

National Savings and Warship Weeks

Introduction

Warship Weeks were held under the pretext of forging new and closer links between the people and the ships of the Fleet. These Weeks would be a valuable link between the many inland towns and the Royal Navy that for a majority was little more than the name of a Service on which a good deal could and did depend. It was not quite the same with coastal towns where the maritime ports had been linked with the Navy for hundreds of years. However the exchange of gifts would do much to increase the links. The Admiralty shields and armorial badges of naval vessels that would eventually adorn the Council Chambers of authorities of towns and cities would mark something of a return to the days when the King's ships had an intimate connection with the ports in which they were sometimes built and more often manned. The public would not be asked to pay for the service of the Navy but merely asked to lend their money to the country at a fair rate of interest with complete safety.

Warship Weeks like War Weapons Weeks before them were held to boost national savings. It was hoped they would not only raise large amounts of money by concentrated effort but have a more permanent effect of forming habits of thrift and minor self-denial during wartime. Additionally they were intended to attract new and enthusiastic voluntary workers to strengthen the local savings machinery, notably by creating more savings groups. Often tragedy prompted action as demonstrated by one woman who after the loss of her son on *HMS Royal Oak* ran a street savings group and thereafter became a fervent supporter of the war effort. One of the great values of these Weeks was they attracted marginal savers the so-called inflationary potential, the type who only saved when a physical object prompted by propaganda stirred their emotional and patriotic feelings. Unless more marginal savers could be converted to regular savers then a succession of localized savings weeks would be needed at shorter intervals and for longer periods. It was far more difficult to inspire regular habits of saving than to try and catch up periodically with the growth of the inflationary potential but there was no doubt that this was one of the Savings Committee's principal tasks and therefore a great and lasting value of these weeks.

It is important to understand why savings were required. In wartime there was a vast redistribution and increase of wealth as more people were drawn into war work, particular women. The government needed to take most of these earnings out of circulation for two main reasons. Firstly to prevent spiralling inflation, as goods became scarce and with more money available for spending prices would increase. Secondly the deficit budget would rise year on year as the cost of the war increased meaning the Government needed to borrow more. The first problem was controlled by higher taxation and rationing, the second was to a large extent overcome by the Government borrowing from its own people. The National Savings campaign was thus a constant effort to ensure a steady flow of regular contributions to the national chest as war costs increased and the budget deficit expanded. The general pattern however was for savings to increase during these special weeks and fall away after.

There were two main schools of thought regarding saving, compulsory advocated by the Economist John Maynard Keynes and voluntary by Sir Robert Kindersley, President and Chairman of the National Savings Committee. Compulsory saving or 'deferred payment' developed between October 1939 and February 1940 was Keynes preferred remedy. The sums credited would carry 2.5 per cent interest and were blocked deposits for most purposes. They would be unblocked and made freely available to the holder by a series of instalments after the war thus assisting the country through the anticipated post-war slump. The rights to deferred payment after the war would be widely distributed amongst those who had foregone consumption instead of being mainly concentrated in capitalist hands as they were in the First World War. Kindersley in contrast strongly believed voluntary saving was preferable to compulsion as when people were stirred to effort and self-denial through appeals or conscience as to their duty to the armed forces morale was strengthened and a sense of unity in determination achieved. This trust in good sense and patriotism was in accordance with the genius of the people. It was no good carrying taxation beyond a stage where it created a sense of unfairness or destroyed people's willingness to give their maximum effort, in fact the public would have perceived compulsory loans as taxes. Alternatively if they were victims of enforcement morale would weaken and dissension on a large scale was likely. Voluntary saving needed to harness public opinion while there was always a danger of exerting a kind of unofficial compulsion.

Although the Inland Revenue had its concerns it was believed that Keynes system could be administrated in some simple form. For Keynes to succeed he needed to convince both the unions and Labour. The unions subsequently went against compulsory saving on the grounds that though it might be economically necessary it was likely to have undesirable and unnamed long-term political and economic consequences. The Labour Party National Executive Committee objected to Keynes plan on grounds of administrative complexity as it would be difficult making deductions in pre-PAYE days. It was acknowledged even after modifications to Keynes scheme that it left untouched the problems of evasion by the rich and the diversity of individual capacity to save. Not unsurprisingly the NEC focus was on increased taxation of middle and higher incomes, war profits, rationing, price regulation and an improved scheme of voluntary saving. If after these had been addressed and prices were not under control and with the threat of inflation only then would it be necessary to consider compulsion. After thorough consideration the Chancellor, Sir John Simon decided to take a risk and urged the nation to make the effort to save voluntarily.

Warship Weeks

Warship Weeks can be seen to have originated from the First World War. A Business Men's Week was held in England and Wales between 4th and 9th March 1918 while a Gun and Warship Week (Weapons Week) was held throughout Scotland between the 8th and 13th April. Under this scheme a definite task was set for each town in the country. Each town was asked to buy War Bonds, or Savings Certificates to purchase an instrument of war chosen in accordance with the size of each town. Thus Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham and Glasgow were each expected to raise £2,500,000 for the purchase of a super-Dreadnought. Other towns were asked on this basis to raise cruisers, destroyers or submarines and aeroplanes according to their ability, machine-guns, tanks and howitzers were also included. The officials of the War Savings Committee expected to raise at least £100,000,000 by these weeks' efforts.

During World War Two to focus public attention and engender a feeling of direct participation by local communities in the war drive the government sponsored War Savings Movement identified specific areas of activity and requested local authorities to designate one particular week each year a 'War Savings Week'. Thus, nationally led, regionally coordinated and locally organized National Savings campaigns based on service themes enabled the public to respond to the challenge to meet financial targets set by local savings committees based upon the presumed economic capability of each local community. Although normal savings went on throughout the year they were overshadowed by these sporadic weeks when whole communities were encouraged to compete against their neighbours to see who could raise the most money. *The Times* stated, 'the National Savings Committee has wisely arranged to set comparable communities in generous rivalry against one another, the general idea of the campaign being to set counties in competition.' The first successful large drive of World War Two was War Weapons Weeks held in England and Wales between September 1940 and April 1941 when areas saved and invested in Government securities for the cost of war weapons including vessels but without adoption schemes.

On 21 August 1941 it was announced a new autumn savings campaign to stimulate savings would take the form of Warship Weeks, the intention to realize from the small saver £15 million per week over a twenty-four week period or £360 million. The aggregate Warship Week target figure for England and Wales was quoted as £366.5 million an amount divided between counties. Lincolnshire for example announced a savings target of £7,473,566 in November 1941 revealing this would enable the Admiralty to sign contracts for three cruisers at a cost of £3,466,566 through normal weekly savings plus four destroyers, two submarines and other craft at a cost of £4,007,000 through Warship Weeks. For the cost of three cruisers the 26 districts of Lincolnshire were split into three areas each with a final target of £1,200,000. Progress of the cruiser campaign was shown weekly in the local press on a County Indicator. As a commitment before the inauguration of Warship Weeks representatives of the savings committees from Lincolnshire's districts visited *HMS Royal Arthur* at Skegness to hand Rear Admiral Buckley (Commodore *Royal Arthur*) signed

contracts guaranteeing the cost of the £7,473,566, the whole event being filmed. What this meant was that each area partaking in a Warship Week was contacted to save a weekly amount towards a £150,000 weekly target over the 23 week period, plus the sum of the target for their adopted vessel.

Type	No.	Vessel Name (HMS)
Destroyers	4	Vanity, Vanoc, Wolverine, Wrangler
Submarines	2	Parthian, Taku
Motor Torpedo Boats	6	MTBs, 8, 25, 45, 66, 73, 220
Motor Launches	1	HM ML107
Minesweepers	3	Beryl, Franklin, Herald
Sloops	4	Electra, Enchantress, Pelican, Stork
Corvettes	5	Mallard, Sheldrake, Nasturtium, Myosotis, Polyanthus
Boom Defence Vessels	1	Signet
Total	26	

Lincolnshire Warship Week Adoptions

The public were informed that Warship Weeks were a further great effort to raise money by National Savings to provide the sinews of war in the shape of ships and vessels for the Fleet. Great results had already been achieved, but the Savings Campaign, no less than the struggle at sea on the land and in the air had to continue unabated until victory was won. The First Lord of the Admiralty, A.V. Alexander in his message supporting the Warship Week campaign stated that the Royal Navy had always been close to the hearts of the British people and the campaign would forge new and closer links between the people and the ships of the Fleet. The war brought home just how much the country depended upon the Navy for the safeguarding of Britain's shores against invasion and for the protection of cargoes from overseas which brought food, raw materials and the tools for victory. It was believed that public opinion tended to focus on the highlights of the war at sea and not on the detail, routine and risks of the daily work of the Royal and Merchant Navies. As far as the Admiralty's Publicity Departments were concerned such a scheme was chiefly a method of linking communities ashore with HM Ships resulting in local interest and publicity. Speeches from platforms throughout the land during Warship Weeks would make the public conscious of the Navy and bring home to the people the feats of sailors in every sphere which the Navy and Merchant Marine were risking their lives to bring home these precious cargoes. The public were continually reminded of the vital necessity of replacing ships and vastly increasing naval strength as the sooner the Navy was placed in a supreme position the sooner the war would end and the men return. The argument that spending on non-essential goods prevented releasing shipping for essential services was also emphasised.

The Warship Week scheme was introduced by the National Savings Committee in order to induce people to lend their money to the Government. In financing the war, the more

money lent the less people would pay in taxes, the public were told. In one way or another, the money had to be forthcoming and naturally all the advantages were with lending. The money was given not taken and bore interest during the term of the loan will full repayment on termination. Here patriotism combined with profit, creditable and praiseworthy profit from an action which was of service to the nation, according to the propaganda. The scheme combined an appeal for increased savings while forging closer and permanent links between cities, towns and rural districts and His Majesty's ships. The idea of allocating named ships for adoption by local authorities was that the connection between the name and the district might be permanent. The campaign allowed the adoption of ships to be linked to National Savings; the Admiralty provided vessels for adoption while the National Savings Movement supplied savings securities and organisation.

The scheme was outlined in a letter sent to local savings committees by the President and Chairman of the National Savings Committee asking a community to select a Week between 18 October 1941 and 28 March 1942. During this period the intention was to raise a sum by investment or deposit in all types of war savings representing the cost of building one of His Majesty's ships ranging from the smallest to the largest vessels. Locality size was an obvious factor hence a small town or rural district would sponsor a motor launch whilst large towns found sufficient money to adopt a cruiser or large destroyer, whereas a city could expect to reach the target required for a battleship or aircraft carrier. When local savings organisations invested sums of money during the campaign, they were in theory bearing a financial burden comparable to the cost of a vessel they were subsequently officially authorised to adopt. Local savings schemes were run by Local Savings Committees with the aid of Municipal Authorities, the latter being accepted as the authorities to whom the success of the local effort should be recognised by the Admiralty through the gift of plaques and certificates in commemoration of the adoption.

The adoption of vessels was dependent upon raising a sum of money, the target, through either investment or deposit in National Savings. Targets were based upon the build cost of vessels. To provide an idea of build costs an aircraft carrier price tag was £5.25 million a cruiser typically £2.75 million. For a large destroyer the target was £700,000 and the major items were broken down into £210,000 for the hull, £250,000 for the main and auxiliary machinery and £240,000 to provide guns and ammunition. The savings targets therefore were set at either £210,000 for the hull or £700,000 for the fully fitted vessel. At the opposite end of the scale the amount to be raised for the cost of a fully fitted Trawler/Minesweeper was £62,000 including £40,000 for the hull, £19,000 for the main and auxiliary machinery, £1,700 for armament and ammunition plus £1,300 for other equipment. The people of the town and district will be asked during that week to lend sufficient to build a warship. A special feature of Warship Weeks lay in the tangibility of the object; £10 million pounds was to most minds merely a distraction difficult to comprehend yet a battleship costing £10 million pounds to

build conveyed its own meaning and could be visualized as a concrete reality the result of work and effort.

The minimum objective for adoption was the cost of the hull thus locations with only hull targets once met were encouraged to save for the fully fitted vessel. This on occasion carried on well after a Warship Week had finished. Ilminster having raised the cost of the hull for *HMS Ready* during February 1942 carried on saving until August when the complete vessel was paid for, stating 'no further campaigns (Tanks for Attack) would be started until the debt for *HMS Ready* was cleared'. The totals were sometimes mentioned as having raised enough for the hull and main machinery but falling short of a complete vessel. A typical breakdown of the target of £225,000 for the destroyer *HMS Goathland* adopted by Axbridge Rural District, Somerset is shown in the table below.

District	Quota	Raised	District	Quota	Raised
Axbridge	£10,000	£6,173	East Brent	£7,000	£14,099
Badgworth	£3,500	£3,967	Hutton	£5,500	£4,108
Banwell	£16,000	£4,175	Kewstoke	£6,500	£7,329
Blagdon	£10,000	£7,902	Locking	£1,500	£4,051
Bleadon	£8,000	£7,327	Loxton	£1,500	£1,420
Brean	£2,500	£4,420	Lympsham	£4,500	£2,702
Brent Knoll	£7,500	£4,771	Mark	£9,000	£7,332
Burnham Without	£2,500	£1,121	Puxton	£2,000	£822
Burrington	£4,500	£5,749	Shipham	£4,500	£5,433
Butcombe	£2,000	£2,422	Weare	£4,000	£4,869
Chapel Allerton	£3,000	£1,268	Wedmore	£24,000	£29,500
Cheddar	£22,500	£24,006	Wick St Lawrence	£2,000	£3,145
Churchill	£8,000	£21,060	Winscombe	£20,500	£28,197
Compton Bishop	£4,500	£2,563	Wrington	£15,000	£35,070
Congresbury	£13,000	£13,274	Total	£225,000	£258,275

Axbridge Rural District

The Admiralty provided lists of standard naval items including the cost of a sailor's kit allowing both individuals and savings groups to select targets. Typical targets are shown in the table below. Groups either saved for single, additional or multiple items or often combined to achieve common targets. The groups were organized voluntarily and when wanting to increase or alter their targets they had to be agreed upon by all members. One group normally contributing £3 per week set a target of £40 for a Carley life float, this target was quickly passed and altered to a large life float costing £60, this was achieved with £7 13s to spare. Additionally money raised through other efforts such as concerts for purchasing naval items was passed to the Admiralty.

Object	Cost	Object	Cost
Bolt	2d	Sextant	£18
Pin for Shackle	6d	Small life float	£25
Hand lead and line	5s	Depth charge	£25
Chart	6s	Carley life float	£28 to £40
Marline spike (long)	8s	Binnacle	£30
Signal Flag	6s	Small mine	£50
Hammock	13s	Large life float	£60
Boats Anchor	£2	Depth charge thrower	£75
Oars	£3	Lewis gun and mountings	£75
Square yard of deck	£3	Anchors	£120 to £520
Life belt	£3 15s	Medium mine	£90
Signal lantern	£4	Large mine	£130
Ships bell	£4 10s	Magnetic compass	£150
Naval Telescope (small)	£6	Rangefinder and mountings	£150
Shell	£6 to £25	Diver's outfit	£300
Fathom of cable chain	£12	12pdr gun	£450
Patent log	£14	Destroyer Sick Bay	£1000
Binoculars (pair)	£17	Torpedo	£2000

Naval Items and Prices

Only a limited number of vessels of each type were available for adoption and the request for a particular vessel was passed to the Admiralty via Local Warship Week Executive Committees and Regional Committees. It was the local Executive Committee who decided when their Warship Weeks would be held and they who selected the vessel type and target figure. Their decision was assisted by looking at previous years fund raising particularly War Weapons Weeks and at the financial ability of the community to raise money so as not to be overoptimistic. However civic pride and community spirit were factors in preventing target figures being made unduly low. If wages or industry had increased in the area then this could be reason enough to increase the target and either adopt a larger vessel or switch from the purchase price of a hull to a fully fitted vessel. The cost of vessels would basically determine what the objective would be, for example if a town determined that it could raise not less than £120,000 and at the most £210,000 their choice would have to lie between a complete corvette costing £120,000 and the hull of a destroyer which cost £210,000. Vessels in-between were a submarine hull at £175,000 and a sloop £190,000.¹ A complete ship of any

¹ Typically a T-Class submarine cost £425,000 – Hull £175,000, Main and Auxiliary Machinery £175,000, Armament and Munitions' £74,000, Auxiliary Items – anchors, cable etc. £1,000

of these two classes cost considerably more than the stated maximum objective, so if they succeeded in raising the objective of a submarine or sloop hull any money subscribed over and above that would go toward the cost of equipment. Each district having set itself a target and selected a date for its Warship Week was allocated its vessel by the Admiralty.

When the adoption scheme was introduced in order to meet all requests from local authorities it became necessary to include not only completed vessels but those under construction or in the new build programme yet to be laid down. For ships under construction the Admiralty made a general rule that the civil authorities adopting HM Ships would only be allowed to communicate with them one month after the date of commissioning. From a total of 1,273 districts 1,178 Warship Weeks were organised by Local Savings Committees in England and Wales.

Scotland's Warship Weeks were projected to be held throughout the same twenty-four weeks as in England and Wales yet as early as 27 October 1941 it was reported in view of Stirlingshire having already raised £1.5 million for War Weapons Week and as large sums had left the county to Glasgow Warship Week the local committee would delay fixing a week until ascertained whether a week in April or May 1942 was acceptable to headquarters. In January 1942 the Chairman of the Scottish Savings Committee informed the Lord Lieutenant of Stirlingshire that the Chancellor was willing to authorize an extension in Scotland until the end of May for the time allotted for holding Warship Weeks. Nonetheless where an extension was sanctioned it had to be through exceptional local conditions (mainly climatic and geographical) that justified relaxation. Exceptional conditions applied to Roxburghshire which held its county effort between 2 February and 23 May 1942, during which period all money subscribed was credited to Warship Week. This meant the towns of Hawick, Jedburgh, Kelso and Melrose could hold their Warship Week during this period e.g. Hawick Warship Week was held from 16-23 May 1942. Meanwhile the Chancellor stressed the urgency of pressing forward Warship Weeks concluding them wherever possible by the end of March 1942. In actuality a high percentage of Scotland's Warship Weeks were held throughout April and May 1942. The number of adoptions normally mentioned are for England and Wales and generally accepted as final totals, however to this figure must be added at least 53 Warship Weeks that took place in Scotland and a further seven in Northern Ireland.

In Scotland the tendency was for a county to adopt a single vessel with the exceptions of cities and some major towns which adopted their own vessels. A county was divided into districts and divisions including towns each provided with a quota objective. The County of Argyll for example was contested between Kintyre and Campbeltown and Cowal and Dunoon the remaining districts making up the smaller figures; the aim to raise £300,000 to adopt the destroyer *HMS Inglefield*.

District	Quota
Kintyre and Campbeltown	£70,000
Cowal and Dunoon	£70,000
South Lorne and Oban	£70,000

Mid Argyll	£15,000
Mull	£15,000
Islay	£15,000
North Lorne	£15,000
Ardnamurchan	£15,000
Tiree and Coll	£15,000
Total	£300,000

Argyll Warship Week

In many instances it was anticipated that the objective would be achieved quite early in the Week, local committees were therefore urged to prepare plans for rallying the public to proceed to an additional objective immediately the target was met. Contributions did not end once the target was achieved as this was what the government wanted and the National Savings Committee strove for; additional savings and investments were all welcomed. It was often announced that a location would save for two vessels, meaning that after passing the target for their fully fitted vessel they would save enough for a second vessel but only the original vessel would be adopted. For example a town could raise enough for a destroyer and a minesweeper but only the destroyer was adopted, the minesweeper being represented as an amount.

Whenever possible a specific attachment to a place was used to develop ties and as a result so many requests to name vessels after cities and towns were received it was impossible to comply with all requests. By February 1942 the Admiralty stated that owing to technical considerations it was quite impractical to name ships after a town or area. This was to be accepted as a ruling and no exceptions could be made. However by this time the Admiralty had allocated a number of vessels to towns and areas linked with local names. Interestingly when Darlington asked for a ship to be named after the town following the transfer of their adopted ship *HMS Nizam* to the Australian Navy in 1943 the Admiralty pointed out that the only way that this could happen was if the money raised for adoption was given as a gift to the nation. Darlington finally accepted *HMS Barfleur*. Many towns had to change vessels as the Admiralty ran out of vessel types, particularly corvettes; a similar priced vessel was then offered for adoption. Others changed from unnamed vessels such as MTBs to named vessels, but this meant increasing their targets. The whole point was that it did not matter how glamorous or heroic a vessel was, they all formed part of the great service which had saved England before and would save it again. It was important that the people concerned felt themselves drawn closer in gratitude to the men responsible because of this new association. The adoption scheme was thus based on a clear principle and the fact that the particular locality to which a warship was allotted felt that it had paid for the ship by its savings and thus provided a strong natural tie between the locality and the ship.

As an incentive to raise money the Admiralty decreed areas holding Warship Weeks would be provided with the name for the type of ship allocated to them if previous to the week

they achieved the sum to the cost of the hull. This entailed leaflets being sent out by Local Committees to prospective savers and companies requesting commitments to savings before the event. If the hull target was achieved the vessel name would be communicated in advance allowing the name to be used for publicity, otherwise the vessel remained a type. Vessel names often were not provided by the Admiralty until some time after the Week was over.

To launch the campaign in the county arrangements were discussed at an early date. It was normal for the Admiralty to write to the Lord Lieutenant of the county who then held a conference of MPs, mayors and council chairmen to discuss these Weeks. Full civil recognition was to be given and every support to influence, stimulate and inspire the efforts of local savings committees. These in turn were normally broken down into sub-committees (investments, industrial, street groups, schools and publicity) but for these special savings weeks additional sub-committees were required: 'Business Premises' to canvass business houses and arrange for the decoration of the town, 'War Bonds' to undertake setting up of selling centres and selling booths at social functions, 'Social' with the assistance of various societies to prepare social functions and organize raffles and 'Procession' for their organisation.² The cost of the Week had to be funded somehow and therefore was raised by holding whist drives, raffles, dances and through the sale of Warship Week badges and programs etc.

In scattered rural areas it was nearly impossible to get a representative meeting during the winter months so the National Savings representatives started their Warship Week Campaign by visiting each village in turn and explaining to the voluntary workers what was being done and what needed to be done. From this nucleus a committee was formed responsible for the special activities in that village. Representatives were elected to the Area Committee which met in different centres so they all had the opportunity of attending some meetings if not all of them. Generally they had no large centre where anything of a largely spectacular nature could be staged. With no industrial groups there were no industrial deposits during the Week. What was needed was to bring the need for saving to every individual and this was best achieved by decentralisation. Each village had to feel it was part of the effort and so made its own arrangements for the Week. The objective per head of the population for each village was fixed; competitions in schools organised; a War Bond Committee formed; petrol allowing, wooden ship mock-ups would visit each village; an exhibition of MoI films along with a visit of cinema van would occur and a naval exhibition would visit whenever possible.

Once the hull target had been raised the community adopted the vessel along with its crew and the bond was strengthened by presentations in recognition of the money raised. The arrangement of the exchange of tokens can be summarised as follows: as soon as the

² Additionally voluntary selling agents were used to sell National Savings Certificates and Stamps

ships crest or plaque was manufactured by Chatham dockyard it was dispatched by the Senior Naval Stores Officers (SNSO) to the Clerk of the Council for safe keeping. Once the Admiralty was advised of its dispatch the nearest regional shore authority was requested to make contact with the Civic Authority with a view to arranging an occasion for the exchange ceremony. Members of the Admiralty Board were rarely able to attend ceremonies and in rare cases the Commanding Officer of the adopted ship or his representative would perform the ceremony. Where neither of these arrangements were possible a retired senior naval officer attached to the Speaker Section of National Savings Committee made the presentation. Thus through the Local Savings Committees and Civic Authorities arrangements were made by the Admiralty for the adoption of HM Ships in accordance with the war savings achieved, but having once done this the Admiralty took little part in the adoption process.

The effort of men and the amount of materials in the manufacturing of the adoption plaques was occasionally commented upon, but the Admiralty's reply was that the castings of the Warship Week plaques was of low grade metal unsuitable for any purpose connected with the war. The manufacture of plaques was given no priority over the production of weapons of war. In January 1943 Mr Oliver Stanley, chairman of the National Savings Committee said he was much concerned about the delay in executing the commemorative plaques to be sent to the local authorities in connection with Warship Weeks. The First Lord of the Admiralty reported that the delay was due to the necessary labour being required on the vital work of the Fleet. The Admiralty had in fact been criticised previously for the delay in the despatch, some local committees expressing their unwillingness to proceed with further savings campaigns until they received their plaque. The Admiralty in response pointed out there was no obligation upon any Committee to receive a plaque or present one in return.

Having adopted the ship, the crews were usually adopted. Local people seeking a forces pen pal were given the opportunity to write to members of the ships crew, children would also write letters and send cards. Others, seeking to provide comforts for servicemen or reading material and games could send such items to the men on their ship rather than to anonymous distribution centres. Throughout the war newspapers tell of packages being sent to vessels and the crew's thanks being returned. In turn the Commanding Officer or delegated representative would inform the townsfolk of the activities of vessel and crew through communication with the Council or local newspaper. Whenever operations would allow officers and men of the adopted vessels made personal appearances, such occasions being invested with the formality of public events in order to draw attention to the continuing connection between the vessel and local community. However the Admiralty pointed out that in order to restrict unessential travel and avoid invidious distinctions, ships could when attendance was possible be represented by the Commanding Officer or his representative and a strictly limited number of the ship's company as decided by the Commanding Officer. Unofficial adoption of vessels had started previous to Warship Weeks when committees, schools and various groups took it upon themselves to adopt a vessel, usually with a local

connection and with the intention of providing comforts. The only adoption scheme formally recognised by the Admiralty was the adoption of HM Ships by towns and boroughs etc in connection with the Warship Weeks of the National Savings Movement. Any adoptions outside this arrangement were therefore an informal one by agreement with the Commanding Officer and the interested party.

In April 1942 the Admiralty issued a Fleet Order drawing attention to the forbidding, except with prior Admiralty authority of the acceptance by naval personnel of gifts from private sources for acts performed by them in their official capacity. Wherever information was received of a proposal to make a monetary presentation to a ship by a town or made by a firm or organisation to make a gift in recognition of rescue work etc., or in any other similar circumstances the correct course was to suggest the money should be forwarded to the RN War Amenities Fund in order that arrangements could be made for it to be spent on the provision of amenities for the crew of the ship. Coincidentally the secretary of the fund had to be informed of the proposal in order that arrangements could be made in consultation with the Commanding Officer for the money to be spent in the most appropriate way.

Although the Admiralty gained important publicity through the warship adoption scheme there were disadvantages including the inequality of treatment between adopted and non-adopted vessels. There was also wide differences in the help afforded by adopting authorities by which, for example a corvette would receive much more generous treatment than a cruiser or a battleship. The gifts supplied also depended on the wealth of the vessels adopting area. Additional, complaints were made early in the campaign regarding the waste of materials used to promote Warship Weeks and the manpower used in their production. A tin brass-pinned badge for example weighed a trivial 24 grains, but when multiplied by 10,000 this equated to approximately 35lb. Later many badges were produced in paper. However, at the expense of the paper supply thousands of posters advertising Warship Week were pasted on windows and hoardings. Further many programmes and leaflets were made for distribution. Alternatively it can be argued that by producing these articles they were helping to advertise weeks and raise funds for winning the war. The sales of badges and programmes along with other fund raising efforts went to the organising and running of the weeks and any surplus was used in a number of ways. For example interest free loans to the Government, gifts to the Red Cross, sums put aside for ships comforts and any balance remaining kept for future fund raising events such as Wings for Victory Weeks.

The Merchant Navy were often mentioned at opening speeches, but there were no equivalent adoption weeks, however they had their own organisation 'The British Ship Adoption Society' which in 1936 became the link between some 500 ships and their adopting schools. Later the members of the Society thought it desirable to organize a separate society for the purpose of providing comforts for the seamen onboard ships. Accordingly there was organized the Merchant Navy Comforts Service, which began functioning on 1 February 1940. In 1943/44 Merchant Navy Comforts Service Weeks were held throughout the country

when money was raised for emergency rescue kits (clothing), prisoner of war parcels, comforts and other services for officers and men.

Warship Week schemes provided for the presentation to the Civic Authority in the adopting area a replica of the adopted vessels crest or an Admiralty badge as a memento. The adoption plaques as they were known were presented by the Admiralty on behalf of the people to the Civil Authority for permanent safe keeping in the Town Hall or Council Offices whilst parishes received illuminated certificates if they reached their targets. John Buchanan, an artist without hands produced the majority of these certificates completing over 3,500 in less than twelve months. In the majority of cases only one adoption plaque was presented, however where districts (e.g. Urban and Rural) combined to achieve the same target two identical adoption plaques were presented with appropriate inscriptions on their dedication plates. In County efforts where a number of towns combined to adopt one ship, numbers of replica plaques were presented. One of two patterns of plaques could be presented; the first a replica ships crest mounted on a wooden shield for vessels with official crests and the second a standard Admiralty badge for vessels without official crests. Initially the Admiralty stated that in the case of ships not entitled to a crest, a photograph of the ship signed by the Commanding Officer would be presented to the adopting area (after submission to censorship). Generally vessels down to the size of sloops were allocated ships crests, the exceptions being a number of submarines, the trawler *HMS Kennet* and MTBs which had common crests with vessel numbers. The Admiralty eventually changed the rules for vessels without official crests and presented the Admiralty badge previously mentioned. The adopting areas meanwhile provided suitable presentation plaques with coats of arms (where they had one) for display onboard the adopted vessels, many of these were returned to the adopting areas and Admiralty stores before the vessels were disposed at the end of their careers.

Unfortunately there were many war losses but this did not prevent communities adopting like vessels as replacements through additional fund-raising over an extended period, the links with the new vessel thereafter continuing. Unlike Warship Weeks it was impossible to secure investments from joint stock banks or insurance companies. The fund raisers relied on normal channels of investment through banks, post offices and savings groups, and therefore it was essential to spread the effort over a longer period. Adoption plaques were presented to acknowledge a replacement vessel but without the words 'Warship Week' or an adoption date. Many adopted ships were transferred to allied navies for example by early 1942 the United States had entered the war but was desperately short of ocean going escorts so the Royal Navy transferred vessels to the US Navy as part of a reverse Lend-Lease agreement while other vessels were transferred to allied Free Navies.

Once hostilities ended and vessels decommissioned the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty informed communities that the association between adopters and vessels would conclude. However, warship adoption did not end there as coincidental with Warship Weeks was an expansion of sea cadets and the formation of new units or Training Ships (TS), taking

their names after a towns adopted vessel. Some local units have now taken custody of adoption plaques. In future years the plaques it was expected would remind people of the war and the sacrifices made for them during that time and provide a lasting record of their patriotism. In many cases relationships have been maintained by contacts between associations formed by members of ships' companies after World War II and civic authorities in the areas of the country concerned. Reunions being held in the districts with appropriate memorial services arranged.

As time has passed and adoption plaques are being rediscovered the myth that a vessel was paid for by the local population has transpired. In truth this was never the case as institutional concerns raised the majority of the target through investments in Saving and War Bonds, the small investor and saver contributing their reduced contributions in Savings Stamps, National Savings Certificates, 3% Defence Bonds and deposits in the Trustee and Post Office Savings Banks. Money realised for adoptions were thus investments and savings lent to the War Treasury redeemable at a date after the war. The success of a Warship Week in reality depended mainly upon the support given to by leading industrialists and businessmen. To provide some idea of the influence of large investors, Dundee Warship Week with a target of £2.5 million was guaranteed success as even before the Week opened £2.4 million had been promised. The organisers increased their target to £3.5 million to provide enough for another vessel and announced it would be fitting if the small investor contributed the additional £750,000. In fact on the opening day £1,643,097 was stated as raised of which £1,615,340 was contributed through joint stock banks; the final total reached £3.75 million. Having said that a large amount came from large institutional investments a proportion of these investments represented indirect savings from individual incomes. The funds of insurance companies, building, friendly and cooperative societies all represented depositors savings. Rate-payers money, union and pension funds are also examples of re-investments in government securities while money lent to the Government and other investors by banks represented the accumulated savings of customers. The general population were also likely to contribute towards the paying of dividends for savings and defence bonds through taxation. The contribution of the individual incomes was thus far higher than the small savings totals implied. After six years of heavy taxation as a result of which large saving by the wealthy had been curtailed, small saving by many millions of small amounts added up to a huge total occupying an indispensable position in the country's economic structure.

National Savings and Warship Week Figures

Each town had one Warship Week the remaining twenty-three were normal savings weeks. There had been no reason that the sum of £12 million (normal saving) per week from small securities postulated by Sir Robert Kindersley should not be achieved. Further it was believed the surplus of possessors of large and institutional incomes was not being fully tapped and the £20 million a week asked from these could easily be found. On 21 August

1941 it had been announced that a new autumn savings campaign in the form of Warship Weeks should be able to realize from the small saver £15 million per week (increased from the initial £12 million) over a twenty-four week period or £360 million (for England and Wales).

The aggregate Warship Week target figure for England and Wales has been quoted as £366.5 million an amount proportionally divided between counties. This however was only the small savers contribution, if the £20 million a week expected of the larger and institutional contributors for the twenty-four week period of £480 million is added then the final postulated figure was £840 million. During the twenty-four weeks of the Warship Week campaign an accumulative total of £955,611,589 flowed in as loans to the Exchequer including the £545,640,770 realised during all Warship Weeks.

Therefore for a weekly expected total of £35 million from corporate investors and small investors/savers there was an increase in average weekly savings to approximately £39.8 million. Of the £955,611,589 nearly one third £314,713,007 came from small savers made up as follows:

• National Savings Certificates	£127,586,591
• 3% Defence Bonds	£89,927,145
• POSB and TSB Deposits	£97,199,271

Large and institutional savings accounted for approximately two-thirds namely £631,168,635 comprising:

• 2 1/2% War Bonds	£317,117,516
• 3% Savings Bonds	£314,051,119

The remaining £9,669,947 came from loans free of interest.

The amount realised in England and Wales alone for Warship Weeks with a target figure of £366.5 million was £477.766 million (Wales raised £21.5 million), Scotland £58 million and Northern Ireland approximately £10 million (Scotland and Northern Ireland had their own Savings Committees). In the 984 England and Wales savings committee areas excluding London the total subscriptions during Warship Weeks amounted to approximately £300 million of which £196 million was in large and £104 million in small subscriptions representing £6 7s 6d per head of the population for large savings and £3 7s 1d for small savings. London and its environs had a target of £125 million this was exceeded when £146,065,225 was raised. For propaganda purposes these were impressive figures yet in reality the London target only met the current rate of military expenditure for just under ten-and-a-half days.

The £545,640,770 in terms of vessels as quoted by the publication '*What Britain Has Done*' was equivalent to the cost of building 5 battleships, 4 aircraft carriers, 45 cruisers, 300 destroyers, 160 corvettes, 33 submarines, 267 minesweepers, 124 motor torpedo boats, 177 depot ships, sloops, monitors etc. These figures require further understanding in context with Warship Weeks; however they were certainly good for propaganda. *The Times* newspaper further stated that over a thousand ships were included in the chosen targets as eight

communities aimed at and reached the cost of a battleship while in the list were four aircraft carriers, 49 cruisers, 301 destroyers, 25 submarines, 288 minesweepers, 164 corvettes with a host of other craft. Again these figures require checking against actual figures but are almost certainly wrong.

Conclusion

The national savings campaign was a constant effort to ensure a steady flow of regular contributions to the national chest as war costs increased and the budget deficit expanded, it was always a game of catch up. Effort increased year-on-year putting more life into the campaign at more cost while results from real savings are difficult to define. 'Wings for Victory' and 'Salute the Soldier' campaigns would follow Warship Weeks. For large investors the swelling of figures by the exchange of idle bank deposits or company reserves did nothing to assist the war effort or reduce the risk of inflation a view the Treasury eventually came round to. It is also arguable that the final figures realized through the National Savings Committee give no clues to the aggregate of new savings coming from all classes of the community and consisting to a large extent of transfers from previous savings. The officials consoled themselves in the belief little harm was done and some good came out of it all. Moreover in the later phases of the campaign these Weeks had their uses in sustaining moral when judged in a wider context than the stimulation of saving which was their ostensible purpose. The National Savings Committee however was correct in saying that savings would help win the war. Indirectly savings helped materially to maintain supplies for adequate essential equipment for the fighting and defence forces. Rationing and the move away from a national to a war economy restricted what non-essential commodities and luxury items were available, while taxes and saving removed the spending power of people at a time when large numbers were in employment with the opportunity of earning higher wages.

Warship Weeks were based on clear principles and the fact that the particular locality to which a warship was allotted feels that it has paid for the ship by its savings providing a strong natural between the localities and the ship and ships crews. The scheme however caused a considerable amount of work for the Admiralty at a time when it was hard pressed with urgent war requirements, but on the whole worked satisfactorily.

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