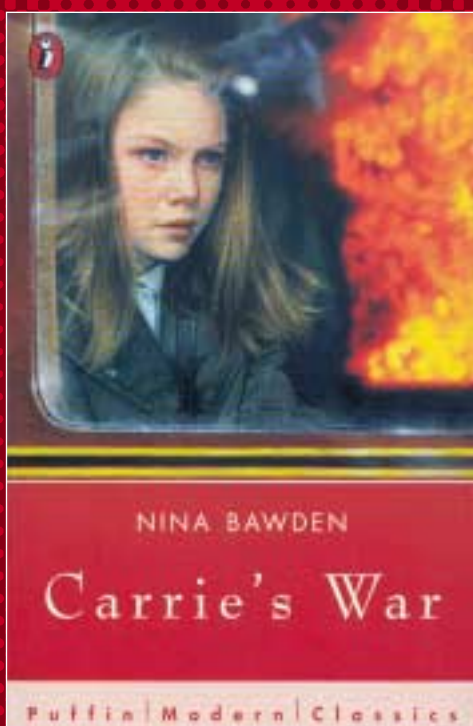


THE GREAT READING ADVENTURE 2005

# CARRIE'S WAR



Activity Pack

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MAIL MARKETING  
INTERNATIONAL LIMITED



# CARRIE'S WAR ACTIVITY PACK

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# INTRODUCTION

The annual Great Reading Adventure aims to get the whole of Bristol reading and talking about books. The main title chosen for 2005 is a haunting novel set during World War Two: *The Siege* by local author Helen Dunmore.

To encourage younger readers to become involved in the project, we have also chosen a book by Nina Bawden called *Carrie's War*. This refers to the British evacuees sent to the country during World War Two. It is a modern children's classic, suitable for confident KS2 readers and up. It is also popular with adult readers.

This pack has been devised as support material for reading *Carrie's War* in the classroom, in the library or at home. There is information about the author and about children in World War Two, and activities based around the book.

We would be interested in seeing copies of work produced as a result of using this pack. A selection of these will be posted on the Great Reading Adventure website and published in the Bristol *Evening Post*. Send to:

The Great Reading Adventure  
BCDP  
Leigh Court  
Abbots Leigh  
Bristol BS8 3RA  
Email: [enquiries@bristolreads.com](mailto:enquiries@bristolreads.com)

For further information on the Great Reading Adventure, including competitions children can enter, visit the project website at [www.bristolreads.com](http://www.bristolreads.com).

# NINA BAWDEN

Nina Bawden, author of *Carrie's War*, was born in 1925.  
She has homes in Islington and in Greece.

Nina has written over 40 books, some for adults and some for children. Many of these have been translated into different languages and have been adapted for film or television. Her books for younger readers include *The Secret Passage* (1963), *The Runaway Summer* (1969), *Carrie's War* (1973), *The Peppermint Pig* (1975), *Keeping Henry* (1988), *The Outside Child* (1989), *Humbug* (1992) and *The Real Plato Jones* (1994).

Nina was an evacuee during World War Two and was sent from her home in London to a mining village in Wales, just like the children in *Carrie's War*. One of the families she lived with owned a chemist shop. She has said: 'Carrie's story is not mine, but her feelings about being away from home for the first time are ones I remember.' *Keeping Henry* is also about evacuees who are sent to Wales. Although she was sometimes homesick, Nina enjoyed the freedom that being away from her parents gave her. She says: 'the sense of not being watched, brooded over by concerned adults, was heady.' She writes about her experience in her autobiography *In My Own Time* (1995).

At one time Nina Bawden wanted to be an explorer and later she wanted to be a war reporter. Instead she went to university in Oxford at the end of the war to study politics, philosophy and economics. She married soon after she had finished her studies and began her family.

She had loved reading when she was young and wrote her first novel when she was only eight – though she soon realised that it wasn't very good. She also wrote a school play about elephant hunters in Africa: when she saw it performed on the stage she ran to hide in the toilets to cry because it was so dreadful. When she was at university she wrote a short story, which was published in a magazine. Her first 'proper' novel was published in 1953 and she has been writing ever since.

In her books she often writes about places, events and people she has known. The readers can imagine themselves in similar situations because they seem so real. Many of her children's stories involve secrets and the complications that follow when people try to keep things hidden. They are also about how children can adapt to change and how they try to make sense of only half-understood facts. Usually by the end of the book the characters have found out a little more about themselves and the world around them. In *Carrie's War* Carrie has to wait until she grows up to really understand what she went through.

Nina Bawden has been described as 'one of the very best writers for children'. She says: 'I like writing for children. It seems to me that most people underestimate their understanding and the strength of their feelings and in my books for them I try to put this right.' She thinks that in real life children are 'always at the mercy of the adults who mostly run their lives for them' and so in her novels she gives her young characters a chance to prove themselves. She says: 'Horrible characters are lovely to write about because you can get your own back on all sorts of people you never liked when you were young.'

*Carrie's War* is available as a paperback book and as an audio tape from Puffin. A TV adaptation shown in 2003 is available as a DVD from Acorn Media Ltd.

What the press has said about *Carrie's War*:

An outstanding book, written with compassion and with insight and above all with honesty.

*New Statesman*

No one could be too old for it... *Carrie's War* is as vivid and elusive as a good dream.

*Times Educational Supplement*

She has a depth of perception, an almost supernatural understanding of a child's mind, which, with her gloriously understated sense of humour and a sound common sense, make every word ring not only memorable but true.

*Daily Telegraph*

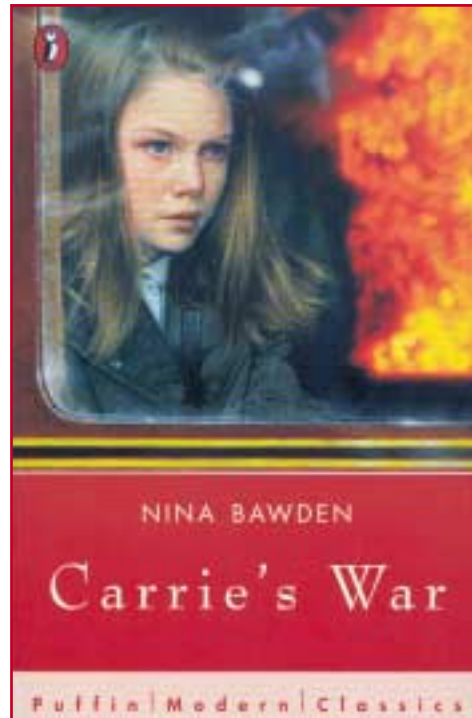
The best account I know of how children adapted to strange surroundings in wartime.

*The Times*



Nina Bawden

# CARRIE'S WAR – CHAPTER BY CHAPTER



## Chapter 1

Carrie, a widow, takes her children to the village where she was evacuated 30 years ago during World War Two. She had been 11 at the time and her brother Nick was nearly ten. At first she is excited at the thought of going back but now, as they walk towards a house she used to visit, she becomes sad and anxious. She says she did a dreadful thing when she was here before. They turn away from the path that leads to the house – she says no one lives there any more in any case – and head back to the village. As they walk, she tells the children her story.

- What was the real name of Druid's Bottom?
- How has the village and area around it changed since Carrie was there?
- How do the children react to Carrie's moods?

## Chapter 2

The book now goes back 30 years. Nick is sick on the train taking a group of evacuees from London to the village where they are to spend the war. Nick and Carrie meet an older boy, Albert Sandwich, who helps them carry their bags to the village hall. The children are told to stand by the wall so the villagers can pick the ones they want to take home with them. One of the organisers encourages Miss Evans – Auntie Lou – to take Carrie and Nick. She is nervous as her brother told her to get two girls. Mr Evans is a grocer and lives above the shop. Auntie Lou gives the children something to eat and hurries them off to bed before Mr Evans gets home. Downstairs the children can hear Mr Evans shouting. Nick thinks he must be an ogre.

- Why do you think Carrie's mother is cheerful at the station?
- Why does Carrie admire the way Albert behaves?
- Why is Carrie anxious about Mr Evans' house being so tidy?



## Chapter 3

The children meet Mr Evans for the first time. Auntie Lou explains to the children how her father was killed in the mine. When her mother died too, Mr Evans and his wife took Auntie Lou in and brought her up alongside their own son. Mr Evans has been more like her father than a brother to her. Carrie and Nick help out in the shop. Nick is caught stealing biscuits and Mr Evans threatens to beat him with his belt but instead prays with him. They settle in to life in the village. The children get a letter saying their mother has gone to Glasgow to be near her husband who is stationed there. She comes to visit for a day.

- Why doesn't Mr Evans want Nick to tell his teachers he was hungry?
- Why is Carrie worried when Nick says he hates Mr Evans?
- Why do you think they feel shy when their mother comes to visit them?

## Chapter 4

Nick is given a pair of gloves and a Bible for his birthday. Nick and Carrie have to go to Druid's Bottom to collect a Christmas goose from Mr Evans' older sister, Dilys Gotobed. Mr Evans was upset when Dilys married an English mineowner and has fallen out with her, though he still accepts the annual goose. Auntie Lou has said that the path through the Grove to the house is not a place to be in after dark but Mr Evans thinks that's all superstitious nonsense. Carrie and Nick try to be brave but are startled by a strange gobbling sound coming through the trees. They run to the house, terrified.

- Why does Carrie feel sorry for Mr Evans?
- Auntie Lou says Mr Evans and Mrs Gotobed are both proud people. What do you think she means by this?
- Why do you think the walk to Druid's Bottom is the most important journey Carrie and Nick made together?

## Chapter 5

The children enter the warmth and safety of Hepzibah Green's kitchen where they see Albert Sandwich. The gobbling noise was made by Mister Johnny Gotobed who has difficulty talking. Nick soon makes friends with him. When they fetch the goose together, Albert tells Carrie what he has learnt about the house and family. He shows her a skull and asks Hepzibah to tell the story of the curse that goes with it. Mister Johnny walks the children part of the way home. Having seen how lovely it was at Druid's Bottom, the Evans' house seems much bleaker.

- What does Albert mean when he says that Hepzibah is a witch?
- What differences between Carrie and Albert do we learn in this chapter?
- Why is Carrie jealous of Nick?

## Chapter 6

Mr Evans asks Carrie if she saw his sister, Mrs Gotobed. He distrusts Hepzibah and thinks Mister Johnny is an idiot. Nick is angry with Carrie because he thinks she was sucking up to Mr Evans. Carrie overhears Mr Evans telling Auntie Lou it'll be useful for the children to go to the house again to keep an eye on

Hepzibah. After Christmas, Mr Evans tells the children to take a tin of biscuits to Hepzibah as a thank you present for the goose. Mister Johnny shows them his cow and the hens. Carrie hears Mrs Gotobed crying but doesn't see her. Mr Evans is in a bad mood when they get back and doesn't question her. She hopes she imagined that he wanted her to spy on Hepzibah.

- Why is Carrie cautious when Mr Evans starts asking her questions?
- How does she feel when Nick is angry with her?
- What upsets Carrie when she sees Hepzibah at the top of the stairs?

## Chapter 7

Auntie Lou goes away to stay with a friend. In April, Carrie finally meets Mrs Gotobed. Mrs Gotobed is wearing a ball gown. She intends to wear all her gowns before she dies, leaving the best to last. She gives Carrie a message for Mr Evans, only to be delivered after Mrs Gotobed is dead. Carrie has a birthday tea at Druid's Bottom. Albert walks with her through the Grove and says that some people think it is sacred. He kisses her. When the children get back home, Mr Evans is angry. He is even more cross when he finds out Carrie has seen Mrs Gotobed and not told him about it. Auntie Lou is all dressed up to go dancing so Mr Evans shouts at her instead. Carrie is worried that Mr Evans will force her to be a spy.

- Why does Carrie find Mrs Gotobed both embarrassing and frightening?
- Why do you think Carrie is cross when Nick keeps talking about his best things?
- How has Auntie Lou changed since she went away?

## Chapter 8

Hepzibah tries to explain Mr Evans to Carrie. He's had a difficult life and it has made him hard and cold. Major Cass Harper comes to see Auntie Lou. At first, to Nick's annoyance, Carrie sends the major away but then the children help him meet Auntie Lou. The children clean the chapel for Auntie Lou. When they get back, Mr Evans is doing his accounts and looks tired.

- Why doesn't Mr Evans like the Americans?
- What do you think Hepzibah means when she says 'Rich people's charity can be a cold business'?
- Why is Auntie Lou worried about going into the pub?

## Chapter 9

Mr Evans' son Frederick is home on leave from the army. Frederick comes with the children to help harvest the hay field at Druid's Bottom. He teases Mister Johnny who attacks him with a pitchfork. Mrs Gotobed walks out to see them, dressed in her final ball gown. Mrs Gotobed tells Carrie not to be afraid and to remember the message.

- Why do you think Mr Evans tells Frederick to pay his respects to his Auntie?
- Why might Mister Johnny be locked up if they moved from Druid's Bottom?
- Why does Mrs Gotobed say that Mr Evans' heart will be broken?

## Chapter 10

Mrs Gotobed dies in July. Albert comes to tell Mr Evans who closes the shop. Albert and Carrie go for a walk and wonder what will happen to Hepzibah and Mister Johnny. Albert says Mrs Gotobed was going to leave a Will saying they could stay on rent free at Druid's Bottom as long as they wanted to. Mr Evans would get the house and Auntie Lou the jewellery. Mr Evans will be angry when he realises that he won't be able to sell or rent the house because Hepzibah and Mister Johnny will be living there. Carrie thinks he'll be happy to get the message that Mrs Gotobed wanted to do the right thing. Albert is doubtful. Mr Evans flies into a rage when he hears the message.

- Why do you think Albert talks about the ants?
- Why does Carrie think Mr Evans will be pleased when she tells him Mrs Gotobed's message?
- What's Nick's opinion of Carrie?

## Chapter 11

Mr Evans seems to calm down but he's still angry with Hepzibah. Carrie goes to Druid's Bottom to warn them about Mr Evans but is too late: he's already been. No Will has been found and Mrs Gotobed's London solicitor knows nothing about it. Everything will now go automatically to Mr Evans. Hepzibah and Mister Johnny must leave. Mr Evans has been through all of Mrs Gotobed's things. Mister Johnny seems to be saying that Mr Evans took something from the jewel box. Albert remembers seeing an envelope in there and it is now gone. He thinks it might have been the missing Will and that it was written by a local solicitor rather than the London one. Hepzibah tries to soothe the children by telling stories of when she was young.

- Why do you think Carrie is slow to understand what Albert is saying about Mr Evans and the Will?
- Why does Albert think he won't be believed?
- Why does Albert look sadly at Carrie when she suggests Hepzibah could put a spell on Mr Evans?

## Chapter 12

Mr Evans and Auntie Lou go to the funeral. Carrie still struggles to believe that Mr Evans would have destroyed the Will. A letter comes saying that her mother has resigned from her ambulance unit and has rented a house for them all to live in. The children can join her in two weeks. Nick doesn't want to leave Auntie Lou at first, but soon starts getting excited about going. Albert is going to stay with Mr Morgan, the minister, because he will have to leave Druid's Bottom when Hepzibah goes. He had tried to ask the local solicitor if he knew anything about the Will but lost his nerve.

- How does Carrie feel about Nick and Auntie Lou being 'thick as thieves'?
- Why does Albert find it a disadvantage being a child?
- Why does Carrie feel 'torn in two'?

## Chapter 13

Mr Evans says he'll miss having Carrie in the shop. On their last day in the village, Mr Evans shuts the shop and takes the children and Auntie Lou for a picnic. He talks about when he was a boy. When they get back he gives them each a present: a knife for Nick and a ring for Carrie. The children go to Druid's Bottom for a farewell tea. Hepzibah tells the story of the skull's curse again. Carrie shows Hepzibah the ring she's been given. She suddenly remembers seeing it on Mrs Gotobed's finger. Albert is angry and thinks that Mr Evans stole the ring from the jewel box, though Hepzibah says it was his to take now he's inherited everything. Carrie offers to take the skull back to the library but throws it in the horse pond. Albert tells her Hepzibah has found a place on a remote farm where she can take Mister Johnny. The children hurry home. There's no one there but there's a note left by Auntie Lou. She has gone away to marry Major Harper. Nick knew about it and hadn't told Carrie.

- Why do you think Carrie had never talked about her mother to the others?
- Why does Hepzibah speak sharply to Johnny?
- Why does Carrie throw the skull in the pond?

## Chapter 14

The children hurry to bed to avoid seeing Mr Evans. Carrie wakes up and hears Mr Evans downstairs, raking the fire. She is so angry with him she decides to go down and throw the ring in his face. He looks as if he's been sitting by the fire all night. He starts making the breakfast and moans about Auntie Lou leaving. He shows Carrie an old photo of Mrs Gotobed in his fob watch. She's wearing the ring he gave to Carrie, which he'd bought his sister with his first wages. He had found it in the jewel box in an envelope addressed to him. He sees the children off at the station. Nick's glad to be going. As the train pulls away from the village he shouts goodbye to all the things they pass. Carrie screams when she sees Druid's Bottom on fire. She thinks it's her fault for throwing away the skull.

- Why does Carrie lose all her rage when she sees Mr Evans by the fire?
- What do you think Mr Evans really feels about Mrs Gotobed?
- Why do you think the children never speak of Druid's Bottom again?

## Chapter 15

It is now back to the present. Carrie's children leave her to sleep in late at the pub and walk to Druid's Bottom on their own. They find an outbuilding by the ruined house that seems to be inhabited. An elderly woman is out feeding chickens. The children think it must be Hepzibah. She invites them in for breakfast and introduces them to Mister Johnny. She tells them what happened after Carrie and Nick left. She sends them out to meet Carrie who is walking through the Grove towards them.

- Why do you think Carrie still cries about Druid's Bottom, even though she knows the fire wasn't really her fault?
- Why hadn't Carrie and Albert kept in touch?
- What do you think will happen next in the story?

# CARRIE'S WAR CHARACTERS

Below is a list of the main characters from *Carrie's War*.

## Carrie Willow

the central character

## Nicholas Willow

her younger brother

## Albert Sandwich

their friend, another evacuee

## Mr Samuel Evans

the grocer who takes them in

## Miss Louise Evans (Auntie Lou)

his younger sister

## Mrs Dilys Gotobed

his older sister

## Hepzibah Green

the woman who looks after Mrs Gotobed

## Mister Johnny

a distant cousin of the Gotobed family

## Frederick Evans

Mr Evans' son

### ACTIVITY

Write a paragraph describing each of them: what they look like, how they behave, what they like and dislike, what they do. Draw a picture to illustrate each paragraph.

# CARRIE'S WAR PUZZLE

Can you find the answers to the questions about *Carrie's War* in the Word Search box? The words run down, across and diagonally, and letters can be used more than once.

1. What is the surname of the teacher on the train with Carrie and Nick?
2. What branch of the armed services is Carrie's father in?
3. What is the name of the pub where Auntie Lou went to see Major Harper?
4. What name does Hepzibah call Albert when he tries to argue about the ring?
5. Where does Hepzibah say that the slave boy came from?
6. Which book did Albert read to check about the number of teeth in the skull?
7. What animal is Frederick like?
8. What is the name of Carrie's dog?
9. What colour are the feathers on Mrs Gotobed's final gown?
10. What sort of rolls do they take on the picnic?
11. What is Carrie's middle name and what is Mr Evans'?
12. What type of stone is in the ring?
13. What's another word for Camp, the place where the Americans are?
14. What do the children get on their hands because it is cold?
15. What illness did Albert have in addition to rheumatic fever?
16. How many minutes does Carrie like her eggs boiled?
17. What type of snake does Mr Evans call Hepzibah?
18. What precious stone is the same colour as Carrie's eyes?
19. What meat did they eat on their first visit to Druid's Bottom and what do they have on the day they deliver the biscuits?
20. What type of tree grows in the Grove?
21. What's the Welsh word for feeble?
22. What county does Carrie's granny live in?

F	G	N	E	S	H	S	J	K	B	B	W
D	A	F	R	I	C	A	F	E	A	E	E
O	R	Z	H	A	M	U	I	N	S	A	N
G	N	V	A	B	R	S	V	T	E	R	D
A	E	A	R	C	H	A	E	N	A	V	Y
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D	B	O	N	G	O	E	P	I	E	C	E
D	O	V	V	I	P	E	R	T	N	P	W
U	W	B	E	M	E	R	A	L	D	K	R
C	S	I	S	A	A	C	H	E	Y	S	E
K	P	N	E	U	M	O	N	I	A	Y	M
G	R	A	Y	S	A	N	A	T	O	M	Y
C	H	I	L	B	L	A	I	N	S	U	L
M	R	S	E	A	L	A	W	Y	E	R	Z

# WRITE A REVIEW

## ACTIVITY

Write a review of *Carrie's War*, using the headings below to guide you.

### Who and when

Who wrote the book and when was it first published?

### Setting

Where and when does the story take place?

### Plot

What happens? Was it believable? Was it interesting?

### Characters

Who are the main characters? Who did you like most? Why?

### Reading

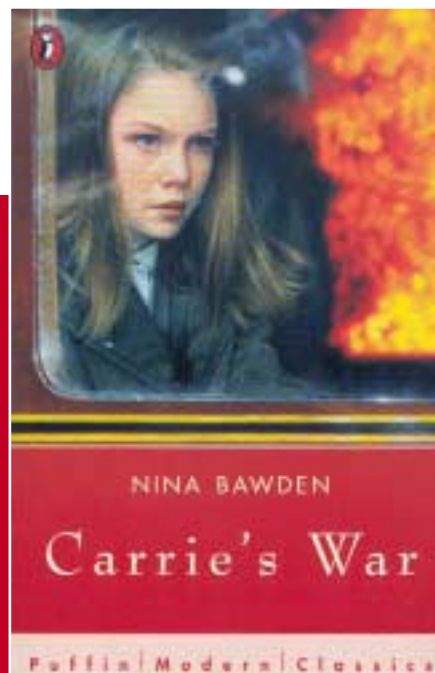
Was the book easy to get into? What do you think about the style it is written in?

What kind of readers would like this book?

### Your opinion

What did you like or dislike about this book? How would you rate it?

Brilliant? Good? Average? Terrible?



# BRITISH EVACUEES



Bristol evacuees

When Hitler came to power in Germany in 1933, it seemed likely that there would soon be a major war in Europe because of the ambitions of his Nazi party. During World War One (1914-1918), 1,400 British civilians had been killed in enemy air raids. In the next war, with the development of modern weapons, the number of casualties would be even higher and steps needed to be taken to protect as much of the population as possible.

The British Committee of Evacuation was set up on 26 May 1938 headed by Sir John Anderson. It decided how people would be moved to safety when war came. The country was divided into evacuation areas, neutral areas and reception areas. The evacuation areas were places likely to be bombed. They included London, Portsmouth, Southampton, Birmingham, Liverpool, Manchester, Sheffield, Newcastle, Edinburgh and Glasgow. These were places where there were factories, transport links and government buildings, which the Germans would want to destroy. The reception areas were places it would be safe to send people to.

The people to be evacuated were children aged between five and fifteen, mothers with children under five years old, pregnant women, and disabled people. Most of the children were to be sent away in school groups with their teachers.

Britain and her Allies declared war on Germany on 3 September 1939. This followed Hitler's invasion of Poland two days earlier. As part of the evacuation plans, local councils and teachers made lists of all those people who wanted to leave the evacuation areas and were eligible to go. Parents were given lists of what to pack for their children. Essentials included a gas mask, identity card, ration book, woolly jumper, warm coat, handkerchief, socks and shoes.

The evacuees had labels tied around their necks with their names and addresses on. When Nina Bawden asked her teacher why they needed to be labelled she was told 'if the train was bombed and we were blown to bits, the labels might help to identify our bodies'. The evacuees left the cities on trains and buses. The parents who waved them goodbye did not know if they would ever see their children again.



Some of the younger children thought they were going on a holiday and didn't really realise what was happening. After a long day travelling, they arrived tired and hungry in a place they'd never been before where they were sent to billets (homes that took in evacuees) to live with people they had never met. Just like the scene in *Carrie's War*, the evacuees would assemble in a village hall or similar large space and local people would pick the ones they wanted to live with them. Children who looked as if they might be unhealthy or badly behaved or dirty would be left to last. Brothers and sisters might get separated as no one could take them all together.

By Christmas 1939, half the children who had gone away returned home as the expected air raids hadn't happened. However, in June 1940, the Germans occupied France and were now within reach of Britain. There was a real fear that Britain would be invaded and people moved away from the south coast to escape the threat. Major British cities and ports were attacked by the Germans in what became known as blitzes because the bombing was so heavy. Evacuation began once more and many children did not see their homes again until the end of the war in 1945.

It is thought that over three million children were evacuated during the war in Britain. Some children enjoyed the experience and had fun living in the country; others were miserable, as the people they lived with were unkind and the places they lived in were unpleasant.

You can read more about evacuees and what happened in Britain during World War Two on the Great Reading Adventure website at [www.bristolreads.com](http://www.bristolreads.com) and in the Great Reading Adventure readers' guide.

Bristol evacuees



## ACTIVITY

Imagine that you live in the country during World War Two. Your parents take in two evacuees from London. You have to share your bedroom with them and you are supposed to look after them.

In your diary you write what you think about these strangers.

Do you like them? Are they a nuisance?  
Do you feel sorry for them?

They've probably never been to the country before. Do they seem silly to you because they don't know about cows and fields?

You've never been to the city and don't know about some of the things they talk about. You may not always understand what they say because of their accents. Do they treat you as if you are dim? Or are you all interested in the different things you've each done and seen?

Now what do you think the London evacuees would write in their diary about you?

## BRISTOL IN THE WAR

At the beginning of the war, some of the evacuees from London and other big cities came to Bristol. A few remained here in the city while the rest were put on to trains and buses that took them to smaller towns and villages in the South West.

Bristol was called a neutral area because it was thought it would not be attacked. Therefore, there were no official plans to move people out of the city. However, some parents didn't want to take a chance and sent their children to live with friends and family in the country.

On 25 June 1940, the first German bombs fell on Bristol. The worst attacks were between November 1940 and March 1941. This was called the Winter Blitz. The German bombers tried to destroy the docks, the aeroplane company at Filton, the railway lines and the city's factories.

In February 1941, over 6,000 Bristol children were sent to Devon from schools in the centre of the city and in Avonmouth. More children left after April 1941 when the city was officially declared an evacuation area. During the war over 20,000 children left Bristol. In addition to Devon, they also went to rural areas in Somerset and to Cornwall.

Not everyone was sent away: many parents preferred to keep their children with them at home even though it was dangerous. When the bombs fell, they would hurry to the air raid shelters. Some people had shelters buried at the bottom of their gardens; other people had to go to the big public shelters. When they came out again at the end of the raids, they could see the damage left by the bombs. During the raids on Bristol over 1,000 people died, over 3,000 were injured, 3,000 homes were destroyed and 90,000 homes were damaged.

You can read more about Bristol in the war and see pictures of the city during the blitz on the Great Reading Adventure website at [www.bristolreads.com](http://www.bristolreads.com) and in the readers' guide.

Hunting for shrapnel in Bristol





## ACTIVITY

Look at the picture above of a house in Bristol that was bombed during an air raid. There are two little girls in the picture, and a boy pointing to the damage.

Imagine the man in the flat cap is a reporter from the local paper.

What questions would he ask the children?

What do you think they would reply?

Write a few paragraphs for a newspaper report about what happened.

## ACTIVITY

Look at the picture of a Bristol church that has been damaged by bombs. There are some children climbing on the rubble while grown-ups try to clear up.

Do you think the children are frightened by what's happened? Are they upset? Amazed? Excited?

Write a poem about what is happening in the picture.



## MEMORIES OF BEING AN EVACUEE

Nina Bawden says living through World War Two is 'the most important thing I can remember from being young. It happened during the most formative part of my childhood'. Many people today have very clear memories of what happened to them all those years ago. The following is taken from the reminiscences of a man who was evacuated from Bristol when he was a little boy.

My parents were quite sad and upset but we were very, very pleased, war being a nasty thing and, I suppose, the tension of war was beginning to tell on us. The next morning we lined up with our labels and our gas masks and the coaches were there. The parents started to cry. I couldn't understand why they cried because I thought they should be enjoying it like us. We all had sandwiches which disappeared before we got to Temple Meads station...

It was still daylight when we reached Clovelly and we saw the sea. But only the bottom deck [of the bus] was allowed off at Clovelly. We landed up at what I now know is Hartland in North Devon. We were herded into a hall – it was rather like a slave market. The bidders stood there and selected children... I was the last in the auction.

They walked me down a country lane to a house that was to be my home for the next 18 months. A policeman was there and when the lady came to the door, he said 'This is Master Gerald Smith and he's going to be your evacuee'. The lady looked at me with glaring eyes and said 'I'm not having that scruffy little bugger here'. I remember it so clearly... it was a tragedy for me. I went into a house where I felt very much unwanted. I looked out of the window in the moonlight to see the sea glimmering some miles away. I thought, Gosh, I've gone across to America! I didn't know where I was. They gave me a candle to go up to bed and I went to bed a very sorry and sad boy and cried the hours away. (From *West at War* by James Belsey and Helen Reid)

Evacuees seen off by the Mayor of Bristol



## ACTIVITY

Most of the children who were evacuated during World War Two would have been born between 1924 and 1938 so would be in their sixties or seventies now.

Do you know anyone who went away? Perhaps a relative or a family friend or a neighbour?

Ask if they would be willing to talk to you about what happened.

Questions you might like to ask them include:

Where did you go to?

How did you get there?

Who did you stay with?

What were they like?

How long did you stay?

What did you miss about home?

What things did you like and dislike about being away?

What was it like to go back home again?

Did you feel different?

Either write up what they tell you as a story describing their experience or as an interview, putting down exactly what they said in reply to your questions.

If you have a tape machine, you might find it easier to record the conversation and just write notes while they talk.

## EVACUEES AND REFUGEES IN THE REST OF EUROPE

People were evacuated from territories throughout Europe during the war. In Germany, for example, in 1939, thousands of people were moved away from the border with France to escape the fighting. At the same time, on the other side of the border, the French were being evacuated too. Later, in 1945, the Soviet army began its invasion of the east of Germany. Over two million Germans were evacuated from the area, many forced to walk because there was not enough transport to carry them. They headed west, even though the Allies were advancing from that direction, as they realised that the Soviets were likely to treat them harshly. The Nazis had been responsible for a number of massacres when the German army had held territory in the Soviet Union.

Many people were on the move even before the war began. Germany had been a fairly safe and pleasant country to live in until Hitler came to power. Jews and other people disliked by the Nazis tried to leave, as they knew their lives were now at risk. Only a few were successful. You needed money and special documents to get away, and countries willing to accept you.

One family who got away were the Franks. They were a middle class Jewish family living in Frankfurt am Main in Germany. Margot, their first daughter, was born in 1926, and their second daughter, Anne, was born in 1929. In 1933, Otto Frank started looking for ways to get his family out of danger. He set up a new business in Amsterdam: Margot, Anne and his wife Edith soon joined him there. All was well, until the German army marched into the north of Holland and the country surrendered. All the restrictions placed upon Jews in Germany now applied in Amsterdam too. In July 1942, the Franks went into hiding in the annex behind Otto's office building. Anne kept a diary during the two years they remained there. In August 1944, the family were betrayed and Nazis ransacked the annex, taking everyone away. Later, Otto's secretary, Miep Gies, found Anne's diary abandoned on the floor. Of those who had hidden in the annex, only Otto Frank survived to the end of the war. When he returned from the concentration camp he had been sent to, Miep Gies gave him Anne's diary, which he published.

Some children were luckier than Anne and her sister. In late 1938, around 10,000 Austrian and German Jewish children were rescued and brought to Britain as part of the Kindertransport. Other children were also rescued under this international scheme but most of those trying to escape persecution were left to their fate. As the German forces conquered more and more countries, more and more people became trapped. The advance was often too rapid to put any official evacuation plans into effect and people were left to fend for themselves. By the end of the war, with all the fighting and cruelty that had taken place, over 16 million people in Europe had become refugees, people forced from their homes, looking for somewhere safe to settle.



Leningrad evacuees



As part of the Great Reading Adventure 2005, older readers are reading *The Siege* by Helen Dunmore, which is set in Leningrad during World War Two. The following comes from the section describing the attempt to evacuate the children from the city when the Germans attack.

**Thousands and thousands and thousands of children. Leningrad children, children who've already been evacuated once, as the Germans advanced, children who've slogged their way to Leningrad past bodies in ditches, and burning huts. Some of them play ferociously in the halls of the evacuation centre, and band together to make trouble for the adults. Some are passive, and will not look directly at anyone... These children know the lorries are the easy way. They know about walking for miles, until the soles of their shoes flapped and their blisters burst, and the grown-ups screamed at them: 'Keep up, can't you? Do you want us all to get shot?'**

So many children, and so little time. The railways are being bombed. Packed trains full of children wait in sidings, creep forward, wait again, then slowly glide back to the station they passed through ten hours before...

Parents bring their children to the evacuation centre, change their minds, take them home again. And the system is completely overloaded now. There aren't enough trains, and no matter how many children are processed, most never leave. Suddenly six busloads of children reappear, whom Anna had thought must be well on their way to the Urals by now. An exhausted mother explains, 'The line was torn up by a bomb five kilometres ahead. They kept waiting and waiting to see if they could get us through, but then we ran out of food so they had to send us back.'

## ACTIVITY

Imagine that you are caught up in this chaos. You might be a child or a parent or one of the organisers. Write a poem about the things you experience.

# EVACUEE WAR PUZZLE

Can you find the answers to the questions about evacuees in the Word Search box? The words run down, across and diagonally, and letters can be used more than once.

1. Who was the man in charge of Germany during the war?
2. What were his supporters called?
3. In what month in 1940 was France defeated?
4. Find six things an evacuee had to pack when they left home.
5. What was tied on to them?
6. Find three counties the Bristol evacuees were sent to.
7. Which Scottish city beginning with G was an evacuation area?
8. What type of area was Bristol called before April 1941?
9. What name was given to describe the Bristol blitz?
10. Where was the aeroplane factory near Bristol the Germans bombed?
11. Which side of Germany did the Soviet army attack?
12. What were the names of Anne Frank's father, mother and sister?
13. Who was the man in charge of the British Committee of Evacuation?

F	L	A	N	D	E	R	S	O	N	O	R
F	S	I	R	E	A	S	T	W	X	H	A
I	R	O	L	V	E	D	I	T	H	A	T
L	J	T	A	Y	I	S	D	A	N	N	I
T	U	T	B	S	H	O	E	S	E	D	O
O	N	O	E	Q	U	C	N	W	U	K	N
N	E	C	L	M	N	K	T	I	T	E	B
D	E	V	O	N	P	S	I	N	R	R	O
S	O	M	E	R	S	E	T	T	A	C	O
N	A	Z	I	S	N	T	Y	E	L	H	K
G	L	A	S	G	O	W	C	R	N	I	J
W	R	A	G	A	S	M	A	S	K	E	O
H	O	H	I	T	L	E	R	L	G	F	H
M	A	R	G	O	T	H	D	E	L	C	N



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