



What role did Derby play in the World Wars?



Rolls-Royce Air Raid!

On the 27th of July 1942, a German plane dropped bombs on the Rolls-Royce factory in Derby. It was Derby's most lethal air raid with 23 people killed, 12 were in the factory and the rest in surrounding streets.

Read the two different accounts and answer the questions.

DERBY EVENING TELEGRAPH

Monday, July 27, 1942

SNEAK RAID ON MIDLANDS TOWN, WORKERS KILLED

A number of persons were killed and others injured when bombs were dropped by a raider which flew over a North Midlands town this morning.

The attack was one of a number of "sneak" raids which covered the greater part of England between 6 a.m. and 9 a.m., after a quiet night. Taking advantage of very low cloud, which makes interception difficult, the enemy machines, estimated at fewer than 30, often skimmed rooftops, dropped bombs haphazardly and machine-gunned streets.

In some areas the raiders made their appearance at a time when people were due to begin work, and there were instances of early workers having to dive for safety as they were sprayed with bullets. Damage and casualties, it is thought, are not likely to prove serious.

During the raid on the North Midlands town, bombs fell in a residential area, five houses being demolished and others badly damaged. Windows and roofs of other houses were smashed or torn off by blast.

Rescue and ambulance squads quickly went to work. Beneath the debris of one house they found

the bodies of a family, but a dog was still alive. The occupants of another house where the roof and floors had collapsed were believed to be on holiday. There were some casualties, too, among workers who had just alighted from a bus and were on their way to a factory. Some of those who were trapped in their homes were at breakfast – a few were still in bed.

SWOOPED LOW

An A.R.P. warden who was on duty in the district said that the raider swooped to a very low level out of the clouds – "It almost touched the roof tops" was his description – before releasing the bombs. "Many of us in the streets could clearly see the markings on the aeroplane," he said, "and there was a general scurry for shelter."

Several families were rendered temporarily homeless. Rest centres were opened immediately, and hot drinks and food were provided, and later the authorities found accommodation for those who were not able to go to homes of relatives or friends.

A plane fouled a balloon cable before making off under a sharp burst of gunfire.



Teacher's Pet



Historic England





What role did Derby play in the World Wars?

German pilot, Helmut Ueberson's account of the raid on Derby.

My objective was the Rolls-Royce factory at Derby. I started at 6am and crossed the North Sea at low altitude with another of our planes. We separated near the British coast and I made for my target. The weather was bad. Suddenly I saw an airfield [near Grantham]. I couldn't avoid it, so I increased my speed and roared right over it. My front gunner fired at the enemy hanger.

We continued just below the clouds, and soon found the railway which we had been told to look out for. We followed it and I saw Derby straight before us. I knew exactly where to find my target and made straight for it. Suddenly we received a hit on the astrodome and felt a jar. A barrage balloon had touched us and been cut from its moorings.

At the same moment we saw the works before us. The Oberste [chief] shouted: 'Out bombs, factory below us,' and I pressed the button and watched the bombs fall. There was a tremendous noise. The wind was blowing through the smashed astrodome and we couldn't hear much. We dived into the clouds as the plane had been badly damaged in the collision with the balloon. The right wing had been smashed.

I turned for home under cover of clouds. These suddenly dispersed, and I saw an enemy fighter to our right. I nose-dived and reached another cloud. During the rest of the flight we were in high spirits at having succeeded.

The air raid led to the death of 23 people with 40 people seriously injured. Despite the damage, no engines were destroyed and the factory was back up to full production within three days.





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Rolls-Royce Air Raid!

Use evidence from the two different accounts to answer the questions.

When did the air raid take place?

What key information does the newspaper report not mention?

Why do you think this information was missing?

Why do you think the Rolls-Royce factory was the target of the raid?

Which parts of the two accounts match?

Which is the most reliable account?



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Rolls-Royce Air Raid! - Answers

When did the air raid take place?

The air raid took place on the morning of the 27th of July 1942.

What key information does the newspaper report not mention?

The report does not mention the exact location of the raid and also does not say that the bombs landed on the Rolls-Royce factory.

Why do you think this information was missing?

The newspaper was being careful not to give away information that German spies could use. It may also have removed reference to the town for the benefit of people from Derby who were away at war and may have worried if they heard that the city had been bombed.

Why do you think the Rolls-Royce factory was the target of the raid?

The Rolls-Royce factory made plane engines so it would have been a key target of the German raids.

Which parts of the two accounts match?

The time of the raids matches in both accounts. Both accounts also make reference to the fact that the plane cut a balloon cable.

Which is the most reliable account?

It is difficult to say which is the most reliable account as both sides had reasons to withhold information. The newspapers purposefully withheld key details to protect important locations. The German pilot probably would not have reported if he had deliberately fired on residential areas.

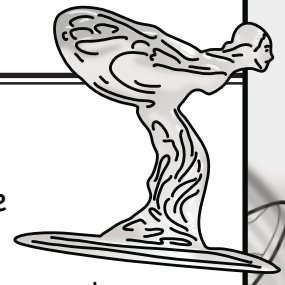




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Local History

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.