

# Memories of Faringdon Folly

by **Joe Pauling**

The Folly tower was constructed during 1935, the year of George V's Silver Jubilee<sup>1</sup>. My grandfather, Joby Pauling, worked for a local firm, Cadle Bros., which built it using local labour. He worked on it as a carter and occasional brick layer. In the same year he worked on a chimney being built for the Express Dairy.

At the commencement of WW2 in 1939, the tower was closed to the public, and commandeered as a lookout tower by the Home Guard<sup>2</sup>. My father Lenard, who worked for the local firm Tucker & Sons., spent his days planting 12 ft saplings around local military establishments. He joined the Home Guard; his duties, apart from drill training on Sunday mornings, involved two nights a week at the Folly.

On duty nights, he would come home at 5 pm, eat his meal, put on his uniform, and go to the Folly. He would be one of three on duty. He would typically spend 2 hrs at the top of the tower on watch, then four hours asleep in a camp bed at the bottom, then a further 2 hrs at the top. There was a field telephone between the top and bottom of the tower to pass reports, but I am not sure how these were passed to the Home Guard HQ, which was based at the Services Club in the Market Square (now the Community Centre). At the time it had a wooden look-out hut on the roof. The Commander of the Home Guard was Major Cowell; he always wore a glove on one hand, possibly due to a WW1 injury. His sergeant was Norman Fletcher; during the 1960's, a hoard of munitions was found in the house in which he used to live<sup>3</sup>.

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1 Did Lord Berners built the tower to provide labour for his local area? It was, after all, at the height of the Great Depression.

2 It is ironic that Lord Berners' declaration, "*The great point of the Tower is that it will be entirely useless.*", turned out, within a few years, not to be true. I am sure that would have amused him greatly !

3 This was probably not intentionally illegal; at the beginning of the war, stacks of munitions were secreted around the country for use behind enemy lines in the case of an invasion, and many seem to have been overlooked after the end of the war. This was all organised from nearby Coleshill House. Ref. 'The Last Ditch' by David Lampe (Cassell, 1968), pp.144-148.