

Evacuees

Britain declared war on Germany on September 3rd 1939. This was no surprise to the British people as they had been preparing for the war for over a year for an attack by bombs or poison gas.

People started to build Anderson shelters in their back gardens and 38 000 000 gas masks were distributed around the country.

It was thought that ports and large towns and cities would be the first places to be bombed and many children were moved from these places to small villages in the country.

Children were sent to school and their teachers took them to train stations and onto the countryside. Each child had to take a gas mask, a label with their name on; they also were given a packed lunch and some sweets for the journey. By nightfall, they were living in a strange house with a new family.

Many children from the big cities were poor and this surprised their new families, some children were rude and this upset the kind people who had offered to take them in.

Some children returned to their parents after the first bombing died down. Others stayed for the duration of the war. Their new foster families adopted some unfortunate children as their parents were killed in the air raids.

1. When did Britain declare war on Germany?
2. What were people expecting to happen?
3. Which places were expected to be attacked first?
4. Where were the evacuees sent?
5. What emotions might parents have felt sending their children away?
6. What did the evacuees take with them?
7. What extra things may they have taken?
8. What surprised their foster parents?
9. What eventually happened to the evacuees?
10. Use a dictionary and write definitions for these words: duration, evacuation, adopted, declared, foster.