

Worthing school attacked by plane

Worthing Herald, February 12th 1943 **Schoolchildren stay calm in spite of bullets**

MACHINE-GUN BULLETS PEPPERED THE WALLS OF A SOUTH COAST CATHOLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ON MONDAY WHILE A CLASS WAS ABOUT TO START.

'Duck!' shouted Mrs Reed, the mistress in charge, as a large fragment of cannon shell struck the framework of an upper classroom window. The next moment a piece of shrapnel struck the blackboard, which fell on Mrs Reed's head and knocked her down.

TWO WHOLE SIDES OF THE CLASSROOM ARE OF GLASS, THROUGH WHICH SPATTERED CANNON SHRAPNEL AND MACHINE-GUN BULLETS.

'We were cannoned from the front and machine gunned from the sides,' Mrs Reed told a 'Herald' reporter.

'We had never experienced anything like it before and the children, especially the tiny ones, were wonderful. They all gave a remarkable exhibition of self-control.'

Eight children were treated at a clinic for slight shrapnel wounds and cuts.

The alert sounded just as the school was re-assembling. The last of the children was entering the premises. Almost simultaneously the raiders swept overhead. Some of the children were shepherded to the shelters while others lay flat in the school corridors. All the injured children were in the upstairs classroom which they had just reached. They had no time to get down.

Hero of the day

Hero of the day was 13-years-old Richard Mountain, who on his own initiative took charge of two shelters which no teachers had had time to reach.

'He took charge quite on his own,' Mr Costello told a 'Herald' reporter. 'He knew that the teachers were all busily engaged. I reported to the headmaster what the boy had done and the Head left him in charge until other arrangements could be made.'

Henry Roberts, a little boy in the upstairs class, was taking the A.R.P.

register when the raid began. He was slightly hurt, but came downstairs with the register still clutched safely under his arm.

One little girl had been worrying at the prospect of having some teeth out. During the raid she received a blow on the side of the face. At a dental inspection next morning she remarked with satisfaction: 'I shan't have to have them out now. They've been knocked out for me.'

Splendid work in fetching dressings etc, for the injured was done by little Harold Weston: 'He was cycling to school when the raiders came,' said Mr Costello. 'He jumped over a wall and took shelter in a garden, and he was worried all the time because it was a private garden and he thought he was trespassing.'

An Old Girl of the school, who was visiting one of the teachers, was caught in the raid, but was uninjured.

First aid was rendered by Mr A.E.Joy (Headmaster), and Mr Costello, assisted by Mr Woodgate, a railway employee, who ran to the school immediately on hearing of the raid.

'In one department there was only one teacher in charge of 40 infants,' said a teacher. 'The little ones were aged about five, and when I looked in on them only a few minutes after the attack they were sitting down calmly at work.'

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