



# NEWSLETTER

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[www.dacorumheritage.org.uk](http://www.dacorumheritage.org.uk)

## 'HIDDEN HISTORY OF KODAK' EXHIBITION

Come along to our pop-up exhibition (funded by SHARE Museums East) telling the history of Kodak and photography in the Borough of Dacorum. It will take place in the former Card Factory shop unit in the Marlowes Shopping Centre (third unit in by the north entrance) in Hemel Hempstead.



**Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> – Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> October**

We have been researching the impact that the Kodak Company made on Hemel Hempstead in the decades since the Second World War.

Come along and see:

- ❖ Our giant model of the Kodak Head Office building.
- ❖ A range of 'Kodak' objects and artefacts from our collections.
- ❖ Memories and anecdotes from ex-Kodak employees.
- ❖ Artwork inspired by our photography collection.

We ran a series of art workshops, hosted by Berkhamsted Arts & Crafts, where some brilliantly original canvasses were created.

After exploring the history of photography and handling original artefacts from our collection, the children created artwork inspired by what they had seen and learnt. Most of the young people had not seen or handled a film camera before and the process was something of a revelation to most, confirming our supposition that film photography is a dying art form.

During the workshop sessions the children also explored light sensitive paper and developing positive images with some amazing results. Workshops were designed to not only inspire, but also to combine history, science and art.



Kodak had a significant employment presence in Hemel Hempstead for around half a century; they were an integral part of the lives of many local families, directly or in support businesses.

Come along and discover why Hemel Hempstead was known as 'Kodak Town' and make a 'Kodak Moment' with us.

**Images: Top:** Kodak 66 'Model II' camera manufactured in England c.1958; one of the last folding cameras made by Kodak.  
**Lower:** Four images showing young people and their work created at our art workshops at Berkhamsted Arts & Craft shop.

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## PEACE DAY 1919 – BERKHAMSTED LAND ARMY GIRLS

An interesting account of the Peace Day celebrations in Berkhamsted from the Berkhamsted Land Army Girls, extracted from 'The Landswoman' magazine's September 1919 issue.

About a week before July 19<sup>th</sup> one of our local Land Army girls had a brain-wave and sent it to our Registrar. The said brain-wave was this: that all we local L. A. girls should take part in the town's peace celebrations, as we felt we were a few of the war winners.

Our Registrar was eager to help us, and called a meeting - or, we might say, Peace Conference – at her house to discuss what we should do. After much voluble discussion, we came to various satisfactory arrangements. There were ten of us all told, so six of the ten agreed to decorate a farm cart, which somebody's "boss" was kind enough to lend for the occasion. Two others said they could bring a couple of cows, and the other two promised to make a banner. The arrangements being complete, the "Peace Conference" broke and went away feeling somewhat elated by thoughts of how we should shine in the coming festivities.

Saturday came as usual, it was going to be a big day for us, and, no doubt, we all went off to work in the early morning with the same thoughts of coming pride and pleasure.

We had to assemble outside the Town Hall at 11 o'clock, so about that time you could have seen various figures in spotless smocks and shiny boots and leggings looking somewhat important.

Along came the cows, and how lovely they looked! There had been such a day of cleaning horns and hoofs and a general grooming down: all ribbon-bedecked, too, but looking very solemn, as is the way of the dear things.



But where was the cart? The clock hands were rapidly travelling towards 11.15, the time for the procession to start off. We spent quite a dreadful five minutes; one girl went off to look for it, and came back without finding any trace of it, and another asked a policeman quite pitifully not to let the procession start without the all-important cart.

At last it appeared in sight, and, in our eagerness, three of us ran down the street to meet it as hard as we could go. Well, it looked a treat; not like a rough old farm cart, but it soon felt like one. Two girls in particular worked very hard on it, and were fully paid for their labours. We could hear remarks of approval on all sides.

We took up our allotted position among the other cars, etc., and the procession started off. Then we began to feel proud of ourselves, for we got many admiring looks and hand-clappings. We journeyed all round the town, thoroughly enjoying our joy-ride. The best cheer we had was the one the "boys" gave us; they were lined up either side of the road, and, as we passed between, the air rang with one big cheer and cries of "Good old Land Army!" That will remain in all our minds, I think, as one of memory's treasures.

The procession then halted, and then the unexpected happened. Someone brought a card and handing it us said, "You are to have the 1<sup>st</sup> prize." Imagine our faces covered with one big look of blank astonishment. There, sure enough, were the words on the card, "1<sup>st</sup> Prize for Decorated Cart" and then we all said in a breath: "We've got the first prize, and it is £3!" We never expected it; honestly we didn't, for what is an old farm cart? Congratulations came from everyone, and one and all said we deserved it, so we were immensely proud when it was presented to us in the afternoon after the sports.

*K. Fountain (L. A. A. S.), Berkhamsted.*

NOTE: - Many thanks are due to our Registrar, Miss A. Smith-Dorrien, who provided most of the cart's decorations.

Thanks to Dr. Julie Moore, the History Department, University of Hertfordshire who kindly submitted this article.

**Image:** Post card showing the Berkhamsted Land Army Girls decorated cart outside Dean Incents, High Street; taken by J. T. Newman of Berkhamsted, on 19<sup>th</sup> July 1919, from the Berkhamsted Local History & Museum Society collection cared for by DHT.

## 80<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE OUTBREAK OF WORLD WAR TWO

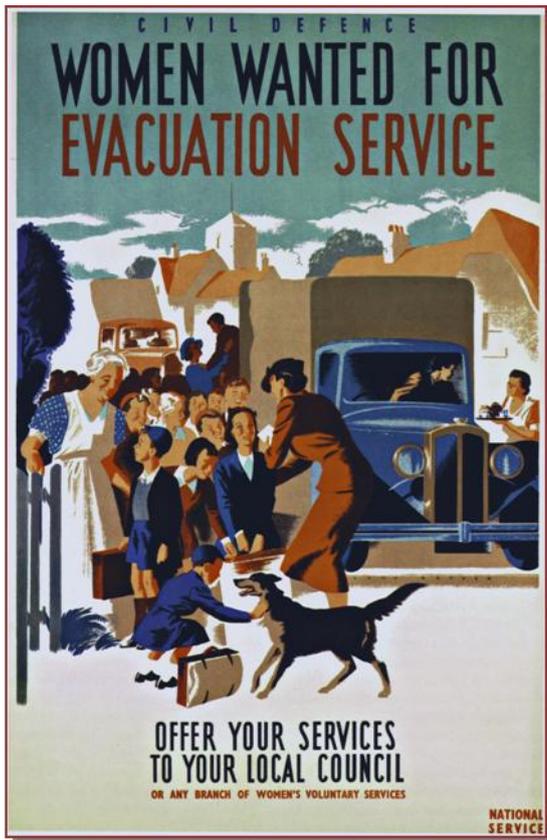
On Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1939 – The entire country gathered around wireless sets to hear the Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain's announcement of the war with Germany.

"I am speaking to you from the Cabinet Room at 10, Downing Street. This morning the British Ambassador in Berlin handed the German government the final note stating that unless we heard from them by 11 o'clock that they were prepared, at once, to withdraw their troops from Poland a state of war would exist between us. I have to tell you now that no such undertaking has been received and that consequently this country is at war with Germany."

To mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the start of World War Two, the Gazette newspaper published a commemorative supplement on Friday 1<sup>st</sup> September 1989; the following is an edited transcript.

Ready for War - All quiet at first an air raid alert. Dated Friday September 1<sup>st</sup>, 1939.

'If War Comes Hemel Hempstead is Ready' was the main heading in the Gazette on September 1<sup>st</sup>, two days before the war started. In fact, like the rest of the country Hemel Hempstead was not ready, and nothing much happened in the next six months except that people got very bored waiting for action and many evacuees returned home. But there was one bit of excitement on Sunday September 8<sup>th</sup> when the town received its first air raid warning.



People in the streets were hurried into shelters and churches, those who could get home within seven minutes – the estimated time of the raid – were told to go home immediately. But many remained and people from the streets also came into the churches to take refuge. All cars were stopped and told to pull into the side of the road and the buses were also stopped and passengers told to take cover.

At first there was a feeling of tension, but this changed to boredom and the ARP wardens had difficulty in making people stay indoors. Eventually the 'all clear' sounded and it was learned that the whole exercise had been a false alarm caused by the miss-identification of a friendly plane.

In the local factories there was a great deal of activity as they switched over to wartime production. Dickinson's gradually moved over to making munitions, by 1941 the Engineering Dept was engaged in ammunition production while the Bankers Envelope Dept made shell containers. The Label Dept made tubes for shells and the Card Dept TNT demolition cartons, the Book Dept made mortar carriers and the Banker Dept anti-aircraft shell containers. At Brocks they turned from firework production to making signal rockets and parachute flares.

Among new organisations set-up was the Herts Herb Collecting Committee which collected rose hips to make rose hip syrup; horse chestnuts and nettles for animal feeds and camouflage paint. There was also a great emphasis on salvage. Paper was collected for re-cycling, bones for glue and all food refuse had to be put aside to be collected for pig and poultry feed.

As the war continued the shortages increased. Metals were urgently needed and Hemel Hempstead park gates were taken away to be melted down, along with many iron railings. Aluminium was badly needed for aircraft production and an appeal went round to everyone to hand in their aluminium pots and pans.

The blackout (it was an offence to show any light at night) caused some fatalities and injuries. The first fatality was Mr James Doult, 61, of Grosvenor Terrace, Boxmoor, who was struck by a motorcycle whilst walking along Lawn Lane.

The blackout meant that cinemas closed early. However, entertainment was provided in the Bury hut in Gadebridge Park which held up to 300 people who came to listen to the music of Cheery Charlie Fellowes and his band.

In October a concert was held at St. John's Hall "to provide something that will enliven this dead-and-alive hole and help dispel black-out blues". Among those taking part was Dan Collins who gave "a very clever dumb show". Arthur Youdes, whose solos were accorded one of the biggest hands. David Hughes gave an impression of Jeanette Macdonald which was as "delightful as it was ludicrous" and Maisie Breed provided a display of graceful acrobatics that revealed her remarkable agility and suppleness of limb.

The first person in Hemel Hempstead to appear before the court charged with a blackout offence was a local clergyman, the Rev. Henry Knowles of Gravel Hill Terrace, who was summonsed for failing to obscure the lights of his house during the hours of darkness on October 6<sup>th</sup>. He said he had left the light on by a mistake when he went off on a weekend to Devon. He was fined 10s., but one of the magistrates paid the fine "in sympathy".

In November 1939, when still nothing had happened except the one false alarm air raid, the Gazette had an editorial suggesting that the time had come to return to some measure of pre-war activity. The paper slammed the blackout for being "tedious and irksome" and said it was not improving morale or temper. It also pointed out that social life had gone back to normal in the villages where there was now a big turn-out for all events.

The phoney war ended the following summer when the Battle of Britain started, after that life became much harder with more and more men being called up for overseas service, more rationing restrictions, longer working hours to help the war effort and an ever increasing number of families losing their loved ones.

By Dick Dawson (Gazette Reporter)

**Image:** Civil Defence recruitment poster, by Jack Matthews, 1939.

## HERTFORDSHIRE ASSOCIATION OF MUSEUMS – OBJECT OF THE YEAR

Hertfordshire Association of Museums (HAM) is proud to be hosting the 2019 awards celebrating the work of Hertfordshire's museums and heritage organisations, with a focus on the achievements and contributions made by these organisations to the local community. The 'Object of the Year' will be awarded through a public vote.

We submitted an interesting object from our collection – a Stanhope peep pipe, by far the smallest object in this year's competition.

At first glance this tiny pipe measuring no larger than a 5p coin appears nondescript, however appearances can be deceiving. Within this tiny object is hidden a world in miniature. Held up to the light it reveals an image of St. Mary's Church, Hemel Hempstead.

Called a 'Stanhope Peep Pipe', these viewing devices became popular novelty collectibles from the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. After the invention of microphotography by John Benjamin Dancer in 1839, with further inventions by Frenchman Rene Dagron, it became possible to combine tiny hidden images into objects. A huge variety of everyday items such as thimbles, pens and jewellery began to be produced containing microphotography images.

To vote for our fantastic little Peep Pipe, please follow the link [here](#). The closing date is 6<sup>th</sup> December 2019.

**Image:** Right - The hidden view of St. Mary's Church, Hemel Hempstead. Left - Man holding the tiny Stanhope Peep Pipe.



## CURATOR'S CORNER



**'Hidden History of Kodak'.** DHT staff and volunteers had great fun experimenting with light sensitive fabric paint to create a wall hanging, for our exhibition. **Image:** L-R Nina, Quentin, Brian, Tim, Anne & Zara.

**'Hidden History of Kodak' Exhibition 19<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> October.** Come and visit our pop-up museum in the Marlowes Shopping Centre (near north entrance). With lots to see from our collection of vintage Kodak cameras and our huge model of the iconic Kodak Tower.

**Legacy Giving.** Help us safeguard our collections for future generations by remembering Dacorum Heritage Trust in your will. For more information visit our website <http://www.dacorumheritage.org.uk/support-us/legacies/> Please remember to include a bequest to The Dacorum Heritage Trust Ltd. when you make or revise your will.

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