

World War II: What was life like in Harpenden?

In this unit, we will learn when and why WWII started. We will also focus on life on the Homefront: specifically, Harpenden's evacuation scheme; food rationing and the Dig for Victory campaign; the POW camp in Batford and Harpenden's air raid shelters. We will also learn important facts about the Holocaust and investigate key events such as the Battle of Britain.

Background information

- WWII lasted from 1939 to 1945. It began when Germany invaded Poland 1st September 1939.
- The Battle of Britain was the first ever battle to be fought entirely in the air. It lasted from 10th July to 31st October 1940. Can you find out any more interesting facts about the Battle of Britain?
- Did you know that there was a plan to have up to 2100 evacuees arrive in Harpenden over a 3-day period?
- Did you know there was a Prisoner of War (POW) camp in Batford during the war?
- Did you know Harpenden had several air raid shelters built to protect the public during WWII?

Knowledge and Understanding

In this unit pupils will learn...

- Which countries and key individuals were involved in WWII.
- Will learn about key events such as: The Battle of Britain and the Holocaust.
- Will describe what evacuation and rationing are and how it affected the way of life on the Homefront.
- Will explore Harpenden's role in the war and what life was like locally.
- Will describe some of the jobs women did during the war.

Enquiry skills and Key concepts

- Develop a chronologically secure knowledge of world history with an emphasis on WWII.
- Construct informed responses that involve thoughtful selection of relevant historical information.
- Research and develop a line of enquiry focusing Harpenden and its role during WWII.

Key Vocabulary:

Allies: A set of countries that fought against the Axis powers during WWII. They included: UK, France, Poland, British Commonwealth Countries, USA, China, Russia.

Antisemitism: discrimination against Jewish people.

Axis: A set of countries that fought against the Allies during WWII. They included: Germany, Japan and Italy.

Billeting Officer: People responsible for finding homes for evacuees.

D-Day: The invasion of Normandy on 6th June 1944.

Evacuation: Leaving a place. Children were evacuated to the countryside or other countries for their own safety.

Holocaust: the deliberate killing of 6 million Jewish people during WWII.

Nazi: A member of the National Socialist German Workers' Party.

POW Camp: a camp where enemy fighters who captured were held during the war.

Rationing: a way of ensuring a fair distribution of food and commodities during WWII

Ration Book: A book containing coupons to use in exchange for rationed food.

VE Day: Tuesday 8th May 1945. It marked the end of Hitler's War.