



What happened in Coventry during World War 2?

Coventry Blitz - Newspaper Report

On the 15th of November 1940, anthropologist Tom Harrison arrived in Coventry with a team of reporters to record the feelings of the people in the city. Using his notes, write a newspaper report about the impact of the Blitz on the people of Coventry. You will not be able to use everything that he has written down so you will have to select the information that you think is most important. Summarise it and add in details that you have learned about the Coventry Blitz.

15th November 1940

The heart of Coventry has been smashed. The crowded nature of the town means the shock effect 'per bomb' is that much greater than in London, Birmingham or Liverpool.

It's easy for the locals to meet people who know someone who has been killed or is missing.

Bad news is taking its toll.

There are some open signs of hysteria, terror and neurosis.

It would be an insult to the people of Coventry to ballyhoo them and exaggerate their good spirit. I am moving in a city of the dark.

I have spent a good deal of my life listening to people talk, but I've never heard people talk less than in Coventry today.

Many walk blankly through the city looking at the mess. I catch the odd comment like: 'Coventry is finished.' And 'Coventry is dead.'

The commonest sound is the scraping of shovels and the shifting of rubble.

The strangest sight is the Cathedral.

At each end the bare frames of the great window still have a kind of beauty without their glass: but in between them there is an incredible chaos of bricks, pillars, girders, memorial tablets.

All across the town there's destruction. Rows and rows of battered houses, smashed in windows and leaking roofs.



16th November 1940

Today people are talking, even joking about it all. I heard someone say, 'We'll recover. Life will go on. We can get used to it.'

People still feel pretty helpless, but not hopeless. The frightened and the nervous have left. You can't blame them. Those left behind want to feel tough. Water, gas and electricity supplies completely disrupted.

Many thousands are homeless. There is talk of 1,000 casualties. The true figure could be higher.

And yet, you hear nobody calling for reprisal attacks against Germany. People say they won't end the war, only make it more bitter.

I noticed a massive need for mobile canteens after a raid like this one. The Salvation Army got one in at once. A man said to me, 'I'll never laugh at them again. They are wonderful, just wonderful.'

The King has arrived to bolster morale. He is a bridge between civilians and the military. His presence is appreciated.

These notes have been adapted from The Mass Observation Archive, 497

Mini Glossary

anthropologist - A scientist who studies human societies, cultures and behaviours.

ballyhoo - Exaggerated publicity or promotion.

bolster - To strengthen or reinforce something.

hysteria - An emotional state characterised by symptoms including anxiety, panic and nervousness.

neurosis - A term used to describe various forms of emotional distress.

You could include:

- A brief summary of the events of the 14th and 15th of November.
- The sights, smells and sounds on the streets. A sense of the atmosphere.
- The mood of the people and how it changes over the days.
- What Coventry looks like in the aftermath of the bombing.
- Details of King George VI's visit on Saturday 16th November.



What happened in Coventry during World War 2?

Coventry Blitz - Newspaper Report

On the 15th of November 1940, anthropologist Tom Harrison arrived in Coventry with a team of reporters to record the feelings of the people in the city. Using his notes, write a newspaper report about the impact of the Blitz on the people of Coventry. You will not be able to use everything that he has written down so you will have to select the information that you think is most important. Summarise it and add in details that you have learned about the Coventry Blitz.

15th November 1940

The heart of Coventry has been smashed. The crowded nature of the town means the shock effect 'per bomb' is that much greater than in London, Birmingham or Liverpool.

It's easy for the locals to meet people who know someone who has been killed or is missing.

Bad news is taking its toll.

There are some open signs of hysteria, terror and neurosis.

It would be an insult to the people of Coventry to ballyhoo them and exaggerate their good spirit. I am moving in a city of the dark.

I have spent a good deal of my life listening to people talk, but I've never heard people talk less than in Coventry today.

Many walk blankly through the city looking at the mess. I catch the odd comment like: 'Coventry is finished.' And 'Coventry is dead.'

The commonest sound is the scraping of shovels and the shifting of rubble.

The strangest sight is the Cathedral.

At each end the bare frames of the great window still have a kind of beauty without their glass: but in between them there is an incredible chaos of bricks, pillars, girders, memorial tablets.

All across the town there's destruction. Rows and rows of battered houses, smashed in windows and leaking roofs.



16th November 1940

Today people are talking, even joking about it all. I heard someone say, 'We'll recover. Life will go on. We can get used to it.'

People still feel pretty helpless, but not hopeless. The frightened and the nervous have left. You can't blame them. Those left behind want to feel tough. Water, gas and electricity supplies completely disrupted.

Many thousands are homeless. There is talk of 1,000 casualties. The true figure could be higher.

And yet, you hear nobody calling for reprisal attacks against Germany. People say they won't end the war, only make it more bitter.

I noticed a massive need for mobile canteens after a raid like this one. The Salvation Army got one in at once. A man said to me, 'I'll never laugh at them again. They are wonderful, just wonderful.'

The King has arrived to bolster morale. He is a bridge between civilians and the military. His presence is appreciated.

These notes have been adapted from The Mass Observation Archive, 497

Mini Glossary

anthropologist - A scientist who studies human societies, cultures and behaviours.

ballyhoo - Exaggerated publicity or promotion.

bolster - To strengthen or reinforce something.

hysteria - An emotional state characterised by symptoms including anxiety, panic and nervousness.

neurosis - A term used to describe various forms of emotional distress.

You could include:

- A brief summary of the events of the 14th and 15th of November.
- The sights, smells and sounds on the streets. A sense of the atmosphere.
- The mood of the people and how it changes over the days.
- What Coventry looks like in the aftermath of the bombing.
- Details of King George VI's visit on Saturday 16th November.



Local History

Historic England and Teacher's Pet have come together to bring you a collection of free resources that you can use in your local history teaching.



Historic England



Teacher's Pet

Who are Teacher's Pet?

Teacher's Pet have been providing downloadable and playable educational content to early years and primary school teachers for over 14 years. We cover all areas of the curriculum and use a team of in-house teachers and designers to create engaging and memorable concepts, that the children will love.

Why local history?

At [Teacher's Pet](#) we want to empower primary school teachers by giving them the tools they need to deliver inspiring and thoughtful lessons about the local area and its history. We believe local history teaching has such an important part to play in a child's wellbeing – helping to give children a sense of pride in where they live.

Our Local History project is designed to provide teachers across the UK with everything they need to successfully carry out a full scheme of teaching about their local area, through key enquiry questions and source led activities.

Working with [Historic England](#) gives us access to archived maps and photos for resources and information from knowledgeable local historians, as well helping us to provide the content to you free of charge.

For more information about our Local History project or to find out more about Teacher's Pet Classroom Resources, please visit our website.