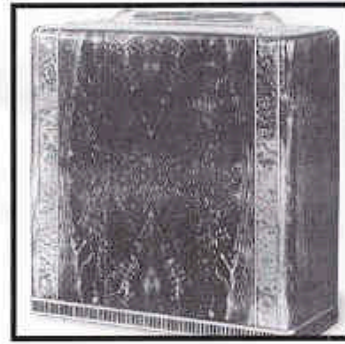




*Console room air conditioner  
Frigidaire 1936*



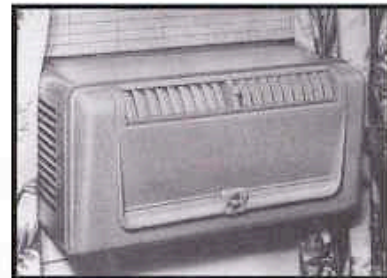
*Room air conditioning unit with rotary  
grille and walnut finish cabinet, York c.1938*

### **Room Air Conditioning Units**

The room air conditioner was an American invention of the 1920s, developed into a practical unit in the 1930s. Henry Galson for De La Vergne patented the first hermetic unit in 1932, which went into commercial manufacture with reverse-cycle capability (heating) in 1933. The patent rights were sold in 1937 to a consortium of manufacturers: General Electric, Westinghouse, Frigidaire, Carrier and Sturtevant. Just prior to World War II, a few units were to be found in the UK. Frigidaire was mentioned in trade magazines and Carrier UK sold units under the Weathermaster label. By the early 1950s the US market reached some 1.2 million units with 65 manufacturers, being dominated by Fedders, Mitchell and Carrier. Post war the UK market was very small. Some units were imported. A few special units were manufactured in the UK. The last 25 years has seen a wide acceptance of air conditioning units for smaller commercial premises and offices, these being generally of the split-system type with the compressor/condenser housed in a remote outdoor section. Any surviving examples from the 1930-50s are of engineering interest.



*Window-box conditioner, USAC c.1950*



*Window box, York 1950s*

## **FURTHER READING**

1895. *Refrigerating and Ice-Making Machinery*, A J Wallis-Tayler, Crosby Lockwood & Son.
1908. *The Mechanical Production of Cold*, Sir J A Ewing, Cambridge at the University Press.
1908. *Refrigeration*, J Wemyss Anderson, Longmans, Green & Co, London
1921. *Cold Storage and Ice Making*, B H Springett, Sir Isaac Pitman, London.
1952. *Father of Air Conditioning, Willis Haviland Carrier*, Margaret Ingels, Country Life Press, Garden City, USA.
1956. *Refrigeration and Air Conditioning*, Richard C Jordan & Gayle B Priester, 2<sup>nd</sup> edit; Chap.1 *The History of Refrigeration*, Constable & Co, London.
1975. *Air Conditioning and Ventilation of Buildings*, Derek J Croome-Gale & Brian M Roberts, Pergamon Press, Oxford.
1979. *A History of Refrigeration throughout the World*, Roger Thévenot, International Institute of Refrigeration, Paris.
1982. *Building Services Engineering: A Review of Its Development*, Neville S Billington & Brian M Roberts; Chap.5 *Refrigeration*, Chap.6 *Air Conditioning*, Pergamon Press, Oxford.
1985. *Halls of Dartford 1785-1985*, Harry Miller, Hutchinson Benham, London.
1994. *Heat & Cold: Mastering the Great Indoors*, Barry Donaldson & Bernard Nagengast, The American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers, Atlanta, GA, USA.
1997. *The Quest for Comfort* (Centenary of the Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers) Brian Roberts, IMI Waterheating Ltd.
1997. *The Legend of York International*, Jeffrey L Rodengen, Write Stuff Syndicate Inc, Fort Lauderdale, FL, USA.
2004. *Manufacturing the Weather: The History of Carrier Engineering Co Ltd, London 1921-70*, Brian Roberts (in preparation).

Additional information is available on the website of the CIBSE Heritage Group at [www.hevac-heritage.org](http://www.hevac-heritage.org)

