

# Kirkham Treasures

## Celebrating Kirkham's Heritage

### WW2

#### Did You Know?

Kirkham was home to a huge RAF training camp.

#### Wartime Kirkham

During the Second World War Kirkham was home to a huge RAF training camp where the prison is now. The camp trained over 72,000 troops from the UK and allied forces. Servicemen came from all over the world to learn skills such as bomb disposal and weapons training. The base had its own aircraft hangars, a cinema, canteen, hospital and research centre. Troops living at the base and throughout Kirkham were often invited into the homes of local families to share a home cooked dinner. Troops could regularly be seen in the streets and setting off to war.



Kirkham not only became home for soldiers but also for evacuees from large cities such as Salford. They would arrive in Kirkham train station with their suitcase and gas masks and wait to be collected and taken to their new homes. Many of those children would not see their families for a long time.

At that time the market would sell basic supplies such as food and fabric. Rationing meant that food was in short supply, however those who had gardens would often grow food at home. Women would visit the market to collect pieces of material to make their own clothes for the local dance. Wartime romances were common and many Kirkham residents went on to marry allied soldiers they met during the war.

Many men from Kirkham served in the forces, and the names of the 29 who lost their lives are on the Cenotaph in the War Memorial Gardens.

On 29th September 1941, four bombs were dropped on the Moor Street area of Kirkham, killing two and injuring ten (see photo left). During the war Kirkham was also home to the Brookmill POW camp. Spanish, Italian and German soldiers were all held there and worked on the nearby farms.

#### Let's Imagine...

Can you imagine being a soldier living and training in Kirkham during the war? What might life have been like for evacuees living in Kirkham?

#### Task

We need you to imagine you're someone living in Kirkham during this era. Your task is to create a postcard from them to someone living in modern day Kirkham. On the front you will need to draw a picture showing what they might have seen back then. That may be RAF Kirkham, the POW camps, the station full of evacuees. On the back you will need to write a short postcard message telling the people of modern day Kirkham what life was like and what you'd like to see in the future of Kirkham.