

When everyone was digging floral gardens were filled with



■ Veg swap - Instead of flowers, the Cliffs in Southend becomes a site for growing crops, particularly beans and beetroot

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THESE photographs show how Southenders were really getting stuck in to the 'Dig for Victory' campaign at the start of the Second World War.

In 1940, every square inch of public land across the borough was transformed into a make-shift allotments. Where flowers once flourished now beetroot and beans were planted while the borough's parks were filled with vegetable patches and greenhouses.

The historic 'Dig for Victory' campaign has been celebrated as an example of true British grit during the Second World War, when a lack of food and harsh rationing meant that everyone had to do their bit.

And everyone did – even the local vicar is pictured in our gallery, getting his hands dirty. The Rev J Cooney grew potatoes within the grounds of the Church of the Sacred Heart in Southchurch and filled the rectory gardens with vegetables. Nobody was above rolling up their sleeves.

The gallery also shows men at work planting vegetables at the Cliffs, instead of the usual flowers. There was no time for selfishness. Even businesses had to put the war effort before profit. Rochford Golf Course



■ Divine crop - the Rev J Cooney with his potatoes in the rectory garden



■ Allotment expansion - a plot of waste land near Seaway is made into allotment ground for the growing of vegetables