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Archive resources relevant to the study of Second World War

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ARCHIVAL RESOURCES FOR THE SECOND WORLD WAR

The following listing highlights a range of materials in our collections relevant to the study of the Second World War which include political archives, institutional archives and personal and family collections.

This is by no means a comprehensive listing but aims to give examples of some of the archive material we hold that may help with your research. Further material can be found by searching our [archive catalogue](#) or our [book catalogue](#), or [email](#) us for specific advice.

SNAPSHOTS from HOME LEAGUE
4, GREAT RUSSELL STREET, LONDON, W.C.1

REQUEST FOR HOME SNAPSHOTS
I would be glad to receive, free of all cost, snapshot photographs taken at my home.

My Home Address is 25, Albert Gardens
Commercial Road, London E.1.

Please write clearly
Reg. No. and Service Address 1077955, Europa Base,
3rd. Coast Regt. R.A., Gibraltar

Signed Mr. Snow

A FREE SERVICE BY AMATEUR PHOTOGRAPHERS ORGANISED BY THE Y.M.C.A.

Papers of Jean Cook

Album compiled by Jean Cook relating to her voluntary work as a photographer during the Second World War for the Snapshots from Home League organised by the YMCA. The contents of this volume include completed forms by service men requesting snapshot photographs of their family and friends, copies of the snapshots taken and sent and letters of thanks from the recipients of the photographs. Also included are letters of thanks from the YMCA on the winding up of the scheme in 1946. The collection includes miscellaneous letters and photographs sent to Jean Cook as well as a DVD interview filmed in 2008

A full electronic catalogue of this collection is available on our online archive catalogue at <http://www.calmview.bham.ac.uk> (Finding No: [YMCA/ACC36](#))

Benton Family Papers

Letters of the Benton family of Old Hill, Staffordshire, reflecting the impact of the Second World War on the families of servicemen in the forces at home and overseas.

Mrs Benton's letters to her son, Eric, serving in the RAF, express her concerns and anxieties for the safety and welfare of her sons, Eric and Ken, on active service, as well as the difficulties faced in everyday life at home due to food shortages and bombing raids. Letters from friends serving in the army overseas give an interesting insight into the wartime experiences of men enlisted into the services and sent abroad for long periods. References to Eric's work in the RAF as a radio mechanic working in the field of telecommunications and the employment of another family member with the Telecommunications Research Establishment in Great Malvern reflect different aspects of military and civilian war service. Examples of official documentation necessary during wartime are also included in the family papers.

A full electronic catalogue of this collection is available on our online archive catalogue at <http://www.calmview.bham.ac.uk> (Finding No: [MS759](#))

Diaries of Raymond Priestley

Raymond Priestley, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Birmingham from 1938 to 1952, kept a detailed weekly diary, and the volumes covering the Second World War period are an important source of information for the impact of the conflict on Birmingham, and on the governance and operations of the University.

There are details about the establishment of a Joint Recruiting Board to channel students into military service, the formation of a Home Guard, and the implementation of fire watching and air raid precautions duties for staff and students. Priestley discusses staff shortages, the involvement of academic staff in government research connected with the conflict, and the evacuation scheme to Canada organised for the families of academic staff. He also comments on the arrival of refugee students, the temporary accommodation provided for medical students from Kings College, London at Birmingham, the effects of food rationing, and the establishment of the University Overseas Club for members of other universities from Britain and overseas, serving with Allied forces and stationed in Birmingham.

The diary entries describe some of his personal experiences and feelings about the war, and include descriptions of air raids, his work to grow vegetables in his garden and on an allotment, his own involvement in fire watching duties, and his separation from his elder daughter, Jocelyn, who was living with her husband in Australia and was only able to maintain contact with her family in Birmingham through sporadic letters.

A full electronic catalogue of this collection is available on our online archive catalogue at <http://www.calmview.bham.ac.uk> (Finding No: [US38/2](#))

Memoir of William George Cadenhead

Volume describes Cadenhead's experiences working as a secretary for the YMCA in Ripon, Barnsley, Swansea and Birmingham. He describes the work of the Birmingham YMCA during the Second World War providing mobile and static canteens and a Forces Centre.

A full electronic catalogue of this collection is available on our online archive catalogue at <http://www.calmview.bham.ac.uk> (Finding No: [YMCA/ACC74](#))

Memoir of Grace Torrington

Memoir contains a detailed account of work undertaken at Manchester YMCA during the Second World War, including the commandeering and subsequent transformation of premises for use by service personnel.

A full electronic catalogue of this collection is available on our online archive catalogue at <http://www.calmview.bham.ac.uk> (Finding No: [YMCA/ACC76](#))

Photographs relating to the European Voluntary Workers scheme

Material includes numerous images of Thrybergh Hostel in Rotherham; and Stainborough Hostel in Barnsley. There are images of EVWs involved in sporting activities as well as socialising. There are also a number of images depicting the interior and exterior of the hostels in Rotherham and Barnsley.

A full electronic catalogue of this collection is available on our online archive catalogue at <http://www.calmview.bham.ac.uk> (Finding No: [YMCA/ACC97](#))



Photographs of European Voluntary Workers based at the YMCA Hostel in Moota, Cumberland

Photograph album compiled by an unnamed Polish Welfare Officer of the YMCA Hostel at Moota, Cumberland [Lake District] comprising numerous captioned photographs of images of EVWs [European Voluntary Workers invited by the government to work in the United Kingdom in the immediate post-Second World War period].

The album includes images of EVWs undertaking agricultural work in the Lake District; sporting activities and playing games including football, basketball, and volleyball; and entertainment including concerts, singing and dancing.

A full electronic catalogue of this collection is available on our online archive catalogue at <http://www.calmview.bham.ac.uk> (Finding No: [YMCA/ACC83](#))



Letters of the Chamberlain family of South Yardley

Letters mostly from Dorothy Walker to her fiance, Stanley (Stan) Chamberlain, 1938-1944, providing detailed information about her work as a Birmingham school teacher and head teacher of St Peter's Infant School, Harborne, during the Second World War, and include accounts of the school's evacuation to Worcester in 1939, references to her fire watching duties at the school and about her pupils. There are also details about how the family coped with air raids as well as shortages of food and fuel during the war years.

A full electronic catalogue of this collection is available on our online archive catalogue at <http://www.calmview.bham.ac.uk> (Finding No: [MS806](#))

Papers of Mosa Anderson

Papers and publications collected by Mosa Anderson concerning her work for Save the Children Fund, primarily focused on the establishment of residential nurseries in Birmingham, Coventry, Scotland and other locations in Great Britain.

(Finding No: [SCF/SC/MA](#))

The World's Children Magazine

The Save the Children magazine which provided updates on the work and aims of the charity through various articles, poems, photographs and drawings. Volumes 19 and 25 cover the war years with a focus on initiatives at home, such as the establishment of nurseries, but also their continuing efforts to provide support abroad, fundraising events, visits and updates from Save the Children branches in other countries and the Save the Children International Union in Geneva.

(Finding No: [SCF/P/2/WOR](#))

Papers of Sydney L. Vinson relating to the First and Second World Wars

Papers collected by Syd Vinson comprising complete set of YMCA Brightlingsea 'Mag-O'-Fun' Second World War magazines, 1939-1948; letters, photographs and correspondence sent to Vinson from YMCA Brightlingsea servicemen and women throughout the Second World War.

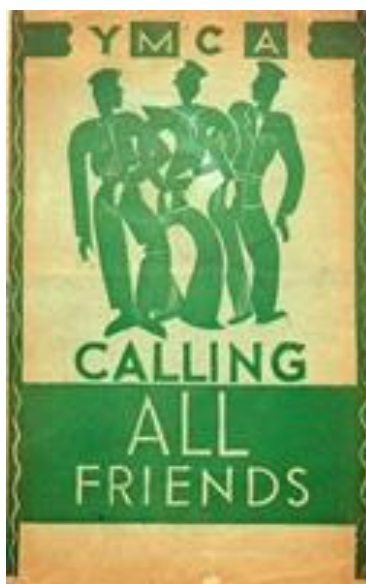
A full electronic catalogue of this collection is available on our online archive catalogue at <http://www.calmview.bham.ac.uk> (Finding No: [YMCA/ACC78](#))



Papers of Miss Tuckwell of Croydon

Material collected by Miss Tuckwell relating to her involvement with Croydon YMCA during the Second World War. Material includes issues of publications produced by Croydon YMCA; and manuscript and typescript account of life at the YMCA centre during the 1940s.

A full electronic catalogue of this collection is available on our online archive catalogue at <http://www.calmview.bham.ac.uk> (Finding No: [YMCA/ACC86](#))



Letters of Hilda and Ida Chamberlain

Letters from Hilda and Ida Chamberlain, sisters of Neville Chamberlain, are a rich source of information about the sisters' experiences of daily life during the Second World War in the Hampshire village of Odiham. These experiences are first seen through the lens of their close relationship with their brother, who was Prime Minister at the outbreak of war in 1939 but resigned in May 1940 and suffered serious illness before his death in November 1940, their correspondence with him covers the events of this first year of the conflict including food rationing, air raids, and political and military developments. After this point, letters written to Neville's daughter, Dorothy, who was living in Birmingham and rural Worcestershire with her young children during the war, give a valuable insight into the sister's lives. They contain much information about domestic concerns, including problems recruiting and retaining domestic staff; advice about gardening and growing fruit and vegetables; and accounts of Hilda's public work with the National Federation of Women's Institutes, and the County Nursing Association.

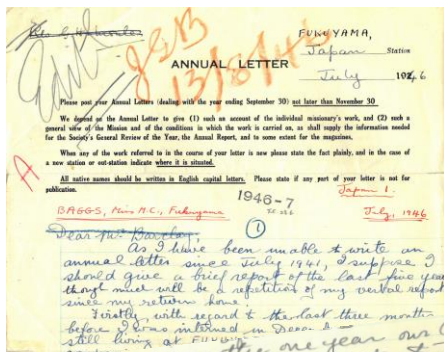
A full electronic catalogue of this collection is available on our online archive catalogue at <http://www.calmview.bham.ac.uk> (Finding Nos: [BC/B/7-8](#); [NC18/2](#))

Missionary Archives

Many men and women working for the [Church Missionary Society](#) (now Church Mission Society) and [Church of England Zenana Missionary Society](#) remained overseas throughout the War, either through choice, internment or due to restrictions on travel. When possible, they continued to correspond with their missionary society employers and their families back in the UK sending news of conditions overseas. Their letters, articles and reports are now good source material for accounts of local social, political and economic developments affecting everyday life during the war years as well as the more immediate impact of air raids and other military action.

The extensive date range of the records makes it possible to trace early signs of the challenges to come. There are contemporary accounts of changing conditions before, during and after the War in Africa, East and West Asia and the Middle East. Annual reports and other records of mission headquarters in the UK include much on recognition of the need to adapt to the needs of communities whose wartime experiences in the home or on the front line, had shaped them for a new post-war world; other topics of interest include support for German nationals.

The annual reports, missionaries' Annual Letters and periodicals in the Church Missionary Society and related archives are an excellent place to start. See also the records of the CMS Overseas Division, [General Secretary's Department](#) and [CMS Unofficial Papers](#). There is information about these sources in the [Research Guide](#) that accompanies the online and paper finding aids to the CMS and CEZMS collections.



At the end of so-called one year our Camp was closed & we were all sent up to Tokyo to the already established bigger camp there. At the end of September, 1942, Miss Nash had been brought to join us. The Tokyo Camp was not so pleasant as there were more restrictions, many more police guards and no privacy. Also the cooking was a restaurant. By it had and dirty cooks from the Red Cross parcels, which we received for Christmas 1942, we should have shared badly, as sometimes the food was uneatable. But this only lasted for about nine months, because after the second American Evacuation boat left in the Autumn of 1943, we were moved to SEKIGUCHI Camp, where we had a new cook who was...



'Church Missionary Outlook',
December 1943: Image captioned
'Allied Troops in Egypt'

Extracts of Annual Letter of Mabel Baggs,
CMS missionary to Japan, interned Dec 1941-1945
(Finding No: CMS ASE AL 1940-1949 Baggs)