

# DIGGING THE AIR RAID SHELTER

By Ray Gigg

The following photographs were taken early in WW2 (1939 – 40) when the residents of the six Council houses adjacent to Ashbury Cross Roads (now known as The Malthouse 1-6) decided to dig and build a shelter in the back garden of No. 5, which belonged to Henry Tilling – our local air raid warden (ARP). The residents of the other Council houses: Jim Williams (No. 2), Walter Stallard (No. 3), Roly Coles (No. 4) and Bert Gigg (No. 6), were Special Constables at that time. The shelter took about six to eight weeks to complete and was lined with corrugated iron. The roof was similarly lined and supported with RSJs and wooden beams. All the 'spoil' was heaped on top to form a mound about 4ft deep. The shelter was 14ft long by 6ft wide with an entrance and stairs down at both short ends.

I can only remember three or four occasions when it was thought we should resort to the shelter when the siren at Shrivvenham sounded. The shelter remained for a few years after the war ended and provided an excellent play area for the younger children until it was eventually filled in.

Mr Percy Wright, who lived at No. 1 Council house, was away serving in the Army at the time and sadly never returned. He was one of several from the village who bravely gave their lives for our freedom. We remember them all each year at the Remembrance Day Service.



PHOTO. MRS ETHEL GIGG

Excavating the air raid shelter at the rear of number 5 The Malthouse in 1940  
Left to right. **WALTER STALLARD. HENRY TILLING. ROBERT MOOR. (EVACUEE)**  
**BERT GIGG. ROLY COLES. MRS ETHEL TILLING. CLARENCE STALLARD.**



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Excavating the air raid shelter at the rear of number 5 The Malthouse in 1940  
Left to right. **Henry Tilling. Walter Stallard. Jim Williams. Bert Gigg. Roly Coles.**