

# London project will mark the birth of the nuclear age

04/02/2015

**In God's mercy we outran Germany**

*This statement was prepared by Mr. Churchill before he resigned, and was based on Downing-street last night.*

**By WINSTON S. CHURCHILL**

**BY THE YEAR 1939 IT HAD BECOME WIDELY RECOGNISED AMONG SCIENTISTS OF MANY NATIONS THAT THE RELEASE OF ENERGY BY ATOMIC FISSION WAS A POSSIBILITY.**

The problems which remained to be solved before this possibility could be turned into practical achievement were, however, manifold and immense; and few scientists would at that time have ventured to predict that an atomic bomb could be ready for use by 1945. Nevertheless, the potentialities of the project were so great that His Majesty's Government thought it right that research should be carried on in spite of the many competing claims on our scientific manpower.

At this stage the research was carried out mainly in our universities, principally Oxford, Cambridge, London (Imperial College), Liverpool and Birmingham. At the time of the formation of the Coalition Government [May 1940] responsibility for co-ordinating the work and pressing it forward lay in the Ministry of Aircraft Production, advised by a committee of leading scientists presided over by Sir George Thomson.

At the same time, under the general arrangements then in force for the pooling of scientific information, there was a full interchange of ideas between the scientists carrying out this work in the United Kingdom and those in the United States.

**A REASONABLE CHANCE**

Such progress was made that by the summer of 1941 Sir George Thomson's committee was able to report that, in their view, there was a reasonable chance that an atomic bomb could be produced before the end of the war. At the end of August 1941 Lord Cherwell, whose duty it was to keep the Government on all these and other technical developments, reported the substantial progress which was being made.

The general responsibility for the scientific research carried on under the various technical committees lay with the then Lord President of the Council, Sir John Simon.

**Experts worked at Bushy Park**

*By Guy Egan*

THE fact that Sir John Simon, the then Lord President of the Council, was the one who gave the go-ahead to the atomic bomb project in this country, is a fact which is not generally known. It is a fact which is of great importance, for it shows that the British Government was not slow to recognize the potentialities of the atomic bomb, and that it was not until the summer of 1941 that the British Government decided to launch a full-scale research programme into the development of the atomic bomb.

It was, however, Sir John Simon who gave the go-ahead to the atomic bomb project in this country, and it was he who was responsible for the fact that the British Government was not slow to recognize the potentialities of the atomic bomb, and that it was not until the summer of 1941 that the British Government decided to launch a full-scale research programme into the development of the atomic bomb.

**The men who knew**

**BLAST**

**PLANE KIDNAP SCIENTIST**

*Snatched from Nazis*

A DANE who was smuggled into Germany who was wounded over England the Allies to perfect the atom bomb.

**PROFESSOR NIELS BOHR**

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**TWO GERMANS**

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Daily Express article about the dropping of the atom bomb on Hiroshima

A south London theatre will link with counterparts in Japan to commemorate the 70th anniversary this year of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima.

The Japanese city was destroyed on 6 August 1945 when the United States dropped the world's first atomic bomb.

Initial reports of the destruction caused by the bomb were censored but after the full effects, including radiation sickness, became more widely known in the UK, politicians, philosophers, scientists and church leaders came together to campaign against nuclear weapons with peaceful protests, marches, music and artwork among the responses.

The Bubble Theatre, Southwark, has launched a project to see how Londoners reacted to the news that heralded the nuclear era. Their research project has been made possible by a grant of £74,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). The information they uncover will be shared with theatre groups in Hiroshima as part of that city's commemoration of the traumatic event.

The research, much of which will be handled by volunteers, will cover a wide range of issues. They will set out to discover how newspapers in London reported the bomb explosion that destroyed more than ten square miles of Hiroshima and killed up to 135,000 people. The researchers want to learn how Londoners received the news, what reaction came from Japanese people living in London and how families of British servicemen who had served in the Far East or had been prisoners of war under the Japanese felt at the time. The project will cover the period up to October 1963 when an international Test Ban Treaty was signed by the United States, the UK and the then Soviet Union. The early days and protests by the peace movement will also be studied.

Much of the research will be based on recorded interviews undertaken by the estimated 180 volunteers. The information and personal stories gathered during the project will be presented in a number of ways including dramatic presentations of testimony, a new website and teaching resources available to schools. The archive of information uncovered will be shared with the Hiroshima Peace Museum.



[Daily Express article about the dropping of the atom bomb on Hiroshima](#)

[London and the A-Bomb](#)