

The Wartime diary of Frank Howcroft - an Air Raid Warden in Bolton

June 20 1940 (1)

Bolton's first air raid warning sounded approx 03-40. All clear half an hour later. I reported at the post in the shortest possible time, and later patrolled the whole area with Mr. Brabin. We did not hear the sounds of any aeroplane engines but it later transpired the enemy were in the vicinity. Our chief observation was that there were too many people out of doors. If such a curiosity persists it may well prove costly in the near future. At the "Raiders Passed" all wardens returned to the post, then hurried home to resume their interrupted sleep.

June 25 1940 (2)

Air raid warning sounded about 01-00. Hurried to post and reported for duty. Came away with rattle and handbell in case of gas. Patrolled houses under my control and later met Mr. Brabin and Mr. Jones. We spotted a light showing through an insufficiently drawn blind, and on going to the suspected house the light was out, and no answer was made to repeated knockings. Enemy aircraft was heard distinctly overhead on two occasions, but as clouds were low the searchlights could not locate them. We then patrolled the whole area and met other wardens, and settled on the railway bridge and chatted until the "Raiders Passed" sounded round 00-20. There were not as many people on the streets this time, although we had to admonish them on three occasions. Returned to post and then home to bed.

August 3 1940 (3)

Sirens sounded about 00-20. Went on duty at once. Aircraft overhead flying very high. About a score of searchlights failed to locate him. The "Raiders Passed" sounded at 01-05, and after reporting to the post the wardens went home.

August 4 1940 (4)

Another warning at 00-10. Went to the warden's rendezvous to await their coming. Nothing doing again, the searchlights being unable to locate the aircraft. At 01-00 the welcome sounds of the sirens gave us the signal to return home. Reported at post and wrote names of all wardens who had reported for duty.

August 12 1940 (5)

Patrolled the area and signed off at 23-00. Having just got settled in bed was aroused by the wailing of the sirens about 23-25. Went out at once to the rendezvous and when Mr. Brabin came I left him in charge. I then proceeded to the post to don anti-gas clothing (my turn this week) but before I could dress the sirens sounded "Raiders Passed" about 23-35. We had however to stand by at the post as the danger was not over. We were eventually free to return home at 00-20.

August 18/19 1940 (6)

On patrol with Mr. Brabin till 23-00 when we retired to rest. We were to be rudely awakened, as the sirens sounded the warning at 23-50. Nothing happened however, and the "Raiders Passed" sounded at 00-15. We are getting familiar with these action warnings. The searchlights did not try to find the aircraft. On returning to the post various wardens said they had heard aircraft for several nights in succession. After reporting Mr. Brabin dressed in anti-gas clothing and came back ready to reconnoiter for gas. On returning to the post a short meeting of the Senior Post wardens and the Senior wardens decided that in future one warden only from each area should return to the post with the names of wardens who have reported for duty. Returned home about 01-00, and so to bed.

August 24 1940 (7)

I went on post duty at 19-00 hours and everything was as usual until 20-18 when the sirens wailed their now familiar action warning. I waited only until an elderly warden came to the post who took charge whilst I made contact with the wardens at rendezvous. The whole area was patrolled several times, while the aircraft circled overhead. At times he came pretty low, but continuous sweepings of the searchlights did not reveal his presence. Mr. Brabin came along in anti-gas clothing looking like a being from another sphere. The 'swish' of the material can be heard many yards away. On this occasion, more than any previous, I personally think that Bolton was lucky to escape being bombed. I think we all more or less expected hearing bursting bombs any instant. A report had to be made about a house on Lever Edge Lane showing pencils of light through insufficiently drawn blinds. We had a long wait before hearing the welcome steady pitch of the sirens which denoted "Raiders Passed" at 23-45. On this alarm it appears that the shelters were used more than hitherto, owing, no doubt to the

fact that the warning was received earlier and there were many people on the streets. A report to the post of wardens who had been on duty ended another air raid warning and the longest up to date.

August 27 1940 (8)

Having got nicely settled in bed the sirens caused a rude awakening and I hurriedly got dressed and went out to the meeting place on the bridge. The other wardens arrived one by one until all had reported. We patrolled the area and found the blackout quite good. The searchlights failed to locate the aircraft. The clouds were low and the aircraft very high. He appeared to circle round and round and finally sheared off. The authorities too, thought the same and sounded "Raiders Passed" about 01-30.

August 28 1940 (9)

I reported at the post and arrived home round about 02-00 and so to bed, but the bomber returned flying very low. I turned out again about 02-15 and was joined by wardens J. Brabin, R. Hubberstey and A. McCann. Bombs were heard to fall and it later transpired that damage to property was done at Kearsley and Walkden. One girl casualty was reported and a pig was killed. They don't even spare their own kind. We noticed several flashes in the sky for which we were unable to account. After the bombing was over, Mr. Brabin and I went through the shelters on the golf course and finally returned to the post. That put paid to our activities for one raid and we returned to our homes at 03-00.

August 28 1940 (10)

I had expressed a desire to go to bed early this evening to catch up on some lost sleep, but as it was my night for patrol that was out of the question. During patrol the wavering sounds of the sirens put us once again on the alert at 22-40. All the wardens reported as usual and after chatting a while we dispersed as the aircraft was very near. We took cover for a while. Searchlights were very much in evidence a little further South to the place they had bombed in the small hours of the morning. Some heavy thuds were heard. The conditions were not good as there was a drizzly rain falling most of the time we were out. The wet flags reflected the lights of cars for some yards ahead and I am sure could be spotted by low flying aircraft. Things seem to be livening up for us. A few members of the Home Guard patrol made a halt on the bridge and a chat with them was very welcome. Nothing occurred in our sector and it was a great relief to hear the "Raiders Passed" signal at 23-45+. On returning to the post the messenger said the warnings were dull affairs. Evidently he wants to see and hear the AA guns in action. After reporting wardens who had been on duty we returned home, I to sleep the sleep of the just.

August 29/30 1940 (11)

Once again the warning note of the sirens caused a rude awakening about 22-40 hours. The length of each raid was about three and a half hours. Bombing was going on to the South West of our contact point. After a preliminary patrol of their own houses all the wardens reported and patrolled the whole area in turn. Nothing exciting to us occurred and it was a great relief to hear the "Raiders Passed signal". Another irritating raid.

August 30/31 1940 (12)

I retired early in order to catch up on lost sleep. Less than one hour in bed had to suffice, however, for the sirens sent out their dismal message at 22-20 hours. I hastily dressed and as usual accentuated the warning on my whistle. Mr. Hubberstey was already on the bridge and all the other wardens arrived in due course. The usual patrols were kept up. After a long time of waiting we were rewarded with a barrage of AA shells piercing the sky with their flashes. We can only hope that they were successful in destroying the aircraft which was out on its errand of destruction. The scene of this activity was further West than the previous raid. It would be some consolation for us if we could get to know if any had been brought down to earth. After a few hours we decided on a drink of tea. Mr. Hubberstey provided a stone bottle and Mr. Brabin filled it with tea and thus we had a very acceptable drink in the wee small hours. Aircraft were heard on several occasions but nothing happened anywhere near us. I have confidence that should anything serious occur in our area the wardens will acquit themselves well. But to be out several hours on end and nothing doing, well, it's just dull. The length of the raids extend every subsequent one. On this occasion the "Raiders Passed" sounded at 02-50, so we were on duty four and a half hours. At the beginning there was developing a rather ugly incident on the bridge as a passing civilian took umbrage after being warned about a glowing cigarette end. As usual a report at the post ended another warning and left us free to return home.

August 31/September 1 1940 (13)

I retired rather early but for very little purpose as the aeroplanes could be heard. I arose and went outside just in time to hear the wail of the sirens send out their unwelcome message at 20-25. The scene of the activity was more Westerly than the previous raid. All week the bombers have been raiding further South and West, and so have been operating in part of a huge circle. Nothing untoward occurred in our particular area. We were rewarded by seeing the A.A. reception given to the bombers. They were met with a terrific barrage, and it would appear that nothing could withstand such a terrific shelling and escape. The early morning hours are now getting chill, so, during this raid we decided to change our rendezvous, which is now one of the shelters on the golf links. The whole area was patrolled by different pairs from time to time, and it was quite a relief to hear the "Raiders Passed" signal at approx 02-45 hours. On reporting at the post there was an order to senior wardens to divide their parties into two, each party to operate on alternate raids, this giving the wardens a chance of a good night's rest. Of course should bombs fall in the vicinity, all wardens would report for duty. I don't know how Area A wardens will take it, but it is going to be no easy thing to arrange two parties. We shall have to meet and talk it over.

Sept 2/3 1940 (14)

Sirens sounded "action warning" at 22-25 hours and sounded "Raiders Passed" at 00-20. During this time we discussed the matter of reporting for duty on alternate raids. The wardens, however, feel they have a job to do, and declared their intention of doing duty every possible raid. **(15)**. At 00-55 another warning denoted aircraft in the vicinity and so turned out again, not much doing, so we were glad to be finally released for the night at 01-10 hours.

Sept 3/4 1940 (16)

Out again at 22-55 doing patrols and reporting to our place of contact. Watched various "AA" Barrages, but not yet seen any hostile aircraft brought down. About 01-15 the steady pitch of the sirens sent us home for a while but not to rest for long, as the dismal wailing had us out again. **(17)** from 02-50 to 03-10. Raids followed on this day

(18) 10-25 to 10-40,

(19) 14-45 to 14-50,

(20) 15-00 to 15-30, after which we were left alone for a few hours.

(21) At 22-10 we were called from our slumbers to report for duty and this warning lasted until 23-20. We were not to have much respite as we were out again at **(22)** 23-40.

Sept 5 1940

This was to prove the most hectic raid yet, for the bombing and the AA fire were terrific. We rested and patrolled in turn, and watch the battles going on afar off. Towards the South a huge fire was started which lit up the sky for miles around. It looked impossible for such a tremendous blaze to be got under control but after an hour or so the sky appeared as usual, with just an occasional glare, and finally died away altogether. As I watched I could not help being reminded of the Premier's words (Mr. Churchill) when he took office, and could only offer toil, sweat, tears and blood. The men who worked on that fire must have passed through the whole gamut. At 04-20 our vigil ended and after reporting to the post went home to bed.

Sept 5/6 1940 (23)

After cherishing an illusion that we should have a free night the dread call came at 22-15. Arose and dressed at once to heed the call of duty and after accentuating the warning on my whistle and patrolling my own small area, went to rendezvous to await events. There was soon commotion to the South West of our vantage point and during the early morning hours a huge fire was started. Any amount of bombing and counter measures from the ground defences. Hostile aircraft were circling over us all the time. Besides myself, wardens Brabin, Hubberstey and Shirres were all together watching and listening when suddenly, we had to throw ourselves on the ground as we heard a bomb screaming through the air. I was conscious of seeing a very vivid flash of light and hearing the explosion as the bomb made impact with the earth. Nine people were injured, seven serious and two slight. That to date is our most exciting occurrence, but who knows, the time may be at hand when we have serious work to do. Patrols, rests and looking out passed our time until the sirens liberated us at 03-55 hours.

Sept 6 1940

Whilst coming home on the bus the journey was interrupted by a warning which sounded at 17-45 and lasted until 17-55. Made straight home on foot. A further warning sounded at 23-25.

Sept 7 1940

An action warning sounded at 09-40 hours and "Raiders Passed" about 10-00.

Home again at 12-10 till 12-25. Many people were in the town centre and very quietly went to shelter. No great hurry and no panic.

A further alarm sounded about 22-25 hours but there was little doing and it came as no surprise to hear "Raiders Passed" signal about 23-15. The wardens who reported for duty went to the post to stand by for a while. We were on the point of leaving at midnight when the sirens bid us return to duty. The night was very dark and wet and the prospect of a long raid was not encouraging. There was not much aerial activity; nevertheless the signal to go home was not heard until 03-03 hours Sunday.

Sept 10 1940

Once again the siren's warning bade us turn out for duty at 00-25. Visibility was bad and rain was falling. There was no activity overhead, a lone plane having passed before the warning was sounded. The warning having been recently changed from two minutes to one minute duration is not long enough. The original time is the better. The "Raiders Passed" came in a quarter of an hour at 00-40. We stood by until 01-00 and then dispersed. I calling at the post before returning home.

Sept 11 1940

At 00-15 the sirens sounded the now familiar alert, and dressing with all speed went out to accentuate the warning on my whistle. The moon was very bright and visibility was good. It was rather cold on the shelter's field, and if we are to be called out in the future as we have been in the past few weeks we shall require woollen helmets, gloves and the like. Intense AA fire was witnessed in a South Westerly direction, and as it finished abruptly one can only surmise that the aircraft was brought down. For, almost co incident with the cessation of fire the welcome "Raiders Passed" sounded at about 01-00. Reported at post as usual and then returned home.

Sept 11/12 1940

The "alert" warning sounded at 22-30 hours just as I was preparing for bed. Sounded whistle and hastened to point of contact. Bombing and "AA" fire were going on for a time in the South West but nothing anywhere near us. When the "Raiders Passed" siren went it was a signal for a general exodus from the shelters. Time 00-45. Quite long enough even though the night was lit by brilliant moonlight.

Sept 12 1940

A lone raider appeared over the town and the sirens went about 10-50 and the warning lasted until 11-05. Later in the day I was informed that the raider had been brought to earth. That is rather encouraging.

Sept 12 1940

Another daylight warning at 19-30 hours. The sky was dull and clouds were numerous and low. Hostile aircraft were heard cruising about. Rain began to fall and things looked like being uncomfortable when at 21-20 the "Raiders Passed" sounded and we went home after visiting the post. Gunfire was heard to a more Westerly direction than on recent occasions.

Sept 12/13 1940

Hopes of a good night's rest were rudely shattered when at 22-30 the wailing sirens sounded. I had been in bed just ten minutes, and after giving vent to my disgust at Goering and co. I dressed and carried on with my duties as usual. The shelters were occupied by the usual clientele. There was not as much going to and fro by aircraft as on other nights, perhaps he is using another entry to approach his object. Things were very quiet on this occasion, and as the wardens kept more in the shelter, there was not much activity. The hours dragged slowly on, and it was a great relief to hear the "Raiders Passed" at 02-45. Visited post and then returned home to resume my interrupted slumbers.

Sept 13 1940

They were again to be disturbed, for at 03-40 another warning went and again I arose at the call, albeit unwillingly. Only one other warden reported, and we soon returned home to standby there. It was not for long however and the sirens welcome "Raiders Passed" sounded at 04-10. During this short period

there was most intense firing to the West and North West. This time we were left in peace and hastily tumbling in bed was soon in a deep, and I think well earned sleep.

Sept 14 1940

At 20-35 hours the sirens once again called the wardens to duty. We are rather short handed just now. Two members being too unwell to appear. Being Saturday evening others were perhaps held up in town. No one turned up to take refuge, the wardens being left in sole possession. Desultory firing took place in the West and South West districts. It did not last for long however, for after about an hour "Raiders Passed" sounded at 21-30. Aircraft were heard overhead and it seemed another warning was imminent. Reported at post and then returned home to wait.

Sept 15 1940

The warning came at 04- and on turning out was rewarded by the moon shedding its full brilliance over the earth. It seemed difficult to believe that destruction could hide in such beauty. On the other hand what a wealth of targets was in view. A cold wind was blowing and we were glad to take to the shelters. We had not long to wait before release came with the welcome sound of "Raiders Passed". Once again reported at post previous to returning home.

Sept 15 1940

This warning at 11-35 found me about ten minutes walk away from home. I covered the distance in much less time than that and went on duty at once. There was nothing doing, however and we spent the time in the shelter until the sirens released us at 12-05.

Sept 16 1940

The sirens at 02-10 hours awoke me from a deep sleep but I was soon upon my now accustomed duty. Very few people came to the shelters. It was rather cold outside so some patrolled and others sat in the shelter. Owing to the brilliance of the moon it was quite light, but we could not see any aircraft, although one was flying to and fro. After a time Mr. Brabin and myself went on patrol and while we were out we called at the post in order to save time when the "Raiders Passed" signal sounded. This actually happened when we were in the post at 03-15 so we were able to make straight home and resume interrupted slumbers.

Sept 16 1940

Whilst on the bus going to work the familiar warble of the sirens sent out their unpleasant message. The bus kept on the move, however and when all the fares had been taken the driver pulled up at the nearest shelter. Whether by accident or design. I know not. Everything was at a standstill in town. It took a little time for traffic to run normal. Length of warning 08-45 to 09-30 hours.

Sept 16 1940

The sirens sounded a warning about 19-38 hours and lasted until 19-55, but as we left the shelters an aircraft was heard, so it was no surprise to hear another warning at 20-05. This went on until about 21-00. We witnessed bombing and "AA" fire away over to the West and South West of our shelters. After the "Raiders Passed" signal we saw bomb flashes from an enemy plane to the South. He was travelling in an Easterly direction and as he went he appeared to be jettisoning his load doing damage wherever he could, rather than on any particular target. As we were proceeding to the post down Lever Edge Lane, we saw a very vivid flash which lit up the sky for several seconds. We thought at first that a power station had received a lucky hit, but learned later the trailing wire of a barrage balloon had fouled the supply cables and plunged the whole district in darkness. After visiting the post we returned home. Not for long however, for, at 22-15 the wailing sirens once again brought us out on alert. It was a miserable night. Drizzly rain made visibility bad and we were in the shelter most of the time. There was not much doing, and we were all thankful to hear "Raiders Passed" at 22-50, and expressed a wish that we should now be left alone for a while.

Sept 17 1940

A short air raid warning this morning from 10-40 to 11-15. There are too many curious people who would come out of doors and gaze skywards. A foolish procedure. At 20-30 hours we were called to duty by the sirens but the warning was only of short duration. "Raiders Passed" sounding at 20-50. Today we began a fresh arrangement in order to give wardens a chance to stay indoors and get what rest they can. Two wardens will be on duty for the whole of the raid. The remainder will accentuate the warnings on their whistles when the warning is sounded. They must then return home and be ready to go on duty at a moments notice when bombs drop in the vicinity. Mr. Brabin and myself were the first

two to open up in our area. I had been in bed half an hour when I was awakened. The warning sounded at 22-20 and we patrolled the area and went to the shelter. No one had arrived, so we were lonely. Bombing and anti-aircraft guns made the sky light up towards the South West. The bombers were particularly active, and some place seemed to be getting it hot. It is to be hoped that the "AA" fire was successful in getting some victims. While activity was still going in that direction our sirens sounded "Raiders Passed" at 23.00, and on returning home met the post messenger who relieved us of the first aid dressing box. Then home to bed and a well earned sleep.

Sept 19 1940

At 00-50 we were called out to duty but only for short time as the "Raiders Passed" signal sounded at 01-06. As I was not on duty for the actual time of the raid I was in bed, and arose to accentuate the warning by blowing my whistle. I soon returned to bed, but was awakened at 01-50 on the same errand. We all met for a chat before dispersing but before Mr. Harker and Mr. Shirres could leave to go to the shelter the welcome sound of the sirens sent us all home at 02-03, and we were not disturbed again. The next morning came when the day was pretty well advanced and lasted for half an hour from 10-40 to 11-10. Another alert warning at 21-17 I was on raid duty with Mr. McCann. I was acting as deputy for Mr. Hubberstey who is temporarily out of commission through sickness. Bombs had been dropping far afield during the evening, and the sounding of the local sirens caused no surprise. We went to the shelters after our initial patrol but only for a short time as we got our release at 21-30.

Sept 20 1940

At 00-03 I was again roused, but as I had got into bed partially dressed I was soon ready for duty. As I went into the street it began to rain, and as time went on the rain became worse. It looked as though we should have a real miserable time. As usual "AA" fire and bombing were going on in the usual districts. Bolton seems to be singularly lucky in this respect. This is about our 50th warning and only one or two bombs have fallen in the town. We had settled down for a long, dreary wait in the shelter, and were more than glad to hear the welcome relief note of the sirens about 00-23. After that we were not to be disturbed.

Sept 22 1940

The sirens aroused us from our slumbers at 00-15 and at once I went out into the streets to accentuate the warning as is my usual custom. Mr. Brabin and myself were the wardens to remain on duty for the length of the raid. We met, and proceeded to the shelter but had no sooner got settled than the "Raiders Passed" signal sounded about 00-30 and we at once returned home. A further warning sounded at 08-50. A glorious morning greeted me as I went outside to blow the whistle. Many people were stood at their doors and little knots of people in the streets were gazing skywards trying to find the aircraft. The plane must have flown right over and kept on his way, for we heard the sirens give out their welcome message about 09-20. Later on in the day I was visited by Mr. Holmes who had been informed that three cases had been reported of people having touched gossamer with their bare hands and been burned. Probably artificial gossamer impregnated with blister gas, and discharged from aircraft and trusting to luck for it to fall in congenial places.

Sept 23 1940

The sirens sounded an alert at 20-13 hours and, as usual I went round to add to the warning on my whistle. There was much gunfire towards the West and South West but nothing doing locally and when the "Raiders Passed" signal went about 21-08 hours we made straight for home. After a time I retired to bed, hoping for a long sleep, but I was quickly disillusioned for the wail of the sirens put us all on the run again at 22-25. We had barely made contact, however, before we were again set at liberty at 22-40.

Sept 24 1940

Having got nicely settled down the sirens caused a rude awakening at 00-25. We wardens performed our usual ritual in the area before proceeding to our rendezvous. Once there, we could see that the same place was in for a hot time. There was a lot of A.A. shells bursting in the air, and at intervals the sky lit up with the flashes of heavier guns. Mr. Brabin, Mr. McCann and myself were on duty to see the thing through. Mr. Brabin will be out, though there was no need for him to be on duty on this occasion. Relays of hostile aircraft flew over every few minutes on their errand of destruction. They certainly met with a hot reception, and we would like to think that many were destroyed. About 02-00 Mr. McCann brought us a drink of hot tea for which we were thankful. It was cold in the shelter as a mist was creeping over the field and it did not spare us. After a while we prevailed on Mr. McCann to go home and get some rest as he had to be at work at an early hour. After a further period of alternate rest and

looking out, we set out to patrol the area, and called at the post to get warm. We were given a drink of tea, and before we left the post the "Raiders Passed" signal sent us home at 04-13 hours. From that time we were left alone for the rest of the usual sleeping hours.

Sept 25 1940

We were called out for duty at 20-32 and after performing the usual duty reported at the rendezvous. As usual bombing and "AA" fire to the West and South West, but nothing locally. It was very cold and it was with expressions of relief that we greeted the "Raiders Passed" at 22-02 hours

Sept 26 1940

At 19-45 the sirens had us out on duty again. The wardens for raid duty being Messrs Harker and Shirres. I reported as usual and stayed out about an hour and a half, and during that time there was spasmodic bombing and answering fire. On this occasion the warning was of four hours duration, the sirens sounding at 23-45.

Sept 27 1940

A short warning this morning lasted from 10-42 to 11-13. The sirens sounded again at 19-55 and after a preliminary patrol I made contact with others at our meeting place. Very soon the "AA" guns were in action towards the South West. Always the same district. It must look a bit chaotic by now. It did not last long, however when the fireworks ceased we went into a shelter for a little warmth, as a freshening wind was blowing. After a little while the "Raiders Passed" signal went at 20-40, so we immediately went home. About 22-00 hours we had another warning but no sooner had we patrolled our own small areas than we were released from duty again at 22-10 hours. A further alert signal sounded about 22-45 and on making contact at the shelter went inside to rest awhile. We did not hear any aircraft about and there was no firing in the distance. We were prepared to stay out for a long period but the sirens gave us the "Raiders Passed" at 23-00 hours, so we returned to our homes.

Sept 28 1940

A short warning this morning lasted from 10-25 to 10-32. Nothing at all doing.

Sept 29 1940

Having had a night free from an alarm we were called out at 22-35 hours, and were kept out until 01-10. In the usual districts the raiders were busy, but the answering "AA" fire let the Bosche know that he would not have things all his own way. It would be a tonic to us if we could see one descending in flames.

Sept 30 1940

Another warning at 05-35 hours. This was a very unusual time, as dawn was breaking. It seemed a foregone conclusion that we should not have to stay out very long. So it was. The sirens giving out the "Raiders Passed" signal at 06-15. The sinister wail of sirens made me shut an interesting book at 22-35. After the initial patrol we made contact at the shelter. The night was pitch dark and we could only recognize each other by the sound of the voice. There was nothing doing, however, we could not hear aircraft, bombing or "AA" fire. A cold night, Stygian black, and nothing to report. We were all doubly glad to hear the "Raiders Passed" at 23-15 hours.

Oct 1 1940

October was barely five minutes old when we were aroused from our various beds to answer the call of duty at 00-05. Messrs Harker and Shirres were on duty for the duration of the raid, and after making contact with them and handing over the first aid kit, I returned to bed, but before I could resume my interrupted sleep the welcome note of the sirens at 00-35 acted as a sedative. Early in the evening, aircraft were heard in the vicinity, so it occasioned no surprise to hear the dismal wail at 22-25. We immediately performed our preliminary duties and then made contact at the rendezvous. Various flashes in the distance told us that the Hun was at his dirty work. One in particular seemed intent on a particular target, for he circled round and round several times. The activity was centred towards the South, (Manchester, we guessed). It must have been very hectic while it lasted. We were all surprised to hear the "Raiders Passed" signal at 23-00, as we thought he would not be out of the area. We came to the conclusion that he must have made his departure a different way, as he usually passed over us on his way back. From the shelter we went to view another meeting place offered us. We may decide to take it. It is in the centre of the area, and contains a fireplace, and is weatherproof. After inspecting it we came outside and immediately saw the glare of a large fire, about Salford I should say. It must have ignited at the end of the raid, for the sky was quite black when the sirens sent

us home. It was soon got under control. The firefighters must have worked like demons. Before retiring to bed, I looked out at 23-45, but there was no glow in the sky at all.

Oct 2 1940

This was all to the good for as soon as I got settled in bed I had to get up at 00-04 and accentuate the siren's call to duty. I then went to the shelters and handed over the first aid box to Mr. Hubberstey and Mr. Chadwick, and after wishing them a short stay outside I returned home, but as soon as I had done so the "Raiders Passed" sounded at 00-15, and so to bed. Retiring rather early that I may get some rest before duty called I was hastily aroused at 22-40 to answer the demand made by the sirens. It was very dark outside and I ran in the middle of the road to avoid running into lamp posts. As soon as we made contact there was bombing proceeding in the Manchester district. The Bosche must have left his trademark this time. It appeared to us, to be the most intense bombing attack in this region. There must have been a whole squadron at work, approaching in relays. The thud of the bombs suggested heavy calibre. This went on intermittently for an hour and a half when quite abruptly at 01-00 the "Raiders Passed" signal went and I don't think any of us on duty expected hearing it at that time. As on the previous night Jerry departed leaving a big blaze. We immediately set a course for home, and of course, bed.

Oct 3 1940

We now received the wail of sirens with equanimity. They had us on duty this morning at 07-15 and the warning lasted until 07-55. We neither saw nor heard any aircraft, but we did witness some barrage balloons being hauled in.

Oct 4 1940

No sirens sounded in our region during the night, so we were able to partake of a full night's uninterrupted sleep. I suppose this was made possible by bad flying weather. The alarm sounded during the forenoon at 11-03 and as is usual with these daylight raids, so far from the bases, was of short duration. "Raiders Passed" sounding at 11-17. Out again at 21-35 and, what a night. It was inky black and once I lost my bearings. However, I found our new rendezvous, which we used for the first time this evening and we should be comfortable there. It is the wash house at the rear of 27 Lever Edge Lane which Mr. and Mrs. Hubberstey kindly placed at our disposal. An oil stove has been supplied and I asked for, and got, a storm lamp from the post, so we should be all right. Anyway, we are not continually out in the open, but are quite ready for action at a moments notice in any part of the area. At 21-55 the sirens sounded the "Raiders Passed" signal and we at once dispersed.

Oct 5 1940

We were out on duty again at 21-25 hours and at once I went forth to meet another dark night attended by rain. After a preliminary patrol I went to make contact with the other wardens. Four of us reported in all. Being Saturday evening the others were perhaps in town seeking relaxation, and very necessary too. About 22-15 the sirens sounded their welcome message so we returned home to await the next call. A little "AA" fire was heard in the distance.

Oct 6 1940

At 09-45 we were put on the alert but nothing occurred so we just waited patiently for the "Raiders Passed" which sounded at 10-15.

Oct 7 1940

We were called out again for duty at 20-35 hours and during my preliminary patrol the fun began. I sensed from the outset that it would be a lengthy raid, and so it proved, for we were not freed from duty for 3 and 3 quarter hours. The Bosche made a determined attack this time, and dropped all sorts of bombs, heavy, not so heavy, and incendiaries. He did not appear to have much success with the firebombs, and we have no means of knowing properly what damage the H.E. caused. It can be safely assumed, however, that if a large percentage fell amongst property the havoc must be considerable. The bombs fell too near us to be comfortable, and I made a remark to the effect that our turn had come at last. The Hun did not get it all his own way, as he was met with an "AA" fire greater in intensity than any we have yet seen. A "dud" AA shell struck a house in the sector next to ours, so we very nearly had serious work to do. It was the turn of Mr. Brabin and myself for duty for the whole of the raid, and as he did not turn up as early as usual, I went for him, and learned that he had been caught in town in the raid, and had to walk home. Hostile aircraft completely encircled Bolton on this occasion, and there was never much of a period that the sky was not lit up by gun flash, incendiaries or percussion of H.E.B. bombs. The night was not so dark as the few preceding ones, and late on in

the proceedings a watery moon showed it self, and by its light we could see our way about. About midnight Mr. Brabin and I decided on having supper and while we were so pleasantly engaged the sirens sounded the "Raiders Passed" signal at 00-20 so after visiting our contact post to see that all was well, I returned home to partake of a well earned sleep.

Oct 8 1940

Just as I arrived at work at 09-00 the "alert" sounded, so into their burrows went the rabbits. I started out on my round and had barely reached my destination when "Raiders Passed" sounded at 09-25. Another warning sounded at 13-55 and lasted until 14-15. Perhaps photographic expeditions. I am of the opinions that during this raid (Oct 8) I saw a plane drop down in flames. The "alert" sounded at 20-30 hours and after the usual patrol I reported at the rendezvous. The Bosche was soon at his dastardly work again but the attacks were not pressed home so determinedly. After a time went very quiet and then Jerry left us alone, the sirens releasing us from duty at 21-50.

Oct 9 1940

When the sirens sounded this evening at 20-25 there seemed to be a very unpleasant prospect in view, it was very dark, the rain was falling heavily, attended by strong gusts of wind. I was in the Victoria Hall where the Halle orchestra had been giving a concert under the baton of Dr. Malcolm Sargeant. The end of the concert must have coincided with the beginning of the raid. I reported as early as possible and soon bombs began to fall nearby. A few fires were started but were soon under control. After a quiet spell the "Raiders Passed" sounded at 22-10, so we immediately dispersed.

Oct 10 1940

The sirens sounded the "alert" at 21-35 hours and at once I went out to accentuate the warning on my whistle. After the initial patrol we met at the rendezvous. We then went out to see if anything was happening, and we soon heard bombs falling and answering "AA" fire. The aerial activity took place in the main between Manchester and Bury. After a while things went quiet, only to open out again, then there were two very loud reports as from heavy guns. Then quietness again, and at 22-40 the "Raiders Passed" sounded, so we retired to our homes. Not for very long though, for at 22-55 we were called out on duty again, and it seemed rather considerate of the Bosche to allow us an interval for supper. After following the usual initial patrol we met and went out into the open to await events. On this occasion we were rather quiet and were getting bored when the sirens sent us home at 11-25 hours. We at once dispersed and I went home to bed.

Oct 11 1940

Owing to a miscalculation Mr. Brabin and myself thought we were the wardens for the whole of the raid. So we turned out for duty when the "alert" sounded at 00-25. The Hun proved himself a confounded nuisance. There were two very determined actions during the time we were out. The Manchester district seemed to be singled out for special attention. The aircraft was into attack then went away for a time. We patrolled, went to our rendezvous, visited the shelters, then the post, back to the shelters, spent some time looking out, and then about 04-00 we decided to go home and stand by until the sirens went. As we were proceeding home we heard the aircraft overhead so we returned to our lookout point. Bombing and "AA" fire went on like the very devil, both those on the ground and in the air had a hot time. All of a sudden things went quiet so we returned to our homes to wait. We had not long to wait after that, for the sirens sounded at 04-15. Soon I was sound asleep. Out on duty again a few minutes after 21-00 hours and after the usual ritual we met at the place of contact. We then went to our lookout to see if things were happening. Firing was going on round Merseyside. On the whole, things were rather quiet, but we may have been mistaken for although it was a fine moonlight night, there was a ground mist, so visibility was not too good. Nothing of importance occurred in our vicinity, and as the mist penetrated our clothing, we got cold and went to our rendezvous for a drink of hot tea, supplied by Mrs. Brabin. After that we patrolled and finally went to the shelter, and while there the "Raiders Passed" sounded at 23-40 hours so we immediately went home. Mr. Brabin and myself were again the duty wardens for the whole of the raid.

Oct 12 1940

We had an "alert" from 11-10 to 12-10, but there was nothing doing.

Oct 13 1940

An "alert" sounded at 15-20 but as I was at a church harvest festival service I did not report, the "Raiders Passed" sounded at 15-50. At 20-40 hours the sirens called us out to duty, and immediately gunfire was heard. It didn't last for long, it must have proved too warm for the Bosche, as he turned his

direction towards the West coast. At 21-00 the "Raiders Passed" sounded and we returned home. Once again the call to duty came at 22-45 and very soon things were happening in the South West. A terrific "AA" barrage met the aircraft and can only hope it was successful in destroying one or more. It was the turn of Messrs. Harker and Shirres for the whole of the raid and we stayed with them until about half past eleven when we left them on their own. I returned home and stood by for a while. The siren sounded the "Raiders Passed" signal at 00-05, so I immediately retired to bed, and was not further disturbed.

Oct 14 1940

Jerry soon paid us a visit this evening. I had barely finished my tea when the sirens went out their message at 18-50. He was overhead. Before I had completed the patrol of my area heavy calibre guns gave him a welcome. He sheered off towards Manchester and dropped a few bombs, then all was quiet, and the next we heard was the "Raiders Passed" which went at 19-10. So we immediately dispersed to await a further call. As anticipated, Jerry returned to these quarters at 22-35 hours. Mr. Brabin and I were for duty the length of the raid. We met at the rendezvous but found everything very quiet. It was as was a very fine moonlight night with a rather cold wind. We shall require extra clothing before long to deal with the East winds. As there was no aerial activity we went into our meeting place for a little warmth, and to await events. We waited in vain, however, and it was with feelings of relief that we heard the "Raiders Passed" signal given out at 23-20. We at once dispersed expecting another call to duty, but as none came, we were able to enjoy a full night's uninterrupted repose.

Oct 16 1940

Just after 19-30 hours we were out on duty. The night was wet and visibility almost nil. After our various initial patrols we met at our rendezvous and while we were chatting the sirens sounded the "Raiders Passed" at 19-55, so we retired to our homes to await the next call.

Oct 17 1940

The sirens sounded an "alert" at 21-20. After patrolling my own area and blowing my whistle en route I met the other wardens at our meeting place. There was activity almost at once. Reports from big guns from an Easterly direction opened the proceedings. It was in the South West, however, that things began to happen. Liverpool and Warrington seemed to be the places chosen for the attack and Jerry ran into a hellish barrage. It was lively at one period; there was not a split second an "AA" shell was not bursting in the sky. After a time it died away and all was quiet, so we went to our rendezvous to get warm. As Mr. Chadwick and I were on duty for the whole of the raid, we broke away from the rest in order to get supper before the other wardens left us to it. While we were thus engaged the welcome sound of "Raiders Passed" sounded at 22-40 hours. From then we were not again disturbed.

Oct 18 1940

As I was on post duty at 19-00 hours I was not able to do my initial patrol when the sirens sounded at 20-00. As soon as someone arrived to take charge of the post I left at 20-20 to join my colleagues. Just as I reached the door of the post, reports for big guns meant that the Bosche was in the neighbourhood. A few bombs were dropped in a North Easterly direction, then quiet. Aircraft were also in the South West but on the whole things were quiet. After a time of looking out we went inside our meeting place and stayed for quite a long time. Mr. Brabin and I were on duty for the length of the raid, and I left about 22-40 to get my supper. As on the previous night, I had only been home a few minutes when the welcome "Raiders Passed" signal sounded at 22-45. On another occasion I shall have to leave them earlier and see if the oracle still works.

Oct 19 1940

An 'alert' signal at 19-15 was the prelude to what proved to be a long raid. As I was rather far away from the sector when the sirens sounded I was not able to report at the rendezvous as early as usual. On arrival I found only one absentee, which was very good considering it was Saturday evening. The Bosche was soon at his dirty work. Intermittent "AA" fire from various places greeted him. There must have been many planes overhead, and on one occasion in a direct Westerly district from where we were watching we saw two parachute flares. They were of a type we have not seen before. They were like a huge triangle with a light at each end of the base and one at the apex. They hovered in the air and pieces of fire fell off to the ground now and again. By and by Jerry came near us and dropped a few bombs at no great distance away. As the raid proceeded the ground defences got merrier till there was terrific barrage for the Hun to face. After a time things quietened a little and, as we were cold we went to our meeting place for a warm and a drink of tea. When we went out again aircraft were still coming and going, and there was another lively duel; aircraft v ground defences in the Liverpool-

Warrington area. The night was cold and the moon shed a light over everything. It should have been easy for Jerry to spot targets. About 23-00 hours we once again repaired to our meeting place, and about half an hour later I left and went for supper intending to return at one o'clock to do duty for Mr. McCann who had to work all day Sunday. Just about 24-00 the "Raiders Passed" signal sounded, the raid having lasted four and quarter hours.

Oct 20 1940

An "alert" sounded at 12-15 but all was quiet and it came as no surprise when the "Raiders Passed" sounded at 12-40. The sirens gave us another run when they sounded at 13-30 but in five or six minutes all was over, and we were free to return home, which we did. At 21-20 hours the sirens interrupted my reading of a good book. I went out at once to accentuate the warning. It was very dark, but on getting accustomed to the gloom, visibility was alright for a few yards. A cold wind was blowing and rain threatened, so a long raid wasn't a very inviting prospect. For the first time I turned out wearing a Balaclava helmet, and it was very warm. It will be a boon when colder weather arrives. We did not hear any aircraft and we went to our rendezvous to sit round the stove. At 22-20 we heard the "Raiders Passed" signal, so immediately left for home. Not for long, however, for at 22-35 the sirens upset our reckoning on an undisturbed night. We had only a fifteen minute interval for supper, which was not long enough. Anyway, all the personnel reported and we went to our lookout, but there was only quietness. Some of us went to visit the shelters for the double purpose of doing something and seeing if any of the shelters were tenanted. They were not, so we returned to our lookout. Very soon the Bosche was overhead on his way to do his foul work. Shortly bombs began to fall and big guns opened out in reply. Some bombs fell at no great distance from where we were standing but nothing occurred in our immediate vicinity. We did not see anything doing in the South Lancs. coastal district. On this raid it was more East to South. When we had had enough of looking out we went in the meeting place to get warm. I was just opening the door to leave for home when the welcome note of "Raiders Passed" sounded a few minutes after midnight 00-05.

Oct 21 1940

After about an hour the "alert" sounded again 01-05 and I hastily dressed and went out blowing my whistle. Messrs Harker and Shirres were on duty for the length of the raid. I did not contact them, but returned home to resume my slumbers. The wardens had a pretty bad time as they were kept on the move in and out of bed until after five o'clock. There were two other warnings, one about 03-20 and another about 04-55 before they were left undisturbed.

Another "alert" sounded at 10-30 hours and lasted until 11-55, but there didn't appear to be anything doing. A warning from 14-20 to 14-35. At 16-30 whilst on the bus returning to the office the sirens sounded again, but nothing untowards occurred. This one lasted just over an hour the "Raiders Passed" sounding at 17-35. What a busy day for raids. At 20-25 the warning came to the call to duty. This being the seventh and last raid of the day. It wasted three and three quarter hours, the sirens giving the welcome sound at 00-10. The time dragged slowly by. There was no sound of any aircraft in the vicinity. On turning out at the beginning of the raid the night was dark, visibility being confined to a few yards. Later on the moon came out, and there was an unmistakable nip of frost in the air. Towards midnight there was a ground mist which enveloped one, and it was cold. We therefore went to our rendezvous and before we were properly seated by the stove the sirens freed us from duty. Mr. Chadwick and myself were on duty for the length of the raid, but as soon as we were left on our own the unexpected occurred. Then home to bed.

Oct 22 1940

A few minutes before 19-30 hours the sirens heralded yet another 'alert'. We are something past the century by this time. On my preliminary patrol I found it necessary to knock at a few doors as light was percolating through insufficiently drawn blinds. It was cold and dark with more than a hint of rain, but it kept off, however, there was a little "AA" fire from the South West district, but the hostile aircraft must have entered by the coast route. He did not come over our heads as he usually does. In our sector all was quiet. Mr. Brabin and I were for duty all the raid and as we had had a full night in bed the previous night we were quite O.K. We all went in the meeting place and after a time were glad to hear the welcome "Raiders Passed" sounded at 20-40 hours. After that we were not disturbed, so once again we were able to get a good nights rest.

Oct 23 1940

The sirens sounded the "alert" at 22-50. I had begun to think we were going to have a free night. After the usual routine we all met at the rendezvous, and went to look at what was happening. We had not to wait long before we saw a series of vivid flashes momentarily lit up the ground. There was a lively

“AA” barrage and it was at no great distance from our place of observation. In fact, I hurried home to get the family and visitors downstairs as the plane appeared to be making our way. Anyway, after approaching towards Bolton he turned again Manchester way, and all was quiet. By this time we were cold, so we went to get warm at our stove. We turned out again shortly, and went out to brave the weather, but not for long, as there seemed to be no point in staying out just to get cold, so we returned to more comfortable quarters. About midnight we broke up leaving wardens Hubberstey and McCann on duty for the length of the raid. At 00-58 the “Raiders Passed” sounded and no further warnings were heard.

Oct 26 1940

The “alert” sounded just after 19-30 hours but as I was away from the area I could not give the warning on my whistle. I got to our meeting place as soon as possible, and for a time all was quiet. This week Bolton has inaugurated a war weapons week and a Messerschmitt 111, brought down in an encounter is on view. I have been informed that every place the machine has been on view has been bombed, so I wondered if Bolton was to have a visitation. On one occasion Mr. Brabin stopped the buses as there was a plane overhead. The result was that every bus on the route was at the outward terminus at once. Several parachute flares were dropped and suspended in the air for some minutes. Bombs were dropped outside and inside the Borough, but no great damage has been done, no one killed, but a factory hit, and a few homes shaken. This raid lasted quite a long time, as is generally the case when Mr. Brabin and I are the duty wardens. The remainder left us about midnight, so we had a good walk round the area and then visited the post. Whilst there the sirens sounded “Raiders Passed” at 01-10 hours, the raid having lasted over five and a half hours.

Oct 27 1940

When the sirens sounded at 12-35 I was some distance away from the area, but I got there with all possible speed. There was nothing doing, however, and we were soon home again, the “Raiders Passed” sounding at 13-10. At 18-10 hours we had another “alert”, but there was no aircraft in our immediate vicinity. We had to get the police to a bad case of lights showing, and a caution was administered. There was not much doing so the sirens sounded at 19-35 hours. So we returned home to await the next warning, which came about 20-30. It was very quiet however, and the “Raiders Passed” sounded at 21-20 hours. We were again called to duty at 23-35 but for twenty minutes before that time bombs had been dropping and “AA” shells going up. I was in bed when the sirens went and one crash shook the bed, so it was no surprise to hear the sirens. At once I went into the road, Mr. Brabin was already out and there was a lively duel Kearsley way between aircraft and ground defences. This went on for a time, and the aircraft was made to sheer off and he went towards Manchester, and we saw a string of flaming onions go up, but nothing happened. Again some bombs were dropped locally but nowhere near our sector. After a quiet spell the sirens “Raiders Passed” at 02-15 so at once returned to our homes. During this raid we were supplied with a welcome drink of hot tea liberally dosed with brandy.

Oct 28 1940

At 20-20 hours an “alert” sounded but I was unable to go on duty at once having been to a concert, I managed to get transport within a few minutes and soon joined the other wardens. It was very quiet and it was good to be released from duty at 21-30. Not for long, however, as the sirens called us again at 22-45. This was just about as lively as the preceding warning, nothing doing, so the “Raiders Passed” signal sounded at 23-10.

Oct 29 1940

At 03-02 the sirens woke me so out of bed I jumped, hurriedly put a few clothes on and went round blowing my whistle. As it was the turn of Messrs Harker and Shirres for the duration of the raids I returned to bed and was wakened again when the “Raiders Passed” went at 04-+.

About 20-23 hours the “alert” sounded and after patrolling and whistling I went to our meeting place. There were only three of us this time. Sickness, overtime and other causes have depleted our numbers for this evening. No aircraft came near our vicinity. It was cold, so it was with feelings of relief that we heard the siren’s welcome note at 21-50. We immediately dispersed to await the next call.

Oct 30 1940

An “alert” sounded at 14-15 hours and lasted until about 14-50. At 18-25 the sirens sounded another “alert”. Going out into the street I was met by heavy rain, and a lengthy raid did not seem a pleasing prospect. After patrolling we met at the rendezvous, but very soon the “Raiders Passed” was heard at 18-55. Having got nicely dried from a soaking of rain, I had just got settled in front of a warm fire when

at 20-13 the sirens once again had us on the run. This time in addition to the rain it was pitch dark. We spent some time getting someone to the door of a house of which the chimney was on fire. It was soon under control. We did not hear any aircraft about nor any bombs or "AA" fire in the distance, so we went into our hideout, and swapped yarns until the "Raiders Passed" sounded about 21-10 hours.

Nov 1 1940

An "alert" sounded at 20-03 hours and after a preliminary patrol I met the other wardens at our meeting place. It was rather dark, but not pitch black. The heavy rain of recent days had stopped so that was a good job. It was very quiet locally although there was some activity in the Liverpool district. We stayed out for a while then went into our meeting place. We had not been there many minutes when "Raiders Passed" sounded at 20-56.

Nov 5 1940

Having had a respite of a few days free from any warnings we were interrupted in our sleep at 00-50. I hastily dressed and went out into the street, whistling as I walked. Darkness covered the earth, and fog made visibility worse still. Anyway, we managed to make contact, but there were only three arrivals in all, sickness and night work and overtime accounted for this. It was cold and bleak listening for aircraft, so after a time we repaired to our meeting place and lit the stove. It seemed a bad night for bombing owing to the blackness, and any bombing would have to be haphazard. No aircraft came our way and we were glad to hear the "Raiders Passed" signal at 01-35 hours. We immediately dispersed and went home to renew our disturbed rest. At 21-28 hours an "alert" sounded but there was nothing doing, the "Raiders Passed" sounded at 21-43.

Nov 6 1940

The sirens sounded the "alert" at 04-45. Once again all was quiet and we were aroused from sleep for the purpose of awakening others. We were glad to hear the "Raiders Passed" signal at 05-22 hours.

Nov 8 1940

The sirens sounded the action warning at 11-15 but two bombs had been dropped before the sirens were heard. The raid was of short duration, the "Raiders Passed" sounding at 11-30 hours. Another "alert" at 19-55. As I was on post duty, I could not carry out my customary initial patrol. We have another warden out of commission. R. Hubberstey having been admitted to hospital as a scarlet fever suspect. All was quiet, and "Raiders Passed" sounded at 20-53 hours.

Nov 9 1940

At 15-40 hours an "alert" sounded but I could not go on duty at once and before I was ready to do so the "Raiders Passed" signal went at 15-55. Heavy rain was falling all the time.

Another "alert" sounded at 19-37 and I went out at once. The rain was still falling, not having abated for many hours. A bad day for flying. I should imagine. We did not hear any aircraft nor bombing. We had not long to wait before the sirens released us from duty at 19-53 hours, so we immediately returned home to get dry. Out again into the driving rain at 22-20. I had just retired for the night (as I hoped) but was very soon out and about. As soon as we all made contact and could hear no aircraft about, we went to our rendezvous and lit the stove and lamp and waited the signal to go home. This came at 23-15 hours and we were not again disturbed.

Nov 10 1940

The sirens had us on duty again at 20-20 hours. The wardens all met at the rendezvous and as everything was quiet we went inside and lit the stove and lamp. Whilst inside the rain began to fall and it looks as though we shall have to get used to wet weather now. When the "Raiders Passed" signal sounded at just after 21-00 hours it was raining hard so we made for home at once.

Nov 12 1940

An "alert" sounded at 20-45 hours and I was outside as soon as possible. The rain, which had been falling heavily all day, had temporarily ceased, and in its place was a strong biting wind. It seemed to us impossible flying weather, but the sirens sounded and we must therefore turn out. We did not hear any aircraft about so we went into our rendezvous and lit up. Soon the stove was cheering us with its warm glow and it is good to think that we have such a place to shelter from the elements. The sirens freed us from duty at 21-20 hours.

Nov 14 1940

At 22-45 hours an "alert" sounded and I came downstairs at once and went out to do my usual patrol. Three wardens only came on duty. The moon was brilliant and targets could be easily spotted. It was cold too, with more than a suspicion of frost, and we had continually to keep on the move for warmth. For a time all was quiet, and we thought we should soon be having a quick getaway. Then a plane was heard flying Southward and all at once four great crashes rent the air as the bombs hit the earth. Then all went quiet again, so we went to our meeting place and lit the lamp and stove. We also put the kettle on the stove in order to brew tea. The kettle was almost on the boil and the tea already in the jug when the sirens sounded "Raiders Passed" at 23-57. We immediately left for home without a drink.

Nov 15 1940

Another "alert" sounded at 04-23. Again we met as usual and all was quiet. We re-lit our stove and put on the kettle again, and sat waiting for the water to boil. This had not happened when the "Raiders Passed" sounded at 04-55, so we waited until it did, and we had a drink of hot tea and were satisfied. We did not want to be frustrated for a second time. There was a further "alert" at 14-05 hours but, as is usual in daylight, the raid was of short duration, the "Raiders Passed" sounding at 14-50. The sirens sounded at 21-45 and coincided with a heavy downpour of rain. As the length of this alert was only ten minutes, "Raiders Passed" sounding at 21-55. I wonder if our fighters have contacted the Hun, given him battle, and brought him down.

Nov 18 1940

After two nights of uninterrupted sleep the sirens caused a rude awakening at the early time of 03-20 hours. I hastily dressed and went outside only to return at once for an extra coat as there was a heavy downpour of rain. What an awakening. Anyway, I went round the area to whistle the "alert", and then contacted Messrs Brabin and Chadwick. No other turned up. We soon went into our rendezvous and soon the stove was burning merrily, and we sat down, all very glad to be under cover and not far away from any point of the area. We did hear a plane overhead, but it passed on and we heard nothing further. A few minutes after 04-00 hours the "Raiders Passed" sounded so we dispersed and returned to our homes in the still pouring rain. The sirens sounded the "alert" at 21-15. This was rather strange as the raid was in progress, having previously been off for over an hour. After patrolling the area we contacted, and it was not long before the Bosche arrived. Soon, big guns helped him on his way, and he flew towards Manchester where we saw flashes lighting up the sky momentarily. There was also some activity in the Warrington direction. When all went quiet we went into our rendezvous for a drink of tea, and while thus pleasantly employed the "Raiders Passed" sounded at 22-05, so we all drank up, put out the lamp and stove, and went home. We were not left long in peace however, for at 22-34 we were again on duty. It was quite light outside, the moon having risen to full brilliance. There was an aircraft overhead, but he was at a great height. Nothing occurred on this occasion, and before we had thought of going into our rendezvous the sirens sounded again at 22-49 so we immediately set a course for home to await the next call.

Nov 19 1940

As was expected Jerry came again but a few hours had elapsed before the sirens awakened us at 06-22. It was a glorious morning. The moon was very bright and threw into relief a host of small clouds, and the scene looked very beautiful indeed. But somewhere in that sky, death lurked seeking victims. The Hun passed right overhead and soon the "AA" barrage was seen in action in the Southwest direction. It must have been too hot, for the aircraft came back and flew away Eastwards. Shortly afterwards the "Raiders Passed" signal sounded at 07-07 hours. The sirens sounded the "alert" at 19-22 and at once I went out to patrol the area. On my way round I noticed several houses where the blackout was not conforming to regulations, so the occupants had to be informed. As soon as we made contact trouble began in the Southwest district. It appeared that a fire had been started, but if so, it was soon got under control. The Hun were soon chased out however, and the "Raiders Passed" sounded at 20-00 hours. We then left for home, but before arrival there the "alert" sounded again at 20-10. Jerry must have double backed on his tracks, and it was left to us to go round the area again serenading the neighbours with our whistles. Once again we made contact at the rendezvous and kept a lookout for a time. It was dark as the moon had not yet risen. We went inside our meeting place and stayed until we heard the "Raiders Passed" at 20-55. The Bosche seems very persistent tonight for we were called again at 21-30. Once again round the area, and then to our contact point. This time Jerry was nearer and we saw many flashes lighting up the sky. Towards the East big guns let fly at him and he answered with a heavy calibre bomb. There was aerial activity in several quarters simultaneously. When all went quiet we retired to our shelter and sat beside the stove and had a cup of tea. It was not as dark this time, as the moon had risen and we were able to see our way about better than on

previous "alerts" this evening. At 22.55 hours we heard the "Raiders Passed" sound, so we made for home expecting to receive another call to duty. We had not long to wait before being on duty again as the familiar wailing sirens screamed out their message at 23-22 hours. Although it was expected I had gone to bed, and therefore I had to dress hastily and get outside. A cold wind was blowing and we made contact at the rendezvous. Messrs Brabin and Harker turned out and we stayed together until the "Raiders Passed" sounded at 23-58. Mr. Shirres should have been on duty but failed to put in an appearance. During this "alert" the sky was often lit up by bomb and gun flashes. This is the fourth time this evening and Jerry has been operating N.S.E.W. but has not given us a taste of his load, not that we want it. When I arrived home I went straight to renew my broken rest wondering if we should have any further interruptions.

Nov 20 1940

Sure enough we did. We were rudely awakened at 02-35 hours and after dressing as quickly as I could I hurried round the area whistling as I went. The wind was much keener making it bitterly cold. Before I got to our meeting place I heard a stick of bombs fall to the Eastward, and not very far away either. Mr. Harker soon arrived, and we watched out for a time, but nothing further occurred, and all went quiet. We went into our shelter and lit up and began to get a little warmer. About 03-10 we heard a "Raiders Passed" signal so we left for home. We had made a mistake, as it must have been from another town, carried on the strong wind. As our local sirens had not been too good all the previous evening we thought it was ours that sounded rendered faint by an adverse wind. Once we got home our own sirens sounded at 03-30, but I was already in bed, and from that time on we were not again disturbed. Thus ended a spell in which many Bosche aircraft had been overhead, coming and going. A daylight "alert" sounded at 16-42 hours. It did not last very long. Perhaps Jerry was reconnoitering for later devilish work. "Raiders Passed" sounded at 17-20. The "alert" sounded at 22-55 hours. As I was in bed I had to dress hastily and patrol the area and make contact with the other wardens. Messrs McCann and Chadwick soon put in an appearance and it was their turn for the duration of the raid. I soon left them in order to get to bed, as I had missed a lot of sleep during the two previous nights. I heard there was abundant gunfire in the Manchester district. This raid lasted an hour as the "Raiders Passed" sounded at almost midnight.

Nov 21 1940

At 21-15 the "alert" sounded, and at once I went out into the street to add to the warning on my whistle. It was raining and in addition was a Stygian blackness. It was scarcely possible to see the outlines of the house roofs against the sky. A few flares were dropped towards the Southwest. Shortly after we made contact a plane flew right overhead. The rain became worse, so we sought a little comfort near our oil stove. We were still there talking when the "Raiders Passed" sounded at 21-45 so we immediately dispersed and went home. During this "alert" a few torches were to be seen, the first day of the new regulation allowing to be used during a raid warning.

Nov 22 1940

The usual "alert" sounded at 20-35 and lasted until 21-22. There was not much doing. We did hear a plane over and saw a few flashes in the sky, but nothing happened locally. We made contact as usual. Wardens Chadwick, Brabin and myself put in an appearance. It was a much better night than the previous. The stars were out so visibility was a bit better, and it was not raining. We patrolled part of the area and found it necessary to admonish several people whose blackout did not conform to regulations. Whilst returning from this patrol we heard the sirens sound "Raiders Passed".

Nov 23 1940

At 03-47 hours another "alert" sounded and I had to dress in a hurry and get out. Owing to the indisposition of Mr. Shirres (suffering from lumbago) I did his duty. I met Mr. Harker at our rendezvous and as there was nothing at all doing, we went into our shelter to light up. We put the kettle on the stove but before it had time to boil the sirens sounded "Raiders Passed" at 04-10. The sirens sounded again about 04-28 but as I had not returned to bed I was soon out and about. Once again Jerry must have turned back on his tracks in order to prove himself a nuisance. A cold wind was blowing and as there was no activity it didn't seem worthwhile to look out just for the sake of getting cold. So we went to sit near the oil stove and once again we put the kettle to boil, but as previously, the signal "Raiders Passed" sounded before it had chance to boil. This occurred at 04-48, so we at once returned to our homes, and we were not again disturbed. A warning sounded a few minutes after 20-00 hours but we did not hear it. The sirens must have been faint as many people knew nothing about a raid until the "Raiders Passed" sounded at 20-25.

Nov 26 1940

After a few nights immune from the sirens, they called us to duty at 21-50 hours. Wardens Brabin, Chadwick and myself reported for duty. The night was rather dark, and it was cold too. No aircraft came to trouble us, so we repaired to our shelter and put the kettle on the stove, and made a drink of tea. As soon as it was ready the "Raiders Passed" sounded at 23-10. So we drank up and went home. We must be now near the 150 mark and have not yet been put to the test.

Nov 28 1940

The sirens heralded yet another "alert" at 19-37 hours. The length of this raid easily exceeded all others, for we were not released from duty until 03-55 hours 29/11/40, a period of eight hours eighteen minutes. Besides being the longest it was also the most intense. The Hun at his worst. After the initial patrol I met Mr. Chadwick and as no other warden appeared for several hours, it was left to us to hold the fort, as it were. As soon as we met Jerry was at his dirty work. From our point of vantage operations took place in a huge semi circle from East to South and South to West. The intended bombing was on Merseyside for it went on incessantly hour after hour, and, however much it is to be regretted, considerable damage must have been done. It cannot be otherwise. All night long, bomb flashes, parachute flares, "AA" guns searchlights, and all the requirements of aerial war were put into the duel. The "AA" barrage was terrific, and it would have done us good to have seen one or more descend in flames. There was no moon, the flares made up for its absence. It was cold standing doing nothing at all but watch, and it is not nice to watch a town of our own being devastated, so we retired to our shelter after about two hours and had an acceptable cup of tea. After that we patrolled the area for a time, then back to see the combat. The Bosche was coming in waves, unloading his merchandise and sheering off. It looked as though Warrington was being treated like Coventry was a fortnight ago. At half past ten in the evening, we still had no relief, and as we were hungry we retired for supper, leaving a note to that effect at our post. We returned about eleven and shortly after that Mr. Harker arrived for duty, thus releasing Mr. Chadwick, but he would not go home, and he stayed on duty till well after two o'clock. The aerial activity had not in any way ceased or slackened. East, West, South, each had its visitation, and each district replied with interest. It has been estimated that there were from 200 to 300 planes over, but not one did we see held in the beams of the searchlights. About 03-30 hours things got a little quieter, and when I looked out a little later, there was nothing at all. The "AA" guns had ceased, the searchlights were switched off, and there were no aircraft about. Then quite suddenly came the belated "Raiders Passed" and without more ado we retired homewards, I to sleep the sleep of the just. Before Mr. Chadwick left us something fell with a metal clang somewhere very near, which we thought was a piece of shrapnel. It was too dark to investigate, and looking for shrapnel is not our job.

Dec 1 1940

At 19-59 hours the sirens sent out their message, and after our initial patrol we met at the rendezvous. Five wardens turned out for duty which is more than we have had for a week or two. It was very dark, and as there was no aircraft about, we went into our hideout, but before we could properly settle down, the "Raiders Passed" signal sounded at 20-19, so we immediately made for home.

Dec 4 1940

A short "alert" today from 13-25 to 13-39 hours. Jerry must have been spying out the land.

Another "alert" sounded at 19-34 hours. It was very dark and rain added to the discomfort. It was not long however, before we were dispersed, for "Raiders Passed" sounded at 19-47. Besides myself Wardens Brabin and Chadwick turned out.

Dec 5 1940

Another daylight "alert". This was longer than that of the previous day, its duration being from 13-00 hours to about 13-37.

Dec 11 1940

Having had a few nights free from interruption the sirens sent out their message at 18-58 hours and in a few minutes bombing and answering "AA" fire were going on about Kearsley and Manchester, that is to say, East to South. The moon was full and the sky was almost cloudless, so it was nearly like day. After the initial strafing by both sides all went quiet, except for the passing and re-passing of aircraft. As we had not been on duty for some nights we had lost our order of rotation so Mr. Brabin and myself started the cycle again. The "Raiders Passed" signal sounded at 21-54 hours, practically three hours. Mr. Shirres came on duty and we were glad to welcome him after a few weeks indisposition. I had just retired to bed but before I had chance to get in the sirens sounded another "alert" at 20-30. I was soon

out whistling as I went, and soon made contact with my partner. As on the previous "alert" all was quiet, and it was a relief to hear the "Raiders Passed" at 12-25.

Dec 12 1940

This time I did manage to get into bed, but was rudely interrupted by the sirens at 01-08. Dressing hastily I carried out the usual patrol and met Mr. Brabin. We went in our hideout and sat beside the stove. It was very quiet all the time, and as soon as the sirens released us from duty at 01-5+ we made for home expecting now to be able to get some sleep. It was not to be for long, however, as yet another "alert" sounded at 03-35 hours. Now thoroughly accustomed to being disturbed I dressed and went out carrying out the prescribed duties as I went. As soon as I had met Mr. Brabin, Mr. Laraway came to have a look at us. We went into our hideout and sat beside the stove for a time, but we got fed up and went outside. There was some spasmodic "AA" fire Manchester way. For a time we patrolled with a policeman, and then we went to the post, and we stayed there until 06-00 hours, and then made for home. As soon as we got outside of the post the "Raiders Passed" sounded. I had been in bed only a few minutes when another "alert" sounded at 06-25. I was too weary to get up again so I stayed in bed and listened from there for any unusual occurrence. This time it was only of short duration as the "Raiders Passed" went at 06-35. There was a short daylight "alert" lasting from about 14-55 to 15-15 hours. At 19-25 the wailing sirens had us out again and as soon as we made contact we witnessed a little "AA" fire in the Manchester district. The night was fine and dry, plenty of frost about, also a bit of mist. The moon was full and bright. When the firing died down we went into our place of contact and sat beside the stove, leaving now and again to patrol and see if there was anything doing. About 21-00 hours we brewed up and enjoyed a hot cup of tea. At 21-35 we got the "Raiders Passed" but in less than half a minute the "alert" sounded again, so there was nothing else for it but to patrol again sounding our whistles en route. Before rejoining the other wardens I went home and had supper. Wardens Chadwick and McCann were for duty the whole of the raid, and I went back to join them and stayed till about 23-00. I then went home as I was about all in, and I immediately went to bed and slept the sleep of the just. There I remained unconscious of the rest of the raid. I understand the sirens sounded "Raiders Passed" at 04-10 and that for part of the time heavy gunfire was heard. About eight hours and three quarters in all, for it can be called one continuous "alert" and on the go for eleven hours the previous night. Is our own particular "blitz" beginning?

Dec 15 1940

Another short daylight "alert" today lasted from 13-10 to 13-22. Only Mr. Brabin and myself turned out, but we soon wended our way home. The sirens sounded another "alert" at 20-28 hours. After patrolling we made contact, and almost at once we heard a plane about. He appeared to be travelling in a North Easterly direction. We looked out for a while to see if anything was happening in the usual places Jerry visits when marauding in this district. We did not see or hear anything, and as rain was falling and a fresh breeze blowing cold, we repaired to our rendezvous, and there we stayed until the "Raiders Passed" sounded at 22-15.

Dec 16 1940

Another daylight "alert" sounded at 14-08 and lasted until 14-21. Shortly after the sirens sounded two of our aircraft came over to search for the Bosche. They circled twice, and then made off towards Manchester. Somewhere about 20-20 the sirens sounded an "alert" but I was not immediately able to go on duty as I was at the post re the issue of plugs, and no one in the post heard the sirens. I first knew about it when I heard either gunfire or bombs. So I hastened for my helmet and haversack and made a belated visit to our rendezvous. I was told there that much gunfire had taken place, but nothing of note happened after my arrival. During our talk it was mentioned that this afternoon's raider had been brought down, as our aircraft had been seen doing a victory roll. If so, very good. When the "Raiders Passed" sounded at 21-27 we dispersed and went home.

Dec 17 1940

The sirens sounded an "alert" at 14-14 hours. Considering it was a daylight affair it was rather lengthy, for the "Raiders Passed" did not sound until 15-31. We did not hear any aircraft on this occasion, and we could not see anything as visibility was poor owing to fog.

Dec 19 1940

About 21-40 hours the sirens sent out their call to duty, and after patrolling the area made contact at the rendezvous. Before we could go into our hideout the "Raiders Passed" sounded at 21-50.

Dec 20 1940

At 18-40 hours the sirens sent out their message. I had just sat down to have my tea, so I had to do my whistling patrol and return home to have my meal. It was not long after the sirens sounded that the fun began, and once again Bolton seemed to be encircled by airplanes, as bombing was going on all over the place. As soon as I had had my tea I went to our rendezvous, and we each had short spells looking out in order to report any parachute flares or bombs dropping in the Borough. From our point of vantage we would see bombing in a huge semi-circle from about Kearsley to Liverpool. The Hun's chief targets appeared to be Manchester and Liverpool with the latter place as target in chief. All the while a terrific "AA" barrage was put up, and it would be a good thing for us if the "AA" shells were as sure of hitting a plane as the bombs are as certain of hitting the ground. Bombing and answering "AA" fire went on for hour after hour with but little respite. Mr. Brabin and I were on duty for the whole of the raid, and we bade the others "goodnight" about 23-00. We patrolled the whole area in the teeth of a bitter wind, which made us appreciate our little oil stove. Earlier in the evening we had been supplied with a meat pie each from the post, and brought by the messengers. This is the first time we have had any rations. The way things had been going on I was quite resigned to being on duty for eight or nine hours, but six sufficed. As the "Raiders Passed" signal sounded at 00-40 hours and I was very much surprised, for there seemed to be only a lull in the air and ground duel.

Dec 21 1940

At about 18-40 hours the sirens called to duty, precisely the same hour as yesterday. As before Liverpool was the target in chief and what a blitz they had. There was no respite at all. I suppose the dirty Hun had come at a time when he knew the shops would be filled with Christmas shoppers. All night long Bosche aircraft were coming and going. Very soon a big fire was raging and this served as a beacon for other bombers coming in to complete their foul work. In reply the "AA" guns were very active, and I would dearly like to see a Hun machine descending in flames. As I watched the fire and bombing I was hoping that our boys were over Berlin repaying them with 100% interest. We hear that the people of Liverpool have faced the bombing with calm and courage, and I can only add the hope that if our turn must come that we face the terror with equal resolution. One thing stands out clearly, that our people have risen to great heights in refusing to be intimidated by the Luftwaffe. Wardens McCann and Chadwick were on duty for the length of the raid, and at about 23-30 hours we left them to it. I returned home and went to bed, but I could not sleep soundly knowing that I may be wanted at any time. At 04-00 the last of the raiders had departed so the sirens sounded, this alert having lasted nine hours and a quarter.

Dec 22 1940

At 12-55 another "alert" sounded and the "Raiders Passed" at 13-12. I did not turnout on this occasion as I was not ready, having partaken of the luxury of a long lie in bed. The Bosche keeps a good timetable. Once again at 18-40 the sirens sounded. I was ready for patrolling at once, for I expected the sirens to sound and made the necessary preparations. As soon as we had completed our initial patrol the bombing began but not on Merseyside this time. Manchester and district were the selected targets, and it was a night long to be remembered. Very early in the proceedings a conflagration was under way, and of course was a great attraction to later aircraft. At one time there were as many as a dozen parachute flares in the sky at once, turning the night into day. As time went on a few other fires were started but seemed to be very quickly got under control. All the while the first one was burning furiously. Big guns in the vicinity kept having a bang, and there was a danger of falling shrapnel. Once again the shelters were brought into use, the people evidently thinking our turn had come at last. One flare dropped in a field close by but just out of the borough, so it was not for us to report its presence. Extensive damage must have been done, but as there appears no cure for it, we shall have to bear it with all the fortitude at our command. The Huns ought to be repaid in their own coin, and two or more bombs dropped for every one over here. They ought to be given the opportunity to see if they can take it. Wardens Harker and Shirres were on duty for the whole of the raid and they left us to have supper and return about 23-00 hours.

Dec 23 1940

I left for home about midnight, but I could not settle down, as I was expecting a stray bomb in the area at any moment. About 04-00 I joined the duty wardens and the big fire was still blazing away, lighting up the sky for miles. All this time there was no respite from the bombing, wave after wave of Bosche machines coming in to add to the chaos. About 05-30 things began to slacken a little, the light got a bit better owing to the moon having risen, and finally all went quiet. Then the sirens sent out their doubly welcome message at 06-25, just about fifteen minutes short of seeing the clock round. We lost no time in making for home. This was not the end of our adventures however, for another "alert" sounded at

07-05 but it was only of short duration. "Raiders Passed" sounding at 07-17. Jerry was a little later tonight as we did not get the "alert" until 19-10. He was soon active, for as soon as we met after patrolling the area we saw a parachute flare descending, but it did not throw out much light owing to low and thick cloud. As on the previous night the blitz started in good time, and very soon a fierce fire was raging. We learned later that the fire was oil or petroleum. The Hun was merciless, and it is to be hoped that our boys copy his tactics and reign death on Bosche cities. There must have been widespread damage, it just cannot be otherwise. They must have been two agonising nights for Manchester. As the hours passed slowly on the fire appeared to get worse, and from our post (eleven miles away) we could see thick black smoke pouring from the flames. We learned that many fine buildings were razed to the ground. This is the Hun idea of "Peace and Goodwill toward men". Warden Brabin and myself were on duty for the whole of the raid, but we are used to long "alerts" by now. It seems to me that the Bosche method is as follows. The first plane releases parachute flares over a town and then comes one with incendiary bombs and flies around in a huge circle dropping his cargo en route in order to start a ring of fires. The bombers then come along in waves and drop their high explosive bombs inside the circle. Refreshment was sent up to us from the post and we had a small repast about midnight. We had not a very long time to wait before the "Raiders Passed" sounded at 01-25. We each turned out every so often to see what was taking place, and each time we noticed that the fire was not diminishing. It was still alight at 08-30 when I was going to work.

Dec 27 1940

An "alert" sounded at 12-50 hours. It was not much use looking for any aircraft as the sky was very dull. The "Raiders Passed" sounded at 13-14 hours.

Dec 29 1940

After a day or two of quiet the sirens sounded at 15-10 hours but it was not for long as the "Raiders Passed" went at 15-30.

Dec 30 1940

Another daylight "alert". The sirens sounded at 13-42 and "Raiders Passed" about 14-00 hours. Visibility was bad and there was heavy drizzly rain.

Jan 1 1941

An "alert" on the first day of the New Year. This sounded at 13-40. The sky was rather clear but we did not spot any aircraft. Mr. Brabin, Mr. Chadwick and myself turned out, but as expected the "alert" did not last long, "Raiders Passed" sounding at 14-02. I wonder if the Bosche has started the year as he means to go on. Another "alert" sounded at 21-50 hours just as I was about to fill in a voluntary hour at the post. I had to go and cry off after the sirens had sounded. As I was leaving the post there was an aircraft flying very low but he passed on his way. We had rather a good turn out of wardens. Mr. Brabin and myself were on duty for the whole of the raid and the others left us to carry on a little before midnight. We went out oftener than usual as a keener look out for incendiary bombs is needed, now that the Hun, having failed to blast the people into submission is trying to burn us out. It was very cold out and we were glad to be able to sit in front of the fire when we heard no aircraft in the vicinity. It was very quiet all the time and we did not see many flares dropping or "AA" shells bursting, but now and again the drone of an engine was heard overhead, and as long as he was knocking about, we had to help on the alert. This went on until 01-54 when the "Raiders Passed" sounded, so we hastily beat a retreat and went home to bed, hoping to remain undisturbed.

Jan 2 1941

This was not to be, however, for we heard another warning at 05-50, so of course we had to hastily dress and patrol the area again, whistling as we went. Our fire had gone out but it still radiated a little warmth, so we made the best of it. After a while we re-kindled it and as soon as it was nicely going the "Raiders Passed" sounded at 06-20, so once again we made for home, and were not again disturbed.

Jan 3 1941

About 15-20 an "alert" sounded and lasted until 16-05. Another "alert" went at 19-10 and after the usual patrol with the whistle I made contact at our rendezvous. There was nothing doing at all, and we did not see any flares or the bursting of "AA" shells. No aircraft came our way, so we were not surprised to hear the "Raiders Passed" about 20-00 hours. Jerry is being a nuisance. Another warning at 21-44. The usual whistling patrol, then meeting at our place of contact. Nothing was seen or heard, however, and at 21-58 the "Raiders Passed" sounded so we immediately made for home, as the weather was very cold.

Jan 4 1941

Just after midnight another "alert" sounded (00-18). I had to get out of bed, hastily dress and get out. As before all was quiet, and the "Raiders Passed" signal sounded at 00-50.

At 13-46 an "alert" sounded and lasted until 14-34. It was cold outside, and no other wardens turned up on this occasion.

Jan 5 1941

At 01-52 the sirens sounded and I had to be awakened. It was not pleasant to leave a warm bed and go out in the bitter cold. Still, duty must be done, so off I went to patrol the area. I had no sooner made contact with Mr. Brabin than the "Raiders Passed" sounded at 02-05. On occasions like these one does not know whether to return to bed or stand by in expectancy of another alert. At 18-33 the "alert" sounded and at once I went out and did the usual whistling patrol. Shortly after we made contact either gunfire or bombs (perhaps both) were heard coming from the Manchester area. We did not see any flashes on earth or in the sky. Perhaps that was because visibility was not good. We did not hear any aircraft about, and were not surprised to hear the "Raiders Passed" sound at 19-10.

Jan 9 1941

After a few days free from any warning the familiar wail of the sirens had us out on duty At 19-37 hours. After the usual patrol of our own areas we made contact at our rendezvous. It was not long before Jerry was heard and soon several flashes were noticed in the direction of Manchester. The guns gave him a warm welcome, without hitting him. On two occasions we saw glares in the sky, but as they did not last long we came to the conclusion that they must have been parachute flares and not fires. There was heavy cloud at the time and it was difficult to distinguish one from the other. We did not make much use of our hideout as we expected trouble locally, and it soon came but not in our sector. Several bombs fell in the district near the station and it did considerable property damage and blew out a lot of windows. A little later on we witnessed incendiary bombs spluttering about half a mile from our vantage point. At that we set about making preparations for action as we expected our turn next. We got ready a stirrup pump, water and sand, and were soon awaiting events. However we were left alone. Towards the North of the town we noticed for the first time a twin beamed searchlight which did not sweep the skies but kept stationary. About 23-30 we were invited into a neighbour's house for a welcome drink of hot coffee. Just after midnight we left Wardens Harker and Shirres to carry on while the remainder went home to stand by. At 01-20 the "Raiders Passed" sounded and ended our most (local) eventful raid.

Jan 10 1941

Jerry was soon on the job again. An "alert" lasted from about 09-15 to 09-45.

Another daylight "alert" from 15-15 to just before 16-00 hours.

Jan 11 1941

The sirens sounded an "alert" at 11-19 hours. The "Raiders Passed" went about 11-45.

Jan 12 1941

An "alert" at 12-58 hours interrupted my dinner. I went round the area and met others at the rendezvous. An aeroplane thought to be a Hun, had been observed at a great height, flying towards Liverpool. At 13-18 the "Raiders Passed" sounded so we dispersed.

Jan 13 1941

I had just recommenced my interrupted dinner when the sirens sounded another "alert" at 13-26. Again we turned out, but nothing happened, so it was another case of waiting for the sirens. These released us from duty at 13-50 hours.

Jan 16 1941

After a few days respite the call to duty came at 03-28. Arising from a warm bed and out into the cold frosty air is no joke but still, we could fare worse. The moon was full and property was visible for miles around. As soon as we had patrolled the area and met at our contact point, a Hun plane was heard, but no bombs were dropped and no gunfire to give him welcome. Besides myself wardens Brabin and Harker turned out and when the aircraft went out of earshot we repaired to our hideout and boosted up our dying fire. We soon had a kettle full of boiling water and made some tea to which we did full justice. Now and again we each went out to see if anything was happening in the air, but always with a negative result. The noise of an aeroplane was heard at intervals and we came to the conclusion that

it was a lone marauding machine, just to keep us on the alert. When the "Raiders Passed" sounded at 05-10 we at once made for home and in my case went immediately to bed.

Jan 18 1941

An "alert" sounded about 12-10 but only lasted for a few minutes, "Raiders Passed" sounding at 12-22. Snow was falling at the time adding to what had already fallen during the night.

Feb 4 1941

After a lull of 17 days the sirens sounded at 20-15. I was at a concert listening to the L.S.O. and when the news was given I had to leave. When I arrived at our rendezvous I was told that a plane had been in the vicinity and some detonations heard towards the North. The night was bitterly cold, and later in the evening a kind friend gave us supper. It was very quiet in our sector and it appeared to be a case of being out until relieved by the sirens. So it proved, for they sounded at 23-22, just over three hours, which is long enough, as we shall have to get used to it all over again.

Feb 12 1941

The sirens sound the "alert" just after 07-00 hours, and in my case, it meant being aroused from bed. I was soon out and about, but no aircraft came near our area, and the "Raiders Passed" sounded at 07-20.

Mar 11 1941

After a respite of a month the sirens sounded the "alert" about 21-20 and I carried out my usual patrol using the whistle as I went. On my way round I was questioned concerning whether it was in order to whistle to augment the alert, now that short blasts must be used for incendiary bombs. As we have received no order to quit using the whistle it is permissible, and I replied to this effect. Aircraft had been heard in the vicinity long before the sirens and bombing and "AA" fire were in progress when we met at the rendezvous. Manchester and Liverpool were the objects of the night's visit. Bolton got another dud "AA" shell, but nothing else occurred locally and we were relieved from duty when the "Raiders Passed" sounded at 23-40 hours.

Mar 12 1941

About 20-40 the sirens sounded an "alert". I was at an orchestral concert and the sirens must have gone when the last item was being rendered. As soon as I got in the street, there were several parachute flares over towards the West, and it looked as though Liverpool was for it again. I made straight for our contact point and we had quite a crowd of seven wardens and more than that number of fire watchers. Loaded aircraft passed continually overhead. Manchester as well came in for another dose, but we did not witness any fires. The moon was full and it was a brilliantly clear night, but the cold was intense, by far the coldest night we have been on duty. Shortly before 00-00 hours Mr. Brabin and I left for home as it was not our turn for the alert. At 03-15 the "Raiders Passed" sounded.

Mar 14 1941

After a free night the sirens sounded the alert at 20-55. As usual, I went round with the whistle and surely bumped into trouble. Again I was taken to task as being out of order, even by two wardens who should have known better. I was advised to read orders, and two of the party said I would be reported. Good, I hope they do. As soon as we met at the rendezvous distant rumbles told us of gunfire and bombs in action. Many searchlights swept the sky in search of prey but did not locate any. Many of the Jerry machines were pretty low, as they could be plainly heard, labouring through the sky with their loads of destruction. Manchester and Liverpool were again the targets in chief with a little towards the North. Mr. Brabin and I took this alert, and we were glad the night was not so bitter as the 12th. About 00-30 the other wardens and the fire watchers left for home to stand by, and Mr. Brabin and I repaired to the post for a time. After that we went to our own rendezvous and made a hot drink. Shortly after the "Raiders Passed" sounded at 02-35 so we immediately left for home.

Apr 7 1941

After a respite lasting over three weeks the sirens called us to duty at 22-18 hours. I was able to go out at once, and on proceeding to the rendezvous I found I was alone. Sickness and work has reduced our numbers temporarily. After a time Mr. Chadwick arrived followed shortly after by Mr. Brabin and then Mr. Bullough. As we had lost the sequence of our rota, Mr. Brabin and I went to the post to discover who were the duty wardens. As was to be expected it fell to our lot to stay out the whole length of the alert. The light was not bad, but it was a rather cold night and we were pleased a fire had been lit in our hide-out. At intervals the drone of a plane was heard. It may have been the

same one doing a circular tour, just in order to be a nuisance. There was not much doing either in bombing or AA shells. We made contact with fire watching parties now and again, and when they got too cold, they came to sit near our fire. After a few hours we sent them home, explaining that we would knock them up if required. We then settled down for a little relaxation and must have been in a state of drowsiness when the sirens sounded "Raiders Passed" at 03-45. We then made for home, I for one, to sleep the sleep of the just. Some slight damage to local property was caused by a dud "AA" shell.

Apr 9 1941

An alert sounded at 22-32 hours but we heard no aircraft about, so we were not surprised to hear the "Raiders Passed" at 23-30.

Apr 10 1941

An alert of about an hour's duration sounded. (23-13 to 00-10). We did not hear aircraft after meeting at our rendezvous, but some had been heard going over about ten minutes before the sounding of the sirens. There was no activity in our region.

Apr 15 1941

A mid-day "alert" sounded at 12-35 hours, and the "Raiders Passed" at 13-35.

At 22-15 hours another "alert" sounded and I went out at once and patrolled my own area before reporting at the rendezvous. I was the first to arrive but others came on the scene in a few minutes. There were several aircraft in the vicinity, and Bolton was encircled with searchlights trying to locate them, but without success. Wardens Chadwick and Bullough were on duty for the whole of the raid. It was rather dark and the moon was not due till the morning side. It was milder however, than of late, for the weather has been bitterly cold. Big guns began to play a part in the proceedings after about an hour, and then a few bombs fell, the sound of them coming from the North of the town. There had previously been much searchlight activity in that direction. About midnight Mr. Brabin and I decided to leave the others on duty while we went to rest at home. Just as we were leaving there was renewed activity from several points of the compass simultaneously so we stayed on for a further half hour, when things quietened down again, so then we beat a retreat. Altogether the raid lasted about six hours. The "Raiders Passed" signal sounding at 04-05 hours.

Apr 26 1941

At 22-32 an "alert" sounded and as I was just preparing to go to bed I was soon outside patrolling my own area before proceeding to the rendezvous. As soon as I went out into the street I noticed vivid flashes lighting everything up for a few seconds. This went on for some minutes and at various times during the alert. The big guns were soon in action giving the Hun the welcome he deserved. Merseyside was the target in chief, but the raid was not as fierce as some we have witnessed. Searchlights were busy, without finding any raider, however. A keen East wind was blowing and with the night being dark it was not a pleasant occupation to be on the watch. Still the work must be done. Besides myself wardens Brabin, Chadwick and Shirres came on duty and we four saw the job to its end. Late on in the proceedings we repaired to our hide-out and made a hot drink which was very welcome. We went out in couples at intervals, until at last the "Raiders Passed" sounded at 02-10 hours so we immediately made for home.

May 1 1941

Having just retired for the night I was disturbed by the "alert" sounding at 23-19 hours. Gunfire had been going on prior to this and there was much "AA" fire as soon as I reached the street, and vivid flashes lit up earth and sky. It was obvious from the outset that Merseyside was to be the target once again, and the barrage from the guns was terrific. Other than myself, there arrived wardens Brabin, Chadwick, Shirres and Bullough. The night was very fine and clear, with a coldish East wind blowing. We were quite prepared to settle down for a long raid, when suddenly at 00-20 the "Raiders Passed" sounded. This was surprising for only a few minutes before the "AA" fire had been giving merry hell to the Hun, and we came to the conclusion that the "AA" had once again been successful. Let us hope so.

May 2 1941

At 22-36 another "alert" sounded and as I had not yet retired I was soon out patrolling my area prior to proceeding to our rendezvous. I was soon joined by wardens Brabin, Shirres, Bullough, Chadwick and Harker. Mr. Harker and myself were on duty for the whole of the raid. Once again there was considerable activity, and at intervals the big guns sent forth their shells. "AA" fire was going up in the Manchester district, but it was soon evident that the Huns objective was Liverpool. We heard them at

regular intervals flying over us on their errand of destruction. This went on for a few hours. After a time we went into our hide-out for a drink of tea. Then followed another period looking out for Jerry. A party of fire watchers came in to get warm, having been out some hours. We were about to make them a hot drink, when the sirens sounded the "Raiders Passed" at 02-42 hours.

May 3 1941

The sirens heralded the Hun at 22-40 hours. I was soon outside and had not long to wait before the "AA" was busy, also the big guns. The searchlights were trying to find hostile aircraft without being successful. Once again Liverpool and district were the targets. All the time we could hear the appalling procession of planes loaded with bombs going in to attack. There must have been considerable damage done, but the Jerries did not get away free, for sixteen bombers were brought down, the record bag for night operations. The more the merrier. After about three and a half hours I left wardens Brabin, Shirres and Chadwick to see the job through while I went home for a much needed rest. I later learned that the "Raiders Passed" did not sound until 04-50 hours. During this alert the clock was put forward another hour.

May 4 1941

It was 23-55 when this "alert" sounded and I had to get out of bed to report for duty. Shortly after warden Bullough came on the scene, no other warden appeared, so we saw the alert through to the end. This was a matter of nearly five hours, as the "Raiders Passed" did not sound until 04-45. There was the usual gunfire and the probing of the searchlights, but to me it seemed to be a nuisance raid. There was not the same activity as on recent nights. Certainly not the same.

Being on holiday from 5 May to 10 May I ascertained the times of the following alerts on my return.

May 6 1941

00-10 to 03-49 when bombs were dropped locally and some damage done.

May 7 1941

00-39 to 02-40.

May 8 1941

00-01 to 03-50, 14-12 to 15-15, 23-48 to 03-55. The sirens also sounded at Fleetwood about the above stated times.

May 12 1941

An alert sounded at 01-18 and lasted until 02-25 hours. I was soon awake and out in the streets, and with the moon at the full it was almost like day. The extra hour of daylight will mean getting out of bed early for some few weeks now. Mr. Hubberstey was out when I arrived at the rendezvous and shortly after Mr. Brabin came along, and we all stayed out until the "Raiders Passed" sounded. Very early in the proceedings some bombs were dropped quite close, almost locally, and then we heard the aircraft leaving in an Easterly direction and he was flying very low. That was the limit of the activity from our point of vantage. Of course, there was some AA fire.

May 16 1941

The sirens sounded an alert at 03-02 hours and dressing hastily I turned out. No other warden came to join me. It was very quiet indeed. A few searchlights were sweeping the skies towards the North of the town, but without any luck. I was not surprised when the "Raiders Passed" sounded at 04-03 and I immediately went home to renew my interrupted sleep.

June 2 1941

After a period of inactivity we were aroused by the sirens at 00-40 hours. I was soon out of doors and was soon glad I had put on my new mackintosh (issued during the week) for cold wind was blowing. Shortly after arriving at the rendezvous numerous flashes in the sky bespoke the presence of raiders. Searchlights and gunfire were active over a wide area, but the enemy's concentration was on Manchester. Several flares were dropped but they did not seem to be of much use in locating targets owing to there being a lot of low clouds. Anyhow, the Hun did not depart without leaving a sample of his handiwork for some bombs were dropped. We had a good muster of wardens on duty. Other than myself were wardens Brabin, Hubberstey, Chadwick, and Bullough. When things died down a little we repaired to our hide-out, and had a cup of tea. Shortly after the "Raiders Passed" sounded at 03-10 so we immediately left for home.

June 12 1941

The sirens awoke me at 01-10 hours and I hastily dressed and made my way to our rendezvous. Mr. Hubberstey was there, and shortly after my arrival wardens Chadwick and Brabin put in an appearance. There was no aerial activity at all and no aircraft came our way, so we were not surprised to hear the "Raiders Passed" sound at 01-40.

Another alert sounded at 03-15 and lasted until 03-42. I did not turn out on this occasion.

June 25 1941

The sirens awoke me at 01-25 and I went out as soon as possible and on letting myself out of the house was greeted by the sounding of the guns in the Manchester direction. It was quite light and warm. It was soon apparent to us that Merseyside was the selected target for the "AA" fire was quite lively. As usual, nothing occurred in our sector, and it was a case of staying out waiting for the "Raiders Passed" signal. This sounded at 02-45 hours and we immediately made for home. Although we were glad to be released from duty, we were surprised because AA fire had been in action only a minute or two earlier. Beside myself wardens Brabin and Hubberstey reported for duty. This alert about announces our first anniversary of alerts, our first warning being Thursday, 20/6/40.

July 5 1941

An alert sounded at 01-37 hours. When I went outside everything was very quiet. It just seemed a matter of waiting for the "Raiders Passed" to sound. Mr. Brabin, Bullough and Chadwick other than myself reported for duty. No aerial activity developed, so when the sirens sounded at 02-00 hours we went home.

Oct 12 1941

After an interval lasting over three months the sirens sounded at 23-00 hours and the ensuing raid lasted just two hours, "Raiders Passed" sounding at 01-00. This was the most destructive raid we have had in Bolton. As soon as we met at the rendezvous we could hear aircraft and "AA" fire. One machine in particular was flying very low, but he made off without dropping anything in our sector. Nearly all our wardens were on duty and several of the fire guard. After the warning had been in progress half an hour we saw something a bright red colour hurtling downwards through space. We flung ourselves on the ground expecting the burst of a bomb, but it must have passed us by, as nothing else resulted. About 23-45 we noticed a glare in the sky. A fire had been started in a small works and it was burnt out. Bombs fell in Ardwick Street and Punch Street, off Deane Road, and considerable damage was done to house property. Over eighty casualties have been recorded, about a dozen of them being fatal. Many searchlights swept the sky without locating any raider, however. The winter raiding period has commenced tragically for Bolton.

Oct 20 1941

The sirens sent out their call to duty at 21-02 and after reporting at the rendezvous it was not long before flashes let us know that the game had begun. The activity was well out of our way, towards Manchester as of old. Later on the raid centred on Merseyside. We saw a parachute flare but it no sooner lit than it went out, perhaps shot down before it had time to light up a target. It was soon apparent to us that Bolton was not on the visiting list on this occasion, and it was just a matter of waiting until the raiders had left the region. The night was very dark, and to add to our discomfiture it began to rain, so we had to shelter as best we could against the gable end of a house. Later on a cup of tea was made for us, which was very welcome. Nearly all our wardens reported for duty. At 23-44 the "Raiders Passed" sounded so we immediately left for home. On the way home the S.P.W. said he would send us some rations to our hide-out. Good.

Oct 22 1941

At 20-55 another alert sounded and at once I went out into inky blackness, and reported at our meeting place. Very soon there was "AA" barrage to let us know Jerry was up to his tricks again. As before, Merseyside was the target and at times the "AA" fire was intense. True to his promise the S.P.W. brought us some rations, tea, sugar, and biscuits. It was bitterly cold and we were glad of a hot drink. Whilst we were partaking of this the "Raiders Passed" sounded at 22-45. Early in the raid we thought a fire had been started towards the North, but the light glow was the Northern Lights.

Oct 25 1941

The sirens called us to duty at 21-07 hours. Wardens Brabin, Hubberstey, and Chadwick other than myself were soon at the rendezvous. This was very good for a Saturday night. There was not very much going on, but after a time we could see AA shells bursting over Liverpool. It was not as much as

on previous nights, when the firing has sometimes been terrific. This was quite mild in comparison. It was another case of waiting for something that did not happen. At 22-15 the "Raiders Passed" sounded, so we left for home.

Dec 18 1941

The day had been very cold, frost on everything, and there was also some fog, which worsened as the day progressed. It seemed very unlikely that we should be called out for duty. Anyhow, the sirens sounded at 18-07 hours. I was able to go out at once, and stayed at the contact point until other wardens arrived. I then went for tea. On returning wardens Bullough, Hubberstey and Chadwick had reported for duty. The prospects of a lengthy alert were distinctly bad. No moon, icy cold, and a good dose of fog. One or two planes passed by but there was no bombing and no "AA" fire. We patrolled for a while, and we were relieved to hear "Raiders Passed" a few moments before 20-00 hours. Before going home we went to the post to fill in particulars concerning our duty. This is a new idea.

Jan 11 1942

At 00-05 the sirens sounded and it was a case of leaving a warm bed. There had been aircraft cruising about for some time, so I was not really surprised to hear the alert, but it would have been better an hour earlier. It was very dark out, no moon at all, and it was cold, too. However, wardens Bullough and Hubberstey were also out on duty. The S.P.W. came to visit us and said that an order from the 1st Jan stated that all shelters had to be visited and the number of people using them to be reported at the post. C. Bullough and myself made the inspection, and found as we expected that they were not tenanted. On our return the "Raiders Passed" signal sounded at 00-35, so we reported at the post and then returned home. There was some activity on Merseyside, but we did not see anything as visibility was bad.

July 28 1942

After a lapse of over six months the sirens sounded the alert at 01-55. I was out in a few minutes and at the rendezvous to greet the other wardens. Wardens Hubberstey, Duxbury, Brabin, Chadwick, and Bullough soon appeared quite ready for any emergency. Apart from a little gunfire early there was no incident. J.Brabin and I went to the post to book the others on duty, whilst there the "Raiders Passed" sounded so we went home. It was a night of the full moon. All the rooftops reflecting the silver light.

July 30 1942

The sirens about 02-20 hours again interrupted our sleep. Again nothing occurred worth recording. All our area wardens turned out for duty. The loveliness of the morning compensated our early awakening. When the "Raiders Passed" sounded at 02-50 I went to the post to report all wardens on duty before returning home. I was on holiday from Aug 8th to 15th. Three alerts were sounded Aug 9th, 00-08 to 00-35, Aug 10th, 00-35 to 01-23, Aug 12th, 01-40 to 02-30. No bombs were dropped locally.

Aug 23 1942

The sirens sounded another alert at 22-50 hours but as we heard no aircraft about we came to the correct conclusion that we would not be kept out long. The "Raiders Passed" signal sounding at 23-15.

Dec 24 1944

About 5-30 hours the sirens sounded after a period of 2 years 4 months. We had been almost disbanded since the 1st Nov 1944 and we had no post at which to report. A fair number of wardens turned out for duty, but at a quarter to seven we dismissed ourselves and returned home. A new type of bomb had been used - known as V2 - in adjacent towns and villages. Some property damage was done and casualties occurred, some fatal.

Dec 29 1944

Another alert from about quarter past to half past eight.

Mar 4 1945

The sirens sounded the alert about 02-00 hours, the "Raiders Passed" following quarter of an hour later. There was no local damage and no casualties reported.