

WARTIME MORDEN



Trevor Sergeant (undated)

There were daily air raids in 1940 which were replaced in 1941 by continued nightly air raids. Although there were anti-aircraft guns on Cannon Hill Common and Prince George's Playing Fields, they only created considerable noise and were utterly useless. This period was a distressing time when bombs were falling, and the following day observing local houses destroyed, and customers known to us having lost their lives. Incidentally, Dad's shop window was shattered and, when replaced, again shattered by a subsequent raid! Another problem was the cluster of incendiary bombs, causing fires to break out. These were countered by various groups set up as 'fire wardens', complete with stirrup pumps, hoses, buckets, etc, to contain the fires until the arrival of the fire brigade.

Ken

There was a blue Police Box (like Dr Who's Tardis) in Grand Drive, near the corner with Lower Morden Lane. It was next to the siren, which was a warning of bombs being dropped. The All Clear was sounded when there was no more danger. One day the siren went off when my Mum, sister and I were going home after shopping. We had to go in one of our neighbour's garages which had a shelter inside, as we didn't have time to get home!

Mavis

The Home Guard used to practise every Sunday morning during the War, on the waste ground where the new shopping development and flats have just been built at the corner of Grand Drive and Hillcross Avenue. They were very smart in uniform and carrying rifles! They also used the ground where Edinburgh and Thornton Courts were later built.

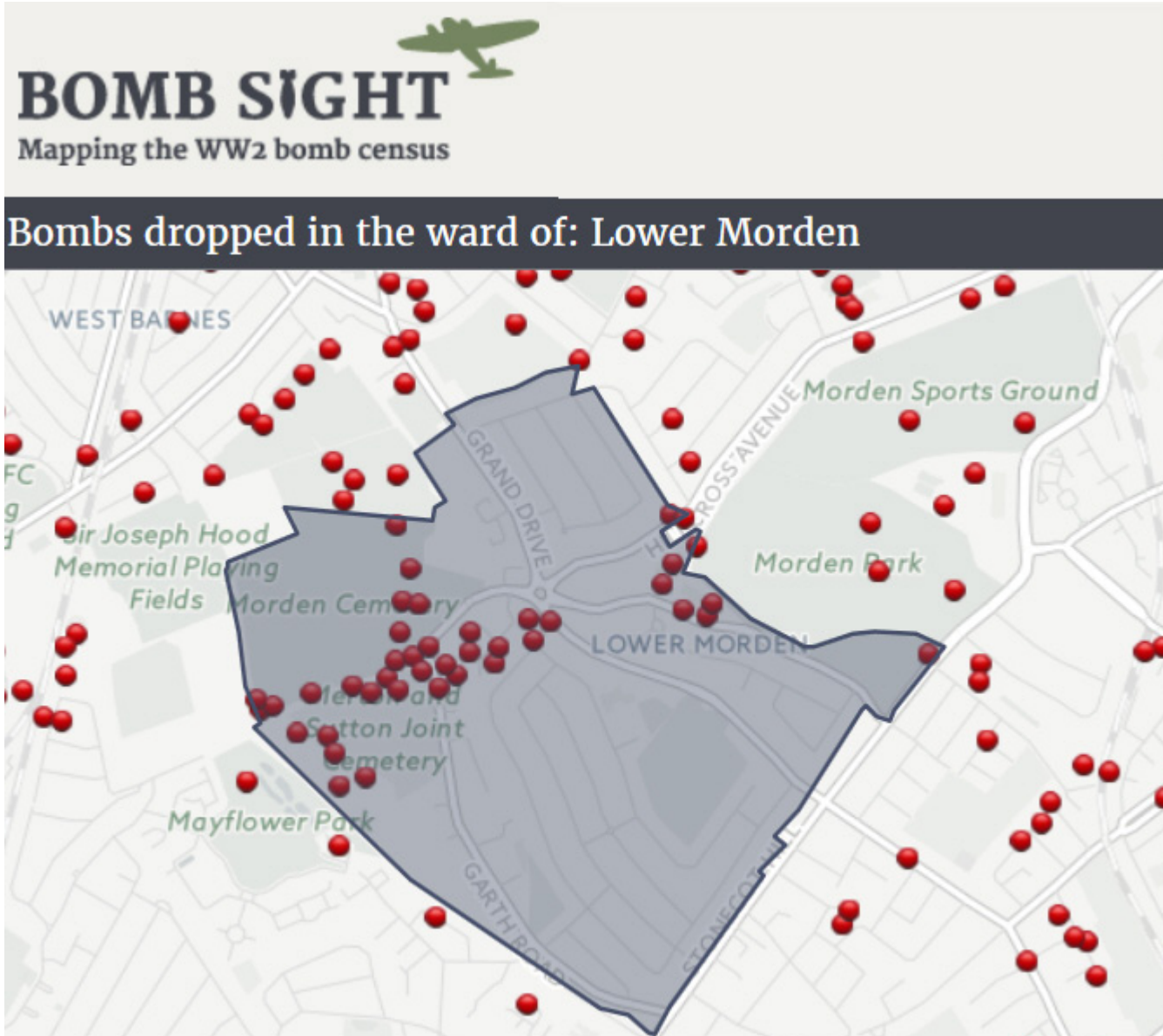
The end shop, which lies back, used to be the Post Office. The siren was on a tall post opposite the Post Office, so you had to hold your ears! The cows in the nearby field seemed to get used to the horrible noise!

The Post Office staff were not allowed to use the shelters, as there was no time to lock everything away!

Gladys

After a brief lull in 1943, we had the arrival of the 'fly bomb' in 1944. This was a device resembling a small aircraft which, on the engine stopping, would descend rapidly, causing immense destruction on landing. I recall an occasion when one of these devices cut out as it flew overhead as I was with several others in Mostyn Gardens. It descended towards us but finally landed in Martin Way, causing considerable casualties to the occupants of the house.

Ken



The rubble of a house in Martin Way, Morden, flattened by enemy bombing in 1940

(c)Wimbledon Borough News [MerMor_World_War_2-5]



Our house was damaged when a doodle bug exploded in neighbouring Northway. but the war also had its excitement for a small boy – collecting shrapnel and watching all sorts of aircraft as well as doodle bugs. The war meant rationing and shortages.

Richard

Total number of bombs dropped from 7th October 1940 to 6th June 1941 in Lower Morden: High Explosive Bomb 39
Downloaded from <http://bombsight.org/explore/greater-london/merton/lower-morden/> 16 Feb 2017

There were public air raid shelters in Joseph Hood Recreation Ground, Mostyn Gardens and other open spaces. However, they were not generally used as everybody preferred to shelter in their own homes. On the outbreak of war, one could obtain an 'Anderson' shelter for erection in the back garden, but they were completely impractical. They were followed by the 'Morrison' shelter which consisted of a large steel tabletop, located in the living room and accommodating 4 or 5 people underneath the table. Nearly everybody preferred sheltering in the cupboard under the stairs!

Ken



George was an air-raid warden during the first part of the war, stationed at the top of our road. Whenever there was a red alert he used to pop home and tell me, and I would wrap Jeanne up in a big blanket ready to take her down to the Anderson shelter when the siren went. We had two Anderson shelters together at the end of the garden to make it bigger and shared it with the next-door neighbour and her two children.

Edith

A house in the next road, facing some backing onto ours, had to be re-built. The family in that house were killed – a husband, wife and baby. Part of the house next door to it also had to be re-built. A piece of the brickwork, about 8 bricks square, hit the corner of our air-raid shelter, but we were alright. Jeanne cried because the dust went in her eyes. Also there was a big crater in the road in front of our house. We had damage through the front bedroom roof and had to have rooms painted and re-papered to clear up the war damage.

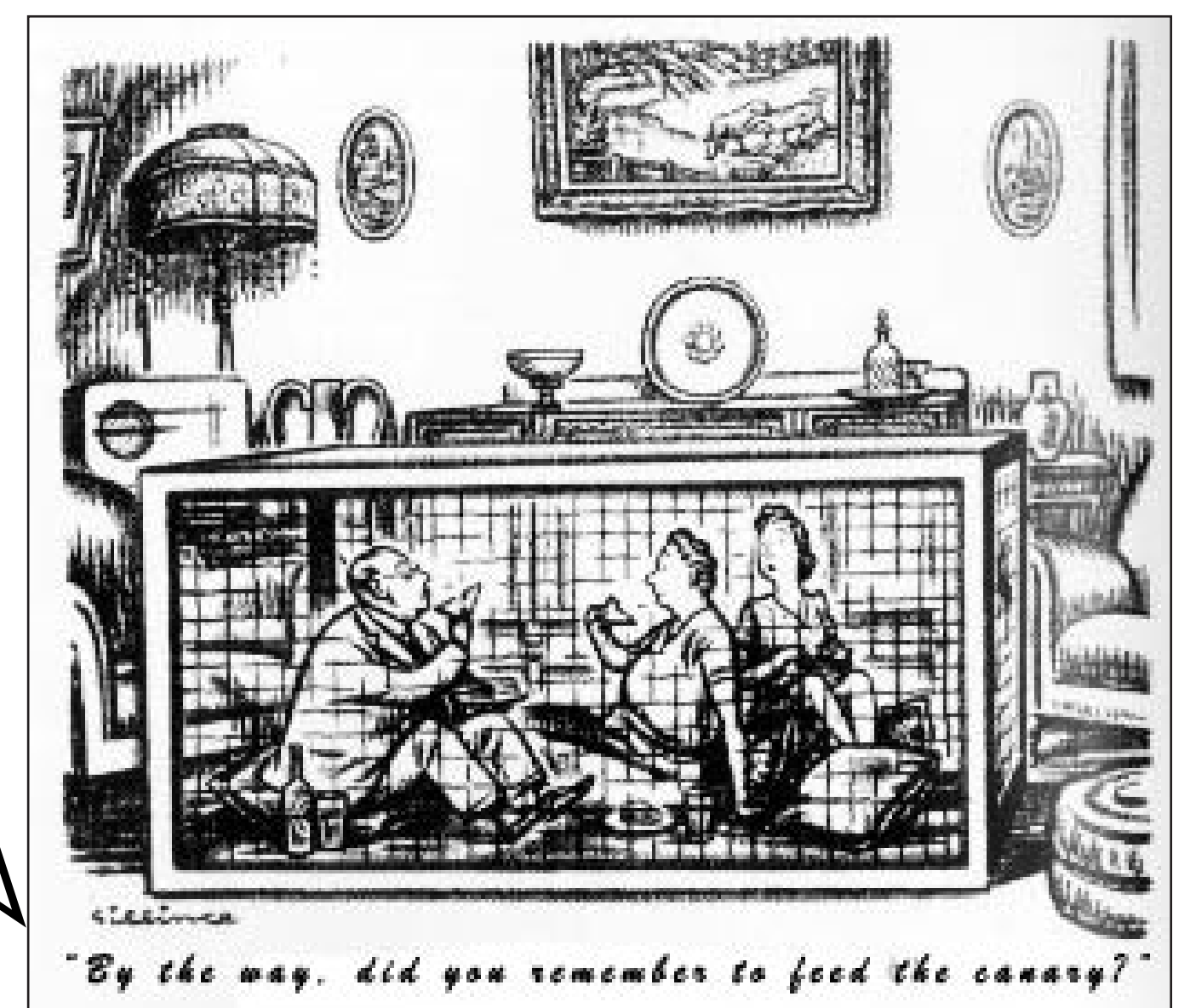
Edith

My Dad put an Anderson shelter in the garden, sunk in the ground, and he put soil and plants on top of the part that was exposed. Although I wasn't very old, I can still remember the damp smell of concrete. My Mum told me later, when I was old enough to understand, that when the siren sounded she would grab my sister and I – one under each arm – and take us down the shelter. I think that was when the Doodle-bugs were coming over. We were about 3 or 4, me being the elder.

Mavis

After a time we were given a Morrison shelter which we had in the front room of the house. It was like a big steel table. We put a mattress on the wire mesh that was the base of it. When we went to bed we'd go into that. I used to put the two children in. It was a bit scary. During the raids, we could hear the guns on Cannon Hill Common. Jeanne sometimes asked me, "Mummy, why are you shaking?" and I would reply, "I'm cold! You've got all the blankets!"

Edith



"By the way, did you remember to feed the canary?"