

HAROLD BECK

1.

I: Whilst in Somerset, did the school run in the same way that it had in London, or did the structure completely change?

HB: Well, if you mean the sort of teaching, appointments and that...

I: Yes.

HB: That remained the same. The school, our school, the Regent Street Poly, was rather larger than the county school, which we shared. They had it in the morning and we had it in the afternoon. Now, there wasn't enough accommodation at the county school for the Polytechnic School, so the Head hired two places for teaching. One was the Methodist Hall, right in the centre of Minehead, and quite close to it, the Masonic Hall, so quite a few of us were taught in the Masonic Hall in Main Street. I think that it all went on normally. I mean, we'd lost the great classroom facilities for chemistry and physics, but the rest of it, we had everything. Also, of course, there were activities at the weekend, which I'm sure the masters and their wives must have organised to keep tabs on us all, including a service in the hall of the school on Sunday mornings.

2.

I: Can you remember how you felt about being evacuated? Were you scared or excited?

HB: Excited really. It was an adventure, we didn't know what to expect. Essentially the whole family was splitting up, because my brother was staying in London, my elder brother, now deceased, and my next younger brother was being evacuated with me, then my youngest brother and my sister who were twins they were being evacuated somewhere else and they were not necessarily the same places, I think they were together for a while, but then to different villages and so on. Yes, it was sad the family breaking up like that. On the other hand we'd had all sort of holidays and so on, so this was just a variation in life, which of course we didn't really understand the significance of.

LIONEL PRICE

I: How long were you in Somerset? When did you come back to London?

LP: First of all on September 1st 1939, we were evacuated down to a place called Wedmore, which is a small village just by Cheddar Gorge. We were there for about a month. It wasn't really satisfactory because it wasn't big enough as it was only a village. We were spread around in the various houses. My brother and I stayed with an old widow lady in a council house there. It was very nice. We went down to the central point and I think they picked us out, but after a month we then moved to Minehead in Somerset. There we shared what was called the County School, the Minehead County School. The locals had it in the morning and we had it in the afternoon.

I: Okay, so you didn't mix with the actual pupils of that school?

LP: Several boys married several of the girls. There was a degree of mixture of course.