Hey! 🔄 Today we’re starting at the beginning of our journey back in time. The museum takes you on a backwards journey of the history of Harrow, starting with more recent history. The Modern Harrow room has lots of things to look at, including many objects relating to World War Two. Lots of soldiers from Harrow went to fight in the war, but sadly not all of them came back. We’ve got all sorts of things that belonged to soldiers in this room, and I want to show you some! I’ve also been told that in summer we’ll have an exhibition in the Special Exhibitions Room all about Victory in Harrow and what happened after the war.

Now, this room we’re in is rumoured to have been used to make dairy products such as butter and cheese! My favourite! 😊 But I think it has a more exciting past. There’s a safe built into the wall of this room that’s never been opened...at least not recently! Even Margery says she doesn’t know what’s in it! I think it’s duck food, more than I could ever want in my whole life! What do you think is in there?

Try to spot it when you go to the Museum next time! See you soon!
This is the Modern Harrow room, which tells the story of World War II and the later 20th Century!
This case holds objects from soldiers from Harrow.
Several objects in this case belonged to 2nd Class Warrant Officer George Munt. There he is front and centre! He drove for the Royal Army Service Corps in World War II.
These are the medals George Munt received for his service in WWII. Using the list at the right, can you identify them?

The one on the right isn’t listed, but is an Efficiency Medal awarded by Queen Elizabeth II to mark 12 years service.
Soldiers and sailors also had to comply with rationing. Rationing limited the types of food you could get and how much you could buy.

Because it was wartime, food was at a premium. Rationing made sure everyone got a fair amount of food to eat.
This drawer holds objects from Aircraftmen during the war, including a Christmas card sent all the way from Egypt to Harrow. Wow!

“Aircaftmen” were men who served in the Royal Air Force (RAF).
These objects would have been owned by pilots in the Royal Air Force (RAF) and its predecessor, the Royal Flying Corps (RFC). They are flight googles, a gas mask/goggles eyepiece cleaner, and a cap badge.
Hi Time Travellers! Today we are going to talk about something that was on everyone’s mind during the war - bombs. The Germans had bombed London during WWI, and the government was worried they might do it again. So they created the Air Raid Precautions service before WWII. The ARP decided that to protect against chemical attacks, everyone needed gas masks - even children and babies! Civilian wardens were recruited to help sound air raid sirens, guide people to shelters, examine unexploded bombs, and enforce blackout - which meant all windows must be covered to prevent light escaping. To protect themselves, people built shelters in their gardens, in the street, and in their houses!

During the Blitz (7 September 1940 – 11 May 1941) incendiary bombs and parachute mines were dropped by German aircraft, and led to the creation of Fire Watchers, who guided emergency services. We have many records of ARP wardens and Fire Watchers from Harrow! It was during this time that the Battle of Britain was won, directed from Fighter Command Headquarters - Bentley Priory in Stanmore.

Later in the war, other weapons were dropped: the V1 (aka Doodlebug) bomb and V2 rocket missile. Overall, 509 bombs and four parachute mines were dropped on Harrow - including fifteen V1 bombs. We have several bomb fragments in the Museum collection, can you believe it? Harrow’s Surveyor’s Department created a map which shows where each bomb fell in the borough - the Archive at the Museum has this map, too.
This case displays objects from people who served in the Air Raid Precautions (ARP) service and the Home Guard.
These objects were used by people called wardens who were part of the ARP services.
They are (from left to right): a gas rattle, warden’s patch, warden’s helmet (top and bottom!), signal lamp, ARP reserve armband, button, and whistle.

Interesting fact: the gas rattle was modelled after a bird scarer. After the war was over, people painted them and used them at football matches!
One of the jobs of people serving in the ARP was emergency services. They were given emergency kits containing these objects to help if people were injured by bombs or gas attacks!

Do you have any of these items in your first aid kit?
This was one of many booklets published to help the Home Guard.

The Home Guard operated from 1940-44 and was made up of volunteers who were ineligible for active military service.

Their job was to serve as the last line of defence inside the UK to protect from invasion, hence the name 'Home Guard'.
Medals weren’t only given to soldiers serving on the front lines! Civilian men and women who served in the Home Guard, Women’s Voluntary Services, some ARP services, and other important roles were awarded The Defence Medal.
This case is called ‘The Bomb Case’ because it contains an actual bomb! There are also gas masks displayed.
Don’t be afraid! This incendiary bomb is harmless now. It is made up of two parts: the body and fin. It fell on Weald Lane, Harrow Weald during the Blitz.

The Museum also has pieces of shrapnel from other bombs, like these two which came from Grove Hill, Harrow.
In order to protect themselves from dangerous gas released by some bombs, many people had gas masks. This one is for a child, and is nicknamed a ‘Mickey Mouse’ mask because of its shape.

I don’t think I’d like to wear one!
This map shows every bomb dropped on Harrow from 1940 to 1944.
Hi there! 🗽️ Today we’re checking out what else happened on the Home Front. World War II wasn’t only won on the battlefield, but also by people helping in the UK. War work was everyone’s responsibility, and with many men fighting abroad, it often fell to women to take up the mantle back home. Many Harrow women served in the Women’s Voluntary Services which undertook activities like fire watching for civil defence.

Women also worked in large numbers in Harrow’s Kodak factory, which was important to the war effort as it made cameras and film... and maybe other super secret things! It was believed to be a target for bombs, which means the men and women working there were very brave!

But it wasn’t just the adults who helped - children played their parts, too. Everyone followed rationing rules, which put restrictions on food, clothes, petrol, and other items which were hard to find during the war. It was important to reuse and recycle as much as possible - can you spot the ‘Make do and Mend’ dressing gown on display? Children also helped their parents dig allotments to grow food for their families! 🍅 Do you have an allotment today?

People celebrated with street parties when the war ended in Europe in May 1945 - a day called Victory in Europe (VE) Day! The war officially ended on Victory over Japan (VJ) Day in August. I’ll be back later today for one more post about the Modern Harrow room - keep an eye out!
Women took on a lot of roles in the war...

...including working as nurses!
In Harrow, women served as Fire Guards, too. This armband may have belonged to a woman like Miss Watts, who was enrolled in 1942.

FIRE GUARD

Harrow’s Kodak factory kept working throughout the war.

Many women worked at the factory to help keep it running. Miss Parker’s pay packet shows she received a war bonus during her work there.

These film cannisters were one of the things made at the factory!
On the Home Front things were reused and recycled as part of rationing!

It lasted even after the war was over.
There were a lot of restrictions on food during the war, and ration books were issued to adults and children to make sure each person got enough to eat.

Many books were published about getting enough nutrition – including how to grow your own food! Do you grow food in your garden or allotment today?
VE Day marked the end of World War II in Europe.
It was celebrated all across the country, and of course in Harrow, too!

Can you spot Great Grand-duck Billeth at this VE Day party
in Valentine Road, South Harrow?
Hi! I’m back for today’s second post! 🙋‍♀️ After the war, people wanted to keep active and keep working as a team, and sports were a good way to do that. Sports in Harrow have always been very popular, from the traditional Harrow Football to the many cricket pitches in local parks. My favourite sport is actually Duck Duck Goose, keep your eye out the next time you see a group of ducks, maybe you’ll catch a game!

Harrow today is such a great place to be, and the people who live here are just the best! In 2012 the museum hosted an exhibition about the diversity of Harrow and some of its wonderful humans. Have a look at how some of them described themselves...what would a short description of you look like?
The curiosity cupboard in the Modern Harrow room displays sport in Harrow!
After the war, people began to play sports more than ever, and Harrow became a place full of athletic competition!

Do you recognize any of the sports equipment? Which trophy would you like to win most??
60 FACES OF HARROW

The story of Harrow from the 1960s onwards has been one of new communities arriving from all across the globe and making Harrow their home. Initially people came from former colonies of the British Empire, and then from all parts of the world.

Like the rest of London, the population in Harrow has changed rapidly, and continues to do so. This is reflected in many different ways, including the type of shops and restaurants on the high streets and the variety of religions practised here.

The 2011 census recorded 217 different countries of birth for Harrow residents, confirming it as the 7th most ethnically diverse place in the UK and the 2nd most religiously diverse in London.

Headstone Manor & Museum hosted an exhibition in 2012 to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee.

It celebrated the diversity of the borough, and illustrated how it has grown over the years.

The exhibition chose 60 individuals and groups that illustrate the rich tapestry of community life in Harrow, a changing borough where communities live, work and celebrate together. Their stories were also collated in a book, 60 Faces of Harrow.

Our story continues, and Harrow today is more diverse and bright than ever!
WE ARE HARROW

We are... a loyal royalist... a Bollywood singer... a park keeper... an ambulance crew... a carer...

We are... doing Duke of Edinburgh... re-cycling...

We are... Head Boy... from Afghanistan... Scouts...

We are... Harrow Stones Football... a rabbi... barbers... neighbourhood champion... a Paralympic torch bearer...