**Memory of Ron Haynes being a messenger for the ARP.**

**WW2 People’s War - BBC**

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**People in story: Ron Haynes, Mr Keeyes, Ralph Carpenter**

**Location of story: Bicester, Oxfordshire**

**Background to story: Civilian Force**

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I lived in Field Street, Bicester. A man living opposite, Mr Keeyes, said to me, “You know the streets around here, I want you to be a messenger for the Civil Defence.” Well, it wasn’t hard to know the streets, as Bicester was only a small town then. I was 13-14 years old. The Civil Defence was based at Claremont House in Sheep Street and I was there for 2 or 3 days a week.

One night, in the blackout, I had to go and fetch the ARP Warden, Ralph Carpenter. I went to the British Legion looking for him. He was there playing cards and I told him that there was an air-raid and he had to turn out. He had a very good hand, a nap hand, and said I had to say I hadn’t seen him! I didn’t know what to do; I had to tell a lie and that was very hard for me.

On another occasion when I was going to the ARP base through the area where Queen’s Avenue is now, there were planes going across there dropping bombs in Bell Field. It was just exercises for trainee pilots, but I put on my gas mask and big helmet (they looked like chamber pots!)

Lord Bicester’s daughter was at the ARP, but it was too dull for her. She had lovely sandwiches; I’ve never forgotten those sandwiches!