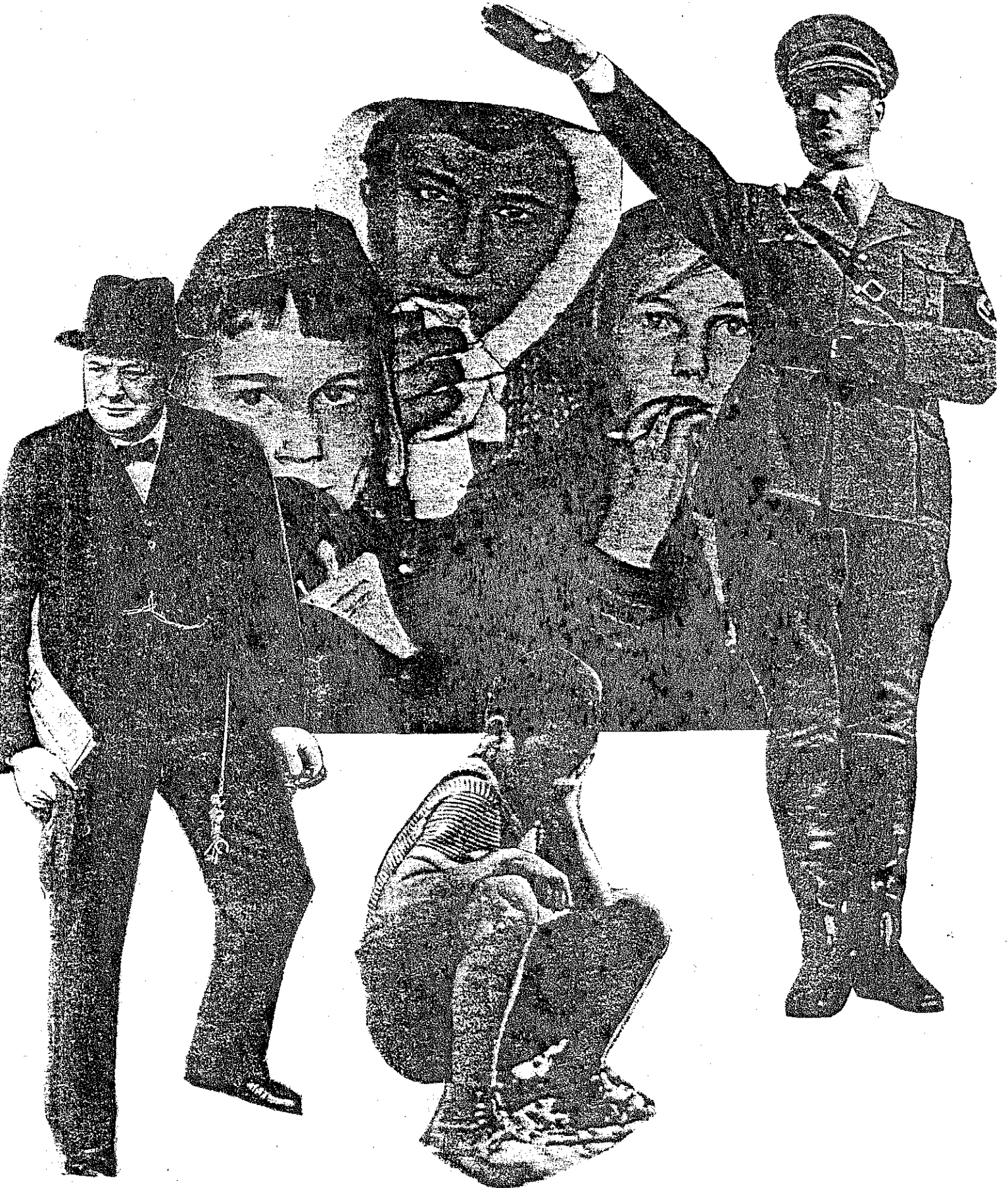


People talk.....

for
"careless talk"



Mrs Jones

I was 3 when the war started and nine when it finished. We lived in Llanyre. We had evacuees stay with us. First we had a mother with a young baby and two other children, they came from Bootle and stayed a matter of months. They didn't like it here. There was no fish and chip shop and they had to cook their own meals. Their habits were not ours, they were poor people, so my mother gave them the living kitchen, which was the warmest room in the house because it had the old kitchen range in it. They shared the scullery with the cooker and the washing up facilities with us.

It was a large house so they had their own bedrooms and there were two staircases, so they used the back stairs, so we didn't clash too much.

There was a high mantelpiece above the range and the Mother never washed the babies nappies, she would take them off wet and hang them on the mantelpiece to dry.

I was an only child and my mother had kept my pram and all my clothes and she gave this mother a lot of my old clothes, and she gave her the use of the pram.

We had a spaniel dog who always used to follow my mother around when she pushed me around in the pram and the dog did the same thing with the evacuees - She said 'I think I'm the Queen' walking around town with a new pram and this dog in tow.

But they didn't like it here because there was no-where to go - we lived a mile and a half from Llandrindod with only one shop and no transport apart from a bus twice a week.

They missed town life so much, they couldn't come to terms with the country. I think that's why they went back - they preferred to be bombed, I think. They missed the hustle and bustle and found it very lonely. She probably missed her own friends because country people are not like town people, they're slower, aren't they, at making friends.

We went to Oxford Road School Llandrindod but the evacuees were taught in the Church Hall by their own teacher because there wasn't room at our school.

Outside of school we played, I had my own friends but we had a large garden so I played with them.

My Grandfather lived with us, he was the billeting Officer. When they arrived they came from Llandrindod station to the Church Hall, as that was the only public room. I think it must have been rather pathetic because it was like being in a shop because people had been told they had to have evacuees, so they went in and chose what they wanted. There was one story of a farmers wife who insisted on having these two children because they were pretty and she didn't have any children of her own so she was going to have the pretty ones. It must have been awful for them but I think the people were very good to them

But our family went back to Bootle.

Then we had the other end of the scale, we had an Adjutant from Llandrindod, one of the Officers and his wife, he was very nice. We had two large rooms either side of the front door and my mother gave them one of these - the drawing room.

One day he was having this desk delivered and his wife pretended it was her house and said 'Oh I don't know which room I want this desk put in' - she was looking around - my father was very angry about that.

He was a real gentleman, very appreciative of what was done, but his wife was a different kettle of fish altogether.

I was an only child and looking back on it I must have been very sheltered, I didn't know what a swear word was and they used to quarrel and this was a new experience for me. One day he said to her "don't be such a bloody fool darling" and I thought this was terrific and a few days later I went up to my mother and said "don't be such a bloody fool darling" she nearly died I think.

My mother gave them the bedroom, and my mother's silver backed brushes and comb were in there which she'd had for her 21st birthday. They went to London for the week-end and she took them with her.

They had to share the kitchen which probably created problems, but we ate separately.

My mother had two half sets, of dinner service, a dozen altogether, they were almost identical, one had a squared pattern, the other had a triangular pattern but unless you saw them together and worked it out you wouldn't know. My mother gave this woman one set to use but she suddenly found that they were getting cracked and chipped and as quickly as she'd damage one she'd replace it in the other pile, so my mother knew by the pattern that this was going on.

She was tall dark and very smart, she wore fantastic clothes, right out of our range. I remember for her birthday her husband bought her a white fur coat and she was so thrilled she paraded around in it all morning, she wouldn't take it off. It was a very windy day and she went out to the coalhouse to get some coal and the wind blew the door and black coal dust went all over it!

My father's family were from Carmarthen and they were nervous of getting bombed and they sent up to us in Llanyre a trunk, and in the trunk was six of everything, six cups and saucers and six plates and six knives and forks and six tea towels and six sheets. So if they were bombed they thought they would have something to start life again - Carmarthen wasn't bombed once during the war.

The only night that was frightening here was when the German bombers were looking for the Elan Valley - they didn't find, but they were flying around.

We didn't have any sweets and there was an issue of boiled sweets to the school - they were all shared out amongst the children, I think you only got about two or three each. But I remember going into the Headmasters Office and the whole of the top of his table was covered in sweets and I'd never seen anything like it in my life!

What I remember most is the blackout. We had oil lamps at the vicarage and shutters on all the windows, so blackout wasn't a problem there. But in the Church... you couldn't have services in the evening because it was impossible to black out the Church windows, so we used to have afternoon services instead.

Meat was very scarce and the ration was very small. In those days there was more of a custom where local farmers would give the vicar a present when he visited. My father would never come back empty handed, he'd always have something like half a dozen eggs. They were very generous, and when the farmers used to kill the pig we used to get spare rib and I thought this was a real luxury.

Each radio had a wet and a dry battery and one of these big black batteries had to be taken to the garage once a week to be recharged. We would listen to ITMA.

When they bombed Swansea my mother said they looked out of the window of our house in Llanyre and saw a glow in the sky and thought that's Swansea burning.

I think the war taught us to appreciate everything we had. Things we now take for granted, food and clothes especially.

I think we learnt to get used to people who were quite different from ourselves. There has to be give and take on both sides for it to work. The local people were very, very kind to the evacuees.... they put themselves out.

Mr Jones

I lived in Builth and was 9 in 1940 when the evacuees came. We had two lots - a mother and two boys and then they left and we had another two boys about my age.

We had a lot of Railway people in Builth Wells and they were very decent, tidy, respectable people and they were absolutely appalled.

These kids were filthy, dirty clothes, they didn't know about toilets - it was shocking for those of us that lived there.

They were used to a diet of fish and chips. They looked on us as country bumpkins. Usually they were very tough and they'd bully us and knock us about.

A couple of their teachers came down to our school. We were Church in Wales and most of them were Roman Catholic of course. We had a stone fight once, the Church was on the other side of the road and they dug a grave they'd dump all this shale in a heap just the other side of the school fence, and we ended throwing them at each other. One got me on the head, nasty cut, so the Headmaster took me into his house and put sticking plaster on it. I went back into school feeling half sorry for myself and half a hero and one of their R.C. teachers saying to me 'ah here's the ringleader'. I won't say there was a lot of fighting but they were tougher than we were.

I think they were well treated but they weren't used to our sort of life. The two brothers that stayed with us were R.C. and they'd been taught that if they went to our Church they were doomed - and they used to walk two or three miles every Sunday into Builth for the 8.0'clock mass at the Catholic Church.

The difference between their children and ours was probably that they were left to fend for themselves a lot, they had to be more self reliant.

My sister and my mother were washing up and washing the dishes and one of the boys billeted with us said 'If our sisters had to do that they'd be crying their eyes out' - they didn't do any housework they were absolute slummites - I'm not speaking in a derogatory sense that's the way it was you know?. It was the general low standards and the poverty, you see.

They missed their families and they missed the City a bit - I think, some of them had never seen a cow before.

Nowadays, people are worried about Nuclear War, well in those days it was gas - we were told to have a gas proof room - seal all the cracks in the windows and block off the chimney so that the gas couldn't get in. I was very very frightened of that, not the explosions, but the gas.

What I remember, and it was a great treat for us children, was the ministry of information film unit. A gentleman called Cyril Parsons used to come round with this van, (he still lives in the village now), and show these ministry of information films—they were propaganda really—about how the war was going and about life in Britain....newsfilms....everybody used to enjoy them....of course we did n't have electricity so he had a little generator in the van like a little motor bike engine with a cable running into the hall.

There was a prisoner of war camp at Newbridge on Wye and they were Italian prisoners. They were very véry nice people, they had no 'guards. They used to work on the land and they used to make a bit of money by cutting hazel sticks into long strips and they'd make them into baskets—beautiful baskets.

The war saw women working in factories when the men were called up, and of course the men said, "Oh the women can' t do such a good job as we can", and the women were building aircraft and working in electronics factories and doing just as good a job.

The headmaster of our village school was a Lieutenant in the Home Guard....very important. He was not exactly a villain, but he could do little things, he could get hold of petrol because of being in the Home Guard. Now his wife's parents used to live at Brynmawr, about thirty miles away. Visiting was difficult because there were restrictions on travelling, making unnecessary journeys—wasting petrol. He used to wear his Home Guard uniform and he had a small gun which he used to tow behind the car, so that if the police stopped him he was on Home Guard duty.

There were American troops stationed near Builth and I remember the black soldiers came and sang negro spirituals at our Church...they had beautiful voices...like Paul Robeson. There was bad feeling between the white and black Americans. Builth was the nearest place for pubs and they had near semi riots between them. So they had a rule....one night it would be whites only and another night blacks only.

People must learn that Hitler was allowed to get where he did because people were lethargic, they did n't bother. If Britain and France had really wanted to they could have snuffed him out before he got going.

Barbara King was an evacuee from Liverpool who stayed on after the war in Wales

"When the war broke out I was seven. I must have been close to eight when I came here. I had been evacuated before for a few months to Southport. In the first house where I was with one of my brothers we weren't looked after. When my father found this out he took us away from there. When the bombing was so bad in Liverpool we had to leave again. I remember the morning we left. We were there on the station platform and I must have been quite tiny for my age because I was wearing leggingettes. We all had labels. The mothers had been allowed to come and see their children off - I can't remember seeing any fathers - there weren't very many men around at all. We were put on the train and you can imagine saying goodbye. Everybody was crying, Everybody.

We'd been told we were going away because of the bombs. We'd all experienced the bombs by then. We were told we were being moved out for safety. Well, that didn't mean a lot to a child of seven. All we knew was that we were being taken from our mothers and fathers.

After we were put on the train I can clearly remember my older brother lifting me up to wave out of the train. He'd have been about eleven.

We arrived, much later, at Builth Road station and we were all taken to a big hall there. We were separated into the schools we had come from and our teachers were with us. We were given something to eat then put on the buses. My eldest brother, because he was from a different school, was billeted round Builth Rd. way. My other brother Tommy and I were put on a bus and we came to Howey. It was dark when we got there and it must have been winter or autumn time because I remember the teacher wearing a fur coat. We all went into the classrooms and waited and people chose us. In other words if they took a fancy to you they picked you.

The lady that I stayed with wanted a girl and her friends said that they'd take my brother. So I lived at one end of the Village and he at the other. It was only a ten minute walk but when you're seven that seems a long way!

I remember first arriving at the cottage and the door opening and seeing a lamp light - I'd only ever seen gaslight before. The first day at School I remember a lot of the children crying - saying they wanted to go home. I didn't. I seemed to have settled very quickly. I loved the area, I loved going out to play. Of course I did miss my mother but the lady I stayed with was lovely and I was very well looked after. So much so, that when I left school and took a job in Liverpool for 6 months, I left again and came back here.

I passed what they called a scholarship in those days. Once you'd passed that you couldn't stay round here - you had to go back. But I did come back after I'd finished my schooling and was old enough.

I think for that lady I was billeted with I was the little girl she'd never had. She took in washing for the Army Officers. One of the first things I learnt to do was iron handkerchiefs. I had a lovely time here as a child. I'd spend hours playing by the stream, playing house with stones. In winter when the water was frozen we'd make a slide.

My husband talks about evacuees coming to Newbridge. They were grubby little things when they arrived but once they were washed they were like new pins. The children from Liverpool could yodel and the children here had never heard yodelling before. They certainly introduced a lot to the country children and vice versa!"

Clarice Oakley lived in Llandrindod Wells during the war as a young girl

"I remember the evacuees arriving in Llandrindod - some of them were pathetic. They weren't very clean. They'd been sent with only one change of clothes.

I worked at the cinema which was in what is now the Grand Pavilion. I was an usherette at first and I worked myself up to being on the pay box. From being reasonably busy in the Summertime to being dead in the Winter, it became very busy indeed. There were queues right around the corner and up the street and that wasn't just one day - that was twice every day.

Llandrindod was an OCTU - an Officer Cadet Training Unit, and many soldiers came. They took over all the hotels - the Metropole, the Glen Usk, the Commodore and the Rock Park Hotel. There were men and women as ATS came as well.

It was a very different experience of the war living here than it would have been in the cities. My cousin who lived in Manchester said that for nearly two years they slept in the shelter. She said she'd been frightened of thunder - but after the bombing raids thunder seemed nothing. She said that afterwards it seemed flat. It was as if she'd been exhilarated by it in a strange sort of way.

Later in the war the Americans came. The white ones were at Pencerrig and the black ones on Pen y Bont common. They'd been segregated in America and when the black soldiers came to the cinema at the Pavilion they were fascinated by the fact they could sit just where they liked. When the Americans left Pen y Bont some Belgian soldiers came. They had to de-louse them, they kept them in for 3 weeks and then they paid them and let them out. They went absolutely mad! I remember taking over on the last shift at the cinema box office and my friend told me that the place was packed with these soldiers and not one had gone in without a bottle. You see they'd gone to the pubs with all the money they'd got - they'd had a real good drink there and then they'd brought bottles of whiskey etc. They had to carry them out afterwards!

In the Elan Valley they tested the bouncing bomb. When you see the film the "Dambusters" you'll see one of the turrets of the dams in that sequence.

The cinema was open on Sundays as well when the soldiers came - much to the disgust of the Church people, who had to push their way through the cinema queue when they came out of Church. The Pump House (now the County Hall) was a military hospital. Men who'd lost their limbs in action (women too, as the war went on) were there. They'd come to the cinema matinee in wheelchairs. They used to have races inside the Pavilion. You could hardly believe the spirit they had, such courage".

H.C. OWEN LIVED IN NEWTOWN AS A SMALL BOY DURING THE WAR.

In April 1941 I was working as an errand boy for the Co-operative Stores, Newtown. One morning as I was making deliveries in Kerry Road, I was approached by a man about 5' 1" tall. He had a limp. He asked me what the huge buildings were behind him and I told him it was Pryce Jones ' Warehouse. Then he asked me what factory did he pass coming into Newtown on the train, and what was made there? I told him that I did not know. He then asked me how many troops were stationed in the town and which regiment they were and where the barracks were. By this time I was quite nervous and told him nothing. He walked into town and I followed him. He went into the library, so I went to the police station and reported what had happened to Sgt. Edwards. The man was subsequently arrested, and within hours he was taken away by the Military Police. I knew all the answers to his questions, but 'Careless Talk Costs Lives'.

DON HUGHES JONES.

I remember my parents discussing the fact that war had been declared-I just remember how frightened I was.I expected to see Germans running up the main street.

At the beginning of the war you were told about the "brave Finns" and the "wicked Russians".Towards the end everybody was talking about the "poor Russians".It was very confusing for a ten year old.

People on the Home Front came into contact with the war much more violently-the number of bombs for a start-than in the first world war.Without women in the second world war we would'nt have succeeded-they played a tremendous part.

I was aware of things changing-windows had to be taped and this sticky guaze was put on train windows to stop them shattering from blasts.Sweets were rationed except for things like liquorice root or cough sweets.We used to eat a lot of chocolate powder straight from the tin.

All sorts of buildings were taken over to house the troops,before they went to fight-requisitioning they called it.The soldiers used to make things for the kids-especially the little boys who had older sisters as a bribe to be introduced.When they came back from Dunkirk,kids were able to pick up an awful lot of stuff-because the troops had to be re-equipped.If you got a jack knife that was really something.

Something that was dangerous about the air raids was the shrapnel.You'd hear it raining down in the streets.The fire would go up from the "ack-ack" guns and explode,then the splinters or shrapnel would come down.We,(our family),had a lady who used to clean for us and she was out during an air raid;which they advised you not to do;and a piece of shrapnel hit her leg and opened it right up.It was very jagged and sharp.She kept that very piece.As children we would collect it.

At one point we all ended up with lice in our hair.I can remember the ritual of being deloused which was a painful process.You had to use these special combs,you had to have paraffin swabbed into your head and combed out with this very fine comb that scratched the scalp which was quite painful. Then these things would drop onto the paper and be squashed.In school kids would pick up fleas and things you don't here of today.Ringworm was quite a common thing-impetigo was another.If you told someone you had impetigo you might as well have said leprosy-no one would play with them.

Prejudice is a strange thing-it seems to turn on such small things.I was once in hospital with diptheria and the boy in the bed next to me was a Catholic and he used to lick his plate when he'd finished his meal.I think this developed into me misguidedly thinking that all Catholics did this.But it was'nt just children who thought those things.Many adults then held odd beliefs that would be thought ridiculous now-all based on rumours or silly stories.

Another phenomena of the war was the British restaurants that were set up by the government.You could go in and have a midday meal.The walls were decorated with murals -usually pictures of food-great big oranges and bananas pouring out of a horn of plenty, which was a bit cruel in the circumstances.Most people never saw an orange or a banana for the whole war.You'd get three tickets for a meal.The food was things like brown windsor soup,main-meal sausages,(or sliced beef so thin that when you held it up to the light you could almost see through it),instant potato and cabbage.Then for sweet it would be something like semolina with a great big blob of jam.

During the war all our games were war orientated.We had great difficulty mind you.It took us all our time arguing out who was going to play the Germans,because nobody wanted to play them-it was a case of eeny-meeny miney to decide.

The devastation of some of the bombs was terrible. You'd go to an area that had had a land mine dropped on it, there would'nt be a house standing-it would be just like open ground-everything was flattened. The devastation was terrible-but they did'nt drop that many of them. Looking back I suppose that Dresden was an unforgivable act by this country by Bomber Harris. On both sides complete centres of cities were wiped out. Swansea centre was a wasteland.

One thing that really worried me was my little baby brother having to wear his gas mask. It was big like a space mask and the baby's whole body went in. There was a concertina-like thing on the side to pump in air for the baby to breathe. You had to put the baby in every so often to get used to it, because generally speaking the babies yelled their heads off. The threat of having gas was quite strong and there was a lot of fear about this. But what really upset me was when I saw my mother pumping this thing and I asked her what would happen if anything happened to her. She told me that if she stopped pumping the baby would'nt have any air and the baby would die. I remember not saying anything but going away and planning that if anything did happen to my mother I would keep him alive.

I suppose one of the big tragedies of the war-any war-is that the young people have to go and fight. Part of a whole generation gets wiped out.

Nell Embrey was around 17 when the war started. She came from Bradford to work around Crossgates as a Land Army Girl. She worked on Pest Destruction. She stayed and now lives in Llandrindod Wells with her husband Terry.

"We were homesick. But the girls were all in the same boat. We were all more or less townies. We had a good time - restricted in some ways because we had to be in by 10 o'clock during the week.

There were 26 of us in Crossgates hostel. There were different kinds of Land Army Girls. In our hostel there were machine girls - they were ploughing, there were pest destruction girls, killing rats and rabbits, like me, girls who had to be up at half past 5. We had to be ready by 8.

Later I moved to Maealwch Castle which was a bigger billet. There were about 90 girls there. I had to learn how to use strychnine to kill the rodents and rabbits. Then the boy who had the job of collecting the rats got called up and I got that job - driving the truck round to all the farms. It got monotonous some-times.

You had to get permission to go to a dance and stay late. The Americans had a band - boy could they play! They really put their hearts and souls into it. Just as it was starting to hot up we would have to go (at eleven o'clock). The taxi driver knew us and would wait for a little while.

The cinema at the Pavil ion would keep seats for us if we were late working. Some boys would latch on to us because they knew they'd get a seat.

Before I left Bradford I remember there being a filling factory for bombs. We'd get off the bus and see these girls and men at about 8 o'clock coming off the night shift. They were yellow - it was the mustard gas. We thought - we're not going to work there. So we volunteered for the Land Army.

The war broke homes up. I missed out on going out as a family with my parents and brothers and sisters. I think the local farmers were quite sceptical that we'd ever be able to drive a tractor or do anything like that. But we did all sorts - knocking the tops off swedes, stacking. Our billet-the hostel - was pretty spartan. We had bunk-beds, a concrete floor, a little mat between each bunk and a coke fire in the middle of the room. One homesick girl made up her mind she was going home. She made up her bunk bed as if she was in it. Then she got out through the window, case and everything. The warden used to come round - you could tell she was coming because of her shuffling feet. She'd check to see if we were all there - well, we kept quiet till we knew this girl had caught the train - she'd 'escaped'. Some girls didn't like it - but most did. On Pest Destruction we had to put poison down holes, cyanide and set traps.

In the winter you'd be wet but you'd have to be scrabbling around in hedges looking for the rabbit runs. You'd have a pole across the shoulders with rabbits and rats hanging off it. You'd have to deal with maggots. Sometimes we'd catch a rabbit and it was pregnant but we'd still have to do it. We'd be saying no, but the rabbit catcher would just laugh and say "Go on". I remember doing that up at Radnor Forest.

We've had reunions since at the Metropole. Most of us have found we've got back trouble. We reckon it could have been the Land Army. We later worked with Italian P.O.W's. They lived in Nissan huts. They had the same life-style as us, they were in uniform- they did what we had to do. They were anxious to get back home again. My husband fought in Burma.

In the forces you learn to mix. You meet and accept people in the forces that you'd never have met. But on the whole I think the war was terrible.

My brother was in the R.A.F. He was involved in the saturation bombing over Berlin. His mate lost a leg. Another was killed in his cockpit. When he came back his nerves were terrible and he could hardly stop smoking. I think the war was wrong - wasted time, wasted money, wasted lives. Yes it was an experience but all these governments just make war and talk afterwards, when it's too late - lives have been lost".

Mrs. Croley from Brecon moved back to Wales from London during the war.

We were more like immigrants than refugees, when my two sons and I fled from London the day after they blacked out the London buses and streets. I was sure, no matter what Mr. Chamberlain said, that War was coming and I returned to the Land of my Fathers; to a cousin I had not seen for 20 years.

We went to Brecon, encumbered by gas masks and cases, only to find that there was no one to meet us. I didn't know until then that the postman had to cycle 6 miles and climb a steep hill to deliver my telegram to Maud and she had to pay 10 shillings.

Eventually a Mr. Jones, who knew my cousins, kindly drove us out into the country and up over Battle Hill. Trevor, one of my sons, was sure that we must be lost. There couldn't be any houses out there! At last we arrived at a gate and Mr. Jones said it was too rough and steep for his car, so he helped us to carry our baggage $\frac{1}{2}$ mile up that steep stony lane, and at the top there stood the farmhouse with Maud and Jack and their two small boys waiting on the steps. The kettle was boiling and there was home made bread and butter and Welsh cakes. What a tea that was! The two shy little boys soon had my sons trying to ride on the old fat sow!!!

Walking over fields and hedges to school soon proved too much for Trevor, so we moved to a big Medieval farmhouse $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile out. Folk lent me iron beds and straw mattresses and feather beds and a big table and a bench used at shearing time, and Maud lent me a horsehair couch and lovely standard oil lamp for the parlour...we were content. Then the evacuees came.

Everyone was asked to take people from Liverpool and London. I had twin boys from London's Dockland. Two utterly dissimilar boys, Jimmy was fair and plump, easy going, while John was thin, dark, and out to cause trouble.

They were all told at school and home not to eat anything in the hedgerows that had not been specifically passed by teacher or adult; but the first week John ate some blackberries and was violently sick after I had dosed him with salt water; I never discovered exactly what he had eaten as he would not tell me, and the others only guessed at honeysuckle or deadly nightshade, but my treatment stopped him eating anything like that again.

A lot of the evacuees missed the pubs and fish and chips so much they went back home. But my two were content, especially after their father and aunty came down just before Christmas and brought a big cake and expensive presents. Their mother did not come as she was expecting again, and had another pair of twins, exactly like these two, it was amazing.

I used to get milk from my cousin's three cows, and then one had an ulcer. The medical officer of health, Dr. Betenson, came out and ordered the cows to be

destroyed, and the children were tested for T.B. So the twins were taken to a children's hospital at Llandrindod Wells, where I visited them once, but it was a terrible journey in snowy weather; before I could visit them again, their father had come and taken them back to London. I often wonder what became of them, they would be over 50 now.

Mr. and Mrs. Parker

Mrs Parker - "I can remember when ^{we} were doing bread and butter for the children for tea, we had to scrape it on and scrape it off again to make it go round. And if they had jam we had to do some slices with just butter or marg on, and some with just jam, they couldn't have both. We had to make the bread go a long way".

Mrs. Parker - "Quite a number of German children had come out on their own. There was one girl I became quite friendly with, but looking back now, I think how little I appreciated their situation really. I didn't realise how lonely they must have been. She used to show us photographs of her parents but as far as I'm aware she never saw them again. She went to America afterwards...."

Mr. Parker - "During the war I was a medical student at Birmingham so I was involved in some of the air raids. I was involved in fire watching on the Q.E. (Queen Elizabeth Hospital). There were occasions when we were terrified with the raids, whether we were going to live through it, it must have some effect on you. I was fire watching on the only night that anything dropped on the Q.E., when they dropped the incendiaries. Normally the incendiary just drops and then it immediately burns at a tremendous heat, but on that particular night .. We had a place right up on the roof and on this particular night they dropped some incendiaries, about six of them, and we dashed out, dropped sandbags on them, which is what you were supposed to do, and because there was a lot of stuff coming down we dashed back in, and I don't think we stopped until we were three floors down. And that was the first night that they had exploding incendiaries, so if we'd have stayed out and said "Oh that's good, we've put that one out" - they would have just exploded. Before that they didn't explode, they just burnt. Through being frightened we saved ourselves from getting into any worse trouble."

Mrs. Parker - "At the end of the war I was nursing in Birmingham, and I was on duty on V.E. night on casualty, I'd had a morning off and I went on at 1.30 in the afternoon and it was very quiet. In the evening Sister said would some of us like to go out. Two or three of us went out into the centre of Birmingham to see the crowds and what was going on. Out in the streets people were singing and dancing, jostling and crowding down to Victoria Square. We were only away about an hour and when we got back casualty looked like a battlefield, there were people who'd got drunk and fallen down, I can remember a thirteen year old girl who was blind drunk, the police had picked her up in a doorway and brought her in. It was absolute pandemonium. So one or two of the day staff had to stay onto help the night staff because there was so much work to be done, so I volunteered to stay on. It was all minor things, I don't think we had anything serious, but all night long we were stitching up odd cuts and things. There were people all over the place, lying in the corridors, all the examination rooms were full, people were being sick, it was generally a bit chaotic."

Mr. Parker - "Even now one wonders what is truth and what is real propaganda, what one sees on the television. It's very easy to pick out isolated examples. None of us really know what goes on in Russia, you know "The Russians are terrible in the way they treat the Jews" and this, that and the other, but this is only hearsay over the television, isolated examples to say - that is what goes on in Russia. You could very easily take an instance as a reporter, you could produce a little bit of film from a British mental hospital showing a patient being ill treated, and then you take that and say "this is what happens in mental hospitals." And you could get an entirely wrong impression. It's such a pity that one can't get to know precisely what does go on."

LIVING IN LLANDRINDOD WELLS

I lived in a large hotel before the war. It was arranged that we would let about twenty or thirty rooms to officers, who were here with the Officers Training Unit, the rest of the hotel was full of people who wanted to stay with us for the whole of the war - they'd decided they would close their houses in London or wherever it was, and with their chauffeurs and maids they would stay with us. Most of these people were elderly and very wealthy, they would have suites of rooms.. That was fine throughout the winter, then in late April two men came in, in bowler hats and pin-stripe trousers, and they said to my grand-mother "We want your hotel cleared in three days, we override the army in this, we're from Roehampton Hospital and we're evacuating all the patients. We may also use the hotel if there is an invasion." In the end they gave us a fortnight. My mother and I had to go into a tiny flat, everyone had to get out. All the contents of the hotel were put into huge marquees and sold, every single thing was sold. People were buying half a dozen sheets for a shilling, lovely linen sheets, and blankets, everything going for nothing. They took my mother on as housekeeper and I was called up as a nurse.

To start with we had an influx of evacuees. Beds were everywhere you could think of, the lounges had about thirty beds in, it was packed. I was told to put my nurse's uniform on and come and wash the children, they were in a terrible state, dirty, filthy, they did their business on the floor anywhere, it was absolutely terrible, there was no discipline, and they were very unhappy little people. They were terribly unhappy, just little labels put on them and sent off. But we looked after them and scrubbed them up and tidied them up, and did our best to comfort them. From there they were housed, it was a stopping off place.

I think there was a certain amount of horror from the community at first, it was a shock to the system I should think, though they may have got the worst of the evacuees at our hotel, they were very deprived. I've talked to people and some friends of mine, they had a couple of children, and so have other people, and they still correspond, the children used to call them aunty, they really were very friendly.

We were very careful with blackout, we had black curtains over the windows, there was no light allowed. If you went out you had a torch but you had to keep it right down, cars had little slits to drive by. No street lights, nothing, it was absolutely pitch black everywhere, it was dreadful; but wonderful when you could have it on again.

I worked at the Pump House hospital for most of the war. It was terribly strange at first, it was absolutely shattering, because I'd had a very spoilt, cosseted life, and there we had nursing sisters who'd been through the First World War when life was really tough. They had come from being very uneducated, rough sort of women, they had come to positions of power, and my word they made us feel it. I was as wild as a rabbit of course, I'd be dancing on the tables and always in trouble, but we tamed them eventually. The worst one was called Battleaxe, she was a terrible woman, but in the end she used to sleep all night when we were on duty, put her feet up and I'd run the ward - complete faith, eventually, after four years. Eventually they trusted us and realised we were quite capable. You learnt a lot to start with. We had an influx of people after Dunkirk, they were putting people in any hospital they could find. They'd had only the first treatment and then straight to us, so they were pretty rough. One of them said to me, I was pretty young then, "Oh nurse, get me a hot water bottle, my feet are frozen". I rushed for a hot water bottle and rushed it back, and of course he'd got no legs at all. Roars of laughter! He was kidding me! But the paralyzed ones were so bad, because they realised when their wives didn't

write and they didn't bother with them, and then they heard their wives had left them and they were crying all night, it was awful. They knew they'd be no good again. Some you saw die gently, others not so gently.

We had a lot of people who pretended they were ill to get out of being in the forces. They'd pretend they had temperatures, all kinds of things, putting soap in their mouths, and putting a hot water bottle under their arm so that if their temperature was taken under their arm, they could stick it next to the bottle. They'd do anything.

One of the most horrific things was arriving in London station in the early morning, we'd travelled all night to save time (when one doesn't have much leave). And to find people asleep in the underground, it was terrible, every single night they'd have to go down there, it was a dreadful sight, the smell, and they were in bundles, bundles of people. We didn't know there was a war on here, not by comparison. Though we knew what it meant in the hospital, what a wicked waste of energy and life.

Mr. Rolfe

I didn't conscript, I had no choice in the matter. I got called up like my other brothers got called up. Your mum and dad accepted it, with a lot of tears of course. I always remember the first day I got called up. We went to Warwick, and we'd been travelling nearly all day. When we got there we had to walk about four miles to the barracks, and I was starving. We'd had nothing to eat, and we got up there and this corporal said 'put your kit there and I'll take you up to the mess room'. That would've been at about nine o'clock at night. And we walked up to the mess room; and if there was anything that I detested it was liver and onions, I'd never eat liver and onions at home, never; and we got up to the mess room, and we were really very hungry, and we got there and what do you thing was to eat? Bloody liver and onions! And I ate three dishes of it and it was marvellous!

I didn't go to Normandy till three days after D-Day and we went out on this ship and got there hours and hours later, after I'd been awfully seasick, in fact all the squaddies on the boat had been seasick, it was all over the boat, you slipped and slid and sat in it.....When we got to the other side, we went down the side of the ship on these rope ladders, and I kept going down and down and down, and I was going to drown, because we'd landed too far from the beach. And it was only by a Scotsman called Jock Snowdon getting hold of me by the scruff of my neck and holding me up that I didn't drown. A lot of squaddies got drowned when they got there, because they catered for everyone being about 5foot 6, and if you were 5 foot like I was there was six inches of water on top of your head.

All at once some German planes came over, we were still in the water at that time, and started dropping bombs on the beach, and they must have hit a petrol dump, all at once this petrol dump went up, and we could hear screaming above the noise of the anti-aircraft guns. We looked at the beach and we could see men running into the water burning, because they'd got covered in this exploding petrol; and I think I began to cry, I think I started asking for my mam. When we got on the beach we saw all these squaddies that had been burnt to death, all like black crisps, there was about thirty of them, and I didn't know what to do. I do know I was everso frightened, in case that might happen to me.

There was a camp, it was all trees, all barbed wire, well there were two camps inside, officers in one camp and privates and NCOs in the other. I saw this bloke guarding it, and I said "What's this for?" And he said 'These are deserters. They've got to know about D Day and they've deserted. This is where we put them'. There was loads of them. And what surprised me was the amount of officers that were in there. What happened to them I don't know.

Being in the army wasn't bad, not to start with. You met a lot of different people, a lot of Scottish and Welsh people, you were all in the same boat together. We were all youngsters, we were all kids, not a man amongst us. I was a reluctant soldier, I never wanted to be in the army, in fact very few of us did, but you had to make the best of it. You met all different types of people that you wouldn't normally have met. In our barracks there were chaps from university, chaps there from the mines, blokes from the countryside. You used to talk about your jobs and where you'd come from. It opened a new world for you in a way.

It was only when you saw a dead German that you felt sorry. You always felt sorry for a bloke who'd been killed whether he was a German or British, you

didn't differentiate between the two. If you got to bury them you'd do the decent thing, you'd treat them just as you'd treat a British squaddie, you'd bury them in a blanket, that's what we used to do.

I went on a convoy, we picked up some people from down in France, and we took them into a small place in Germany, and we didn't know what it was, but it was a concentration camp. Belsen. And what I saw there as a nineteen year old youth will live in my memory forever. We saw this terrible, terrible sight - all these bodies and all these people walking about like skeletons, and the stench was terrible. The chap in my cab was a colonel, and he got out of the cab and he started to cry. He'd be about 50 I suppose, I'd never seen an older man cry. And I always remember him saying, 'This is what man's inhumanity to man means, man's intolerance of man'. I'll always remember that, and really I live my life round that experience, that you've got to tolerate everybody as much as you possibly can. The days I was at Belsen were the worst days of my life.

We had a job while we were there to pick up German civilians from the surrounding villages and bring them back to a building in the camp; there the army cinema group had got a lot of film, captured German film that had been taken in concentration camps, there were things that the Germans did to some of the inmates, like experiments and that sort of thing, and some of the film that we'd taken at various camps, and we'd get these German civilians, aged about 15 to 70 to watch. And even then they didn't believe what they saw, they thought it was propaganda some of them. But you could see women fainting and men crying, so I suppose it did some good, made them realise what awful things'd been happening under Hitler and his terrible regime. I don't suppose they'll ever forget it.

It all just showed me how stupid war is, you saw all the damage that was done and all the horrible things that happened. A lot of people think that war is like a game, we had the Falklands, and they thought it was marvellous. War's awful, it's terrible. Man's dignity is destroyed by war. You'd see little babies, dead babies, their mothers still there holding them, and you'd think - this isn't war, it's madness. And that's what war is, it's complete madness, it destroys people, it destroys their dignity and nobody ever wins in the long run, nobody, certainly not ordinary people. It shouldn't be glorified.

It's intolerance that starts a war, one nation intolerant of another, and if children can learn to tolerate each other, tolerate people from different groups, societies, different countries, that would be one of the lessons children could learn from this war or from war itself. Children ought to be taught about the horrors of war.

I was one of the fortunate English soldiers that eventually ended up in Berlin. We were there with the Russians, I met up with a Russian soldier, he was just like me, he wanted the war to finish and he wanted to get home to his loved ones, he wanted to leave the army. I had some good nights with the Russians. One of the jobs I had in Berlin was to take the musicians for the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra to rehearsals in a barn about four miles outside Berlin. One day one of the musicians (he played the cello) said 'Could you pick me up early' because he had a piece to do for a concert. So I said 'Yes, I'll come and pick you up'. So I took him to this barn, overlooking Berlin, you could see all the devastation of the city. There were no windows in the barn, we made a stage out of some boxes, and this German got on this stage with his cello and I sat the other end, and looking out of the door there was a flurry of snow coming through.....and he started playing, and it was so silent, and this music was so sad, that I felt something coming down my face, and it was tears, I was crying. Listening to this music it was so sad. I was crying for what I'd seen.....Anyhow I took this man back to what was left of his house, and I remember giving him twenty fags, and he put his arm around me and he said 'Du bist mein kameraad'.....

Mrs. Rolfe

I was eleven when the war started. I remember going to school, I'd started at the senior school, and the first day we arrived we weren't allowed into the classrooms, we were all in the playground. We were sitting on the walls, and the teachers came out and told us that we'd got to go home until further notice. Well that was fantastic, because we didn't have to go to school, we didn't go to school for the next three months. Then when we did go, there'd be half a dozen of us in people's houses, and the teacher would teach us for half a day at a time, so we didn't have any proper schooling for about a year after the war started.

My mother couldn't have been more than six stone but she went onto the railway, cleaning the engines, and with her being so little and thin they used to push her into the boilers to scrape all the stuff off the sides of the engines, and clean them.

There was a prisoner of war camp for Italian prisoners, and they worked on the railway. They were quite nice people, we couldn't believe that the enemy could be so nice as they were. They used to make things and give them to my Mum to bring home. Belts and little ornaments, rings made out of half a crown with your initials on, and brooches made out of perspex that was used for aeroplane windows.

We didn't have a lot of bombs in Nottingham, we had about two air raids, one was a very bad one. We went into these air raid shelters that were built in the street, and you used to have sing songs in them and all the kids slept on mattresses.

You had to take your gas mask to school everyday and if there was a day time air raid, you used to finish your lessons off in the air raid shelter. We used to go to school without a gasmask just for an excuse, because they'd send us home again to get it. To make sure you'd got your gasmask with you wherever you went, whenever, they'd start throwing tear gas in the streets, and if you hadn't got your gasmasks to put on your eyes were all sore and runny for quite a while after.

We didn't really know what the men were suffering at the front. We used to have the newsreels on at the pictures, or you'd sit round the radio listening at home. If anything special was happening they'd come round with a newspaper shouting 'Specials' so everyone would run out to buy a special newspaper - they were printed very quickly and distributed, so you got the news, what was happening.

I can remember at school one of our teachers said, in front of all of us, 'Well at least Hitler did one good thing, got rid of a lot of Jews'. All the kids shouted 'Fascist, fascist, fascist - we don't want you to teach us anymore!'

When the war finished it was fantastic. Everyone who was coming home, all the neighbours would get together and trim up the whole house, and put Welcome Home, and everyone would be at the railway station waiting for them to come, and all along the street, they'd march them down the street home. Then we had street parties, we all dressed up. I dressed up as a Hawaiian with a grass skirt on (I was only about seventeen), and all the lads were pulling the bits of strips off me! People would be playing the piano in the street, and we'd all sing around the piano. Wherever the food came from I don't know. But everyone would make this food, sandwiches, cakes, buns and trifles.

Everything was on ration, like clothes, you used to go to a jumble sale and get a coat, then turn it inside out and make a new coat! Or you'd get an army blanket and make a coat of it and it used to be fantastic. If you got a parachute, that was heaven, you could make beautiful underwear, knickers, skirts, blouses, frocks, everything, dye it, do everything with it, stitch sequins on, make you look the belle of the ball. It's marvellous what you did really, you never wasted anything, you made something of everything you had. We even made pastry with liquid paraffin, because you couldn't get the lard to make pastry with, and it was beautiful. You used to make trifle of slices of bread and jam, cut the crusts off, put that in the bottom instead of sponge cake, and get some gelatine and colouring (you could always get gelatine, colourings and flavourings, but you couldn't get jelly), you'd make the jelly in the bottom, and you'd make some sort of a custard on the top with dried milk, then you'd make the cream out of white sauce, a bit of egg powder. They were lovely they really were. You did manage. In fact we were better fed when the war was on than before the war. We had rations of butter, we didn't know what butter tasted like before the war. Everybody was on the same, and everybody was working and getting money. It was good times in alot of ways. There was alot of comradeship, and friends.

Alot of it was fun, until the seriousness came out, you'd got a bit older, there were lads in the street getting telegrams to say people had got killed. It came home to you then. And then after the war finished and all these things came out about the concentration camps, you realised then what an awful thing war was.

Extracts from letters from Bootle evacuees.

"We knew quite a lot of things that the country kids didn't know....I suppose you'd call it 'street wise' now.....we were tough.....but they knew things we didn't - about the countryside. They could point at a bush and say we could eat the berries and then say at the last minute it was poison. We learned to trust each other. They'd never seen traffic, aeroplanes or bomb sites but they could tell us that the lovely birds we saw on the march were curlews".

Mr. E. Radcliffe
stayed near Erwood when he was 11

"When I used to hear the planes going overhead I used to get upset because I thought they might be on their way to bomb Liverpool!"

Elsie Law
stayed near Painscastle when she was 12.

Mrs. D. Hird from Bootle.....

"My husband had two older sisters Marion and Jean. They were both billeted in Radnorshire. Marion must have been a handful. The billeting officer ran out of places to put her. In the end she went to live with him. At one place she stayed she cut all the flowers in the back garden and sent them home to her mother. Another place the lady gave all the children staying with her a saucer with 2oz of butter and told them that she would give a treat at the end of the week to the one who had the most butter left. Well, at the end of the week Marion got a hiding because she had 3oz of butter on her saucer. Another time she wrote herself a letter as if it was from her mother asking her to come home and some lady in Liverpool posted it for her. So Marion was put on the train for home and she thought it safe enough to laugh and tell the truth. She got pulled off the train straightaway.

Then she went to live in some vicarage and the woman there made Marion wear a maids uniform to answer the door when she was expecting company. After a while this got up Marion's nose and she told their company that she wasn't a maid but an evacuee. When Marion was older and married she was the life and so l of any party with her tales of Wales!

MAVIS DOWNEY

The rector brought the wireless to church on Sept 3rd, 1939, and we listened to Neville Chamberlain's sombre words that "no such undertaking has been received", "therefore we are now at war with Germany". I was fourteen at the time, attending the County School for Girls, at Brecon. We had to carry gasmasks, the boxes covered with a navy material, to match the uniform.

After a while, the evacuees came. They were mothers and young children from London. It was difficult to understand them talking, and I suppose they had the same trouble with us. They were brought to the village schoolroom, and the local people went to the school to choose the ones they wanted. Gurs was a Mrs Anderson and Joan. She was a tall, rather gaunt woman, with dark hair.

They had the large room at the top of the house. It was not easy. Mother, busy with farm chores, and housework, used to resent Dad talking to Mrs Anderson, and she used to try to keep me apart to concentrate on my homework in the evenings. For the unaccompanied youngsters, it was to some an adventure, and they couldn't understand why their mothers were crying.

One girl of twelve, Irene, was the last one left in the village hall, so the billeting officer took her around to a couple in a cottage. The woman took one look at her and said "I don't want her, I want a baby". Not the best start to a relationship.

One thing the local women found hard to accept, was the habit of the Londoners of going to the local pub in the evenings, the village women would not dream of entering a pub in those days. Eventually, however, most people got on quite friendly terms with their visitors. There were several babies born. Sometimes husbands would come, on leave from the Forces.

There was Double Summer Time. The British Summer Time was carried on through the Winter, then the extra hour added on. At school, we were sharing the premises with a school called St Ursula's.

Several of the older boys from the back of the bus disappeared. They had volunteered for the Army or Air Force. A girl from the village had joined the RAAF. There were two boys in the Navy, and one lad became a prisoner-of-war. In church, the rector used to say in the prayers, "especially Percy Woodford" "of this parish". Although the farm boys were in a reserved occupation, there was still demand for more workers, because more land was being brought under the plough. There were wheat quotas, sugar beet, and potato quotas.

So then it was the turn of the women. The Women's Land Army took girls who had a fancy for country life, and trained them to be of real help on the land. Maesllwch Castle, Glasbury-on-Wye became a hostel for them, and every day, girls would be sent to wherever was the most urgent job at the moment. They would go threshing, hoeing, hay-making, or potato picking, depending on the season. At this time, soon after my sixteenth birthday, I left school, and became a sort of unofficial Land Girl.

It became the practice, about then, for wireless announcers to give their names when reading the News. There was Alvar Liddell, Stuart Hibberd, and, voice of doom, John Snagge. When he spoke, because something serious had happened, a great ship had been sunk, a devastating air raid had occurred, or many of our aircraft had failed to return from a bombing mission. Another great broadcaster of the time was J.B. Priestley, who spoke on Sunday nights.

The ordinary life of the people was pretty spartan. Meat was rationed, as was cheese, ^{sugar} butter, and eggs. We had a market garden, and could never grow enough vegetables and fruit to satisfy our customers. Sweets were rationed, you were only allowed 2 oz a week. Another thing which required coupons was clothes.

These had to be made to comply with a certain standard, not extravagant, and had to carry this label:-



While signposts and railway station names disappeared, posters on various themes became evident. Careless Talk costs Lives, Dig for Victory, Food Facts, and there was a Mr Chad peeping over a wall saying What, no Oranges (or anything else) with a view to lightening the situation. There was a great drive for scrap metal for munitions, and many iron railings vanished. My cigarette card collection went in the hue and cry for waste paper.

Petrol was rationed, and could only be obtained with coupons, and only then for what were deemed essential purposes. We were able to have petrol for our journeys to market in Dowlais, Glam. in the Austin 10 loaded with freshly washed vegetables, eggs, potatoes, flowers and fruit. You had to register for everything. There was a cartoon in the paper showing a horse and cart with someone walking behind with a shovel. The horse is turning his head and saying "Are you registered with me?"

Farmers' wives had to face the possibility of being stopped by food inspectors, who were on the lookout for butter, eggs (unstamped) bacon, and any other food product which the striving people could produce. If anyone was caught with any "contraband" of this nature on board, a very heavy fine could be imposed.

About this time, Young Farmers Clubs began to develop. One was founded in Gwendu, jointly with youngsters from Cricldhowell district, and we used to meet once a week in the Coffee Tavern in that town. Dairy calves were bought in Carmarthen, and were reared by the members, giving them a personal interest in the welfare of young animals. Feeding stuffs, such as Dairy Nuts and calf-rearing pencils, were only available with coupons, obtainable from the County Agricultural Executive Committee, the War Ag, as it was known.

This committee was responsible for ensuring that the ploughing and other cultivations were carried out, and farms managed in a proper manner to obtain the maximum output from all land in the country.

Mining was also a reserved occupation, there was a campaign to recruit boys who did not wish to enter the army, into the mines. Ernest Bevin was in charge of this, and they were called the Bevin Boys.

Some of the first evacuees went back, they could not stand the quiet of the country, but those who stayed made lifelong connections with their hosts. There was a second influx of evacuees to Cwmdau, unaccompanied children from Liverpool, and these seemed to settle down very well. Three brothers were held together on one farm, which said a lot for Mr Thomas, John and their housekeeper, Miss Jones. Many mothers stayed on in the area, and made new lives for themselves.

There were high wages to be had in the munitions factories, but unless the women used the special creams provided, their skin became the colour of custard. The wireless provided entertainment. There was "Workers Playtime" a half-hour of jokes and singing held in different locations. Somewhere in England was the usual address given. The compere was Bill Gates who used to sign off with the phrase "Good Luck, War Workers!" There was "Garrison Theatre" with Jack Warner. Tommy Handley had his show, ITMA, it's that man again, which, I believe, was evacuated to Llandudno.

There were some private evacuees. Perhaps people could not part with the children at the first chance, but bombing started in different cities and they sent them under their own arrangements. Two such children were Maureen and Janet Duffet, from Bristol. They came to us, and in between my tasks on the farm, I helped to look after them. They shared my bedroom, and on the days when mother was away, I would make them a special dinner of chips and spam, followed by a pudding called Creamola, which they liked. They visited us several times after the war, and their friendship was one good thing which came out of the chaos.

Pat Parris came to Wales in the war and was originally from London. She talks about her family

"I was 14 and living in London when the war started, I left after evacuation and apart from various leaves which I had from the A.T.S. I never really went home again. At first it was a bit exciting going on a sort of holiday, we didn't know how long it was going to last - going to the country after a while I started to miss my family. We were a huge family, 10 in all, plus my mother and father. We always did things together - so I missed that. We all played music or sang, we went to museums and art galleries.

Two of my brothers were already in the Army, they'd joined during the depression. They couldn't get jobs anywhere and the only things were going into service if you were a girl and the army if you were a boy. The third brother was conscripted at 18. After his 3 weeks basic training he went to Coventry. It was the night it was bombed and he was on the guns - quite a trauma for an 18 year old who was very dreamy and musical; his ambition was to be an organist. After that they sent him out east. He was in Singapore. He was captured by the Japanese and he spent the rest of the war in a P.O.W. camp. Not one of our letters got through to him for 6 years.

When they released the prisoners they took them to India first to feed them up. So when he came home his face was quite bloated and yet there wasn't the muscle beneath it.

They used to have six eggs a day to try and build them up because they'd be such a shock for their families. The only thing he told us about the camp was that he made himself a keyboard out of cardboard and he just used to keep himself amused practising on that. One day though, the Japs broke his hands with a shovel. His ambition had been to be an organist but he ended up getting a menial job in the Rolls Royce factory.

The two older brothers were on what was called 'A' reserve because they'd been regular soldiers for years. They were called up straight away. They both went to Europe. They were both at Dunkirk. They were both on the beach when the planes were going over machine-gunning them but neither knew the other was there. Then they went out with the eighth reserve to Africa, to the desert. One of them told me a story about it.

When you're out on the battlefield with tanks it's not like the home-front - you don't get air-raid warnings about attacks or "all clears" when it stops. But you have to have breaks for meals and such. There's a sort of tacit agreement about this. So when one lot of shells stop coming over - you stop with yours.

My eldest brother got up one morning and he saw a German inspecting his minefield. They both saw each other and both had rifles but they just said 'morning' "Well," my brother said "he was just a bloke doing his job, just like me, just out there inspecting his minefield". The younger of the two brothers went out after the fighting one day and got blown to bits with a shell.

My mother was a royalist and the first time I heard her say anything against the Royal Family was when she got this letter from the King saying how he died for his country - and she said "well it's very nice of the King to write to me but it won't bring Arthur back".

My sister Edith was in Service, Myra was a telephonist and ARP warden. My eldest sister Jill went into munitions. She and her husband, before war had broken out had been involved in getting Jews out of Germany. I was staying with them and made friends with one Jewish girl called Ira. In that long summer holiday we were great friends. We went into a shop and they thought she was French. She had let them think that, she said. Ira wasn't her real name and she wasn't going to tell anyone she was German. She insisted on going back.

She became a teacher. After the war, my brother went over. He found out that she'd been shot in front of her class - for being Jewish and "subversive". Betty my other sister was in the Army working with radar and on the guns. Maudie worked as a cook in the Naafi.

My eldest brother, Walter, told about one time he was driving his tank and he got to a crossroads. There was a man there guiding all the tanks, he said to this chap, who was a Welshman - "which way mate"? and this soldier said "well you go that way its inland but there are no Germans and that way it takes you to the coast but we think there is an ambush on the way". My brother said "thanks mate" and went on his way. He got caught in crossfire. His tank was at the front and next to him the Officer in the next tank had had his leg shot away and another tank was burning. Well, he and his crew got bivouaced in - they stayed undercover in the tank all night with German and Italian tanks all around. In the morning they decided to make a dash for it and abandon the tank. The crew ran and my brother's mind went as he was doing it. He could see men out of the corner of his eye kneeling down - they were actually stretcher bearers - he thought they were men taking aim to shoot at him. I said to him "I wonder what happened to the bloke at the crossroads who gave you directions". I mean, nobody was seeing that he did that duty. He could have got a lift on one of the tanks but there he stood. My brother said "If you wonder what happened to him, what nightmares do you think I suffer from?". Even now he's not right. He has so much pent up inside of him. Sometimes he'll suddenly pin his wife up against the wall - raving at her and then come out of it and not know what happened.

About me being evacuated? On the day I went my mother gave me an orange with my sandwiches. She didn't come with me, which sounds callous but they were told not to. As the train came I dropped my orange on the line - my precious orange.

Firstly I went to Kent. I stayed there for nine months. There was a terrible winter that year. I didn't get to school. The teachers had to come to me. I was terribly embarrassed my first Christmas of the war in this farmhouse in Kent. I was 14 and didn't believe in Father Christmas and had told the people I was staying with. My mother came and gave some presents and also brought things for a stocking for me. I was embarrassed because she should have known. I used to milk the cows there and helped dig the sheep out of the snow. It was my first real experience of being able to listen to comedy shows on the radio because we'd just had a crystal set at home.

Later I was re-evacuated. The trains were scheduled to avoid London so the journey took hours. We had out tin of corned beef and condensed milk and 8 ounces of melting chocolate. At some point along the way the W.V.S. and Scouts provided water.

the train was stopped and we were so grateful for this water.

When we arrived in Wales I was billeted with Mr Davies who was a mine manager. While I was there, there was a mine accident. I remember someone coming to tell him and he went very white and took a drink of brandy. Two men had been killed. They were the pensioners, the Davies's, and it was quite difficult for them to look after me. I then went to stay with another couple. The school I went to had a lot of extra curricula activities. I started to play violin in the orchestra. I also got involved in the debating society. Every now and then the 5th and 6th formers had to hold a debate and the rest of the school had to watch listen and vote. You were supposed to vote according to the arguments and not how you personally felt. You used to have to take an argument from the opposite side of how you felt. So if you were a rabid communist you had to be a Nazi or something, and if you were Jewish which a lot of us were you had to argue from the position of anti-semitism, so you had to learn how to do an argument and you learnt to understand the other point of view not so you would agree with it but that it was ammunition later on when you were really against it, that you'd know what they were going to say because you'd studied it from the opposite side.

It was while I was there that my brother was killed and my sister died of .T.B. I couldn't believe my brother was dead - because I was still getting his letters. The army post was slow.

After this I decided to join the A.T.S. I couldn't bear being at school anymore. All the talk of the exams etc. It all seemed so childish. I just thought - Arthur's gone - what can I do. I was in London in the school holidays and I just went to the recruiting office in Oxford Street. Eventually they sent me to Pontefract barracks for basic training and we had to say what we wanted to specialise in. I said I wanted to be a wireless operator because I didn't want to do anything to do with actual killing. I was sent to the North of Scotland for the training for 4 or 5 months. In the winter they brought us down to Edinburgh.

What I learnt from being in the army is the value of privacy. In a barracks room you can never have that. I also saw how many brains are wasted in the army and time too. Hours of sheer boredom. The stupid things they'd have you do. Whitewashing the coal for inspection, watering the garden though it was pouring with rain because that's what the order was to do that day. the bureaucratic mind! What's more, you can cheat efficient bureaucratic people because they won't do anything beyond their brief - so if you say "I refer you to the commanding officer" they'd say "Alright I'll do that now". They always did things at the same time so if you wanted to nick some fuel to heat the army hut, you knew the inspection was at 8 or 10o'clock. You went down at half past 8 or 11o'clock.

Tommy McGuigan was a child in Sunderland during the war

- When the war started I was just an infant at infant school. In those days they always expected the Germans to drop gas bombs and we all had to carry our gas masks on our shoulders to school - all of us. We got training lessons in school about how to use the gas masks. As it happened gas was never dropped. Initially at the beginning of the war we were getting quite a few ^{air raids} during the day because the Germans were getting through quite easily. Our defences weren't up to much at that stage. With Sunderland being an Industrial area we were getting quite a few air-raids day and night because they were after the coal mines, the shipyards, the steelworks, etc.

We had a shelter in our back yard - if you had a yard your shelter was brick with a concrete roof. If you had a garden you had a hole dug in the ground with corrugated sheeting bent over the top. The trouble with these was that they tended to fill up with water so a lot of people ended up sleeping in the house during the air raids. They also found that people were getting killed just as much in the shelters so they might as well stay in the house. Mostly people would shelter in cupboards or under the stairs because often even if the house got hit the stairs stayed standing and was one of the most safe areas.

We started off using our shelter. My mam had it done out like a little home from home. We had four bunks - for me, my brother, my mam and my nanna, bureau with comics and magazines, a candle and things like liquerice root and chewing gume. Also, children had what they called a siren suit - parents would put these on them when the air-raid sounded. They were like a little sleeping bag with a hood on and a zip. They'd be put on when the children had to be woken up and taken into the shelter. In the air-raids it was terrifying when you could hear the German bombers coming over because there was a difference between the sound of them and the English. You heard the bombs drop all around you. You didn't know whether they were going to hit you or hit a couple of miles away because all you would hear was dozens of high pitched whistles as they dropped.

One time we had a very heavy air-raid and we thought we were going to get hit because they were falling so close and my mam and nanna were both shouting - "My God "My God, it's coming for us! and I was only little and I was saying "Pray mam Pray"! Anyway they must have done because we didn't get hit. If you were at school and there was an air-raid you'd all have to go in the school shelter - a big concrete one with berches on all - four side. One day there was a raid and my mam was frightened for me and sent my Uncle Benny down as he was on night shift at the pit that week. He came and the nuns made him stay with us in the infants shelter and he was quite embaressed.

They insisted on him staying though. They gave him a boiled sweet which all the infants were given.

Once at home there was an air-raid and there was a rag and bone man in the back lane and my mam invited him into the shelter and he tethered his horse to a telegraph pole in the back lane. It was quite a heavy raid and when the all-clear went we came out and the poor horse was dead, wrapped round the pole. The 'Ali-Baba' sauce factory had had a direct hit and the horse had been killed by the blast. They must have been trying for the coal mine or the railways. All the women who worked there were out in the shelters. It stunk to high heaven because of the sauce and the pickles. The whole area stunk of vinegar for weeks. They also used to fire tracer bullets from the planes. On the runners which ran from the pit to the river - on the wall alongside it there were holes from the machine gun tracer bullets.

Once a big cinema got hit. Showing was Gene Autrey in 'South of the Border'. A land mine hit it and loads of people were killed. My Uncle George, who also worked at the colliery was in the home-guard and he went down to help get the bodies out.

He brought me a piece of land-mine from that horrible bombing. We, as children, used to collect things like that.

Bino's was hit, a big department store. People went to try and do some looting to get groceries or burnt carpets. The railway station was hit. It was a huge building with a glass roof which shattered all over the town. The carriage wheels went hurtling through the air and crashed through the windows of a sports shop. It was a terrible feeling to go round and see some areas just flattened and gone because of a bombing raid.

The goods yard of the railway was at the bottom of the street was where they eventually put the prisoners of war. Mainly Italian they were, with some Germans. The warehouse had bars on the window and they'd put them there on route to somewhere else. The children and even the adults seemed to have no real grievances against them and they used to take sweets and magazines and hand them to them. ^{through the bars} I think they, the prisoners, were glad to be out of the fighting.

One day at school we were told we were going to get a lovely surprise. Two boxes were brought in and we were each presented with a Canadian apple, which were scarce. This we had to treasure.

A GERMAN JEW EVACUATED OUT OF BERLIN

"I was 12 when I left Germany - just before the war started, in August 1939. I had a passport to get out of the country, on the back is a "J" which means "Danger, Jewish person."

There were different categories to get out, one was a category for children if they could find a guarantor, someone who would guarantee to look after them, that's how I got out. My case was a bit untypical. There was an English lady who lived in Dorset, who had a friend who was half English who lived in Germany, and when she was ill the nurse who looked after her had looked after my grandfather some years before, and she told the lady about me. The lady in Dorset was arranging for quite a large number of children to get out, she brought out sixty people. I only met her once for an hour, but she was a very remarkable lady. Her husband was totally bedridden and ill and she ran the farm by herself, all the plowing and the milking, in addition to organising for sixty children that she'd brought over.

My father was very active in helping people in the community, he'd been a judge originally, he'd ceased to be a judge in 1933 when Hitler came to power, all Jewish judges were kicked out. He then devoted himself to various organisations that were helping people who had nothing to fall back on. Because of that I knew very much what was going on. In 1938 they had one of the big acts against the Jewish community, large numbers of people were arrested and sent to concentration camps at that time, and the office of the welfare organisation was smashed to pieces so all the phone calls came to our flat, we were constantly all day answering the phone - I knew what was going on. You also saw things in the streets - places being smashed up, people beaten up. When Hitler used to speak in the big stadium, every radio shop was encouraged, perhaps compelled, I don't know, to put a loudspeaker outside the shop going at maximum decibels, to make sure that everyone heard what Hitler had to say. He ranted and raved against all the groups that he hated. I saw people who'd come back from concentration camps, before the war, and I knew that they were completely broken people. They were kept there for so many weeks or so many months, their hair was shaved off. They kept bursting into tears for no reason, they'd suddenly collapse, I suppose from what they'd seen.

Children in the schools were taught what dangerous people Jews were. I had to leave the state school I went to quite early on. Coming back from school sometimes, people from the state school recognised me and started chasing, throwing stones, saying "dirty Jew", I sometimes came home bleeding from that sort of thing. They were not discouraged from doing that, they were actively encouraged.

All that is why my parents wanted me to come out. I had a brother as well. I came out in August 1939, my brother was going to come in October, but of course it was too late.

In Germany before the war, people lived in very close-knit communities, people had a sense of loyalty to their community, and for certainly the people I knew, being Jewish was their religion, it wasn't a nationality, and so to become that much of an outcast in what you thought was your community, I think probably hurt many people more than anything else. My father had five brothers, three of his brothers were killed in the First World War, fighting on the German side, my mother's brother was also killed. I was told that I was German; then you have this sudden switchround.

I suppose there was an element of jealousy of the Jews, some Jews had got a fairly arrogant attitude - but then Jews are the only people who are allowed to be anti-semites! At the time the Jewish people were the convenient scapegoats to blame things on, just like today people tend to

blame things on other kinds of immigrants. A cousin of mine was interned over here in 1940, and you weren't allowed out until you'd got a job. He was a toolmaker amongst many other things, and he got a job at an aircraft company, making engines for Spitfires, he got a job as an inspector - it was in Liverpool - and one of the other inspectors was Welsh. There was a certain amount of anti feeling towards my cousin because he was foreign, and the Welsh chap came up to him and said "I can understand exactly how you feel, I'm also treated like a foreigner here." Everyone's a foreigner somewhere.

When I was living in Germany I was also aware, which perhaps many people were not, that there was a resistance in Germany, which possibly helped. We lived in a block of flats, as most people did in Berlin, on the top floor, and on the same floor there lived some people who were very much opposed to the Nazis - eventually both the husband and wife were taken away and never seen again.

I had learnt a bit of English at school, but schooling was interrupted with all this going on. But there was an interesting thing; I was pretty lazy at school in those days, except for the things that interested me, but I found that when it was a particularly harrowing time, like in 1938 when all these arrests were going on, that to bury yourself in schoolwork was one of the best ways of calming your nerves.

When the war started I knew that there was a considerable risk that I wouldn't see my parents again. I was physically sick nearly everyday in the first two or three months because of that. I was so worried about it. I felt very well looked after, but I remember feeling very distressed that they didn't allow me to see the newspapers; I think that they thought that they were protecting me from the nasty things that were going on, but before that I'd been in the thick of it and read all the newspapers, and I knew. So that upset me.

There were of course some anti-German, anti-Jewish boys in the school, one or two, but it wasn't deepseated, it had obviously been imposed on them by adults, because when we got to know each other it disappeared, they forgot about it.

I collected, as a child would under the circumstances I suppose, all the letters that I had from my parents - in the early days I had letters that had been sent via neutral countries. Legally the only thing you could do was write a letter through the Red Cross - I had a reply from my father, in his own handwriting : "For your wishes thank you very much, Nobody's ill here, We hope the new year will be nicer than the old one was," - he'd made a little rhyme out of it.

In the early period, one still hoped that they might have survived. I knew that they had been taken to a camp, I knew nothing more than that. Somebody they knew wrote to somebody - indirect post - that they'd been taken away. They had these trains to the east, one went to Au chwitz, but I don't know beyond that. That was in 1942, I knew about it about two months after it had happened.

Various people knew what had happened, when my parents were finally taken away to a concentration camp, and there was nobody at all who could think of anything to say. I was fifteen at that time, and I was distressed by that.

Immediately after the war, one tried to trace people, see if anyone had survived, and I thought of going over there, but where do you go? To get any information from Eastern Europe was very difficult. The Red Cross person put me in touch with the Search Organisation that was set up, but they didn't find anything at all. Some people kept saying "There's still a chance" because some people had survived pretending to be German prisoners of war and that sort of thing, it was only ones

or twos, but they clutched at straws.

I went back once to Berlin, to look at places, which was quite strange. In terms of people there was no feeling left at all, but in terms of trees and stones and things like that.. obviously as a small child I was taken to parks for example, and in one of the parks I visited while I was there, there was a stone seat that I'd forgotten all about, and there were some stones lying about that I recognised, and there was a tree that I recognised. I remembered the general layout of the place, but there was also a strong feeling about it, I suppose as a young child of two or three I must have spent hours and hours playing with a stone or whatever it was. But the stores and shops and the people milling around were extremely alien to me. I would have thought somehow that people who were being friendly, with similar faces, would somehow stir something, but there was nothing at all.

I had no contact with any relation for many years living in Britain, so in many ways I became much more integrated into the society. I feel Britain is my country.

MRS. PARTON-DAVIES

Before September 3rd 1939, the day that war was finally declared with the Germans, there was an air of uneasiness and tension within every household. An impending sense of doom did dominate our thoughts. "What was going to happen?", words on the lips of all adults.

Little boys who knew no better, walked around shouting foolishly and thoughtlessly "we want war", these children felt no fear.

The word evacuation was now used frequently, and we were all issued with a gas mask and carrying case. For a child this was something quite strange but not too frightening, maybe it was even a little exciting. How were we to know the true significance should the real necessity arise for the use of a gas mask.

Eventually a decision was made, evacuation would take place. Children were to leave London to go to the Country where they would be safer than by staying in the City. The children were told that they were only going away for a short holiday. Possibly this was told them to allay any fears.

However, the younger members were not particularly concerned with what the future may hold, just with the immediate talk of a holiday. For many the idea of going away with school friends created great excitement. Holidays did not exist for the majority. There was plenty of poor families in London at that time with no hope of ever venturing further than local parks and play grounds.

At 12 years, and being the eldest, I was quite the little mother helping to care for two brothers aged 7 and 8, and a little sister of 2.

Mothers were instructed to pack a bag or case of clothes for each child plus a pack of food for the journey. All were to meet at their particular school ready to leave for somewhere in the "Country".

My Mother wanted me stay with "The Boys" (a term used in my family when referring to my two brothers). So instead of going away with my own school, I happily forfeited my Grammar Schooling to remain with Charles and Jack, my brothers. Education was forgotten for the time being. The urgency of safety was the all important factor and took prevalence over all.

On the 1st September, we made final preparations to leave our home in Holborn. The boys were dressed in their Sunday best clothes and my mother suggested that I wore my smart school uniform. I believe her words were to the effect, that the uniform would create a good impression. She was quite right in her assumptions.

Little did we know that it would be 6 years and more before most families would be totally re-united.

We were not happy at the parting but I now had to face my responsibilities and hide my fears, I had two somewhat tearful brothers to console and care for. My mother promised that she would see us soon.

I recall quite vividly standing on the platform at Kingsway. Somehow and suddenly there wasn't so much exciting chatter after all, just a crowd of pale-faced kids who had finally realised that a parting had taken place.

Gone were almost all of the thrilling thoughts of that promised holiday, to be replaced by the significance of leaving behind parents and possibly a baby sister or brother, parents from whom they had never before been separated except maybe for a day away at the seaside with the local Sunday School.

Now and here was a crowd of kids dressed in the best clothes which had been collected for the occasion, clutching carrier bags, small cases filled with a shabby change of clothing and carrying a gas mask in its container by a strap.

Late afternoon we reached Cirencester a small town in Gloucestershire, on the first leg of our journey. The second stage was by coach which took us to Fairford, a village 9 miles away.

Travelling on the coach with us was Mr Hedges. Mr Hedges was the Headmaster of Fairford School and had met the train to welcome us.

My smart uniform had already created the anticipated impression. Before long, it was suggested that I should stay with the Headmaster and his wife in their house during the evacuation period. I had been "chosen".

On reaching Fairford, we were taken to the local Church School. The small main hall had been set up with tressle tables on which were placed sandwiches and diluted orange juice. The local clubs and Boy Scouts were assembled to greet us and immediately began to distribute food and drink.

After our initial entrance, I suddenly realised that other people were surrounding us. Looking, peering, feeling, touching and examining contents of "luggage" carried by the evacuees.

The local folk were waiting to pick and choose. It reminded me then, of a market, only this time it was little human beings who were being "picked". Consequently, it had to be the cleanest, best dressed with the least torn carrier bag who was to be chosen. Only the kindest accepted those left behind.

A certain Mrs Batts chose to take my brothers. We had no choice. For my Brothers and myself, the moment was nearing when we would have to part. This proved all too much for Jack, my youngest brother. He became very distressed and clung to me.

Mr Hedges was understanding and suggested that for the time being I had better stay with "The Boys" until they had settled into their new homes. This was decided after I had been taken to the house of Mr Hedges to meet his wife.

Their home was a beautiful old stone ivy-clad low rambling house standing well back from a narrow country road. The building stood within gardens filled with flowers and lawns. Entering through an old wrought iron gate which completed a low wall built in true Gloucestershire style, one felt the welcoming warmth from chinty curtained windows. Even the carved wooden front door projected an air friendly, homeliness. I was to have my very own room. The sheer joy was overwhelming when I saw this room, so pretty and feminine and it was to be mine. No need for details of any depth for my dream was to be short lived. I remained with my Brothers.

Gone was my delightful room in the beautiful old house with climbing roses everywhere. Jack and Charles needed my support so I joined them and we stayed in a tiny cottage with an allotment for a garden with a 20 yard walk to an outside toilet.

Admittedly, in the beginning, I was given a tiny room in which to sleep. The surroundings were unimportant. I spent much of that first night, unhappily sitting up in bed crying for my mother.

I was already terribly homesick. Meanwhile, my young Brothers were sharing a small box room, and a little bed. They too shed their tears.

We as evacuees settled down reasonably well. A greater sense of comradeship was born. We from the City had invaded this pretty village, but we felt no guilt. Perhaps it was all part of an adventure. The local WVS and the kindly folk of the neighbourhood gave clothes generously to those of us in need.

Starting School was our next hurdle. General School work was affected in many areas. Fortunately, children adapt, so Town and Village taught and learnt to-gether. However, the local School was a Church School, with none of the facilities to which we from Holborn were accustomed. No more arts and crafts room. No more Drama classes, we were deprived of these enjoyable out-lets.

After a year or so, most of the children had settled well into their new foster homes. Enjoying, in a sense a new found freedom. Living in the open countryside with fields and woods in which to roam and play. The local river provided a place to swim and to fish for "sticklebacks", there was now a space to breathe fresh air away from the winter fogs of London. Room to play away from cramped living conditions. Many children soon began to speak with a Gloucestershire accent. The war had little meaning to most.

Occasionally at night, the sound of enemy planes could be heard as they flew in to bomb one of the Cities of England. Even that sound caused no concern. The disastrous results of the bombers passing overhead was lost to the children. They felt safe and secure. After all, the reason for their being sent to "The Country" was to leave behind all that was threatened. Even when the rationing of food came into force, the children were only interested in the amount of sweets available on their ration card. They were the unhappy recipients of 2ozs of sweets each week.

Gradually more Mothers came to stay in Fairford as London was being bombed regularly. I looked forward to the day when my mum and sister would arrive we had only one visit from them. No doubt the cost of the fare was the problem.

The Black and White coach brought them one Sunday mid-day but for a few brief hours. A joyous visit which ended at 6pm leaving us alone once more.

I recall smelling the perfume of my little sister on my hands whilst I was kneeling at Prayers in the Church that evening. I remember the evening sun shining through the beautiful coloured stained glass windows and feeling sad.

I decided then that the visit was distressing for each of us.

Then the American Soldiers arrived bringing a sudden recollection that there really was a war taking place somewhere.

The giant tanks, waving long menacing guns, rumbled noisily into the tiny village invading the peace and tranquility which prevailed. The tanks churned up gentle grassy banks as they passed along the narrow roads, the engines created strange noises. There was much squeaking and grating before the tanks finally came to rest and settled large fat bodies onto the road around the tiny market square. This grand entrance caused no alarm, Soldiers were standing in the turrets waving, smiling and shouting "Hallo" or "Hi there" to the newly assembled small groups of local inhabitants.

The Americans were made welcome, perhaps there was something reassuring in their presence. They were friends here to help us fight the war we had heard about. The Soldiers were accepted readily by one and all. Most of them were only a few years older than us.

We now had the luxuries of various kinds of chocolate or candy bars as the Americans called them and plenty of all types of chewing gum.

For some months we took the visit of our new friends somewhat for granted and accepted their being with us as quite the normal way of life.

Very soon dances took place in our local hall. Crazy, noisy, gay, joyous, exhilarating dancing to the music of the band of our American Soldier friends. Learning to dance and jive, enjoying this new outlet to excessive youthful energy. Walking home with girlfriends, carrying shoes in hand, having danced all evening. Pleasantly exhausted and with feet hurting. The pavements and roads were so cool.

We were village girls and evacuees, soon thrilling to the attention of newly acquired boyfriends. We met at dances or perhaps by just chance meetings around the village.

My friends and I would often sit on one of the low Cotswold stone walls, just chatting when Soldiers would pass by with nowhere to go. They often stopped and joined us in our idle chatter. Nothing serious, only the need for company.

Somehow I made friends with a tall nice looking Infantry man whose name was Pinky Herring. A rather strange name but it was unimportant.

We enjoyed long walks together. We sought nothing else. Just being together was nice.

My foster-mother, Mrs Sadler, invited Pinky back for supper one evening, I recall that she made a delicious Spam (an import from U.S.A.), and onion pie served with home grown new potatoes. Pinky was grateful for this invitation into an English home. It was a happy evening and one I recall with affection.

Our friendship was but for a brief while. The pleasant lazy walks and sweet short kisses Good-night had to end.

We all gathered in the tiny market square on that day our friends of the Infantry Division drove away in their jeeps and their large, noisy tanks of warfare. As the long line of army vehicles moved slowly and somehow sadly along, each of us tried to find the face we were seeking for that last glance and wave of good-bye. When the last tank had rumbled past and had disappeared from sight leaving only an echo of sound, no one seemed to move for a few seconds.

Suddenly Fairford was empty and bare. A sense of loss prevailed. This had been our first experience of friends from the U.S. Army, and each one of us, as we viewed the now empty Nissen Huts in the beautiful deer park, the dusty torn grassy banks churned by the rolling tracks of the now distant American Soldiers, understood and forgave the necessary and vital invasion.

We all remembered.

The adults with a certain amount of tolerance and kind feelings. The boys with great pride and in possession of many army souvenirs. The young girls with tears and perhaps a little love in our hearts.

I received 2 letters from Pinky Herring, then no more. Pinky and our friends of the unknown Infantry Division from the U.S.A, had finally gone to war. They could not keep promises made.

They did not come back.

They could not come back.

Returning to happy hours, another favourite pass time was collecting wood for the fire. We would go to a local woodland armed with a small rather rusty old saw, an axe, pieces of string and usually an old pram. First we would collect tiny thin branches and tie them into a large bundle. This was called "faggoting". The faggots were used to light the fire. Sawing and chopping broken branches enabled us to use up quite a lot of surplus energy. We would sing and shout and laugh. It was great fun.

We would load the pram high with logs, balance the "faggot" on top then wend our way wearily home.

When armistice was declared - a signing of peace between warring nations - most of the evacuees and their mothers remained in Fairford. Now happily accustomed to a life in the "Country" and having grown up during the 6 years spent there, the evacuees had discovered and adapted to a new way of living. They had no inclination to return to the City of early childhood. It was another world. Many had dismissed their original existence from their thoughts. It all happened a long time ago and was now erased.

For many, there was no place to return to in London. Homes and belongings had perished in the terrible bombing of Cities.

Now peace reigned again. Great plans were made for the future. Fathers would also come to Fairford. Fathers who had been away for a long time fighting in that war somewhere.

There was much to look forward to in the beautiful little un-spoiled corner of Gloucestershire which we had grown to love so well.

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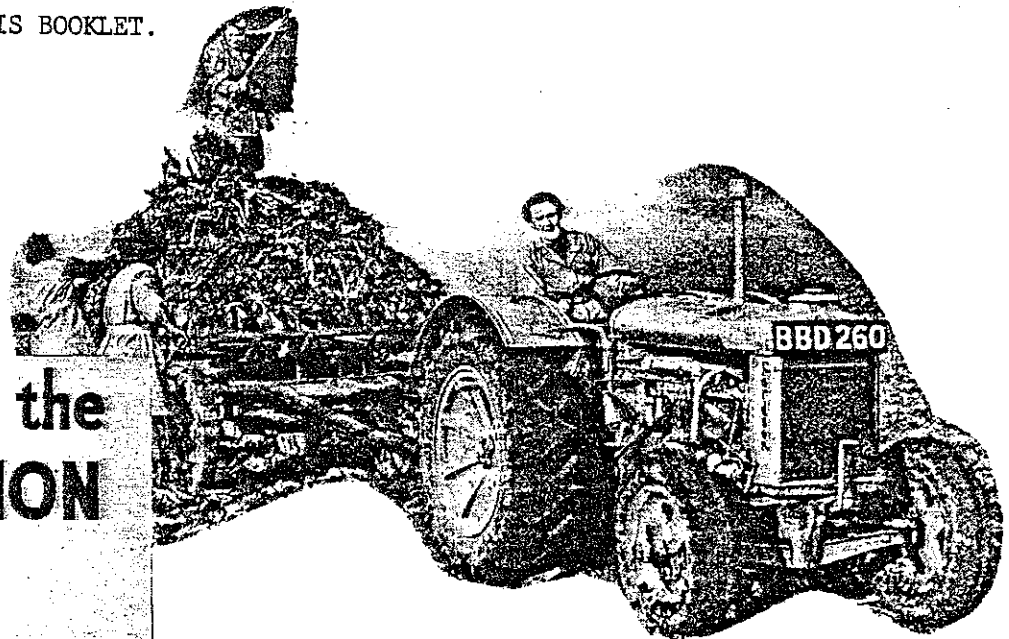
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THEATR POWYS GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGES THE CONTRIBUTION TO RESEARCH
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Three words to the
WHOLE NATION

**GO
TO
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HERBERT

