‘CARRIE’S WAR’: AN INSIGHT INTO THE EVACUEE EXPERIENCE OR A DISTORTION OF REALITY?

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ABSTRACT

Historical novels are an ever growing genre of fiction, with many now being used as an aid to teaching history. This has led to rising concerns as they are after all fictional stories, with many historians highly questioning their use. A contrasting view has recently been developed, however; which supports the use of fiction in learning about the past. This dissertation will therefore debate whether or not historical fiction does indeed have a place in the classroom and if so how it should be used effectively. The historical novel Carrie’s War will be its focus with comparison being made between the novel and six real life accounts, collected through interview, in order to fully debate how historically accurate this novel is or whether it promotes a false view of the evacuation experience. The implications this will have on the novel’s use in school as a way of developing children’s knowledge of evacuation in the Second World War will then be considered.
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this dissertation is to debate how far the novel Carrie’s War truly reflects an evacuee experience in the Second World War; it will also seek to address the implications this has on using this type of historical fiction in the classroom and how this may or should impact historical teaching.

When teaching the Second World War in school it would be perverse to not focus on the impact the war had on British children; as Jackson (1985) discusses, around four million people were officially evacuated with many more unofficially evacuated, the bulk of which were children. There had never been an evacuation of this scale in Britain which makes the event so much more significant. Furthermore, this topic has particular relevance to primary aged children as many of the evacuees would have been of a similar age. It can therefore offer an opportunity for children to develop a real empathy with events and people from the past.

Evacuation and the experience of those involved is an area that has been heavily debated over the years. The National Curriculum (Department for Education and Employment, 1999) for history at Key Stage two states that children should understand that there are different interpretations of the past and learn to use different sources to develop historical knowledge, therefore; looking at the differing accounts of evacuation may be of value in developing these crucial interpretive and evaluative skills.

There is quite a debate also to the use of historical fiction in schools with some, possibly more traditional educational historians such as Charlton (1960), strongly arguing that it has no place in the teaching of history. Other historians; however, advocate the use of historical fiction in schools. This dissertation will therefore seek to address this issue and build conclusions concerning the use of historical fiction.

In order to put forward an informed argument wide reading was undertaken concerning both the nature of history, the use of historical
fiction and the evacuation process. In order to fully evaluate the chosen novel, *Carrie’s War*, the interview of six ex-evacuees was also undertaken so that specific questions could be asked and answered by those who had experienced evacuation first hand, with the responses of these and the literature read then being used to decide just how typical the experience of Carrie truly was, or whether the novel is more fictitious than factual. This will then also be used to further discuss the general use of historical fiction in the classroom and whether or not it has a place in the teaching and learning of history. The following chapter will seek to discuss the debates in this topic in more detail and form some conclusions which will help in the evaluation of *Carrie’s War*. 
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to carry out this research extensive reading was carried out concerning both the use of historical fiction and evacuation. There are several debates amongst historians with regard to the viability of using historical fiction in the classroom, with some strongly promoting its use while others remain very strongly opposed to it. This reading also uncovered a belief concerning evacuation: that evacuation was an unpleasant experience for the billets due to the poor manners and bad hygiene of the evacuees. What can be made, however; of either of these debates and what are the prevailing opinions concerning them?

The nature of history has long been debated by historians. More traditional views such as those championed by Elton (1967) have long argued that history is nothing without the chronology and the structure of real facts. He believed that all historical enquiries should be aimed at representing and uncovering the truths of the past. Although at this time, the debate over historical fiction was not implicitly being referred to, Elton’s (1967) view would certainly suggest that using this type of fiction is flawed due to its fictional rather than pure factual nature.

Historians such as Marwick (1981) began to suggest that the lines between fact and fiction in history were not as clear cut as it had possibly been suggested before. He advocated the idea that all history is built around some guess work, stressing that it is difficult to talk of facts when events and people from the past are gone leaving only traces of their existence behind. This idea has been built on by many other historians influenced by postmodernism; for example, White (1985) discussed the myth element to history and the idea that all history has some debate over its factual nature. This was an idea further considered by Jenkins (1991) who argued that all history writing, whether factual or fictional, is merely an interpretation of the past. He states that as past events are gone, no living person can ever truly say exactly how things would have been as they were not there; all they can do, he feels, is give their own representation of the past. Jenkins (1991) argued that this in fact was a major flaw of all historical
interpretations. He states that modern researchers can never give an entirely accurate interpretation of the past as they have modern beliefs and thought processes. Beliefs and feelings change over time along with society and what is deemed as acceptable or unacceptable. The implications, he argues challenge whether any historical interpretation, factual or fictional can ever truly represent the feelings and actions of those in the past?

When linking this idea of historical accuracy with historical fiction, the more traditional view from historians such as Frye (1957) challenged the use of historical fiction, suggesting that there is a huge difference between history and fiction and that as a result, fiction cannot be used to learn about real history (cited in White, 1985). This certainly adheres more to Elton’s (1967) view of the nature of history as something which should have strict guidelines and promote fact not fiction. Other educational historians, such as Charlton (1960) also argued that historical fiction has no place in the history classroom (cited in Jackson, Humphries & Bracey, 2005) again reinforcing the idea that history should be based solely around facts and not fiction. This is a sentiment echoed by some more modern historians, for example, McCullagh (1998) states that true history should be about uncovering facts and not be based around the narration found in historical fiction.

With the rising debate over the nature of history, however; came more proclaimed arguments concerning the use of historical fiction, especially over the last two decades as historical fiction began to become more popularised. Even historians such as Evans (1997) who, despite not endorsing the postmodernist approach, discussed how all historical sources draw 'less than final conclusions' (pp.252-253) which certainly seems to lean more towards the suggestion that as the factual nature of all historical interpretations can be challenged, this should not totally rule out the value of using fictional sources such as novels. Historical educators such as Bracey, Gove-Humphries and Jackson (2006) developed this point, suggesting that the lines between
fact and fiction are not so clear cut and that fiction could therefore be of just as much value, provided it is tested for its reliability.

This idea of testing the reliability of sources is certainly something which Vygotsky’s (1978) zone of proximal development would seem to support; he argued that children are perfectly capable of these higher order thinking skills, provided adult or more able peer scaffolding is in place. Interpretation skills also feature highly in Bloom’s (1984) Taxonomy of questioning, which he promotes as fostering deeper thinking skills. Provided historical fiction is correctly evaluated it can therefore be extremely beneficial in developing critical thinking skills in children. Little and John (1986) linked this with the use of historical fiction, suggesting that children can distinguish fact from fiction provided there is adult support, inferring that historical fiction can be of use.

While Hicks and Martin (1994) do advocate the use of historical fiction they do warn that picking fact from fiction is extremely hard to do, the dangers, therefore being that children will not be able to separate the factual and fictional elements of a story. They also discussed how this may result in promoting stereotypes, for example in the case of evacuation; some stories are prone to suggest that evacuation was an unpleasant experience for the evacuees involved. Husbands (1996), however; stresses that this shouldn’t prevent the use of historical novels, arguing that provided they are interpreted as Little and John (1986) earlier suggested they can still be of use. Husbands (1996) in fact argues that this is even more important as interpreting sources forms a strand in the history National Curriculum, (Department for Education and Employment, 1999) a strand he believes is often overlooked. He argues that it is crucial children should be taught to critically review all sources and form their own interpretations rather than naively accepting all sources as factual. Martin (1999) argues that this is even more crucial as most of children’s historical knowledge will come from fictionalised sources such as television programmes or novels so it is vital to teach children how to interpret information rather than accepting it all as fact.
As the number of historical novels is ever becoming more popularised, the debate over their reliability too has grown. Historians such as Collins and Graham (2001) still warn that there are limitations to using these types of novels as sources, suggesting that the most engaging novels tend to be the least factual, which again links in with earlier arguments that children may find it hard to deduce fact from fiction. Martin and Brooke (2002), however; still debated the value of using novels, building on from the ideas of earlier historians such as Plumb (1969) who suggested historical fiction could enable pupils to see the past as something more tangible and real, something which effected real people just like themselves. He stressed that using a novel can aid pupils in gaining an empathy with history as characters are established who give historical events a more personal touch. Martin and Brooke (2002) argued that history is after all about people, the decisions they made, their actions, their feelings and their responses to events. It is this which forms the past and which therefore, they suggest give extra value to novels.

Jackson, Humphries and Bracey (2005) have also discussed this, stating that it is this which makes history engaging as it puts the abstract past into a more concrete form. They argue that it is this which makes historical fiction so valuable: it engages pupils with the past, sparks curiosity and motivates the study of past events. Provided, they argue that historical novels are not used in isolation, with a wide range of primary and secondary sources also being used; fiction can be of real value in the teaching and learning of history. This is an idea supported by De Groot (2009), suggesting that novels can offer a more rounded view of an era and allow pupils to gather a real feel for the past.

In the case of Carrie’s War there arguably is a further issue surrounding its authenticity. The author Bawden uses aspects of her own evacuation experiences in the story, but how reliable are memories? Lowenthal (1985) argues that memories are risky to use, they are after all not proven facts. He discusses how throughout our lifetimes we constantly re-organise our memories, often re-writing
them to fit the past we would have liked to have occurred. Hindsight is also a major issue as he stresses that childhood memories in particular are prone to be altered with older, wiser eyes.

The novel Carrie’s War also raises issues concerning the evacuation experience. Other forms of literature read often painted a vivid picture of evacuation as an unpleasant experience. Jackson (1985), for example discusses how evacuation was extremely hard on the foster families as children from cities like London and Liverpool were often ill mannered and had health problems such as lice. He debates reports of the time which charted the actions of some evacuees: breaking household items, swearing, stealing and complaining about the food in the countryside. This is a view of evacuation also supported by Crosby (1986) who suggests that many of the children evacuated came from city slums which was a shock to the middle class families with whom they were billeted. He states that many evacuees treated the experience as a holiday, returning home only to be re-billeted and the chance to view as many different parts of the country as possible.

While it is impossible to state for a fact that not all evacuees acted as such, Longmate (1971) suggests that this is a slightly biased view, perhaps in part down to the fact that it was mainly negative aspects which were reported at the time, such as the spreading of lice and bed wetting. Bed wetting in particular was a main issue, with the Government eventually being pushed into offering compensation for foster families who experienced this. Wicks (1988) argues that this led to an increase in foster families reporting this happening, whether it was true or not, to claim the reimbursement which may also explain why the view of poor hygiene in evacuees has been for so long upheld. Wicks (1988), in fact suggests that evacuation was a mixed experience for both the foster families and the evacuees. Some evacuees were grossly abused by those they were placed with, while others formed excellent relationships within the community and relished the experience of staying in the countryside. Rose (2004) also suggests that it was not simply a case of city slum children being placed with middle class families. He argues that the country had its own poverty
and that as a result evacuation was not always pleasant for the children involved.

Many different arguments have been discussed in this section, chiefly regarding historical fiction and evacuation. There are several arguments for why historical fiction should not be used including: the suggestion that children may not be able to distinguish fact from fiction especially as not all novels have an appropriate balance between factual and fictional aspects. Having said this, there are also strong arguments for the use of historical fiction if caution is used. It has been debated that it can greatly stimulate the teaching of history, giving a more personal, concrete approach to the abstract past. Allowing children to evaluate its reliability has also been accredited with developing higher order thinking skills and covering strands in the history National Curriculum (Department for Education and Employment, 1999). This dissertation will focus on the use of one historical novel in particular, Carrie’s War. It will seek to debate on whether this is a valuable novel to use or whether the interpretation of evacuation it presents is too fictional to be of value. In doing so the evacuation myth will also be debated, seeking to describe just what the evacuation experience meant to those involved.
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH APPROACH AND TECHNIQUES

Due to the double debate in this dissertation: the argument for or against using historical fiction and the comparison of the novel Carrie’s War to real life evacuation accounts, research had to be undertaken concerning both areas. The first research carried out was extensive reading around the use of historical fiction in the teaching of history to gain an appreciation of both sides of the debate so as to be able to present a more informed discussion. A letter was also sent to the author of Carrie’s War, Nina Bawden, asking to what extent her own experiences of evacuation were reflected in her novel and questioning her own research methods when writing the novel to ensure that it was historically accurate (see Appendix One). Due to ill health, however; Bawden was unable to write back herself, a letter was received from her daughter-in-law which recommended the reading of Bawden’s (1994) autobiography In My Own Time: Almost an Autobiography which was carried out as part of the research project.

This book was very insightful in seeing how much of Carrie’s War was based on the author’s own real life evacuation experiences, however; it was not as useful as actually having the author answer set questions. As Thompson (2000) argues, written sources such as autobiographies very much focus on the writer’s chosen areas of interest and so will not necessarily answer every question that a researcher may want to discover, hence why interviews or questionnaires can in some cases be of more use. Having said this, much of what was needed to be found out was covered in the autobiography so it was still of great use.

With regards to the evacuation focus of this dissertation, extensive reading around this topic was also carried out. Literature was read concerning not only the factual details of evacuation but also autobiographical accounts written from varied ex-evacuees. This seemed of real importance, as Thompson (2000) argued, keeping some aspects the same: in this case their general age and the fact that they were evacuated as children is of value, but ensuring that a range of sexes and classes of people are used is important as their
experiences may differ greatly. It was important that for this purpose of this research that many varied accounts were read so as to develop a greater sense of what effect evacuation had on different people and whether there is such a thing as a typical experience. As Flick (2006) also argues, written sources can also be of value as they allow the individual to choose what they share and so it can therefore not be tainted or led by what the interviewer wants to find out.

Having said this, interviews were also decided to be used so as specific areas of interest could be focused on which may not be found in written sources alone. Flick (2006) suggests that carrying out extensive reading first is important, however; as this can then help in the structuring of questions which it did in this case, splitting the interview questions up into five broad areas of interest: leaving home, the billeting process, the experiences of staying with a foster family, schooling and the long term effect of evacuation on evacuees. This last area was of particular interest as while the literature held extensive accounts of actual evacuation and the short term effects on those involved, little was written about long term effects and whether it changed evacuees personally or mentally in any way. This is also an area touched upon slightly in *Carrie’s War*, where Carrie is almost haunted by an event she thinks she was responsible for when evacuated and this impacts her quite extensively as an adult. Whether or not any real evacuees had similar thoughts was then of some interest in the research process which was reflected in the questions asked.

The interviews carried out were semi-structured. King and Horrocks (2010) discuss how this type of interview can be particularly valuable when undertaking quantitative research. These types of interviews allow for more flexibility and what King and Horrocks (2010) describe as probing questions which allow for the interviewee to elaborate, clarify or complete a point. It was vital that the questions used were non-leading so as to still allow the interviewee to share their story in their own words and not be led into saying anything which would hopefully ensure that the answers given were as true a reflection of
their actual experiences as possible (see Appendix Two). The ethics of the research were also contemplated in some detail with the British Educational Research Association’s (2011) guidelines strictly adhered to; the very fact that the questions were purposefully designed to be non-leading was one aspect of this. All candidates too were fully informed of the purpose of the project and have been given strict confidentiality, hence why no real names are used in the later research chapters.

The candidates chosen were what Wisker (2009) describes as an opportunistic sample (see Appendix Three). Due to the age of those evacuated in the Second World War it was very much a case of interviewing those who were available and who could be found, often through ‘snowballing’, which did somewhat limit the sample and also explains why three of the interviewees were evacuated from the same city and were all females. On the other hand, the sample interviewed were varied in other ways: sex, age when evacuated, whether or not they were evacuated alone or with siblings, where they were billeted and also what type of people they were evacuated to. Once all six interviews were carried out, coding was then used as a method of analysis (see Appendix Five). The aim of this was to establish links between the evacuation experiences so as to best compare the experience portrayed in Carrie’s War to these real life accounts.

Thompson (2000) strongly argues that this type of oral history is of value when researching as when speaking face to face with someone, answers can be challenged, further questions can be added and a sense of what they are feeling can also be gathered from tone of voice and facial expressions, something which cannot be replicated in written sources such as autobiographies. The question of reliability must be discussed, however; as in the case of evacuation the events occurred several decades ago and in the speaker’s youth, so how reliable can they be? Piaget and Inhelder (1973) contemplate the complexities of the mind and memory and state their findings to show that memory is constantly re-organised in the mind. This is an idea also advocated by Lowenthal (1985) who believes that when talking about memories
from the past they will always be tainted with retrospect or personal manipulation for what the thinker would have liked to occur rather than what did. These are all possible limitations of using both autobiographies and oral sources, however; having read and recorded extensive accounts makes it more likely to gather a fair and accurate picture of evacuation as many features were similar for many involved. As Wisker (2009) argues, any source has its limitations and provided that all evidence is analysed and looked at critically it is still of value, it is merely a case of not believing all that is said or written.

The following three chapters will split novel *Carrie’s War* into three broad areas: the initial stages of evacuation, the experience of evacuation and returning home. The way in which these areas are portrayed in the novel will be discussed and compared to the accounts from the six interviewees. Conclusions will then be drawn as to how far the novel truly represents the evacuee experience and the implications this will have on its use in the teaching of evacuation in schools.
CHAPTER FOUR: ESCAPE TO THE COUNTRY

When war was declared on the 3rd September 1939 the British government, unbeknown to the public, had already in place extensive plans for a mass evacuation of children, expectant mothers and the disabled from the cities. They feared that once bombing occurred, something they in fact greatly overestimated the scale of, the panic and the impact on morale it would cause would be detrimental to the war effort and so these groups of people would be best moved to safer areas of the country. The first official wave of evacuation began on the 1st September 1939: one and a half million people were evacuated in this first mass exodus of the cities to waiting reception areas and it was on the whole carried out with military precision. Many of the people evacuated were children, either sent with their mothers if under five, or evacuated with their schools if older. For many of these children, this would be the first time they had ever left home, left their families and for some ever seen the countryside. Just what were the feelings of these children in these early stages of evacuation and how well did they fare with this initial upheaval?

In Carrie’s War, Carrie and her younger brother Nick’s initial experiences of evacuation; leaving their mother and the journey to the billet, is described in a fairly negative way. Carrie describes how they are ‘labelled like parcels...only with no address to be sent to’ (1974, p.17) which infers that the process was dehumanising, treating those involved like luggage rather than human beings, something echoed by Interviewee E who was evacuated as a child herself. She describes the process as ‘horrible...being made to feel like a parcel’. She felt this was exemplified by the fact that no-one knew where they were being sent to, something that for some children could have caused greater anxiety. This is again reflected with the character of Carrie, who states that 'None of them, not even the teachers, knew where they were going’ (1974, p.17). Interviewee A, who like Carrie, was evacuated to South Wales with his school described his ‘apprehension’ as the train pulled away; feelings which further developed upon arrival in Wales and being surrounded by unknown scenery such as mountains,
something that this London born child had never seen before. To this extent then, *Carrie’s War* appears to quite accurately reflect the initial feelings of evacuated children and the turmoil of being moved to an unknown location in this manner, however; how typical were these feelings?

Strangely enough *Carrie’s War* author Nina Bawden, who like the protagonist in her novel was evacuated as a child to South Wales, had almost opposite feelings to Carrie at the prospect of being evacuated. She discusses how the ‘prospect thrilled’ (1994, p.36) her and that even as the train departed taking her away from her mother and brothers to an unknown destination, that she felt ‘alight with excited anticipation’ (1994, p.44). Bawden (1994) had particularly romantic ideas about staying in the countryside and even imagined herself ‘living in a big house...with rich and educated and even titled people’ (p.37). These feelings were also echoed by Interviewee F, who stated that she felt ‘excited’ by the idea of being sent to stay in the country; although also admitting that at the time she ‘didn’t really understand’.

This was something also echoed by one evacuee who was moved from Birmingham aged nine, a similar age to Carrie. She describes the train ride as being the ‘height of excitement’ (cited in Robins, 2004, p.71). Inglis (1989) argues that this could have been the case for other children too who may have never travelled on a train before or even ever left their home cities prior to evacuation. Leading on from Interviewee F’s statement of not really comprehending what evacuation meant could perhaps also explain why some children may have felt initially quite positive; they may not have realised that they would not be returning home for an extensive period of time.

It may be argued that this realisation only really began to sink in once children had arrived and the billeting process commenced. In most literature this process is described as being fairly unpleasant to those involved but how true a reflection is this? Bawden’s (1994) own experiences certainly seem to correspond to this viewpoint as she describes how both her and a friend had to wait a long time to be
picked and the feelings of inadequacy this caused as ‘bewitching little creatures with shining ringlets’ were favoured to her (p.48). This perhaps heavily influenced how Bawden portrayed the billeting process in *Carrie’s War* as Carrie and her brother Nick wait and wait to be picked. Carrie describes how she felt ‘ill with the shame that no one would choose her’ (1973, p.20) which almost echoes the author’s own experience of being billeted.

This was an experience shared by Interviewee A. Unlike Carrie who was billeted from a local hall, a process described as a ‘cattle auction’ (1973, p.20), Interviewee A and his school party were taken door to door and handed to foster parents. He describes the confusion being taken door to door in this manner had on him and states how he was in a state of ‘semi-shock’. It may well be said then that *Carrie’s War* quite accurately describes the feelings that many evacuees faced when being billeted. The billeting process designed to be quick and effective by the government may well have succeeded in placing evacuees in foster homes but at what cost? *Carrie’s War* quite accurately portrays the experience that many children would have faced at not being picked promptly, as Carrie says ‘Children left the line and were taken away. Only unwanted ones left’ (1973, p.20) and it may be said that these feelings of rejection would have been faced by many evacuees. In fact, Wicks (1988) argues that this whole process may have been psychologically damaging. This is an area that the research undertaken here failed to uncover particularly, however; it is a real issue that would be worth investigating.

So far, *Carrie’s War* has quite accurately reflected the initial stages of evacuation, from the anxiousness of leaving loved ones to the shame of the billeting process. Through the main character Carrie, the reader is shown how it may have felt to be an evacuee and this gives it real value to use in the classroom. Most evacuees, like Carrie, were very promptly found foster homes and it is perhaps here that the real story begins. Carrie and her brother are placed with the stern and bad tempered Mr Evans and his kindly yet powerless sister. How does
Bawden choose to portray their evacuation experience and more importantly how far does it reflect a true evacuation experience?
CHAPTER FIVE: ‘I WANT TO GO HOME...I DON’T WANT TO BE SAFE IN THE COUNTRY’

Much that was reported or written concerning evacuation at the time portrayed an image of slum children shipped from the cities straight into middle class Britain, bringing with them, amongst other things, havoc and head lice. How true a reflection of the evacuation experience is this though? In Carrie’s War this view isn’t supported at all, in fact, there is almost an opposite situation whereby Carrie and Nick are sent to live with people who it is suggested may not be as wealthy as the children’s own family. For one, the children worry about keeping their foster house clean, especially as they are used to having a maid at home, one signal that the children may be from a higher class of family. Furthermore, on being told that must use an outdoor toilet, ‘Nick stared as if he couldn’t believe his ears’ (1973, p.24) showing that the children are used to an indoor bath room at home.

Perhaps then, Carrie’s War in this sense is as DeGroot (2009) would argue, slightly biased to the author’s own experiences. Bawden (1994) discussed how despite the popular belief that all children evacuated were ‘slum children...with head lice and no table manners. Our experience, on the whole, was the other way around’ as she was sent to mainly working class families (p.44). In the early stages of evacuation, before fostering evacuees became compulsory, many of the families who volunteered to take on children or families were working to middle class families, with many of the upper class homes shirking their responsibilities, so the idea that children evacuated were sent to a better class of home than those they had themselves left cannot be true for all evacuees.

This is something also echoed in Interviewee E’s experience of evacuation: she reminisces on how she was sent to a

small terraced house with a back yard. There was no bathroom or hot water but we had baths in front of a fire in a tin bath filled with hot water from the stove
something she was not used to at home. Curiously, none of the interviewees were particularly concerned with the state of the house they were sent to, or whether or not they were even in the same comfort that they were used to at home, something which *Carrie’s War* does too reflect as the children make the best of the house they are sent to and never complain to their mother about any lack of facilities or comfort. The main concern seemed to not be the type of property sent to, but the nature of the people they were sent to and whether or not they would be kind foster parents.

Interviewee F had a happy experience due to the kind nature of her foster family who she describes as spoiling her and treating her ‘*just like one of the family*’, a sentiment echoed by Interviewee A who, like Carrie, was evacuated to South Wales. In fact he describes how he has ‘*nothing but the fondest of memories*’ of his foster parents and the time spent in Wales with them. This is something which is also shown in *Carrie’s War*. Despite their foster father’s gruff ways, he too is kind in his own way, buying the children both birthday and Christmas presents as well as expensive gifts when they leave and the children grow forge close relationships to their foster family.

For many children too this would have been their first glimpse of the country and for some this would have been a wonderful opportunity to take part in activities that they would never have had the chance to do before. Carrie expresses her joy at harvesting a field, lying back on the grass and exclaiming ‘*This is the best place in the whole, wide world*’ (1973, p.91). Interviewee A fondly recalled spending days picking wild fruit on the mountain side and playing in the street with local children: were all aspects of evacuation so sweet though?

Interviewee E had a particularly sad experience despite having kind foster parents. She describes how she was ‘*desperately home sick all the time and cried a lot*’. Even visits from her mother made no difference, in fact she states how this was worse and only upset her more. This area is touched upon in *Carrie’s War* as the children feel awkward around their mother when she visits, ‘*they didn’t know what*
to say...they felt shy anyway, seeing her where she didn’t belong’ (1973, p.35). For many children their previous life must have felt like a ‘dream’ as it is described in Carrie’s War, especially if they were not having regular contact with loved ones back home (1973, p.34). In this sense, it can be argued that Carrie’s War paints a fairly accurate portrayal of evacuation. Hicks and Martin (1994) discuss how often historical fiction can paint an image that evacuation was always sad or always happy, however; Carrie’s War does not do this. There are experiences and aspects of evacuee life which are inferred to be very happy, having said this, the children do have periods where they are extremely home sick or pine for their own home routine and their mother’s affection just as many real evacuees must have felt themselves.

One area of evacuation that Carrie’s War does perhaps slightly overlook is that of education. We are told that Carrie is taught in a small chapel ‘some mornings because there wasn’t room for us all in the school’ (1973, p.15) and it perhaps due to the infrequency of these lessons that they do remain so unmentioned throughout the story. Again this could be seen as a fairly accurate representation of how many evacuees education fared; Interviewee C for instance describes how she ‘didn’t have much of an education’ despite being integrated into the local school and that she did not ‘think we did very much’ there. This is something echoed by Interviewee F who describes her education as being ‘very much interrupted’ as a result of having to share the local school premises, meaning that they only had half days of lessons. Even Interviewee A, who was integrated into local lessons, felt that the schooling was vastly different to that which he had experienced in London, feeling that the work was too easy. Interviewee E’s education too was much disturbed, not down to the disorganisation of lessons, however; but due to the new teacher at her billet, a woman who would

*box my ears when I couldn’t thread the needle in needle work...I was really too miserable and frightened to learn much.*
This is an area often overlooked in evacuation literature, perhaps due to the fact that it shows the government had not seamlessly planned evacuation. This was a reality faced by many children and not just evacuees as lots of the schools in cities were closed, so even those children who remained at home had a much disturbed education during the war period.

For the most part it could then be said that Carrie’s War quite accurately describes the ups and downs of evacuation life. True that it cannot represent the experiences of all evacuees, it certainly does portray a fairly balanced view, neither inferring that all aspects of evacuated life were wonderful, nor suggesting that it was a horrendous experience. Evacuation and the effects of evacuation, however; did not end in 1945. The experiences faced would have stayed with those involved for life, for better or for worse and it is to this that that we will now turn.
CHAPTER SIX: WAR’S OVER, YOU CAN GO HOME

Evacuation ended at different times for different children. Many who were evacuated in what became known as the ‘Phoney War’, in September 1939 often returned home quite promptly as the expected barrage of German bombers never materialised. As a result, when the Blitz finally did occur many children had to be billeted yet again, meaning that lots of evacuees experienced more than one foster family. Having said this, others remained evacuated for the duration of the war and so in 1945 returned home, possibly for the first time in six years. How would these children now fare when returning to distantly remembered homes and would their experiences of evacuation remain with them? Were these children who returned even the same people they were when they left?

In Carrie’s War the children remain evacuated with one foster family alone, spending well over a year there. They are called away at last by their Mother who has located a cottage in the safety of the countryside. The children’s reactions are mixed, with obvious joy to be reunited with their Mother but also sadness to leave the Evanses’ and the house that has become their home;

Nick actually grumbled “I don’t want to go to rotten old Glasgow. I don’t want to go to a new school. I don’t want to leave Auntie Lou.” (1974, p.122).

It must have been even more difficult for children who unlike Carrie and Nick were moved from foster home to foster home. Bawden (1994) describes how she and a fellow evacuee became ‘cautious’ about how much attachment to place with foster families as they never knew for how long they would actually spend there (p.53).

For Carrie and Nick it is difficult in another way, having built a second life almost with the Evanses’ and so feeling deeply sad when leaving. This was something even echoed by Interviewee E who despite being ‘desperately home sick’ whilst evacuated, was still ‘sad to leave the foster parents who were devastated’ when her and her sister left. This
illuminates the turmoil faced by some evacuees: the obvious feelings of happiness to return home to loved ones, but also the sadness of leaving foster families and new lives at their billets. Carrie also expresses another anxiety, what if their Mother no longer recognises them, or vice versa. This is another potential dilemma evacuees may have faced, as reuniting with a family who could have become like strangers to them may have been a daunting experience.

Perhaps the most fictional aspect of Carrie’s War is the long term effect that evacuation has on her. Towards the end of her time with the Evanses’ Carrie is taken in by old tales of a cursed skull at the house of Mr Evans’ sister; when Carrie throws this skull into a pond and the house shortly after burns to the ground, Carrie carries the guilt that she is responsible with her for years after. Holding herself responsible Carrie remains

*afraid of happy times stopping...perhaps because this happy time had come to an end...and she blamed herself for it*


This part of the story is obviously completely fictional and so cannot accurately reflect a typical evacuation experience, however; these lasting feelings may well be reciprocated by other evacuees.

Some evacuees may have been left with deep sadness caused by the experience. Interviewee E, for example, describes how evacuation was *'not good’* for her at all, she came out in *'rashes as...*(she) was so home sick’* and the hatred of parting from loved ones is something that has remained with her even to this day. The effect of separating young children from their families is something that Crosby (1986) argues was widely overlooked by the Government when organising evacuation. Evacuation may have been very well organised, however; it definitely did lack any sympathies for the personal and mental welfare of those involved. It may be said that its’ aim was to simply clear out the cities, pastoral care was virtually nonexistent. While wardens and the children’s class teachers were responsible for ensuring the safety of
those evacuated, with so many children, in places so widely spread out, it was almost impossible to truly monitor each child’s welfare. This was something touched upon by Bawden (1994), who describes how teachers informed them to come and tell them if 'too much was being asked' of them in their foster homes, but as Bawden (1994) says 'what was too much?' (p.46); there were no clear guidelines given to children for what they should be expected to put up with in foster homes and so some children may have been deterred from speaking out to their teachers.

Having said this, not all aspects of evacuation were damaging. Interviewee A describes how evacuation made him who he is today, someone who understands 'the value of money...the value of friendship' and someone who is 'not afraid of anybody'. The idea of being strengthened by evacuation is also something echoed by Interviewee D who states that the experience was 'good for (her)...really' having left home for the first time as a self proclaimed 'Mummy's girl'. The trials and experiences faced by these evacuated children, it may be said, would have meant that when they returned home, they would have grown up in more than just age but maturity. As Interviewee A stated when interviewed, even when faced with hardships while evacuated, the worst being the death of his father who served in the Royal Air Force, 'life went on...it had to'.

For better or for worse, evacuation did inadvertently shape the youth of Britain. These children who had been forced from their homes, endured the effects of rationing and learnt to live without many of the luxuries that modern, twenty-first century children take for granted had to grow up fast. Who can say the longer term affects this may have had, for example, on the choices they made, their actions and their opinions, possibly unconsciously shaping Britain for ever.
CONCLUSION

This dissertation set out to test the reliability of historical novel Carrie’s War through comparing it to real life accounts of evacuees. It then attempted to answer the question of whether in fact historical fiction should even be used in the teaching of history and the implications that this may have on both teaching and learning.

It is quite fair to say that Carrie’s War would certainly be useful in giving pupils a fairly well rounded feel for the war period, something which Bracey, Gove-Humphries and Jackson (2006) argue a good historical novel should do. Through the protagonist, Carrie, the reader is transported back to nineteen-thirties Britain and the experiences of her and her brother arguably offer an accurate portrayal of what evacuation could have been like for children, this is not to say, however; it is a true reflection of every evacuated child’s experiences. The accuracy of Carrie’s War could in large part be down to the fact that author Nina Bawden was herself evacuated to South Wales as a child. Bawden (1994) discusses the process that was undertaken when deciding, thirty years after the war, to write a story charting the experiences of two fictional evacuees; describing how in writing ‘memory had been overlaid by invention and invention by memory’ (p.42). This illuminates the delicate process involved when writing historical fiction and the delicate balance that emerges between historical truth and fiction.

While Carrie’s War is in essence a fictional story, it does none the less represent accurate elements of evacuation, from the billeting process to day to day living with a foster family and the potential emotional dilemmas facing evacuees when leaving their billets. Bracey, Gove-Humphries and Jackson (2006) suggest that it is the balance between these elements which decide on whether a historical novel is valuable to use in school or not, arguing that there must be enough of a story to engage and interest children whilst also maintaining an accurate portrayal of the period, something it can be argued that Carrie’s War fulfils.
This has implications for how history could be taught in schools, especially with regards to using fiction. Evans (1997) argues that when studying any historical source, be it a primary or secondary source, fact or fiction, the same principles should remain. He strongly suggests that any source should be carefully analysed with consideration being taken into its reliability: nothing should be read and naively taken as the truth. In this case historical fiction can too have a place in the history classroom, provided that it is analysed to deduce fact from fiction. Four million people were evacuated, the bulk of which were children, and as a result, it could be argued that no one account, be it a fictional novel or an autobiographical account, can completely reflect a typical experience, for indeed what is a typical experience? Evacuation effected children of a range of ages, some were billeted alone, others with siblings, they were sent to wide ranging locations, to a host of different characters and the duration of their stays could also vary from weeks to years. One account, it may well be argued then cannot sum up the experiences of millions; Carrie’s War certainly portrays one experience and if children are given the chance to compare this to other real accounts then they could well develop a much better understanding of evacuation than if they focused on one account alone. Considering that this kind of interpretation makes up a strand of the National Curriculum (Departments for Education and Employment, 1999), this can only be seen as a good thing, as this states that pupils should be taught to evaluate sources.

With regard to the comparison which took place between the novel and real life accounts, if this research was to be undertaken again, it may be more beneficial to focus more on the lasting psychological effects of evacuation as never before had children been separated from all that was familiar to them for such a long period and it could be argued that this may have had a huge impact on those involved. The personal and psychological effects of evacuation have largely been overlooked in existing literature and while this research attempted to slightly delve into this area, it was not done so in extensive detail as it formed only part of the research. Evacuation was such a major event in British
history, never before had so many people been removed from their homes. Who apart from those who were involved can truly say what the long term effect of evacuation was and how it may have shaped the future adults of Britain.

WORD COUNT: 8, 107
REFERENCES


APPENDIX ONE: LETTER TO NINA BAWDEN
Ms N. Bawden,
c/o Puffin Publicity,

Dear Ms Bawden,

I am a third year student at the University of Northampton where I am training to become a primary school teacher. As my specialism is history, for my dissertation I am focusing on the experiences of children evacuated during the Second World War and am looking to compare real life accounts to historical fiction. For the fictional aspect I have chosen to focus on your novel 'Carrie’s War' having read the book several times, including when I was at primary school and having really enjoyed the story.

I was wondering if you would be able to please assist me with my dissertation by answering some questions concerning the research process undertaken when writing the novel and also surrounding your own evacuation experiences?

- I understand that you were evacuated during the war. In your own words, how would you describe your evacuation experience?
- Do you believe that your experience changed your views on the world or on people in any way?
- To what extent was your work based on your own experiences?
- What other sources did you find useful when writing?
- What do you consider to be the relationship between history and historical fiction?

27th December 2011
I understand that you are very busy, but I would really appreciate any help you can offer me. Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

Ivana Terzic

PS. I have enclosed a self addressed and stamped envelope; however, if it is more convenient for you, any response could be emailed to the following email address: ..... 

Thank you.
Prior to evacuation:

- What are your main childhood memories before you were evacuated?

First stages of Evacuation:

- When were you evacuated?
- How did you find out that you were being evacuated?
- What were your initial feelings?

Evacuation:

- What do you remember about the billeting process? How did you feel about it?
- In your own words, would you like to tell me about the experience of staying with a foster family?
- How would you say that your education fared when evacuated?
- What are your most significant memories of evacuation?
- For how long were you evacuated?

Returning Home:

- How did it feel to return home?
- Would you say that evacuation changed your views on people or the world in any way?
- Is there anything else that you’d like to add?
Name: Interviewee A

Place: Corby

Location: His own home

People present: Me, Interviewee and another student

Time: 11-1pm

I: Right, first of all I just wanted to talk to you about your experiences prior to being evacuated, so really your main childhood memories before you were ever evacuated.

IP: Oh that’s simple. 97 Upton Park Road, Forest Gate, my father was a carpenter builder. We lived in an apartment with my mother and my two brothers; my elder brother...my younger brother was born ’38, I was born ’32, my elder brother was born ’30. Umm...we, Jack and I went, that’s my elder brother and myself, he’s passed on, we schooled at Elmhurst which was just down the road. Umm... which was council junior, you know infants, junior, senior up to the age of 11. Umm...we lived in an apartment which had err...bathroom, indoor plumbing, coal fire, gas fire, electric light, flush toilet. Okay, that’s how we lived.

I: Yeah.

IP: I schooled until...I started school at 5. Umm...I was born in ’32; I started school in ’37...’39...oh no I beg your pardon; I was 7 when I was first evacuated. Umm... and that’s...oh my father’s parents...err my father’s mother was still alive with his brothers, uncles and aunts so they were all around and that’s basically my childhood in London. Okay?

I: Yep.

IP: After that, operation Pied Piper and Plan 4 umm...Pied Piper...umm was the first evacuation; September first, September 1 to September 4, 1939 and umm...Plan 4 was June...umm 1940, just prior to Dunkirk or just after while Dunkirk was going on. That’s my childhood. Basically. Play, what we did for play, we played in the street, again
nothing else nowhere else to go, oh you could go to One Stead Flats, but that was miles away. And holiday time we went to South End and that was your treat. And I remember going to South end with my Grandparents and my father and my mother and the only memory I have of South End is that the tide was out.

I: Hah.

IP: And all I ever saw of South End or the sea was mud.

I: Ha-ha.

IP: Ha-ha...that’s the only memory I’ve got of South End. Ha...after that...nothing. Ha and I’ve never been back. I’ve been back to Upton Park...I don’t advise anyone to go back home...not after so many years. Well, A you don’t know anybody and half the things have been...umm were blitzed anyway...umm but I only went back once and I’ve never been back since and I’ve no intention of going back. My home, as apart from here in Corby is, is Wales which is where I was raised, err...as an evacuee, which you know. Yeah. Next.

I: Umm...how did you find out that you were being evacuated?

IP: Umm...my Dad told us. Err...because papers came out...err do you want your children evacuated umm...and Dad...and Mum and Dad agreed. We had no say, I mean children had no say...children were seen and not heard. You’ve got to remember this was 1939...1930 onwards and consequently he decided that we would be evacuated and in the first instance my mother and my brother...my kid brother who was still a babe in arms, Jack and went and...err under operation Pied Piper and I think we went down to...I’m not sure I think it was Suffolk.

I: Okay.

IP: And the only memory I have of that...cus we were only there for a short time cus of the Phoney War. Nothing happened...err the government thought that if, if, war came and when it came the sky would be black, bombers...we’d all be bombed so what the hell were we worried about, we were all gonna be dead anyway. So what was
the panic? So...umm...but it didn’t happen and nothing happened...because...err...if, if...you read your history and you’ve seen various programmes err...on the history channel, that’s what happened, nothing happened. Nobody panicked...err and so a lot of us including my mother were only away for a fortnight, three weeks and we were back in London.

I: Huh.

IP: And the only memory I’ve got of where I was, where we were evacuated to was a place called Walbridge, but I’m not sure...is that it had no pavements, just sand...which smelt, smelt terrible. And that’s the only memory I’ve got of that and then we went back and we started back into school in err...’39...umm...and in September, no, probably in the October ’79 we had Christmas, at home, cus I know I got a...umm...my, my Uncle had bought me a...umm...flash light lorry which worked and err...it was clockwork, that’s the part that I remember about that. And then we then we just carried on schooling and then...err...the second...err...wave when the new danger was threatening the way we found out that we were going to be evacuated was that err...you took a note home from school and you had to turn up to school the following day with your gas mask and your ID card, your ration book and your suitcase whatever and you would go to school and you would go through the motions. And you did that about once a week...until the day came when you were told to bring it all again tomorrow, so we did and there was a whole fleet of buses, which we knew nothing about and then we were all marched out and you wondered where your Mum and your Dad were...and they’re over there and you got loaded on the coaches and isn’t it all great fun and then the damn thing moved.

I: Huh.

IP: You knew you were on your...and no one knew anything about it. Okay...err I suppose parents did...umm and you were taken to a railway station...err...where you were with your teachers and you were trained up and your parents were nowhere near ya. The scheme was
that err...the aim was that you kept parents separated and any photographs you see of children being...err in the big crocodile you won’t see the parent. Oh...err they’re over there or they’re over there because they kept um...cus in the first err...time...the evacuation took place a lot of parents started jumping in and bringing the children out and they didn’t want um to go and the Government said no, so the parents were kept separated. So all you had around you were your school friends, your...err siblings, if you were with them and err...your school teachers. And err...the rule was that if you ended up on a railway station and err...the staff were under strict orders not to tell anybody where you were going. Each train, each engine, had...err, err...a white disc with a number...and...err...if you were for train number one that’s where you’re going. And...err...if one of your staff, one of your teachers went up and asked the porter “where are we going?”, “sorry sir, I can’t tell you that, you’ll have to check with London County Council” and of course there were none of them around...they’d all taken to the hills. And so...err...you were put onto a train, the doors were locked and off you went. Now it could take you...a whole day to go...err...if you went in Cornwall it would take something like eight hours, to get to Cornwall, the train would stop, open the doors, get off, go to the toilet facility, water, summut to eat, you always took summut, you were told what to take if possible and then you got back and you were locked until you ended up where you were going. And we ended up at Newport, South Wales, where the train was split and we ended up going up the valley, we were dropping children off to the extent that...err...that the book that James Rothey, the Chair, the founder of the Evacuation Reunion Association wrote and a lot of us put, sent forward our names from everywhere and err...I got in contact...err...one of the ex-evacuees got into contact with me, she was evacuated into a place, a town called Rogerstone and she came back and she rang me and she said “when did you go?”, I told her and she said we were on the same bloody train ha-ha.

I: Ha-ha.
IP: Ha-ha, the same train going from Newport going up the valley. But she got off at Rogerstone and we had to carry on as you...err...and they’d come along and just call out names or what group you were in and you’d just get off. And we reached Llanywelth and 66 of us got off.

I: Huh.

IP: And then the rest went further up to Aberbee, to...err...Embey and the train was split again to Amberberton area that way or the Never Valley that way. And so you all got dropped off and that was basically it, but you didn’t know where you were going, the only people that I think knew where they were going from the research that I’ve done over the years...were...umm...schools that were....umm...you know public schools.

I: Umm.

IP: Because Kettering you know, for example, they took in a boys’ grammar school and a girls’ grammar school. So they knew where they were going. We didn’t. The aim was secrecy all the time...err...A because...err...they still had this fear that we were going to get dive bombed or God knows what else and a lot of kids were, James Rothey was. He was evacuated to...err...James is the founder of the Association and he’s a very dear friend of mine and I’ve worked with him for 14 years. Err...and he was evacuated to a place called Poolborough and during the Battle of Britain and he got machine gunned.

I: Huh.

IP: They took a very strong dislike to him.

I: Ha-ha.

IP: Dived into a ditch, bloody airman.

I: Ha-ha.

IP: You know I didn’t do anything to them and, and that’s the sort of thing that happened. Err...err...again that was basically it but most of
us didn’t know where we were going to go or who you were going to stay with.

I: How did it make you feel, not knowing?

IP: Umm...it’s difficult, I can only speak for myself. I remember cus I was with my elder brother, we were apprehensive, obviously and when we were going down Clathery Street in South Wales and the group would stop and the billeting officer would go and say “right, Mrs Jones, you’ve got, here’s your two” or whatever and we were at 16 Clathery Street with Laura and Jim Carter, God bless them and we were on the doorstep and they’d only put their name down for one...but err...Laura just looked at Jim and she said “oh no, no, no we’re not splitting brothers, we’ll take the two” and we ended up in...err...with some wonderful people...who looked after us...and we became part of the family to the extent that her sons, Laura and Jim are both gone God rest them but her sons and her daughter are my brothers and my sister.

I: Aww.

IP: And it’s never been...my kid brother still lives in Wales still the same. Err...and...err...there’s no talk about this is my kid brother or my elder brother, we meet, which is very, very rare now and when we meet it’s, it’s a great day. So that’s basically how that happened but umm...but your parents didn’t know, the first your parents knew where you were was when you got, when you arrived into your billet you were given a postcard that was stamped and you wrote on that where you were and your address and where you were and that was posted and this is only postcard that we got free postage on from the government because one MP raised the matter at the post office and the post office were most dis...err..displeas...displeased with that and nothing ever happened so if you wanted to write home which you had to do you had to come out of your pocket money and all the rest of it, but that was basically and then your parents knew where you were...simple as that. But how everybody felt you’ll have to ask other people, I know, I know one lady in...errm...who lives in the Isle of
Wight...err...her parents...err loaded her up in the car, put a mattress on the top of it, took her off to a school somewhere, God knows where in the middle of the night and dropped her off there...got in the car and drove away. It happened. A lot of people, it’s like I always say if you think of everyone I talk to, adults, I say if you think I’m going to tell you a fairy story forget it. I don’t talk about Walt Disney...I talk about true life and so err...that’s it. Not I mean...err...I would say the majority of evacuees were lucky, a hell of a lot were not. And I mean I lived, I, I am still in contact with three sisters who now live in Bristol who lived in the same street Upton Park Road and came with us on the same train, South Wales, same school, they wouldn’t go back to Wales if you gave um a ten thousand pounds...cus they had...err...Cathely Street was there, Meadow Street was there, just like that and we lived here and they lived here and they had hell on Earth...to the extent that when my foster mother Laura died and I was informed and I fought my way from here to in a snow storm and walked, started to walk the last seven miles in through snow drifts through Partlypool to where my parents, where my mother was living then and then down to...umm...Lanhelyth for the funeral and when I met the three girls in Westminster abbey on the 50th anniversary of Pied Piper...umm...and we got talking...umm...and they said “yeah we’d have done it and we’d have got to dance on their bloody graves”. That was the difference.

I: Hmm.

IP: We were lucky. Most that I know...umm...we’re lucky but...err...in the course of being Director of Research at the Evacuation Reunion Association I’ve come across stories that would make your hair curl.

I: Hmm.

IP: And it happened. But the, the thing is what, what I’ve always thought about, I mean I wrote an article which went all round the world in, in a magazine was why should we feel guilty because everything I was getting was people were ringing me up and, and err...they were feeling like it was their fault. But it wasn’t. Who walked away? Who did the...bad Samaritan act? Walked the others side and
knew it was damn well going on and I mean you have mental abuse, you have physical abuse, you have sexual abuse they were all in there. They’re all in there. To the extent that there are still some evacuees out there and I as I say have just turned 79...who are still hurting, still suffering. And the only way that, that, the, we can help and I’m always available, I can have, I’ve had people ring me up and I’ve never met them but we talk because and evacuee will talk to another evacuee because we’re on the same playing field. And you talk, now, I don’t know if you ever saw, but...err...err...the year before last Mike Aspel did a series of programmes of evacuees reunited.

I: Oh yeah.

IP: Did you watch that?

I: Yeah.

IP: Now I know Mike very well and he was king pin and he was the anchor man and he told...err the group, the company that was putting it together because we worked with them but...err he had the final say. They’ll be no airy-fairyness, no larks, when he was, talk, talking to, to the evacuees, that’s what’s going to be, that’s what’s going to be published, oh and that’s what’s going to go out and there was something like...I forget what it was that figured viewing in three nights in a row, took the TV totally by, I suppose they thought it wouldn’t work but it did and you may remember that there were two brothers stood outside a house...and they couldn’t walk into it? Because they knew damn well what had happened and as old as they were they could not walk into it. And it still happens. And there are people like myself who can go back to South Wales and can go back to Clatheny Street and walk back into number 16, well I can’t now cus I don’t know who owns it.

I: Ha-ha.

IP: But...err..the first time I went back I took my own children back with me and err...my wife and I went down and...err...no that was the second, the first time I went back my elder brother and me went down
to 16 Clatheny Street and Jack was going to go straight back in and I said “no, we won’t” and we knocked on the door and Laura opened it and I said “can you take in two evacuees?”. God I got swamped.

I: Ha-ha.

IP: That’s the difference. And after all these years and it’s still the same when I go back to Wales. The first time I went back and I’m walking up Cletheny Street and...err...this voice says “Jimmy Wright?”. Ha-ha.

I: Ha-ha.

IP: And I turned round yeah and “do you remember me?” yeah and I met a lady, her...err...maiden name was Rabbits and she lived straight opposite 16 and err...that was 40 years since I came back.

I: Huh.

IP: Huh. That’s how it works. And you know, it, it’s one of those things but it does...err...I mean I’ve got good, lots of happy memories, got sad memories...errm...but I’ll go on to those later. Next.

I: Err...just in your own words would you like to tell me about your experience in, of being evacuated?

IP: Well...err...it was a happy life...errm...once we’d got used to it. We were, we started school in, we were given part of the school called the old school where we schooled but then we integrated cus you had the three schools. You had the old school...umm...Jigright and Brinhebrid. Jigright was up to age 11 and Brinhebrid was the senior secondary so we just integrated all the way through. My claim to fame, you know this, was, cus I told the kids, my claim to fame was I think, I’m not sure, I think I was the first non-Welsh boy to become...err...head prefect at Jigright school.

I: Ha-ha.

IP: That’s my claim to fame and I’m sticking to it. Ha-ha.
IP: What’s yours? I’ve got mine. Erm...and we just integrated, what, what we did find was and what I found was when I moved from the old school up to Jigright and form 6 with Smudgy Smith, Smudgy Smith, cus you only had one teacher teaching you all about all subjects...errm...and he wanted to know what I was doing and, and I’d already done...err...fractions and I was onto decimals, they were, his class were still doing HTU. And so you know in that sense you know...err...but then when everybody caught up, that’s where I got my love of history from. Err...the only thing that annoyed me about history was that they were teaching us about the Anglo-Saxons and there’s a bloody great big world war going on out there.

I: Huh.

IP: I love history but I couldn’t tell you anything about the Anglo-Saxons who the hell were them?

I: Hah.

IP: I have no idea. Don’t ask, I don’t know. But that’s what we were being taught, Anglo-Saxons, but what we wanted to know was what was going on in the world...err...which is where I got my love of social history, military history cus I’m a military historian as well. Erm...but my life as such with my brother were fine with Jim and Laura, Jim then went into.....no...yeah Jim was called up and he went into the army. Then my mother came down with my younger brother...cus they got bombed out and then my Dad followed cus he’d been called up and...err...so we lived in this room temporarily, 12 by 10...with one bedroom and my Dad was...and we were as I say...my Dad came down he’d been called up and he went off to...Africa...South Africa to train as air crew...err...that was in ’41, he came back...late ’42 and he was killed in action ’43...errm and that’s where if you like our evacuation changed. Because I was...I had to then grow up so did we...err...with my two brothers we had to grow up rather fast and my childhood stopped. Erm...and we had no-one to go back home to in
London, like my father’s parents...err...it’s family were still alive and it’s only recently that I’ve discovered an extended family of cousins.

I: Huh.

IP: Which is wonderful cus we just fell off the radar. They knew David...err...my cousin who lives in Henden and now I’ve suddenly found that I’ve got 2 living in Higham Ferrars. I’ve got a couple living...err...in Weston Faval.

I: Huh, wow.

IP: One of them is in France. They’re all over the place so we’re all hoping to get together cus they’ll all, knew nothing about me or my, my two brothers. They knew a little about their Uncle who’d been killed...but that’s all they knew. Err...why, we’re endeavouring to find out. So...life as such went on...errm...I was once asked it in some school, you might have been in the class, who wanted to know the worst day of my evacuation and I always said that’s easy...that was the 13th or 14th July 1943 when I was called out of school to be told by my mother that my father had been reported missing and I said the second worst day of my life was the 16th or 17th when we got a letter confirming that he’d been killed in action. You can’t get worse than that no matter what you try to do. Errm...but life just went on...it had to; there was nowhere else that you could go. You had rationing to contend with...errm...I mean...err...day to day life was great fun. You had no, we had a park down the bottom I remember, but most of the games were played down the street. Cricket, you name it, we didn’t have a ball God if you had a ball...

I: Hah.

IP: If you had a ball you were king of the roost.

I: Hah.

IP: You just had a couple of old rags and you wrapped them together...err...a piece of wood for a cricket bat...and two man hole covers you know so you to keep it apart and that was it.
I: Ha-ha.

IP: But you know we had fun, we lived. Errm...I don’t recall...err...any...it didn’t do me any harm put it that way. And err...evacuation in total...it taught me...it made me who I am. I’m not afraid of anybody...errm...nobody frightens me. Nobody is higher than me or lower than me. Err...I know the value of money. I think the most, the greatest thing it taught me was the value of friendship. Cus if you’ve got friends, you’ve got life, you’ve got, you’re, you’re a very rich man or a very rich woman cus if you haven’t you’ve got nothing. But that’s what evacuation taught you, you’ve got...err...and then I was in the air force for 23 years so that more or less tied, but that’s all I ever wanted to do, when my father was killed I was 9, going on 9 and a half, I said then I’m going to, that’s what I want to do and I never deviated, I did various jobs when I was in Wales but I only ever wanted to do one thing and that was go and join the air force which I eventually did much to my mother’s disgust.

I: Huh.

IP: And I went and I spent 22 years.

I: Huh.

IP: Liked some of it, most of it, hated Aiden but who didn’t. I was in Aiden for the last two years, I did Malaya, Singapore. I travelled around the world...so I’ve seen a bit.

I: Umm.

IP: Next.

I: Umm...what are your most significant memories of evacuation?

IP: Day one. Cus you didn’t know what was going to happen. You were all together and I don’t know if I’ve told you this, but the bus moved ha-ha.

I: Ha-ha.
IP: That helps, try it some time. Ha-ha.

I: Ha-ha.

IP: Ooops, where are we going? Nobody knows...umm that and...err...arriving in, I can only talk about South Wales. Arriving in South Wales and not knowing where I was, nobody knew where we were.

I: Hmm.

IP: Err...and like I’ve said to you, what the hell is that great big thing? It’s a mountain. What’s a mountain? Down here sort of thing and coal came out of a scuttle didn’t it? I didn’t know it came out of a hole in the ground. Umm...a whole new learning curve...umm...making friends...I mean the first day...err oh yeah...the first day we arrived in South Wales and we went in to 16 Cathely Street, I’ll never forget and I spoke...err...to my late brother about this and it’s a row of mining houses altogether you see known as The Fields and you have this short...you’ve got a front door and a short passage way and up to the left was the parlour which was 10 by 12 and that was used for high days, holidays, funerals and Christenings...weddings sort of things. Errm...and then you had the big room and the scullery at the back end. And we went into the house, Laura took us in and we sat underneath the stairs and there was a...errm...two seater settee and I’ll never forget it, Rexene covered...you don’t see um now...red. Now the door into the main...err...what we would call the main...the lounge but it was the room they used for high days and holidays...err...was wide open to the front door and you couldn’t see out the front door, was packed with kids all yelling “Mr and Mrs Carter, can we come out to play?” and we’d only just arrived. We have never, I have never forgotten that. Ever. And outta that group I made two really good friends. We were lifelong I guess until I left Wales. And...err...they were there so I mean we were more or less, they knew, the kids knew that we were coming and so...err...it was a learning curve on both sides. We were speaking Cockney and they were speaking with this
Welsh, now if my kid brother called me now, you’d swear born that he was Welsh born and bred.

I: Ha-ha.

IP: Cus he’s got it. Cus that was his life time, he got little or no memory of D...of our Dad because he was a youngster but what he does carry, carries in his wallet is a little rem...I don’t know if you remember the little threp’ny piece, the cog wheel?

I: Umm.

IP: You do? He’s got one of them. It’s black. But you could offer him all the gold in the world and he’d say ‘no thank you’. It was the last gift that my father gave him when he left...and where Peter goes that goes. And well that, that, that, that I think was the most significant memories of the actual evacuation. Cus I’ve never forgotten that, ever. Errm...losing my Dad, you don’t forget things like that and err...being called into the Headmaster’s office, Mr Rogers, I wonderful man, I can see him now...err...at Jigright and saying “I would like you to be my head prefect” ha-ha

I: Ha-ha.

IP: I think they’re the three most significant and err the last, the greatest most significant day of when I left Wales was and that was a long time after the war, was when I joined the Air Force. Happiest day of my life apart from meeting my girl...and marrying her but...err...that’s about that really. Lots of bits in between, Christmas’, you know making do with just about anything, I mean working as a errand boy during the war and weighing up, I mean you’ve never skinned a cheese, you probably wouldn’t know how to skin a cheese cus you’ve only seen the cheese on the slab and they cut it but dear God know, you’ve got a 56 lb round skin, it’s got skin and you’ve gotta get it off it as the errand boy and you had to take the skin off without leaving any of the cheese behind, that’s someone’s rations for God’s sake. Yeah it was great fun learning that or weighing up a 200 lb sack of sugar into 1oz, 2oz, 4oz, 6oz, 8oz, 10oz, 12oz a lb blue bags. And when you get
to the bottom of it and it’s a hessian sack and you’re scraping it down so God knows if you’re right at the bottom, you had to come off, cus the manager would count it out and you had to come out with 200lbs the weight of the sugar.

I: Huh.

IP: Somebody’s ration, it’s all rationed out. So you had that sort of thing and at Christmas day or Christmas you had a...err...bakeries called Dixie’s and...err...you’d see everyone charging off there at 8 o’clock, 9 o’clock in the morning and taking their joint or whatever they had with them and he’d bake it, in the oven. And they’d all charge up there about 1 o’clock and bring it all back. Most glorious smells, I can still smell it now, the same as when you’re baking your Christmas cake and the rations were increased at Christmas time and so that, that sort of memory. Errm...going to the Bug House, the pictures known as the Play House, built by the miners, owned by the miners, run by the miners and then it fell down. Ha.

I: Ha-ha.

IP: Subsidence got it. And it went for years and it used to cost you 4 pence to go in downstairs but if you were rich and you had 6 pence then you could go upstairs and sit in the posh seats, that sort of thing. And I mean it’s memories, happy ones, you get a lot of sad ones...because you know there were always people getting killed du...during the war. And yet it was funny...errm...when we got there and my father had been killed in action and when I went to school the following day to Jigright all the children in my class and in fact the head, the teachers and the heads and they just kind of enveloped you. They, they understood even, even you know kids your own age 9, 10, they knew. You’d, you’d go out to the playground and be standing in the corner and oh no way, they’d come over and “come on, we’ll play cowboys and Indians” or call it what you like. They never left you alone. They seemed to understand cus some of them had Dads in the service and it might have happened to them, you never know. But that’s some of them that stand out but as I say my claim to fame, head prefect.
I: Ha-ha.

IP: Big deal. Ha.

I: Ha-ha. Yep. I’ve read quite a lot about food, how would you say that the food compared in Wales to what you’d had at home?

IP: Today? Well...err...

I: At the time. Was it any different to what you were used to?

IP: Oh no, no, no. Oh well, the only thing that was different in, in...err...I suppose the Welsh made, did an awful lot of cooking themselves, I mean...err...a bake stone a pieclet. Err...a bake stone is, I go down to Wales now and my sister in law, my kid brother’s wife, God bless her and she’ll go round to her neighbour and she’ll say “our Jim’s coming down” and she’ll say “ok” and they’ll make a half a dozen fresh bake stone. Now a bake stone is just flour...err...sugar and you can make them up by like a scone dough

I: Yeah.

IP: And you cut it into circles and you put it on a bake stone on the fire, it’s absolutely gorgeous when they’re hot off the fire. And we’d go pick the blackberries to make blackberry jam, blackberry tart and blueberries and make the same thing. Errm...food, no I mean...rationing was getting under way when we were evacuated so there wasn’t much difference...errm...errm...in Wales. It was, you didn’t throw anything away. There was no such thing as fridges or...err...freezers, it was put in the pantry and of you took the cheese out and it had a bit of the blue mould on it you wouldn’t throw that away, you wouldn’t throw the cheese away like people do today, no that was cut off.

I: Ha-ha.

IP: Nothing else wrong with it...err...you know, I suppose we ate reasonably well...err...I don’t remember ever being hungry...err...simple as that. So not a great deal of difference, I mean
sweets disappeared off the face of the Earth...errm...I can tell you one story...errm...oranges.

I: Oh yeah.

IP: I can tell you where I was on the 21st December 1944...and I wasn’t in school...the way I found out, I’d go down to Combran cus I do family history and I thought I’ll research my own school and I got Brinhedway’s diaries out and Arthur Harris, Headmaster, a lovely, lovely man, I can see him now, blue pin stripe suit, white shirt, blue tie, splash back hair, shoes you could shave in.

I: Ha-ha.

IP: And in the diary in the morning it says how many children, how many people, kids on the books, how many in school in the afternoon, how many in the books, how many in school and it’s way down. And in Coppergate writing underneath it says ‘reason for low attendance a supply of oranges in the local green grocers’ and guess who was in the queue?

I: Ha-ha.

IP: A big group with the green ration books. So...err...can you say where you were on the 21st December last year? I know where I was the 21st December 1944. I say that to the kids and they look at me like I’m barmy! But I know cus I know that I got an orange for Christmas day.

I: I remember my Gran telling me something similar to that cus she was born during the second world war...

IP: Yeah.

I: ...and she says she remembers one Christmas getting an orange in her stocking and saying that it was just the best thing ever.

IP: Oh yeah you couldn’t beat it, you got an orange wow. And after the war, bananas started coming back in...err...and I mean a lot of children that had been born didn’t know what to do with
it...errm...grapes were the same, apples were alright cus you could get local apples...errm...but it was surprising what you could find in the hedgerows. I mean there was one mountain that we called the winberry mountain and it was a small blueberry and I don’t know...err...we took...who did we take...we took somebody up there I know that and they were looking for the winberries and they were looking in the trees and you can’t find them in no trees, they were all in little bushes bending down. And we made winberry tart, jam, things today you’d die for. But that was all, you didn’t throw anything away. I mean if you get some of the old war time recipes, wooton pie, there’s no meat in it. All wooton pie is all the veg you can get yo your hands on and stick it in the pot, boil it up and flour would make a pastry, stick that on the top and you’d got a wooton pie. Simple as that, you didn’t throw anything away but food otherwise no there wasn’t a great deal, I don’t know that there was any difference. The bread...errm...you’d always get fresh bread and of course then the colour changed...it got greyer and greyer and greyer...which was horrid but you still ate it. It was either do that or go without. You always got your free milk in school and they kept that one going...errm...but ice-cream, no unless you made, somebody started to make some themselves, if you’d got custard powder, oh God it was horrid and the worst thing was if you ran out of sugar and you couldn’t drink tea without sugar so someone would say try golden syrup...don’t.

I: Ha-ha.

IP: Well you can, but look at the colour when you put your tea in, it looks alright with the milk and then good God what’s that colour. It’s a colour that’s indescribable.

I: Ha-ha.

IP: Don’t even try it, I have.

I: I’m gonna be curious to try it now.

IP: Yeah. You’ll have to ask your Grandma if she’s ever tried it in her tea. It just goes the weirdest colour you’ve ever seen in your life. But
that’s what you did. You made, you’d make do and mend. You didn’t put, you just kept going with everything you could think of, simple as that. Errm...you had the British restaurant where you could get a damn good meal for a shilling, it was basic, but it was a meal and they went on for quite a while and actually they, they could do with bringin’ um back, do Morrison’s outta business, no flaming idea.

I: Ha-ha.

IP: Errm...but no, it’s, food was fine. As far as I was, well look at me I’m still here. Thank God. Next.

I: Errm...how long were you evacuated for?

IP: It never ended...because when my father’s family, we had nothing to go home to. We finished 1945...errm...which was, we could have gone home but...err...we had nothing to go home to so we stayed in Wales but everybody else went home and err...most were told it’s over, go home, forget it. Now how you can wipe five years outta your life, I don’t know but if you think about it and your six or seven and you’re evacuated 1939, how old are you in 1945? Are you the same person? No way. I mean one of my, a good friend, an ex-evacuee lives in Milton Keynes, he was evacuated...err...to a farm in Somerset and Gordan can switch into the dialect just like that (clicks fingers).

I: Hah.

IP: Ooo-arr, I’ve been down bottom end...and you hear him go and he loved it...to the extent that he was adopted by the farmer and his wife.

I: Oh wow.

IP: And he’s sings ‘um, they are the bee’s knees. And he lectures as well from the, for the Milton Keynes side. Errm...it’s err...I dunno...my, as I say my evacuation, I would say that I’m still evacuated, in, in, to that point but...err...1945 was when it finished and at the end of it I think there was about, just about seven and a half thousand who just didn’t go home again, no-body to go home to, families disappeared, one way to get rid of the kids, forget about ‘um, or they could have
been killed in the Blitz. Errm...and their foster parents became...err...adopted them, I mean there are cases that I know about of...err...as I say, evacuees were a complete mix...err...they were no, we were not all squeaky clean...err...we were not all polite, we were not all good mannered. You get three and a half million people and you’re not going to get...err...you know everyone’s in the melting pot but a lot of good that came out of evacuation, the evacuation was...err...but a lot of evacuees came from shall we say the poorer half, the poorer classes where every second word was ‘f’, ‘b’ or ‘c’.

I: Hah.

IP: Right. Now, I don’t want to shock you but that happened, they didn’t know anything else, that was the way you spoke. So it didn’t matter...but when they went back...they were totally different people. I know of one case in Wellingborough, of a young man, a boy, who was billeted on a family where every other word was ‘f’, ‘b’ or ‘c’ and he stayed with ‘um for the war and at the end of the war he was dis...err...dis...err...and off he went and two days later there’s a knock on the door in Wellingborough and it’s one young man “Pl, please can I come back and stay with you ‘cus I can’t live where I am?”. A complete turnaround so it takes time. It takes time. It...err...a lot of good, a lot of good came out of it, a lot of bad came out of it, I mean and there’s still a lot of hatred...errm...amongst ex-evacuees, we’re not all dead yet. Errm...there’s still a lot of unhappiness; there’s still a lot of hurt because evacuees took the blame. I mean I went to interview a historian, not too far from here and she started to complain, was talking about her, what I was doing “oh yes, I remember they came in here...” and she was the historian “…and they brought in this and they brought in that and they brought in everything else” so I went and checked it out, oh yeah...the water came from a local well which was contaminated, but we got the blame. Err...if it went wrong we got the blame. Errm...you know this one, the one with the slides...at Reading in Berkshire, the...err...you remember, the school medical officer?
I: Yes.

IP: With his return, he submitted a return with impetigo, scabies...err...rickets and various other diseases ok, amongst school children, with a percentage, huh? Know when he took it? 1938 there weren’t even a bloody evacuee in sight. But we got the blame. I mean...err...as I said earlier...err...if I was to say that we were all squeaky clean I’m telling a lie, no of course not, there were children who didn’t know how to behave.

I: Umm.

IP: But that was the way they were brought up. So who, who, you know you can’t apportion, you can’t, this, this is the argument...errm...and this is the side the association and as far as I’m concerned, anyone who writes a book on evacuation and I read it and it’s wrong, we’ll go after you. We went after Max Hastings and we got an apology out of it because he put the self same and he should know better.

I: Hmm.

IP: And he apologised, he’d got it wrong. Juliet Gardiner, she’s another one. Sometimes she gets it right, sometimes she gets it wrong, just let ‘um know. No, I mean if you’re gonna talk about me and if you’re going to teach about evacuation, get the facts right, you’ve got to get that, ‘cus if you haven’t got the facts you’re not going to go anywhere and the only way you can get to the facts is by literally talking to people who’ve actually been there and that’s the difference. Errm...a lot of people you know you can surmise what people have, what it was like, sorry...unless you were a five, six years of age and somebody stuck a label on you, ‘cus that’s the only medal we got, was a label which was on you, tied to you, that was, that’s the only medal we got and at the end of the war go home, forget it. You can’t do that, ‘cus it’s up here (points to head)...errm..I spoke...err...with one lady...not last year, the year before, she got into contact with me by phone...err...’cus...err...and she was seeing her vicar, she was seeing
the priest and she was seeing shrinks like this and God knows who else, had been for years because between her mother and her sister...err...something had gone wrong through the war and she was still suffering...and she rang me up because she read the article that I’d put in, in the Evacuee and she’s read this “Why should we feel guilty?” and she got talking and I said, well the only thing I could say was, “well I’m going down to London in the November...” and this was in July for armistice day, cus I was doing pray commander for the ERA, in Whitehall and I said “...are you going to church?” “Oh yeah”, “well this is the only suggestion I can make and I’m no trick cyclist...” I said “...buy yourself three poppies and find yourself a war memorial somewhere...” I said “...and when you go there wear your poppy and put the two down and say...” cus her Mum, Mother and sister had gone, I said “...put ‘um down there and say ‘if I’m wrong, if I was wrong I’m sorry, if you were wrong, I forgive you” I said it may work, I dunno”. So we carried on chatting and anyway three days later I got a phone call, she’d done it and I said “And?” and she said “A load, I feel a load has gone from my shoulders”.  

I: Huh.  

IP: It was as simple as that, but it’s still there and...err...some people will talk and some won’t talk, it’s bottled up and that’s where it stays...errm...it’s just one of those things, you can but try...anything else?  

I: Erm...you stayed in Wales, so does that mean that you stayed in touch with your foster family?  

IP: Oh yeah. Yeah I took my, when I got married and had children I took ‘um all up all down there and Jim Carter God rest him, he took me and my and I went with him, he took my youngsters when they were down round Lathwelyn pit and he was 12ft tall.  

I: Hah.  

IP: Oh God yeah, this is my foster son’s children here to every miner, my God he was as proud as punch.
I: Aww.

IP: Oh God yeah. You know I swear blind he was 12ft tall.

I: Aww.

IP: Yeah, oh yes, yeah. We stayed in touch and then they both died...err...I didn’t know that Jim had died because, I think I...err...must have been away and I came back and...err...I found out that he’d died and he was buried with Laura so I went down and Peter and I went up the cemetery and we laid flowers...and all I put was a card that said ‘with love from three evacuees’. What else can I put? But that, that was it and as I say I’m still in touch with some of ‘um. Any more questions?

I: Umm...you’ve partly answered this already but would you say that evacuation changed your views on the world or on people in general?

IP: Oh yeah. Oh yeah, yes, ‘cus as I said it made...err...I can only speak for me...it taught, it made me who I am because...err...it, when you lose your Dad...err...through enemy action...err...you have to grow up, your childhood stopped, well my childhood stopped, you had to grow up.

I: Hmm.

IP: Err...and you started to take...err...as I said it taught me the value of money, it taught me the value of...err...many things, to the extent that I’ve, I’ve always stood on my own two feet, I don’t cow tow to anybody, I never have, I never will...errrm...certain people I like, certain people I dislike but that, that’s another story...errm...because as part of my service career I ended up in places that I didn’t particularly want to go but I ended up there and...err...but overall...err...I’ve gotta say it made me who I am, I enjoy what I do, I enjoy life, it taught me history, I love history...err...and I, I like people, I like talking to people, I like learning about people and I like to help people, especially people of my own ilk who are still suffering and that...err...I think it was one of the basic things about it which is what
you learn and what it teaches you and...err...you make do and...and you make do without...errm...you don’t throw things, I don’t throw things away I mean going down into my shed is fun ‘cus I don’t throw anything away, you didn’t during the war, you, oh no, no, no, no, my family I mean my family so that I drive them up the wall.

I: Hah.

IP: My late wife, God bless her, had to put up with just about everything I mean...errm...she had to. Ha-ha.

I: Ha-ha.

IP: She had to put up with me for fifty-nine years. Hah. But in...err...all in all...errm...I can look back for the good times and the good times in my evacuation far outweigh, far outweigh the bad times...but that’s only me.

I: Yeah.

IP: You could talk to someone else who’ll say God I hated every second of it, but that’s people and depending on, I mean Jack and I were very, very fortunate because we ended up with two lovely people and a family who took us in to the extent that...errm...they’re still my brother and my sister. Simple as that, not errm...you can’t, I can’t add to that...err...but London’s not home, Wales is home, because if I drive down to Wales and I go off the M5 and I’m going through the Wye Valley towards Mumouth and you go past a sign that says welcome to Wales, when I pass that I always say “nice to be home”.

I: Ha-ha.

IP: And I never change and...err...when I used to take my wife down, as soon as I pass it, nice to be home.

I: Can you just tell me what your very first thoughts were on your foster family and the community as you arrived sort of in the town?

IP: Err...well the train pulled up at Llanhyth station and we, sixty-six of us got off, now we didn’t know where we were right...
I: Hmm.

IP: ...so we were then formed up into the big crocodile and taken from Llanhyth railway station up to the...err...Baptist Church which is no longer there but will be on one of the slideshows...err...where we were wined and dined, I think and we...err...rested up. Then we were grouped together and...err...split, one half going to one half of the village and my half going the other half and my half went down to an area called the Fields...now it was...Meadow Street, Clathery Street, Railway Street, Pointers Road, Saints Row, five streets, one separated by the river Ebou, which was black because of the coal dust. Nowadays it’s got fish in it and it’s clean and so we were taken down to, we stared off in Clathery Street and as you went down the first impression you get is “where are we?” because it’s totally different to what, I mean I lived in Upton Park Road which is a long, a long road, all the way from Queen Street to up to, Green Street rather up to, all the way up to St Alawishes Monastery which is the far end, a long, long road and we lived at number 97 and there was two sides. Errm..so it all looked very, very compact and I suppose...first impressions was you know what’s happening, because of course everyone’s on the doorsteps and when we reached number 16 and Laura and Jim both said that they’d take us two we didn’t say anything, you, you’re still in a, in a semi-shock.

I: Hmm.

IP: Because you knew then, I suppose then that you’re not going home that night...you were going to sleep somewhere else. And...err...but the welcome that they gave us...err...it wasn’t a matter of “oh come in you’re here” oh no, no, no, arms round “come in boys, come and stay with us, would you like to stay with us?”. I’ve never forgotten that.

I: Uh huh.
IP: So in that respect...err...it was very, very soothing and it helped you over the first hurdle which was a hell of a hurdle to go over because you’d never been away from home before.

I: Hmm.

IP: Does that answer that one?

I: Uh huh. And those thoughts they never changed?

IP: No, oh no. Not in a million years because...errm...I can still think of Laura and I can still think of Jim with great, much love and affection, you couldn’t have wished for two nicer people as far as Jack and I were concerned they were, I mean Jack...err...would stay in Wales, he died...err...two years ago and...err...he would always visit because he lived in the house that my Mother took...umm...got in 1947 but her would always and that was on the Llathwelyn mountain but he was would always come down and visit, he would visit the boys and...err...visit Laura and...err...all the Carter family.

I: Hmm.

IP: And he was always made as welcome as the flowers in May...because Jack never married, he was a bachelor all his life and...err...but he always...err...they loved him to bits...so I mean that was right up to Laura died and...err...then when Jim died, Jim died he moved further away but oh no, nothing but the fondest memories, thank God. We were two of the lucky ones.

I: Hmm.

IP: Uh huh.

I: Umm...you touched on your experience in school in Wales, what was it, can you remember what it was compared to in London?

IP: Oh yeah totally different. I mean we stayed together for a little while in...err...the old school because they gave us this part of the school but the of course as we got, Jack was reaching the age where he had to go to senior secondary, so he went to Brighedrin and
everybody started to move round and then they integrated us into the
old school and...errm...with our old teachers until those teachers went
back and then, one only remained and that was...err...Mr
Perriman...err...she stayed with us right through the
war...err...literally became second fathers to a lot of us who remained
behind...errm...the schooling was, the, the schooling was different in
the, the, in the effect that we seemed to be from London even though
I was that young, we seemed to be in advance, as I told you when I
went to Jigright, I’d already done fractions and they were only coming
out of HTU into fractions and I was already doing
decimals...err...so...err...in, in that sense, but no...err...schooling just
continued, we just seemed to, we just seemed to pick up from where
we’d left off, which was the name of the game I suppose. Okay?

I: Yeah. And err...just the last one, would you have done anything
differently...in your evacuation?

IP: Would I do it again?

I: Yeah, or...

IP: Not bloody likely.

I: Ha-ha.

IP: I’d send the politicians.

I: Would you have done anything differently though...sort of, during
your time?

IP: What during the war or after the war?

I: During.

IP: Err...no because we had no option so you can’t say I would have
liked to have done this, to have done this or to have gone there
because, we, we had no, children had no say it was done by the big
people, by the adults, they knew what was best for us.

I: Hmm.
IP: So you accepted, you had two choices, you accepted or you rejected, now a lot of evacuees rejected, a lot of ‘um went back, even from our group, sixty-six, a lot went back.

I: Hmm.

IP: And went smack into the Blitz. At the end of the war...errm...in 1945, VE day, there were...five plus one teacher of the original sixty-six left...

I: Wow.

IP: ...in Wales, the rest had gone back through the period of time and...err...the three sisters, the Tate sisters and Jack and myself and Mr Perriman, we were the last, we were the last five...errm...everyone else had gone so that, that’s how it went...err...but to say would I have done anything different, no. Well, I can’t answer it really because I had no say.

I: Yeah.

IP: I was, we were evacuated and there we were, I mean if I was offered...errm...the choice of, the choice of going back to London to a Grammar School because my Headmaster thought I was a suitable candidate...err...a Grammar school but my Mother said “no” because we had nowhere to go in London so I lost out on that, on the Grammar school so I just finished off in...err...when I was fourteen I left school in Brighedwin and the next education that I had, I did was when I joined the RAF and we had five GCE’s one after the other and I got all five which rather surprised me.

I: Ha-ha.

IP: Do you know that may old, we were getting on a bit then...errm...that was in Germany and I’ll always remember the, I dunno if it’s relevant but the...err...we had...err...a wack education officer, she was gem and she was trying to teach us English and we’re all sat there airmen, generals, SAC’s, you know it’ll be years service in
it and she started off asking us “what is a noun?” and we all sit there blank, pardon.

I: Hmm, ha-ha.

IP: “What is an adjective?” pardon? And...err...and she said “where are we goin’ to start?” and we all piped up with from square one. We aint goin anywhere and that’s what she did and I got five GCE’s and...err...no I couldn’t, I don't think I would do things, I mean things that you’d want to change in your life, in your evacuation, one I would have liked my father to have come through the war.

I: Hmm.

IP: But you can’t change that, that, that’s life. Err...I think if anything I could have changed is that I would have, no p’raps I wouldn’t have because of I’d have changed going into the air force when I was fifteen as a boys entrance I wouldn’t have met my wife, I wouldn’t have met the love of my life...err...so no...err...seriously, seriously no, that was my lot and I accepted it.

I: Hmm.

IP: A lot of other people had to accept the exact same thing because there’s no other way you can do it. You had to either accept it or reject it, there was no, there was no middle line. If you went back home, you went back home but you were never evacuated again ’cus you were struck off the list. Well of course then in ‘44 when the buzz bombs started and the V2’s, I mean all hell broke loose again because everyone wanted out of London again so it started another mass exodus.

I: Hmm.

IP: Until we overran the V1 sites and the V2 sites and then, then that stopped but an awful lot of people got killed with those and a lot of those were kids and I mean if you knew, they knew what they were going back into but...err...we didn’t.
I: Hmm.

IP: I mean I remember the...err...in Wales and I remember the Blitz on Newport and the Blitz in Cardiff because the sky was red...and we were only twelve miles from Newport...up the valley and...err...Cardiff was about twenty, twenty miles away but the sky was blood red when they got their hands on it because they went for the docks.

I: Hmm.

IP: But that was the only time, well we had the sirens go off, it was like I told you, I told the kids when the sirens went off when we were at school, now the old school’s on top of the mountain right, so you had to climb up Llanhty th hill and go round up another big hill the law was if the sirens went you had to, all children had to get back home so by the time we got back down to the Fields the air raid was over.

I: Ha-ha.

IP: So eventually they stopped it and they put a teacher out as a spotter and...err...it did happen, you had a teacher out as a spotter and we lived out in Wales as I say and we were surrounded by mountains and if you, if the teacher happened to see something that she thought was an aircraft coming she would just shout out, ring the bell, air raid and we’d all disappear...but down in the cellars of the school and unfortunately a lot of the teachers yelled air raid and it turned out to be a sea gull or a bloody pigeon.

I: Ha-ha.

IP: But there again if you see, if you look, if you look into the distance and you see something come out to you and it’s gliding, you’re not going to take any chances so woops sorry head. Ha-ha.

I: Ha-ha.

IP: A blackbird or a large bird you know but that was the only time...no to change anything, no. I...err...couldn’t even if I wanted to as simple as that. I cast my lot and I am now where I am...so no I’m
still going strong even after a heart attack...which frightened the bloody life out of me. It was a hell of a wakeup call.

I: Hmm.

IP: ’Cus I lost so much, I was forty-two inches round the waist, I’m now forty. I was sixteen and a half stone, I’m now twelve.

I: Wow.

IP: So I...err...had a wakeup call. But that was, that’s me and I’d have changed nothing ‘cus if I’d had I’d have never met her.
APPENDIX FIVE: CODING OF INTERVIEWS
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Interviewee A</th>
<th>Interviewee B</th>
<th>Interviewee C</th>
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<th>Interviewee E</th>
<th>Interviewee F</th>
<th>Carrie’s War</th>
<th>Nina Bawden</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leaving Home</td>
<td>‘...there was a whole fleet of buses, which we knew nothing about and then we were all marched out and you wondered where your Mum and Dad were...and you got loaded onto the coaches and isn’t it all great fun and then the’</td>
<td>‘we decided after the November Blitz that we’d go there, there was the Mother, my Mother and my best friend we went down there and stayed with an Auntie, me Auntie Nesta’</td>
<td>‘Well my Mother was coming with me so I didn’t really mind, I mean I knew me Auntie and Uncle and I knew me cousins’</td>
<td>‘I’d never been away from home before and I was really a Mummy’s girl you know’</td>
<td>‘My initial feelings were great sadness because of leaving home but I knew my big sister would look after me’</td>
<td>‘We were told at school and home. We didn’t really understand but it sounded exciting’</td>
<td>(On the journey to the billet) ‘Fun as I had plenty of goodies and a new doll and book. My father took me on the bus’</td>
<td>‘Labelled like parcels...only with no address to be sent to’ (p.17)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
damn thing moved’
go earlier on you see, a lot of children went with school but I think I was a bit of a chicken ha-ha and somehow I persuaded my Mother not to send me so I think some of my school friends went earlier on so it wasn’t too bad going with my Mother and my best friend, it’s not

adventure,” Carrie’s mother had said, and not just to cheer them up: it was her nature to look on the bright side’ (p.17)

'I saw myself living in a big house in the country with rich and educated and even titled people who drove about in beautiful old cars, always ate with candles on the table, fell in and out of love with each
like going on your own’

'I partly knew that it was time that me mother and I were separated'

other, and generally had a wonderfully exciting life like the people in the Dornford Yates novels I had just become addicted to.’ (p.37)
for a while.’
(p.37)

’Not that Carrie is me. She is both more anxious and more composed than I think I was in 1940. I can be fairly sure that some of her feelings about being away from home for the first time, sent
to live with strangers, are ones that I remembere d.’ (p.42)

‘In August 1939, leaving London on the train to Ipswich, I had been alight with excited anticipation and I had not been disappointed.’ (p.44)

| Billeting | ‘we were | N / A | ‘They wanted | ‘we were | ‘My sister was | ‘I didn’t go | After being | On being |
apprehensive, obviously’
‘they’d (the foster family) only put their name down for one...but...Laura just looked at Jim and she said “Oh no, no, no we’re not splitting brothers, we’ll take the two,”
‘Arriving in South Wales and not knowing me to go with my school to be evacuated but I didn’t want to go’
evacuated, from the school, we were evacuated to Leamington which wasn’t that far away really’
it was all done through school’
to be evacuated with the High School, although she hadn’t even started there and I was allowed to go with her’
‘The actual parting from my parents at the station was terrible: going away to an unknown place to live with complete strangers, but I did have my
through the billeting process. Luckily my father knew a family in the area the school was being evacuated to’
offered a slice of cake and refusing Carrie is told to stand ‘there by the wall...and someone will choose you’ (p.20)
Albert describes the process as “a kind of cattle auction...” (p.20)
‘she had made to wear a luggage label “It’s silly for me to wear a label. I’m not luggage, and I’m not a baby. I should have thought I was quite old enough to know where I live and who I am!” (p.37)
“We hung around the
where I was, nobody knew where we were’

‘first impressions was you know what’s happening, because of course everyone’s on the doorsteps and when we reached number 16 and Laura and Jim both said that they’d take us two we didn’t

sister’

‘We were put in a large hall and finally we were picked by foster parents who had no children of their own but who were desperate for two evacuees’

already begun to feel ill with shame at the fear that no one would choose her, the way she always felt when they picked teams at school’ (p.20)

‘No one would take home a buy that looked like that, so pale and school hall waiting to be ‘chosen’ much longer than we had expected to...It was certainly clear (clear to me, at any rate) that the town worthies who had come to look us over were avoiding Jean and me and
say anything, you, you’re still in a, in a semi-shock’.
‘but the welcome that they gave us...err...it wasn’t a matter of “oh come in you’re here” oh no, no, no, no, arms round “come in boys, come and stay with us, would you like to stay with us?”. I’ve never

delicate’ Carrie talking of her younger brother who has been sick on the train journey (p.20)

‘Minutes passed, feeling like hours. Children left the line and were taken away. Only unwanted ones left, Carrie

others in our class in favour of bewitching little creatures with shining ringlets’ (p.48)
| Experience of staying with a foster family | 'we ended up...with some wonderful people...who looked after us...and we | 'But...err...there's a saying that relations turn fish stink in three days and that ha-ha-ha after a | 'I left school when I was fourteen you see and just before I left school I was evacuated but | 'we were evacuated to Leamington Spa which is obviously very close and it's not a city like | 'They lived in a small terraced house with a back yard. There was no bathroom or hot water but | 'My experience of being evacuated was very happy. I was very spoilt by | 'We were so happy here, Nick and I’ (p.13) | “She thinks we’re poor | ‘I was billeted on a family who lived in a council house and were forgotten that...it was very, very soothing and it helped you over the first hurdle which was a hell of a hurdle to go over because you’d never been away from home before’ | thought.’ (p.20) |
became part of the family’

‘we were lucky’

‘it was a happy life...errm...once we’d got used to it’

‘the worst day of my evacuation...when I was called out of school to be told by my mother that my father had been reported

short time ha-ha they’d probably had enough of us’

‘It’s a bit awkward with relations and we didn’t stay there too long’

I mean it wasn’t too bad ‘cus as I say I’d got my Mother and it was to an Aunt so it wasn’t as bad as some children who went to

it was only to an Auntie up in Newcastle, well just outside Newcastle but I was only there for about...three or four months’

‘I had a younger sister as well that was only three years...err...ten years younger than me so she was only, she came up with ours, we were moved away from the munitions factories and all that, so we were evacuated to Leamington Spa at the beginning of the war for about four months I think’

‘I had a Anderson

we had baths in front of a fire in a tin bath filled with hot water from the stove’

‘Our foster parents were very religious and we went to Church three times a day on a Sunday’

‘They were very kind to us and let my sister sleep with me. I was desperately home sick all the time and the family; they had a son who was a little older than I (I’m an only child), he was a big brother to me. They also had a gorgeous dog. They treated me just like one of the family’

‘we had an Anderson

Building relationships in the local community went ‘very well’

children, too poor to have slippers,”

‘very nice family, Salvation army family, big family’

(p.22)

‘My kind family, anxious that I should not miss my mother and my brothers, took me out for drives in their small car and stuffed me full of sweet biscuits, cakes and chocolate.’

(p.38)
missing and...the second worst day of my life was...when we got a letter confirming that he’d been killed in action...but life went on...it had to’

‘day to day life was great fun...most of the games we played were down the street’

strange homes and...umm...it wasn’t too bad really’

‘it was near the sea so that was a treat ‘cus we’d never been. Yeah well you could see Conway across the estuary there was like an estuary and across the water you could see Conway over me up North as well.

Me Mother sent us, the two of us to live with an Aunt up in Durham and she came with me and when I became fourteen I came home and she didn’t like being there on her own so somebody had to go up and bring her back’

shelter, we used to go down and we breakfast, lunch and dinner down in the Anderson shelter, until you’ve experienced it you can’t imagine what it was like but, you just had to put up with it there was nothing else really you could do you know’

‘I went with a friend cried a lot’

‘There were no phones, mobiles etc but our parents wrote to us’

‘We were evacuated for six to twelve months during which time my parents visited us but it only upset me more’

‘I was evacuated for a second time but I only stayed two weeks. The family were very good but the sirens went as the planes passed over us on the way to bomb Manchester. If my home was to be bombed and my parents killed, I had to be with them’

‘It felt wonderful to be home of course but it was also sad to leave’

is very strong Chapel. So you’ll have to be especially good, Sundays. No games or books, see? Except the Bible of course.’

(p.22)

“Call me Auntie,”

(p.23)

‘Neither she nor Nick were’

‘Except in the coded way that most novelists make use of their lives, cannibalising rough odds and ends of experience to make a tidy whole, Carrie’s War is not my story.’

(p.40)

‘Blaengarw was the...’
‘what the hell’s that great big thing? It’s a mountain. What’s a mountain?’

‘coal came out of a scuttle didn’t it? I didn’t know it came out of a hole in the ground’

‘the front door, was all packed with kids all yelling “Mr and Mrs Carter, can

the water so it was quite nice really’

there was two of us and she lived in the next road to me and we were in the same class at school’

‘my Mum used to come over on weekends’

‘it was near one of those...a huge factory and they’d got...umm...six children themselves...grown up, but grown up

the foster parents who were devastated when we left’

particularly tidy; at home...their maid, always picked up their toys and made their beds and put their clothes away’

Being asked to use the outside toilet ‘Nick stared as if he couldn’t believe his ears’ (p.24)

particular town where some of us had been billeted for a week when our school was moved from Suffolk to South Wales.’ (p.40)

‘I stayed with a miner...with a plump, smiling wife and a plump and beautiful daughter...I
we come out
to play?” and
we’d only just
arrived. I
have never
forgotten
that. Ever.’

‘it was a
learning curve
on both sides.
We were
speaking
Cockney and
they were
speaking
Welsh’

‘going to the
Bug House,
the
pictures...it’s
children and
they’d got
grandchildren
sort of thing
but they were
very nice...
and I mean one
of their
daughters were
having a baby
you know it
was all very, I
suppose it was
good for me
really’

The first
night in the
foster home
‘I want to
go home...I
don’t want
to be safe in
the country.
I want
Mummy and
Milly and
Dad.’ (p.26)

Nick on
being
captured
stealing
biscuits
‘You need
a sharp
lesson, my
wished I
could have
stayed with
this happy
family for
ever and at
the end of
that short
week I cried
when I left
them, as I
hadn’t cried
leaving my
mother and
brothers in
London.’
(p.41)

‘Mothers
and fathers
could be an
embarrass
memories...happy ones’

‘my father had been killed in action and...all the children in my class...they understood...they never left you alone’

‘we’d go pick the blackberries to make blackberry jam’

lad, and I don’t mind giving it. Strap’s what you’re asking for, isn’t it?”...Nick had never been beaten, not even a slap’(p30-31)

‘Who could she tell? Their mother and father were so far away and you couldn’t...when they came to visit...when my mother came...I was so anxious to protect my poor foster mother from what I imagined would be my real mother’s withering contempt for her obvious inadequacies that I
‘we ate reasonably well...I don’t remember ever being hungry’

‘we had nothing to go home to, so we stayed in Wales’

‘if it went wrong, we got the blame...evacuees took the blame’

‘I can still write that sort of thing in a letter. Miss Fazackerly? She had said, “Come and tell me if things aren’t all right in your billets.” But what could she do if they did? There were so many evacuees in the town and not enough places to spent most of the precious time singing her praises.’ (p.43)

‘our foster father would walk around the house in his nightshirt, carrying a guttering candle and, and stand for some time, silently, beside the bed where
think of Laura...and Jim with great, much love and affection...you couldn’t have wished for two nicer people...nothing but the fondest of memories’

stay, so the teachers said...some of the children were having to sleep three to a bed’ (p.32-33)

Their mother sends them a photo of herself ‘they didn’t look at it much...she didn’t belong in the

‘This was my fifth billet and I was accustomed by then to other people’s funny habits.’ (p.43)

‘Life in other people’s homes was
Evanses’ house...she belonged somewhere else...in a dream, in another life...’ (p.34)

On their mother’s visit
‘They had looked forward to seeing her but when she came they didn’t know what to always interesting if not always comfortable’ (p.44)

‘Most accounts of wartime evacuation concentrate on the shocking arrival in middle-class homes of hordes of slum children from cities like London...’
say...they felt shy anyway, seeing her where she didn’t belong.’
(p.35)

Their mother asked if they were happy
‘Terrified that Nick would say no, he wasn’t happy at all, and that
their

and Liverpool with head lice and no table manners. Our experience, on the whole, was the other way around.’
(p.44)

‘I was instructed to call these foster parents Auntie and Uncle. I had
mother would get out of the train and go back to the house and pack their things and take them away. After poor Auntie Lou had tried so hard to be nice!’ (p.38)

Nick says to their mother "...I like it here very much. I begun to resent addressing people who were not my relations in this way…” (p.45)

On her second foster family ‘They had not planned to take an evacuee. They were taking me to please the
don’t ever want to go home again. I simply love Auntie Lou. She’s the nicest person I’ve ever met in my whole life.” (p.38)

‘On his birthday Auntie Lou gave him a pair of leather gloves and Mr Evans gave him a minister. I was made to feel fortunate, and I did feel fortunate.’ (p.45)

‘They were affectionate to me, and kind. They never left me alone in the house (I was frightened of being alone), and they left the landing light
After visiting another billeted house "...I don’t want to go back to the Evenses’...I never did want to be there but it’s worse now...I want to go home..."

(p.57)

Carrie’s on for me at night (I was frightened of the dark).

(p.45)

‘This Auntie, much the richest of them all, asked my mother for an extra contribution, a demand which I found shaming at the time’

(p.46)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>birthday</th>
<th>‘Mr Evans and Auntie Lou gave her handkerchiefs and her mother sent her a green dress that was too tight in the chest and too short...Carrie cried...not because the dress was no use but because her mother should have</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘In Auntie’s house, I washed enough dishes and did enough housework to more than pay for my keep...I had no sense at all of what was expected of me...our teachers told us to...‘help in the house’...if we felt...that</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
guessed how much she had grown’ (p.73-74)

Carrie gets to harvest a field

‘Carrie was hot and tired but wonderfully happy…’This is the best place in the whole, wide world. In the whole universe…”’ (p.91)

too much was being asked of us we must…come to tell our teachers…What was too much?’ (p.46)

‘the amourous assaults from both Uncle and his gown-up student son…were too shaming to report…I was more
On receiving a letter from their Mother saying they will be going up to Scotland to join her 'Carrie didn’t know if she was happy or not. It was all so sudden it made her feel queer; affecting her stomach like looking embarrased than alarmed’ (p.47)

Nina was questioned about her billeted family who were quite strange but kind and the teacher decides to move them 'It felt like the worst, the cruellest thing that I had ever done.'
Nick actually grumbled "I don’t want to go to rotten old Glasgow. I don’t want to go to a new school. I don’t want to leave Auntie Lou."’

On having so many foster parents ‘made us circumspect, cautious about how much of ourselves it was safe to offer’ (p.53)

‘At Christmas, when I thought my baby brother might be down from the top of a cliff or riding on a Big Dipper.'
taken for a picnic by Mr Evans as a ‘Last Treat’ (p.118)

They are given leaving presents by the Evanses, a sheath knife for Nick and a gold ring with a red stone for Carrie (p.119)

Auntie Lou says dying, I was glad for the chemist’s wife to hug and comfort me; delighted to be allowed to help the chemist in the shop...but when Jean came back for the spring term I didn’t need these kindly adults any longer’ (p.53)
“Oh, there’s happy I’ve been with you two, there’s been life in this house, first time I’ve known it!”
(p.120)

Carrie is asked what her mother looks like

“Well she’s quite tall,” Carrie began, and then stopped. Not because

On leaving one foster family
‘I had a lump in my throat; they were suddenly so dear to me.’
(p.57)

‘We were not allowed to go upstairs more than twice a day in case our great, galumphing feet should
she couldn’t wear out the new stair carpet.’ (p.60)

‘However softly we crept upstairs, she would rush out... muttering her mantra, “Up and down, back and forth, in and out, messing and humbuggin...”

She couldn’t remember, but because it was such a long time since she’s seen her, and she felt strange, suddenly, she knew she would be on their way to Scotland tomorrow. They would be on their way to Scotland for, in and out, back and forth, in and out, messing and humbuggin...’
I don’t recognise her, suppose she doesn’t recognise me, and felt her face grow hot.’ (p.121)

As they depart on the train ‘...my heart’s breaking...’ (p.133)

As they depart on the train ‘...my heart’s breaking...’

School ‘we just integrated all the way N / A ‘Well I didn’t have much of an education ‘It was the local school’ ‘I went to school in an old church hall full ‘Our education was very much ‘that’s Ebenezer Chapel ‘Our school shared a local school
I'd already done...err...fractions and I was onto decimals, they were, his class were still doing HTU’

the schooling was different in the, the, in the effect that we seemed to be from London even though I was that young, we seemed to

to be honest because the last year I was at school really, ‘cus when I was at school down in Coventry the sirens used to go and you had to go all the way down to the basement’

‘it was the normal (school), the children, they put me up in front of the class and they

of strange, unknown children with a very strict teacher who boxed my ears when I couldn’t thread the needle in needle work’

‘I was really too miserable and frightened to learn much’

interrupted. We just went for half day, sharing with the children of the local school. Our school went mornings one week and afternoons the next’

‘When I returned the school which I attended was still closed for several weeks’

where we used to have lessons some mornings because there wasn’t room for us all in the school. It was only a small school, you see, not big enough to take all the extra children from London’ (p.15)

building, using it alternate mornings and afternoons, holding the out-of-school lessons in various church halls and Welsh Nonconformist chapels. The distances between these makeshift classrooms meant that
be in advance
'schooling just continued, we just seemed to, we just seemed to pick up from where we’d left off, which was the name of the game I suppose’

'our old teachers...one only remained and that was...err...Mr Perriman...err

said “this girl has come from Coventry” you know and of course when the Blitz was on you know they wanted to know if my family was alright 'cus I was still there you see and I said I hadn’t heard if anything happened but they were alright’

‘it was just

‘he was in the top class and sometimes he was taught on his own by Mr Morgan, the Minister, because he was cleverer than even the most senior boys’ (p.68)

it was easy to get 'lost’” (p.54)

'I was getting an unusually privileged education; because so many girls had drifted back to London, those of us who stayed behind were getting, in the musty, dusty chapels of Nonconform
| Lasting effect | 'I’ve been back to Upton Park...I don’t advise anyone to go back home...not after so many years’ | 'No not really 'cus as I say it wasn’t like some children had it where they went to strange places, I had a different outlook really 'cus I was | None. | 'I suppose it was all very good for me really’ | 'Evacuation was not good for me at all. I came out in rashes as I was so home sick but my sister made life bearable and looked after me all the time. I | 'Just to realise how much I loved my family’ | 'Even thirty years later, when she was quite old enough to know it wasn’t her fault, that a house didn’t burn down because a | 'Thirty years between the war and the moment I decided that it might be interesting to write about it. And in the |
apart from here in Corby is, is Wales which is where I was raised, err...as an evacuee’

‘it made me who I am’

‘I’m not afraid of anybody...no body if higher than me or lower than me’

‘I know the value of with my Mother and although I didn’t really know the Aunt all that well it wasn’t like going to strangers’

have remained even now hating good byes and separation from the ones I love’

girl threw a skull into a horse pond, she still cried in much the same way when she thought of it.’ (p.135)

Carrie’s son talking about Carrie ‘More afraid than most mothers. Not stopping them doing things, she wasn’t silly writing, as always, memory had been overlaid by invention and invention by memory’ (p.42)
money'

‘I think the most. The greatest thing it taught me was the value of friendship. Cus if you’ve got friends, you’ve got life...you’re a very rich man’

‘I made two really good friends. We were lifelong’

‘I’ve gotta say it made me

like that, but you would look at her sometimes and see the fear, holding her still. Especially when they were happy. As if she were afraid of a happy time stopping. He thought, perhaps because this happy time had
who I am, I enjoy what I do, I enjoy life, it taught me history, I love history…err… and I, I like people, I like talking to people, I like learning about people and I like to help people, especially people of my own ilk who are still suffering and that’

come to an end all those years ago, and she blamed herself for it…” (p.141)
‘you make do and...and you make do without...errm...you don’t throw things, I don’t throw things away’

‘London’s not home, Wales is home’