

## VE Day in Teignmouth



The Teignmouth Post - Victory!

Victory in Europe Day, generally known as VE Day, was to celebrate the formal acceptance by the Allies of Nazi Germany's unconditional surrender of its armed forces on the 8th of May 1945 and thereby ending the war in Europe.

Many people in Britain didn't wait for the official day of celebration and began the festivities as soon as they heard the news on the 7th of May.

After years of wartime restrictions from food and clothes rationing to blackouts and bombing raids it was understandable how eager the population were to finally be able to let loose and enjoy themselves. Colourful bunting and flags lined the streets of villages, towns, and cities across Britain. On the eve of VE Day, bonfires were lit, people danced and the pubs were full of revellers.



Victory Ball at the Royal Hotel, Teignmouth on Wednesday, May 9th, 1945.

Victory thanksgiving street parties at Teignmouth were celebrated on a large scale and parents saw to it that the children had something to remember the greatest victory of all time.

# THANKSGIVING STREET PARTIES

## Further Celebrations

**V**ICTORY thanksgiving street parties at Teignmouth were on a large scale and compared most favourably with those of larger towns. Housewives certainly saw to it that the children had something to remember of the greatest victory of all time. We publish pictures of four more parties in the town.

In the Grove Terrace gaily decorated district, 60 children sat down to an excellent spread, presided over by Mr. J. Stocker. The area was absolutely "alive" for the occasion, members of the Royal Navy and R.A.F. taking a keen interest in the proceedings, whilst the band of workers went all out to give the kiddies a real peace time delight. After tea the elders indulged in dancing to the strains of an accordion played by Mr. W. Tront, whilst sports were arranged for the children. At the close each child was presented with a shilling.

Two dozen Naval ratings were among the 120 who sat down to tea at Teign View Terrace. Never before had the district been so elaborately decorated with flags and bunting, whilst red, white and blue flowers graced the tables. "We had a real good time," was the comment of one of those taking part. The wireless supplied the music during tea, the Naval men seeing to the washing up afterwards. Singing and dancing followed, Mr. W.

ed by Messames Bailey, Cousins and French, assisted by Mrs. Blewett. The Salvation Army lent trestles and tables and the urn for the tea and over 50 youngsters sat down to a sumptuous meal. When the blanchmanges appeared on the table the cheering was deafening. After the tea, Mrs. Gosling, on behalf of the parents, presented Mrs. Blewett, amid cheers, with a knitted handbag in National colours for her help and interest. In returning thanks, Mrs. Blewett mentioned that residents on the Kingsdown Estate had contributed handsomely to the event, she not having had a single refusal. A "sports meeting" followed under the superintendence of Mr. E. B. Blewett, J.P., when some keen competitions took place. The success of the event was due to the enthusiastic way in which everything was arranged.

Amid pastoral surroundings the children of Hutebings Way were given their treat on Saturday. They had a most delightful time, thanks



Photo by H. Boulton

TEIGN VIEW TERRACE

company, marshalled by Mr. Dart, formed themselves into a procession and, headed by drums and with flags and lighted torches, proceeded to the top of Faldon Hill. A

## WHITSUN HOLIDAY

Teignmouth had a fair number of visitors for Whitsuntide, but the weather was not of the best—for holiday-makers. On Sunday rain fell until the afternoon, the evening being fine. Heavy rain fell early on Monday morning and those who ventured forth after breakfast were rewarded—the weather throughout the remainder of the day being sunny.

There were no special attractions on Whit-Monday, but, nevertheless, the town had its share of trippers from Plymouth and Exeter, and stations between. The beach was crowded in the afternoon and the accommodation in trains and buses was taxed to the utmost towards the evening. There was a brisk demand for the deck chairs on the beach and sea front and rowing boat proprietors did a fairly good business in taking people for trips in the bay. Bathing was also freely indulged in, whilst the Den bowling green and tennis courts found many devotees. Queues formed up for ice cream at some of the establishments.

The Pier attractions open-



Teignmouth Post - Thanksgiving street parties.

## Teignmouth Pier

Proprietors: TEIGNMOUTH PIER LTD. Manager: J. J. ANGLISS

HAPPY DAYS ARE HERE AGAIN !

### DANCING

in the

### PIER BALLROOM

(the Hall over the Sea)

### SATURDAY, May 26th

8 TILL MIDNIGHT.

ADMISSION 2/6

### TUESDAY, MAY 29th

DANCING 8 TILL 11 p.m.

ADMISSION 1/6

### THURSDAY, MAY 31st

DANCE 8 TILL MIDNIGHT

ADMISSION 2/6

### TEA DANCE

THURSDAY, 4-15 to 5-30

ADMISSION 1/6

INCLUDING TEA

### BAND PLAYS DAILY

in the

(except Mondays)

### PIER BALLROOM CAFE

11 TILL 12 NOON.

4 TILL 5 p.m.

Morning Coffee, Ices, Teas, etc.

May 1945

Dancing on Teignmouth Pier.



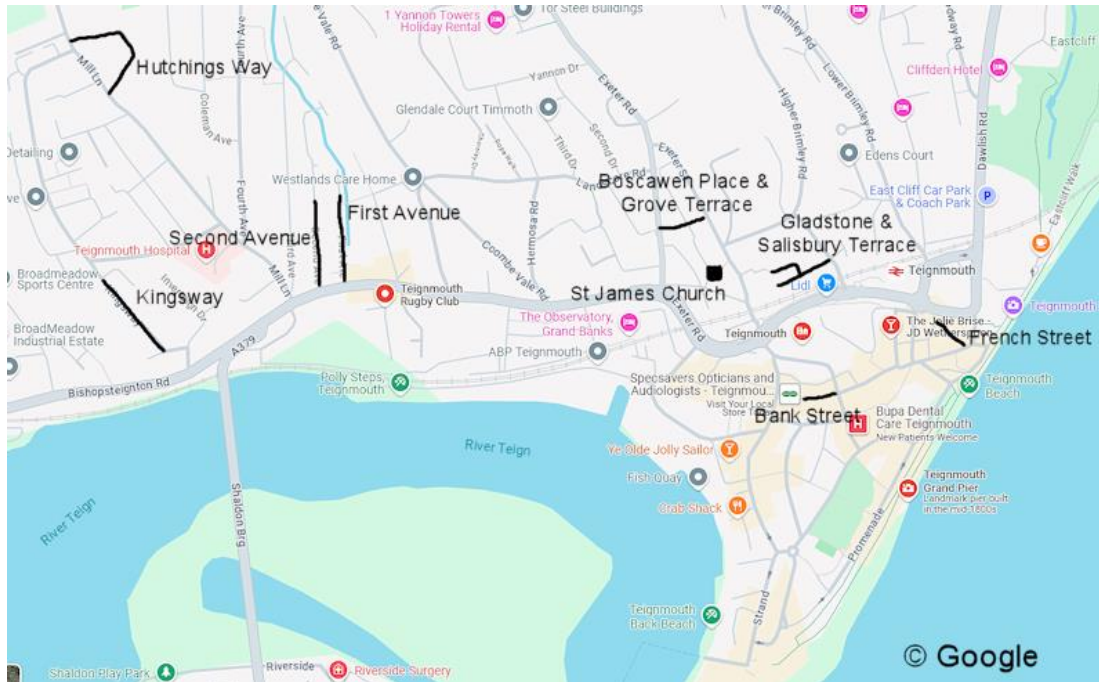
On VE Day 1945 in Teignmouth, Devon, the officers and men of the Special Service Establishment HMS Mount Stewart participated in a Victory parade through the town.



The Royal Marines Boom Patrol Detachment marching through Teignmouth, Devon

Pictured is the Royal Marines Boom Patrol Detachment marching through the town. Captain D Cox MBE leads the contingent, with Lt Hurst behind him (Left), Lt Montgomery (Centre) and Lt Arnold (Right), with C/Sgt King DSM and Sgt Horner (Looking at the camera) behind them.

VE Day parade in Teignmouth.



Location map for images.

Images from around Teignmouth



Courtesy of the Wilson Archive





First Avenue



Boscawen Place  
and Grove Terrace



Gladstone and Salisbury Terrace

VE DAY MAY 1945. TEIGNMOUTH.



St. James' Church



French Street



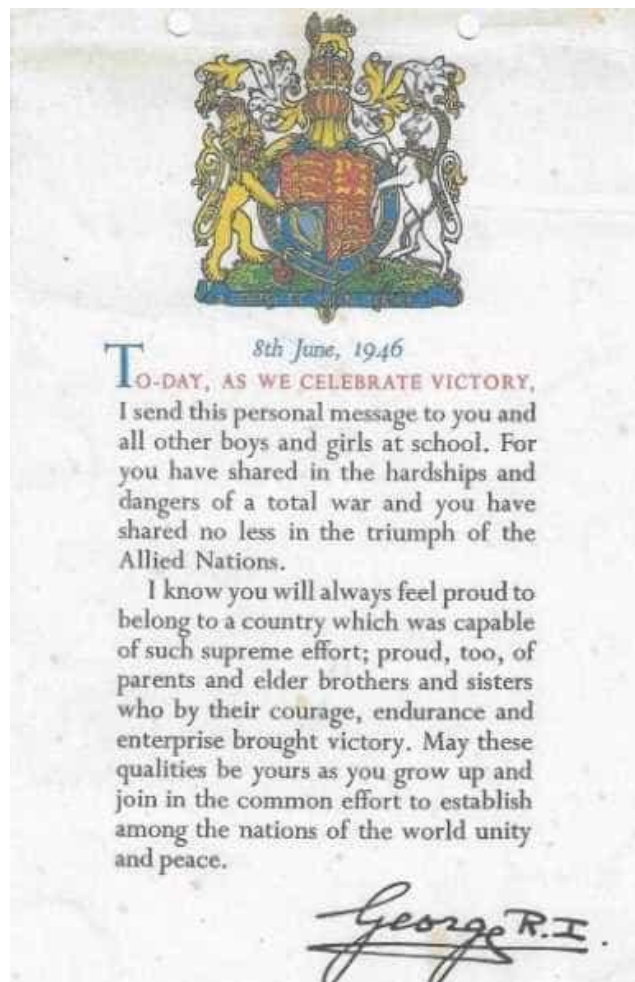
French Street



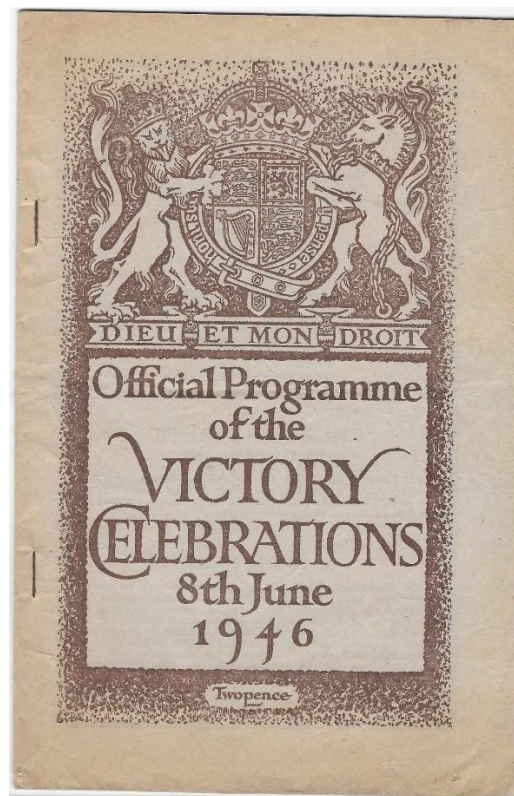


Bank Street

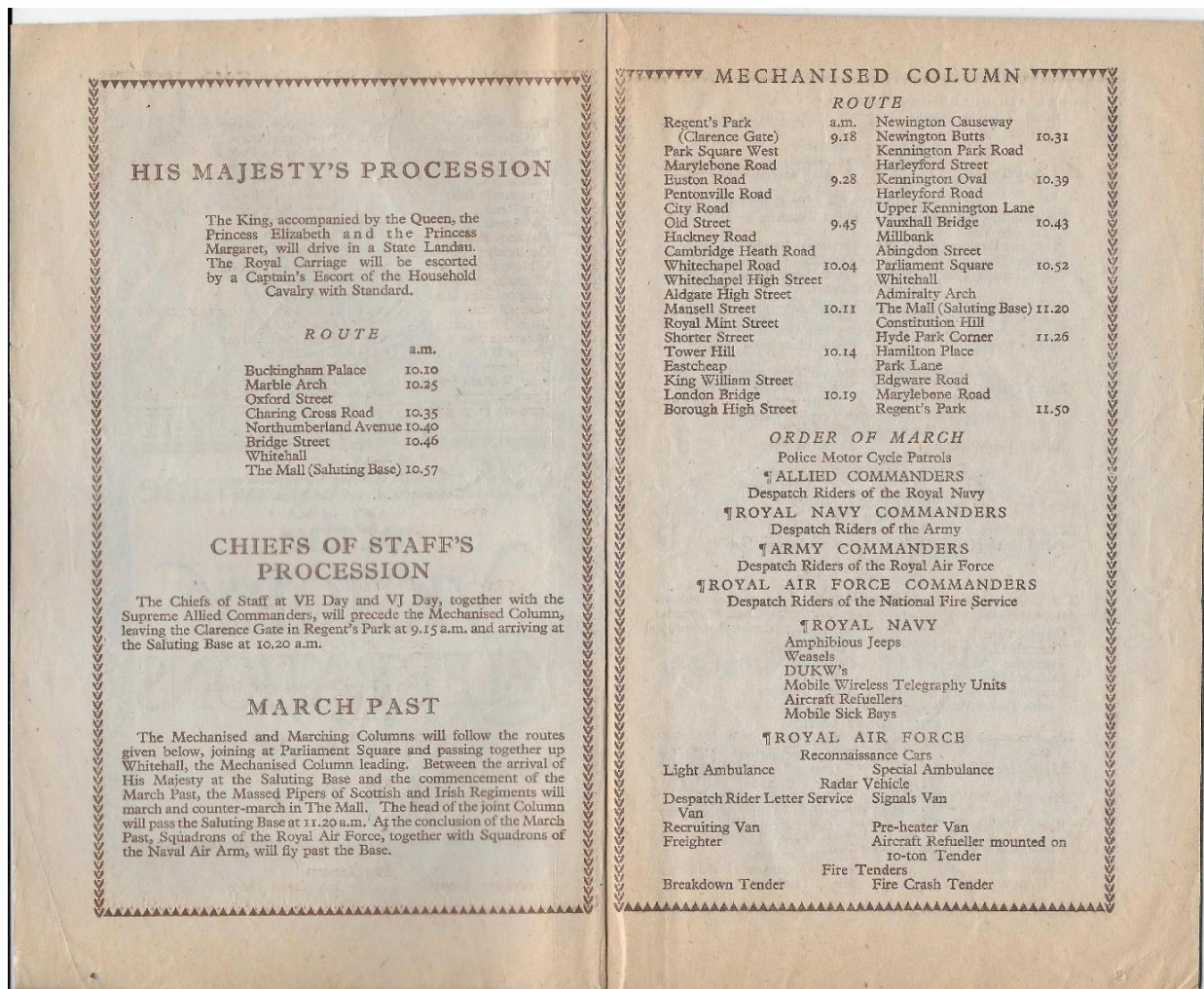
We were still celebrating in 1946.....



Kings letter to schoolchildren 1946.



Official Programme of the Victory Celebrations 8th June 1946 – cover.



Official Programme of the Victory Celebrations 8th June 1946 – inside.



However things were not progressing as well as what was hoped for .....

# Teignmouth Is Still Hit By War

**T**EIGNMOUTH, Mecca of thousands of annual holidaymakers, and apparently so much disliked by Goering's Luftwaffe that it claimed the title of Britain's worst-bombed Small Town, has just about the biggest housing headache in Devon.

Only cities like Exeter and Plymouth, where hundreds of homes were obliterated by the rain of bombs, have more damage to repair, and Teignmouth (population 10,500) have not their resources.

All 15 members of Teignmouth's Urban Council, which is led by Mr. F. E. Davidson, form the town's Housing Committee. The town's Housing Officer is Mr. N. S. Tucker, the council's chief sanitary inspector.

Mr. Tucker, the clerk of the council (Mr. T. W. Lee Edwards) and the surveyor (Mr. W. Scott) have, with the Housing Committee, given the accommodation queue top priority and their combined efforts have meant homes for 323 Teignmouth families since the war.

*This is how they have been housed:*

*Pre-war homes, 64; post-war traditional type homes, 78; prefabricated houses, 100.*

But home-finding is a thoroughly discouraging task for the council and their officials. In spite of their work and achievements, 400 applicants still wait patiently in the queue for council houses.

## Flats Scheme

Under existing plans there are 226 council houses still to be built at Teignmouth. Only 11 homes have been built for private ownership, but 11 more licences have been issued.

Teignmouth Urban Council have seized every reasonable chance of providing homes for the homeless or the ill-accommodated, and 13 houses converted into flats under an official scheme have given shelter to 32 families.

Before and since the war expenditure on house building at Teignmouth has cost a total of £200,000 and the council plans to spend a further £100,000, because, like Oliver Twist, it asks for more.

It costs about £1,500 to build each post-war council house, but site works and road and sewers increase the figure on the average by about £150.

Inclusive rents of Teignmouth's council houses range from 13s. 3d. a week (pre-war non-parlour type houses) to 28s. 9d. (post-war four-bedroomed type homes). About 27s. is the inclusive rent paid by tenants of three-bedroomed houses and in Teignmouth's 100 prefabricated dwellings the rent is 18s. 1d.

## Simple Plan

Commenting on the council's points scheme, Mr. Tucker says: "This is very simple, but broadly, it does serve in bringing urgent cases forward and I would stress that houses are not allocated merely on the highest number of points.

"The system is: 30 points per person in the applicant's family; 10 points for war service; and 10 for those who have been bombed out.

"Points are taken away in accordance with a schedule in relation to the number of living rooms occupied by the applicant and his family. Thus, a large family occupying sufficient accommodation, although having a high number of personal points, loses by the rooms points and thus come low on the list.

"The schedule is as follows: Two rooms (excluding kitchen), 60 points; three rooms (excluding kitchen), 120 points; four rooms (excluding kitchen), 180 points; five rooms (excluding kitchen), 240 points.

"In regard to tubercular cases placed under County Court order to quit, special prominence is given in my selection report to the Housing Committee.

## Position At A Glance

**T**EIGNMOUTH'S Urban Council has provided homes for 232 families since the war, but there are still 400 names on its list of applicants for council houses.

Under existing plans 226 dwellings still have to be built and the Council intends to spend a further £100,000 before asking for another loan.

The approximate cost of housing at Teignmouth so far (including pre-war schemes) has been £200,000. Eleven houses have been built for private ownership and licences have been issued to 11 potential builders.

Thirteen Teignmouth houses have been converted into flats, under an official scheme, and 32 families are at present living in them.

The average cost of Teignmouth's council houses is £1,500 (excluding expenditure on site works, roads, etc.) and rents (including rates) range from 13s. 5d. to 28s. 9d.

"The Housing Committee are at present endeavouring primarily to re-house local bombed out families, and particularly those with life-long residence in the town."

Teignmouth Council is justly proud of the points scheme and Mr. Davidson had the perfect answer for its critics not long ago.

He gave a women's organisation a fictitious list of housing applicants supported by details of the actual circumstances of a number of unnamed Teignmouthians and asked members to form themselves into a housing committee to decide the order of priority, in which houses should be allotted.

Had the mock committee power to grant council house tenancies there would certainly have been plenty of complaints on their assessment of housing need.

The report they showed to Mr. Davidson would have given homes to some of the least needy before the "desperate" cases on the housing list.

Mr. Davidson called "check-mate."

**NEXT WEEK: DARTMOUTH**



The aftermath – housing crisis



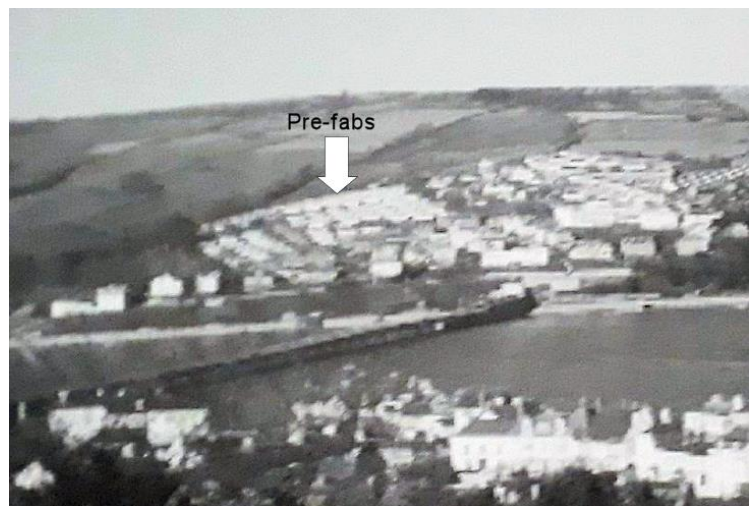
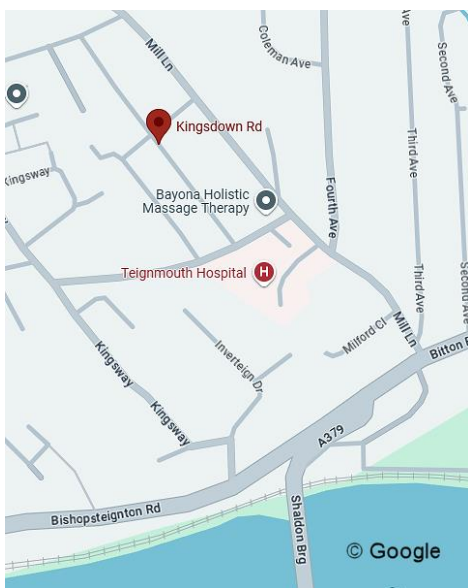
A post-war report has the following information:

Cities like Exeter and Plymouth where hundreds of homes were flattened by German air raids had more damage than Teignmouth and with a population of around 10500 it did not have the resources of these larger towns.

The council housing committee gave priority to re-housing bomb damage families and managed to find accommodation for 323 Teignmouth families. This list included: 64 pre-war houses; 78 post-war traditional houses and 100 pre-fabricated homes. Most of the pre-fabs were built in Kingsdown Road and lasted for far longer than originally intended.



Typical pre-fab buildings



Pre-fabs location in Teignmouth

There were still 400 names on the council housing register and around 226 houses still to be built. The costs of all this work was about £200,000 with a probable £100,000 further required to clear more of the backlog. A number of houses have been converted to flats housing 32 families.

The average cost of building these council properties is £1500 and rents are in the range of 13s and 3d to 28s & 9d (In case you are struggling with these figures that's roughly 66p and £1.45 in today's money!)



## Further reading on 'pre-fabs'.

What were prefabs made of?

Early temporary prefabs were constructed using a timber frame and asbestos cladding or cement, while some later buildings used aluminium.



© Historic England Archive. DP183945.

Designed by the Selection Engineering Company Ltd, the Uni-Secco prefabricated bungalow was the third most common type of prefab built as part of the Temporary Housing Programme. They were constructed using a timber frame and asbestos cement

Later, permanent prefabs were made using precast reinforced concrete or steel frames clad in asbestos panels.

Do people still live in prefabs?

Although initially planned as a temporary fix, many prefabricated homes have lasted far longer than originally intended.

Those that have survived are often well-loved and defended against the threat of redevelopment.



© Historic England Archive. DP220920.

In total, 156,623 prefab bungalows were built between 1945 and 1949.

Around 8,000 are left in the UK today, with about 30 listed. People still live in them today.

As well as the interruption to traditional house building and damage from bombing, the war years also witnessed a dramatic increase in population growth.

In 1942 the government set up the Burt Committee to 'consider materials and methods of construction suitable for the building of houses and flats, having regard to efficiency, economy and speed of erection'.



© Historic England Archive. P/H00093/001

This Universal House prefabricated bungalow dates from 1946. The Universal Housing Co Ltd of Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire, designed it. Constructed using timber or steel frames and asbestos cement cladding, each bungalow cost £1,218 to build.

In the first decade after the Second World War, nearly 500,000 permanent homes were built using some form of prefabrication. Prefab housing estates were often built on bomb sites, some of which were cleared and prepared by Italian and German prisoners of war.

In 1942, the government introduced the Utility Furniture Scheme, established to create good quality standard furniture when there was a shortage of raw materials and increased demand due to wartime bombing.

Phoenix Type temporary bungalows were prefabs constructed using a timber frame and asbestos cladding. Each unit cost £1,200. 16 surviving examples in Moseley, Birmingham, were given listed building status in 1998.

Uni-Seco prefabricated houses designed by the Selection Engineering Company Ltd, the Uni-Seco temporary prefabricated house was made of asbestos cement on a timber frame. One of the most numerous prefabs with almost 29,000 built all over Britain. The Uni-Seco was a highly versatile prefab. The building was designed in a kit and could be assembled in various combinations to suit its location.



A young girl in the kitchen of a Uni-Seco prefabricated home in Brixton, London.

© Historic England Archive. P/H00049/007.

The Uni-Seco's designer, Hungarian émigré George Fejér introduced streamlined kitchen design and appliances. This Uni-Seco kitchen features integrated shelving, fitted cupboards, a fridge and a fold-away table.



The AIROH House was constructed using aluminium and some 54,500 were built.



An AIROH House being assembled.  
© Historic England Archive. P/H00042/003.

Also known as the Aluminium Bungalow, AIROH stands for Aircraft Industries Research Organisation for Housing.

The AIROH brought together several aircraft manufacturers to diversify their product lines in the immediate post-war period. With the capacity to produce vast quantities of aluminium, the AIROH was made in large numbers.

The UK100 or American.

A delegation of engineers sent to the United States recommended a temporary prefab design created by the Federal Public Housing Authority. 8,150 arrived in Britain in 1945.

It was initially planned for 30,000 UK100s to be imported from the United States. However, the end of the Lend-Lease Act reduced the number to 8,150.

### **Permanent prefabs.**

While temporary prefabs could help solve the nation's housing crises in the short term, a supply of permanent houses was of utmost importance. Wartime and post-war shortages and austerity meant designers and builders were encouraged to develop innovative solutions.

In 1943 the Ministry of Works established an experimental demonstration site in Northolt, London, which enabled new designs to be costed and shown to the public. In the first decade after the Second World War, nearly 500,000 permanent homes were built using some form of prefabrication.

## The Orlit House

- Designed by: Czech émigré architect Ervin Katona for Orlit Ltd
- Construction: precast reinforced concrete



Orlit houses, Kingfield Estate, Poplar, Tower Hamlets, London.  
© Historic England Archive. P/H00060/001.

To help solve the housing crisis in the London borough of Poplar, the building firm Orlit Ltd proposed a two-storey prefabricated house.

The Ministry of Works built the homes on a site previously cleared by German prisoners of war.

## The Howard House

- Designed by: architect and town planner Frederick Gibberd for civil engineering and building contractors John Howard and Company
- Construction: light steel frame clad with asbestos panels
- Built: 1,500



A Howard House under construction in Windsor and Maidenhead. The prefabricated Howard House was designed by architect Frederick Gibberd and produced by John Howard & Co. Constructed using a light steel frame clad with asbestos panels.

© Historic England Archive. OP33568.



Named after its manufacturer, the Howard House was suitable for factory mass production and only took a few days to construct.

### Airey Houses

- Designed by: Leeds industrialist and builder Sir Edwin Airey
- Construction: precast concrete blocks
- Built: around 26,000



Airey Houses under construction in Chingford, Waltham Forest, London.  
© Historic England Archive. P.H00005/004.

One of the most prolific permanent prefab houses, the Airey House could be built in two weeks and required no skilled labour or specialist equipment.

They were made of small concrete blocks that were light enough to be handled by one or two workers. Conceived in the 1920s, they continued to be built up to 1955.

### The Swedish House

- Construction: timber
- Built: 5,000



A prefabricated Swedish House in an unidentified location in England. In the mid-1940s, 5,000 prefabricated two-storey houses were imported from Sweden.

© Historic England Archive. P/H00002/004.

In the early 20th century, Sweden had a skilled prefab industry. In the mid-1940s, 5,000 Swedish Houses were exported to England.

The two-storey houses had two or three bedrooms, a living room and a bathroom. The first was built at Abbots Langley, Hertfordshire, in January 1946.

#### The Wates House

- Designed by: Wates Ltd
- Construction: cast concrete
- Built: 60,000



Wates Houses, Tulse Hill, London.  
© Historic England Archive. AA98/06364.

During the Second World War, the construction company Wates Ltd developed several concrete structures, including parts of the Mulberry Harbours used during the Normandy invasion.

After the war, Wates used its modular cast concrete technology to construct over 60,000 houses and flats.

#### The Cornish Unit

- Designed by: Cornish firm, the English China Clay Company
- Construction: concrete panels
- Built: 40,000



Cornish Unit houses in Hoo St Werburgh, Medway.  
© Historic England Archive. DP172145.



The designs for the Cornish Unit were finalised by 1946. In the following 10 years, more than 40,000 were built by local authorities.

The concrete panels used in their construction incorporated waste material from china clay pits. Bungalows and two-storey and terraced house versions were made.

### **Protected prefabs.**

Despite the temporary nature of many of the country's wartime and early post-war prefabs, some have survived. This has sometimes resulted from a local protest against the threat of demolition and redevelopment.

Recognition of the architectural and historical significance of the prefab was eventually given in 1998 when 16 prefabs in Birmingham were listed at Grade II, and in 2009 when six were listed in South East London.

Wake Green Road, Moseley, Birmingham

Phoenix design prefab bungalows were built along Wake Green Road, Birmingham, in 1945. The Ministry of Works constructed them on land and foundations supplied by Birmingham City Council.



16 Phoenix prefabs in Wake Green Road were listed at Grade II in 1998.  
Historic England Archive. BB98/21734.

2,248 Phoenix prefabs were built as part of the Temporary Housing Programme.

In 2009 six surviving prefabs at the Excaliber Estate, in the London borough of Lewisham, were listed at Grade II.

Acknowledgements: Historic England Archive.

Teign Museum.