



Refreshment van at Chalmers Street entrance

# Digging for Victory in Pittencrieff Park!

Fife Council teamed up with Fife Cultural Trust in an attempt to unearth what Pittencrieff Park was like during World War II. 'Digging for Victory' was a free family event held in the park's Glen Pavilion in early 2013. Event organisers specifically invited older generations to come along and share memories, stories, documents and photos relating to the park during that time.

Over 300 people of all ages were involved on the day showing genuine interest in the social history of the park. Military vehicles and machine gun lookouts were on display alongside a range of wartime memorabilia.

The team established a wide range of uses for the park during World War II such as the location of air raid shelters, the use of the Pavilion and where allotments were situated.

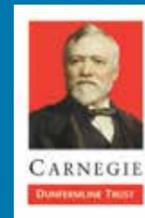


## Pittencrieff Park restoration project

Thanks to funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund with match support from the Carnegie Dunfermline Trust and Fife Council, a £1.6 million transformation to return this much loved green space to its former glory began in Autumn 2012.

Producing information on how the Park was used during WWII is part of this project.

[www.scottishmvg.org](http://www.scottishmvg.org)  
[www.defenddunfermlineww2.co.uk](http://www.defenddunfermlineww2.co.uk)



## In 1939 World War II was declared in Europe.

Come and explore Pittencrieff Park's part in the war effort and share some of the memories of the local people who lived through this time.

Pittencrieff Park has a rich and varied history. Information is widely available about military and war activities in Dunfermline so this project aimed to gather information and memories that related specifically to Pittencrieff Park.

Records held by the Carnegie Dunfermline Trust provided much of the background information and local people have added a more personal insight into life during the war and how they remember the park during this time of great change.

For the first time, local people, visitors and future generations have the opportunity to learn more about Pittencrieff Park at war.



Pamphlet from Dunfermline Museum Collection



# Pittencrieff Park: The War Years

## 1939

Before the war began, leading bands and musicians played open air concerts in Pittencrieff Park. The Children's Gala was held in June 1939 with many local people taking part.

Following the declaration of war in September 1939, the Military Authorities requisitioned the Music Pavilion and Tea Room.

Open air concerts stopped and several employees from the park were requested by the National Authorities to take up war related work at Crombie and Rosyth.

## 1940

Due to emergency and economic measures, many activities within the park were drastically reduced or suspended until more settled times.

The Agricultural Executive Committee for this area requested that the southern portion of the park be given over to the grazing of sheep. The cultivation of allotments began in October 1940.

11 employees from the park were engaged in work of national importance or in the army.

A van providing light refreshments for military personnel was placed at the Chalmers Street entrance of the park (at the Louise Carnegie Gates).

## 1941

As war escalated around the world, this was a year of much change in the park. The east portion of the south lawn was planted with potatoes.

Polish soldiers were accommodated in and around the park and became a part of the local community. Many attended local churches and concerts at Carnegie Hall - sometimes as participants.

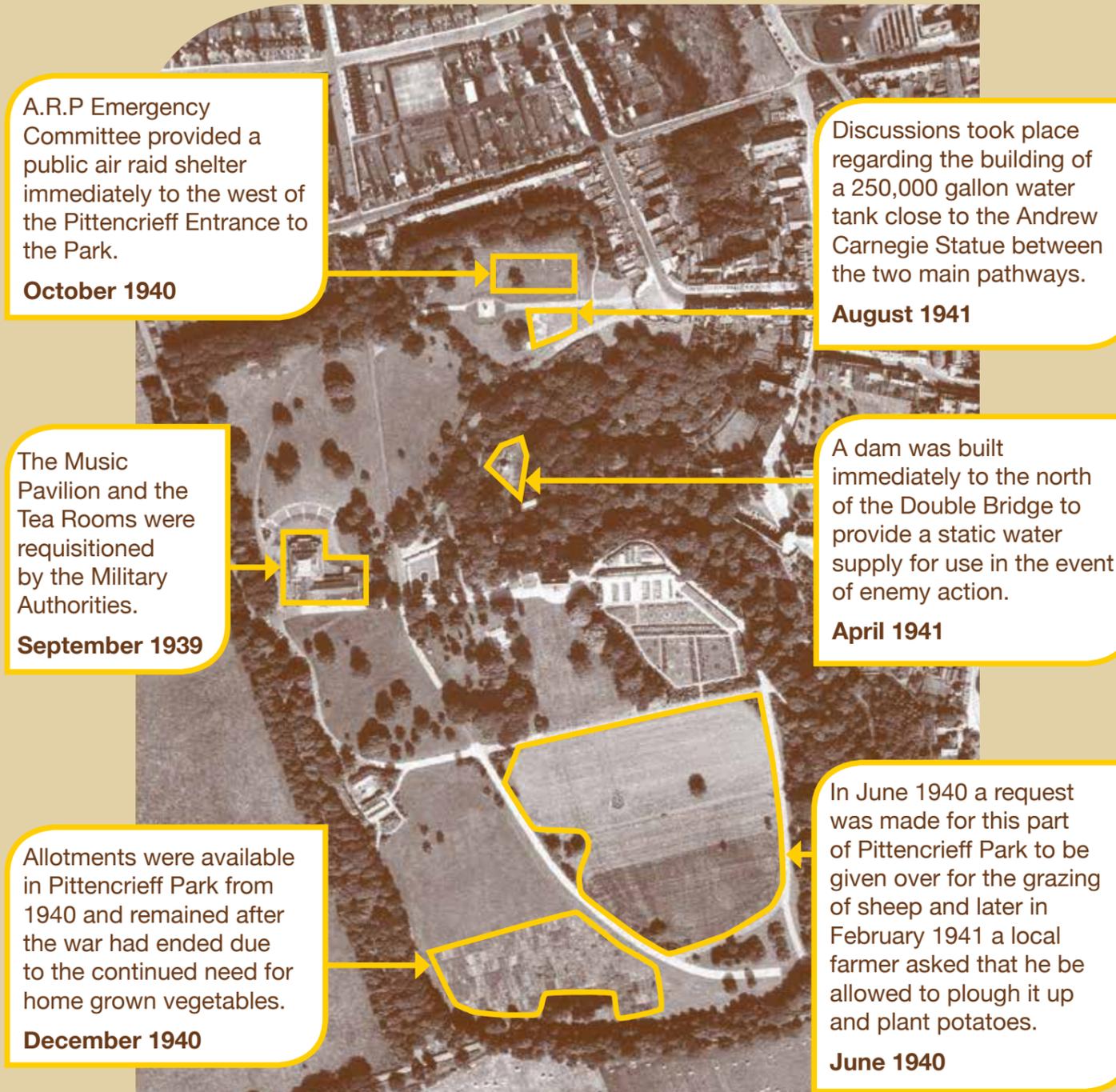
In April 1941 the Tower Burn was dammed. Permission was sought to build a water storage tank close to the statue of Andrew Carnegie. By December 1941 the National Fire Service had connected this water tank with the Tower Burn using steel piping.

## 1942

By 1942, much of the park was now being used for war related activities. However, during the local trades holiday week dancing was provided on the lawn in front of Pittencrieff House every evening and refreshments were sold.



Pittencrieff Park was part of Dunfermline's perimeter 'Anti Tank Island' strategy. Concrete anti-tank cubes were used around the park and as roadblocks. Some of the trenches in place around Dunfermline extended into the park.



A.R.P Emergency Committee provided a public air raid shelter immediately to the west of the Pittencrieff Entrance to the Park.

**October 1940**

Discussions took place regarding the building of a 250,000 gallon water tank close to the Andrew Carnegie Statue between the two main pathways.

**August 1941**

The Music Pavilion and the Tea Rooms were requisitioned by the Military Authorities.

**September 1939**

A dam was built immediately to the north of the Double Bridge to provide a static water supply for use in the event of enemy action.

**April 1941**

Allotments were available in Pittencrieff Park from 1940 and remained after the war had ended due to the continued need for home grown vegetables.

**December 1940**

In June 1940 a request was made for this part of Pittencrieff Park to be given over for the grazing of sheep and later in February 1941 a local farmer asked that he be allowed to plough it up and plant potatoes.

**June 1940**

## 1943

The demand for vegetables continued to rise. By February 1943 there were 55 allotments being cultivated in Pittencrieff Park, an increase from eight in 1940.

Some of the pre-war activities enjoyed by local people in the park could now be considered again, though opportunities were still limited.

## 1944

As the Allies made considerable progress fighting the war, the effort also continued at home. Local people continued to visit the park and Tea Rooms with their work colleagues and families at lunchtimes and in their free time.

American soldiers, and others, on leave from Edinburgh and surrounding areas visited the Tea Rooms in the park.

## 1945

War related activities had already been reduced within the park before victory in Europe was declared in May 1945. The lawns which had been cultivated for potatoes were re-sown with grass. Allotments remained in the park due to the continued need for vegetables.

Leisure activities for local people increased with Punch and Judy shows and magic shows.

Despite the end of the war, many staff were still engaged in war related work, unable to work or had not returned. Replacing ornamental shrubs and plants was not possible for many years but metal railings which had been removed from around the park were restored by the end of the year.

## 1946

Shortages of labour and materials continued into 1946 and the annual Gala Day was not held in June, despite the best efforts of the Carnegie Dunfermline Trust. However, steady progress was being made in bringing Pittencrieff Park back to its pre-war standard and the Music Pavilion had been completely restored and was in use during the summer season of entertainments.

## 1947

Work to restore the park continued and in June 1947 more than 7,000 local children took part in the Gala. Though slow, progress was being made to return Pittencrieff Park to its former state as a special place for the people of Dunfermline and beyond to enjoy.