

The Origin of the Resistance Movement in The Isle of Wight  
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January 1968

Answered urgent telephone call from Capt Spicer, chief constable of the island constabulary, to meet him at his office at Fairlee [Newport].

I was shown in to Captain Spicer who had with him a man in civilian clothes. Captain Spicer asked me what I proposed to do if the island were occupied by German forces. I replied that I should remain in the island in the capacity of executive officer of the Isle of Wight war agricultural executive committee. He thereupon asked me to accompany the man referred to a car in the yard for a further talk. I naturally asked Captain Spicer who this man was and he replied that he, Captain Spicer, would vouch for his identity and purpose. I was somewhat interested in this cloak and dagger business and retired. In the car, in the yard, safe from all eavesdroppers, he said he was Major Saunders and had been sent by the war office to interview me.

The Major gave his life story which astonished SAW [Watson] though he did not or could not give details in 1968. He told me that the British Government, through their agents in the German War Office were in the possession of all of the alternative plans for the invasion of this country. I did not know which plane the Germans would put into operation and that would only be known when the event took place. So far as our part of the country was concerned a plane was to seize the Isle of Wight and thereby dominate and control Portsmouth naval dockyard and the port of Southampton.

The plan he submitted to me was that I should organise a set of people throughout the island who lived no more than three miles apart but the setup should cover the whole island. These men should be known only to me and not to one another. It was vital to the plan that one should have a boat and to know the Solent so that messages could be passed across the water. Major Saunders would train me in the act of simple sabotage such as gelignite explosives and petrol bombs and in turn would instruct the others. I agreed to co-operate.

First SAW sounded out Leonard P Mew junior of Messrs W B Mew Langton, the Newport brewers. SAW and Mew had been at school together and Mew was a yachting man and possessed a motor cruiser. SAW recruited several men, including Tom Cowley of Stenbury Manor, Whitwell. All SAW's recruits met at Stenbury Manor. Each agreed to recruit four or five in their locality. In some secluded spot in their area, an underground chamber would be constructed, the underground chamber was to be of a sufficient size that the party could live in it and it could store equipment and ammunition and such like. Mew and SAW recruited three more men including a cafe licensee. Their dug out = on the southern slopes of the road to Ganetts Farm in a wood north of Standen House. The members enlisted as members of the Home Guard.

Held at IOW Archives – ref unknown.