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The night in 1941 when Luftwaffe bombs fell on Hyndland

Researchers interviewed people who had experienced the Blitz for a local book.

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By [Ian Marland](#)

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The horror and devastation of a wartime air raid on Glasgow are revealed in previously unpublished accounts of people who lived through the event 80 years ago this month.

One man, who was a boy of nine in March 1941, tells how his West End tenement was caught in the blast of a parachute mine, blowing out the windows and shaking the building.

He recalled how shortly afterwards his father had moved from the hall where the family had been sheltering to check on the damage.

Moments later, his father was caught in a second explosion and suffered severe injuries to his face from flying glass.

Another account tells how firemen and rescuers were still searching through the rubble of nearby tenements that had been destroyed many hours after the raid.

A telephone engineer called to the scene spoke to a neighbour who told him how one boy and his mother were trapped in a cupboard in one of the collapsed buildings.

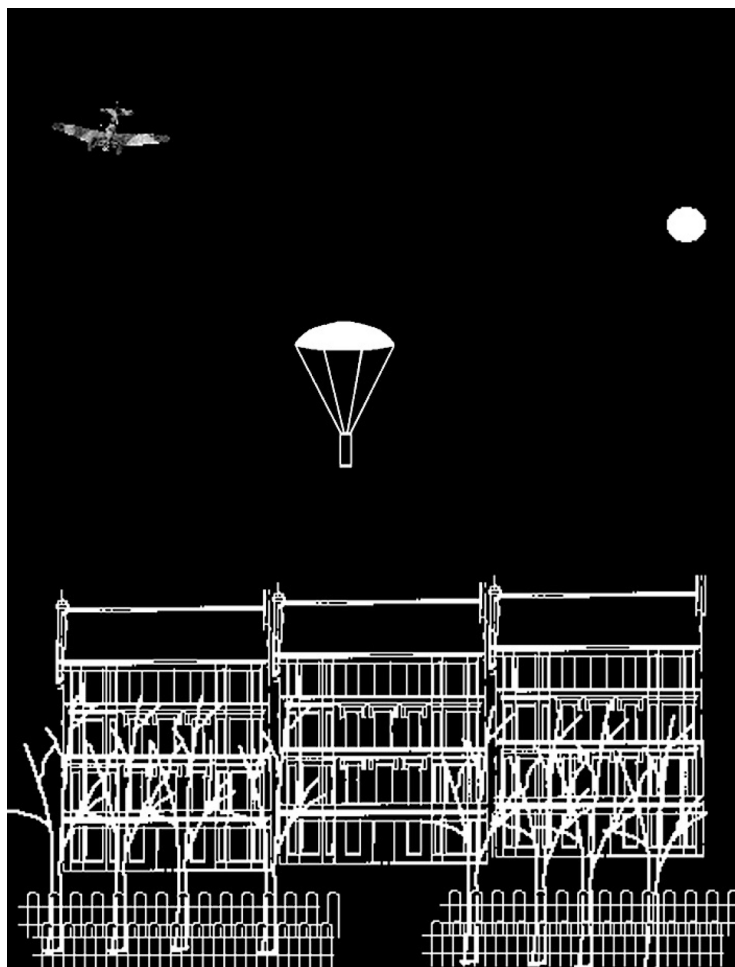
The neighbour also told how one woman had been killed by the impact of the bomb.

The street where the bomb fell was Dudley Drive in Hyndland.

It was among many areas across the city that saw destruction during Luftwaffe attacks on March 13 and 14, 1941.

The events are largely recalled now as the Clydebank Blitz because of the utter devastation inflicted on that industrial town, which claimed 528 lives.

But more than 600 people were killed in multiple attacks across Glasgow over the two days.



Glasgow suffered much destruction during Luftwaffe attacks. Illustration: Ann Laird

In one strike on Tradeston on March 14, a mine landed between a tram and a tenement on Nelson Street, killing 110 people.

In another on Yarrow's shipyard the same night 67 were killed.

Knightswood took multiple hits and was among the first areas to suffer.

In Peel Street, Partick, 50 people were killed in an explosion that destroyed a row of houses opposite West of Scotland Cricket Club.

In the Hyndland area around 40 devices were dropped on the night of March 13.

Many were believed intended for nearby railway lines and bridges but fell short of their targets.

A blast destroyed a house at the corner of Lauderdale Gardens and Turnberry Road killing two people.

The mine that descended and exploded at around 11.30pm on Dudley Drive killed 36 people.

Researchers

It landed between numbers 8, 10 and 12 totally destroying the blocks. Numbers 6 and 9 nearby were later demolished.

The personal accounts of those who were living in the street were gathered by local historian and resident Ann Laird and fellow researchers in 1996.

Some of what was recorded informed Ann's book 'Hyndland' that tells the history of the area and its architecture.

But many of the accounts were never used.

One man, Ian Mitchell, who lived at 2 Dudley Drive as a boy told researchers what he could remember.

The account reads: "Ian was in the flat that evening with his mother, father, two sisters and uncle.

"Earlier, the uncle had taken his two sisters to a show at the Pavilion.

| *Dudley Drive where 36 people were killed*

"During the raid, the family took shelter in the hall.

"The first explosion blew windows in and shook everyone in the hall, but no-one was actually injured.

"Ian's father went into the kitchen to check that the coal fire had not set the room alight.

“While he was there, flying glass from a second explosion severely lacerated his face and eyes.”

Explosions were being heard across the city as wave after wave of Heinkel 111s flew over the city.

Mr Mitchell recalled that the Rev David Herd, minister of Partick High and Dowanvale Church in Peel Street, had a narrow escape.

'Dangerously close'

His manse in Turnberry Road was the second house on the left above Lauderdale Gardens.

He had been out several times on fire-watching duties that night, and as he returned home, “he saw a landmine dangerously close by, descending on its parachute”.

He immediately made for the manse to take cover, and gained valuable seconds when he found the keys still in the lock, accidentally left there earlier.

“In fact the minister had only seconds to reach safety before the landmine exploded, totally destroying the adjacent property in Turnberry Road.

“This key incident almost certainly saved his life,” Ian told the researchers.

Aerial image of Dudley Drive from 1942 and the gap left by the bomb. Photo: NCAP/Historic Environment Scotland.

Ian and other children were fascinated with the barrage balloon that had been positioned in Hayburn Park.

Ian B Smail who was interviewed in 1996 said the balloon had not been raised on the night of the attack.

Another account told how neighbours at 1 Dudley Drive gathered in the hallway of the ground floor flat on the night of the raid.

Ian Redpath was a boy at the time living with his family at the end of the street.

“On the night of March 13, 1941, the sirens had gone off rather early, so Ian’s father decided that the family would go and shelter in the hall of the neighbour's ground floor flat immediately below them.

“In fact everyone in the tenement at 1 Dudley Drive decided to shelter there that night, sitting on chairs, about 15 people in all.

“This was considered the safest place in the building, with no outside windows, and storm doors for

protection.



In fact the minister had only seconds to reach safety before the landmine exploded, totally destroying the adjacent property in Turnberry Road

– Ian Mitchell

“At the time there were no public air-raid shelters in the area, although one was later built in the middle of the road.

“When the blast from the exploding landmine struck their tenement, nobody inside I Dudley Drive was injured.

“The (family’s) flat, however, sustained considerable damage.

“Fairly soon after the explosion, fire engines arrived at the scene and at least one was positioned right outside the close entrance with hoses running through the close close presumably for access to a hydrant.

“The loud droning from this appliance seemed to dominate all other noises for the rest of that night.”

Bill Kenmuir was a telephone engineer during the war.

On the first night of the attacks he witnessed two tenement buildings in Kilbowie Road, Clydebank explode.

| *Parachute mines were highly destructive but didn't always detonate. Glasgow, March 1941. Credit: Wikipedia*

He was later called out to Dudley Drive in the West End, within what appears to have been hours of the attack or later the following day.

Mr Kenmuir told researchers how he arrived at the scene: “Carrying his repair equipment, he walked under the bridge to Dudley Drive where he was confronted by a scene of great devastation.

“Numbers 10 and 12 were totally destroyed and a great deal of debris and rubble lay everywhere.

“Fire officers and rescue workers were working on the scene, but Bill's attention was concentrated on the two telephone kiosks at the Clarence Drive end of Dudley Drive.

“These had been blown from their foundations and the telephone equipment largely destroyed.

“A fire officer on the scene asked him if he could quickly establish telephone communications, but Bill found that the lines to the kiosks were dead.”

The engineer eventually re-connected the kiosks after locating the cable under Hayburn Park with the help of two firemen with spades.

As he was leaving he was approached by a neighbour at 16 Dudley Drive.

“He told Bill that some 90 people had been killed (probably a reference to the wider area) in the demolished tenements and that a boy was trapped in a cupboard with his mother.



Carrying his repair equipment, he walked under the bridge to Dudley Drive where he was confronted by a scene of great devastation'

– Bill Kenmuir

“He said that there were no shelters so people had been taking cover in the back closes.

“Moments before the land-mine exploded, a woman who had been sheltering in the ground floor area of 16 Dudley Drive had stood up and walked towards the back door.

“She was killed instantly when the back door was blown in.”

The book ‘Hyndland’ says the trapped boy was Stanley Ewing who was reportedly dug out of the debris after two and half days.

The boy said he had stayed alive by eating sugar from the cupboard and drinking water from the fire hoses.

Ann Laird said the story of the blitz was one that should never be forgotten.

She said: “It is important to remember the past and increase our awareness of what happened during the war.

“The tenements on Dudley Drive stand as a permanent monument to the people and families who lost their lives 80 years ago.

“Publishing these eyewitness accounts now should help generate interest and further understanding of people’s experiences back then.”

Marc Conaghan at the University of Glasgow is researching a Phd on the Clydeside Blitz.

| Ann Laird says it is important to remember the events of 80 years ago.

He said around 40 bombs were dropped in the area between the railway line over Clarence Drive, Turnberry Road and Queensborough Gardens.

“The majority of the bombs (36) were incendiary bombs and many of them didn’t explode.

“The last two were Luftmines commonly known as Parachute Mines.

“They were the heaviest bombs used on Clydeside in the March attacks.

'Mistaken'

He said: “The parachute mine on Dudley Drive would have been aiming for the railway line but it missed.

“The parachute mine on Turnberry Road I think was an error.

“If you look at the junction of Turnberry and Partickhill on an old map it could be mistaken for a railway spur, at 10,000 ft, at night.

“Or it may have just drifted in the wind as often happened.

“It would have been the same plane, a Heinkel 111 that dropped both of them.”

** If you have a personal link to the Blitz and the events that unfolded around the West End please get in touch. You can email: glasgowwe@todaynews.co.uk*

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