequately protected during their period of rest without undue disturbance.' The Region was asked to make representations to the Home Office to this effect.¹⁷ Possibly the fact that many of the personnel involved would be Council employees, with what appears to be a minimal choice on 'volunteering', made the Council particularly aware of a duty of care. The Region's reaction was that practice 'over the whole county' was for personnel in Rescue Stations to take shelter in adjoining cleansing stations if the need arose, so such representations would not be made. There was a warning that to go ahead did not guarantee that grant approval would be given.¹⁸

With war now declared, negotiations assumed the pattern of claim and counter claim. A formal letter transmitted a resolution of the ARP and Finance Committees to seek grant and loan sanction for a sum totalling £31,153. A minute of the Home Office in January 1940, suggests a, 'personal touch' to try to resolve the matter, with the Regional Technical Adviser speaking to the Council, but the Home Office view was that a sum of only around five thousand pounds was grant eligible.¹⁹ It is at this point that the file reveals that work on the buildings had actually begun on 13 September 1939 and all were now nearing completion.²⁰

¹⁵ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39 ARP Committee 24/7/39 1042 min 6670:..Council 28/7/39 p1065

¹⁶ TNA, HO 207/1123 Letter from Regional Office to Borough Engineer 24/8/39

¹⁷ Ibid. Letter from Engineer to Region in response to 24/8/39, copy undated.

¹⁸ Ibid. Letters from Region to Engineer 1/9/39 and to Town Clerk 4/9/39

¹⁹ Ibid. Letter Town Clerk to Region, 18/11/39; Minute of Home Office 2/1/40 and letter of Home Office 5/1/40

²⁰ Ibid. Minute of Regional Technical Adviser 20/2/40

A text book example of the Council acting in the way it saw fit, for the well being of staff, volunteers and city. (Although it was possibly not alone in this, see below.)

Faced with this revelation the Home Office accepted the situation on the cleansing stations, but on the matter of the depots was not so accommodating: ‘Here we are on very different ground, the local authority appears to have taken up a rather independent attitude in providing these Depots with a greater degree of protection than that laid down in Circular 134 in spite of instructions from this office as far back as August 1939.’²¹ There was also discussion going on over provision of facilities in the Report Centres, prompting the remark that: ‘There appears to be a (undecipherable word) tendency on the part of some of these Welsh Authorities to first install or buy something and then ask us for approval afterwards.’²²

A lengthy series of somewhat tetchy exchanges followed, including a meeting on 23 October 41, involving the Chairman of the ARP Committee and representatives of the Department of Home Security, in which it was pointed out that had the Council gone ahead with the timber construction first required by the Ministry, improvements would have had to be made to protection work, under later changes to Code requirements. The Council: ‘strongly depreciated any attempt to evade their legitimate claim by taking advantage of a proposal initiated before the war, which subsequent conditions have proved to be both unsound and impractical.’²³ Internal correspondence within the Home Office and Region acknowledges that the Council’s case had some merit, and the Region was given approval to negotiate on the basis of the estimated cost of the Cleansing Stations to the Department’s specification.²⁴

This did not draw the matter to a close, however. In spring of 1942 the Senior Regional Officer took the issue back to the question of, ‘amenity’ and the Council wanting the structures to look appropriate in the park setting: ‘If the Authority had tackled the matter of Rescue Party Depots, as they were instructed to do in July 1938 – one year before – and followed the instructions given in the Stages Circular, much less expenditure would have been necessary, because the practice throughout the county was not to build but to find suitable buildings which could at some reasonable expenditure, be adapted for the purpose.’

On the basis of expenditure at the time, he recommends an offer of three thousand two

²¹ Ibid Hand written note 22/2/40

²² Ibid.22/2/40, as above. The Council wanted air conditioning in the Report Centre. The Assistant Engineer had had the work done, at a cost of £175, but was now in the forces. While there must have been a reason, the note concludes ‘This makes a very poor case,’ and disallowed the expenditure. There remained the ‘outstanding question of light construction vs. permanent building (in Rescue and Repair Depots) to settle.’

²³ Ibid. Letter Borough Engineer to Region 27/10/41

²⁴ Ibid. Letter from Region to Home Office 1/11/41

hundred pounds.²⁵ A haggling process ensued, with claim and counter offer, until the local authority finally received grant approval for expenditure of seven thousand pounds in April 1943.²⁶ When the wind-down began, at the end of the war, approaches were received to return the pavilions to their intended use – as football club dressing rooms and for youth work. In November 1944 the ARP Committee approved temporary use of Rescue Depots for dressing rooms. In April 1945, the committee agreed to allow the use of dormitory shelter colonies and the Rescue and Cleaning Stations in the parks for other purposes.²⁷

The whole picture presented by the file might be of a dilatory and argumentative Council, failing to make a proper provision for a war time essential, were it not for what is almost an aside in the file – that the Council had in fact begun constructing the buildings on 13 September 1939 and that now, in February 1940, the building programme was nearing completion.²⁸ Authority had been given to proceed at the ARP Committee on 31 August and the Finance Committee had agreed arrangements for construction the day after war was declared.²⁹ It was not possible to go to tender, because of the war, so the work was distributed between an approved list of contractors who could begin immediately. Instead of an exercise in apathy and dereliction it becomes a stealthy balancing act of the Council quietly moving ahead with its plans, while intent on securing the highest amount of finance it can negotiate.

This single case neatly illustrates a number of points that are discussed in Chapter One. The demolition personnel in question were Council staff, confirming the sometimes ambiguous nature of the term ‘volunteer’. The prolonged debate illustrates the Council’s desire, as an employer, to ensure an appropriate level of comfort and protection for its workers, although it would probably be unwise to completely acquit the Council of also having an eye to the appearance and future use of the buildings. The extent of involvement of a government

²⁵ Ibid. Report of SRO 7/4/42

²⁶ Ibid. On 19/8/42 the Council claimed £11,910. The Ministry countered with £5,945. The Council then asked for £8,000. Internal correspondence of the Home Office suggests an offer of £7,000. The Regional Commissioner wrote to the Home Office on 22/8/ 42 about the ‘alarming file’ indicating he was minded to settle, if the Home Office agreed. The sum of £7,000 was approved on 13/4/43.

²⁷ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1943/44 Parks etc Committee 10/10/44 p 889 min 6286. ARP committee 20/10/44 p 929 min 6565; Cardiff Council Minutes 1944/45 Parks (Recreation) Sub Committee 14/11/44 p 15 min 100; 9/1/45 p 162 min 1195; ARP Committee 6/4/45 p428 min 2992&2993.

²⁸ HO 207/1123 Minute of Regional Technical Adviser 20/2/40.:

²⁹ CHL Cardiff Council Minutes 1938/39, ARP Committee on 31/8/39 p 1071 min 6782:Finance Committee 4/9/39 p 1081 min 6837

department in the activities of an individual authority at a time of national crisis is perhaps slightly surprising, even over the matter of money, confirming a government tendency towards intermittent micromanagement. The lengthy meetings held in London are perhaps also slightly unexpected, but confirm the Council's direct relationship with Whitehall and the willingness and confidence of elected members in taking their case to the centre. That the discussion is about financing – approval for the proportion of expenditure which will be eligible under the ARP grant arrangements – is not surprising, this issue having arisen in various contexts on repeated occasions before the war and continuing throughout. The Council gains its point in this respect by obtaining a higher level of finance than the Regional Officer considered necessary. The Council's final triumph, in having its request for blast and splinter protection overtaken by events, illustrates both the Council's persistence and determination in fighting its case. It also shows up one of the overarching themes of the thesis, of the government being obliged to adapt policy in response to the realities of the war on the home front. Perhaps the most striking feature of the file is the revelation that the Council has in fact been building all the while, securing the provision while the wrangling plays out. In this case the Council demonstrates practical perception of what is needed, ahead of supposed central expertise, concern for its staff in their role as volunteers, persistence, determination, negotiating skills, an independent attitude and level of confidence to get on with the job, even without a settlement. In this case the honours appear to be with the Council a success, illustrating some of the Council's more distinctive qualities.

As an end note, the short history of the County Borough, written on its abolition in 1974, particularly mentions the construction of the depots with an eye to their future potential as recreation centres and changing facilities, which may serve to confirm that this element was sufficiently current in Council circles at the time to be recalled decades later.³⁰

³⁰ *Cardiff 1889- 1974* p 68

Appendix D

Rest Centres Summary of opening of Cardiff Rest Centres September and October 1940 and April and May 1941¹

Date	Rest Centres	Remarks
3/4 September (Report 5/9/40)	Three Stations opened for five hundred people in Cardiff and Roath.	Some houses demolished but majority of evacuation result of UXBs. By next night all but two hundred had been found accommodation. Hoped to close all stations by next day.
15/16 September (Report 20/9/40)	Food and shelter stations opened for Cardiff area for two hundred and fifty people in three stations.	Two stations closed after two days, one still open for twenty people Mostly problems with UXBs.
10 October 1940 (Report 11 October)	Twelve people in one centre.	Little need in recent weeks, but this centre still open.
2 & 3 January 1941 (Report 4 January)	This was the city's first experience of an intensive raid, with the situation made more difficult by the winter weather conditions.	See details below. Also raid 3/4 March
26 February (General Report 9/5/41)	Forty one people were in two centres	Evacuees given breakfast only.
29/30 April 1941 (Report 30 April)	One thousand people homeless. Most made own arrangements but three hundred and fifty were taken to rest centres. Seventy serious and sixty slightly injured.	<p>'The arrangements worked well – the people have been moved into centres on the outskirts of the city.'</p> <p>Later the general report, on 9/5/41, indicated two centres accommodated three hundred and five people on 29 April, one hundred and ninety six on 30 April, one hundred and fifty three on 1 May, one hundred and twenty four on 2 May, forty two on 3 May, forty four on 4 May, eleven on 5 May. Sleeping accommodation and meals were provided. Both centres closed on 6 May with people returned home or billeted.</p>

¹ National Archive HLG7/385 *Care of the Homeless Region 8* Reports from Welsh Board to Home Office Reports dated 7/1/41 and 13/1/41 are also mentioned but not on this file.

Additional Notes on Raids.

The raids on Cardiff on 2/3 January 1941 and 3 and 4 March 1941

(Information from National Archive files HLG7/385 and HO 199/151, which indicate different numbers of people accommodated in rest centres.)

The Home Office file records that at the peak period of Friday 3 January, six thousand people were accommodated at shelter stations. This reduced to three thousand seven hundred on 4 January, one thousand five hundred and forty two on 8 January and between six and seven hundred by 10 January, with billeting still proceeding. Mobile canteens were operating from 6 am on 3 January, offering teas, sandwiches and biscuits with soup, bread, cheese and jam for the remainder of the day. By 4 January hot meals were being served.²

At 10.25 on 4/3/41 Mr Almer, Chairman of the Welsh Board of Health, was on the telephone to London, to report the results of a heavy raid on Cardiff, and the situation regarding rest centres. One thousand two hundred people were reported to be in rest centres, there were numerous unexploded bombs in the centre of the city and more expected to be discovered in the course of the day, with some damage to nine water mains. Incendiaries had fallen in Cathays Park and several had been dealt with from the roof of the Board of Health's own building. Most of the incendiaries had been extinguished, but there was some damage to Glamorgan County Hall and the Law Courts. Mr Almer was attending a meeting of Chief Officers of the city at 11 am. There was a following report, also by phone, the next day. Numbers were steadily decreasing at the six rest centres opened. Additional assistance was not required; the city had plenty of rest centres and volunteers.³

Regional Commissioners' Monthly Reports Region 8

The Commissioner's reports for three months in the spring of 1941 record 35 warnings and 3 raids for 15 February – 15 March; a heavy raid on 3 March when Civil Defence performed well; 1 raid and 41 warnings in the period 15 March – 15 April; and 33 warnings and 3 raids in the period 15 April to 15 May, with the raid on 29/30 April classed as somewhat serious, with much damage, but relatively few casualties, which the Commissioner attributes to

² Information on raid on 2/3 January from *Cardiff Air Raids 1939 – 45 An Information Source Book* (page 96), compiled from National Archive file HO199/151, by Cardiff Heritage Library.

³ *Ibid.* *Care of the Homeless Region 8* Note of a telephone message. After this point reports were frequently made by telephone rather than in writing.

people being in domestic shelters⁴ Although there are only five raids, with two listed as serious, warnings were also disruptive, requiring precautions to be taken, even if no raid materialised.

*Report to the Home Office, Home Intelligence Branch by ARP Controller Alderman O C Purnell on the raids 17/18 May 1943*⁵

After the raid nine Rest Centres were opened with an estimate of four hundred people using the service, but there had been much movement and some had only used the feeding services. Mobile canteens offering tea and sandwiches and emergency clothing stores had operate at each centre, with medical services provided. By the morning of 21 May one hundred people were still in two Rest centres, half of whom were there on account of UXBs.

⁴ HO186/536 Regional Commissioners' Monthly Reports Region 8

⁵ Cardiff Heritage Library *Cardiff Air Raids 1939 – 45 An Information Source Book* pp 102 - 109, quoting from National Archive file, HO199/154 report of Action 18/5 /43 Home Intelligence Branch, dated 21/5/43.

Appendix E

Official Programme for Salute the Soldier Week

The programme highlights several of the points made in the chapter – the importance of the exhibition and parade, the role of official ceremonial, in suitable attire, the range of events, the ritual of daily updating the indicator and the elaborate arrangements for chairing, honour guests, etc.

*

Priced three pence, the pamphlet has a foreword from the Lord Mayor, confident the city would meet and exceed its largest ever target.¹ Attractions on offer included a free open air Anti Aircraft Display and demonstration in Cathays Park ‘SEE! The weapons that defend your City against enemy planes.’ With the chance to examine equipment and demonstrations ‘just like the real thing.’ At the Prince of Wales theatre there would be a ‘Salute the Soldier’ Pageant for six nights at 6.30 pm – a Stoll Theatre London Production. On Friday night a Grand Military Ball and on Saturday the parade, with the Welch Regiment with ‘Regimental Band and Goat.’ The Lord Mayor and others: ‘in their robes’ would welcome the unit. The route was set out on the back page and the order of marching, to included the US Navy and Army, the Red Cross, St John Ambulance, the National Fire Service, Air Raid Wardens, Ambulance Parties, the Civil Defence Mortuary Service, the WVS, Land Army, Boys’ Brigade, Scouts and Guides, etc.

A daily ceremony would update the Indicator outside the Castle.² The Secretary of State for War would attend on the first day, and the Lord Mayor would entertain a list of distinguished guests, named in the programme, for lunch. Alongside the formal pageantry a variety of concerts, fairs, dancing, exhibitions, a dog show, an American basketball match (by kind permission of the Commanding Officer, United States Forces) and bridge building across the River Taff. Each day would have a separate theme and be presided over by a different dignitary. On Thursday – Civil Defence Day, the Chairman of the ARP Committee would

¹ TGA D309/8 Programme for Salute the Soldier Week June 10-17 1944 printed and published by the Western Mail

² The noon Indicator ceremony was singled out as a highlight in The Pioneer, South Wales National Savings Magazine, June 1944 no 36 TGA DC OMC/1/8/163

preside, Colonel Bruce, the Regional Commissioner would be Guest of Honour and the NFS would provide the Guard of Honour. The programme concluded with details of the types of savings available and locations to buy.

Reports following the week.

The events considered to be highlights of the week included the Parade, four appearances by the Secretary of State for War (who was one of Cardiff's MPs), the pageant at the Prince of Wales Theatre, 'An excellent show' and the presence of American troops in the parade: 'The coloured troops attracting considerable attention by their smartness on parade.'³

Rivalry between cities was exploited. For Salute the Soldier Week Bradford challenged Cardiff to a savings race, as their weeks coincided. Cardiff won, raising twenty pound per head, against Bradford's twelve.⁴

³ TGADC OMC/1/8/163 - The Pioneer South Wales National Savings Magazine July 1944 no 37: National Savings Committee Region 12

⁴ TGAD309/8 -The Pioneer South Wales National Savings Magazine September 1944 no 39

Appendix F

Analysis of the membership of Cardiff County Borough using *County Borough Elections in England and Wales 1913 – 1938: A comparative Analysis. Volume 2 Bradford – Carlisle*, by Sam Davies and Bob Morley, together with the minutes of Cardiff County Borough, November 1939 to November 1945

The first full council meeting of Cardiff County Borough, following the declaration of war on 3 September 1939, took place on 2 October 1939. The Members recorded as being present, with subsequent additions and alterations which took place during the course of the war, appear at the end of the appendix.

The ability to compile a complete list of Council members at any one point using the Council minutes is complicated by the absence of any recording of members absent, with or without apologies being submitted, by the three year rolling programme of re-election, and the failure to record in alphabetical order. The attendance lists give no indication of political affiliation.

Comparing the analysis of election results contained in the study of the results of county borough elections for the period 1913 to 1938 by Sam Davies and Bob Morley with Council members recorded in the minutes, it is possible to arrive at probable figures for the political composition of the council as: fifteen Labour, ten Conservative, twelve Liberal, twelve Ratepayer, five Independent, and two Anti-socialist Pact. Figures must be considered probable rather than definite, as the political persuasion of Alderman, nominated rather than directly elected, can only be deduced by tracing through the Davies and Morley records and matching names and affiliations of men previously elected to the Council which, while likely to be accurate, cannot be guaranteed. Also there are four sitting councillors who do not correspond to those elected between 1936 and 1938. Again their political affiliations have been deduced by a name comparison. In the case of a Councillor who appears to have stood for Labour in various wards since 1924, sometimes being elected and sometimes unsuccessful, this appears a fairly solid assumption. Two Ratepayer affiliates have some limited electoral history to back the assumption, while the third appears as an unsuccessful candidate in 1934 but would seem later to have replaced a Labour member in a seat that otherwise had been a 'safe' Labour seat since 1927, which potentially raises questions.

In 1929 an Antisocialist Pact, comprising Liberals, Conservatives, Ratepayers and Independents was formed, combining to field candidates in opposition to Labour. Although the Pact was no longer in operation in the last pre-war election of 1938, two remaining Alderman were originally elected on this ticket.¹ During the war local elections were suspended and the political balance effectively frozen. Under the Local Elections and Register of Electors (Temporary Provisions) Acts 1939 to 1943, vacancies were filled by nomination. While the Labour party appears to hold the largest grouping on the County Borough, this was a long way from having political control. In modern parlance the Council would be classed as no overall control.

On second of October 1939 all the County Borough's Alderman and Councillors were male. This changed on 6 November 1939 when Mrs Helen Evans (a previously unsuccessful candidate) replaced Councillor H G Bartlett, who had tendered his resignation. She was joined in 1944 by Mrs Anna Kerrigan, also a previously unsuccessful candidate at the ballot box. Other substitutions are noted in the list.

¹ There are actually four Alderman recorded in this way, one of whom, Sir William Williams, has been identified by matching as a Liberal. Alderman Sir Charles Bird was probably also a Liberal, and has been included in that group.

Aldermen and Councillors October 1939

Alderman Howell ¹	Liberal
Alderman Iltyd Thomas	Conservative
Alderman Sir Charles Bird	Anti Socialist Pact (Liberal) ²
Alderman Pethybridge	Liberal
Alderman Sir William Williams	Liberal (Anti Socialist Pact)
Alderman Hill Snook	Liberal
Alderman Sir Charles Melhuish	Coalition of Anti-Socialists
Alderman Gough	Labour
Alderman G Fred Evans	Liberal
Alderman Sir Herbert Hiles	Labour
Alderman O C Purnell	Conservative
Alderman Henry Johns	Liberal
Alderman McCale	Ratepayer
Alderman Turnbull	Anti Socialist Coalition
Councillor Hellyer	Ratepayer
Councillor Griffiths	Labour
Councillor F Jones	Conservative
Councillor Parker	Conservative
Councillor Mullins	Labour ³
Councillor Wills	Liberal
Councillor Ferguson	Liberal

¹ Lord Mayor in first year of war, 1939

² Died 1944, replaced by Henry Bull

³ Died 1944, replaced by Mrs Kerrigan

Councillor Robinson	Conservative
Councillor Kerrigan	Labour
Councillor G Williams	Liberal
Councillor Bevan	Conservative
Councillor Hegginbottom	Labour
Councillor Muston	Labour
Councillor Collins	Labour
Councillor White	Conservative ⁴
Councillor Baden Smith	Ratepayer
Councillor Beecher	Independent
Councillor Moreland	Independent
Councillor Martin	Ratepayer
Councillor Frewer	Independent
Councillor Ferrier	Ratepayer
Councillor Arthur Powell	Ratepayer
Councillor Hallinan	Conservative
Councillor D T Williams	Conservative
Councillor Banbury	Conservative
Councillor Lovitt	Ratepayer
Councillor Weston	Labour
Councillor Morgan	Ratepayer
Councillor Robson	Labour
Councillor A J Williams	Labour
Councillor Bartlett	Labour ⁵
Councillor Sweet	Labour
Councillor Llewellyn	Labour

⁴ Died November 1945

⁵ Resigned 1939, replaced by Mrs Helena Evans

Councillor R T Evans	Liberal
Councillor Edwards	Independent
Councillor Mick Roberts	Ratepayer ⁶
Councillor Cazenove	Independent
Councillor Jeans	Ratepayer
Councillor Shute	Ratepayer
Councillor Chapman	Liberal
Councillor M Davies	Ratepayer
J D Williams	Labour

⁶ Died April 1940, replaced by Earnest Jones

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LC 10 940 53 061 4ARM Army Exhibition Programme

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MH10/97 Ministry of Health Circulars

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The maps following, of the city centre in 1933 and the city and docks in 1942, were supplied from the Cardiff Heritage Library collection.

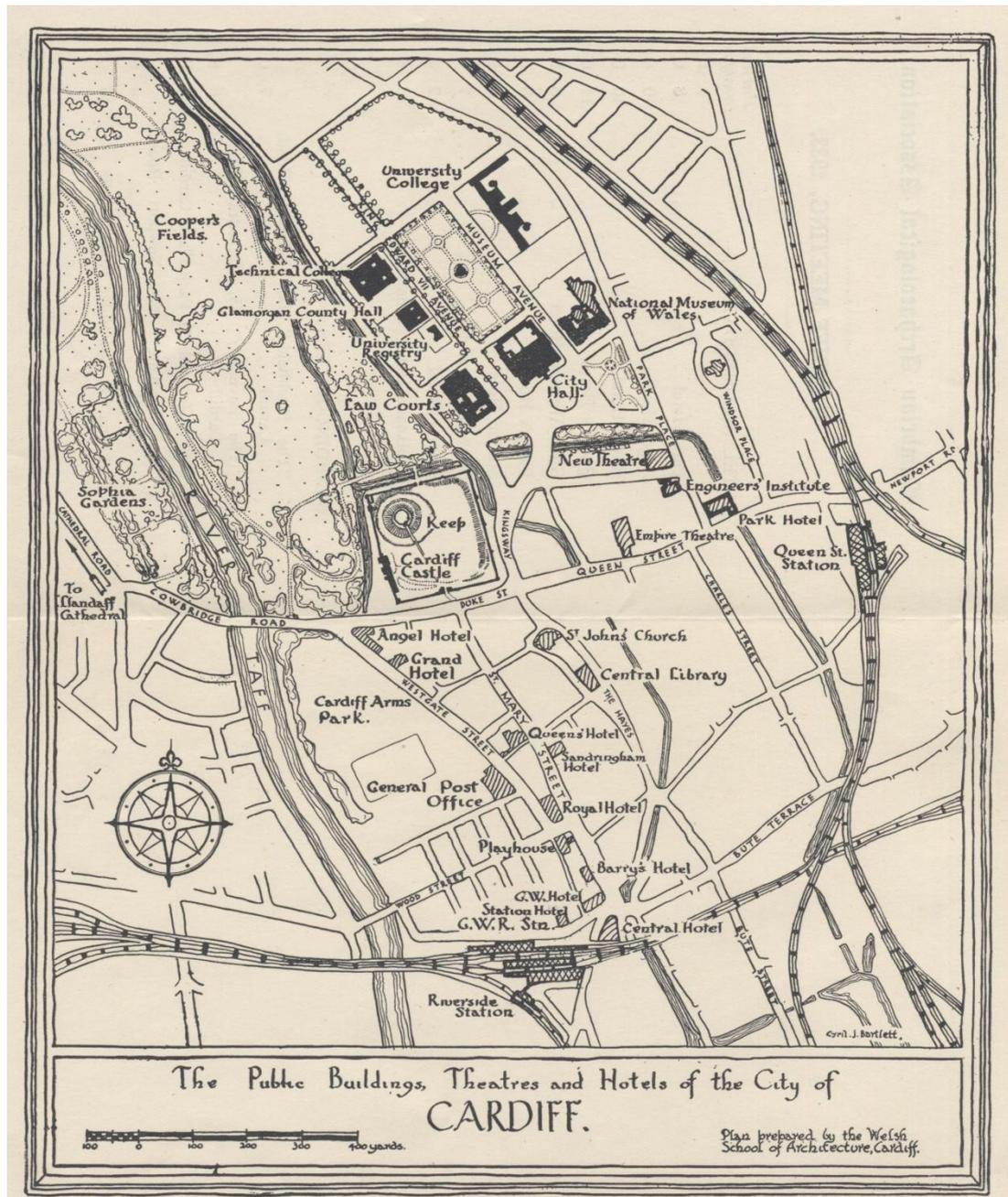
Maps – Cardiff in 1933 and 1942

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