

The Blackout



The blackout was a nationwide effort to turn off all lights everywhere in an attempt to prevent German bombers using the lights to help them find their targets.

Blackout regulations began on the 1st September 1939. This meant that all windows and doors should be covered at night. Each home was given enough blackout material, usually a dark cotton fabric, to cover all windows.

Streetlights were switched off or dimmed and shielded to deflect the light downwards. Car headlamps were also blacked out, killing more people in the dark than aerial bombardments. The speed limit was reduced to 20 mph to cut accidents.

Traffic lights, bicycles and eventually car headlights were fitted with slotted covers to deflect the beam down to the floor. People were not allowed to smoke outdoors. The blackout was enforced by Air Raid Precaution (ARP) wardens.



Eila: 1 Sept 39 Germans attacked Poles. War practically inevitable. Black out in force.

Albert: 9 Dec 39 Measuring up windows for blinds and blackouts.

A: 3 Jan 40 Tried to make blackout at WAAF's windows more effective.

A: 9 April 40 Eila dancing and fetched at 9.45 On way home a man crashed into car while crossing from the Horse and Chains. We found it was Horace Davy and his right leg was broken, a compound op - both bones. To police station after to report. Car not damaged.

A: 13 April 40 Went to Peace Memorial Hospital to see Davy. Davy cheerful but injury to leg is very serious. Gave Davy 50 Player.

A: 7 July 40 Air Raid Warden rang from Patchett's Green re a light, but there was no light going in front of house. Also trees would have prevented him seeing it.

A: 3 Aug 40 Eila to dance. I went to meet her. Held up by Police to tell me to drive without headlights. Evidently danger of a raid.

A: 27 Sept 41 Watford to look for curtains for small sitting room. Found v. nice material which is ARP (Air Raid Precautions) lightproof.

