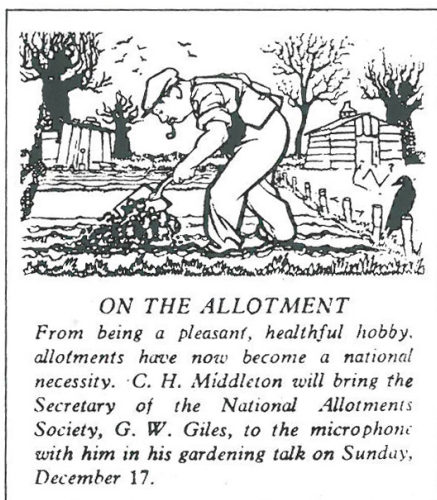


# 1939-45: the Society in Wartime

## Dig for Victory



At the beginning of the war, about 60% of food was imported and subject to U-boat attack. Rationing was introduced and allotment and home gardening became "a national necessity".

RAS Treasurer Mr G Newman was on the Borough Wartime Food Production and Advisory Sub-Committee, which aimed to encourage food production on allotments and gardens.

Alderman Conder allowed boys from Coleridge Senior School to cultivate land belonging to him on Strangeways Road. His land was also used for a Pig Club.

**1940** A Dig for Victory meeting held at Morley Memorial School was attended by the local MP, Commander Tuffnell.

**1941** The Board of Agriculture visited the allotments and put up a display of pests outside the Hut.

**1943** During Dig for Victory Week, a talk on potatoes was held at the Hut.

## The RAS in Wartime

**1940** In March, 2.77 acres in Perne Road were to be possessed for thirty war allotments under the control of RAS. However, in September this land was taken away "by reason of the operations of the Military Authorities" (Borough Allotment Committee Minutes). The local rumour was that the land was to be used for a VD hospital.

A tank trap had to be crossed to reach some plots on Mowbray Road. A dug-out was constructed on Plot 92 on Glebe Road.

**1941** An air-raid shelter in a Hills Avenue back garden was reported to have interfered with the water flow in the Baldock Way ditch.

**1942** A Committee meeting heard that all rents were paid up for the first time in history.

**1944** As they had throughout the war, women asked for and received help from the Society in maintaining their plots whilst their husbands were on active service, including Mrs Thoday, whose husband "is lying wounded in hospital in Epsom".

The RAS won the premier award, The Papworth Cup, at the Autumn Show.

Plotolders were urged to plant onions for the Red Cross Onion Scheme, whereby donated onions were sent to NAAFI and the Military Authorities paid their value in money to Red Cross funds.



## The fight against potato sickness

**1940** Following a visit from Mr Cramp, County Horticultural Adviser, a trial plot was established on Baldock Way. It was divided into sections which were "treated with naphthalene, soot, lime, carbide, or cynalamide [*sic*]" (Committee minutes).

**1943** In her Dig for Victory Week talk, Miss Hudson insisted that the only cure was "to rest the ground from potatoes". As a consequence, the trial plot was planted with carrots and produced 11 cwt – "which were about as much trouble to dispose of as they were to produce" (Committee minutes).

**1944** At the Society's AGM Mr Cramp from Plant Protection Ltd was "very disturbed" by the ell worm and urged "drastic action".



The Ministry of Food encouraged people to eat vegetable meals, including Woolton Pie. The recipe was the creation of Francis Ladry, the chef of the Savoy hotel and named after Lord Woolton, head of the Ministry of Food.

Waste was discouraged and a contemporary rhyme went

*Those who have the will to win  
Eat potatoes in their skin,  
Knowing that the sight of peelings  
Deeply hurts Lord Woolton's feelings!*

Illustrations from *The Wartime Kitchen and Garden* by Jennifer Davies (BBC, 1993)