



# An Interview with an Evacuee

**Dark clouds hung over Britain during the Second World War (1939 – 1945). Many cities such as London, Glasgow and Birmingham were bombed and those who could, left for safer surroundings.**

*Born in 1938, Ronald Statham lived in Gorton, East Manchester. This is his story of being an evacuee.*

## **When were you evacuated and from where?**

It was near the end of the war in 1944 and Manchester was getting bombed quite heavily. My mum and dad made the decision that it was better for my older brother and me to leave and that we would be more secure elsewhere.

## **Where did you go when you were evacuated?**

I was evacuated to Conway. It's a seaside town in North Wales.

## **How did you get there and what was the journey like?**

We travelled from Exchange Station right in the heart of Manchester. I don't remember being upset or anxious, just being really cold. In fact I don't remember much about the journey – I was too busy chatting away to my friends. Anyway, my mum had told me I was going on holiday, so I was really looking forward to it. We came from a poor family so I'd never been on a train before.

## **What did you take with you?**

I was only small so I couldn't carry a heavy case like some of the older children. I remember having my name pinned to my jumper. I thought it was funny because I already knew my name! The rest of my clothes were given to me when I arrived.

## **Who did you live with?**

I didn't live with a family like most evacuees. When we arrived we met Dr Garret. He explained that we were going to live in a holiday camp. We were really excited and glad we could all stay together. When I was older I found out it was a special camp built for the poor.

## **How did you feel living in Conway?**

It was just like being on holiday – but remember, that's where I thought I was. It was a great contrast to Manchester. I'd never been to the seaside before so going to the beach and playing in the sea was like going on an adventure.

## **What is your favourite memory of being an evacuee?**

I enjoyed the experience very much. Both the food and surroundings were better than back home. It's funny when I see a TV programme about evacuees. I know we were part of Britain's history but looking back, it all seemed pretty normal at the time.

## **Have you ever been back to Conway as an adult?**

I went back to the site many years later. But the yard was empty and the buildings abandoned. Not long after it was all bulldozed flat so they could build a new motorway. Conway is quite near Manchester so I often go there on days out with my wife Susan. It brings back wonderful memories!

