



Under Fire

During World War II Chippenham was not a main target for enemy bombing in the same way that larger towns and cities like Bristol and London were. This did not mean that Chippenham escaped completely.

Local residents remember a number of times when Chippenham came under fire:

“One day a couple of German airplanes attacked the old Nestlé’s Condensed Milk Factory in Bath Road and we were all taken out of class and had to go into the air raid shelters. As we crossed the play ground we could hear the gun fire from the planes.”

On the evening of Saturday 25 April 1942 a German bomber attacked Chippenham. It dropped four bombs along Bristol Road. Three missed the house falling instead in the gardens but one hit a cottage killing a husband and his wife. Amazingly their daughter survived.

This bomb fragment, or shrapnel, in the museum collection is from a bomb dropped on Chippenham during this attack.



Read these accounts of the event:

“I remember lying in bed one night and some bombs were dropped by the folly cross roads Although we were in Oaklands the explosion was so load it sounded as if it was in our garden.”

“I remember the night they bombed the folly, we went under the table, and they dropped a few stay ones - it was in the middle of the night and I was left under the table until the all clear was sounded.”

“One Saturday night the siren had sounded, we were downstairs under the table, and when the All Clear sounded at about midnight, we went to bed. (Next day) We heard that a returning bomber had dropped a stray bomb opposite Hardenhuish Park. We rushed over to see the house was extensively damaged.”

Write a newspaper report about the bombing:

- Come up with a name for your paper
- Write a headline. This needs to grab the reader’s attention, you could use alliteration or rhyme
- Include a picture and caption. Perhaps you could draw a picture of the plane or the remains of the house?
- Write your news report of the event. Remember to use the 5 Ws (what, where, when, who and why) and include quotes from eye witnesses.
- Don’t forget to write in the third person and present the main events in chronological order!