

Children on the Move Teaching Resources



These learning resources are designed to make the work of the Children on the Move project more accessible for primary school children. It gives pupils the opportunity to learn about World War II evacuation from the first-hand accounts of the people who actually experienced it.

The resources are aimed at Key Stage 2 and can be used to support the teaching of History and Citizenship at this level. Whilst specifically aimed at Key Stage 2, these resources could also be adapted for other Key Stages studying Second World War evacuation, the effects of the Second World War on Staffordshire and the assessment of oral history as historical evidence.

The resources focus on the first-hand oral history accounts of World War II evacuees and those touched by evacuation in Staffordshire. This oral history archive was collected by Staffordshire Record Office and Staffordshire Museums Service for the HLF-funded Children on the Move project.

There are seven components to this resource pack - a series of PowerPoint-based lessons, two activities and two web-based case studies for further exploration. These lessons and activities address questions such as:

- What was it like for children to be evacuated during the Second World War?
- What was it like for the families of children that were evacuated?
- How was evacuation organised?
- How did the billeting process affect evacuees?
- Where did evacuees come from and where were they sent to live?
- What was it like to live in another family's house as an evacuee?
- How did life in Staffordshire differ from life at home?
- What was it like to be a child whose family took in evacuees? How did it feel to share your home and your family with evacuees?
- What contribution did Staffordshire billet families make through evacuation?
- What was the long-term impact of evacuation on the lives of those children evacuated?

Through first-hand accounts from people evacuated to Staffordshire and those who were part of billet families in the county, children can explore these questions, become aware of different experiences and perspectives and also learn to evaluate a range of primary sources, from oral history through to newspaper reports and school log books. All lessons and activities have cross-curricular links as detailed in the lesson plans below. The historical sources to accompany the lessons and the transcripts of all audio-clips used are available to download from the Children on the Move website.

Introduction – Evacuation and Evacuation to Staffordshire



On the 3rd September 1939, World War II was declared in Europe. A few days before the war began, the British government began the mass evacuation of children, mothers of pre-school children and pregnant women out of areas likely to be bombed. This was called Operation Pied Piper. In total, around three million children were evacuated from cities and vulnerable areas and sent to live with foster families in the countryside.

Staffordshire was initially defined as a neutral area, meaning it was neither likely to receive evacuees or send children out of the county under the evacuation scheme. However, the county was soon re-defined as a reception area – an area to receive evacuees. This was probably because of the good railway links and the rural nature of large parts of the county.

There were two waves of evacuation to Staffordshire. During Operation Pied Piper and the early stages of the war, 8,605 unaccompanied children were evacuated to the county. They came from cities close to Staffordshire, such as Birmingham, Manchester and Liverpool. By the end of 1939, most of these evacuees had returned home because the anticipated bombing of cities had not taken place. This period of the Second World War was called the Phoney War.

The second wave of evacuation came in 1940 and increased after the start of the Blitz. This time children came from all over Britain to Staffordshire: Kent, London, Brighton, Liverpool, Manchester, Bristol, Essex, Coventry, Walsall, Birmingham and East Sussex. They were often evacuated with their school and accompanied by teachers. There were also children who were evacuated privately by their families to live with local relatives or friends.

Many of these evacuees experienced a different way of life in Staffordshire. Indeed, for Staffordshire children and their families, having so many new children in the county, and in their homes, was a major event. These sources and oral history accounts show how each side felt about evacuation and how it affected their lives.

Lesson Plans – A Study of the Impact of the Second World War on the lives of men, women and children from different sections of society. Evacuation: Evacuees and Billets

| Lesson | Key Ideas and Enquiry Questions | Learning Objectives | National Curriculum Links | Teaching and Learning Suggestions | Learning Outcomes | Cross-curricular Links | Assessment Evidence |
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| 1 What was it like to be evacuated in WWII? | To familiarise children with evacuation and evacuees | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was it like to be an evacuee? • What was life like for children that were evacuated? • What was evacuation like for their families? • To use and evaluate primary sources for historical enquiry | History: 3, 4, 7 & 11b | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examine historical photographs and draw information from them • Listen to and analyse oral history accounts from Staffordshire evacuees • Read and analyse local newspaper extracts about evacuation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To identify what an evacuee was • To relate to how it felt to be evacuated • To understand how parents felt evacuating their children | Citizenship: 4b English: Speaking, Listening, Writing & Reading | Oral responses to discussions relating to historical photographs Oral responses to discussions relating to oral history clips Written/Oral responses to newspaper extracts |
| 2 Finding a new home in Staffordshire 1 | To familiarise children with how evacuation was organised To familiarise children with billets and the billeting process | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How was evacuation organised? • What was a billet? • What was the billeting process like? • To compare primary sources for historical enquiry | History: 3, 4, 7 & 11b | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read, analyse and compare local newspaper extracts with oral history accounts • Listen to and draw information from oral history accounts from | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To understand the word billet and what the billeting process was • To relate to how evacuees felt during the billeting process | Citizenship: 4a & b English: Speaking, Listening, Writing, Reading | Written/Oral responses to newspaper extracts Written/Oral responses to discussion relating to oral history clips and their comparison |

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| | | | | <p>Staffordshire evacuees regarding the billeting process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compare oral history accounts from different perspectives to gain insight into historical “facts” • Start a vocabulary board with keywords like evacuee, evacuation, billet, billeting officer | | | Discussion relating to vocabulary board |
| 3 Map Activity | To gain an understanding of the geography of evacuation to Staffordshire | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where did Staffordshire evacuees come from? • Where were they sent to live in Staffordshire? • How long did it take to get from their homes to Staffordshire? | History: 7 & 11b | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use maps to plot the location of places • Use the context of evacuation to Staffordshire to describe where places are | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To understand which parts of the country evacuees came from and why • To understand journey lengths from these places to Staffordshire • To familiarise children with urban areas – towns, cities • To understand where evacuees were sent to live in Staffordshire, | Geography: 2c, 3b & c | <p>Completion of map activity sheets and related discussions</p> <p>Extension of work: Research into local stories of evacuation</p> |

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| | | | | | noting rural areas | | |
| 4 Finding a new home in Staffordshire 2 | To understand what life was like for evacuees living in Staffordshire billets | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was life like for children in billets? • Did all children have the same experiences? • How was life in Staffordshire different from their home life? | <p>History: 3, 4 7 & 11b</p> <p>Citizenship: 4a - 4f</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to, analyse and compare oral history accounts from evacuees who were billeted in Staffordshire | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To understand that evacuees had different experiences in billets • Using the context of evacuee's experiences to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - become aware of how to treat people - understand how other people's actions can affect others - understand that people have different values and customs - become aware of different types of relationship - recognise and challenge stereotypes • To understand that many evacuee's had not been to the countryside before • To recognise the differences between urban | <p>Geography: 3c, d & f</p> <p>English: Speaking, Listening, Writing, Reading</p> | <p>Oral responses to discussions relating to oral history accounts</p> <p>Extension of work: Research into life in an evacuation city in the 1930s and 1940s</p> |

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| | | | | | and rural and their differing lifestyles | | |
| 5 Design an Evacuee Postcard Activity | <p>To use and evaluate historical sources in order to understand evacuation</p> <p>To develop empathy with evacuee's and their experiences</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did the government want parents to feel about their children living in billets in the countryside? • What does the postcard say about life in the countryside? • What would pupils say to their parents if they were an evacuee living in Staffordshire? | History: 3, 4, 7 & 11b | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examine and evaluate the postcard as an historical source • Imagine life as an evacuee. Design and write a postcard based on prior learning from lessons | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To understand what life was like for evacuee's and to apply this to their own creative works | <p>English: Speaking, Listening, Reading, Writing</p> <p>Art and Design: 1 & 2</p> | <p>Oral responses relating to postcard</p> <p>Postcard designs and letters</p> |
| 6 What was it like for children in billet families? | <p>To introduce a different perspective of evacuation</p> <p>To familiarise children with the impact of evacuation on local Staffordshire children and their lives</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was life like for children whose families gave a home to evacuees? • What did they think to evacuees? • What was it like to share a home? • What was it like to share your family? | <p>History: 3, 4, 7 & 11b</p> <p>Citizenship: 4a – 4f</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to, analyse and compare oral history accounts from Staffordshire children who lived in billet families • Compare and contrast these with how evacuees felt and how evacuation affected them | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To understand that evacuation affected local Staffordshire children as well as evacuees • To recognise how this impacted on their lives, including school life, sharing toys, parents • Using the context of | <p>English: Listening, Speaking, Writing</p> | <p>Oral/Written responses to discussions relating to oral history accounts</p> |

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| | | | | | <p>Staffordshire children who lived in billets to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - recognise the differences and similarities between people i.e. accents - recognise signs of teasing and bullying because of difference - recognise and challenge stereotypes i.e. stereotypes of evacuees • To conclude that eventually billet family children and evacuees lived and played happily together despite any differences | | |
| 7 Case Studies | To use the Children on the Move website to research specific evacuation stories | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What contribution did billet families make during World War II? • What was the long-term impact of evacuation on the lives of evacuees? | History: 4, 7 & 11b | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read case studies on Children on the Move website • Draw conclusions from these stories regarding contribution of | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To understand that some Staffordshire billet families made a significant contribution during evacuation by | ICT: 1a English: Reading | Oral/Written responses to case studies |

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| | | | | <p>billet families and adoption of evacuees</p> | <p>taking in evacuees despite their limited space and resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To appreciate human kindness and generosity• To understand that the lives of evacuees were often changed completely as a result of evacuation. Some evacuees were happiest in Staffordshire and were adopted by their billet family. | | |
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Using Oral History as Historical Evidence

Oral history can provide wonderful insight into the personal experiences of ordinary people - their feelings, hopes, aspirations, disappointments and family histories. It can provide new knowledge of the past and new perspectives on it.

By studying these oral history accounts, pupils have the opportunity to learn about World War II evacuation from the people who actually experienced it.

As with all historical sources, oral history should be viewed critically and not always taken literally. In relation to accounts of former evacuees, it should be remembered that many of the subjects are recounting events that took place whilst they were small children, some as young as four years old. Their memories therefore, may not be completely clear or true to actual events and could be coloured by later life experiences and media representations of evacuation.



Technical Notes

Lessons using PowerPoint should be used with Microsoft Office 2010 and PowerPoint 2010. This will enable the audio-clips to be played within the presentations. Older versions of Microsoft PowerPoint may not allow playback of the audio-clips.

If you are using an older version of Microsoft Office/PowerPoint the lessons can still be used and the audio-clips downloaded from the Children on the Move website and played separately in Windows Media Player or equivalent.

The historical sources to accompany the lessons and the transcripts of all audio-clips are available in PDF format from the Children on the Move website.

Further Study and Information

For help in continuing the study of World War II and evacuation, take a look at the activity days and resources available through the Staffordshire Museums Service at Shugborough - <http://www.shugborough.org.uk/educationandgroupvisits/Education.aspx>. Activities include an evacuee experience day and a World War II museum loan box.

For further information about the Children on the Move project, the travelling exhibition and the resources available please contact the Stafford Record Office - <http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/leisure/archives/contact/sro/home.aspx>, email: matthew.blake@staffordshire.gov.uk, Telephone: 01785 278376

Children on the Move website: <http://www.childrenonthemove.org.uk>

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This resource pack was designed and written by Natalie Taylor, working as a freelance consultant for the Children on the Move project and Stafford Record Office.

