

# Wartime West Sussex 1939 - 1945: AIR RAIDS – ARP WARDENS

## ARP services in Mid-Sussex

**Mid-Sussex Times 29 August 1939**

### **MID-SUSSEX PREPARED - A.R.P. SERVICES READY AND WAITING ARRANGEMENTS FOR ACCOMMODATION OF EVACUEES**

The serenity of Mid-Sussex; where ordinarily the beautiful stretches of countryside and the sight of the immobile Downs banish all thoughts of turmoil and strife in the outer world, has been disturbed by recent events.

If Britain must go to war, Mid-Sussex will play its part, and though it may not be subjected to the dangers which menace the thickly populated centres, it can relieve these areas by accommodating evacuees, it can contribute its quota to the fighting forces, and it can be prepared to face any emergency - for in modern warfare no locality can be considered to be immune.

While many menfolk in the Territorials and reserves have been leaving to join their units, while people from danger areas have been trickling into the towns and villages of Mid-Sussex, the local authorities, together with the Organisers (Mr. I.H. Merry and Mr. O.F. Brown), and volunteers, have been working strenuously to tighten up the A.R.P. organisation and to prepare for any contingency.

Local arrangements have been made in co-ordination with the County headquarters at Lewes - incidentally, the County A.R.P. Organiser, Lieut Col O.J.F. Fooks, has had to cancel his holiday - and full preparatory measures to enforce a complete 'black-out' at short notice have been taken.

Following instructions from the Home Office on Wednesday, the local police visited all business premises warning the owners to make preparations to black out all interior lights, while those having illuminated exterior signs were instructed to be ready to extinguish them at a minute's notice.

The police also distributed posters setting out the air raid warnings. For the

benefit of our readers, these are as follows: "the warning of impending air raids will be given by a fluctuating or 'warbling' signal of varying pitch, or a succession of intermittent blasts sounded by hooters and sirens. These signals may be supplemented by sharp blasts on police whistles. The 'raiders passed' signal will be a continuous signal at a steady pitch. If poison gas has been used, warning will be given by hand rattles. The ringing of handbells will announce that the danger from gas has passed".

A portion of the buildings opposite the principle branch of Barclays bank at Haywards Heath has been taken as a police A.R.P. store, and stocked with protective clothing, respirators and sandbags.

During the weekend employees of the Cuckfield Urban District Council were engaged on painting a broken white line along the middle of the tarmac portion of the county road through the urban district from Bedales (Scaynes Hill) to High Bridge (Cuckfield). The object is to assist motorists in the event of restricted lighting regulations being put into force. The East Sussex County Council have made the same provision on the main London and Brighton road and other county roads through their area while in some places white rings have been painted around telegraph poles and trunks of trees. Copies of the restricted lighting regulations are available at any police station.

Local shops report heavy demands for food for storing and for materials for darkening windows. During the weekend, workmen have been busy painting white lines on roads and white squares on kerbs at corners of roads for the guidance of motorists in a 'black-out'.

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