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# BROMLEY

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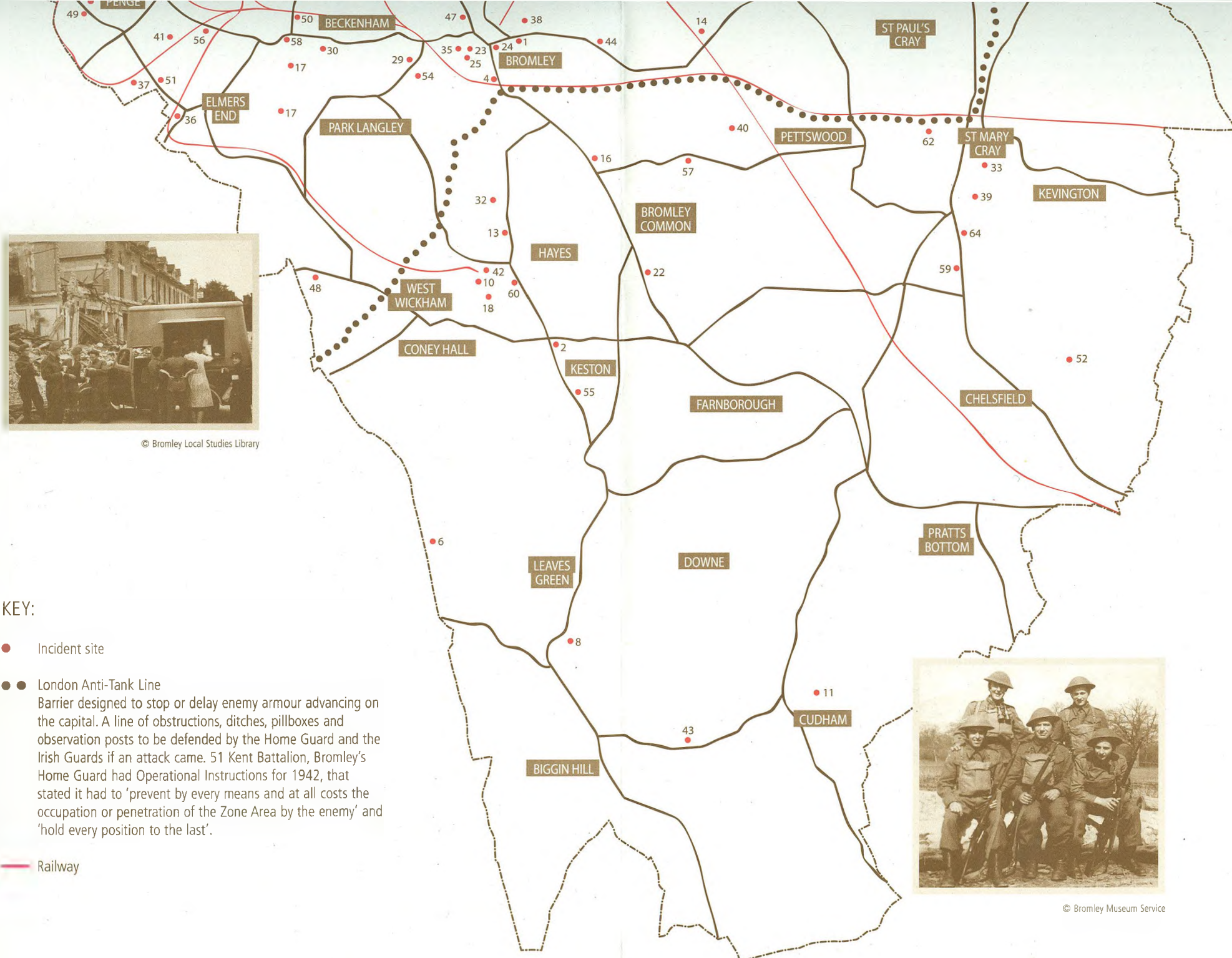
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# WAR

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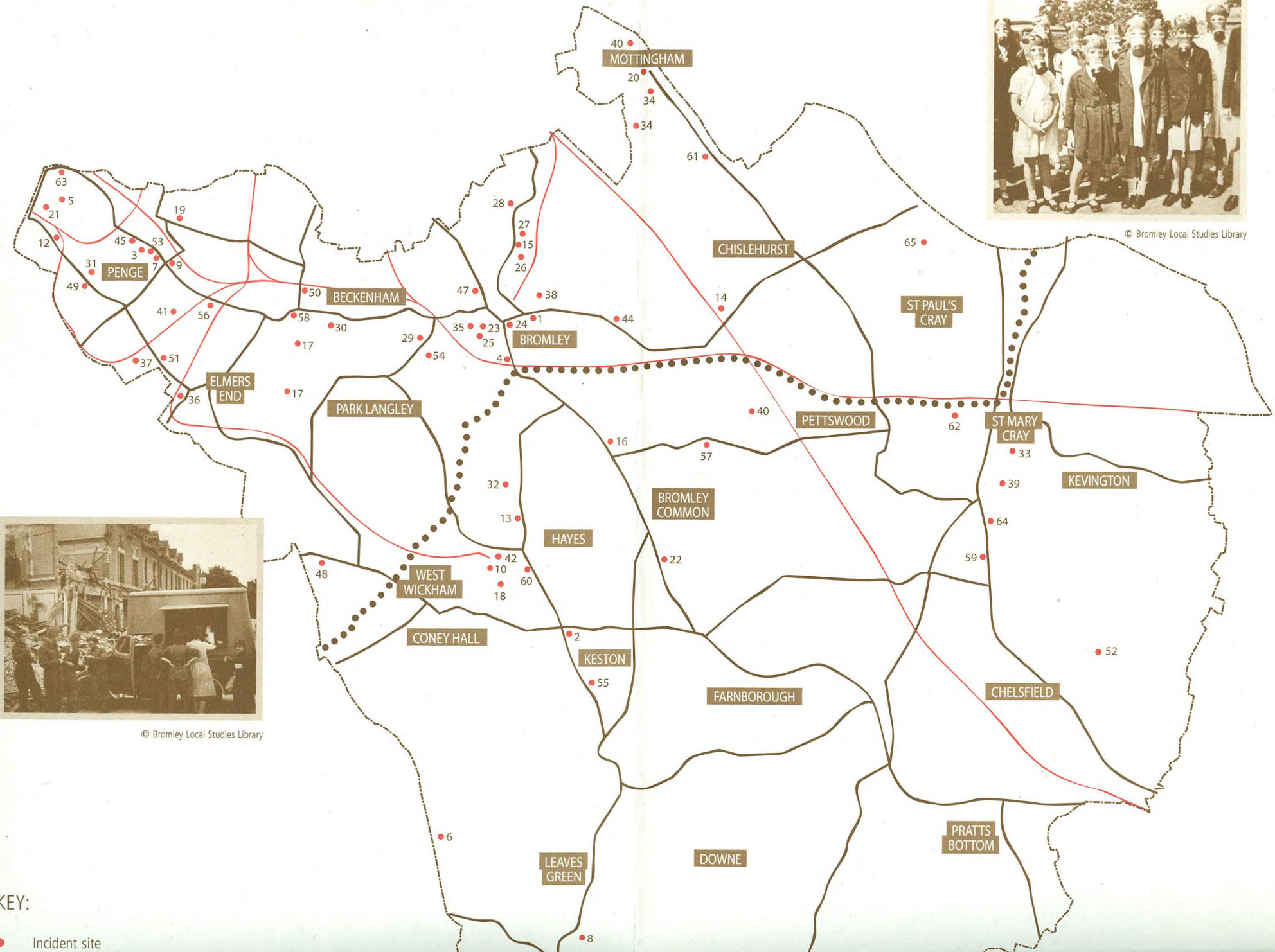
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# BOROUGH INCIDENTS MAP



KEY:

● Incident site

## INCIDENTS

**1 Siren, Bromley Police Station – Sunday 3 September 1939**

This was among the first of Bromley's air-raid sirens to be installed. Others were installed later to give full aural coverage across the borough. As a stop-gap some police cars were fitted with sirens to give warnings in less populated areas. Factory hooters were also used as a temporary measure.

## 2 Anti-aircraft battery, Hayes Common – 29 September 1939

Battery site 'ZS10' first set up and manned at the junction of Baston Road and Croydon Road, part of a ring of twenty-three protecting the approach to London. Early action included a delayed action bomb in the early morning of Monday 16 September 1940. The weapon was defused and destroyed by Royal Engineers. The site was targeted again on Saturday 28 September by a 100kg oil bomb, which was again successfully defused. In the spring of 1942 'ZS10' became 'S10' with a mixed battery company and more modern guns.

### 3 Reopening, St John's School, Penge – 4 March 1940

On this day the school had its quota of air-raid shelters and reopened fully with 312 children attending. Following practised air-raid drills the school could be cleared within two minutes. Previously only sixty children could use the building at the same time. Any teacher not on duty would attend the town hall to work on ration cards in the Food Control Office. Similar construction work had been undertaken at schools across the borough.

**4 Sunday cinema, Gaumont, Bromley – 5 May 1940**

It took a world war to lift Bromley Borough's ban on Sunday film showings. It was decided to dispense with public consultation on the idea. The war, and the need to boost public morale took precedence. Sunday 5 May 1940 saw the Gaumont in the High Street hold a celebrity concert to usher in the new era.

## 5 Refugees, Crystal Palace Park – May 1940

Marquees erected in the park and on Hayes Common administered the arrival of refugees from Belgium and Holland following Germany's invasion of their countries. Once registered the people were then billeted with local people or moved into empty houses.

## 6 First attack, Keston, Tuesday – 30 July 1940

First air-raid incident in the Bromley area occurred at Stagmanspit Cottages, Layhams Road, Keston. A high explosive bomb caused some damage during darkness hours. Biggin Hill airfield was also targeted.

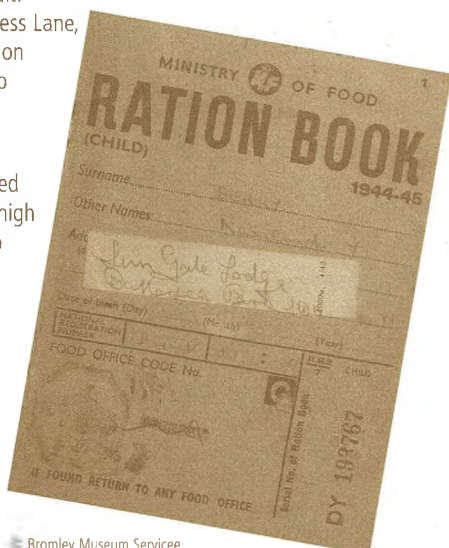
**7 The Empire Theatre, High Street, Penge – Monday 26 August 1940**

An audience of 500 watching a performance of 'Murder on the Second Floor' were kept in the theatre as the sirens began. A party atmosphere was created with community singing, jokes and monologues recited by members of the audience and the actors returned to perform a series of sketches on the stage. It was six hours before everybody could go home. A fortnight later the theatre was closed and did not reopen until July 1941.

## 8 RAF Biggin Hill – Sunday 18 August 1940

Air-raid siren sounded at 1.20pm. Machine gun and cannon fire raked The Kings Arms as a burning Dornier bomber exchanged shots with a Hurricane fighter in hot pursuit. The Dornier made a belly landing in a field off Blackness Lane, having previously been hit while taking part in a raid on RAF Kenley. The destruction was officially attributed to Addington Home Guard to give 'Dad's Army' a boost and the national press promoted the story.

Heavy bombing of the airfield and surrounding area led to at least six civilian deaths in Leaves Green. Eighty high explosive bombs fell outside the airfield perimeter. Up to 400 bombs were recorded on the airfield. The runways were heavily cratered and white markers were placed to show areas clear for landing.





**8 The Station's 'Darkest Day' – Friday 30 August 1940**

A series of raids on most days caused damage to every building and wreaked havoc in the surrounding area. More than 1,200 airmen, 250 Women's Auxiliary Air Force (WAAFs) and dozens of civilians were working at the Station.

Friday was 'The Darkest Day' according to newspapers. At 6pm serious fires followed a direct hit on a trench shelter. Scores of ambulances arrived.

Thirty-nine bodies were recovered and twenty-six injured rescued. Most of the dead were young women of the WAAFs, but the total included eleven local residents. This was the worst single incident of the war for casualties in the Borough of Orpington. RAF dead were buried in Star Lane Cemetery, St Mary Cray.

Raids hardly died away before they began again through the weekend. By the Sunday raiders were back at 1pm, disrupting the burial of fifty people in a mass funeral. At about 6pm a formation of Dorniers knocked out the sector operations room. Later the property known as Towerfields near Keston ponds served as a temporary operations centre.



© Bromley Museum Service

**9 The Blitz begins, Green Lane, Penge – Saturday 7 September 1940**

Officials of the Penge Co-operative Flower Show continued judging competitions at the Co-operative Hall, despite bombs falling around them.

**10 The New Inn, Hayes – 15 September 1940**

A direct hit caused virtual demolition of the building. The headwaiter, Fredrick Scates and Charles Hammond, husband of one of the waitresses were killed. Hayes Station also sustained serious damage. The inn was rebuilt in 1962. The Rex Cinema (now the Iceland store) and Hayes Station were also damaged in the raid.

**11 Angus House, Cudham Ju88 bomber crash – 27 September 1940**

At 11.05am a Junkers, Ju88 bomber was hit by anti-aircraft fire and crashed in the grounds. Three of the crew baled out and were held, a fourth fell to his death due to parachute failure.

**12 Public shelter, Anerley Road & Station Road, Penge – 8 October 1940**

Direct hit on the shelter at 4am believed to have cost several lives. The shelter was hit again just after 6pm on Tuesday 11 July 1944. Many shops were damaged and a fire broke out in a wrecked bakers. Seventeen people died and nearly a hundred were injured. Nine of the victims were killed at 15 and 66 Anerley Road.

**13 216 Hayes Lane, Hayes – 26/27 October 1940**

The building was demolished by one of a cluster of high explosive bombs, killing three. Owen Parsloe and Walter Field from Bromley Rescue Service were later awarded George Medals for rescuing a mother and her young son at the scene by tunnelling under rubble and debris of the collapsed building in a three-hour operation.



© David Stoner, Bromley Museum Service (media)

**14 Chislehurst Caves – October 1940**

Opened as a public shelter by the principal lessee, James Geary Gardner. Ministry of Health officials felt the caves were unfit for shelter due to their high humidity and the crowded conditions. However, many families used the caves for extended periods without any apparent ill effects. Estimates vary but it is likely that over 1,000 shelterers used the caves by the end of September. They came in cars and on trains from miles around. Many were homeless refugees from the East End and surrounding boroughs. By December 1940 there are estimates of between 6,000 and 14,000 people regularly using the caves which now had ventilation, food canteens, a hospital and entertainment facilities. Marshals administered controls over admissions and behaviour.



# INCIDENTS

## 15 Springhill Fire Station – 2 November 1940

Just after 10am on an overcast morning a low-level raider dropped a bomb on the Auxiliary Fire Station at the corner of Plaistow Lane and College Road, a large villa standing in its own grounds. Two firemen were killed under mounds of debris. Today traffic circulates around the open grassed area where the building previously stood.

## 16 26 Johnson Road, Bromley Common, Saturday – 9 November 1940

At 7.30pm a Heinkel bomber hit by anti-aircraft gunfire crashed onto houses in the road during a raid. Three crew members and resident Mrs Alice Monday were killed. Two of the crew had baled out; one hung from a gutter by his parachute and died later. The pilot came down in the grounds of Sundridge Park Hotel and surrendered. Johnson Road was evacuated because of the danger from thirty unexploded 50kg bombs. Rescue workers dug under debris doused with high-octane fuel before bombs were cleared to relieve the trapped and give medical aid to the injured. Sgt David Grigg who carried bombs to safety and Dr Kenneth Tapper who gave medical aid to those trapped under debris were awarded the George Medal for their outstanding courage.



## 17 Greenways & Merlin Grove, Beckenham – night of 14/15 November 1940

On this clear, moonlit night a pair of parachute mines fell 1,200 yards apart in Greenways and Merlin Grove, Beckenham. 300 homes destroyed or damaged. Among five fatalities at 55 and 58 Greenways were a husband and wife and their two sons. Two further deaths occurred at 103 Merlin Grove. The local area was devastated by the blasts. The site at Merlin Grove subsequently became an internment camp for Italian soldiers captured in Libya during the North African campaign.



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## 18 Ivy Cottage, Warren Road, Hayes – Open December 1940

Lady Estelle Hambro made the cottage available for use as a canteen for service personnel stationed in the district. Known as the United Services Canteen the building offered dining, reading and writing rooms, remaining open for four years with the help of 120 local volunteers. During that time it served 91,467 hot meals, 173,407 hot drinks, 75,400 cakes and 81,925 cigarettes.

## 19 Cator Road, Beckenham – Sunday 29 December 1940

Enormous conflagrations and firestorms in the City, clearly seen from Bromley lighting up the blackened sky. A land mine exploded with great violence at 6.47pm near the junction with Lennard Road, destroying six houses and damaging 420, plus Holy Trinity Church and a couple of factories. Lennard Road ARP and FAP posts, plus St Christopher's Kindergarden School on the corner of Lennard Road were wrecked. Remarkably only one person was killed, the 11-year old niece of the school's headmistress.

## 20 Mottingham post office – 19/20 March 1941

One of the last major attacks at the end of the 1940-41 London Blitz. A family of three were killed while waiting for a bus as a one-ton high explosive bomb landed in the road, 30 yards away. In all six people died at the junction of Mottingham and Portland Roads. Among eighteen injured, three were trapped under burning debris.

## 21 Water Towers, Crystal Palace – 16 April 1941

The 284ft high Crystal Palace water towers were demolished creating an estimated 1,600 tons of scrap metal. South Tower was taken down in 1940. North tower was demolished on 16 April 1941. Logie Baird the Scottish TV pioneer had previously experimented with colour transmissions from one of the towers to his labs in Kangley Bridge Road.

## 22 3-5 Jackson Road, Bromley – 16/17 April 1941

Nearly 700 German bombers flew towards London. Many flew over Bromley. Incendiary bombs were dropped on the town to light the way for follow-up raiders. Sirens sounded about 9.15pm and a high explosive bomb landed on 3-5 Jackson Road, which destroyed or severely damaged ninety homes, ten shops, a public house and Bromley bus garage including sixty buses. Four people died in their garden Anderson shelter.

## 23 Bromley parish church – 16/17 April 1941

St Peter's and St Paul's church hit in the first waves of attack, almost totally destroyed by a 250kg high explosive bomb. Only the tower remained. Incendiary bombs started a fire in the ruins and Hazel Kissick, an 18 year old pupil on fire-watch duty was fatally injured. St Marks Church tower survived the raid but Bromley's Congregational Church and the Methodist Central Hall were destroyed.

## 24 Around Market Square – 16/17 April 1941

Landmines, dozens of high explosives and numerous incendiary bombs showered down on the town. Isard's warehouse behind the Post Office was destroyed. Damaged water mains reduced water pressure for hoses. Enormous local damage ensued. Whole rows of houses were damaged. Dunn's furniture store on the eastern side of Market Square burnt fiercely as the linoleum department caught fire. Fire services were hampered by low water pressure caused by fractured mains and the fire was soon out of control. Damage affected adjoining shops. Finally the building was reduced to a charred shell, while neighbouring shops were badly damaged by the effects of smoke and heat.

## 25 Church House – 16/17 April 1941

The mansion stood overlooking Bromley Library Gardens, near the parish church.

Since August 1939 it had been occupied by No. 19 Group Centre, Observer Corps, relaying details of enemy aircraft movements over North Kent, Surrey and both sides of the Thames estuary to the RAF. This work played an essential role in the Battle of Britain and the defence of London. The building was completely gutted by a deluge of incendiaries. The Corps

retreated to the telephone exchange off Church Road and quickly restored communications. The only visible remains today are the terrace and an oval lawn to the former entrance, at present a flowerbed.



Bromley Local Studies Library

## 26 64 Lansdowne Road, Sundridge Park – 16/17 April 1941

Three CID officers were investigating a robbery that had taken place in Algernon Road, Lewisham. DI's Haynes and O'Sullivan and Sgt Davey called at the house before the raid began. They were still there when a large calibre bomb demolished the house, killing all three and several occupants.

## 27 72 Nichol Lane, Plaistow – 16/17 April 1941

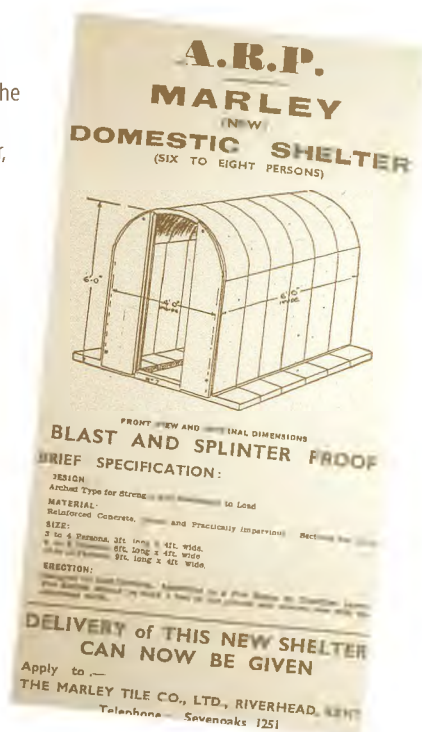
The building was hit by a land mine, killing eighteen people and injuring sixteen. Twenty-six houses were destroyed and more than seventy damaged, scarring the area for many years afterwards. The Randall brothers Percy and William, professional golfers, and their sister, Helen died in the blast.

## 28 58-62 Southover, Plaistow – 16/17 April 1941

Land mines were usually dropped in pairs. A block of council flats suffered badly from the twin that devastated Nichol Lane killing fifteen residents in Southover. Forty-two people were injured. Nine flats and three houses were destroyed and nearly 500 damaged.

## 29 4 Park Hill Road, Shortlands – 16/17 April 1941

'Tantallon', the home of Lord Stamp of Shortlands, Freeman and Charter Mayor of Beckenham (now the site of Luscombe Court) took a direct hit. Lord Stamp, Lady Stamp and their eldest son died in the raid. They were buried in Elmers End Cemetery, now Beckenham Crematorium.

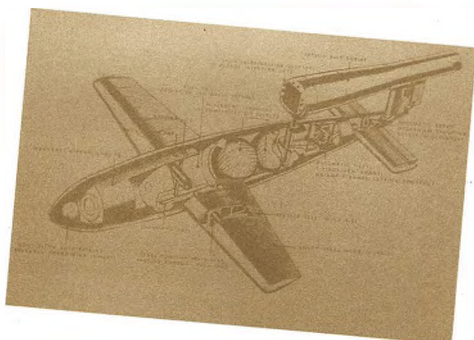




# INCIDENTS

## 30 Junction of Wickham Road & Court Downs Road, Beckenham – 16/17 April 1941

Twenty-nine year old Carl Taylor, driver of a towing vehicle and trailer pump won the George Medal. When a 250kg bomb landed 20 feet from his trailer three firemen died instantly in the blast. Fragments entered the petrol tank and engulfed the whole vehicle. Carl Taylor struggled to the driver's seat and dragged a seriously injured comrade from the blaze.



## 31 Ridsdale Road, Anerley – 16/17 April 1941

Three 250kg bombs landed in the road, demolishing Nos.26-32, 48-50 & 50-58, killing four people and injuring sixteen. Ridsdale Road was hit again at 3.45am by half-ton bomb at rear of shops. Nos. 4-12 destroyed. Also two other high explosive bombs in Anerley Park Road and Castledine Road. The same raid caused a major fire at printers Johnson Riddle in Green Lane where the strenuous efforts of fire fighters couldn't prevent the premises being completely burnt out.

## 32 Bourne Vale, Hayes – 16/17 April 1941

At 10.20pm a 250kg bomb fell in the front garden of 167-169 making a large crater and destroying both houses. Gas mains and sewers were fractured. Another 250kg bomb fell near 160-162 also demolishing both buildings. To make matters worst a parachute mine landed to the rear of 167, causing blast damage to some 250 houses in the surrounding area at 10.30pm.

## 33 High Street, St Mary Cray – 16/17 April 1941

Nearly 50 heavy bombs and mines were recorded during this night in Orpington. The most serious was a parachute mine exploding at High Street, St Mary Cray at 9.55pm, the commencement of the raid. Exploding opposite the Catholic church the missile destroyed six shops, shattered the church and set vehicles ablaze. The blast resulted in eleven deaths and more than forty injuries. Most casualties were at Nos. 127, 162, 168, 172 and 176 High Street.

## 34 Beaconsfield Road & Hartings Road, Mottingham – 16/17 April 1941

Two pairs of land mines inflicted enormous damage over a wide area. The first of a pair of land mines fell at about 10.20pm inflicting enormous damage over a wide area. The blast caused eight deaths, three at 33 Beaconsfield, and seventy injuries.

## 35 Trench shelters, Martins Hill – Saturday, 19 April 1941

Bromley attacked as part of an extensive raid on London. Alert from 9.20pm to 4.46am on Sunday. Six land mines, plus over one hundred 250kg heavy explosive bombs were dropped on the Bromley area. A direct hit on a trench shelter at Martins Hill Recreation Ground resulted in five people being killed.

Trenches had been constructed around major towns prior to the beginning of the war as part of plans to protect shoppers and residents. Here in Bromley, trenches were intended for up to 1500 people. Dug seven feet deep and five wide, the sides were boarded, covered with corrugated iron and then two feet of soil added on top.

## 36 Elmers End Station – 19 April 1941

St Margaret's Road and St Margaret's Villas in Croydon Road, plus station sidings and railway tracks were destroyed. Muirhead's factory damaged by an unexploded bomb. Eight killed in the villas, plus three killed by a direct hit on an Anderson shelter.

## 37 Beckenham AFS fatalities – 19/20 April 1941

Men of Beckenham's Auxiliary Fire Service (AFS) dispatched to a fire sub-station at Old Palace School, St Lennards Street, Bromley-by-Bow to reinforce the hard pressed East End firemen. As the men mustered for orders in the early hours of Sunday morning, the building was hit by a heavy bomb, which demolished part of it and started a major blaze. A total of thirty-four firemen perished, including twenty-one from Beckenham. A memorial stone stands at Beckenham Crematorium. Alongside it stands another memorial to heavy rescue personnel of Beckenham's Civil Defence who lost their lives while on duty in Links Road, West Wickham on 16 June 1944.



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# INCIDENTS

## 38 St John's Parish Hall, Freelands Road, Bromley – 28 April 1941

Ministry of Food began providing reasonably priced meals for the public. Opening of the first 'Civic', later called 'British' Restaurants, meant the public could have a self-service meal for 10d, less than 5p today. Soup (1d), meat and two vegetables (6d), pudding (2d) and a cup of tea (1d). In the first week 970 meals were served and the second 1,300. In June 1941 another communal feeding centre opened in Bromley High Street and others followed in Burnt Ash Lane, Southlands Road and Arthur Road Mission Hall Restaurant, Beckenham, delivered hot meals to factories involved in the war effort. A British Restaurant at Melvin School, Penge also operated a cash and carry service.

## 39 Anglesea Road, St Mary Cray – 22 October 1943

Eight bombers tracked following early evening sirens. Twenty high explosive bombs fell in the Orpington area, one or more landing in St Mary Cray. Occurring at 7.30pm explosions destroyed or seriously damaged thirty homes in Anglesea Road and rendered seventy people homeless. Seven people were killed and sixteen injured at 64-66. Three houses were destroyed and eighty badly damaged in the raid.

## 40 Thornt Wood Battery, Petts Wood – 21/22 January 1944

Attack in two phases; the first at 9pm and the second at 4.30am the following morning. Nearly 500 sorties making this the biggest raid on Britain since 1941.

Huge uproar of concentrated anti-aircraft gunfire meant bombers had to take sharp evasive action to avoid flak. 34,000 heavy rounds fired. The unit of Home Guard artillery in Thornt Wood, Petts Wood fired 475 rounds during these attacks. Many raiding crews decided to return home without making their London target. It is estimated that only one-fifth of the enemy force reached London.



© Mr Richard Ewing

## 41 'Fire Zone', Birkbeck Road, Beckenham – 24/25 March 1944

At 0.15am a great concentration of incendiary bombs fell around Birkbeck Road. Fifty-three separate outbreaks burned simultaneously, affecting sixty properties. The south side of the street, from 105 to 183 was alight. On the north side St Michael and All Angels Church, Ravencroft Road, the vicarage, church hall and several houses were ablaze. Eighteen properties in Mackenzie Road were on fire. The fire service designated the area a 'fire zone' thereby directing all appliances available to the scene. This prompt action, plus help from firewatchers and members of the public saved the situation from escalating to neighbouring streets. Amazingly there were no reports of casualties.

## 42 Station Approach, Hayes – 24/25 March 1944

Incendiary bombs fell on roofs of flats above shops in Station Approach a few minutes after midnight. Deaths occurred in flat No.49, (then Rumsey's the Chemist) and above Barclays Bank, damage at David Greig's, also the stationers, grocers and sub-post office at 51. Lesser damage sustained to a café at 43. Fires also affected nearby 68-78 West Common Road, three properties in Grove Close and 11 Hayes Garden. Two friends, little girls Patricia Crowhurst and Pamela Mote were killed in the raid and are buried side by side in the parish churchyard.

## 43 Cudham School – Friday 16 June 1944

The school's proximity to RAF Biggin Hill made it just outside the 1,000 yards advisory zone for evacuation. Remarkably the school received no direct hits. However in the early hours on Saturday a flying bomb landed and exploded in a field opposite, 100 yards away. The severe blast caused damage to roof, walls, ceilings and windows.

## 44 First Vls to land in Bromley area – Friday 16 June 1944

The first flying bomb fell at 1.30am in Shawfield Park, Bromley, hitting a fire station and council depot. A Civil Defence supervisor died and three firemen were injured. Tylney Road suffered as well in the blast.

**45 High Street, Penge – Sunday, 18 June 1944**

The first VI to hit Penge at 3.10am. Demolished 26-30 High Street and severely damaged 12-70 and 43-109. Eleven people were killed and twenty injured. Most of the fatalities found in the ruins of 26 and 32. During the afternoon a second flying bomb exploded in Anerley Park. A total of eighteen VI missiles landed in the Penge district by the end of the war.

**46 21 Mottingham Road – 21 June 1944**

A direct hit by flying bomb caused four deaths and injury to ten people. Timed at 4.20am the impact caused major damage to George Hyde's car works (now a petrol station) by fire and blast, plus to 253 houses in the immediate area. A second direct hit at 2.45am on 26 June finished off the premises and caused damage to Eltham Collage and local shops.

**47 London Road, Bromley – 25/26 June 1944**

Two VI rocket attacks on the same stretch of road, one at 0.50am and another at 12.40pm lunchtime. A total of twenty-two shops, flats and houses were destroyed. Park End in particular was severely blasted. 720 shops and houses were damaged as far as Market Square. Eight killed, seven at 46-52 Park End and sixty-seven injured.

**48 High Street, West Wickham – 28 June & 11 July 1944**

Two separate flying bomb attacks on the High Street. Both incidents happened in the late afternoon; the first at 5.30pm and the second, two weeks later, at 5.50pm. Many shops were badly damaged by blast and fires and cars and buses were destroyed.

**49 Anerley Town Hall – Thursday, 29 June 1944**

The building sustained damage when a heavy anti-aircraft site at the rear was hit. One person killed and four injured. The gun site was hit again on 24 August 1944. Members of the Home Guard were killed in this final VI incident in Penge which occurred at about 8pm. Seven deaths and eighteen injuries were reported.

**50 Beckenham Green – 3 July 1944**

Flying bomb crashed in Albemarle Road at 3am, killing three at No.7 and injuring thirty. Eleven shops in Albemarle Road and thirty-eight in Church Hill were severely damaged. St Georges Church, the church hall, the Railway Hotel and Beckenham Public Hall also sustained damage.

Another flying bomb fell at 5.40pm on 27 July 1944. A direct hit on 5 Church Road. Three people lost their lives. Twenty-five people were injured and eight houses and a bakery were destroyed. Damage encompassed fifty-three houses, thirty-eight shops, a hotel, four banks, all the stained glass windows at St Georges Church were blown out, the fire station and St Georges School were damaged. Church Road disappeared, its route traced by a footpath across the green. Church Hill is now part of the High Street.



**51 Elmers End Bus Garage – Tuesday, 18 July 1944**

A flying bomb hit Elmers End bus garage at about 8.30pm. In the fire that followed there were a series of explosions as petrol tanks blew. Eighteen people including eleven bus employees were killed. Fifty people were seriously injured. Stored petrol and Home Guard ammunition made rescue and fire fighting extremely hazardous. The bravery and skill of firemen and rescue workers saved many lives and prevented a giant explosion. Despite the damage and loss of vehicles, all services ran out next morning on time. Earlier at 8am, a VI exploded in Croydon Road starting a fire at Surridges Patents Ltd. Other local factories such as Muirheads, Flack Ltd and Marsh Motors were damaged in the blast.

**52 Chelsfield, Barrage balloons – 21 July 1944**

Defences improved to meet the rocket threat. Anti-aircraft gunnery became better organised and obstacles such as metal cables and balloons were aligned along the North Downs to help reduce the impact of bombardment on densely populated areas. This system of cables was successful in bringing down a VI at Lilly's Wood, Chelsfield at 2.30pm. Balloons were also sited at The Highway and in fields at the end of the 'Tree' roads to the south of Worlds End Lane, Green Street Green.



# INCIDENTS

## 53 Blenheim Road, Penge – 21 July 1944

Just before 7am a flying bomb dived into Blenheim Road, just behind the High Street. Seven people were killed when a row of shops in the High Street was destroyed. The heaviest toll was at 3-7 Blenheim Road, three of several homes completely demolished by the blast. The five members of the Carter family were killed. Within a few hours yet another VI crashed in the vicinity of No.106 Penge High Street, so that day ended with over 300 shops and houses destroyed or damaged in the vicinity of the town centre.

## 54 Church Road & Kingwood Road, Shortlands – 22 July 1944

A flying bomb attack at 1pm caused severe damage to St Mary's parish church and church hall, the vicarage and an Air Raid Patrol (ARP) post. The church was damaged again on 27 July and twenty-five houses damaged.

## 55 Lakes Road, Keston – 24 July 1944

Five people killed in a VI blast at 6.25pm. The blast resulted in four fatalities and thirty injuries. Eleven cottages were destroyed in the blast. In all about 150 buildings were damaged in the area of Commonsidge, Fox Lane, Fishponds Road and Croydon Road. Twelve fire appliances were called to deal with the fires and help in rescue work. The blast overturned beehives with the result that firemen and a policeman were injured by multiple stings.

## 56 Clock House – Wednesday, 2 August 1944

A crowded restaurant, Richards Café in Beckenham Road hit by a flying bomb at lunchtime. Small groups of shops on both sides of the road between the railway bridge and Clock House Station were demolished, including the Prince Arthur pub and a dozen houses. Severe damage to sixty shops and houses nearby. Five separate fires broke out among the ruins and the roadway was blocked for many hours. A total of forty-four were killed and twenty badly injured.



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## 57 The Crooked Billet, Southborough – Sunday, 19 November 1944

At 9.15pm a V2 landed in Southborough Lane destroying the Crooked Billet and a row of houses. The four storey building was reduced to a heap on the lip of a crater 30ft wide and 15ft deep. Twenty-three people were killed and sixty-five seriously injured in the crowded bars. A member of the home guard and a fireman were among the dead. The building was re-built after the war.



© L. Holden Negs

## 58 Fairfield Road & High Street, Beckenham – Friday, 5 January 1945

At 10.45pm a VI flying bomb launched from a Heinkel bomber destroyed twenty houses and severely damaged thirty-five more as well as Christ Church. Nearly 200 shops and houses suffered moderate damage. Thirteen residents perished in the blast at No.24 Fairfield Road, 40-42 and 151 Burnhill Road and 1-5 Lea Road. Thirty-two were injured. The car park area behind the church shows the extent of the destruction from this raid and a previous attack in August 1944. Note the newer brickwork of Christ Church, facing the car park.

## 59 Court Road, Orpington – Sunday, 14 January 1945

In the early hours six houses were destroyed by a flying bomb. The blast was felt as far as Orpington High Street, where forty shops, the old Commodore Cinema and the sub-divisional fire station at 250 High Street suffered damage. The early hour resulted in the death of eight people asleep in 100 and 106 Court Road.

## 60 West Common Road, Hayes – 9 February 1945

At teatime a V2 rocket destroyed two shops, five houses and Hayes Garden Nursery. The Parish Church, Village Hall, The George public house, a garage on the corner, the old church school, thirteen shops in Hayes Street and nearly 300 houses in surrounding roads were damaged. Four people died including the nursery owner and seventy others were injured.

**61 Walden Avenue, Chislehurst – 9 February 1945**

V2 rocket attack at 9.30pm on Walden Avenue. Eight houses demolished, 340 damaged, plus six shops in Mottingham Road, the White Horse Inn and the Baptist Church. There were two deaths and sixty-eight were injured.

**62 Station Square, St Mary Cray – 8 March 1945**

The blast from a V2 rocket damaged the railway station, shops, houses and factories at 4.35am.

**63 73-75 Crystal Palace Park Road, Thursday – 15 March 1945**

Two large houses hit by a V2 at about 1am. Eight people killed, although it was not until two days later that the last body was recovered. Confusion over emergency service boundaries meant confirmation of damage was delayed. The site now provides access to the park.

**64 Kynaston Road & Court Road, Orpington – Tuesday, 27 March 1945**

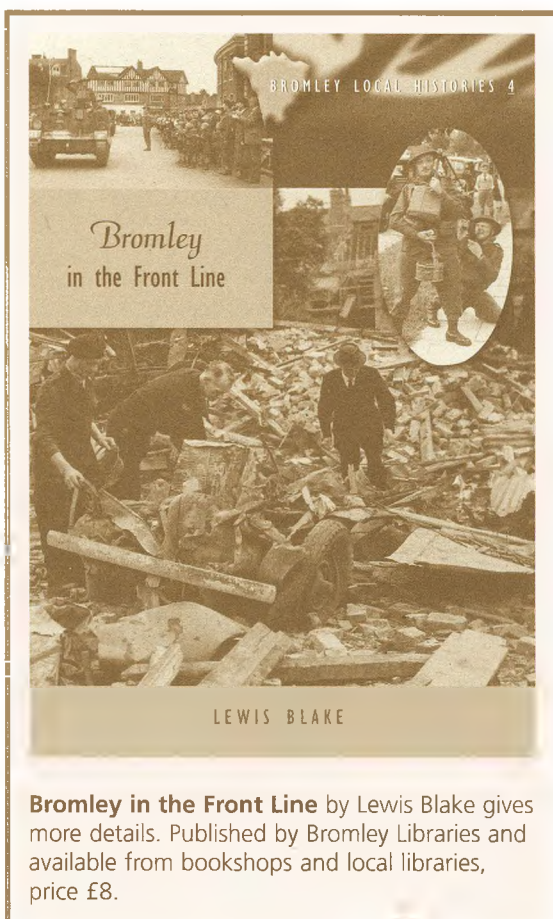
On a beautiful spring afternoon fourteen homes were destroyed, one person killed and fifty-six injured when a V2 rocket hit just before 5pm. Ivy Millichamp was the last member of the public to be killed by enemy action at 88 Kynaston Road. This was the 1115th and final fatal V2 rocket attack to hit Britain. Mrs Millichamp is buried in the churchyard of All Saints.



**65 Scadbury Park, Chislehurst – 28 March 1945**

At breakfast time a V1 flying bomb exploded causing the borough's last significant recorded air-raid of the war. At 8am the missile crashed and exploded at Scadbury Hall in Scadbury Park. The hall and some outbuildings were partially demolished or burnt down. Four people were badly injured.

Kent Messenger Group



**Bromley in the Front Line** by Lewis Blake gives more details. Published by Bromley Libraries and available from bookshops and local libraries, price £8.