



Poems to celebrate Liberation, reflect on Occupation and remember the evacuation



75 years of Freedom in the Bailiwick of Guernsey

LIBERATION 75
FREEDOM NOT FORGOTTEN
A public exhibition to celebrate 75 years of Liberation 

INTRODUCTION

This year, 9th May 2020, celebrates 75 years of liberation from the occupation of the Nazis during World War 2, for the people in the Bailiwick of Guernsey. On this date for each of those seventy-five years, the people have celebrated this freedom and remembered the sacrifices made during that difficult time.

In the Spring of 2020, I organised a poetry competition asking school students to write poems about the experience during occupation and the joy of liberation on 9th May 1945, after 5 long years.

Students from schools across the Bailiwick talked to their grandparents, heard first-hand from people who were children at the time who were evacuated and learnt about how it affected their families. It is so important the young people learn about this, as it disappears from living memory.

The poems were judged by local sixth form students studying English, who chose the final nine. Online voting was used to identify an overall winner from the nine finalists.



The 2020 Liberation day was going to be a special celebration for the 75th Anniversary with lots of different events planned down at the harbour of St Peter Port. These poems, written by school children, were going to be displayed in a tent on the quayside. COVID19 put a stop to this so reflections, remembrance, and celebrations have now gone online.

June 2020 is also the 80th anniversary of the evacuation which some pupils choose to write about for this competition. A selection of the evacuation themed poems entered for the Heritage 75 competition are listed here to help us also remember this event.

Karen

June 2020

Poems to remember the evacuation of the people of Guernsey 80 years ago
Written by school pupils in the Bailiwick of Guernsey 2020

Time after Time Zoe Collins age 10

The day had come; war had started,
I could taste fear in the air.
The guns were already shooting.
I was four, my parents told me,
to get packed for a journey.

I had only packed a few things
before the sun was no more.
People were queuing at the harbour,
Screaming at the boats, babies bawling.
Mum took me to the teacher.
I was taken away,
I never saw her again for years to come.

The next moment I can remember
was on a rocking boat sailing
away from my beloved Guernsey
and my parents.
I didn't know what the soldiers
would do to them.

My teacher was as strict as ever.
I was so downhearted to see the island
disappearing from my sight.

After five years of German
occupation I finally came home.
But I hardly recognised
those strangers who were my family.



**“The years of darkness and danger in which the children of our country have grown up are over, and, please
God, for ever.”**

King George VI 1945

Who will pick me? Evie Linane age 13

As I step of a train for the first time,
I feel the hippy wind blow up my scarlet dress.
I don't know where to go,
I don't know what to do.
The only thing I do know is that I am trapped being held captive in this foreign place.

I sit in a room for hours staring at my feet,
Wondering who will pick me and why aren't they picking me.
Eventually I hear some sweat voice whisper in my ear.
She said, 'you're coming home with me love no need to worry now.'
She took my hand as we walked back to my new home,
It wasn't big but it didn't matter for I had her by my side.
I got called for supper anxious I was,
But it didn't matter for I had her by my side.

I went away Alexa Stockwell age 10

June 1940.

That was the day,
When all normal happenings,
Just went away.

Germans forced my dad to do their work (I think they
should've helped too!)

My cousin, he was sent away,
Then I had no one to play.

I had to go to England
I stayed there for years.
I couldn't be with any of my school peers.

I really missed my family,
and our little house
and even our tiny little Kitchen mouse.

Then finally five years later,
I could come back home!
I jumped skipped and leaped about,
When the Germans had to go!

Then it was finally Liberation day!

Occupation Louisa Hardouin-Munro age 10

We were sent to foreign countries,
to places far,
Sent away to unknown strangers,
without having a say.

I was scared,
I was frightened,
and I don't know why,
but my stomach tightened.

I held on tight to my dear mother,
And cried until I could cry no more,
Then I waved goodbye,
and leapt through boats door.

We landed on an Island,
much bigger than our home,
With lots of food and land,
and a little garden gnome.

I hope it stops soon Isabella Morgan age 11

Today is sad.
Today is the evacuation.
The German soldiers came,
And shot some people.

It is hard when we leave our families.
I have to stay in my house.
At the black sparkly sky at night and stare at the moon,
We have to leave with our teachers,
Going backwards and forwards
But I hope it stops soon.

I'm going to miss my cuddly toys,
I see all the boys passing by,
But I really hope it stops soon.
I wish I had delicious food, to fill my hunger,
Dreaming all day and night,
Then I heard a tremendous loud bang....

I'm wondering what it was,
But I was too scared and frightened.
That I couldn't stay alive,
I went to my beautiful mother.
Before I was going to bed,
And she hugged me forever.

Then I woke up with a stretch and a yawn,
I looked at the soldiers.
I was too scared to look at the window,
But I hope it stops soon.

Now 5 years later,
I'm with a different family.
I don't remember my old family.

When I came back with a big heavy sack full of clothes that I saw
Lots of people are cheering of excitement.
I was so happy.

Patchy Eve Hartley age 11

Together we boarded the ship,
Hand in hand with Patchy,
We waved farewell to Mama and Papa,
Tears racing down our cheek.

A man held me back, as I tried to get away,
Screaming, shouting, wailing I was,
Curled up in a ball, I sniff Patchy,
I always feel better when I smell his soothing scent,
Soon my parents were a little dot in the distance.

Sent away to live with Mrs Earl,
Be quiet! Don't touch! Do this! Do that!
I soon felt like a slave,
I was only five years old,
But I know that I will always love Patchy.

Holding Patchy's scruffy little hand reassuringly,
It was May 1945,
Waving good-bye to the malicious Mrs Earl,
Patchy and I put our best foot forward,
And boarded the boat,
The boat home,
The boat to freedom.

Goodbye Amelie Rochester age 11

The lingering kiss of goodbye,
Still clings to the tip of my tongue.

Mother cries tears of hope and love,
As the sky cried tears of a storm.

My arms still aching,
Longing for the hug to never end.

An unknown hand pushes my back,
And my sweaty, loving hands leave her patterned frock.

Screams pinch at the back of my throat,
Untamed, wild.

As the boat pulls slowly away,
The tears prick my yearning eyes, stinging in anger.

All I want is Mother, with her sweet voice,
And her chestnut brown hair.

But she's at home,
I shan't be able to live without her hand in mine.

Shine Isabella Blackwell age 11

The press fell through the post-box this lunch,
At twelve o'clock just noon,
My mother just stared and stared,
I shook her but she remained still,
You have to go tomorrow she cried,
I got her tissue and her eye, I dried.

I wrote my letters goodbye tonight,
My emotions going crazy.
I turned out the light and closed my eyes,
Thinking about tomorrow,
What would happen at noon,
When my family fell out of sight.

My family fell out of sight today,
A twelve o'clock just noon,
Wet salty cheeks from everlasting tears,
That are dripping down my face,
I think on the bright side, well at least I try,
But my mind keeps changing to my past life lost.

The boat was rough, and I felt a jolt,
All of the children fell and screamed,
I wish I had my mummy one said,
I thought that in my own little head,
Then, a big horn honked and scared me,
Then, a massive wave came and sent the boat sinking.

The suitcase flung open,
The latches now broken,
My eyes are awoken,
By tears streaming down my face,
My past life flooding back,
My life will never be the same,
Everything had lost its shine.

Leaving Guernsey Tom Rawlings age 8

I couldn't feel my ears any more after what I had heard from my parents.

I had to leave Guernsey to go to Weymouth because the Germans were coming.

I had to pack all my essentials in a bag, and I left on a boat.

The Germans bombed the tomato trucks, and everyone had to take cover.

The next day the Germans marched through the town.

I didn't come home for 5 years and I missed my family.

Time to Go Finlay Sneddon age 10

I couldn't believe my ears,
I had to leave my family and go somewhere completely different.
Tears welled up in my eyes and I couldn't help crying.
"How could this happen to me."
"Don't cry," my mum said, walking into my room,
She helped me pack the essentials; it was time to go.

I looked back Joshua Pailing age 9

As we left the Island on boat packed with people,
I looked back on all the beaches and homes and Castle Cornet.
None of us knew how long we would be away from our island homes and family.
We sailed, drifting slowly along
until Guernsey was a speck on the blue, sparkly horizon.

Sarnia Cherie by Beryl Kellow

They are coming. Make a choice,

Stay or go. Boats are waiting.

They came, holding small bags.

Evacuation

Other boats came, planes landed.

Sound of jack boots, sight of swastikas.

Men bearing arms, marching in step.

Occupation

Orders came: Report to Town.

Guernsey folk a threat to occupiers.

Hered on to boats for Germany.

Deportation

Years passed, hunger, near starvation.

Crystal sets speak of an end in sight.

Boats disgorged new soldiers. Can it be?

Liberation

We meet this special day.

Seventy-five years have gone.

So sing '**Sarnia Cherie**'.

Celebration

*During the occupation many thousands of islanders were evacuated to the mainland.
It was five whole years before they got to come back. Alderney was uninhabitable at first.
Islanders not only lost loved ones, but also their whole way of life had changed, their language, their
culture. They were your grandparents and great grandparents- their lives were turned upside down*

Five long years by Karen Simpson

When the boats came, we had two hours to pack our life.

My ancestors had farmed this strip since medieval times.

We took the dog to the butcher and his body was added to the bloody pile
but we didn't tell the children.

One suitcase each and we didn't lock the door.

My invalid mother was carried down the hill, but the children thought it was an adventure and they laughed as their
childhood was captured in one last photograph.

The chatter didn't drown the distance guns;
they were close.

The island disappearing into the gloom was imprinted on my mind, "à bétao" I whispered to myself.

The crossing was rough, and we were squashed in more than the boat was meant for; we were scared.

When we arrived at the port the local people were kind; they gave us food and blankets and we rested.

We finally made it to our new home; they had got a translator, but we talked their language and the unaccompanied
children lined up to be chosen.

Five long years we stayed.

Our children grew up forgetting their language, their heritage; they became locals.

They cried when it was time to go back to a distant memory of a forgotten childhood.

Our house was a shell; to keep warm they had burnt our furniture and wooden door frames.

Only walls stood.

We had nothing.

They had kept the best furniture, so it was brought out into a field and we fought off our friends to take what wasn't
ours.

Embarrassed - we closed our doors to the neighbours that day

Everything that defined us was gone.

Forgiveness did not come easily.

Lest we forget

The "Lost" Generation by Janine Le Cras

All my friends went away today.
They boarded a boat and sailed away,
off on a big adventure,
leaving me behind.

Once they were gone, the Germans arrived.
It was years before I saw them again.

Me and my brothers went away today.
We boarded a boat and sailed away,
off on a big adventure,
leaving our parents behind.

Once we arrived, we were all split up.
It was years before I saw them again.

Me and Mum went away today.
We boarded a boat and sailed away,
off on a big adventure,
leaving my Dad behind.

Once we were gone, the bombs rained down.
I never saw my Dad again

In 1940, 5200 school aged children were evacuated from the island in the days preceding the German Occupation. Many of them travelled alone, but a few parents chose to evacuate with them. Only 1200 children stayed.

Among the children that evacuated were my mother, her four brothers, my father and his mother. My parents were both 5 years old.

My paternal grandfather who stayed on the island was a Constable in the Guernsey Police. He was killed in the air raid on the 28th of June 1940 aged 33.