
Postscript

In January 1940 food rationing was introduced in Britain. In April Germany invaded Norway and Denmark, and in the following month Holland, Belgium and Luxembourg. Chamberlain resigned as Prime Minister on 10 May and was succeeded by Churchill; on the 29th of the same month came the evacuation of Dunkirk, marking Britain's retreat from the continent of Europe. In June Italy entered the war and the Germans entered Paris; the Battle of Britain followed during the summer months.

Even the English language was suddenly invaded by new elements: terms such as 'blitz', 'blackout', 'evacuee' and 'air raid shelter' were on everyone's lips. Civilians found themselves in situations hitherto associated only with armed forces serving at a distance from home: fathers doing their stint of 'firewatching' or serving as 'air raid wardens' took their 'tin helmets' with them, and children had to be reminded to take their gas masks to school in case there was a poison gas attack during lesson-time. But all this is, of course, part of the history of another decade, the Forties.