

KEN KERR

#### Evacuation

Me, well I had a good evacuation. I was in the very first batch to leave St Philomena's school in Ayresome Street and we were gone in the first week of the war. I was only 11. We all had our gas masks in our boxes with our labels on and carrying our paper bags. We went by train to Bridlington and I remember it was stuffy and hot.

When we arrived we were taken up to the school, not far from the priory, and the people who had volunteered to take us in came along to pick us out. Most of them wanted the girls, not the cheeky lads. I went with the little lad next door, Frankie Green and another lad called Crawford and the three of us were picked out by Mr and Mrs Robson, they had wanted girls but in the end they didn't really have much choice. We stayed in a house on Pinfold Street opposite the high green, and they were lovely people, he had his own joinery business and they kept chickens in the back. Mrs Robson had two girls and a boy. The three of us stayed together in one room and we had the use of a flushing toilet which was right next door to the house. The school was just up the way and we were all mixed in with the children from St Patrick's.

Mr and Mrs Robson had family who lived in a farm just up the way and we had bags of fun there, feeding the cows, playing in the barn and playing with the cats. I was there nearly a year and the only reason I came home was because the Germans started dropping their bombs on the town, the post office was destroyed. When the German planes were shot down, the bodies of the crew would be brought up to the graveyard behind the priory and interred there. Well, we were inquisitive kids and we used to go up there and watch from the side of the graves as the soldiers fired the salute, and when the bullet cases fell to the ground, we would collect them up, we also collected the pamphlets that the German planes would drop asking you to surrender or make friends with them against the Russians.

#### War declared

It was a lovely sunny Sunday morning when War was declared, we all knew about the rumours but then it came out over on the wireless about the ultimatum the Germans had been given. Then the sirens went off. At that particular time we didn't have an air raid shelter and we were worried that the Germans were going to come straight over and bomb us that day.

#### The shelter

We were issued with an Anderson shelter which had to be put up in the front garden. The base was thick concrete and the arc was covered with earth. In the winter it flooded. A make shift chair and a candle and some matches was all that were in it.