

Lights of London were dark during Christmas of 1941

By M. McIntyre Hood
LONDON—As I walked along the streets of London's West End the other evening, admiring the blaze of illuminations and decorations starting from Piccadilly and going up Regent Street, along Oxford Street in both directions from Oxford Circus down Bond Street, with all its shops aglow with its seasonal adornment, my mind went back to another Christmas season when London looked a great deal different. That was 21 years ago, at the Christmas season of 1941, the second Christmas of the Second World War.

There were no lights in the London streets then. The tightness of the enforcement of the blackout regulations made it an offence to carry even a tiny gleam of light coming from it. To walk on the crowded sidewalks in the heart of London on those evenings of 1941 was a feat calling for great agility in order to avoid collisions with other pedestrians also groping their way in the dark.

TIME OF AUSTERITY
So far as the stores in the West End were concerned, that was a Christmas season marked by evenings of austerity. There were no gaily lit windows, no decorations dangling over the streets. London, outdoors, was a place of gloom, no matter what festivities might have

been going on behind the shrouded doors and windows of places of entertainment. There was entertainment, inside of course, but out on the streets there were no visible signs of it.

In memory's eye, I could again picture these darkened London streets, which seemed to belie the fact that this was the festive season of Christmas.

LONDON ABLAZE
But before that festive season ended, London was ablaze with a different kind of illumination—deadly and disastrous. On the weekend between Christmas and the New Year, German bombers set the heart of the city ablaze

by dropping a hail of incendiary bombs on the area from the Strand to beyond St. Paul's Cathedral, and in the district around that famed edifice.

These were nights of terror and destruction. Looking east from Trafalgar Square, I could see the great masses of flame soaring to the inky sky. It did not seem possible that any of that vital area of London could survive this fiery furnace. And once the district was well and truly ablaze, the bombers from above started dropping massive high-explosive bombs into that charnel house of flame and smoke. The high-explosive bombs

halted the flow of water to the fire hoses manned largely by members of the Auxiliary Fire Services, some of them Canadian firefighters. Long lengths of hose had to be laid down to the Thames, and water pumped from there in what seemed like a futile effort to halt the progress of the flames.

HEROIC WORKERS
In the glow of the flames, one could see the firemen, the auxiliary police and other civil defence workers, assisted by contingents of troops working madly to control the raging inferno. They looked like figures etched against the fiery glow when seen from a distance. These two nights of the weekend between Christmas and New Year of 1941 were nights of heroic deeds by hundreds, possibly thousands, of just the ordinary folks of London, battling to save their beloved city from the flames.

20,000 Yule lights brighten Glasgow

By M. McIntyre Hood
GLASGOW, Scotland—Glasgow's city centre can boast of having the biggest display of Christmas lighting anywhere in Britain. This was the claim made by the Lady Lord Provost, Mrs. Jean Roberts, when the lights were turned on to give Glasgow's centre its greatest ever Christmas illuminations.

A fourth and more grandiose scheme has been erected in George Square, in the city's business heart. In all, an area of a mile long has been created in a Christmas fairland of light and beauty for the festive season. This is an indication of the extent to which Christmas is superseding the New Year holiday as the traditional period for celebration in Scotland.

OVER 20,000 LIGHTS
Over 20,000 fairy lights have been installed on Buchanan Street, Renfield Street and Sauchiehall Street.

lanterns, Christmas trees and 1700 stars. Five miles of cable have been used to link up the various schemes. And there are four miles of metallic, glittering garlands.

The cost of providing the lights, erecting, maintaining and dismantling them afterwards, is estimated at just over \$80,000.

Great crowds of people assembled in the city's business section when the lights were turned on, in two stages. The official opening of the Buchanan Street, Renfield Street and Sauchiehall Street section was on November 14, while the George Square scheme was scheduled for lighting on December 14.

"DINNA BIDE AWAY"
DUNBURGH (CP)—Bandmaster Maurice Pope, who accompanied the massed bands of the Argyle and Sutherland Highlanders and the Royal Scots Greys on their recent North American tour, says they have had scores of invitations for an official opening of the Buchanan Street, Renfield Street and Sauchiehall Street section on November 14, while the George Square scheme was scheduled for lighting on December 14.



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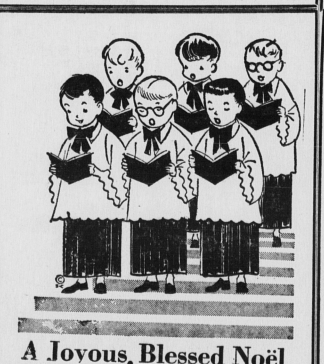
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