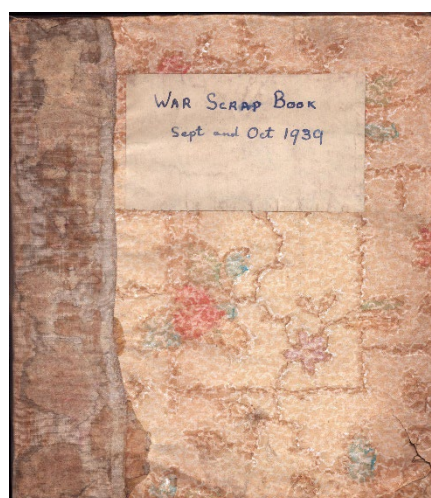
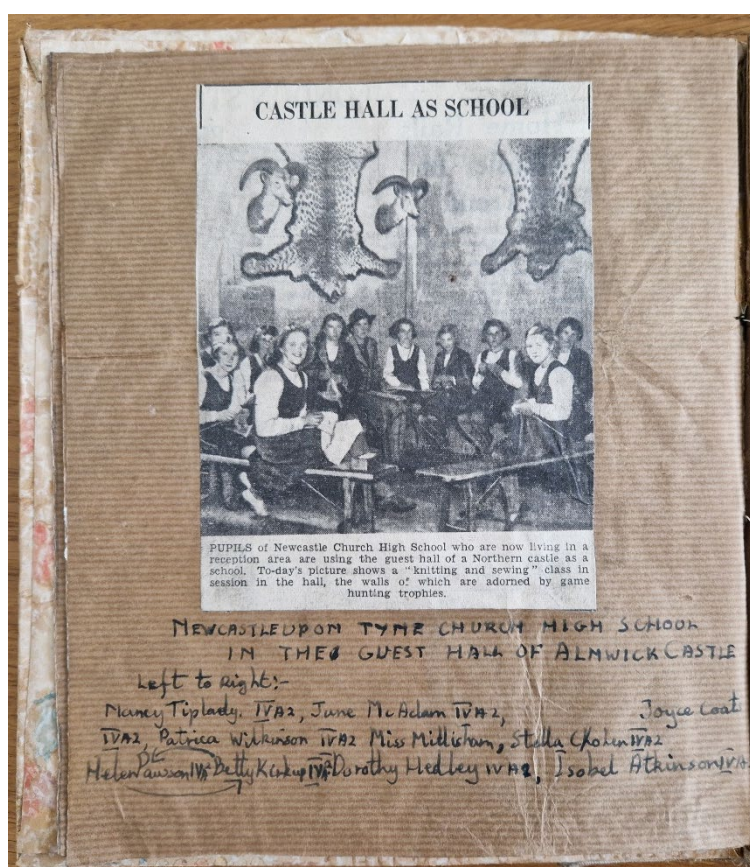


Animals in WWII by David Gray

As many will know by now, I do occasionally dip into my collection of WWII scrapbooks looking for inspiration for new stories to put on this page. Many of the scrapbooks I have were put together by children, and these tend to feature more stories relating to animals than those created by people who were older and who focussed more on the serious and political side of the conflict.

I will start with a handmade book that belonged to a young girl who unfortunately remains nameless, who attended the Newcastle Upon Tyne Church High School. The school and pupils were evacuated early on in the war to Alnwick Castle of all places. The girls may well have been instructed to make a scrapbook each and keep a record of their time at the castle.



Scrapbook *above*, for the period 'Sept and Oct 1939'.

Left, first page showing a cutting featuring a group of the girls in their temporary home at Alnwick Castle. The owner has written down the girls' names.

There are a number of cuttings in this book relating to Whipsnade Zoo. One, dated 'About Sept 6 – 9' is below entitled:

'Whipsnade Zoo Reopens Today – Bored Animals in Regent's Park

Although the zoo in Regent's Park still remains closed, that at Whipsnade will be open as usual from 10 o'clock today. This decision will be welcomed by the zoo-visiting public, many hundreds of whom have been disappointed during the past few days when they went to Regent's Park only to be turned away.

The inmates there have passed through the loneliest and strangest week they have experienced. All have been bored and disgusted. They have listened and watched for the arrival of the crowds that feed them, and when they were disappointed time after time, they grew more and more depressed. Many

of the animals are puzzled by the balloon barrage. Apes and monkeys gaze at the barrage as though trying to decide what it can be, but although at first, they were alarmed when a new balloon made its appearance, they have now lost this fear. Some of the large cats living in outdoor dens are equally intrigued by the barrage and at times they crouch as though ready to spring if one should descend.

All the elephants have now been evacuated to Whipsnade. As elephants are extremely highly-strung it was feared that they might take fright in an air-raid and the stable provided as a temporary home when the old elephant house was demolished would not be suitable for them under these conditions.'



Left, a picture showing a camel, a caption written above it reads: '**Petrol Saving at the Zoo.**' The official caption below the picture reads: 'ZOO ANIMALS are "doing their bit." Those suitable are being employed like the camel above, to carry fodder about the gardens, work formerly done with petrol-driven vehicles.'

As one problem is solved, so another rears its head as our next cutting reveals:

'Fish Shortage at the Zoo – Meat Ruse that Failed

Although the zoo authorities foresee no immediate difficulty in feeding those of their animals which are meat-eaters or vegetarians, the fish shortage has already proved a serious problem. Certain creatures, such as sealions, penguins and pelicans, live exclusively on fresh fish, and they have large appetites.

Formerly each sealion had a daily allowance of about 30lbs of herring or whiting, while the penguin and pelican had from 6lb to 8lb according to his size; but since the war there have been many days when only one box of fish could be obtained.

In consequence, rations have been very lean, and the penguins have been fed on heads and tails so that the sealions could have the "middle cuts." Attempts have been made to persuade these fish-eaters to try slices of meat soaked in cod-liver oil, and the pelicans are accepting this new diet. But the penguins are not deceived by the coating of cod-liver oil and they steadily refused to touch the disguised meat. The sealions swallow the meat, but when they realise what has happened, they promptly disgorge it.'

As is always the case at zoos, the monkeys were a real hit with the children. Some children who had been evacuated to Luton, were given a free trip to Whipsnade which was not too far away. The children who had made their first visit were delighted, "I enjoyed the chimpanzees most of all." Wrote one 14-year-old girl to the Zoo superintendent, "because they were so amusing and intelligent in their ways. I also enjoyed watching the bears," one child added "and the way they sat and looked at their visitors. Also, the monkeys gave some of us a laugh when they climbed up to take the nuts people gave them."

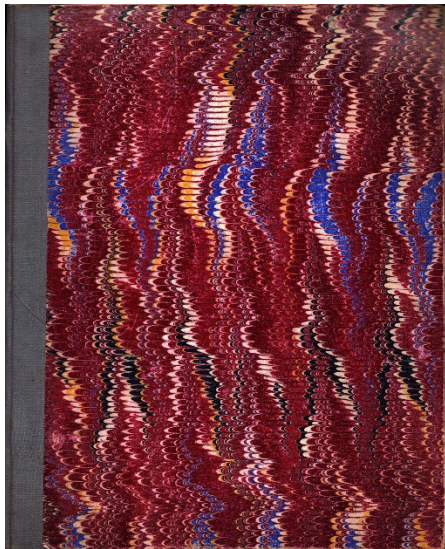
Later on, one monkey who was particularly enjoying himself got a mention in the newspapers under the title:

'Wartime Liberty at the Zoo – A Monkey Enjoys Himself

A zoo Tamarin monkey known as Paddy is enjoying the present war conditions. In recent years a number of South American monkeys have had suites in the tortoise house, and this member of the marmoset family has been living there for several months. Now the Tortoise House is closed to the public as it is being used as a kind of 'store room' for a variety of creatures requiring heated surroundings, and is packed with tanks containing tropical fish saved from the aquarium and wooden boxes occupied by pythons.

This arrangement suits Paddy. He is in a position to go out of doors to get tit-bits from the public, and at other times he has the run of the house. Being amiable and docile, he is a great pet with the keepers and when they go into the house to tend their various charges they liberate Paddy from his cage. He then runs around examining the tanks, visiting tortoises to get a ride on their backs, and jeering at other neighbours who are not at large. When told that playtime is over, he promptly runs back to his cage.

At the beginning of the war the penguins, sealions and other fish eaters had a lean time, as the zoo obtained only very small quantities of fish and neither the penguins or sealions would take meat soaked in cod-liver oil as a substitute. When supplies of the fish [eventually] became available again, they still had to be content with whiting and haddock, but now they are getting their favourite fish – herrings.'



Away from the zoo now, and in a different scrapbook *left*, a cat was in the news in 1942 having travelled many thousands of miles on its own. The title of the article was:

'Stowaway Joins the 8th Army – Cat with a Family

A Lend-Lease stowaway has joined the Eighth Army – and no questions are being asked. Only two facts are known about this strange affair. One is that the stowaway hid away in a supply ship which was being loaded for North Africa in a United States port. The other is that when the traveller turned up with four offspring at a depot of the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers in the desert and offered the services of all five – well, even the sergeant was won over.

And so, an American tabby-cat and her kittens, after a secret sea voyage of several thousand miles, are now on the official strength of the famous Eighth Army.

Originally, of course it was just Yankee Puss herself who hid herself away among some new machinery in a packing case. Some time during the trip her four kittens were born. How she kept herself and her family alive during the long voyage is told by 21-years old Sergeant James Powell, of Lingard Street, Barnsley, who went to the Middle East three years ago from an electrician's job in Sheffield.



In a letter to his A.T.S. sister, Joyce he writes: "I'm sending you a photo of a Yankee cat. It came along to our shop in a packing case, which must have taken many weeks to get here, along with four kittens, which must have been born on the way. All that time it lived on grease and paper off the machinery inside the case.

I've had the job of feeding them for the last month, and now they are distributed among the sergeant's mess – not forgetting one which went to a sister at the hospital.'

A short article in the same book told of the frightening experience involving an attack in the English countryside by a very rare animal:



'Rare Animal Attacked Boy – S. American Beaver

While making a bird-watching hideout on a lonely sewage farm at Slough, Bucks, Peter Gladston, 15, son of an Eton college master, was attacked by a strange-looking animal which darted out of some rushes and flew at him uttering shrieks of rage.

Kicking out in self-defence the boy killed his assailant and carried it home. There it was identified as a Coypu rat, a rare South American animal, believed to be one of those which escaped from a fur farm at Henley in 1935. Three feet in length and weighing [up to 20lb.], the animal has a beautiful pelt of reddish-brown fur, webbed hind feet and broad orange-coloured incisor teeth.' *(The picture is to illustrate the animal and was not in the scrapbook).*



If you think that was a shock then this next cutting from the Daily Mail dated October 23rd, 1943, in the same scrapbook raises the bar considerably:

'Town Shoppers Watch Safari

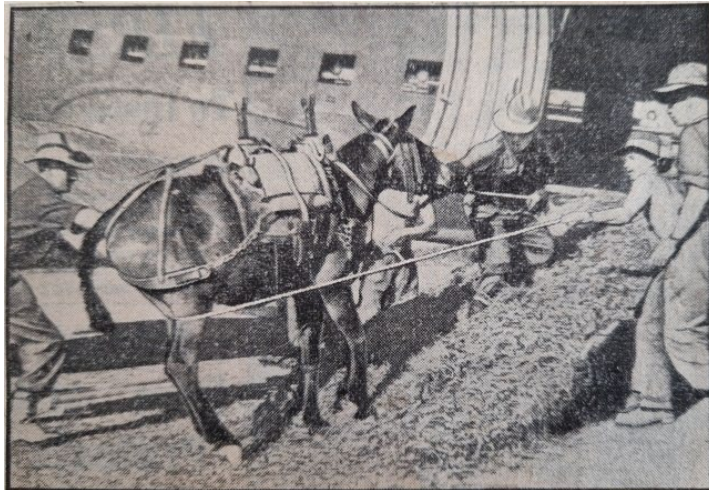
A bait of kidneys was used to lure back into captivity after 3½ hours a lion which, escaping from a wooden crate inside a railway box-car at Clapham Junction, London, yesterday jumped out of a window onto the platform, placidly surveyed the busy scene and peeped through an office window at a guard before ambling away along the track and startling women railway workers there.

Spotting a rail-side pit, Leo investigated, which just suited the armed Home Guards, police and keepers from a private zoo stalking him. They promptly fenced

him in with corrugated iron; then, rifles at the ready, a door in the fence was removed and a big wooden cage was put in its place.

The kidneys – plus a little prodding – did the rest. The picture shows the cornered king of beasts looking none too kingly. Just beyond is a usually busy shopping street, where hundreds of spectators kept at a safe distance until the proceedings were safely concluded.'

Further along this scrapbook there is another Daily Mail cutting, this one dated May 5th, 1944 *below*.



The caption for this photograph reads: 'A Recalcitrant Missouri mule is gently but firmly persuaded to make his first air trip in one of the transport planes used in the landings behind the Japanese lines in Burma by troops under the command of the late Major-General Wingate.'

Note the rope around the mule's hind legs and the ramp covered in grass.

More chimps made the news in this book on July 29th 1944. This cutting is entitled:

'ACHTUNG CHIMPS – F-Bomb Conscious

Of all the animals in the London Zoo only the chimpanzees are flying-bomb conscious. They are called the "Achtung chimps." Lions, tigers and nervous creatures like Henry the llama in the children's zoo, are not aware of the peril in the sound of the flying bomb's engine. The "Achtung chimps" hear the bombs when they are miles off, and they infallibly distinguish between them and the engines of the fleets of Allied bombers which roar overhead.

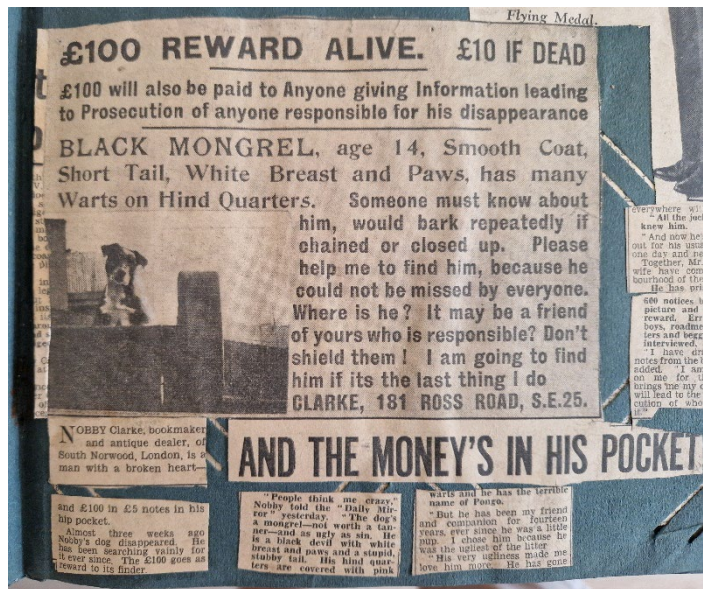
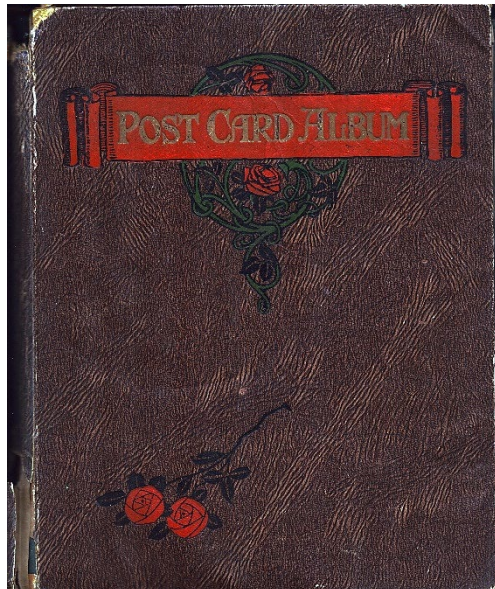
The "Achtung chimps" have established a flying-bomb warning service at the London Zoo. This is how it began. A flying-bomb, it was stated yesterday, recently fell on the banks of the Regent Canal, which runs through the zoo, shattering the glass in the animal houses. No animal was hurt, but since then the "chimps" have been acutely aware of the danger in flying-bombs. I watched them climbing unconcernedly round their cages as squadrons of Allied bombers thundered overhead.

Soon afterwards an Alert was sounded in the London area. The chimpanzees continued to accept scraps of food from visitors. Then, for apparently no reason, they whimpered and let out a series of yelps, and as if at a signal retreated to the furthest corners of their cages. One or two climbed up into corners near the roof; others huddled on the ground.

Seconds later I heard the familiar buzz of a flying-bomb. The engine cut out in the distance, but the chimpanzees remained in the positions they had taken up. A rumble told that the bomb had fallen. Immediately a chorus of snorts, barks and yelps broke out. The chimpanzees came from the backs of the cages, and in a few seconds were behaving normally again.'

On to another scrapbook now, all sorts of books were used by people during the war for their cuttings, from commercially produced scrapbooks to ledgers, post card albums, photograph albums, exercise books and some people even made their own books out of cardboard, wall paper or brown paper.

As we can see *below left*, this book was originally a postcard album. *Below right* is a story which really shows the love of a man for his dog. We can read the headline and larger print to the right of the photograph so I will just record the main story which is in smaller print.



‘Nobby Clarke, bookmaker and antique dealer, of South Norwood, London, is a man with a broken heart – and £100 in £5 notes in his hip pocket. Almost three weeks ago Nobby’s dog disappeared. He has been searching vainly for it ever since. The £100 goes as reward to its finder.

“People think me crazy” Nobby told the Daily Mirror yesterday. “The dog’s a mongrel – not worth a tanner – and as ugly as sin. He is a black devil with white breast and paws and a stupid stubby tail. His hind quarters are covered with pink warts and he has the terrible name of Pongo. But he has been my friend and companion for fourteen years, ever since he was a little pup. I chose him because he was the ugliest of the litter. His very ugliness made me love him more. He has gone everywhere with me. All the jockeys and grooms knew him, and now he’s gone. He went out for his usual morning walk one day and never returned.”

Together, Mr. Clarke and his wife have combed the neighbourhood of their home. He has printed more than 600 notices bearing the dog’s picture and announcing the reward. Errand boys, news boys, roadmen, postmen, costers and beggars have all been interviewed.

“I have drawn twenty £5 notes from the bank.” Mr. Clarke added. “I am carrying them on me for the person who brings me my dog or news that will lead to the successful prosecution of whoever has stolen it.”

I have no more news on this story. I wonder if Pongo was ever found?

The owner of this scrapbook was obviously a dog-lover as they cut out and pasted many stories relating to them. This next one tells the story of how a dog saved its owner, the one after that describes how an owner made the supreme sacrifice for his dog.



'Trapped – Saved by a Dog

The frantic barking of a dog beneath the wreckage yesterday saved the life of a man trapped under tons of debris in a bombed London basement. It was not thought possible that there could be any more survivors and the rescue work had been given up for hours. Then the rescue squad heard to dog. They dug down and tunnelled towards the sound.

At last, they came upon the animal – Mina, a black retriever bitch – and behind her, pinned down by a heavy beam across his legs, was a man – Mr. Charles Paynter. But the rescue problem was not yet solved. Mina, injured and frightened, would not let the workers pass to reach the man.

They could not drag her out since her hindquarters were imprisoned. Eventually, a veterinary surgeon was called and gave her a morphia injection. With a motor-car jack the dog was released *left*, and work was started to release Mr. Paynter, who was lying in bed unable to move.'

The next cutting tells a story entitled:

'The Boy Who Died for His Dog

John Langley aged nineteen, had a dog. He got it as a puppy and brought it up himself. It was his dog. Not just a family pet. John nursed it through distemper, chills, fight wounds, accidents and all the little mishaps of a dog's life. "There's nothing I wouldn't do for him," John once told his parents. This dog *below*, was, in a way, an unusual type for a boy to make such a friend of. It was a Pekinese. There were no two greater pals than John and his Peke.



One day the sirens wailed in John's home town in the Eastern Counties. The bombs began to fall, and one scored almost a direct hit on the home of John Langley and his parents. The A.R.P. rescue squad raced to the house. Their search of the wreckage revealed first John's father dead. Near him they found Mrs. Langley, John's mother – seriously injured. "Are there any more people in the house?" asked the rescue men anxiously. "Find John, my son," Mrs. Langley whispered.

The rescue party set to work, but for a long time discovered nothing. Then, from a pile of rubble on the ground floor the quick ears of an A.R.P. man detected a faint whimpering. "It's a dog," he said. Swiftly the heap of debris was removed. Under

it they found the figure of a boy lying face downward very still. It was John Langley. Tenderly they moved him. Then they found John's Peke, clutched in his arms, under his body. The dog was unhurt except for a cut over the eye.

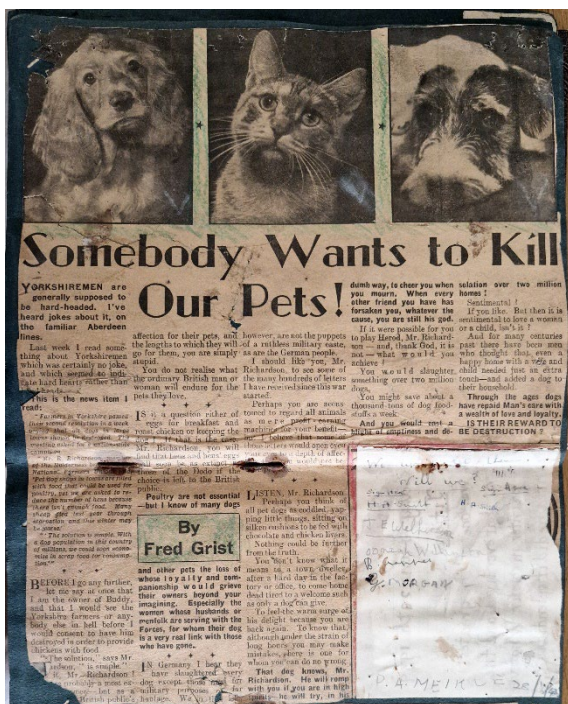
John was dead, he had flung himself on top of his pal when the crash came, and he had given his own life that his dog might live.

They took the dog to the local centre of the National Animals A.R.P. Committee and took care of him. His wound is healing but he is fretting for John. He leaves his meals untouched, watching every visitor anxiously, waiting for the master who can never come again. John's mother is coming out of hospital. She will take the dog. "It is all she has left to remind her of her son. She says she will never part with him," a friend said last night.'

Talk was fierce in 1941 over what should be done with pets. Many people thought that pets took much needed food and that they should be put down in order to conserve the country's meagre supply. Even the government indicated in a leaflet that it might be a good idea and this was taken up by many as a direct request, resulting in the destruction of thousands of animals. More about this later. First, I want to focus on a page in the same scrapbook we have been looking at, the owner was clearly a dog-lover, and a large cutting covering a story emanating from the National Farmers Union is preserved in full.

'Somebody Wants to Kill Our Pets!

Yorkshire men are generally supposed to be hard-headed. I've heard jokes about it, on the familiar Aberdeen lines. Last week I read something about Yorkshiremen which was certainly no joke, and which seemed to indicate hard hearts rather than hard heads. This is the news item I read:



"Farmers in Yorkshire passed their second resolution in a week urging that all dogs in large towns should be destroyed. The meeting asked for a nation-wide campaign.

Mr. R. Richardson, member of the Holderness Branch of the National Farmers Union, said: 'Pet dogs in towns are filled with food that could be used for poultry, yet we are asked to reduce the number of hens because there isn't enough food. Many sheep died last year through starvation, and this winter may be worse. The solution is simple, with a dog population in this country of millions, we could soon economise in scrap food for consumption.'

Before I go any further, let me say at once that I am the owner of 'Buddy', and that I would see the Yorkshire farmers or anybody else in hell before I

would consent to have him destroyed in order to provide chickens with food. "The solution" says Mr. Richardson "is simple". Mr. Richardson, you are probably a most excellent farmer, but as a judge of the British public's affection for their pets, and the lengths to which they will go for them, you are simply stupid. You do not realise what the ordinary British man or woman will endure for the pets they love.

Is it a question either of eggs for breakfast and roast chicken or keeping the dog? If that is the case, Mr. Richardson, you will find that hens and hen's eggs will soon be as extinct as those of the Dodo if the choice is left to the British public.

Poultry are not essential – but I know of many dogs and other pets the loss of whose loyalty and companionship would grieve their owners beyond your imagining. Especially the women whose husbands or menfolk are serving with the Forces, for whom their dog is a very real link with those who have gone.

In Germany I hear they have slaughtered every dog except those used for military purposes or for haulage. We in this isle however, are not the puppets of a ruthless military caste, as are the German people. I should like you, Mr. Richardson, to see some of the many hundreds of letters I have received since this war started. Perhaps you are accustomed to regard all animals as mere profit-earning machines for your benefit – but I believe that some of those letters would open even your eyes to the depth of affection that you would not believe possible.

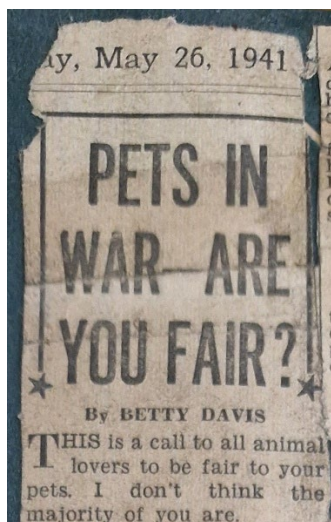
Listen, Mr. Richardson. Perhaps you think of all pet dogs as coddled, yapping little things, sitting on silken cushions to be fed with chocolate and chicken livers. Nothing could be further from the truth. You don't know what it means to a town dweller, after a hard day in the factory or office, to come home dead tired to a welcome such as only a dog can give. To feel the warm surge of his delight because you are back again. To know that, although under the strain of long hours you may make mistakes, here is one for whom you can do no wrong.

That dog knows, Mr. Richardson. He will romp with you if you are in high spirits – he will try in his dumb way, to cheer you when you mourn. When every other friend you have has forsaken you, whatever the cause, you are still his god.

If it were possible for you to play Herod, Mr. Richardson – and thank God, it is not – what would you achieve? You would slaughter something over two million dogs. You might save about a thousand tons of dog foodstuffs a week. And you would cast a blight of emptiness and desolation over two million homes!

Sentimental? If you like. But then it is sentimental to love a woman or a child, isn't it? And for many centuries past there have been men who thought that even a happy home with a wife and child needed just an extra touch – and added a dog to their household. Through the ages dogs have repaid man's care with a wealth of love and loyalty.

IS THEIR REWARD TO BE DESTRUCTION?'



There were, of course, two sides to this story, and on the same page in the scrapbook is another cutting *left*, dated May 26th 1941, this time putting forward the alternative viewpoint.

'Pets in War – are you Fair?

This is a call to all animal lovers to be fair to your pets. I don't think the majority of you are. There are two classes of pets – useful and luxury. In my opinion – as the daughter of a veterinary surgeon and having myself dealt in animal welfare for many years, I feel entitled to an opinion – all luxury pet owners should have their animals destroyed. Our English sentiment over animals is all very well in peace time, but there should be no room for it now.

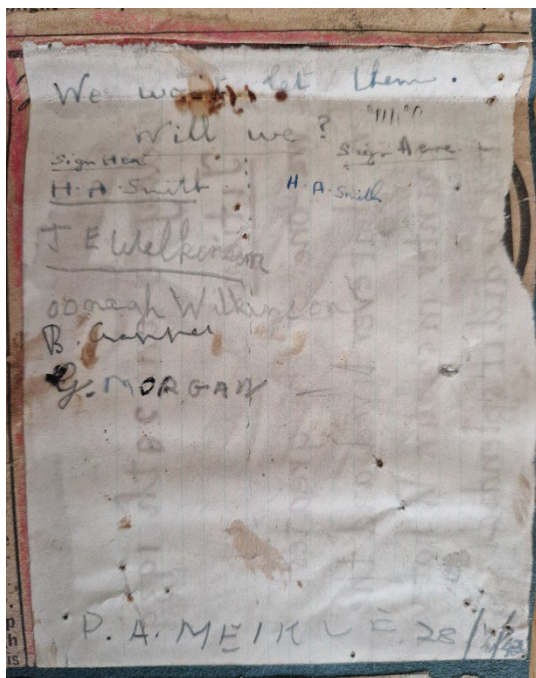
Though about 750,000 dogs were destroyed in London alone during the first few days of the war, it is estimated that this country's dog population is at present about 2,000,000. Less than half these animals come under the category of "useful." By useful, I mean working dogs – police dogs, sheep dogs, ratters or those in the service of the military.

These animals are having to go short of rations to keep alive their useless cousins whose only reason for existence, so far as I can see, is to satisfy the whim or sentiment of a few thousand owners.

Some luxury pet owners share their own meat rations with their dogs. They may feel entitled to do what they like with their own rations, but by doing without themselves they are doing their country an injustice. Today we need as many fit and well-nourished men and women as we can get. After all, if they feel they do not honestly require all the meat allocated to them, there are plenty of other human beings who will doubtless be only too pleased to eat it for them.

Pre-war, on an average, one dog ate in a year enough food suitable for human consumption to keep a man for a week. Now in many districts food for dogs is almost unobtainable, and in a large number of cases the luxury pet is not getting enough to eat. This is sheer cruelty. Just as important as being fair to yourself and your country is to be fair to your pet.

Next comes that most common of all pets, the cat. There is approximately one cat to every six persons in this country. But on the whole, she is a useful creature and, in my opinion, quite entitled to existence. By nature, the common cat is a scavenger, eats little and is doing a job of national importance by keeping the mouse population down and, in some cases the rat.'



The person who owned the scrapbook leaves us in no doubt about their loyalties regarding the destruction of dogs. Next to these cuttings they have pasted a petition *left*, they raised entitled, "We won't let them, will we?"

This petition, [the date is indecipherable but must be contemporary with the cutting, around the middle of 1941], contains seven signatures. Whether it was ever completed or submitted as part of a larger protest we will never know.

However, 750,000 dogs were destroyed in London alone, who knows how many more across the country? The government was partly to blame for this mess as they sent out a leaflet at the beginning of the war advising owners that it might be wise to have their pets put down. Many believed this to be an instruction.

The "Pet Massacre" of 1939

Leaving aside the scrapbooks for a minute, just before the war began, the British government published a pamphlet called "Advice to Animal Owners" via the **National Air Raid Precautions Animals Committee (NARPAC)**. It advised pet owners to **consider having their pets put down** if they could not be properly cared for during the war, particularly during air raids or food shortages.

This advice caused widespread panic.

As a result:

- It's estimated that **over 400,000 pets were euthanized** in just the first week of the war.
- This event has since been referred to as the "**British Pet Massacre.**"

Why did this happen?

1. **Fear of bombings:** Many people believed pets would suffer terribly or become a liability during air raids.
2. **Food rationing:** With rationing looming, people feared they wouldn't have enough food to feed themselves, let alone their pets.
3. **Official advice:** The government's pamphlet, although not mandating euthanasia, carried authority and contributed to public anxiety.

Public Reaction

- Some animal welfare groups and veterinarians were horrified by the mass euthanasia and tried to stop it.
- Others believed it was a necessary precaution in the face of war.

Aftermath

- As the war went on and it became clear that the initial fears were exaggerated and people regretted their actions.
- Animal charities like the **PDSA (People's Dispensary for Sick Animals)** and **RSPCA** tried to care for pets and discouraged unnecessary euthanasia.



A lighter story now, even though the scene comes from a bomb-damaged forge, this cutting is entitled:

'The Whole World Looks Him in the Face Now

Bombs have certainly knocked his blacksmith's shop about a bit, but Doug Holland, village smith in a Kent district, doesn't let that stop him from carrying on his job.

He's been a blacksmith for a good many years now, and with horses staging a bit of a come-back in these petrol-short days, there's still plenty of work.

He's got his anvil, forge, hammers and nails still, so why worry if the roof of the old smithy isn't what it was?

So, the time-honoured scene of the patient horse and the bending blacksmith is re-enacted every day, and the clink of the anvil is not stilled.'



This time we have a picture taken from the battle front.

'Samaritan of the Battlefield'

From amid the strife and rubble of the battlefield in Normandy there comes this outstanding picture of human kindness prevailing in the heart of total war.

In the lifeless, deserted, war-shattered village, a British sergeant empties his water-bottle for a thirsty and homeless puppy.'



A dog welcoming his owner back from his duties in the Home Guard.



The Chelsea W.V.S. Salvage Officer with 'Tony' the Shetland Pony, collecting salvage.

There are many more heartwarming stories and pictures in these scrapbooks and I have only just scratched the surface. I hope I have given a taste of how even in the darkest days when bombs were dropping and people young and old were being killed, the love of their animals and pets helped people to get through the seemingly endless days of fear and danger. Sometimes their pets rescued the owners, sometimes owners rescued their pets. Always, the companionship was priceless.