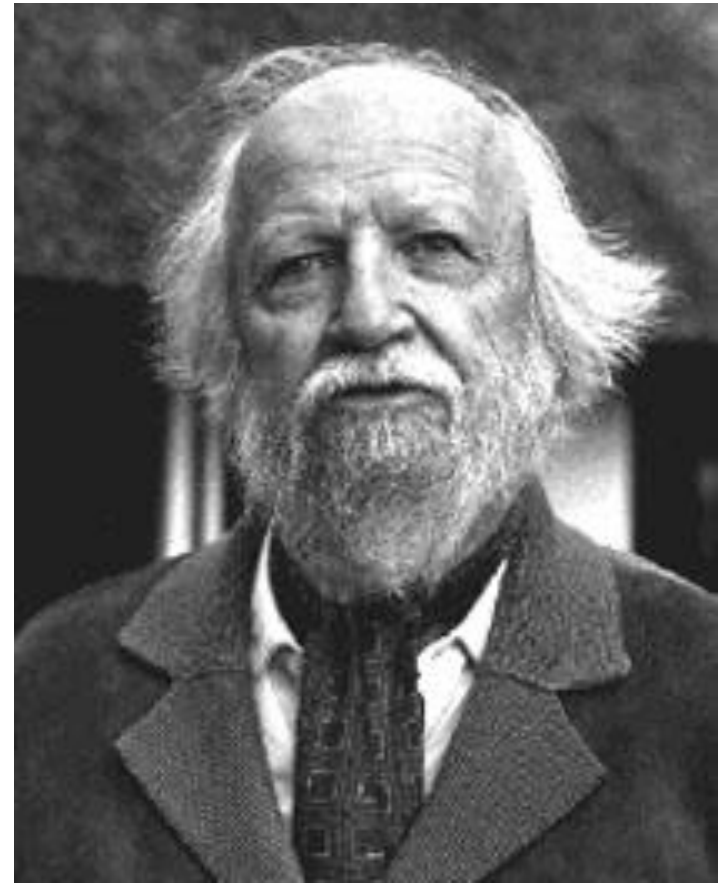


Building a Context for *Lord of the Flies*

War on the British
Homefront

Context

- ▶ From what we know about William Golding's life, we can infer that his experience in the Royal Navy in World War II influenced his writing.
- ▶ We will look at life on the British homefront during WWII to get a perspective of what the boys in our novel were experiencing before they crash landed on a deserted island.



Evacuation

- ▶ During the Second World War, many children living in big cities and towns were moved temporarily from their homes to places considered safer, usually out in the countryside.
- ▶ Between 1939 – 1945 there were three major evacuations in preparation of the German Luftwaffe bombing Britain.
- ▶ The first official evacuations began on **September 1 1939**, two days before the declaration of war. By **January 1940** almost 60% had returned to their homes.
- ▶ A second evacuation effort was started after the Germans had taken over most of France. **From June 13 to June 18, 1940**, around 100,000 children were evacuated (in many cases re-evacuated).
- ▶ When the **Blitz** began on **7 September 1940**, children who had returned home or had not been evacuated were evacuated.



Evacuation

- ▶ By the end of 1941, city centres, especially London, became safer.
- ▶ From **June 1944**, the Germans attacked again by firing V1 rockets on Britain, followed later by also V2 rockets. 1,000,000 women, children, elderly and disabled people were evacuated from London.
- ▶ This new way of attacking Britain carried on until the end of the war in Europe in **May 1945**.

Evacuation

- ▶ The British government introduced evacuations because it was worried an new war might begin when Hitler came to power in 1933. It was afraid that British cities and towns might be targets for bombing raid by aircraft.
- ▶ Evacuation tried to ensure the safety of young children from the cities that were considered to be in danger of German bombing – London, Coventry, Birmingham, Portsmouth etc.
- ▶ They were evacuated by train and road to smaller towns and villages in the countryside. Some children were sent to stay with relatives outside in the countryside, but others were sent to live with complete strangers.



Who was evacuated?

- ▶ Schoolchildren (827,000) and their teachers
- ▶ Mothers with children under five (524,000)
- ▶ Pregnant women (12,000)
- ▶ Some disabled people

- ▶ A further two million or so more wealthy individuals evacuated 'privately', some settling in hotels for the duration and several thousands travelling to Canada, the United States, South Africa, Australia and the Caribbean.



What did they take with them?

- ▶ The government recommended that in addition to their gas mask and identity card the evacuees had the following items:

Boys:

- ▶ 2 vests
- ▶ 2 pairs of pants
- ▶ Pair of trousers
- ▶ 2 pairs of socks
- ▶ 6 handkerchiefs
- ▶ Pullover or jersey

Girls:

- ▶ Vest
- ▶ Pair of knickers
- ▶ Petticoat
- ▶ 2 pairs of stockings
- ▶ 6 handkerchiefs
- ▶ Slip (like a very long vest with shoulder straps)
- ▶ Blouse
- ▶ Cardigan



What was it like for a child to be evacuated?

- ▶ Being an evacuee must have been scary and exciting at the same time. The children had to leave their families and homes behind and try to fit in with host families in the country.

At the station

- ▶ Children had labels attached to them, as though they were parcels. They stood at railway stations not knowing where they were going nor if they would be split from brothers and sisters who had gathered with them. They felt scared about being away from their families but also excited about going to a place they had never seen before and only read about in books.

On arrival

- ▶ The children arrived in the countryside, tired, hungry and uncertain whether they would ever see their families again.
- ▶ They were taken to the village hall, where they would be met by the **billeting officer** (the person in charge of finding them homes). A 'pick-you-own evacuee' sessions would then take place, where **host families** (the people they were going to live with) haggled over the most presentable children while the sicklier and grubbier children were left until last.

One boy for you, Ludwig.
He has got the Rabbit (Jaw)
Stand at a bit quiet now, it
but he has a fish on his nose
in the street near Samy's shop
in the bottom row, I wish he
will be his school in time.
I expect I'll be what by my
accident when I go to school
I'm washing his hands with
water after the country
I don't forget at Pop's birthday
the next
I'll be in
I want to school
I'll be in
I'll be in
I'll be in



Being evacuated was very exciting, but it was also strange and frightening.

Most mothers did not go away with their children, and the children didn't know where they were being sent or who they were to live with.

Some children had fantastic adventures and some were very miserable.

Before the war many children living in towns and cities had never been to the countryside and were amazed when they saw cows and sheep for the first time!

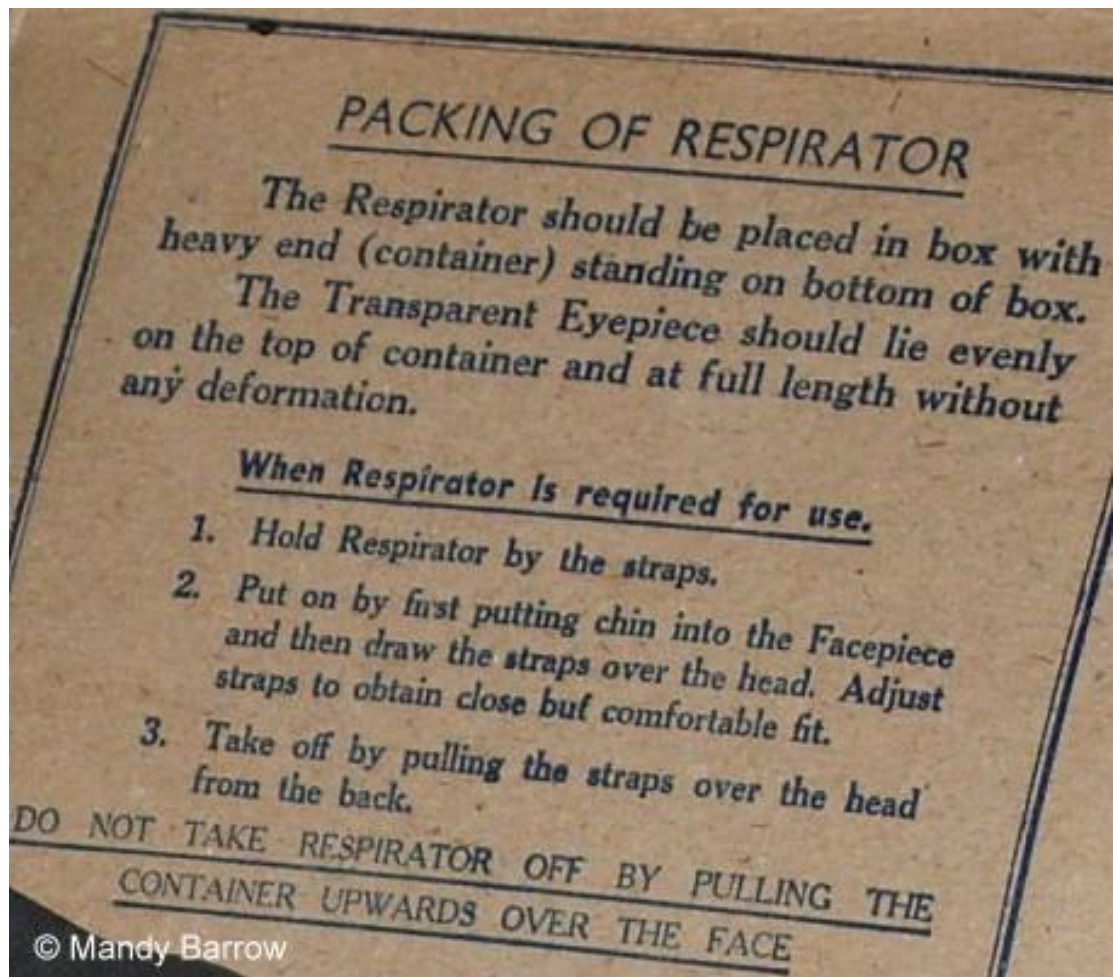
Imagine how big a shock it might have been to return to London after living in the country.

Gas Masks



By September 1939 some 38 million gas masks had been given out, house to house, to families. They were never to be needed.

Everyone in Britain was given a gas mask in a cardboard box, to protect them from gas bombs, which could be dropped during air raids.



▶ Gas had been used a great deal in the First World War and many soldiers had died or been injured in gas attacks. Mustard gas was the most deadly of all the poisonous chemicals used during World War I. It was almost odourless (could not be smelt easily) and took 12 hours to take effect. It was so powerful that only small amounts needed to be added to weapons like high explosive shells to have devastating effects.

▶ There was a fear that it would be used against ordinary people at home in Britain (civilians).

How to use the gas mask



**Hitler will send
no warning –
so always carry
your gas mask**

ISSUED BY THE MINISTRY OF HOME SECURITY

OFFICIAL INSTRUCTIONS ISSUED BY THE MINISTRY OF HOME SECURITY

GAS ATTACK

HOW TO PUT ON YOUR GAS MASK

Always keep your gas mask with you – day and night. Learn to put it on quickly.

Practise wearing it.



1. Hold your breath. 2. Hold mask in front of face, with thumbs inside straps.
3. Thrust chin well forward into mask, pull straps over head as far as they will go.
4. Run finger round face-piece taking care head-straps are not twisted.

IF THE GAS RATTLES SOUND



1. Hold your breath. Put on mask wherever you are. Close window.
2. If out of shoes, take off hat, put on your mask. Turn up collar.
3. Put on gloves or keep hands in pockets. Take cover in nearest building.

IF YOU GET GASSED

BY VAPOUR GAS Keep your gas mask on even if you feel discomfort. If discomfort continues go to First Aid Post

BY LIQUID or BLISTER GAS

- | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|
| <p>1
Dab, but <i>don't rub</i> the splash with handkerchief. Then destroy handkerchief.</p> | <p>2
Rub No. 2 Ointment well into place.
<i>(Buy a tub, far more from any chemist). In emergency chemists supply Bleach Cream free.</i></p> | <p>3
If you can't get Ointment or Cream within 5 minutes wash place with soap and warm water</p> | <p>4
Take off at once any garment splashed with gas.</p> |
|--|--|---|---|



Children had to take regular gas drills at school. They found these drills hard to take seriously, especially when they discovered blowing out through the rubber made 'rude' noises!

Internees

- ▶ In 1930 there were about 20,000 people from [Germany](#) living in Britain. This number increased after [Adolf Hitler](#) gained power in 1933. It is estimated that around 60,000 German refugees entered Britain in the years leading up to the outbreak of the [Second World War](#). These were mainly [Jews](#) and left-wing opponents of Hitler who had escaped from [Nazi Germany](#).
- ▶ In September 1939, the police arrested a large number of [Germans](#) living in Britain. The government feared that these people might be Nazi spies pretending to be refugees. They were interned and held in various camps all over Britain. Like other refugees they were eventually appeared before tribunals which classified them into three different groups. 'A' class aliens were interned, whereas 'B' class aliens were allowed to leave the camps but had certain restrictions placed upon their movements. The vast majority of refugees were identified as 'C' class aliens and were allowed to go free.
- ▶ On 12th May, 1940, [John Anderson](#), who was in charge of national security, ordered the arrests of over 2,000 male aliens living in coastal areas. A few days later all 'B' class aliens were rounded up and placed into internment camps. [Winston Churchill](#) defended this policy by claiming that it was necessary to "collar the lot".

The Home Guard

- ▶ The **Home Guard** (initially "*Local Defense Volunteers*" or *LDV*, or in humorous slang, *Look, Duck, Vanish*, hence the name change) was a defense organization of the British Army during the Second World War.
- ▶ Operational from 1940 until 1944, the Home Guard — comprising 1.5 million local volunteers otherwise ineligible for military service, usually owing to age, hence the nickname 'Dad's Army' — acted as a secondary defense force, in case of invasion by the forces of Nazi Germany and their allies.
- ▶ The Home Guard guarded the coastal areas of Britain and other important places such as airfields, factories and explosives stores.

The Holocaust

- ▶ Genocide of approximately 6 million European Jews during WWII.
 - ▶ A program of systematic state– sponsored extermination by Nazi Germany under Adolf Hitler, its allies, and collaborators.
 - ▶ Legislation to remove the Jews from civil society was enacted years before the outbreak of WWII.
 - ▶ Concentration camps were established in which inmates were used as slave labourors until they died of exhaustion or disease.
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