What’s New About The ‘Onesie’?
We look at its Wartime Origins.

Front Line Duty
Jon Mills looks at the badges of the Royal Ordnance Factories

Maurice Winnick
by Jeff “Two-Tone Boogie”

Diary Events
And much more...
Having to scrape the ice off the car windscreen and the appearance of sparkling Christmas decorations in the shop windows are just two signs that the year is drawing to a close. It always seems such a surprise when we see yet another year go by and the last Society magazine of 2013 comes dropping through your letterbox.

With the end of the year I must say a thank you to all those who have continued to support the Society. At the heart of the Society is its members and whilst its always a pleasure to work on the magazine, website and meetings, without all of your support these just wouldn’t happen. The end of the year marks the time to renew your subscription to the 1940s Society and I hope that you will continue with your support. Subscriptions can be renewed using the form on the back of this magazine or online at the Society Website.

This past year has not been without its sadness and I am sure I am not alone in losing a very dear family member this year. I am very sad to report that a long-standing and very supportive member, Cedric Verdon passed away this month and I am sure I speak for us all when I wish his family our sincere condolences.

As we move forward into 2014 I look forward to hearing from many more members whom I hope will put pen to paper and contribute details of their museum visits, events, reviews or reminiscence’s to your magazine.

I would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year.

Kind Regards

Ian

Please support the Society with a subscription on-line at www.1940.co.uk or fill out and return the form on the back of this magazine.
The 1940s Society
For Everyone Interested in Wartime Britain

Regular meetings at Otford Memorial Hall near Sevenoaks

Friday 29th November 2013 - 8pm

A Canterbury Tale
Film and presentation by Phil Clucas

The lives of three strangers – a Land Army girl, an American GI and a British Sergeant – become entwined during an August weekend in 1943. They first meet on the blacked-out railway station of Chillingbourne near Canterbury. Moments later the girl becomes the latest victim of the ‘glueman’ who flees into the shadows.

From this sinister opening episode to its climactic military parade, and service in the cathedral, Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger’s gentlest of wartime propaganda films, ‘A Canterbury Tale’, unfolds a fascinating story of three troubled people whose lives are changed by the blessings they each receive as unknowing pilgrims to Canterbury.

Phil Clucas presents a fascinating evening watching this classic wartime film so come along and enjoy our last meeting of 2013.

Friendly meetings learning more about life in the 1940’s. Meetings start at 8pm at Otford Memorial Hall, Nr. Sevenoaks. Admission £3. Further details from Ian on 01732 452505 or visit the Web Site at: www.1940.co.uk
Dr John Ray
Authoritative Books

The Battle of Britain, New Perspectives

The Night Blitz, 1940 - 1941

Now available from Amazon, Apple, Kobo, Watermans, NOOK, etc

Spitfires over Burma
by Albert Bennett

Available from the Rainbow Trust website at: www.rainbowtrust.org.uk or call 01372 363438

All proceed from the sale of this book go to the Rainbow Trust who support children with life threatening or terminal illnesses.

Advertise here for as little as £20
My favourite film:
A Canterbury Tale

With the film showing at our next meeting Xan Brooks (writer for the Guardian) gives his views.

I first watched A Canterbury Tale with my father, nearly 20 years ago. He warned me that while he liked it, most people did not. It was too flawed, too rum, it didn’t hang together. So we sat in the lounge and saw the hawk turn into the fighter plane and the trainload of pilgrims pull into Kent and the first, scurrying escape of the “glue-man”, who pours adhesive into the hair of the girls who date the soldiers – and about half an hour in, my dad hit the pause button and asked if I maybe wanted to watch something else instead. “No, it’s OK, I like it,” I muttered, because it’s always easier to say that we like things as opposed to what I really wanted to say, which was that I loved it, that I was choked by it and that, in that moment, I had no desire to watch anything else, ever again. And that would he please, for the love of God, hit the play button right now – now! – and then leave the remote control alone for the rest of the picture.

I revisited A Canterbury Tale again a few months back and was relieved to find it just as magical as ever. This ensures that it has briefly shuffled to the top of a stack of my other “favourite films” (there are about 20 or 30 of them; it’s not the most exclusive club), though I still hesitate to shove it to the fore, because it’s a thing of such fragile, broken glory, like some tubercular saint, that I hate the thought of people laughing at it. Even its director, Michael Powell, wasn’t especially fond of A Canterbury Tale. He felt that Emeric Pressburger’s script was at fault and that this dragged the film off course, whereas I’d argue that the cracks are what give it that crucial layer of strangeness.
and that the rambling detours lead to the richest, wildest rabbit-holes of all.

It was shot in 1943, in Powell’s home county, during the dog days of the second world war and charts the fortunes of three modern-day pilgrims (land girl, British soldier, US sergeant) en-route to Canterbury but waylaid for a few days in the neighbouring village of Chillingbourne. None of them want to be there; they would rather be at home, except they are so tired, lonely and saddle-sore that they scarcely know where home is anymore. The film throws them together and has them solve a local mystery. Then it cuts the ties and turns them loose, batting the pilgrims onward to Canterbury where they wander the bombsites and blank spaces of the town centre; their worlds a mess, their futures uncertain. Eventually, against all the odds, they each receive a blessing.

A Canterbury Tale may be the most loving and tender film about England ever made. It's a picture that's steeped in nature, in thrall to myth and history; a re-affirmation of the English character, customs and countryside from a time when many viewers may have wondered whether this underpinning had been kicked clean away. But the

**Film Details**

Title: A Canterbury Tale  
Production year: 1944  
Country: UK  
Cert (UK): 15  
Runtime: 124 mins  
Directors: Emeric Pressburger, Michael Powell  
Cast: Charles Hawtrey, Denis Price, Dennis Price, Eric Portman, John Sweet, Sheila Sim
film’s genius lies in the way it connects these big, sweeping themes to the intimate, the eccentric and the everyday. It’s the human details that give it life, and the film is always beautifully played – particularly by Eric Portman as the rigid local magistrate and Dennis Price as a hard-bitten soldier who refuses to name the thing he loves.

On beginning this blog, I was going to write that the story of A Canterbury Tale is a bit like the legend of the Arthurian knights asleep on the hillside, waiting to be called forth at the hour of greatest need. But that’s not quite right, because the film implicitly suggests that there is no hillside, no sleeping knights, and no magical horn to call them forth. The only world is the one we’re in, bashed about and bent out of shape, and the only heroes the people around us: frail and fearful, sometimes misguided, and coping as best they can. But if we can learn to trust them, and invite them to trust us back, then we may just be OK. More than that, we might even be blessed; rattling through the ruins to uncover miracles in derelict caravans and hear the voice of angels in the train whistle’s yelp.

Many thanks to Xan Brooks and the Guardian Newspaper for allowing us to reproduce this article.
The COCO club

Enjoy the style and glamour of the 1930s

At the Stag Theatre Plaza Suite, Sevenoaks - 8th February 2014 - 7.30pm

This vintage nightclub features period music from Empire Radio and live performances by renowned musicians 'The New Arcadians'.

This is an opportunity to wear your best classic clothing and enjoy an evening of fabulous music, social dancing and a unique atmosphere.

Order Now from the Box Office on 01732 450175
or online at www.stagsevencocks.co.uk (Tickets £12.50)
FRONT LINE DUTY
Jon Mills takes a look at the badges of the Royal Ordnance Factories

Until 1936, when the government realised that new factories would be needed for the large scale production of munitions for a future conflict, the Royal Ordnance Factories (ROFs) at Woolwich, Enfield and Waltham produced the government’s entire output of munitions. As a result new factories were established in areas not vulnerable to air attack where land and labour was plentiful, many of them the depressed areas of the 1930s.
ROFs were of three types: explosives, engineering and filling factories, the last known as Royal Filling Factories. Between them they manufactured all types of weapons and ammunition, except motor vehicles and tanks which remained the preserve of the motor manufacturing industry. When munitions production reached its peak in 1942 forty ROFs were in production employing 300,000 workers seventy per cent of them women.

In August 1942 an article in the magazine War Illustrated announced the King’s approval of a new badge “to be worn by men and women engaged in the Royal Ordnance Filling Factories”, to acknowledge the
debt the country owed to those undertaking this dangerous work. The article suggests the badge was to be metal which seems unlikely at a time when the issue of individual metal badges for the ROFs was stopped on grounds of metal economy and no metal versions of the Front Line Duty badge are known to exist. The cloth version of the badge, presumably intended for overalls was also worn on office clothing as the photograph of ROF Kirkby’s Wages Department shows. It is not known where the plastic version, sealed by the Ministry of Supply as “Badges, ROF, Front Line Duty” on 2nd November 1941, was intended to be worn. Although it has been suggested that the cloth version was worn by ROF Home Guards no evidence of this has yet come to light. One further ROF cloth badge I am aware of is that of the ARP service at ROF 13 at Radway Green in Cheshire and I would be interested to hear of others.

Jon Mills is the author of many books on Britain’s Home Front. His book “Doing their Bit - Home Front Lapel Badges 1939 - 1945” is recognised as the leading authority on the subject.
Photo Album
Original Period Photographs with a Story
Women Man The Machines

A women at work in the machine shop of a Spitfire factory somewhere in England.

This press photograph dated 1941 was published to illustrate how women had replaced men in many jobs to aid the war effort.

See the article by Jon Mills on page 9 for details of the women working in Royal Ordnance Factories.
Battle of Britain Countryside
in a classic WWII Trainer

Helmet, goggles and scarf at the ready, strap into a Tiger Moth and take to the skies over Kent for a birds-eye view, as seen by Battle of Britain Pilots. Prices from £160.00.

For more details, contact:
The Tiger Club
Headcorn Aerodrome, Ashford, Kent. Tel: 01622-891017
www.tigerclub.co.uk
There seems no barriers to the popularity of this ‘new’ garment as it transcends both class and age. Grandmothers wanting something warm and comfortable to wear around the house, young mums rushing to take the kids to school, and children themselves who find them a practical and fashionable alternative to ‘conventional’ clothing.

And it seems that there is a Onesie to suit every pocket with prices starting from under £10 and going up into the hundreds. Marks and Spencer have just received considerable press coverage by announcing a Cashmere Onesie in their Autumn collection available for £199.

There are certainly those that dislike this new fashion trend, and suggest that they are just adult sized baby grows, have no redeeming features and should be the sole preserve of the new-born. However, when thinking of its use as a baby grow we can see just why it is so practical and why the Onesie is not a new phenomenon but has its origins in the Second World War as the Siren Suit.

The Cashmere Onesie from Marks and Spencer.
The Siren Suit or as it was more widely known the Shelter Suit became a popular garment during the Second World War. To understand its popularity you must really consider the difficulty that many faced during a time of increasing air raids and consequently interrupted nights. Being woken in the middle of the night by the sound of the air raid siren would just be the first step in the rush to get under cover. Getting dressed, grabbing a bag of essentials that you had (hopefully) prepared the previous evening and ensuring everyone was accounted for before rushing to the Anderson Shelter at the end of the garden was a common ritual for many.

Anderson Shelters were notoriously cold and damp. If you were going to be there for some hours you had better ensure that you were wrapped up warm. The Shelter Suit

Right: A Shelter Suit owned by Sir Winston Churchill
offered many advantages to conventional clothing. It was designed to be slipped over your nightwear, could be put on very quickly (often in the dark) and was nice and warm.

Winston Churchill was a keen advocate of the Shelter Suit and was often photographed with visiting dignitaries in one of several he had made. The brightest of which was a red velvet suit that can still be seen exhibited at the IWM Churchill War Rooms in London. With the Prime Minister himself being seen publicly and in the newspapers wearing this very practical garment then there was no-one who could feel out of place wearing one. In fact it became rather patriotic to be seen in your Shelter Suite especially if you were of a higher social standing – it showed that you too were doing your bit.

If you are concerned by the £199 price tag of the M & S Onesie then you may be interested to know that its not the most expensive Onesie. In 2002 a grey wool Siren Suit worn by Sir Winston Churchill was sold at auction in London by Sotheby’s for £29,875.
Maurice Winnick
by Jeff ‘Two-Tone Boogie’

A look at another of Britain’s often forgotten musicians who made a major contribution to the Big Band music scene of the 1930s and 40’s

There is one British band leader who seems to have been eroded from public memory and even the memory of some interested in British Jazz and Swing. Musician, band leader, band contractor for the BBC, TV and Radio producer Maurice Winnick. Winnick appeared in theatre, on stage, in concert, in movies and on radio and television. A gentleman who’s musical career spanned from the mid 1900’s through to the late 1950’s.

Born on March 28th 1902 in Manchester, England, Maurice Winnik became a child prodigy while studying violin at The Manchester Collage of Music. During the latter years at collage Maurice played in a cinema pit orchestra for silent movies and during his teens, as
well as studying saxophone, Maurice formed his first band which featured as part of the entertainment on a transatlantic liner.

In 1928 Maurice (now back on terra-firma) formed a small dance band which played local clubs and halls in and around Manchester and with such artists as soprano Frank Colman at Manchester’s Plaza. Maurice soon moved to Nottingham to take over the position of director of the Nottingham Palais band. It was from the early 1930’s that Maurice started to work in London. By this time he had gained a substantial following having worked at some of the most prestigious venues such as Hammersmith Palais de Dance, The Casino Club, The San Marco Restaurant and Ciro’s Club to name the most popular. Maurice had a big hit with a recording titled ‘A Little Bit Independent’ with male vocalist Sam Costa, from his time at The San Marco Restaurant. Maurice and his band produced several recordings of dance band music with labels such as Regal, Panachord, and Edison Bell.
Maurice modelled his band’s style upon that of Guy Lombardo. He used Lombardo’s charts with the full co-operation of both Guy and his arranger brother, Carmen Lombardo. Maurice’s theme tune at this time was ‘The Sweetest Music This Side Of Heaven’, a number from the Lombardo book the title of which summed up his place in the world of British dance band music. Maurice, at this time of his career was also making live radio broadcasts from The San Marco Restaurant. In 1938 when Maurice and his Band shared the stage with George Reinhardt, guitarist brother of Django at the Yacht Club Deauville in France as well as working at other venues on the continent.

The spring of 1939 was an important time for Maurice as this was when he started working at Park Lane’s Dorchester Hotel where he took over from Harry Roy. Needing to cut band members to 11 Maurice still managed to employ some of the top players for these engagements, namely Ted Heath, Don Barrigo (Saxophone), Bill Shakespeare (Trumpet) and many others along with some top vocalists including Dorothy Carless and Al Bowley. During this time
Maurice continued to record for several record labels including Edison Bell, Regal and Panachord.

Maurice already had a reputation for employing the best and this carried on into his radio work as well but not just players, Maurice made sure he had the best he could get in arrangers and technicians. Maurice and his band also appeared in some films in the 1930s, including Gay Love (1934), which featured popular British entertainer Florence Desmond and the American vaudevillian, Sophie Tucker. Maurice toured Europe and the Middle East with ENSA, playing for the troops during World War II as well as maintaining his popularity. Due to Maurice successfully using parts of Guy Lombardo’s along with his own style Maurice and his Band became more popular than many of their contemporaries on the British Dance Band scene. Keeping the band going throughout the war, Maurice disbanded it when war was over.

Maurice stayed in the entertainment business working for the BBC as a band contractor and producer in both radio and television. Maurice Winnick died on 26th May 1962 aged 60.
**Events**

Not a complete listing of everything that’s going on but a few events that may be of interest to members.

More are listed on the website at www.1940.co.uk

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**23rd November 2013**

Otford 1940s Swing Dance 7-30 till Midnight.
Otford Village Memorial Hall, Otford, Kent TN14 5PQ
Dress to Impress, 1940/1950s civilian or allied uniform
Free tea, coffee & doughnuts,
Please bring your own drinks
Large dance floor and stalls
Tickets £7 on the door
Details: 07931 674 158 or www.preservers of sound.com

**24th November 2013**

**Music from the 20’s, 30’s & 40’s**

Dunton Green Village Hall - 2.30pm to 4.30pm
Featuring the Jean Bentley old Thyme Dance Orchestra performing favourites from the 20s, 30s and 40s. FREE entry, collection, raffle and refreshments in aid of much needed funds for the village hall. Details from www.dgvillagehall.co.uk or call 01732 453468.

**29th November 2013**

The 1940's Society - Sevenoaks
A closer look at ‘A Canterbury Tale’
Phil Clucas presents a fascinating insight into this classic 1944 British film made by the legendary team of Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger during which we will enjoy watching it. Refreshments and possibly even popcorn and icecreams may even be available for that true cinema experience!
8pm at Otford Memorial Hall near Sevenoaks, Kent.
Further details from Ian on 01732 452505 Admission £3

**30th November / 1st December 2013**

Forward to Victory’ re-enactors bring to life the historic buildings in this not-to-be-missed wartime Christmas themed event which is bigger and better than before.
Further details www.kentlife.org.uk/discover-kent-life

**11th January 2014**

Spitfire Bounce 7-30 till Midnight
Swing, Jive & Boogie all night to music from the 1940s & early 1950s.
Slade Green Community Center, Bridge Road, Erith (Dartford) DA8 2HS
Dress to Impress, 40s or 50s Civilian or Allied uniform
Free tea, coffee & doughnuts,
Please bring your own drinks
tickets £7 on the door
Details: 07931 674 158 or www.preservers of sound.com

**31st January 2014**

The 1940’s Society - Sevenoaks
Stella Reading and the WVS
Author Carol Harris will be giving an illustrated presentation on the formation of the WVS and the essential role it played in wartime Britain.
8pm at Otford Memorial Hall near Sevenoaks, Kent.
Further details from Ian on 01732 452505 Admission £3
8th February 2014
The Coco Club
Enjoy the style and glamour of the 1930s at the Stag Theatre Plaza Suite, Sevenoaks - 7.30 pm
This vintage nightclub features period music from Empire Radio and live performances by renowned musicians ‘The New Arcadians’. This is an opportunity to wear your best classic clothing and enjoy an evening of fabulous music, social dancing and a unique atmosphere.

Tickets £12.50
Order Now from the Box Office on 01732 450175 or online at www.stagsevenoaks.co.uk

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Otford 1940s Swing Dance 7-30 till Midnight.
Otford Village Memorial Hall, Otford, Kent TN14 5PQ
Dress to Impress, 1940/1950s civilian or allied uniform
Free tea, coffee & doughnuts, Please bring your own drinks
Large dance floor and clothing stalls
Tickets £7 on the door
Details: 07931 674 158 or www.preservers of sound.com

28th March 2014
The 1940’s Society - Sevenoaks
The Night Blitz
Author and historian Dr John Ray will be giving a talk on the Night Blitz during the Second World War.

8pm at Otford Memorial Hall near Sevenoaks, Kent.
Further details from Ian on 01732 452505 Admission £3

12th April 2014
Otford 1940s Swing Dance 7-30 till Midnight.
Otford Village Memorial Hall, Otford, Kent TN14 5PQ
Dress to Impress, 1940/1950s civilian or allied uniform
Free tea, coffee & doughnuts, Please bring your own drinks
Large dance floor and clothing stalls
Tickets £7 on the door
Details: 07931 674 158 or www.preservers of sound.com

10th May 2014
Spitfire Bounce 7-30 till Midnight
Swing, Jive & Boogie all night to music from the 1940s & early 1950s.
Slade Green Community Center, Bridge Road, Erith (Dartford) DA8 2HS
Dress to Impress, 40s or 50s Civilian or Allied uniform
Free tea, coffee & doughnuts, Please bring your own drinks
Tickets £7 on the door
Details: 07931 674 158 or www.preservers of sound.com

23rd May 2014
The 1940’s Society - Sevenoaks
Dunkirk
74 years ago this month the ‘miracle of Dunkirk’ took place. Sean Longdon author of a bestselling book about the evacuation of Dunkirk will be giving a presentation about this incredible event.

8pm at Otford Memorial Hall near Sevenoaks, Kent.
Further details from Ian on 01732 452505 Admission £3
I hope you have found this issue both interesting and informative and would like to receive it on a regular basis.

Please use this form (or a copy) or join online at www.1940.co.uk if you would like to receive the magazine for of 2014.

If renewing your membership please ensure that your details are up to date.

Membership is just £15 per year (£30 non UK).

Please write clearly in capitals

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Please let me know what items or improvements you would like to see in the magazine ____________________________________________________________

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