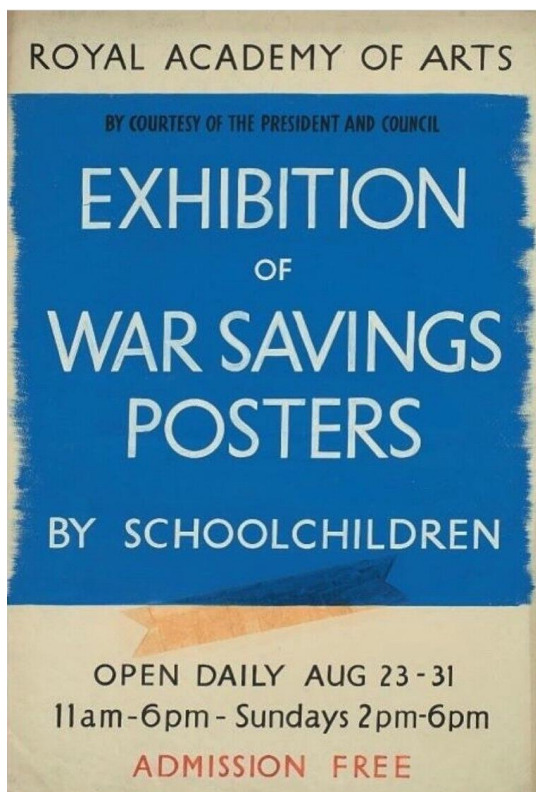


Second World War Hand Drawn Posters – David Gray

During WWII there were numerous official and semi-official competitions in which ordinary people were asked to design posters which helped to send out various important, wartime messages, such as not travelling unless absolutely necessary, planting your own vegetables, buying savings certificates etc.

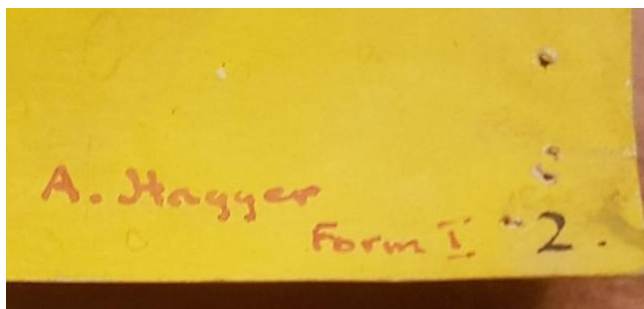


School children were regularly taking part in poster competitions, often organised at a local level by the local National Savings Committees. These competitions, to design a new poster to encourage National Savings clearly had the effect of keeping the message high in the consciousness of children and created some striking alternatives to the official posters that everyone recognised. The winner of the competition would have their poster printed and displayed around the local area. Posters designed for competitions held on a national level could see their poster reach a far larger audience.

Unlike many of London's major museums the Royal Academy remained open throughout the Second World War. The galleries were host to an astonishing variety of displays, mounted under the most challenging of circumstances. In August 1941 it welcomed the designs of hundreds of schoolchildren as part of a competition. This was the first time the Royal Academy had staged an exhibition comprising solely of children's art. The poster *left*, advertises the exhibition. I am unaware of what posters finally won.



As quite often happens when collecting memorabilia, occasionally something comes out of the blue when least expected and this happened to me when I came across a number of children's posters for sale. These had all been painted by one child for entry into a poster competition. There were five posters in total. The poster *left*, measures 11 inches x 15 inches (28cm x 38cm). It is painted in watercolours or 'poster paint,' and has 3D letters in green and black on a vivid yellow background. At the bottom it is signed 'A. Hagger, Form I.' (*below*).





I was told by the person from whom I obtained them that they had been retrieved from an old trunk in an attic during a house clearance. The only address they could supply was that it was somewhere in Ilford. Unfortunately, there seems little chance of me finding out any more about A. Hagger. We don't even know if it was a boy or a girl. We also have no idea which savings competition the posters were designed for. Some or all could have been winning entries, or equally they could have been rejected. It is tempting to believe some of these posters might have hung on the walls of the Royal Academy in 1941, at least two have that date on them, or they may simply have been done for a school competition. One thing is certain, their designs are exceptional.

The poster *left*, measures 12 inches by 16 inches (31cm x 41cm). The message is in the same style as the previous poster in that it is painted to look like 3D. Again, the paint is

watercolour but this time, unlike the previous poster which has been painted on a piece of thick art paper; this one is painted onto some thinner, lined graph paper.

The message is stark and very much to the point. It was no exaggeration to say that defeat to the Nazis would have reduced everyone in Britain to that of slaves. In the picture *below*, the poster states at the bottom left, 'Form 1' bottom middle '1941' bottom right 'A. Hagger.'



The following poster measures 11 inches x 15 inches (28cm x 38cm). Beautifully painted in watercolour with the flags of the Allies in each corner, the poster is very striking. The message is hammered home in a very clear and mature way.

The American and British flags are obvious and are regularly seen in all types of posters. The two flags at the bottom of the poster, Russia and China, did not appear as often, particularly at the beginning of the war. The Russian flag puts in more of an appearance after the German invasion of that country in 1941. Before then Russia had actually invaded Poland from the east, at the same time that Germany invaded from the west. This change of allegiance by Britain and the public seems to have happened with no comment at all. Suddenly, Britain found that her enemy was now Russia's

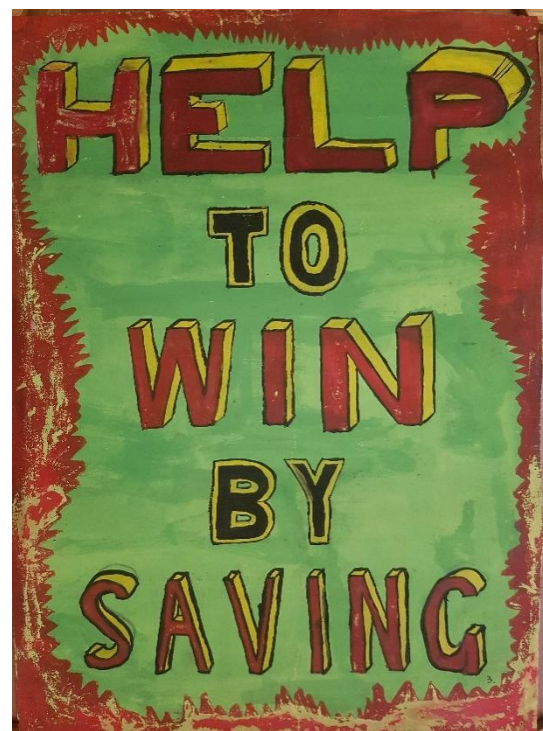
enemy too and began to make every effort to support Russia in any way she could. China had been fighting the Japanese before WWII started, but it was not Britain's war at that time. From 1941 both countries were fighting the Japanese and again, British support was being offered.



I think the poster on the *right*, is quite unusual in its colour scheme. It measures 12 inches by 16 inches (31cm x 41cm), and has been painted in brown and green, with the text highlighted in yellow. A. Hagger has used the same jagged, 'electricity' effect as in the blue poster earlier to highlight the lettering and it is no less impressive for being painted in more muted colours.

This unusual technique of using 3D effect letters and a jagged, zig-zag design, bears little resemblance to regular, official designs and really does grab the viewer's attention. Also, apart from the four flags earlier, these posters contain no pictures; all is focused on the message.

The final poster, *following page*, is the largest, measuring 15 inches by 22 inches (38cm x 52cm). This poster addresses the problem of many people travelling during the Easter break. However, for the first time it cleverly uses two simple graphics to make



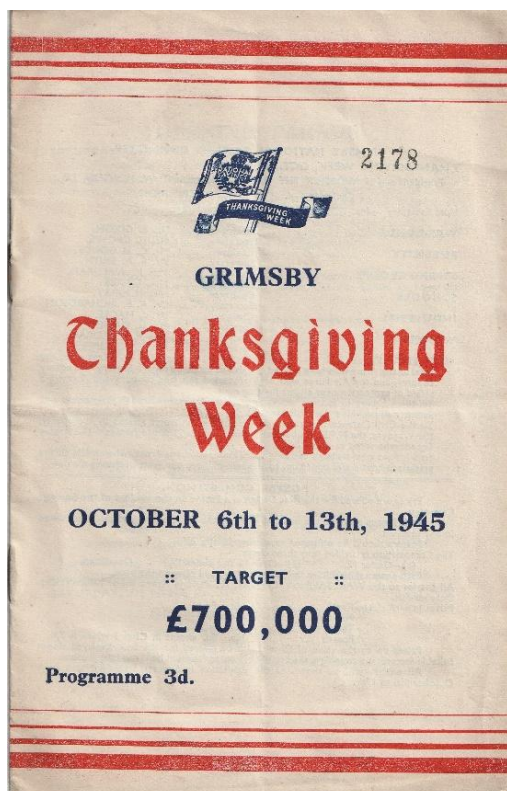


its point. A picture of a suitcase with lots of travel stickers on it denotes holiday travel 'Cut Out This', and the box below it marked 'Rifles' gives meaning to the line 'To Make Room For This.' Again, the same jagged design but interestingly no 3D letters this time. The poster cleverly contains two messages. One, stay off the roads and rail network to allow the unimpeded flow of arms and war materials. Two, don't spend your money on holidays when it could be put to better use buying weapons (that's the Savings message). A. Hagger also cleverly reminds us that this is a request from the Government. These posters are fascinating, giving us a window into the mind of a school child cleverly using their imagination to deliver a very grown up and important message.

So far we have looked at a poster competition organised, if not as an official government competition, at least we could call it semi-official, being organised by the Royal Academy of Arts, which was, and still is, a national institution.

Many competitions were organised by Local National Savings Committees across the country. These were not strictly government organisations although the National Savings Movement was linked intrinsically to the government in that it raised funds for it, the Local Committees and Groups were

volunteers and did not take any payment from central government or anywhere else. They simply carried out their work for the benefit of the country. When savings weeks came along, such as 'Warship' Week or 'Wings for Victory' Week, local committees arranged events to promote savings for that particular cause.



Usually a programme of events was published which detailed everything that was going on during the 'Week' and they often arranged competitions which included designing a poster. The winning poster would be published by the Savings Committee and used in their advertising. The winner also quite often received a number of savings certificates, with lesser awards going to runners up.

For example, Grimsby's 'Thanksgiving' Week was October 6th to 13th 1945, and they produced a nice, two-colour, eight-page Programme *left*. Thanksgiving week was the final savings 'Week' of the war and was intended to promote savings to help pay for the rebuilding of Britain after the war. The Programme carries a lucky number (2178), on the front for the end

of campaign raffle. We can see *below* that the first page inside carries a list of those who formed the Grimsby National Savings Committee and there is also notification of a **Poster Competition** which was divided up into three classes, under 12, over 12 and under 16, and Open. The page after that advertises the Opening Parade which began at 3pm on Saturday 6th. Tens of thousands of Savings Weeks took place across the country during the war and very often a poster competition was included.

GRIMSBY NATIONAL SAVINGS COMMITTEE
THANKSGIVING WEEK, OCT. 6th to 13th.
President:—HIS WORSHIP THE MAYOR—Alderman C. W. HEWSON, J.P.
Chairman:—Lt.-Col. R. W. MACPHERSON.
Hon. Secretary —Mr. G. BRADLEY. Hon. Treasurer:—

WAR-BONDS	Chairman ...	Mr. E. DIXON.
PUBLICITY	Secretary ...	Mr. H. CROWE.
STREET GROUPS	Chairman ...	Mr. C. H. GOUDE.
SCHOOLS	Secretary ...	Mr. E. A. SMITH.
INDUSTRIAL	Chairman ...	Miss K. WALDRAM.
WOMEN'S	Secretary ...	Mrs. I. PARK.
	Chairman ...	Miss H. GRAY.
	Secretary ...	Dr. R. E. RICHARDSON.
	Chairman ...	Mr. J. MAGEE.
	Secretary ...	Mr. G. DAVIES.
	Chairman ...	Miss K. WALDRAM.
	Secretary ...	Mrs. D. COOPER.

OUR THANKS are due to—To the fighters, to the Navy who have kept open the seas, to the Army who have carried the tide of battle by superb bravery into enemy country, and the Air Force who have protected this land of ours and formed a shield of protection over all our fighting men.
To the workers in factory, workshop, and home, who through long hours and patient toil provided the tools for the fighting men.
To the Civil Defence that risked danger during the worst attacks by the enemy, the Wardens, the N.F.S., Ambulance Drivers and the First Aid Parties. The Rescue Squads who saved so many lives.
To all those who through the long years kept the Home Front, who amidst all the privations kept a stiff upper lip, to all these millions our grateful thanks are due.

POSTER COMPETITION.
Prizes are offered for the Best Design of a Poster on the subject of the Savings Campaign.
Each Poster must be the unaided work of the Competitor, and can be executed in any medium.
Posters should be on paper measuring 15" by 20".
The Competition is divided into three classes:—
(1)—Under 12. (2)—Over 12 and under 16. (3)—Open.
Each poster should have the name, address and class on the back.
All entries to the WAR SAVINGS CENTRE, 79, Victoria Street, on or before Friday, October 5th.
Prizes in each class—First £1 10s. 0d.
Second 15s. 0d.
Third 12s. 6d.
Fourth 10s. 0d., except in Class 3 which is 7/6.
Prizes up to the value of £5 will also be offered for the best displayed slogan suitable for present campaign, the age of the competitor will be taken into account.
All entries will be shown at the Exhibition, in Augusta Street Barracks, from October 6th to 13th.

OPENING PARADE
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 6th, 1945.
3-0 p.m. ... Parade moves off from Riby Square.
Led by the Band of R.A.F. No. 1 GROUP MILITARY BAND, by kind permission of the Air Officer Commanding, Air Vice-Marshal R. S. BLUCKE, C.B.E., D.S.O., A.F.C.
Detachments from all branches of His Majesty's Forces, together with the Sea Cadets, Army Cadets and Air Training Corps.
Detachments from the British Red Cross, with Cadets, St. John Ambulance Brigade and Cadets, Boy Scouts and Girl Guides, W.V.S. Group War Savings Secretaries, N.F.S. and Police.
Marshal:—Capt. G. A. TATHAM.

Route:—Riby Square, Freeman Street, Pasture Street, Victoria Street, Old Market Place, Bethlehem Street, Osborne Street to Town Hall Square.

The Salute will be taken as the Parade passes Freeman Street Market, by Major K. YOUNGER, M.P.
who will be accompanied by His Worship the Mayor (Ald. C. W. HEWSON) and Officials of the Grimsby National War Savings Committee.

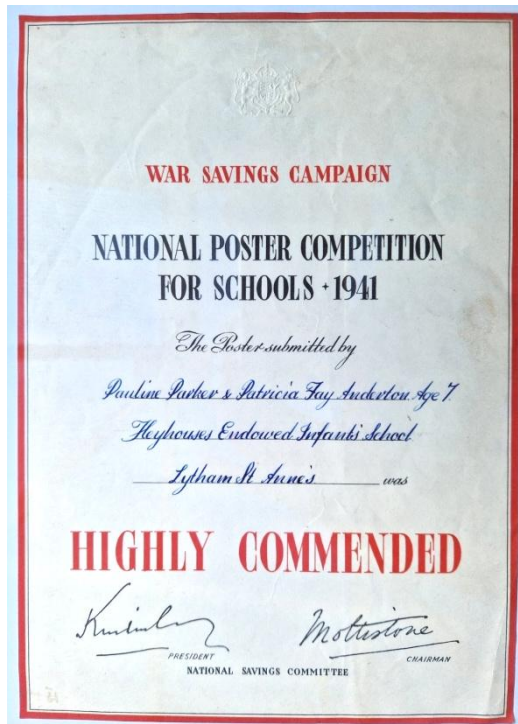
In the Town Hall Square, the Mayor will introduce Major K. YOUNGER, M.P., who will speak on Thanksgiving Week.
Loud Speakers will be installed to enable everybody to hear.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 6th, 1945.
7-15 p.m. **CENTRAL HALL.**
CONCERT by the Cleethorpes String Orchestra
Leader EVELYN ALEXANDER.
Conductor ROWLAND LEAFE.
With ALVAR LIDELL, Baritone.
Speaker Major K. YOUNGER, M.P.
Accompanied by His Worship the Mayor (Alderman C. W. HEWSON).
Advanced Bookings at H. POOLE, Ltd., Osborne Street:—4/-, 3/-, 2/-.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 6th, 1945.
OPENING NIGHT DANCE
At the TOWN HALL, from 7-30 to 12 p.m.
GUY'S STAR DANCE BAND, Director—Mr. E. Waterhouse.
Admission will be 4/6 for which a 2/6 Savings Stamp will be given.



As we have seen, poster completion winners during savings weeks usually won a cash prize. Schools however were different. The certificate on the left was awarded to a young boy called Derek Cox 'For a Poster', during the St. Albans and District Warship Week which took place between February 14th and 21st 1942. This was a 'Schools Competition' and as such Derek probably didn't receive a cash prize. There may have been one, but it could well have gone to the school savings group and be added to their total saved.



The certificate on the *left* was another 'official' competition. This was presented to the winners of the 'War Savings Campaign, National Poster Competition for Schools + 1941'. The certificate states: 'The Poster Submitted by Pauline Parker & Fay Anderton, Age 7, Heyhouses Endowed Infant's School, Lytham St. Anne's, was Highly Commended.' The certificate has an embossed impression of the Royal coat of arms at the top. Heyhouses Endowed C. of E. Primary (and Infants) School still exists (*below*).



I have no idea who created the poster *below*, it must have been for some sort of competition. The message is clear and was a common one throughout the war. Food was rationed and people were encouraged to grow their own vegetables as they really were 'All in this together'. The poster is on very thin drawing paper and measures 22 inches by 17 inches (56cm x 43cm).

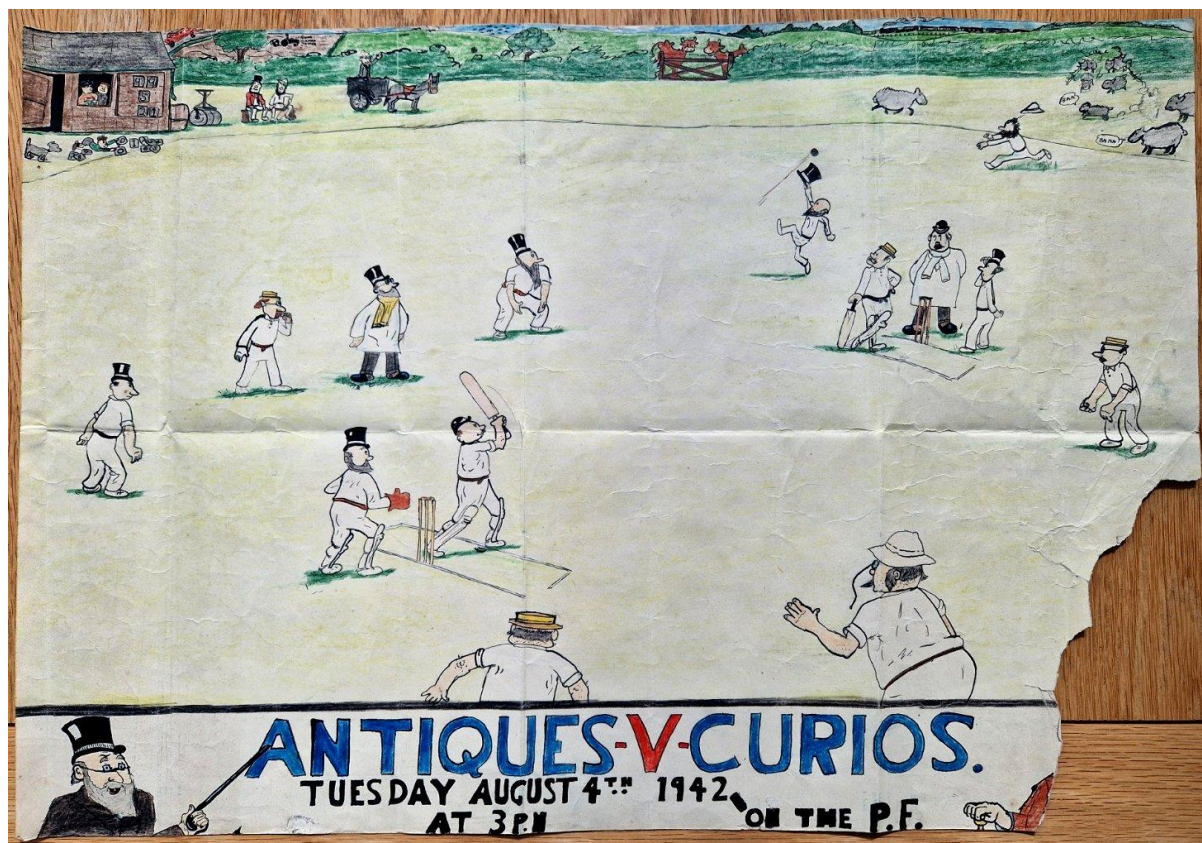


The poster below, although unfortunately damaged, is a variation from the normal public service posters. This one is to advertise a cricket match, but I had to include it as it mentions the wartime date clearly enough, and it shows a real sense of humour.

ANTIQUES-V-CURIOS

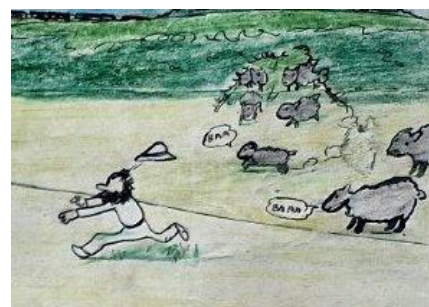
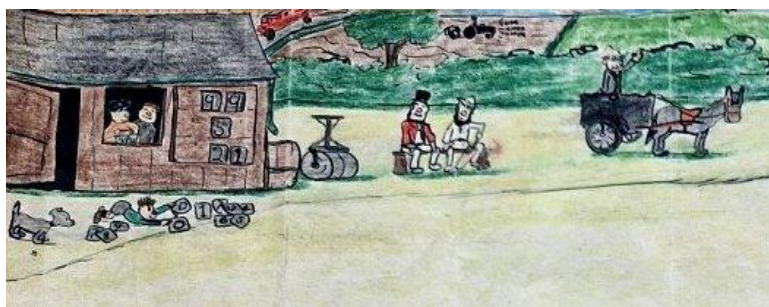
Tuesday August 4th 1942

At 3pm on the P.F.



I take it the **P.F.** mentioned must stand for Playing Field. The poster, which measures 22ins x 15ins (56cm x 38cm), has been painted on fairly thin drawing paper using watercolours and then the details have been outlined in black ink.

It also pays to look into the background. *Top left*, along with a pair of elderly types sitting on a bench watching the match and another 'old boy' watching from a horse and cart (the horse seems to be watching too), we can see the scorer has dropped all of his numbers, and *top right* the outfielder is being chased by a flock of sheep!



These two pictures are so similar they appear to be a preliminary design (*left*), which was then worked into the final version of the poster (*right*). The first design is on very thin paper, half the size of the finished version. The finished article has been drawn on the back of a genuine National Savings poster (bottom of page). This official poster is basically blank for any message a savings group wished to print on it (and there were many variations on this theme), with a picture of a Spitfire at the top. This leads me to suspect the hand drawn design was created for a National Savings Poster competition and the artist wanted to get the measurements just right.

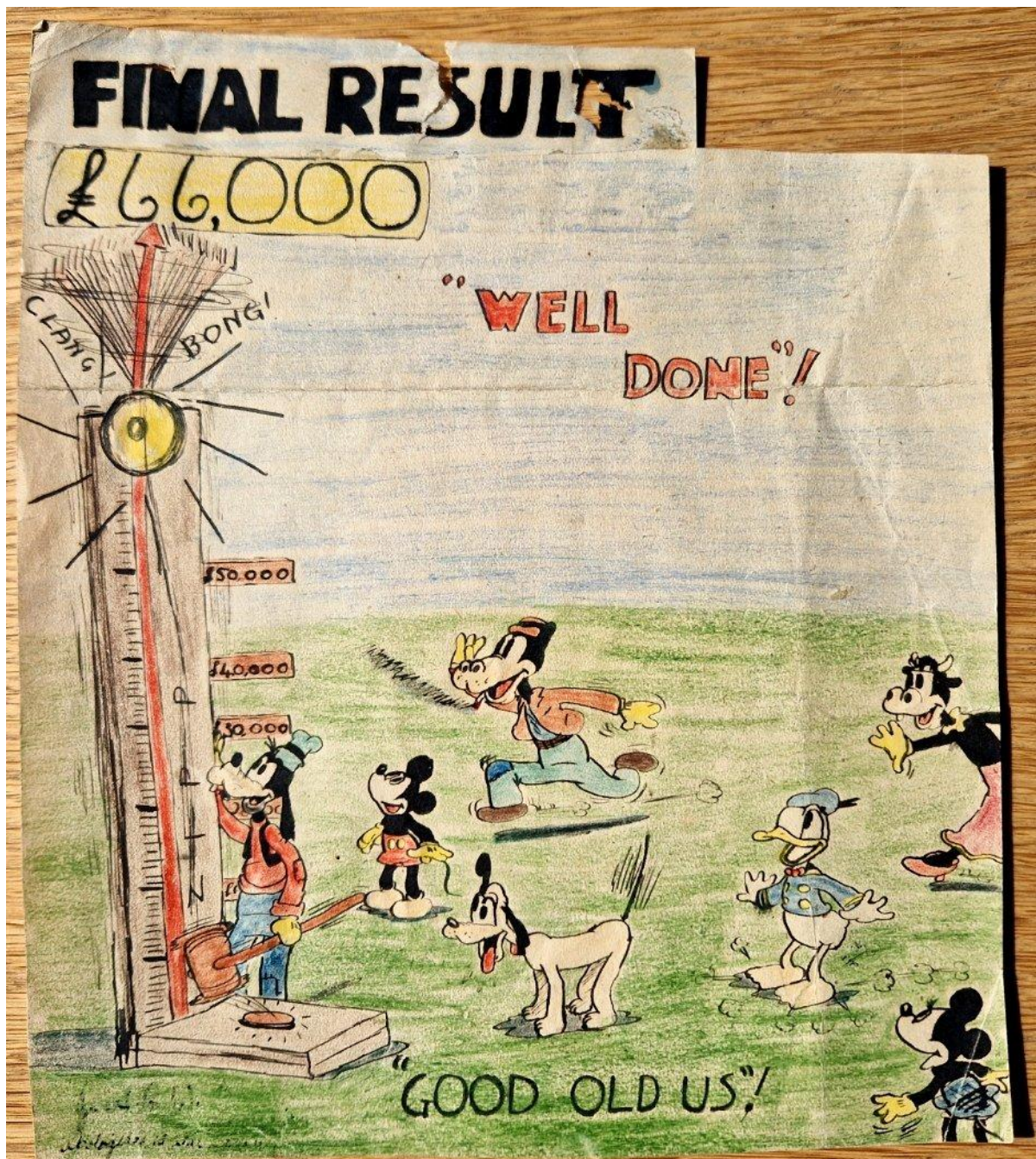


The message is: 'A Smashing Victory. Make This a Record Breaker Your Savings Will - (Soar?) to Great Heights.' Written on the bomb John Bull is hitting Hitler over the head with is 'British Air Power' and of course the bomb Hitler is dropping says 'Axis Air Power.' This large poster is 30ins x 20ins (76cm x 50cm). There were many variations of the poster the artist has drawn on. We can see on the *right* another example, this time with a Grumman Avenger at the bottom.



The picture *below* copies much from Disney. The piece of paper it is drawn on is 8ins x 8ins (20cm x 20cm), and looks a like the colouring is crayon with details highlighted in ink. The top section 'FINAL RESULT' has been done separately and glued on to the top of the main picture. With cries of "Well Done!" and "Good old Us!", this looks like the final result of a savings week and was probably not produced for a competition. The machine that Goofy has just hit with the hammer is graduated in tens of thousands and ends at the top with a total of £66,000.

This looks like the result for a small village campaign but there is no way to identify where it is from. The artwork is actually very competent, showing Goofy, Minnie and Mickey Mouse, Pluto and Donald Duck. Something has been written in the bottom left hand corner but it is so faint it is not possible to read it.



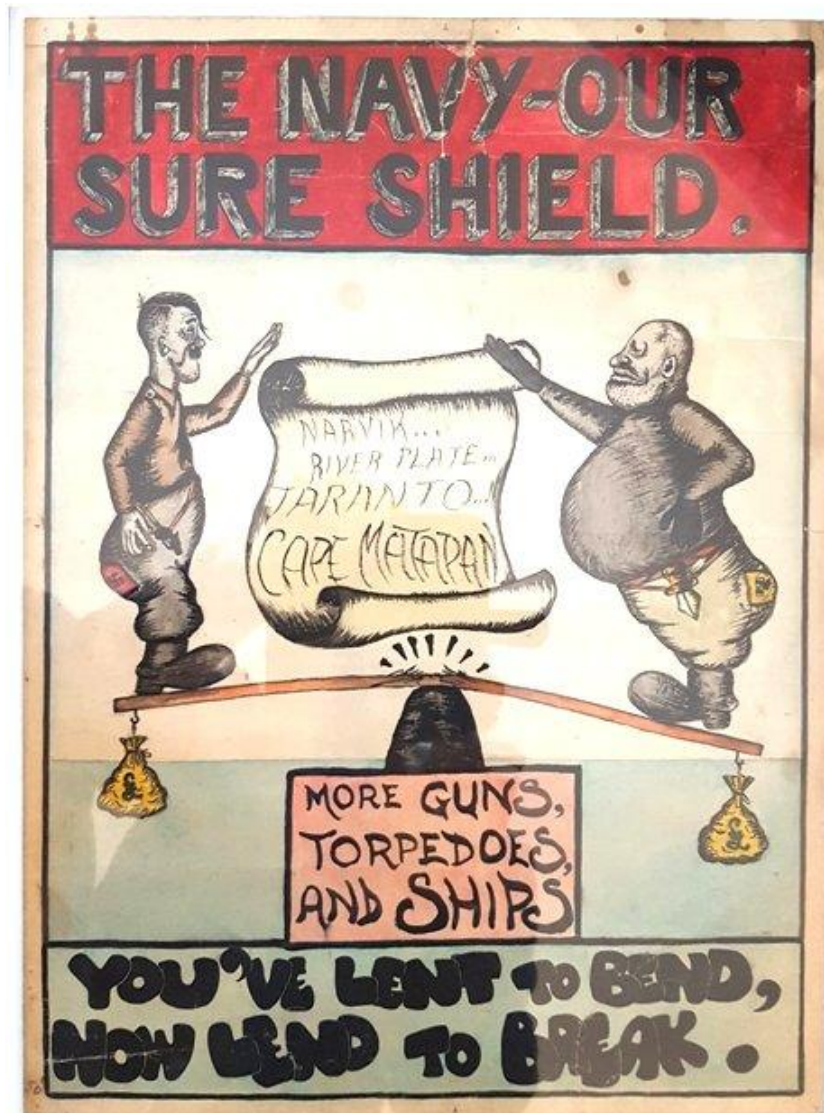
The picture below is another which could have been drawn by the artist who produced the 'FINAL RESULT' on the previous page. It is a Disney theme again; the board declaring it to be a 'War Savings Machine for £40,000!!!' is a bit of a giveaway. Donald is shouting "WHOOPEE!! I KNEW HE COULD DO IT!" as Goofy hits the bell at £40,000. However, the cow is holding two more boards with 50,000 and 60,000 on them so could this be an earlier drawing for the same campaign as the previous picture which did reach over £60,000? It looks to be the same type of paper with crayon and ink highlights. The picture measures 9ins x 7ins (23cm x 18cm)

Again, in the bottom left hand corner there is some writing which makes it more certain that these two pictures were drawn by the same person. The artist has signed the picture in ink; it looks like 'Jack. R. W.' and underneath this he has written 'Apologies to Walt Disney.'



On the following page we can see the final poster in this article. This was the winning entry for the Weymouth War Weapons Week Campaign in 1941. War Weapons Week was the first National Savings Campaign Week of the Second World War. Warship Week followed in 1942, Wings for Victory Week in 1943, Salute the Soldier Week in 1944 and Thanksgiving Week in 1945. I have seen it written that War Weapons Week was created in order to raise funds to replace the weapons that were lost by the British army in the evacuation from Dunkirk. I have to say in all of the research I have done, and I have written eight books on the subject of National Savings in WWII, I have never once found it mentioned from an official source that this was the reason for War Weapons Week. In fact, it appears that during this week there was a particular bias towards the navy. Many towns and

cities such as Weymouth focused on the Royal Navy and its battles. Here Weymouth mentions the great naval battles of the early war and is looking for 'More Guns, Torpedoes and Ships.'



All of these posters, apart from the Royal Academy poster on page one, are from my own collection. I have numerous other officially produced posters and hope to write up an article which focuses on them in the future.