

OCTOBER 1944 – MAY 1945

Dave Bambrough 2011

In the build up to Christmas 1944 advertising and celebration were fairly low-key priorities for two very good reasons. One, the war was still in its latter stages and the other being that food was rationed, continuing to be until 1954. There was a feeling in the community that the prospects of victory were brighter than at any other period of the war, but the Germans, as was to prove, were still capable of strong resistance during the remaining months.



Many Sandown men and women worked at Cowes, employed in the factories of Saunders Roe and J. Samuel Whites. Others opened their local businesses and served the community with their daily needs.

Small boys collected Turf Cigarette Cards, Matchbox Tops, Cigarette Packets and played marbles quite contentedly in gutters in the relatively empty roads of the time. There was very little sporting activity taking place at this time.

Bus services between Sandown and Newport were so full at times that many people waiting at stops between the two towns were left standing at the stop, the buses being packed right out to the edge of the step. (There were no rear doors on Island Double Decker buses at this time). Pre and post war regulations which determined the number of passengers allowed to stand in the lower deck gangway would have involved the companies concerned with summonses, in times of need much is

overlooked. Many factory workers commuting from Sandown to Cowes made use of the Sandown - Newport Railway line. (Closed in 1956).

The only war news published weekly in the Chronicle appeared under the heading "Local War Notes" mainly consisting of bereavement, home leave and persons on the missing list. Occasionally the heading "Safe" would announce that a person previously listed as missing was in fact a prisoner of war, which no doubt brought great relief to the families concerned.

One food source not rationed was fish from Sandown Bay. On Tuesday November 21st 1944 Messrs. Hooper's Brothers motorboat "Dawn", manned by Cyril Kemp and Tom Southcott brought a catch of over 2000 herrings to shore. All were sold on the beach to ready buyers. Much to the annoyance, apparently, of local fishmongers.

Pleasurable activity within the town consisted of the two Picture Houses, (the Rivoli and the Queens) jumble and rummage sales, dances at the Manor House in Lake and numerous auctions of varying commodities. Pleasurable

moments increased when the War Department relinquished possession of Sandown Pier on November 30th 1944 and the Council resumed the letting of the Pavilion for entertainment.

The adverts for local shops illustrate the more varied type of business and names, most long gone, that existed in comparison with today. Mew Brothers 8-10 Melville Street, selling China, Glass, Plated Goods and Cutlery. Yelf & Co., at 15 High Street, an Off License. Dore's Cafe, 9 High Street, Baker, Pastry Cook and Caterer and Hot Lunches daily. Pollard and Ramage, Chemist, 107 High Street. Colenutts, 21 High Street for Children's Books, Toys, China and Stationary. L.S. Knott, 75

High Street Sandown, family Butcher, advertising home killed beef, pork, Lamb, plus best quality Colonial Meats and H. Hibbard, Grocer, at 12 Avenue Road.

Entry to the Island had been banned for most of the war; this was lifted in the weeks leading up to October 1944. Longshoremen quick to take advantage of the unexpected opportunity for some late season business, quickly made beach huts, tents and deck chairs available at the Western Esplanade, greatly appreciated by the influx of late visitors.

Sandown Youth Club, situated in Victoria road at this time announced in mid October 1944 that they had a full compliment in numbers and no more members would be admitted until the New Year of 1945.

Two private schools in existence at this time were, Ambleside P.N.E.U. at 5 Culver Road Sandown, (previously in Carter street) with Morrison Shelters available should the Luftwaffe visit.

Children started at three years of age and could continue until nine. Sandygate School in Grange Road (top of Beachfield Road) advertised their education merits as follows; Exam centre for College of Perception, Elocution and Drawing. And, private lessons for adults, encompassing, Art, Dancing,

R.B.1
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MINISTRY OF
FOOD
1953 - 1954

SERIAL NO. 1
AK 569098

RATION BOOK

Surname CLARK (AMY D) Initials
Address Valparaiso
6 Avenue Rd
Sandown, I.W.

IF FOUND
RETURN TO
ANY FOOD
OFFICE

F.O. CODE No.
S—C
3—4

AMBLESIDE P.N.E.U. SCHOOL,
5, CULVER ROAD, SANDOWN.
(Morrison Shelters).
Kindergarten and junior classes (ages
3 — 9 inclusive).
Particulars from the School.

Sandygate School,
THE GRANGE, SANDOWN
Seniors, Juniors and Infants
Exam. Centre for College of Precep-
tors, Elocution, Drawing. Buses from
all parts stop at gate. Classes and pri-
vate lessons children and adults. Elocu-
tion, Art, Dancing, Economics. For
particulars apply to Barbara Allison.

French lessons and Economics. The Clerk of the Council was instructed to make enquiries of the owners of the Coastguard Cottages along Culver Road with a view to turning the area into a post war-housing scheme. 67 years later the status quo remains.

Only four shops placed adverts in the Chronicle advertising Christmas. Colenutt's, 21 High Street, Byerley's No.1 High Street. Boards (now Bailey's) with a simple "Christmas Gifts" heading their normal advert and A.R. "Winnie" Rix, "Newsagents", 3 St. Johns Road.

The Post Office announced that a delivery of letters and parcels would be made on Sunday, 24th of December and one delivery, *as usual* on Christmas Day. There was no delivery on Boxing Day. A Christmas card in an open envelope cost One Penny to send; this was firmly stated in a G.P.O.advert as many people were only putting a Halfpenny stamp on.

Around the Churches; a traditional service of "Nine Lessons and Carols" at Christ Church. St. John's Church, Carter Street, advertised many services on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. York Road Methodist Church advertised a Nativity Play "The Court of the King" at 3p.m. on Christmas Eve and a Carol Service at 6.30p.m. The Congregational Church in Leed Street offered a "United Christmas Day Service". The Baptist Church in Station Avenue, a "Lantern Service" at 2.30p.m. and Carol services at 11a.m. and 6.30 p.m. St. Patrick's, Beachfield Road, held a Midnight Mass to a crowded congregation on Christmas Day.

CHRISTMAS PLEDGE

Of all the festivals of the year, Christmas belongs to the family and especially to the children. With cribs and Christmas trees, presents, toys, holly and mistletoe, fun and games, we recall to young minds the nativity of Christ and the joy His birth brought to the world.

Children everywhere will be reminded of the Infant whose coming heralded peace & goodwill towards men. They will hear the supreme message of Christmas to all mankind, "Lift up your hearts and rejoice."

While we cannot rejoice wholeheartedly this year, with so many families separated from each other we can resolve and pray that our children, our neighbour's children and the orphans of war shall not have to endure such desecration of the spirit of Christmas we have witnessed in our time.

In early January, Sandown Pier Pavilion advertised a one off performance only Pantomime, Dick Whittington, in aid of No. 1085 East Wight Squadron A.T.C. Welfare Fund and N.F.S. Benevolent Fund. Admission 4/- and 3/- reserved. Unreserved 2/-. Tickets obtainable at Martin's Library, No. 2 High Street.

The popular Sandham Hall Youth Club then situated in Victoria Road was not so popular with local residents who complained to the Council of noise and disturbance caused by persons at the youth club. This was outside of the Council's jurisdiction. The club remained there for many years moving to the Fairway Secondary Modern School in the mid fifties.

The end of January 1945 brought about the heaviest fall of snow experienced on the Island for many years. Travel was only possible by train or Shank's Pony, the bus services being suspended for a few days. It appears that the Southern Vectis had suspended their services whilst the erstwhile Enterprise Company ran one bus between Sandown and Newport with Blake's maintaining their service with the smaller of their two vehicles also running in the afternoons.

Children took full advantage of the conditions indulging in snowballing and tobogganing on convenient slopes. Popular resorts within the Sandown area were; Lake Hill, Pier Street and Esplanade Road. The inclement weather brought about the cancellation of the Dick Whittington "Pantomime" until

February, with most schools, no doubt to the delight of the children, closed for a couple of days.

In February 1945 access was once again permitted to Sandown Pier. The Pier had been breached during the war years in order to prevent any invasion by the Germans using it for easy access. The public and fishermen were once again allowed access as far as a barrier erected at the shore end of the breach. In the middle of March following an agreement with the appropriate government department, Culver Road re-opened to the public, restricted access having been implemented for most of the war. A rather topical request to the Council was that dustbins should be emptied weekly instead of fortnightly. Forthcoming holiday visitors taking holidays at Easter and Whitsun were advised through the paper that it would be prudent to bring food with them, as there were no guarantees that enough would be available within the hotels due to rationing.

The aforementioned (Flying) Enterprise Bus Company ran a service from Newport to Sandown. The Company, a small privately owned one had a fleet of 6 buses. Enterprise drivers were often very accommodating in dropping off people and parcels at addresses on the way to Newport, that were well away from the nearest bus stop. At the April Sandown-Shanklin Council meeting the question of the very inadequate service run by the Southern Vectis Bus Company was raised. The problem was, with mainly hourly services, buses were nearly full at source and many people were being left behind at stops on the Sandown - Newport run. The Enterprise Company however were doing their best to avert this problem, but unfortunately not within the law. A Mr F. White (Councillor) said he had been informed that the 32-seater Enterprise Bus had recently transported 65 people on board on this route. The Council urged that both matters be brought to the attention of the respective companies, as extra buses would certainly be required when holidaymakers arrived. Both matters were referred to the respective companies.

"Nazis" in Sandown, impossible, but almost true. It seems that a film entitled "Hitler's Children" shown at the Regal Cinema in Shanklin had influenced three Sandown youths to imitate Germans. One burlesquing as Hitler, the others as two of his henchmen. The appearance of a policeman soon put the invaders to flight. The Rivoli announced some very technical news in early May. Namely the installation of the very latest "British Acoustic Duosonic Sound Reproducing System", and the fitting of a "Westone Beaded Screen", thus ensuring perfection of sight and sound. Marvellous!

In the first week of May the rather distressing news of the Sandown Rabbit Club came to light. Solely due to lack of interest the activities of the Sandown Rabbit, Poultry and Garden Produce Club, ceased to exist. At an extraordinary meeting held at "Hibernia" Victoria Road, with only four of its members present it was decided to discontinue the Club. It recommended that any members still interested should join the Shanklin Rabbit Club. Funds in hand totalling £4.12s were transferred to the Sandown, Lake and Newchurch District Nursing Association (£3.3s.) and Shanklin Rabbit Club (£1.9s). (A case of "Hare" today and gone tomorrow).

On a more serious note the war was officially over at one minute past midnight of May 7th. V. E. Celebrations were held throughout Tuesday May 8th. in a restrained manner and with good taste. Services of thanksgiving were held in the local Churches attended by exceptionally large congregations. A large bonfire was lit on the beach, hotels such as "The Seagrove" had had their pre war lighting restored and effectively augmented with dozens of fairy lights. Many of the Public Houses were brightly illuminated and full to the brim with singing and dancing merrymakers. Large numbers attended dances at the Manor House, Lake and the Town Hall Shanklin. A speech given by the King (George VI) was listened to with appreciation at the Rivoli Cinema. One feature of dissatisfaction with some of the towns' citizens was the complete withdrawal of all postal facilities for 48 hours during the celebration period.

CELEBRATE VICTORY
WITH DINNER AT MASTERS
OPEN TILL 9 p.m. DAILY.

—○—

We have a fine selection of Wines and Beers.

—○—

BOOK A TABLE AND BRING YOUR FRIENDS.

Masters, Caterers & Butchers, 16 & 18 High Street Sandown.

On cessation of hostilities and with an eye to business, Arthur "Doughy" Masters was prompt to place the accompanying advert in the local paper.

The Sandown & Shanklin Urban District Council organised a "United Thanksgiving Service and Victory Parade". It was held on Sunday May 13th 1945. The Parade was assembled in Grafton Street at 2.15 p.m. then proceeding to the Pier Pavilion by way of Melville Street, High Street, Avenue Road Slipway and along the Esplanade for the United Service in the

Pavilion at 3 p.m. The war in Europe was now over, celebrations concluded, Sandown returned to as near normal as was possible. There was of course still the small matter of defeating the Japanese. Continuing reports appeared in the press for months highlighting the return of prisoners and some of their stories. Several returning men were awarded medals for their bravery whilst others were mentioned in despatches prior to receiving their honours. (Concluded).