

LANDMARKS IN LONDON HISTORY

Week 8. London at War





‘Overhead, an enemy plane had been dragging, drumming slowly round in the pool of night, drawing up bursts of gunfire--nosing, pausing, turning, fascinated to the point for its intent. The barrage banged, coughed, retched; in here the lights in the mirrors rocked. Now down a shaft of anticipating silence the bomb swung whistling. With the shock of detonation, still to be heard, four walls of in here yawped in then bellied out; bottles danced on glass; a distortion ran through the view. The detonation dulled off into the cataracting roar of a split building: direct hit, somewhere else.’

- Elizabeth Bowen, *The Heat of the Day* (1948)





‘I’m hiding underground, and up above the Germans are methodically smashing London to bits all around me. You remember St Clement’s – the bells of St Clement’s. They’ve smashed that – St James’s, Piccadilly, the Burlington Arcade, Garland’s Hotel, where we stayed for the pantomime, Maples and John Lewis. It sounds like a thriller doesn’t it, but the thrillers are like life’

- Graham Greene, *The Ministry of Fear* (1943)



Key questions

1. What were the impacts of the First and Second World War on London?
2. What social and economic transformations took place while so much of the male population was fighting overseas?
3. How was London subject to aerial attack, and what defences were established?
4. Is there a myth of the Blitz?

STEP INTO YOUR PLACE



First World War

- **28 June 1914:** Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria assassinated by Yugoslav nationalist Gavrilo Princip in Sarajevo.
- **28 July 1914:** Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia and invaded
- **3-4 August 1914:** Germany declared war on France and Belgium
- **4 August 1914:** Britain declared war on Germany

WW1 – Impact on London

‘There were large crowds perambulating the streets and cheering the king at Buckingham palace and one could hear the distant roaring as late as 1.30am in the morning’.

- Prime Minister, Herbert Asquith

‘The vast majority of Londoners did not stand or move around Buckingham Palace or the precincts of parliament... they went back to their homes in the suburbs at the usual times, by their usual trains, trams or buses, they were neither elated or frightened, only bewildered by news of which they could not guess the consequences’

- Historian, Llewellyn Woodward



GERMAN EMBASSY MOBBED.

At about 9.30 last night a hostile crowd assembled outside the German Embassy in London and indulged in groaning and hissing, followed by stone-throwing at the Embassy. Some of the windows were smashed.

Prince Lichnowsky was in the Embassy garden at the moment of the crowd's arrival, conversing with members of his staff, but when he realised the nature of the demonstration he withdrew to the house.

A special message was despatched to Cannon-row, and a force of mounted and unmounted police was quickly on the scene, but had considerable difficulty in restoring order.

Large quantities of luggage have been despatched from the Embassy during the last day or two.

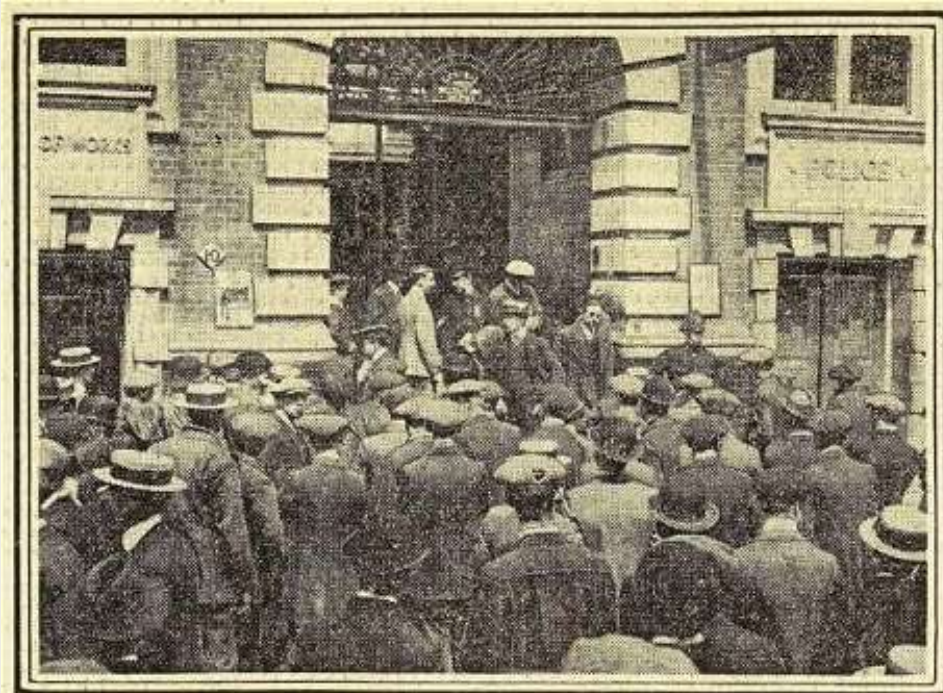


Photo.]

CENTRAL LONDON RECRUITING DEPOT.

[L.N.A.]

WW1 – Economy and Employment

Initially a **downtown** in London's economy

- Reduction in the production of non-essential industries
- Loss of European markets & lack of imported materials
- Problems with transport & closure of Balkan ports
- Lack of credit & loss of European banking capital

Male unemployment:

- Pre-WW1 = 6%
- Sept 1914 = 10%
- Dec 1914 = 6%
- April 1915 = 1.8%

By July 1915: 20% of London's pre-war male workforce recruited into military



WOMEN URGENTLY WANTED

FOR THE

W·A·A·C

WOMEN'S ARMY AUXILIARY CORPS

WORK AT HOME & ABROAD
WITH THE FORCES

COOKS, WAITRESSES, CLERKS, DRIVER-
MECHANICS, ALL KINDS OF DOMESTIC WORKERS
AND WOMEN IN MANY OTHER CAPACITIES
: TO TAKE THE PLACE OF MEN :

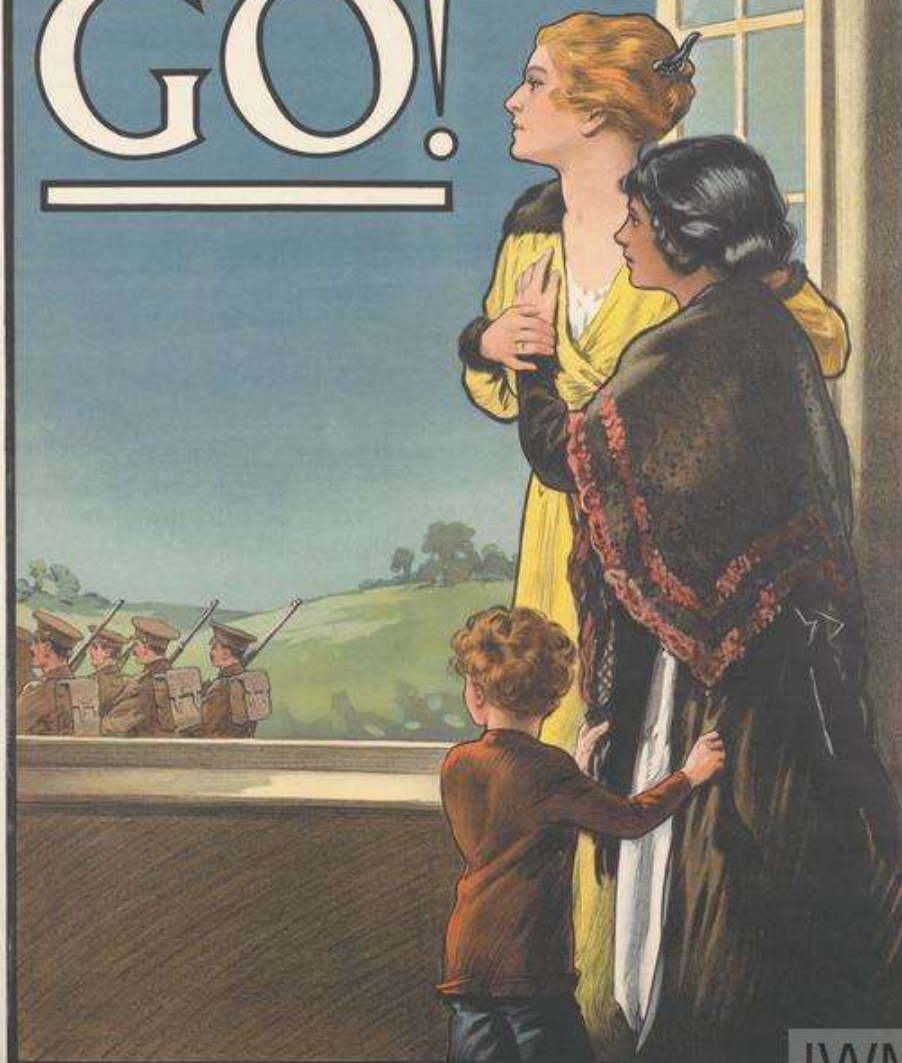
GOOD WAGES · UNIFORM
QUARTERS · RATIONS

FOR ALL INFORMATION AND ADVICE APPLY AT
NEAREST EMPLOYMENT EXCHANGE

THE ADDRESS CAN BE OBTAINED AT ANY POST OFFICE



WOMEN OF BRITAIN SAY - "GO!"



WW1 – Women in Work?

Post 1916: shortage of working men addressed by women

By 1918: London transport companies had released 17,669 men

Women employed in dockyards, factories and arsenals:

July 1914: 2,000

Nov 1918: 247,000

Not necessarily mass increase in working women

50% recruitment into transport from other female employments

BUT: Increased opportunities for educated middle-class women

1 million women formally added to the British workforce between 1914 and 1918

WW1 – Munitions

Particularly London-based industry and a significant employer of women

Ministry of Munitions (est. 1915) = huge increase in London production

115,000 Londoners engaged in munitions work during the war





WW1 – Munitions

To the east:

- Royal Small Arms Factory at Enfield (est. 1816)
- Royal Gunpowder Mills at Waltham Abbey
- Vickers factory at Crayford (Vickers machine gun)

To the west:

- Munitions factories at Cricklewood, Hayes and Park Royal
- **By 1917:** factory at Park Royal employed 9000 people
- Manufacturing **1.8 million** components **a week**

To the south:

- **Woolwich Arsenal** = centre of London's arms industry
- 1914 = 10,900 employed inc. **125 women (1%)**
- 1918 = 65,000 employed inc. **28,000 women (43%)**



WW1 – Silvertown Explosion

Munitions work could be very dangerous to workers and public...

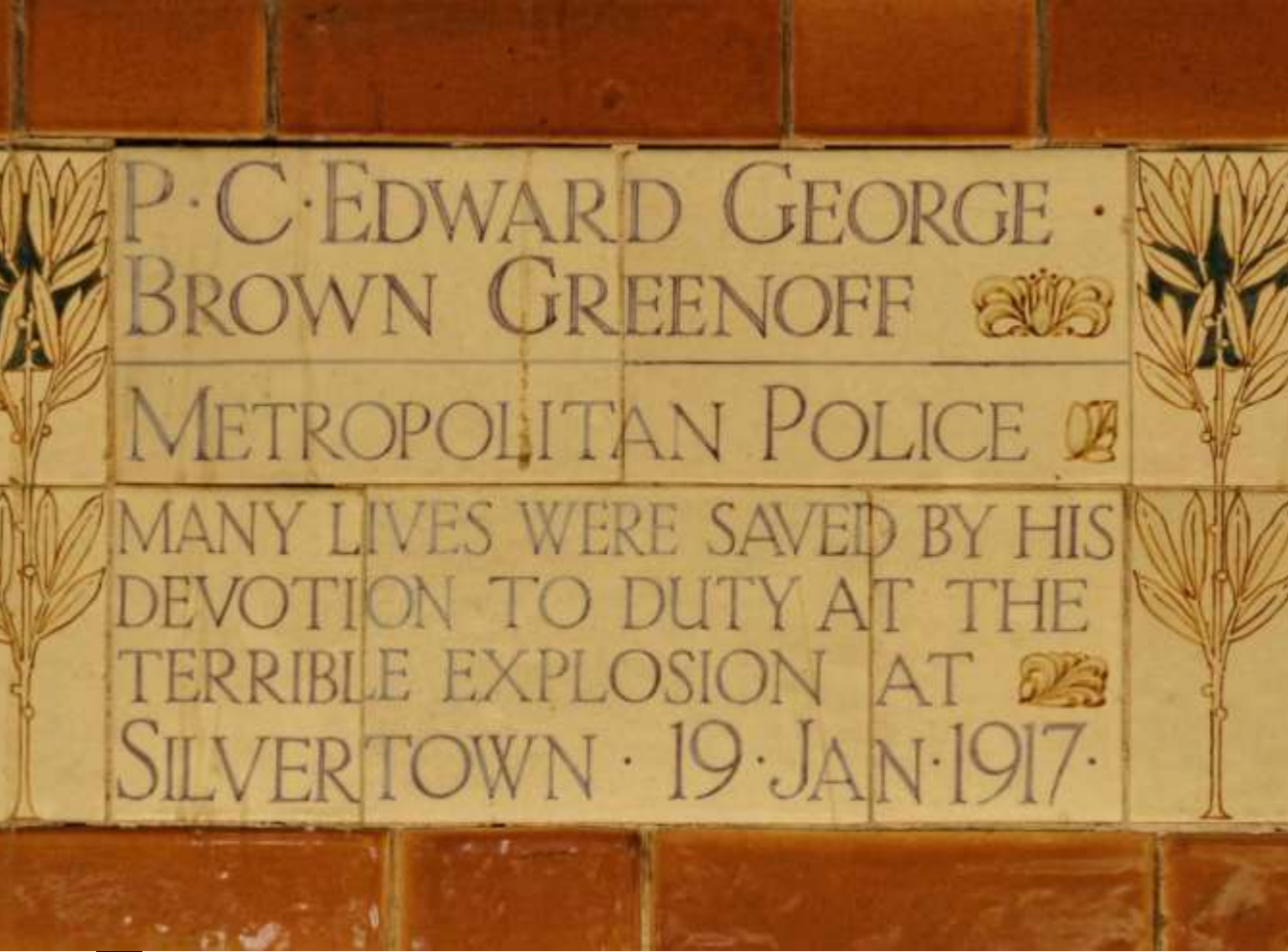
19 January 1917: the largest explosion in London's history at Silvertown

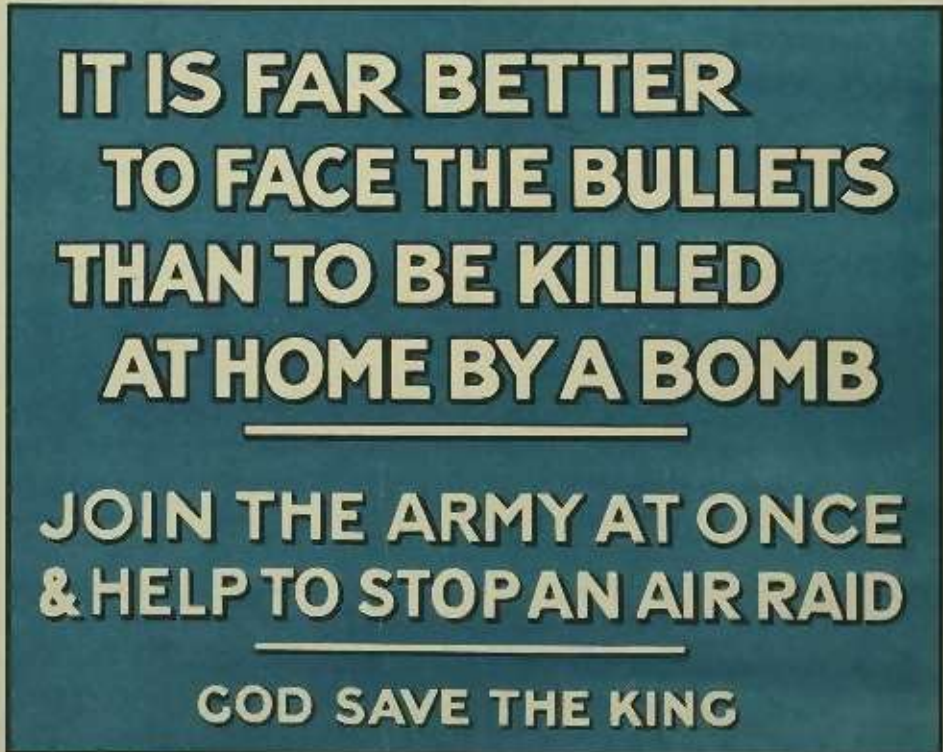
- The Brunner Mond chemical works, Crescent Wharf
- 50 tons of TNT exploded
- Blew out windows in the Savoy Hotel
- Could be heard over 100 miles away

69 people killed on the night; 4 more died later in hospital

P.C. Edward Greenoff killed in the blast

Commemorated on the Watts Memorial in Postman's Park





WW1 – Air Raids

- 31 May 1915: first bombing raid on London killed 7 people. Zeppelin airship dropped 120 bombs. Mostly dropped on east London around the docks
- 1915-17: 11 airship raids on London: around 200 killed, many over June-Oct 1915

Numerous plaques commemorating attacks:

- 61 Farringdon Road
- Queen Square in Bloomsbury
- Lincoln's Inn Fields

Dolphin Tavern pub, Red Lion Street, Holborn hit on 9 Sept 1915, its clock stopping at 10.40pm...

THESE PREMISES
WERE TOTALLY DESTROYED
BY A
ZEPPELIN RAID
DURING THE WORLD WAR
ON
SEPTEMBER 8TH 1915
REBUILT 1917

JOHN PHILLIPS
GOVERNING DIRECTOR



ON THE NIGHT OF THE
EIGHTH OF SEPTEMBER 1915
A ZEPPELIN BOMB FELL
AND EXPLODED ON THIS
SPOT ALTHOUGH NEARLY
ONE THOUSAND PEOPLE
SLEPT IN THE SURROUNDING
BUILDINGS NO PERSON WAS
INJURED



THE SCARS THAT DISFIGURE THE PEDESTAL
OF THE OBELISK, THE BASES OF THE SPHINXES,
AND THE RIGHT HAND SPHINX, WERE CAUSED
BY FRAGMENTS OF A BOMB DROPPED IN THE
ROADWAY CLOSE TO THIS SPOT. IN THE FIRST
RAID ON LONDON BY GERMAN AEROPLANES A
FEW MINUTES BEFORE MIDNIGHT ON TUESDAY
4TH SEPTEMBER 1917



Images: Illustrated London News, 23 Oct 1915)

WW1 – Air Raids

By **mid-1916**: air-raids switch to **planes**

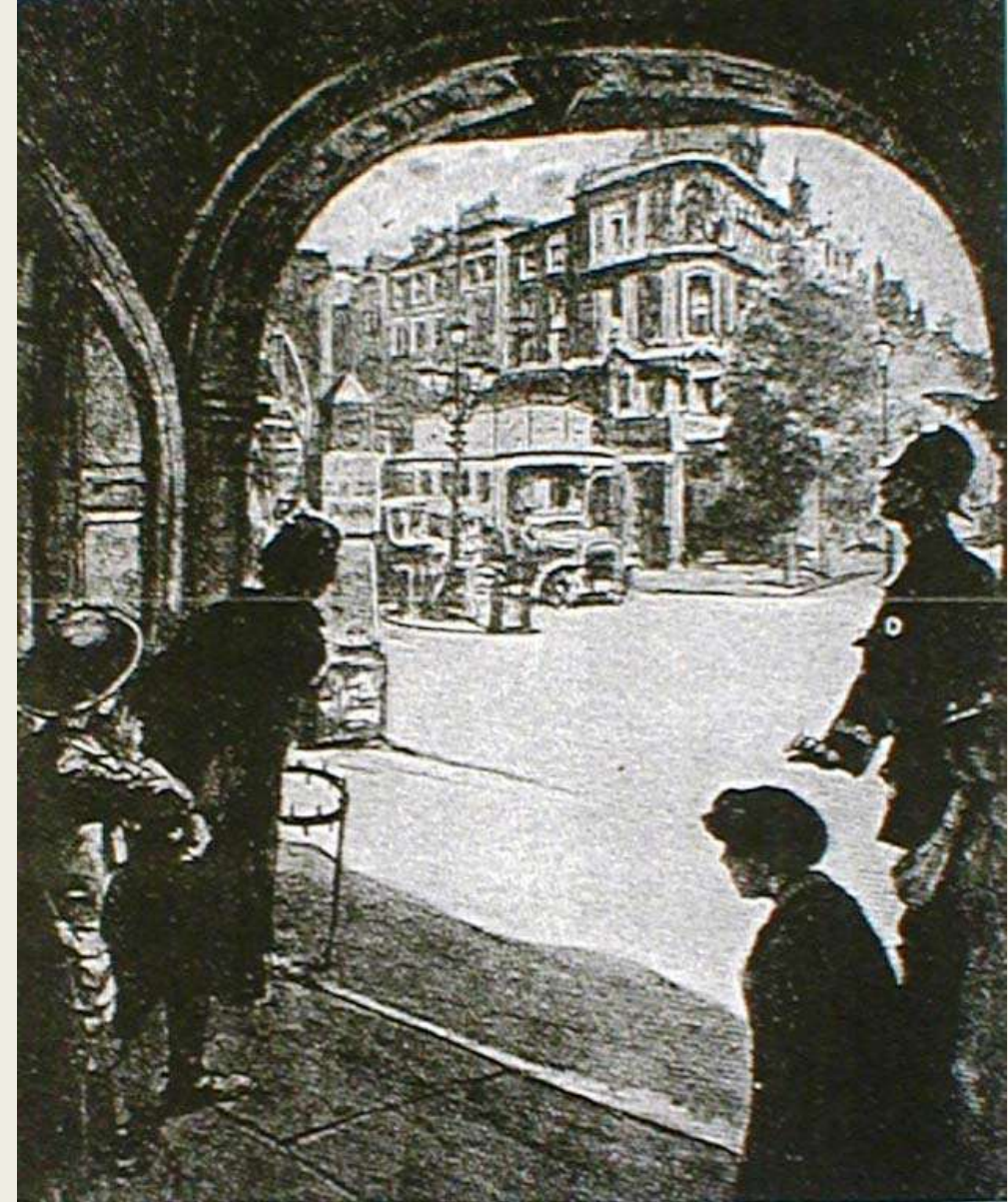
6 May 1916: single plane attacked the East End

28 Nov 1916: six bombs dropped on Victoria Station

13 June 1917: 14 aircraft bombed central London, killing 160 and injuring 424.

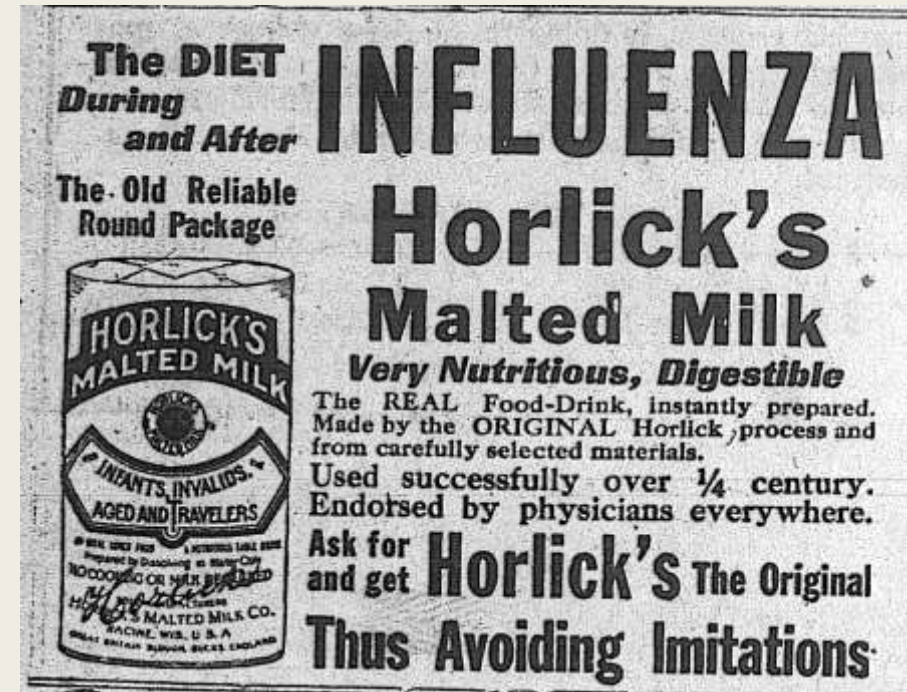
- *Royal Albert Docks*
- *Liverpool Street Station*
- *East End*
- *Upper North Street schools in Poplar hit; killed 17 children*
- *P.C. Alfred Smith killed in the attack on 13 June (Watts Memorial)*

■ In all: aircraft dropped over 100 tons of explosives on London



WW1 – Loss of Life

- Around **124,000** Londoners were killed in combat,
... or **10%** of men between 20-40
 - In London itself, a total of **670** killed, **2000** injured in around **51** raids
- BUT: 'Spanish Flu' (1918-19) killed around **18,000** Londoners





WW1 – Changes to London's Streets

- Far less people and vehicles, with fuel shortages:
By mid-1916: newspapers reporting London like a quiet rural town.
- Far less men & men in uniform:
Uniform was used as a recruiting tool & a mark of bravery
- Order of the White Feather
sought to shame men by presenting them with a white feather to imply cowardice
- Creation of the Silver War Badge (1916)
men who had been honourably discharged due to wounds or sickness



£100 REWARD.

Whereas some malicious Person, or persons, are spreading a report about that I am a German, the above Reward will be paid to anyone giving information that will lead to a conviction.

L. FEITELSON,

JEWELLER,

327, GREEN St. UPTON PARK.

N.B.— I am a Russian, born of Russian ancestors for generations, and have never seen Germany.



STADDON & SONS

(Late Thomas Evans)
Drapers and House Furnishers,
Ladies' and Children's Outfitters,
11, CANNING TOWN ROAD, E.C.

359, 361, & 363, Barking Road,
3, 4, 5 & 6, Balaam Street,
PLAISTOW, LONDON, E.

To the Public of Plaistow, West and East Ham, Poplar, Canning Town, Custom House, & East London generally.

In view of the regrettable incidents which have occurred recently, I would like to make my position perfectly clear, and to remove any possible doubt in the mind of any single person as to MY NATIONALITY

I should have supposed that there was no Britisher who could not see with half an eye that the name

STADDON

was
ESSENTIALLY ENGLISH

"English of the English," indeed. As a matter of fact, I was

BORN IN "GLORIOUS DEVON,"

where my parents and forefathers had farmed for generations, and with the single exception of a day trip to Cherbourg in a Channel Steamer, which I once took during a summer visit to the seaside, there is NO RECORD OF ONE OF US EVER HAVING BEEN OUT OF THIS COUNTRY. I therefore found it difficult to understand how anyone could honestly have supposed that there was the faintest trace of any but

PURE BRITISH BLOOD

in my veins. No! In common with all other inhabitants of our dear old country, I was deeply horrified and incensed when I read of the diabolical act of those accursed murderers in sinking the "Lusitania" without a moment's warning; but little did I think that I should ever be suspected of any connection whatever with such a nation of poisoners and pirates.

At the moment when unworthy suspicions, nay threats, were being directed at me, MY SONS AND NEPHEWS, with my sanction and hearty approval, were "DOING THEIR BIT" ON ACTIVE SERVICE ABROAD, and have been almost from the commencement of the war.

My business which is MINE AND MINE EXCLUSIVELY has not a single half-penny of anyone else's money in it; neither has any other person, British or Foreign, any interest whatever in it. Such as it is, I am running it for and by myself, and with it I shall have to sink or swim.

From the very commencement of my proprietorship I was resolved to make, what was then a sound, honest business, admirably conducted by my much respected predecessor—Mr. Thomas Evans, of still more service to the public by devoting the whole of my energies and wide experience to giving the public the

UTMOST POSSIBLE VALUE FOR THEIR MONEY.

My efforts from the very first were generally recognised, and I am proud and pleased to be able to say that I have made countless friends amongst my customers, whose interests and my own I always regard as identical.

(Signed) T. C. STADDON.

WW1 – Clashes with immigrant communities

Major incidents broke out on five occasions between 1914 and 1917

- **Aug 1914:** relatively minor, attacks on bakeries in Poplar and Islington
- **Oct 1914:** violence in Deptford and Lee Green areas.
- **May 1915:** violence widespread (19 of 21 districts) with 866 arrested, but particularly in East London, resulting in government implementing internment
- **June 1916:** Violence in Acton, Islington and Tooting.
- **July 1917:** violence in East London and South London, with Dutch, Russians and Italians attacked by large crowds, who also threatened an internment camp

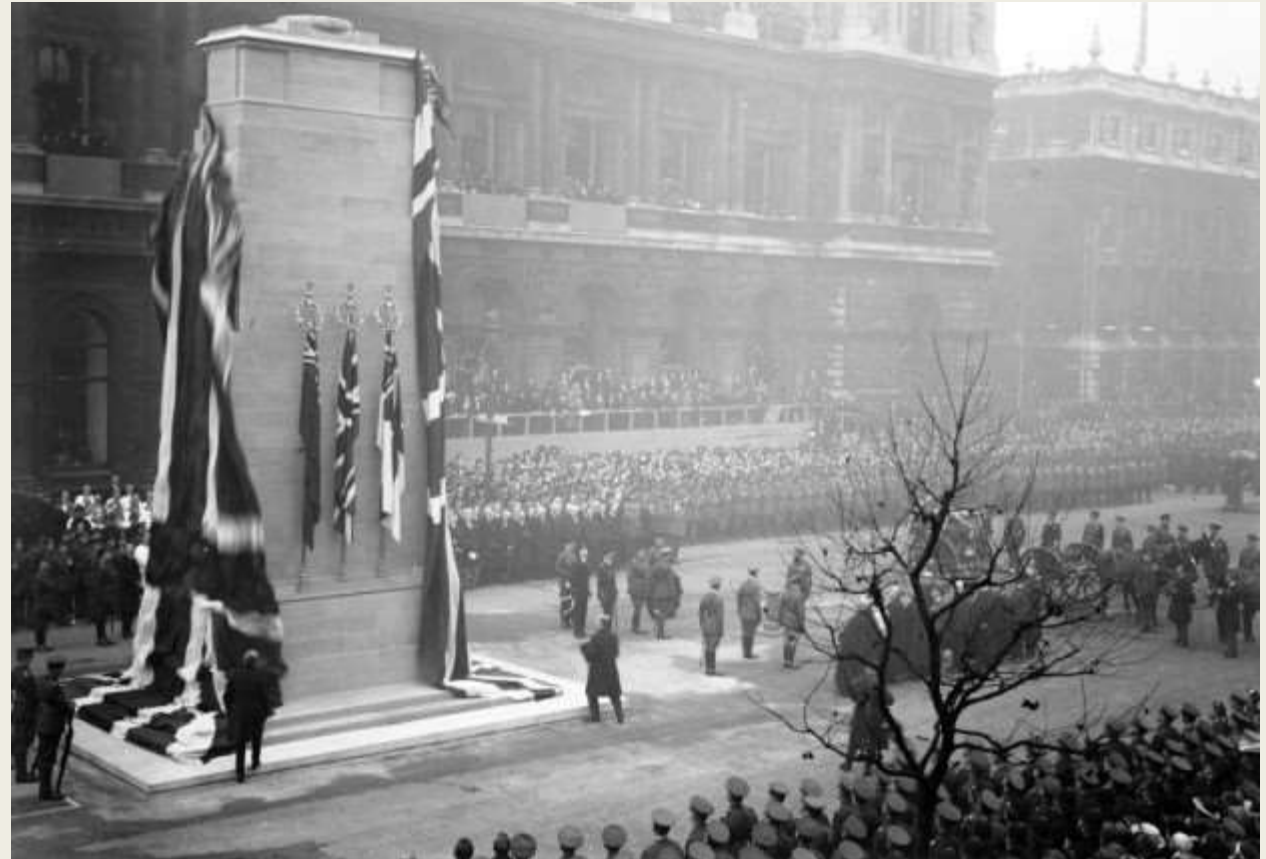
Panikos Panayi, “Anti-German Riots in London during the First World War”, *German History*, 7.2 (1989)

WW1 – Rounding up

Limited impact on social, cultural and economic life of Londoners

More of interruption to progress rather than a catalyst for it

Much of 'modernity' already in place pre-war



WOMEN ARE WORKING DAY & NIGHT TO WIN THE WAR



£25,000 IMMEDIATELY NEEDED FOR THE WOMEN'S WAR TIME FUND

TO PROVIDE REST ROOMS CANTEENS & HOSTELS

LORD SYDENHAM YOUNG WOMEN'S 26 GEORGE STREET
H^{ON} TREASURER CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION MANCHESTER SQUARE, W.



WW1 – Rounding up

War **did not** increase the number of women in permanent employment in London:

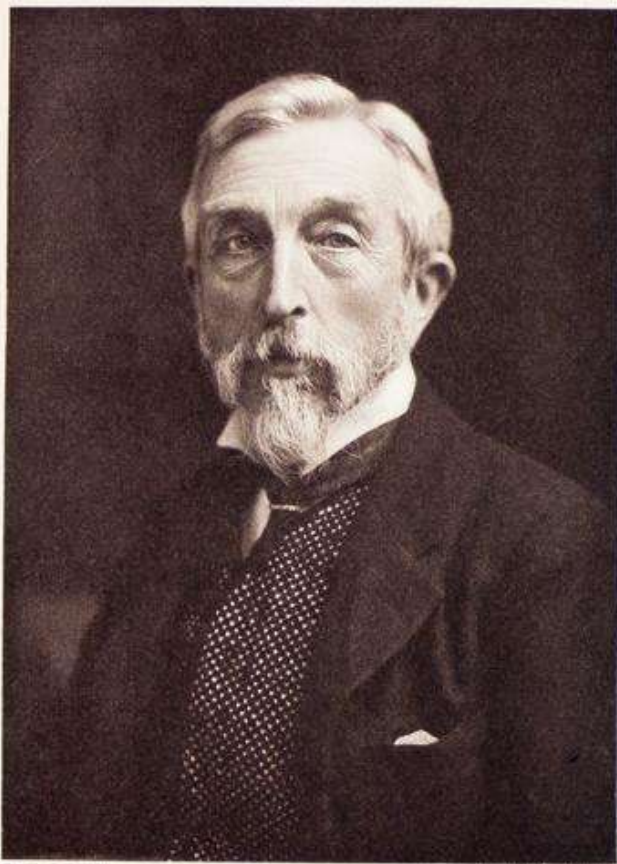
1891-1911 = female workforce rose from **736,000** to **912,000**

1911-1921 = only rose by **34,000**

Instead, a key shift in the types of employment that women undertook:

1911-1921: Dressmaking = fell from **133,000** to **74,000**

1911-1921: Domestic Service = fell from **416,000** to **324,000**



The Right Hon. Charles Booth
D.C.L., F.R.S.
1840-1916

THE NEW SURVEY OF LONDON LIFE & LABOUR

VOLUME I FORTY YEARS OF CHANGE

"Comparisons with the past
are absolutely necessary to
the comprehension of all
that exists to-day; without
them we cannot penetrate
to the heart of things."
CHARLES BOOTH, *Life and
Labour in London*, Final
Volume, p. 31.

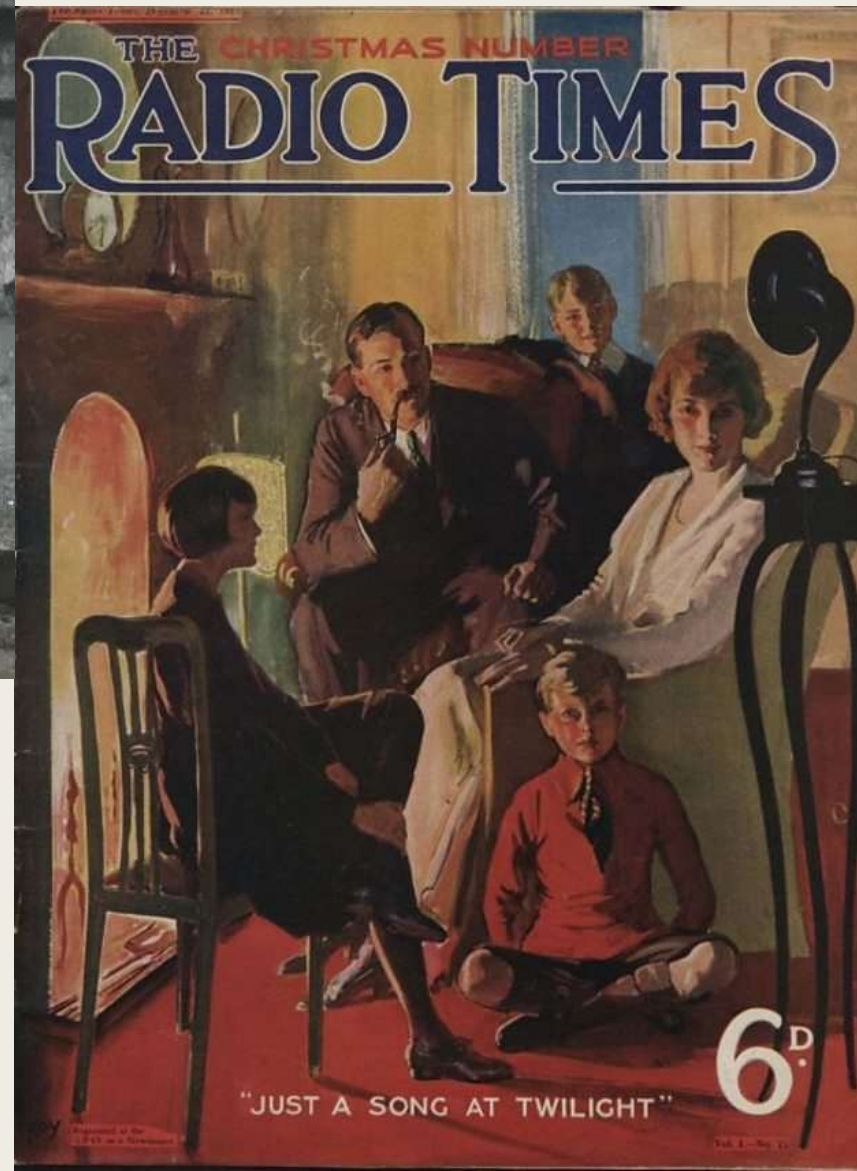
LONDON
P. S. KING & SON, LTD.
ORCHARD HOUSE, WESTMINSTER
1930

New Survey of London Life and Labour

- LSE study led by two of Charles Booth's researchers: Hubert Lewellyn-Smith and George Duckworth, between 1928-35
- War opens a 'new chapter' for London society...
- 'Perhaps the most significant changes, for the purpose of the present survey, are those which took place between 1911 and 1921 (i.e. those showing the direct effects of the war), and those which have occurred in the post-war period.'

The New Survey

- 'The statistics showed clearly the entrance of women not only into shops, commerce and professions, but also into the munitions industries, while there is a heavy drop in domestic service and dress-making'
- 'The 'catastrophic' cause has been the Great War, which not only destroyed the lives of a very large number of London men in the prime of life, but also greatly reduced the numbers of births. One result has been to increase the existing excess of females over males, an excess which rose from 11 per cent. in 1891 to 16 per cent. in 1921.'

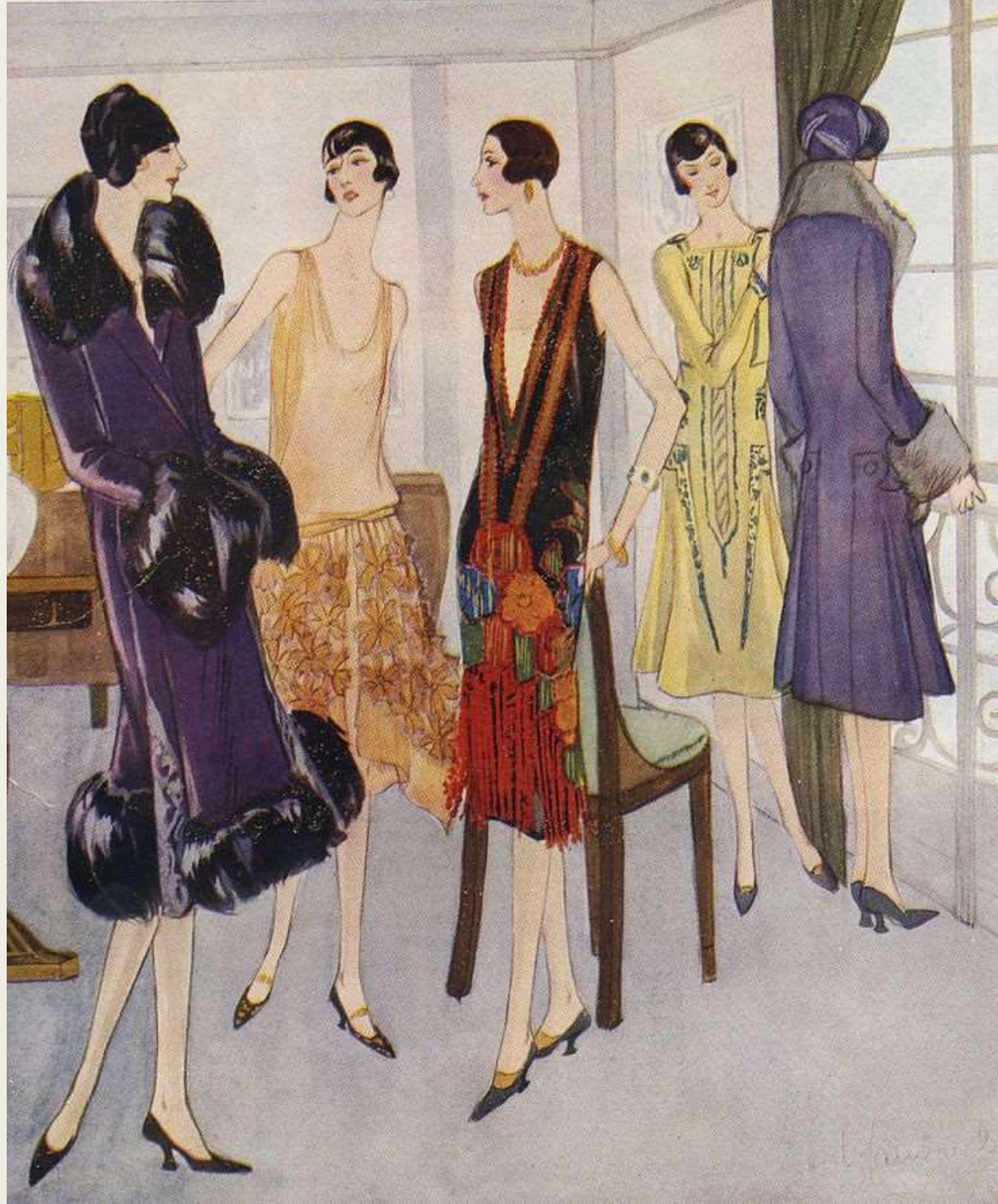
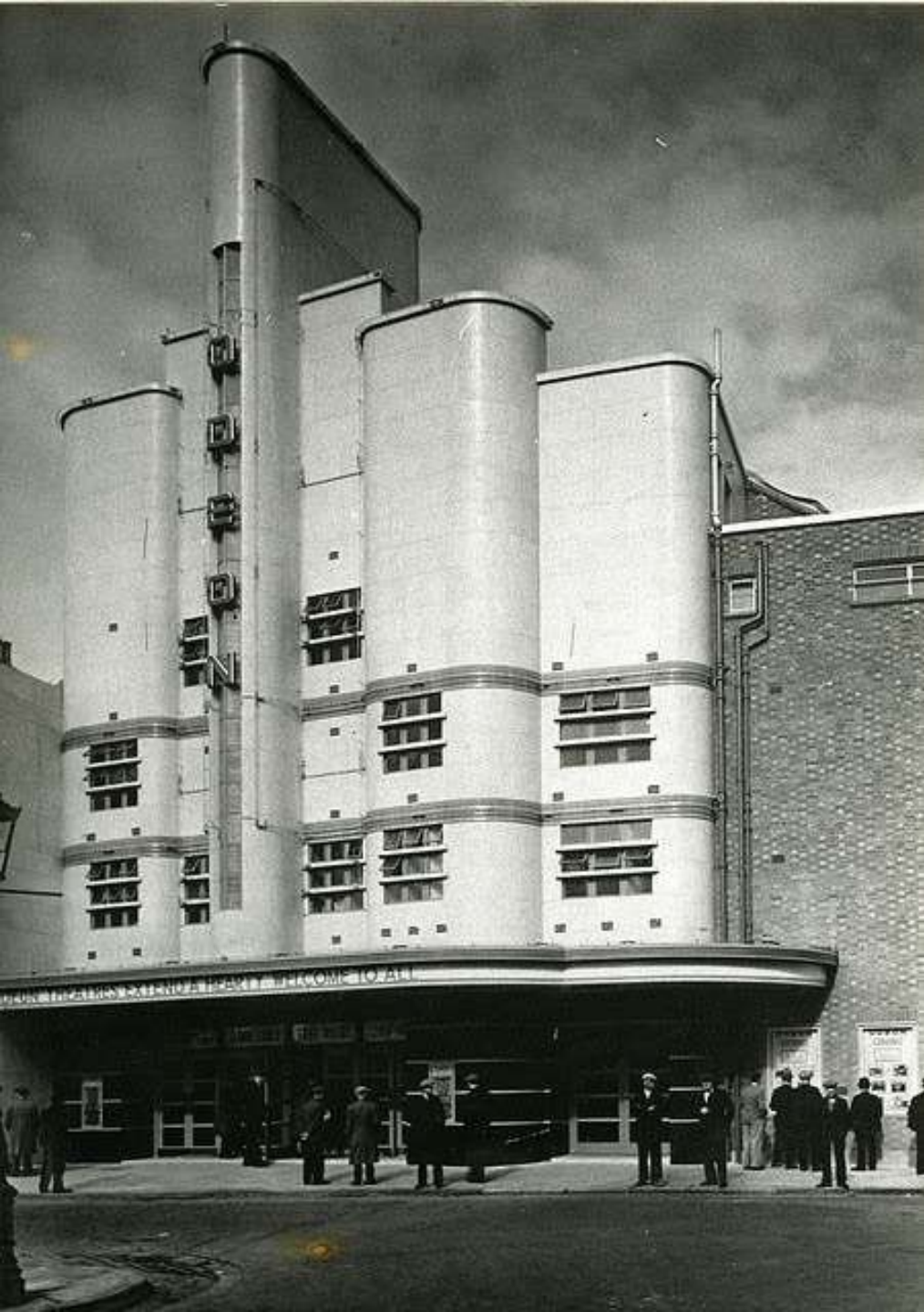


New Survey – rising living standards

- Rent restrictions, reduced hours, higher wages and shorter working days...
- By 1930 poverty had been reduced to less than 8 per cent, compared to 30 per cent in Booth's survey
- Costs of necessities and non-necessities had increased since the war on average by about 83.5%, the rate of wages had spiraled to an average of about 116%
- Together this difference increased the purchasing power of both skilled and unskilled workers by an average of 20%, an increase of 14% for skilled workers and 28% for unskilled workers
- 'The fact that the average workman in London can now buy a third more of articles of consumption in return for labour of an hour's less duration per day affords conclusive proof that the material conditions under which the mass of London workers have considerably improved.' (NSL)

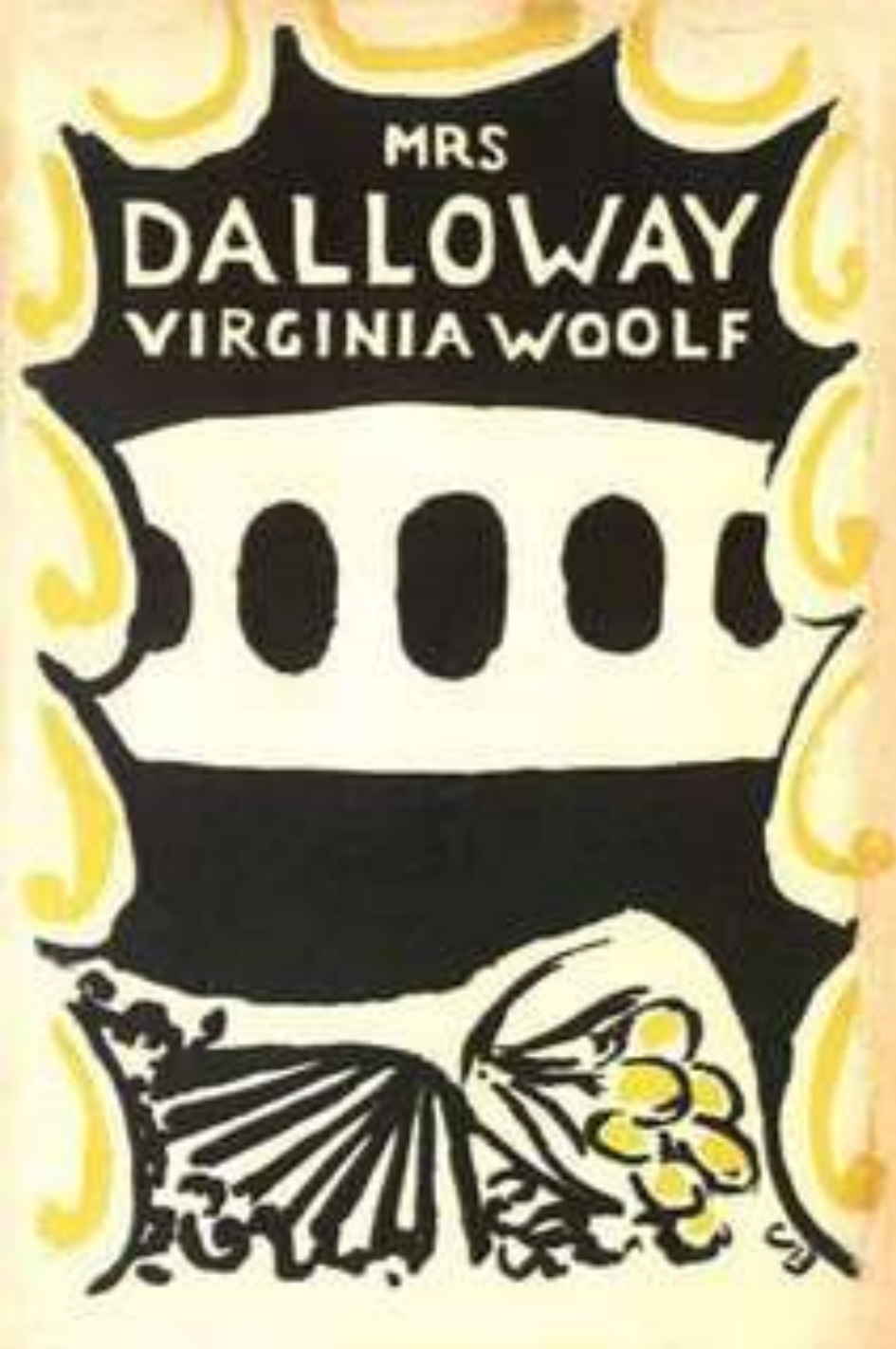
Post-WW1: Women in Work

- New factories appeared on London's new roads, like the Great West Road, many employing women
- Edith Hall left school aged 14 in 1922 and managed to find employment in an electric cable factory in Hayes, a north-west suburb of London
- 'I was often told, 'As a girl, keep your place', but I was never quite sure where my place was. And on my way home from the factory I was shouted at by passers-by, 'Girls taking men's jobs.' It was all so confusing'
- A new generation of economically empowered young women were also given the vote by 1928
- New fashions and consumer culture developed in turn, influenced by new media like the 'Wireless' and the 'Picture Palace', and later photographic publications like *Picture Post*



Post-WW1 – ex-servicemen

- Long-term unemployment had a corrosive effect on the psyche of returned soldiers:
- Some were angry and resentful, and filled up the ranks of the Communists and later the Fascists...
- Others felt isolated by their experiences of war and castrated by their loss of status as wage-earner, and shrunk into torpor and depression, in cases resulting in nervous breakdown, of a kind traced through Septimus in *Mrs Dalloway*



‘Septimus was one of the first to volunteer. He went to France to save an England which consisted almost entirely of Shakespeare’s plays and Miss Isabel Pole in a green dress walking in a square. There in the trenches the change which Mr Brewer desired when he advised football was produced instantly; he developed manliness; he was promoted; he drew the attention, indeed the affection of his officer, Evans by name.

... when Evans was killed, just before the Armistice, in Italy, Septimus, far from showing any emotion or recognizing that here was the end of a friendship, congratulated himself upon feeling very little and very reasonably. The War had taught him. It was sublime.’

- Virginia Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway* (1925)



WW2 – Preparing for bombardment

1924: discussions about planning for future air attacks on London.

Based on bombing in WW1 = prediction of **28,000 dead** in first month

Post Spanish Civil War = figure revised to **58,000** in first 24 hours

Plans made for: increasing hospital beds; digging mass graves; administering the dead.

By Sept 1938: every adult in the UK provided with a gas mask.

Sept 1939 to April 1940: 2 million Anderson shelters distributed

Government expected panic: plans made to evacuate **3.5 million** from the capital



**LEAVE THIS TO US
SONNY—YOU OUGHT
TO BE OUT OF LONDON**

MINISTRY OF HEALTH EVACUATION SCHEME



EVACUATION

DETAILS OF FACILITIES ARRANGED FOR

(1) OFFICIAL PARTIES
(TO BILLETS PROVIDED BY THE GOVERNMENT)

Evacuation is available for

SCHOOL CHILDREN
MOTHERS with CHILDREN of School Age or under
EXPECTANT MOTHERS

(2) ASSISTED PRIVATE EVACUATION

A free travel voucher and lodging allowance are provided for

CHILDREN OF SCHOOL AGE or under
MOTHERS with CHILDREN OF SCHOOL AGE OR UNDER
EXPECTANT MOTHERS
AGED and BLIND PEOPLE
INFIRM and INVALIDS

who have made their own arrangements with relatives
or friends for accommodation in a safer area

* FOR INFORMATION ASK AT THE NEAREST SCHOOL

ISSUED BY THE EVACUATION OFFICE

WW2 – Evacuation

1 September 1939: LCC began its plans to evacuate 'priority groups'

- 393,000 schoolchildren (about 50%)
- 50,000 teachers
- 257,000 mothers and young children

Around 700,000 Londoners evacuated: 50% of the national total.

GOVERNMENT EVACUATION SCHEME

THE FOLLOWING FACILITIES ARE
OPEN FOR EVACUATION FROM
THE COUNTY OF LONDON

SCHOOL CHILDREN

Register them at a School. The teachers or the school keeper will advise you.

SCHOOL CHILDREN OR YOUNG CHILDREN WITH THEIR MOTHERS

If you have accommodation to go to in a reception or a neutral area apply to the L.C.C. Divisional Officer for a free travel voucher and a billeting certificate. If not, register at any open emergency rest centre.

EXPECTANT MOTHERS, THE AGED, THE INFIRM AND THE BLIND

You must find your own accommodation in a reception or a neutral area. When you have done this apply to the L.C.C. Divisional Officer for a free travel voucher and a billeting certificate.

THE CHARITY HALL, E.C.1

11-12, ST. MARK'S
EDUCATION OFFICE, L.C.C.

WW2 – Evacuation

However...

- 50% of parents of schoolchildren chose not to evacuate them
 - 65% of mothers with young children decided to stay
- = far higher than expected; put pressure of resources.

Significant amount of privately-funded evacuation

1.2m people (13%) thought to have initially left London in late 1939





WW2 – the ‘Phoney War’

Blackout begins from 1 September 1939 (the ‘Twilight War’)

By Jan 1940:

Cinemas and theatres reopened

Sports (i.e. football & greyhounds) resumed

Museums reopened (minus most valuable exhibits)

Blackout = **400 pedestrians killed** on London streets Sept-Dec 1939 (double amount killed the previous year). Increase in crime, higher than previous 7 years

By Jan 1940, **34%** of schoolchildren, and **90%** of mothers with young children returned
520,000 schoolchildren in London when air raids began...

<https://youtu.be/tEg0XUGukzQ?t=2m38s>

WW2 – the Blitz

24 Aug 1940: German pilots mistakenly bombed London

7 Sept 1940: First purposeful bombing raid of 'the Blitz'

First night: **430** Londoners killed, **1600** badly injured

Following night: **412** Londoners killed, **747** badly injured

7 Sept 1940 to 21 May 1941: major air-raids on 16 British cities

- London bombed for 57 consecutive nights from 7 September
- London was attacked **71** times in total
- **18 Sept 1940:** 300 planes dropped **350 tons** of bombs, more than the total dropped on London during the whole of WW1

WW2 – Going underground?

Sept 1940: 177,000 Londoners slept overnight in the underground
Highly conspicuous activity = helped to create / sustain the myth.

Busiest night of occupation: only **1 in 18** inner Londoners used underground

Mid-November 1940; survey found that:

- **4%** of people slept in the underground
- **9%** slept in other communal shelters or buildings
- **27%** used domestic shelters such as Anderson's
- **60%** slept at home in their own bed.

WW2 – Going underground?

Belief that underground stations were the safest places to be

- 17 September 1940: **20 killed** at Marble Arch station
- 12 October 1940: **19** killed at Bounds Green station
- 11 January 1941: **117** killed at Bank station

Worst incident: 3 March 1943. **178** people killed at Bethnal Green

Caused by a panic and people crushed falling down the entrance stairs

No air raid that night...





WW2 – rounding up

- **29,890** Londoners killed (49% of national total)
- **50,000** badly injured (58% of national total)
- **116,000** houses destroyed in Greater London
- **288,000** houses in need of major repairs

BUT: more killed in Hamburg in July 1943 & Dresden in Feb 1945

Impact on London less than expected but still suffered in UK terms



WW2 – rounding up

Significant impact on family life and children:

- Post-war fall in literacy and numeracy
- Dislocation of family; new patterns of family structure
- Change in attitudes towards children; loss of autonomy

BUT: war created a sense of shared history that bound communities together up until the 1980s

BOMB SIGHT

Mapping the WW2 bomb census

Map | Explore London | About | FAQ | Data | Android App

EXPLORE THE LONDON BOMB SIGHTS during 7th October 1940 to 6th June 1941

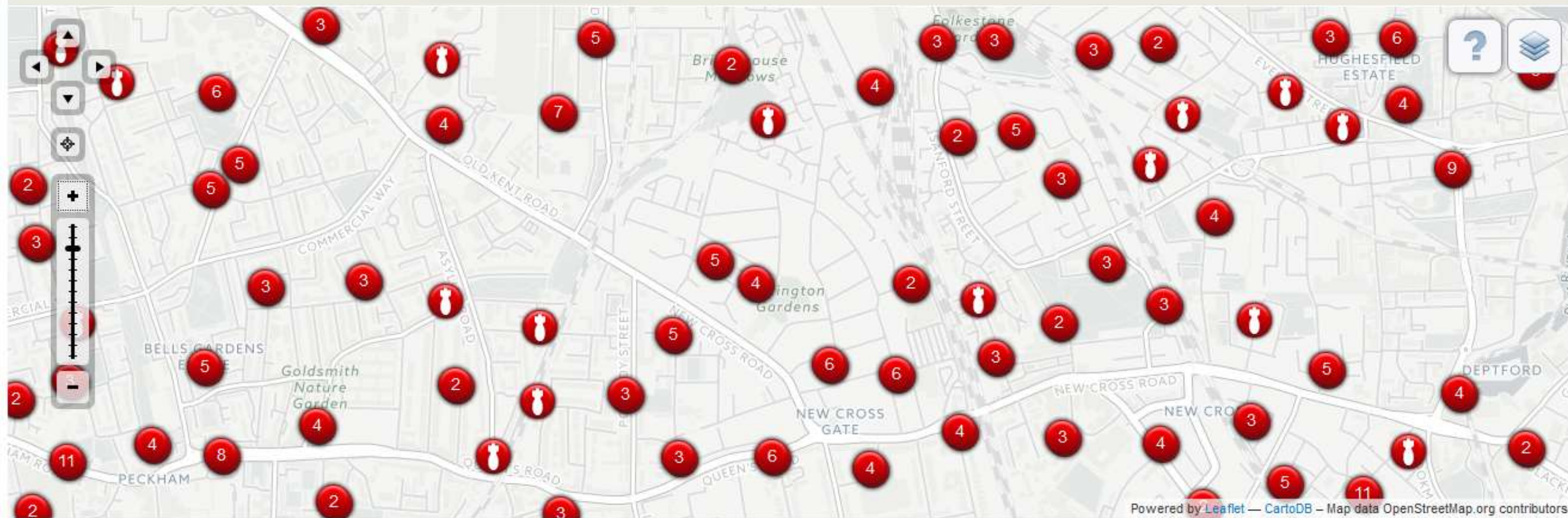


se14 6nw

Searching

Aggregate Bomb Census

Information



Powered by Leaflet — CartoDB — Map data OpenStreetMap.org contributors

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Walk: The City at War

If you are free, we're going on a walk from London Bridge to Postman's Park, exploring the City of London in the Blitz. We'll be visiting a couple of now very tranquil bombed-out churches in the City, and going on a meander through the back streets with a few interesting landmarks along the way.

The walk should take around 1.5 to 2 hours.

If we have enough numbers, I'll split us into two groups:

Group 1 leaving with me at 11am

Group 2 meeting outside the Marks & Spencer in London Bridge station by the entrance at 1pm

Please keep my details and text me if you get separated: 07784 084754