HULL TRUCK THEATRE PRESENTS

DANCING THROUGH THE SHADOWS

BY RICHARD VERGETTE
DIRECTED BY MARK BABYCH
WORLD PREMIÈRE

EDUCATION PACK

By Finlay McGuigan
It's a long way from Hessle to Hessle Road. When Tom and Sylvia meet on the dance floor in 1938 they begin a romance that crosses the class divide. Tom's aspirational mother Grace is horrified that her son has taken up with a girl who works in the fish house, whilst Sylvia's brother David has no time for her daft bank clerk boyfriend.

That's until the divided families are thrown together when the Second World War reaches Hull. Suddenly class means nothing and all that matters is surviving. As the Blitz shatters their world apart, Tom and Sylvia struggle to hold their relationship together.

A story of love and family from the heart of the Hull Blitz.

A new play from local playwright Richard Vergette, inspired by his own family and experiences, this is a very human story from the heart of Hull. Dancing Through the Shadows is Part I of The Hull Trilogy - a trio of exciting commissioned plays which examine how the city's past has shaped its identity and its capacity for survival and renewal.
CAST AND CREW

Cast
Laura Aramayo – Sylvia
John Elkington – Maurice/Gilbert
Jim English – David
Marc Graham – Tom/Brian
Christine Mackie - Grace

Creative Team
Director - Mark Babych
Set and Costume Designer – Dawn Allsopp
Lighting Designer – Douglas Kuhrt
Sound & AV Designer – Mathew Clowes
Movement Director – Jon Beney
Associate Director – Tom Bellerby

Community Ensemble
Leah Andrew
Sophie Bevan
Denise Dalton
Thomas Jagger
Annie Lishman
Paige Mackenzie
Finlay McGuigan
Laura Meredith
James Thomas Newton
Rebecca Stewart

EDUCATION PACK
INTERVIEW WITH WRITER
RICHARD VERGETTE

1. What inspired you to write DTTS?

Tough question really. So many things to be honest. I’d written a piece called ‘Harry’s Luck’ which was part of ‘Ring Around the Humber’ at Truck in 2011. It was set in Hull during the blitz and it was very positively received. It made me think that there might be a more substantial story to tell because I knew that Hull had been the most bombed city during the blitz outside of London. As well as that, both of my parents lived through the war - my father saw active service and my mother worked in Courtaulds in London during the blitz so it seemed closer to me than perhaps many others. I was also aware that although the play is, of course, set in the past, the horror of being bombed or being killed during a bombing raid is very much part of our present times.

2. What is DTTS about, for you?

It’s about good decent people being thrust into a situation over which they have no control. In most stories or plays there might be an antagonist, a villainous character who creates some of the conflict. In any situation, there are characters with whom we might identify and others who we feel pitched against. In Dancing through the Shadows there is only really one ‘bad’ character (Brian) and he is a small part. Also the events of the play change him considerably by the end. Mostly it’s about good and decent people trying to be good and decent but struggling against the odds simply to survive - let alone understand how to treat each other.

3. What do you think the relevance of your play is, to today’s young people?

Most of the characters in the play are young. They experience life as any young person does - through their relationships with each other and through trying to make sense of the world and enjoy themselves in it. For the characters of Sylvia and Tom this is through dance, for David it’s trying to prove himself and feel a sense of belonging - initially through petty crime and eventually by becoming involved in the war. Even though the play is set more than 70 years ago, I imagine that young people might well be able to identify with some of the characters in it. We should remember as well that people went off to war when they were little more than kids themselves. Many of the young people seeing the play will not be much younger than those who fought in it. My father volunteered when he was 19 and for him and many like him they sacrificed their youth for our freedom. Young people coming to see the play might know friends or relatives who have served with the British army in recent conflicts and understand the kinds of fears and anxieties the characters in the play experience.
4. What do you want the audience to leave thinking about?

I think that’s always down to them and I don’t want to second guess that. How we experience a play or a story depends so much on us, on our past and our feelings and opinions. However, I hope that people understand the closeness of the issues in the play; close both in terms of history and also proximity. The events depicted in the play happened in the streets around the theatre around 75 years ago. In historical terms that’s the blinking of an eye or a heartbeat; it’s nothing. It may seem difficult to imagine but at the height of the blitz in May 1941, the streets around where the theatre is and the city centre looked like something out of Syria. And that’s the other feeling that I hope to generate - that people not all that far from us geographically are experiencing the kinds of terror which the play depicts. Innocent people being bombed out of their homes is not a thing of the past, sadly. It’s happening now, this moment and we should give a damn. But, I also hope that people come away with a sense of the power of the human spirit - the power of love, if you like. Characters suffer in the play and, indeed, not all of them survive, but those that do reach a greater understanding of each other, become more kindly towards each other and rise above the terror and the suffering that the war inflicts.

5. How and why did you become a playwright?

I always scribbled a bit but never with a thought to becoming a playwright as such. I used to act quite a lot and I would write stuff for myself to perform. But I didn’t write a play until I was well into my thirties. My ‘big break’, if you will, happened in 2007 when I entered a one man play, ‘An Englishman’s Home’ for a play festival called the 24/7 Theatre Festival in Manchester - an amazing platform for new theatre writing. It was well reviewed and emboldened me to keep going and write more plays. It took a long time, however, before I had the confidence to call myself a writer and, to be honest, I still struggle with it! Subsequently, a play of mine ‘As We Forgive Them’ won a number of awards and was re-written into ‘American Justice’ which ran for a month in the West End two years ago and I’ve kept going from there. Part of the desire to write comes from feeling strongly about events in the world and wanting to say something but not always quite sure what. Imagining characters in various situations is a kind of way of trying to make sense of the world; not trying to find answers for the world’s problems or anything like that, but trying to find a dramatic way of asking the questions. I always think that when you write a play you’ve got to feel a need to write it more than just a desire to. It’s almost as if it’s something you’ve got to get out of your system!

6. How would you describe your writing style?

If I’m writing a piece of Theatre in Education aimed at 11 year olds I might make the action quite swift moving and place an emphasis on humour in order to keep the audience engaged. Generally, I write in a kind of naturalistic/realistic style but often quite heightened. In Dancing through the Shadows, although the characters are realistic they are perhaps slightly exaggerated. I love finding out how a character talks and then writing for them. Grace, in the play, is often quite ridiculous and rather snobbish, even though she’s ultimately a good person. I had a lot of fun writing her rather extreme reactions to certain situations.
7. What is your writing process? What do you start with?

Again, I can’t honestly say that I have one hard and fast process. For example, with Dancing through the Shadows at least part of the storyline is a given because it’s the events of the war and the specific incidents that happened in Hull. So I needed to create compelling characters that I thought would be able to move the action along and make the audience care about them. ‘An Englishman’s Home’ was inspired by a news story where a farmer shot an intruder and there was a national outcry of support for him when he was sentenced for murder. That particular play, however, started with a question ‘What would it take for someone to cut themselves off entirely from the rest of the world and how would it affect them?’ and I simply took it from there. I know many writers who make pages and pages of notes before they start writing the script. I’m rather the opposite. I start writing the play and then see what happens. It means that I might junk a lot of script eventually, but it’s important to find a method that actually gets you started and writing something. It’s a phrase that I heard once that has rather stuck with me: ‘Don’t get it right, get it written’. I like that. It means that so long as I get something down I can always go back and improve it later. I always enjoy it when other people get involved. So, for me, the sooner I can hand the script over to a director or a dramaturg and get some feedback the better.

8. What, for you, is the essence of a good script?

Does it engage? Does it reach out and grab an audience and compel them to keep watching? Does it move them, charm them, affect them emotionally and - even in a very small way - change them? I read a novel recently where characters constantly talked in long speeches and I knew that it would never translate to the stage - because people don’t talk like that. So a script has to capture the irregular patterns of conversation if it’s going to work and because we often speak in broken sentences good writing for theatre is often quite poetic. But if it doesn’t engage then forget it. I was delighted when actors gave ‘Dancing through the Shadows’ such a warm response when they read it. If the actors can believe in it and imagine how they can interpret the characters and communicate them to an audience then you know you’re half way there.

9. Do you have a strong idea about how you see the characters and will you be involved in the casting process?

The Director, Mark Babych, was very generous in allowing me to be part of the casting process. Obviously, when you write something you often have the sounds of voices in your head and you might imagine lines being said in a particular way or by a particular performer. But often, actors can bring something new, something you didn’t see or hear as a writer and that’s one of the joys of handing the play over and staying open minded to the way other people might interpret what you’ve written.

10. Is it difficult to hand your work over to someone else to direct it?

Absolutely not! That’s the bit I like. I have directed in the past and still do with students but it’s not one of my greatest strengths. I’m very much someone who sees the world in words, whereas most directors I know have a much greater visual sense than I do. I’m very happy for them to use their skills in staging my work in a way that I know I’m just not capable of doing.

11. Do you have any advice for aspiring writers?

Just do it. Don’t wait for someone to offer you an opportunity, don’t approach your local theatre to see if they would like you to write a play - at least not before you’ve built up a bit of a body of work, just do it. Write something, get your mates to read it aloud and then write it again because it never sounds like it reads on the page. Find somewhere to put it on and then invite anyone you can think of to come and see it. Then when you’ve developed a bit of confidence and feel that your skills are improving, look out for any opportunities you can for new scripts or new writers. And don’t feel disheartened if it doesn’t happen for you straight away. I’ve had more rejections than Santa’s had present requests. If it’s what you want to do, just do it.
INTERVIEW WITH
SET AND COSTUME
DESIGNER
DAWN ALLSOP

1. What is the reason for creating a white –card model?
The white card model is the first time the director and designer get to look at a developed idea of the staging. It can be altered, moved around and changed at this point. It is also shared with all departments involved to get their input as well. Sometimes designs evolve very little from the white card to final designs but more often a lot of development will take place.

2. Where did you find inspiration?
In this instance, I found inspiration from the photo archives of Hull during the war years. I was particularly interested in the domestic nature of the play: two families and their lives during the war and so specific images of terraced housing sparked my imagination.

3. Can you explain your thinking and process behind the design for DTTS?
The photo’s we looked at were a starting point for the design. Bombed houses and streets and the debris created from that. There is also a line within the play about the photographs, books and little mementoes of lives snuffed out and the debris will contain props like this as well.

4. Do you have a process that you work through when beginning a new project, or does it change depending on the piece?
The process begins with a chat between director and designer. His is the first exchange of ideas and may be a very loose or detailed discussion. I then gather visual research and collect ideas together and begin making a rough model and then white card.

5. Do you have design training? If so, what is the value of design training?
I trained in fashion and textile design. I then did a post graduate course in costume design and my early career was spent working as a scenic artist and assistant designer. This design training was hugely valuable in teaching me the key skills I use in my work today.

6. What qualities do you think you need to be a great theatre designer?
A design degree in any discipline teaches you how to self-motivate, manage time, work to deadlines and communicate well. The key to being a good designer it to communicate well both verbally and visually.

7. What advice would you give aspiring theatre designers?
Be prepared to work hard and make opportunities happen. Make contact with a wide range of theatre makers and get to see them and show them your work. Meeting people is very important.

8. What are your favourite materials to use when creating model boxes?
I like to make things out of card and apply textures. Then when I paint my models I can pick out the textures with colour, giving added depth and visual interest.
The model box design for Dancing through the Shadows transformed throughout the design process. Dawn Allsopp, the designer, started with her ‘White card’ design (above, an advanced version) to allow for talks with the Director regarding shapes, colours, textures, playing space for the actors and how to represent the different locations in the play.

The next stage used the ideas and discussion points to develop the set design from the ‘White Card’ design to a closer final design.

Inspiration came from images of Hull during the blitz, especially gable ends of terraced houses and domestic architecture. New ideas are always being tested. The ripped cardboard, upstage centre, was an idea to incorporate AV projection in to the design and that was added as a fallen ceiling.
The Final model box is completed and presented to the cast and creative team. All ideas and inspiration is explained and discussions with each creative department are undertaken to ensure everything the designer has designed can happen when the set is realised on the stage.

Here is the final model box that the set builders used to create the set.

Think about how the designer has represented both the Hessle Road house and the Hessle house interior on the same stage.
The Designer’s costume drawings for Grace (above) and Maurice (below). The designer takes into account the era the play is set in, the colours of materials that compliment with the set and lighting design, the locations the character visits and the character study details.
1. What is the role of the sound designer for DTTS?
   To record, source, edit and program the sound effects and music used in the show. The music is chosen by the director and choreographer to fit with the movement on stage and the sound effects and atmospheres are chosen or made by me. My role is also to design the system used for the show, for example, choosing where in the space I want the speakers.

2. Do you have a process that you work through when beginning a new project, does it change depending on the piece?
   I would start by reading the script, pick out the main cues on there and make a list. From there that list becomes the beginning of a checklist of things to do. In this show the use of newsreel from the period was quite prominent, so it required a lot of research and sourcing of relevant clips before we could begin. After the main research is done I can begin to make a pallet of sound that can be used in the tech rehearsal. Then design the system to do what I need it to do, for example if a bomb is to land upstage I design the system so that it sounds as if the bomb has actually landed upstage and not just generally all around. Then I start to program in some of the sound into our playback software to ready for tech rehearsals, where manipulations to sounds and effects and newsreels will be made before opening night.

3. What inspires you creatively in DTTS?
   The hardship and destruction of the war in Hull is particularly inspiring. Also the feeling of Hull being disconnected and forgotten by the rest of the country.

4. What inspires you creatively in DTTS?
   The hardship and destruction of the war in Hull is particularly inspiring. Also the feeling of Hull being disconnected and forgotten by the rest of the country.

5. What are the challenges for designing the sound on DTTS?
   With this production it is definitely time and quantity. There is an awful lot of sound and not a lot of time to find, edit and program it during the rehearsal process.

6. What advice would you give to an aspiring sound designer?
   You don’t need to be musical, I am not musical but have a strong grasp of the physics of sound which helps me achieve the sound that I want. I find it more important and influential for my work, coming from a technician background.

7. How important is the research and development stage for designing sound on DTTS?
   For the music and newsreel content of this show it was very important. The content needed to be date accurate and poignant to complement the narrative of the show.

8. What excites you the most about sound designing in general?
   Seeing the sound and action on stage come together is the most rewarding thing for me. Putting it into context does a lot for sound and its surprising how much it can be manipulated and still be interpreted correctly.
INTERVIEW WITH
MOVEMENT DIRECTOR
JON BENEEY

1. What is your role as a movement director on DTTS?

To try and give the performers a vocabulary of the particular era that Dancing through the Shadows is set in. I focus on Lindy hop, jive and slow dancing. In that era, it was a completely different way of socially interacting. I try to give the performers as much information about the era, styles of movement and social interaction and teach one particular routine that we can then abstract and use the same themes throughout the production.

2. How would you describe your work style?

It depends on the commission and work I get asked to do. I am contemporary dance trained so I work in that area, the work I perform and the choreographers I work for are more physical theatre based. I use a lot of text, there is a lot of acting in the work I do. I might play characters in the work I do. My particular style is based on the work I've done with other companies that I worked with and see. For this particular production the movement is confined to a particular era, so that places limits on the work we create. However, when we start to abstract sections of the routines that will give me a lot more freedom to implement more contemporary movement. For example, we will play with routine sections to see what happens when we speed sections up and slow sections down.

3. Who or what influences your creativity?

If I am creating a piece for myself, if I have got an idea, then generally it is people, conversations and things that are going on in the world that will influence my creativity. I spend a lot of time travelling on trains so I have a lot of time to think. I am a massively into music and I love listening to a wide range. I listen to a lot of world music so that influences a lot of the way I move. I am constantly trying to bring an idea to life. Sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn’t. During a recent project I had an idea to develop with three dancers. I found it difficult to explain my idea to the dancers and they found it difficult to grasp the idea. We took a break from the process and worked on a new section of the project. Coming back to the project at a later date the information had settled in some way, unconsciously, in the dancers mind and in mine. The time away from it had given me time to think about how I could break it down and deliver it clearly to the dancers. If I find myself in a difficult place in terms of the movement, and I do this in my teaching, I say to people and myself, what feels natural. For example, if I have used my right arm to turn and that has put me in a certain position, where do I then turn to get out of that? If I follow my instinct and let my body do what it can naturally, nine times out of ten it creates something interesting or gives me an idea.
4. Do you have a process that you work through when beginning a new project, or does it change depending on the piece?

It depends on the piece. Sometimes you are brought in on a certain commission and you are given boundaries to work within based on a certain theme. Dancing through the Shadows is an example of that, it is about creating scenes that are of the era and then abstracting sections of choreography throughout the play to create a dream sequence or a setting. When I receive a commission, I think about how I will achieve this and what the tasks will be to obtain the ideas and provide the dancers with the skills they need. Working with a variety of choreographers has provided me with a vocabulary of tasks that I have been asked to do in the past. I will add to those and sometimes they give me inspiration. For example, I was on a coach full young people I had been teaching and on the journey they started a game where someone starts a story, fold the paper over and pass it on for someone to add to it. I took that idea and used it in a movement context with a group of professional dancers and created some of the most amazing solos with that. It is about being open, open to different ways of working and finding ones that work.

5. What excites/inspires you creatively in DTTS when developing movement?

What excites me about this particular project is that first and foremost it is set in Hull, my home town. I am excited that it is the first production I have been involved in with Hull Truck Theatre. When I started working with the group I was excited by the fact that they weren’t necessarily dancers. They were a blank canvas. You can work with some dancers and they have this idea of what dance is or should be. The Dancing through the Shadows’ group combines actors and Hull Truck Youth Theatre members. That was very inspiring. The era the production is set in is a challenge because we have to create pieces of movement and dances from the era. However, the music of this era, the kind of artists that were creating the music at the time are incredibly inspiring.

6. How does movement and dance help to tell the story of DTTS?

I create movement and provide ideas for the Director and Assistant Director as part of the collaborative process. The ideas and sections of movement are used in a variety of different ways by the Director until they see how it best fits the piece. The movement will set the era, for example the 1940s dance styles and soldiers marching off to war, and setting, for example a dancehall, for the audience. The movement will also help determine, for example, if a certain character is in a dream state, blurring the lines between reality and imagination. There is strong emphasis on body language with people discovering they did not have to go to work alongside the opposite of being scared and tense due to the bombs exploding around them. I help the performers discover how to portray this through movement in the body. This production will be rich in movement.

7. How important has the research and development stage been for the movement in DTTS?

To have the time with the ensemble movers before the official rehearsal process began was incredibly important. I was able to understand the group’s capabilities and see how able they are and discover what I can get out of the ensemble in such a short space of time. They have made fantastic progress in picking the dance steps up and has made me very excited that we can achieve more. I couldn’t have come in on day one of rehearsals and got the ensemble up to the standard they are at without the research and development stage. It was essential really. Even from a confidence point of view, some of them aren’t dancers, may never have danced before and so developing their confidence to pick up the steps and be confident performing the steps on stage has proved worthwhile.
9. Does the fact that DTTS is set in Hull have any particular impact on you, your work or your personal connection to the piece?

My Nanna lived with my family in Hull and I spent a lot of time with my Nanna sat round the dinner table, she would tell me stories about the war and what it was like. It makes me think about the city we walk around in and that ‘that’ building might not have been there, you are walking around a place that has that history and that character and to our generation we can easily take for granted that it didn’t happen. My Nanna would say that you could go out and leave your front and back door open. If your neighbour needed something they would be able to pop in and tell you later. The unity, people came together to help each other out. I don’t get a sense of that now in society. We wouldn’t dream of it now. Every single door is locked. Some people don’t even know their neighbours names.

8. Is movement directing for a theatre production different to choreographing a dance/movement piece? If so, how?

I believe there is a difference. If you are creating dance that is solely for a dance audience and is based on dance technique itself then you haven’t got to worry so much about the setting of a scene or the place. It could just be a piece of dance because you like the movement and you wish to explore a particular way of moving or use a specific piece of music with movement. Whereas, with this, you have to honour the era and the setting. In both cases there are little sections of movement that can make a big change emotionally. A look can mean something different, a tension in the body can mean something else. On the other hand, when I am just choreographing movement dance you see the physicality of it but you may not see the emotional value of it.
10. In your own work, how imperative has your formal skill training been in the creation of movement?

I couldn’t do any of the work I can do now without the formal training I had. But I was lucky in a way, because I started in a dance and education company. We would create work based around the national curriculum and stories. We created shows based around Roald Dahl poems war poetry. We took a range of poems and tried to capture the mood and the words and create dance pieces around that. So actually that was a skill I learnt before I went and trained in dance. I then did my formal training at the Northern School of Contemporary Dance in Leeds. This gave me a sense of technique, trained my body, changed my body and then I worked with a number of different choreographers. Even now, still, all the influences from the different choreographers I worked with, their different ways of working are imperative. Some have been theatre based and set based it has stood me in good stead for this project. I am constantly learning, I never stop. I’ve worked from early years creating things with toddlers and parents, I’ve been in kid’s shows for under 5s, I’ve worked in prisons with young offenders, I’ve worked with professional companies, I’ve worked with disabled companies, young people with special needs. I’ve worked in hospitals with young people that have had major spinal and heart surgery. With a mix of projects you have to approach them in completely different ways. I have purposefully done that because I have followed projects that have interested me. Rather than chase projects for financial gain. I have always wanted to add to my skills set. One it makes you more employable, but two I just want to do the jobs that are interesting to me. Dancing through the Shadows is another step really, this is an interesting project it is an interesting opportunity and I want to grab it and take it.

11. What advice would you give to aspiring movement directors or choreographers?

I suppose it is about finding out about what is the difference between movement director and choreographer. Movement director is an interesting title, I see the difference being that I am not working with dancers, but I am also trying to work on what the movement says and means to an audience. As a choreographer you do a similar thing but maybe there is a different mind-set. If I have got any advice for potential choreographers or dancers, I’d say see as much as you can, so it is just as important to see the pieces that you don’t enjoy or believe are great pieces of work. That informs you of what you don’t want to do. I’ve learnt more from seeing the stuff I haven’t liked and I have learnt more from working with people where I haven’t liked the way that they teach or the way that they approach work, and that has almost informed me more because I can see that I don’t want to work in that way. Therefore, see as much as you can and do as much as you can, but ultimately keep searching for what excites and inspires you and then you’ll become an artist or a director or a choreographer that you are happy with rather than just doing it because you think it is trendy, or doing it because somebody else is doing it. It is the same with musicians and artists. We are constantly searching for that new way of approaching our work.
FACTS:

In the inevitability of war, the United Kingdom Government made plans to evacuate around 100,000 children, of school age, to safe homes around the country. Friday 1st September 1939 became the evacuation date with around 100 specific trains provided for the cause.

In Hull, children would be evacuated from Hull Paragon station either by bus or by train. They would carry with them their essential belongings, a label with their name and age and a gas mask. On arrival at their new destination they would be met by their new families. Evacuated children were not always allowed to stay in the same homes as their siblings.

Usually the safest places were in the countryside. Children would have to start a new school and begin to make new friends. For some, evacuation became an adventure as they may never have left the city of Hull before. On the other hand some children found it difficult to fit in and enjoy their new lives. The countryside provided new opportunities to play, explore and help work on farmland. Home sickness was prevalent in many especially knowing that their families were under threat back in Hull.

STARTER:

Pre-create a parcel containing items such as a Teddy bear, set of children’s clothing, toothbrush, nightwear, sandwiches and chocolate wrapped in greaseproof paper. Wrap the parcel in brown paper and tie it up with string.

To the group, open the parcel and hold up the contents one by one. Pupils must individually write down a reason why someone might want that item.

In pairs, ask the pupils to discuss their words and what the parcel was used for.

a) As a group read ‘Story 1’ on page 28 of the Education Resources section. In groups of 3/4, discuss how you would feel if your parents received a letter asking if they would agree to have their children evacuated. Produce a word cloud of words describing your feelings knowing your parents were making this decision on your behalf. Think about whether you would want to be evacuated or not.

Produce a diary entry based on your thoughts the night before you leave to be evacuated or alternatively, how you felt that your parents disagreed to have you evacuated.
b)
As a group read ‘Story 2’ on page 28 of the Education Resources section. Ask the pupils to discuss, in groups of 5/6, how David’s family’s lives changed from his father joining the RAF in 1939 and the re-uniting in 1946. What were the long term relationship developments? Think about relationship diversity. For example, the effect evacuation had on sibling relationships or the effect the absence of a father had on David’s mother’s role and identity within the family and society.

Ask the groups to select a specific family relationship to discover. Choose from David, his two brothers and his sister, his father and his mother. Create three freeze frames/still images based on moments in the character’s lives the group feels would have been significant developments in the character’s:

- Relationship
- Identity
- Status in the family and society.

Ask the pupils to include a line, which sums up how the character feels about seeing/experiencing these developments. Once the three still images are created, ask the pupils to find a way to connect all three images. Share them to the group to provide an opportunity for feedback. The groups should think about what the character:

- Saw
- How it made them feel
- What was right or wrong about the moment
- What the character did
- What has happened since the moment
- How, what happened, has led to the creation of the next image.

DEVELOPMENT:
To develop this further, ask the students to add more dialogue and create an improvised scene to portray the relationship in greater detail. Think about the character’s back grounds, how they would have changed due to external factors and events. An example, could be, how David’s siblings saw his role and position in the family as he was not evacuated and they all were.

c)
After reading ‘Story 2’ produce a visual timeline of the changes David’s Mother experienced due to external events and family relationship developments that could have affected her identity and status in the family and society.

Begin with David’s father leaving to join the RAF in 1939 and the family’s re-uniting in 1946
d) As a group read ‘Poem 1’ by David, author of ‘Story 1’ on page 32 of the Education Resources section. Ask the pupils to discuss, in groups of 3/4, possible situations in today’s society in which the children in the family are asked to adapt to the introduction of a new family member. Pupils should think about:

- How they would deal with the situation
- Would they be accepting or not?
- How would it make them feel?
- What happened internally within the family on that day and what was happening externally in the world around them?
- Anything they could identify with
- Discover the five senses. What they could see/hear/smell/touch and taste.

Now, individually, ask the pupils to write their own poem based on someone’s experience for the introduction of a new family member.

e) Ask the pupils to divide into groups of 5/6. Give each group an item or object likely to be found in an evacuation parcel. Possibly the items from the STARTER activity. Ask them to think about the identity of its owner or perhaps its purpose for the owner.

Give the groups several minutes to invent a short story behind the object, then several minutes more to prepare an improvisation of the story or series of freeze frames, using the object as a prop. You might choose to give each group a different object, but often the most rewarding work comes from seeing the variety of stories that can arise from a single stimulus.

Plenary:

Depending on Key stage/age and ability –

a) Write a postcard home from the point of view of an evacuee. Postcard templates available in the resource section of this education pack.

b) Write a letter home from the point of view of an evacuee. Letter templates available in the resource section of this education pack.

c) Make your own evacuation parcel

d) Create a presentation for school assembly based on your interpretation of evacuation in Hull during the Second World War. Use oral history as evidence, (See the resource section for extra first and second hand accounts, the BBC WWII People’s War website, and pupil’s primary research by conducting interviews with people who were evacuated, for example, grandparents or other older relatives/evacuees) Ask pupils to think about:

- Why were people evacuated?
- How did they travel to their destination?
- How did they feel when they arrived?
- What new experiences did they have when they arrived?
- How did they feel about their adoptive families?
- How did it influence their relationship with their own families?
LOST YOUTH

Facts:

People’s loss of youth seems to be prevalent during the World War II era. Young people were not necessarily enjoying a smooth and explorative transition into adulthood. People were experiencing suffering nearly every day, whether that be loss of loved ones, friends, young service men signing up to join the war effort, experiencing the traumas of the Hull Blitz and the effects the war was having on society and the way of living. All of these would affect, in some way, how young people would grow older. Families would lose people they loved, wives were widowed, soldiers could return limbless and mentally traumatised. Their transitions into adulthood distorted.

Many young people experienced having to become young carers for the family. Mothers, often, had to take on a job during the war and this meant the older children in the household became carers for their younger siblings. Their time for play and exploring the transition into adulthood stunted. Their responsibilities included chores, running errands, keeping an eye on the younger siblings, bathing feeding and entertaining.

Young men would often joining the war effort before their time. They would often lie about their age to join friends and family in the ranks, to escape life at home, sometimes to even to show their courage. They, as young human beings, would not be equipped for the trauma and violence they would have experienced. The visceral fear they would encounter in the trenches and on the battlefields could destroy them mentally. Young men would return home shattered psychologically and physically, implying a distorted transition into adulthood.

In today’s society there are numerous young people experienced lost youth due to their position as a young carer for their family who could be sick, disabled or has mental health problems, or is misusing drugs or alcohol. Their responsibilities can include cooking, cleaning, shopping, providing nursing and personal care and giving emotional support. These responsibilities often meant that these young carers can often miss out on opportunities other children have to play and learn. In turn this can lead to isolation from peers and education and they can often experience little relief from the pressures at home.

STARTER:

As a whole group, explore the images on page 38-39 of the education resources section. They represent young carers and children taking on the responsibilities of young carers in the world today.

Ask the pupils to discuss, in groups of 3/4, how these images make you feel and what the story or theme of the image is. Ask the pupils to think about:

- Why the young carer in the image is missing out on opportunities to play and learn?
- How are they having to grow up at a faster rate than their peers?
- What, in the image, has the most powerful connection with them?
a) 
Read Richard Vergette’s play ‘Dancing Through The Shadow’. Ask the pupils to discuss moment and examples from the play which identify character’s having lost moments of their youth. What moments prove that characters have grown up faster than their peers? This could be from young men lying about their age to sign up for the forces to, the patriarchal role women took on and the roles some young people took on to care for their siblings, especially in single parent families.

b) 
Read the interview with Richard Vergette on page 4 of this education pack. Focus particularly on the question regarding the relevance of ‘Dancing Through The Shadows’ for young people in today’s society. Discuss with the class, their reactions and answers to the same question. Discuss if the class is willing to share any personal experiences of similar ‘carer’ experiences or if they know of modern day examples, such as young carers in Britain or how young people from War torn countries over the world, in Syria for example, are adapting to their lost youth.

c) 
Ask the pupils, in groups of 5/6, to interview someone or research someone’s experience of adapting to lost youth. It could be someone that has had to ‘grow up too soon’ for one reason or another. It could be a child story about a child having to take on certain responsibilities at home. The pupils should find a suitable way, if interviewing, to record the story. Please see the story gathering skills on pages 40-41 in the education resources section

After recording the story, read the story and identify the themes, key images, messages, moments, subtext that affect the pupils the most and that they wish to portray to an audience.

Give the pupils 15/20 minutes to physically (naturalistic or abstract) communicate the theme, key image, message, moment or subtext. A good note to give here, is that ‘less is more’.

Ask the pupils to explore their portrayal through varying levels of tension/focus/energy/impact; level 1 being the lowest and level 10 being the highest. They should find a level that suits their style and theme. This will help create further meaning, taking the story from the page to the aesthetic.

Finally, ask the pupils to put the reading/speaking of the story text and the physical portrayal together.

PLENARY:

Provide the pupils with the opportunity to feedback their work and listen to what their audiences say.

- Did the groups communicate their story effectively?
- What worked well and why?
- How can they improve?

Ask the pupils to spend a further 10 minutes to rework their piece, taking into account their audience’s feedback. Finally show back to the group again. Discuss the effectiveness and what the audience feel and learn watching the pieces.
**DANCING**

**Facts:**

People, in the face of adversity during World War II, were still determined to make the most of what they had and enjoying what they could despite the difficult times.

Dance halls all over the country were filled with people dancing to the sounds of Swing jazz and the big band sounds of Glenn Miller, Benny Goodman and the Andrews Sisters. Dance crazes such as swing, Jive and Lindy Hop were introduced by the American soldiers stationed in Britain. Based on strong rhythms from double bass, drums and brass and woodwinds the music created medium to fast tempo and off the beat dancing around Britain. The dances and music evolved from the Jazz era of the 1920s and 1930s providing an escape from the destruction and traumas of the War around them.

**Starter:**

Ask the pupils to discuss what **styles of dance** are prevalent in today’s society. Can they show the class any of these styles? Discuss where they believe the origins of the modern styles come from.

**a)**

In the play ‘Dancing Through The Shadows’ Tom and Sylvia meet through dancing in the dance halls. For many of the same era, visiting dance halls was one of the only ways to escape the thoughts, worries, anxieties and traumas of the war and blitz in Hull. Dancing brought people together, got them talking and interacting socially with other people.

Ask the pupils to discuss in small groups how they think people meet and **interact socially** with other people in today’s society?

**b)**

Using the story gathering skills on pages 40-41 from the education resources section of this pack ask pupils to individually **research** how their grandparents (or other older relatives) met. Compare this to how your parents met and finally compare this to the discussions from the previous task. What do you notice is different? What do you notice is the same? What appeals to you? Do you think in a modern society that meeting people is more diverse and more socially interactive?

**PLENARY:**

Watch BBC Bitesize’s video ‘Dance Party in the 1940s’ Ask the group to discuss and distinguish moves and styles from today’s dance styles that have been influenced by the styles in the video.

Video link: [http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/clips/zptw2hv](http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/clips/zptw2hv)
DESIGN

STARTER:
As a whole group read the interview with Designer dawn Allsop about her design process. Think about a story you know well and how you would design the costume for the characters and the set for the setting of the play.

a) Read/ see the play ‘Dancing through the Shadows’. Ask the pupils to write their own synopsis of the play.

b) Ask the pupils, in groups of 4/5 to choose a character from ‘Dancing through the Shadows’ they wish to carry out a character study for.
Ask the groups to write down everything they know about the character they have chosen. They will receive information from character’s words, actions, reactions, feelings, characteristics, traits and qualities. Who are they and what do they do? Think about the character’s role within the play? How do they support the story? Ask pupils to try to explain how the character changes and grows as the story unfolds.

c) Using the character study carried out by the group, produce a costume design for a character in ‘Dancing through the Shadows. The groups can follow these process steps:

1. Read the script and research the World War II era.
   - This is essential for understanding the world the play is set in, the materials the designers would use and accurately representing the historical era through the clothing.
2. Carry out the character study.
   - This includes how they change throughout the play and what costume changes they would need. For example, if Tom changes from civilian outfit to a soldier’s uniform.
3. Read the script thoroughly and determine when costume changes need to happen.
   - Costume design is highly dependent on what the script allow. For example, there might need to be a costume change for Tom to appear in his Soldier’s uniform, however the script might not allow for a full costume change because of timings.
4. Produce a mood board of ideas for the designs.
   - These are the ideas that have inspired the designer. These would be shown to the Director so they can match the designer’s ideas with their own ideas.
5. Produce Design Drawings of the costumes for each/the chosen character.
6. The final stage would be to source the costumes. They can be hired, bought, made and then adapted to suit the Designs.
Using the character study carried out by the group, produce an alternative set design for ‘Dancing through the Shadows’. The groups can follow these process steps:

1. Read the script and Research the World War II era.
2. Read the script thoroughly and determine the different setting the designer needs to achieve in the storyline.
   a. Think about whether the design will be abstract or naturalistic. Will the design incorporate all different locations and settings or will the design be able to represent all of the different locations? For example, will you create the Hessle road home and the Hessle home and the Beach at Dunkirk all in separate locations or discover a way to represent them all together?
3. Produce a mood board of ideas for the designs. These are the ideas that have inspired the designer.
4. Produce Design Drawings of the set.
   a. Label with possible materials to use, colours and how things might be used in the storytelling of the piece.
5. Produce a ‘White Card’ model. This should be a 1:25 scale, therefore for every 1 cm measured on the model it is equal to 25cm on the stage.
   a. An example of Hull Truck Theatre’s White card model box can be found on page 8. The White Card model enables the whole design team to work the script scene by scene to see if the design can work for the demands of the script and the director’s ideas. It can easily be edited there and then either by introducing new entrances or by drawing/writing on new edits and choices of material.
6. Once edits have been made, create the ‘Final’ model box. This should be at a 1:25 scale, therefore for every 1 cm measured on the model it is equal to 25cm on the stage.
   a. An example of Hull Truck Theatre’s ‘Final’ model box can be found on page 9. The final model box enables the cast and crew to envisage how the set will look on the stage. It will show the colours and textures and represent the materials used on set. It will incorporate the set pieces, such as chairs and table, doors, essential props and to scale figures of people.

PLENARY:
Ask the groups to present their ideas to the whole class. They should explain the reasoning behind the decisions they made through the design process.
RESEARCH

Facts:

The first bombs were dropped on Hull in the early hours of the morning on 20th June 1940. With 70 more raids and 815 alerts to come, the courage and morale of the citizens of Hull would be tested.

Hull Experienced the worst bomb damage of anywhere outside London during World War II. Hull was referred to in the press as a ‘north east coastal town’ as a security precaution. Due to this, the rest of the United Kingdom were unaware that ninety-five percent of Hull was destroyed or damaged by blitz bombs.

The word ‘blitz’ was the name given to the mass bombing of cities during World War II. It derives from the German word ‘blitzkrieg’ which translates as ‘lightning war’. Hull was in the flight path of German Bombers on their way to Liverpool and is home to numerous important shipping ports and industry areas. German bombers on the way back from Liverpool would release any unused bombs onto Hull on their way back across to Germany.

It was important that the Germans did not find out about the damage they were causing to Hull. The government kept the bombing of Hull a secret to deter the Germans truly understanding the effect they were having on the east coast of England. It was also in an effort to keep up the morale of British Citizens as a low morale would lead to a suffering war effort.

In 1945, regarding the rebuilding of the city of Hull, Mayor Leo Schultz of Hull was quoted to say:

‘When the fury of an enemy’s assault was loosed upon our City and we saw our heritage shattered under the weight of air attack, the spirit of the people of Kingston upon Hull was unbroken. The heroism of the ordinary citizen under incessant bombardment earned the admiration of all who were privileged to pierce the anonymity of this “North-East Coast Town.”

‘We resolved that the only fitting tribute that could be paid to the devotion and courage of a brave people was to rebuild our City in a manner worthy of its citizens. Out of the ashes would arise Phoenix-like a fairer and nobler City than we had ever known’.

Hull has dramatically changed since the mass destruction caused by the Blitz. The city’s history and its citizens provide a detailed historical perspective by enabling a connection between local, regional, national and international history. The city and its citizens create an understanding of the challenges of their time and how they rallied together to overcome the complexities of their lives at the time.

STARTER:

Ask the pupils to discuss:

How local history can help us to understand what was happening nationally?

Encourage the pupils to think about how World War II has shaped the city of Hull, its surrounding areas and the people.
a)

As a whole group, small groups or individually, visit a local war memorial. For example, the memorial in Hull Paragon Station, Northern Cemetery and or specific street memorials like Sharp Street Memorial on Newland Avenue.

On a sheet of A4 paper have the students write down key words that express how being at the memorial, reading the names and thinking about the people the names belong to, makes the students feel.

b)

Ask the pupils to choose a name from the memorial to research. Either individually or in small groups, ask the pupils to research who they were, what they did (occupation/role during World War II), where they were from and any other information they can gather.

The Hull History Centre hold around 75,000 Warden Personnel cards which can be accessed via their online catalogue www.hullhistorycentre.org.uk. The Hull History centre also hold a catalogue of those who perished in Hull and the East Riding during the conflict in the centre’s ‘Searchroom’ located in the Hull History Centre.

c)

Ask the pupils to write a letter to the person they have chosen to research. Ask them to think that if they could write anything to that person, what would they say? Would the pupils ask them about their experiences or would the pupils share their own? This encourages the pupils to think about how World War II has shaped today’s world, in particular Hull and the surrounding areas and their attitudes to conflict.

The letter can be approached from numerous directions. For example, pupils can think about:

- Who was thinking of that soldier as they were on the frontline?
- What can they say to keep that person safe?
- Do they want to discover more about their experiences?
- Are they related, a stranger, a father, a mother, a wife, their sweetheart?
- Are they writing to inform them of some news about their local area?
- Are they writing to make them smile?

PLENARY:

Discuss with the group:

- How important it is to remember the past?
- Does it help us understand the complexity of people’s lives?
- How societies are diverse?
- Does it help us to understand the challenges of their time and compare it to ours?
**EXTRA ACTIVITIES**

a) Organise a trip to the Hull History Centre. There is an abundant source of historical information and accounts on World War Two, especially for a local scale history project. You can find the information necessary on their website at: [www.hullhistorycentre.org.uk](http://www.hullhistorycentre.org.uk)

Or on page 42 of the resources section of this education pack.

b) Read the interview with writer Richard Vergette, focus on the question regarding the **essence of a good script**. In conversation we do not always say exactly what we mean or what we really want to say. There is often a subtext to conversations with other people. In Dancing through the Shadows characters often carry out conversations where the lines say one thing but there is an underlying subtext to the conversation.

Ask the students to read Part 1, Scene 10 between Sylvia and Grace on page 44 of the resources section.

Ask the pupils, in groups of 4/5, to discuss what is *being said* between the characters from the facts in the given text.

1. Next, ask the pupils to discuss what they *think* is actually really trying to be said between the characters.

From each group select two performers. Ask the performers to place the words ‘I want...’ before each of their lines, and continue to express what their character’s wants are before saying each scripted line.

For example:

On page 28 of ‘Dancing Through The Shadows’ script (below) Tom arrives at his family home to discuss, with his parents, signing up to join the War effort. The character’s ‘wants’, however, give the scene more depth helping the actors discover the subtext in the scene. The outbreak of war has been broadcast that morning.

Grace begins with her ‘wants’ before her line:

> **GRACE** – I want to *evidence* the fact that I am suffering too due to the war breaking out.

**GRACE** – Thomas there you are! I’m putting the silver away. I think it best.

**TOM** – I want to *tell you*, as quickly as possible, that I am joining up.

**TOM** – Where’s Dad?

**GRACE** – I want you to know we have had an argument.

**GRACE** – He went out to check the oil in the car.

**TOM** – I want to get onto what I have to *tell you*. Never mind the family relations.

**TOM** – Oh I see.

**GRACE** – I want you to know how important the argument was.

**GRACE** – 40 minutes ago.
b) Continued:

The work on the subtext lets the performer know how to play the line and the history in the background of what the character has just gone through. It helps to add depth to the scene.

Look at the scenes between Grace and Sylvia (provided in the resources section of this education pack pages 44-60). Follow the above steps and discuss the ‘wants’ of the characters. Perform the scene before and after the groups have worked on the scenes. Notice how the scene being played out differs from the initial performance. Does the text have more meaning? Do the actors feel more confident in portraying the meaning of each line?

You can follow each scene between Grace and Sylvia and explore how their relationship changes. These scenes can be found on pages 44-47, 52, 64-66, 77-78, 107-110, 122-123 and 127-130 of the script. (Provided in the resource section of this education pack pages 44-60).

c)

Read the interview with writer Richard Vergette. Focus on the question regarding the essence of a good script. Note the writer talks about the writing capturing the irregular speech patterns of conversation. He informs that we often speak in broken sentences.

Ask the pupils to observe a conversation between their friends or members of the public on a bus, train, in the park, in the town centre. They should try to write down key phrases and sentences they like or the essence of the conversation.

Next, ask the pupils to write up a page or more of the conversation as they heard it. Focus on the irregular speech patterns and the broken sentences. Notice that some people don’t always finish their sentences off or get cut off before they can. Find ways to show this on the page. Often script writers use a ‘/’ to show that the next speaker starts to speak during the previous speaker’s line.

Provide the students with a feedback session. Each script writer should have their scripts read by other members of the group. This enables the script writer to hear their work properly. It is important for the group to feedback and give constructive criticism, this aids the writers to develop their work.

d)

Provide the pupils with comprehension questions based on the local stories in the resource section of this education pack. Stories 1-8.
**Evacuation by Bernard**

During 1940 I was at Wawne St. School when our parents were asked if they would agree to their children being evacuated, my Mum said yes. When the day arrived we were loaded onto single decker buses with our suitcase, gasmask and a label with our name on it pinned to our jacket. I can’t remember any on the bus crying, but Mum was wiping her eyes, it was all boys on the bus and it was a big adventure and we had no idea of where we were going. The bus headed up Hessle Rd. and out into the countryside, we passed very close to an airfield which the driver told us was Brough and I told the boys my dad worked there. The airfield was very busy with lots Tiger Moth training aircraft taking off and landing, training RAF pilots, everybody was quite excited with what we had seen.

Eventually we passed through Goole and headed out into the countryside, we stopped and dropped off groups of boys at several villages, eventually about 8 of use were left and we ended up at a village called Whitgift which was pronounced by the locals “Wig-If”. I was billeted with a farm-worker, his wife and small son. To me they seemed very stern and different to my Mum Dad and brother and I ended up not liking them, the food and the village.

The worst meal was Sunday breakfast, Boiled Sausages (Ugh) which I was unable to eat so I went hungry. I had to walk to school in all weathers about 4 miles round trip to a village called Reedness, at home school was just round the corner. The main problem was when I worked out were Wig-If was and the barrage balloons I could see in the distance were at “Hull” home-sickness set-in big time. One night I looked at the Moon and thought I bet my Mum could be looking at it now, that was it I wrote her and asked to be sent back, I arrived home Christmas 1940.

**Family Changes by David**

March 17th 1941 saw one of the heaviest bombing raids of the war on Hull. Among other things the German Luftwaffe made a determined effort to disrupt the railway links running out of Paragon Station. One stick of bombs was a very near miss and hit Londesborough Street that ran parallel to the railway lines. Down the length of the street at intervals of 100 yards or so blocks of houses were hit and destroyed. A wood yard was also hit, hurling massive planks of wood into the surrounding area, damaging countless properties.

West Parade ran off Londesborough Street and in number 71 a mother with a two-day-old baby alongside lay in bed listening to the terrifying noise of the falling bombs and the crashing timbers. As the ground shook and the noises got louder and closer she calmly held a pillow near the face of the baby, determined to save it from suffering she was prepared to smother the child if the house was hit.

I was that baby and living evidence that number 71 escaped the carnage. There was only the two of us in the house. My father was on active service with the RAF and my 3 siblings had been evacuated. The eldest Peter, aged10, was in York and Margery (7) and Ken (6) were on a farm near Eastrington. Split into four separate units the family didn’t come together until 1946. The individual developments that were experienced during the war years were a major obstacle to unity when the family did eventually come together under one roof. I was raised as an only child in a one parent family whereas my siblings had their formative years in a more traditional set up. Quite simply I was socialised to march to the tune of a different drum.

I was close to my mother and she subsequently confided in me that her relationship with my father changed for the worse in the war years. Apparently when he was demobbed he expected to find the same situation that had existed before the outbreak of the war. His failure to appreciate that my mother had ‘taken charge’ during his absence and her reluctance to give up her new found independence caused a rift that was never properly healed.

The young family that had been a very close knit unit prior to 1939 was torn apart due to the new role forced on my mother, the evacuation experiences of my brothers and sister and the war service of my father. But that is another story the effects of which are with me still.
During this period – circa 1940/41 the Binnington family (Mum, Dad and me) resided at No 18 Escort Street, Newbridge Road, and our house being immediately opposite my junior school. (Later bombed as was our house, along with many others.)

I was informed many years later that my Dad, after call-up for the Army, was for some weeks training in Scarborough – “Running Up and Down Oliver’s Mount with Full back pack.” he recalled. He was, at the end of this training period, issued with a 48-hour pass and could therefore come home at the weekend.

He had brought from Scarborough for me (an only child at that time) a little girl’s handbag in brown leather. (No plastic in those days remember.) I was thoroughly delighted with this gift and when I opened this beautiful little handbag I discovered in one of its inside pockets a small round pink tortoiseshell mirror – just the right size for a little girl. I carried the handbag around the house and would not be parted from it.

At some point after tea, Dad (an avid film and theatre-goer) suggested that we ought to go to the “Pictures” that night, - something Mum and I never did on our own. (Well, let’s face it, most nights were spent in the “shelters” as we called them. I decided I would take along my newly acquired little handbag – complete with mirror of course. I cannot remember the name of the cinema but seemed to recall it was situated at the beginning of Holderness Road. I remember entering this big dark room and seeing two giant heads talking to one another on this big screen, and we seemed to be walking downhill?? Dad informed me, many years later, that during the main film a message came onto the screen which read something like:

“The Management have to inform you that at this time an air raid is in operation. Patrons may leave this Cinema if they wish to do so”

My parents decided to leave and make our way home. As we came into the cinema’s foyer a Commissionaire spoke to my dad saying “I wouldn’t take that little girl out there at the moment sir, there is a very bad raid on at the moment. I recall loud bangs and other very loud noises which I could not identify, coming from outside.

Eventually, my dad recalls, there was a “lull” in the raid and the three of us ventured out onto Holderness Road, which on a “normal” night at that time would, of course, be pitch-black. No street lights, or indeed any other lights were allowed during the war. Not this night! Holderness Road was lit up like a large movie set. Huge searchlights were in operation searching for the many German bombers in the sky that night. There was the loud sounds of anti-aircraft guns. It was just a cacophony of surround-sound. We could not walk on the pavement because as bombs fell on the surrounding area presumably the ensuing blast had blown windows out and all the pavements, and some of the road, were covered in broken glass from the shops, large and small, which lined both sides of the road. Looking back, should there have been any “looters” around at that time they could have secured many a valuable item.

I recall our little family running as fast as we could down Holderness Road (no public transport during an air raid of course.) Dad was holding one hand and Mum held my other one. When the bombing became worse and the noise even louder Dad would head us down one of the many small streets leading off the main road, where bomb shelters had been built. Our journey consisted of running down the main road and then quickly making a detour down the nearest street when things were getting really loud and presumably even more dangerous. I do recall in one shelter we entered some of the elderly people were on their knees, praying, and that seemed very strange to me. Something that hitherto I had only seen in Church.

Eventually the Binnington family arrived home, but somewhere during that terrible raid, I had lost my little handbag, probably in one of the shelters in which we had called. I mourned that loss for quite a while. It would have been impossible to trace this little article, because as my dad informed me many years later when I was able to understand – many of those people in those air-raid shelters were killed that night. In hindsight I can see how lucky we were to emerge from that experience.

People have asked me since if I was frightened. The answer is “no”. At that tender age I did not understand what it was all about, and I had my Mum and Dad with me – the most important people in the world to me. Everything would be alright if they were there...

My Dad served in the Royal Engineers throughout the War and sailed for Northern France 2 days after D-Day – when lots was still going on. His boat landed at Arromanches in Normandy and he was to go through France and Germany throughout the rest of the War.

He had much compassion for the ordinary German people as they did their best to build shelters from the bricks and rubble that remained and never forgot the sight of Berlin, raised to the ground and no buildings standing as far as the eye could see.
**Story 4**

**Bomb on St. Paul’s Street by Anne**

I’m 82 now and was a boy in the war and we heard air raids going on all the time. It was a way of life. We heard bombs thudding, gunfire going on afterwards and we were in and out of the shelters all the time. We used to collect shrapnel from the bombs. The metal was twisted from the heat. If there were any bombed derelict houses we used to get the penny out of the gas meters.

One night, the sirens went and we all rushed to the air raid shelter as usual. There was me, my mother, brother and sister. My dad didn’t come. He stayed in the house. He wouldn’t come in the shelter. Suddenly we heard the terrible whistling sound of a bomb. It was a direct hit on our house. The air raid shelter lifted up and the roof started falling in. We all ran to the door but we were trapped. The rubble from our house covered the end of the shelter. I heard somebody shout “Come on” and me and my brother were pushed up through the shelter roof as we moved bricks out of the way.

It was pitch black outside and me and my brother wandered around in the dark. We were dazed. We tried not to think of what had happened to our family. We hid in a doorway and saw an incendiary device on the roof opposite. It sparked. We saw one in the middle of the road too. That sparked too. The warden came and put sandbags on them both to put them out. The sandbags were stored round each lamppost down each street.

We carried on wandering round in the dark and then someone came and took us to King’s Hall on Beverley Road. We stayed there the night with other survivors. We found out the next day that dad had been dug out of the rubble of our house with hardly a scratch and that my mam and sister were safe and well.

For the next week or so we stayed with relatives who didn’t really want us. Me my brother and my sister slept in the cupboard under the stairs under old grubby blankets. We caught lice from those blankets and nits. We were crawling with them.

Not long after that we all went off to live with my granny in Scunthorpe. We caught the Humber Ferry and sailed to Lincolnshire. Once there, Granny picked all the nits from our heads one by one.

We had a lovely life during the war in Lincolnshire after that. We went to school regularly which made a change as our school in Hull had been bombed. My granny’s house was on Hessingham Road and we had a lovely time playing in the fields nearby.

**Story 5**

**My second brush with the Luftwaffe by Bernard**

One night the all-clear had sounded and we left the shelter and went back to bed. My brother and I had hardly laid down when we heard the sound of an aircraft. We both got out of our beds and stood on a table looking through the back window along the rooftop of West Parade. It was a clear moonlight night, and we both saw it flying straight towards us at rooftop height from the direction of Thomas Stratten School. We both realised it was a lone raider and he was “Strafing” the roof tops of West Parade before going home, we saw the red glow from his guns. We both dived back to the beds and he was still firing as he roared over us.

That was a night I have never forgotten.

**Story 6**

**The aftermath of 2 nights of bombing by Bernard**

On the morning of the 9th of May 1941 my Mum told me we were going to have a look at Walker St. and our old home in Porter St. as they had been very badly bombed during the 2 previous nights. My uncle lived down Walker St. his house was damaged but he was Ok. When we arrived it was a scene of wreaked buildings, workmen were clearing the footpaths and the road, and every now and then there where piles of shrapnel most of it was from our Ack-Ack, I wanted to get my hands on some of it because there was some prize swop pieces, mum wouldn’t stop so I lost my chance.

Porter St. was in a similar condition and I think our old house was damaged. Then we made our way to what remained of a little shop which was closed for duration and Mum was looking after it for the owner had been conscripted into war work in Rotherham, Mum and I made our way through the rubble, then I realised why we were here, we were “looting”, Mum found some undamaged tinned goods, but we got away with it.
My Grandfather by Chris

My grandfather was a huge powerful man. He was a blacksmith at the Ellerman Wilson shipping Line and he made the ships anchor chains. He worked throughout the war, even though he was passed retirement age. And yet this “great bull of a man” as my mother described him was extremely frightened during the air raids. And with good reason. After all he had seen the Zeppelin raids on Hull in the Great War. He had seen the bomb damage in Porter Street and had seen the Zeppelins hovering over a helpless city protected only by replica wooden rifles. He had heard how people had watched the bomb doors open and had run helplessly away. And he knew that this war would be much worse.

He had watched the rise of Nazism with growing concern. The German military machine had developed new large bomber aircraft and no number of barrage balloons and anti-aircraft fire would stop them. He also knew from experience that the bombers would target the docks and the railways and that like last time they would miss and hit nearby houses killing and maiming innocent civilians. No one would be safe. He and his wife and youngest daughter lived in Malm Street near St Andrew’s Dock and the main railway line out of Hull. One of the most vulnerable areas. He felt that it was his duty as the head of the household to protect them. The authorities advised you to have one bucket of water handy to put out any incendiary bombs quickly. But their house was a large Victorian one so he would need a lot more water and a stirrup pump on the landing, Just in case. Where was the safest place in the house to shelter during an air raid? This was the toughest problem, not the cupboard under the stairs or even more ridiculously under the dining room table. Then it struck him- of course the covered passageway between the two houses would be ideal. He had the roof of the passageway re-enforced and two heavy wooden doors made to fit exactly at each end. He knew reliable workers who could do that. They would all shelter there during the air raids. He had done everything he possibly could to protect his family. Not that they were grateful or even understood.

He remembered one night his daughter and her fiancée had been to the cinema and just as they came to the house the sirens started. He insisted that Ross should stay with them. It wasn’t safe for a young man to be wandering the streets as bombs were falling. That night the raid went on and on. He regularly checked the doors to see if they had become dislodged with the explosions and watched the ceiling for any fractures. The young couple looked unaware of their danger – talking about furniture they were going to buy for the house they would rent after their wedding for goodness sake. Finally the all clear signal went and Ross could go home. As my grandfather opened the front door he saw a strange very bright light in the sky shining ominously over Hull. He had not seen a light that bright in the dawn sky. It was a new weapon that Hitler had acquired. A new weapon and he was trying it out on Hull. They would be completely helpless again. And the authorities either didn’t know or didn’t tell them. The government kept lots of things secret. “It’s just the morning star” said the young man peering over his shoulder. What a nonsensical idea. He stepped back to slam the door knocking the slight younger man flying. Ross fell on to the rug and shot down the hall, looking very surprised. After Gladys had checked her fiancée was unharmed the family began to laugh helplessly. Why did they find it funny? He had done everything to look after them. Had spent hours devising ways for their safe keeping. Had watched over them throughout that night and now they were laughing. He erupted into justifiable anger.

After his youngest daughter married and went to live in her own house he decided the best way to make sure he and his wife were really safe was to sleep at his eldest daughter’s house in Skidby. And throughout the war each night after work my grandparents went to Skidby to sleep.
Tommy Rand’s Granddad by David

During the war years (and after) Tommy Rand was my best friend. I envied Tommy not only because he could spit all the way across the street but also because he had a granddad that could dance. Let me explain. Tommy Rand’s granddad, who had a shock of white hair and a huge white walrus moustache, was a street entertainer. His speciality was playing the bones or the spoons. Perhaps once a week Tommy’s granddad would appear at the top of the street pushing his friend in a wheelchair and the cry would go up ‘They’re here’.

As people came out of their houses and gathered in the street the man in the wheelchair played a mouth organ while Tommy Rand’s granddad wandered about talking to people and almost absent minded playing the bones. When a crowd had gathered the man in the wheelchair, who also played the squeezebox, struck up a reel or a jig and Tommy Rand’s granddad would dance.

Both men were veterans of the First World War and carried injuries that prevented them from working. In spite of this Tommy Rand’s granddad was a light and graceful dancer and when someone in the crowd handed him a pair of spoons he would play them up and down his body and behind his back while continuing his dance. Sometimes I helped my friend Tommy with passing the hat around to collect pennies and half-pennies and the occasional threepenny bit.

Although the activities of Tommy Rand’s granddad and his friend was borne out of economic necessity in those pre Welfare state days they provided much needed colour and a welcome diversion from the dreariness of war.

At some point I realised that Tommy Rand’s granddad and his companion hadn’t been around for some time. I never did find out what had happened to him. Possibly he ended up in the workhouse but then again during the war people did disappear never to be heard of again.

Return of the Brylcreem Boy – David’s Poem

I do not know if it happened at all.
I remember being told it happened.
That’s all.

When the stranger came
I was three years old or perhaps four,
My brothers and sister evacuated
And my father at war.

The stranger knew my mother well.
What I can remember is the colour blue,
The rough feel of his clothes,
The smell of cigarettes.

They tell me he stayed for some days
And tried to befriend me in several ways,
Calling me ‘son’ and touching my head
But he didn’t belong in my woman’s world.

I remember him in the armchair
His things in a big blue bag
Tied with string at the top.
My mother was crying.

‘Hey you.’ I called.
My first words to him.
‘Yes, son.’ A warm friendly tone
From a warm friendly face.

Very proudly I told him
‘My dad’s in the Air Force.’
July 1940

Dear Mother,

I’ve arrived at my new home out in the country. I am now living in ................. I am living with a host family, they are like my foster family. I have a Mother, Father and a new brother and sister. Let me explain how I came to live with them.

After reaching the train station I ................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................. At the local school/village hall all the evacuees had to ................. then the host families arrived. I was chosen by my new family. When I was waiting to be chosen I felt ................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................. some children didn’t get chosen, they must have felt................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................. When we got to our new house I was shown around. You won’t believe it Mother, it’s got.................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................

I have started at the local school and I have made some friends. After school I ................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................. It’s very different in the country compared to the city because.................. .................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................

I hope everything is alright at home, and nobody we know has been bombed. Can’t wait for your visit.

Lots of love
### Journey
What was the journey like?

### Family
Who are the family you are staying with? What are they like? Are your brothers and/or sisters with you?

### Where
Where are you living? Is it different to what you are used to? How?
School  What is your school like? Do you like your new teacher?

Food  Are the meal times different? Is the food different?

Emotions  How are you feeling? Are you coping with the changes? Do you miss anyone? Who?
Education Activity – Lost Youth
Starter Resource
Education Activity – Lost Youth
Starter Resource

Over 175,000 children play doctors and nurses for real.

By donating a penny every hour you work this month, you can help support disabled children.
Story Gathering skills

Your task is to get the stories and memories of people and turn this into a drama. The way you conduct interviews - and the skills you use when doing it - will help the person to remember and tell you some interesting stories and memories.

i) **Be friendly, curious and interested** - show that by your body language - show the person you are looking and listening to them - eye contact and attention. Make them feel welcome and at ease.

ii) **Who is talking most? It should be the story-giver not the interviewer.** Ask question then listen. Don’t interrupt. Ask another question when they have finished the bit they are talking about - or if they ‘dry up’. If you want more explanation about what they are telling you - wait for a pause to ask them. (see ‘storing up questions’ below)

iii) **Ask more ‘open’ than ‘closed’ questions.**
A ‘closed’ question can be answered by just ‘yes’ or ‘no’.
Example - ‘Did you like school?’
An ‘open’ question prompts them to tell you more than simply ‘yes’ or ‘no’. Example - ‘What did you like or dislike about school?’

iv) **Ask questions that help to prompt the person’s memory.**
If you ask a question like ‘When did you start at school?’ the person will tell you the year or month they started. But it is good to follow this up with a more ‘open’ question eg - ‘what do you remember about your first day or week at school?’ This way you get stories and not just facts.

v) **Be an ‘Active Listener’** -
This means you are concentrating on what they are telling you - you are thinking about it as they tell you, and you are trying to picture it in your mind.

vi) **Storing up Questions**
Often when somebody is telling you something – you may not understand or get the full picture the first time you hear it. Don’t interrupt their storytelling flow - instead store up the question you want to ask and wait for a moment to ask it. If you are being a good ‘active’ listener you will be storing up lots of questions to ask.

vii) **Get the whole picture and the whole story**
When people tell you a story they often miss bits out. It could be the beginning of a story – things in the middle – or what happened next. Store up your questions to get more of the story.

viii) **Facts, Opinions, Descriptions or Stories?**
Facts and opinions are important but if we are going to turn this into a play we need more - we need their descriptions of places, people and things - and most importantly we need their stories. Listen to what they are telling you and make a mental check that you are getting whole stories rather than just facts or opinions. ‘Open’ questions are better at prompting stories than ‘closed’ questions.

*Continued over the page.*
Prepare questions before the interview

Preparing questions makes you think about the life and experiences of the people you are interviewing. It makes you imagine what it might have been like for instance when they were at school. This in turn makes you think about more questions to ask, and it makes you curious to hear what they have to tell you and makes them feel you really want to know. It also helps make sure the interview doesn’t ‘dry up’ – it means you don’t run out of questions to ask – so preparation is important.

BUT- your list of questions is just a starting point. What’s also important is to listen to what people tell you – and respond with more questions on what they’ve just told you- rather than just jumping quickly to your next prepared question. (ie – be an ‘active listener’, ‘store up more questions’, and ‘get the whole story’)

What kind of interviewer am I?

Interviewer isn’t really the right word- you are really a ‘Story Gatherer’ or ‘Story Prompter’. You are not:

A TV or Radio Interviewer (even though you may be recording it). TV and radio interviewers have on the whole to get short, precise answers. You however want fuller stories- which means taking more time to be with and listen to the person you are recording. Have a listen to or watch news programmes- and see just how little time the person has to tell their story. In contrast you have a lot longer time.

A Chat Show Host – chat show hosts are often good at getting people to tell stories but it is all for the benefit of the audience. The interviewer and interviewee are both ‘doing an act’ for the audience. Don’t pretend you are on the radio or on television- just be yourself and be curious about what the person has to tell you.

A Market Researcher- these are the people who stop you in the street to ask you questions. They only want a quick precise answer to each question (eg- ‘what washing powder do you use?’) Once they’ve got that answer they quickly move on to the next question and so on. They are not really interested in your memories or stories- they don’t want the ‘whole story’- whereas you do!

FINAL POINTS

If recording- Check before you start- the recorder is working and has enough batteries or is plugged in, and you have enough tapes.

Tell the person what the material is going to be used for- and make sure you have their permission to use it.
Period Film Research Links.

King & Queen visit to Hull:

Neville Chamberlain returns from Germany with the Munich Agreement:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SetNFqcayeA

Hiroshima mushroom cloud:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LXKLGRB4Hhg

Hull Victory Celebrations:

VE day not Hull:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N1AKeJ16spg

Modern news footage of Hull during the Blitz:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zWm0cMfAR_g

World War 2 Blitz - Kingston Upon Hull Bomb Damage – slide show to music:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xayHnW7vV5M

DVD’s:
http://www.hull-peoples-memorial.co.uk/pages/shop/DVDs.html

Information and Links:
http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-humber-31919031
http://www.arthurlloyd.co.uk/Hull/NationalPictureTheatreHull.htm
Planning your visit – Hull History Centre

A few hints and tips to help you make the most of your visit to the Hull History Centre:

Before your visit:

- Wherever possible, do as much research prior to making a visit and try to identify what information you want to find out. If you are doing your family tree see our [getting started](#) page - and bring your notes with you. See our [events](#) page for details of the Family History HelpDesk we run on Thursday mornings (first and third of the month).
- Check our [online catalogue](#) - although not every item in the collections is described it does provide information about more than 310,000 documents and should help to identify relevant collections and resources.
- Some material is available on microfilm - check our [microfilm holdings](#). To consult these records we recommend that you phone us (01482 317500) prior to your visit to reserve one of our state-of-the-art [microfilm readers](#).
- If you have found original documents on our [online catalogue](#) that you would like to consult contact us (tel 01482 317500 or e-mail hullhistorycentre@hullcc.gov.uk) prior to your visit with the reference number and description for up to 5 items and we will get the items out for you - please let us know by noon the day before your intended visit at the latest.
- To consult items in the searchroom you will need to bring your [CARN ticket](#) if you already have one or bring some ID with your name and address on it (eg driving licence, utility bill etc) and we will issue you with a CARN ticket - see our [CARN ticket FAQ](#) for further details.
- If you are visiting from outside of Hull, there is a list of [nearby hotels](#) that may be useful.
- The History Centre will open at 10am and not 9.30am once a month to allow staff training - please check the dates before your visit.
- Smoking or the use of electronic cigarettes is not permitted within the History Centre.

When you arrive:

- The History Centre has a suite of 12 PCs with free internet access, and MS office software. To use these [ICT facilities](#) you will need a Hull Library ticket - please bring some proof of address if you would like to register for a Library ticket.
- If you intend to use the searchroom you will be asked to use pencils only - see our notes on [using the searchroom](#)
- The searchroom is deliberately cooler than other public areas to protect the archives. You may want to keep a jumper or cardigan with you - we will ask you to leave coats and bags in the lockers provided.

We do offer a reprographic service to provide photocopies or digital copies of documents - but you are welcome to use your own digital camera (a charge of 25p will apply for each photograph taken or a daily fee of £12 - see our [fees and charges](#)).
When the lights of the dance hall fade, they do so into a Smoke House – known as a Fish House on Hessle Road where fish is taken for smoking. SYLVIA’s work requires her to put orange dye on the fish and then smoke them in ovens. She dons the overall of the fish house and starts work.

**GRACE appears in a light outdoor coat looking distressed.**

SYLVIA: Mrs Craven?

GRACE: Do you know what's happened to him?

SYLVIA: Come in a minute.

GRACE: I can't stay - but then again, I've nowhere else I need to be.

SYLVIA: Are you alright?

GRACE: I went to your house. A neighbour said you work here.

SYLVIA: Yes, it's not very pretty I'm afraid.

GRACE: No matter.

SYLVIA: Why have you come?

GRACE: I have to know what's happened to him.

SYLVIA: Tom? I don't know.

GRACE: Please, anything you know, you must tell me.

SYLVIA: Mrs. Craven I've heard nothing from Tom since the first day of the war.

GRACE: The East Yorkshires are being evacuated. I'm terrified he may be at Dunkirk.

SYLVIA: Oh God.

GRACE: You must know something! He mentions you constantly in his letters.

SYLVIA: I'm ever so sorry but I don't.

GRACE: What's on your fingers?
SYLVIA: Dye.

GRACE: Dye?

SYLVIA: For the fish before we smoke them. They don't get orange by themselves.

GRACE: Oh I see. *(She sprays some atomiser around her).* So you've heard nothing from Thomas?

SYLVIA: Nothing at all.

GRACE: But he saw you over Christmas. He would leave the house saying he was going to meet you.

SYLVIA: It must have been someone else.

GRACE: So you're not.....together?

SYLVIA: No. I think I might have upset him. I've thought of coming to see you...

GRACE: I wished that you had.

SYLVIA: I'm not sure if I'd have been welcome.

GRACE: I'm trying to find out if my son is still alive.

SYLVIA: Sorry.

GRACE: The King has asked us all to pray, and why would he do that if he were not afraid? The invasion is surely imminent. I want my boy back.

SYLVIA: Sit down.

*She guides her to some old pallets.*

GRACE: On this!?

SYLVIA: If you get a splinter in your bum I'll dig it out for you, don’t worry.

GRACE: Most kind.

SYLVIA: Can I get you a cup of tea? There's usually some on the go. It’ll taste of fish but it’ll be alright.

GRACE: No thank you.

SYLVIA: There's not really much I can tell you.
GRACE: Any reassurance at all would set my mind at rest.

SYLVIA: I’ve heard nothing but you never know: no news might be good news

GRACE: I shouldn’t have come. You’re not even worried.

SYLVIA: I am. Very.

GRACE: He told us he loved you and that he wanted to marry you – just before he left. He’s a romantic. He can’t help it – like his mother he has a soul filled with poetry. He’s not equipped to deal with the ravages of war. You broke his heart -

SYLVIA: I didn’t mean to. It was all a mess.

GRACE: Oh what does it matter? In a week we could all be dead.

SYLVIA: I wouldn’t worry. It’ll take them longer than that to find Hull now they’ve got rid of all the road signs.

GRACE: It’s all a joke to you, isn’t it? You’re a flighty girl who danced a few dances with a handsome young man.

SYLVIA: Flighty?

GRACE: You couldn’t believe your luck. And he fell in love – or he thought he did. And now he’s gone and he may never be back. Can you imagine how that feels?

SYLVIA: I’m sorry.

GRACE: Is that all you can say? Can you even remember him? I daresay you’ve known a dozen men since.

SYLVIA goes to slap GRACE who recoils in fear. Both realise they have gone too far.

GRACE exits hurriedly.
Music: Glenn Miller’s ‘Skylark’. SYLVIA rushes round to GRACE’s house and bangs on the door. GRACE answers and immediately tries to shut the door.

SYLVIA: I’m sorry! I shouldn’t have got mad with you but you were very rude to me.

GRACE: I may have forgotten myself momentarily. I, too, must apologise.

SYLVIA: Thank you.

GRACE: But I’ve no time to chat. Gilbert stock takes this time of year; it gives me chance to spring clean.

SYLVIA: I’ve no time to chat either - but there’s some things you need to hear. You told me that I didn’t remember him. He has a freckle on his nose and he folds his arms when he’s made up his mind. Left arm over right. He hunches his shoulders when he’s nervous or can’t think of the right words to say. He whistles and he sings, horribly out of tune which doesn’t stop him from trying either. But his dancing - is better than it was. His smile; he doesn’t like opening his mouth when he smiles because he thinks he looks like Charles Laughton in The Hunchback of Notre Dame. I’m worried sick and I’ve been worried sick since he left, not knowing where he is or how he is. And I wish to God I could have him just back here for a single minute to tell him what he wanted to hear. So yes, Mrs Craven I do remember him. And what’s more I’m going to find him.

SYLVIA exits hurriedly. GRACE, deeply moved by SYLVIA’s words but terribly anxious starts to pray.
We are in the Central Library, where GRACE works part time. SYLVIA has received a letter from TOM and has taken it to GRACE.

SYLVIA: I thought you might like to see this.

GRACE: Very thoughtful, although I received one too.

SYLVIA: I've crossed out the rude bits in mine.

GRACE: I beg your pardon?

SYLVIA: I'm joking.

GRACE: It's very kind of you to come and see me during your lunch hour.

SYLVIA: Dinner.

GRACE sprays her atomiser round her.

SYLVIA: Anyway, he says that he's pleased that I'm seeing more of you and Gilbert.....Mr Craven

GRACE: So he does.

SYLVIA: See this bit here... he calls us the two most important women in his life.

GRACE: A kind thought but I wished he'd use the word 'lady'.

Pause

SYLVIA: Do you think he knows how bad things are getting here?

GRACE: I hope not. He has enough to think about.

SYLVIA: There were 6 killed in Gypsyville last night.

GRACE: I'd heard. Gilbert keeps trying to persuade me to leave the city in the evenings.
SYLVIA: There's plenty that do.

GRACE: I've made it clear to him: I'm not sleeping in a field.

Silence

SYLVIA: Funny isn’t it? How people read books.

GRACE: What else should they do with them?

SYLVIA: No...I mean – just coming in here and getting out books and that, as if nothing’s happened.

GRACE: They aren’t. A lot more romantic fiction goes out these days. People lose themselves in stories.

SYLVIA: Gives them some ‘at to do in the shelters too I suppose.

GRACE: Quite.

SYLVIA: I’ve enough on reading Tom’s letters.

GRACE: Yes, a little longer than the ones he sends me.

SYLVIA: He hasn’t known me for as long there’s more to tell me. Over Christmas did he say much to you? How he’s getting on.

GRACE: Nothing really. He told me that his sergeant says that he runs like a fat girl with Piles. I thought that a distinctly unmilitary comment.

SYLVIA: Yeh he tells me all the silly stuff too – jokes lads play on each other but nothing else.

GRACE: What else do you want to know?

SYLVIA: I’m not sure but-

GRACE: His father was at the Western Front for two years. He spoke not a word of it then and hasn’t since. Tom will be the same.

Fade
The others exit as SYLVIA rushes through the streets to GRACE’s house. The scene has a similar effect to when DAVID was riding through the city. This time however, it is the shadows of destruction rather than the attack that we are met with. Eventually SYLVIA arrives at GRACE’s door. She hammers on it and calls-

SYLVIA: Mrs Craven! Mrs Craven!! Grace!

GRACE enters.

SYLVIA: He was stock taking wasn’t he? This time of year, that’s what he does, you said so.

GRACE: You have a good memory.

SYLVIA: What’s happened?

GRACE: He didn’t get to the shelter. They pulled him out an hour ago. They told me he wouldn’t have known a thing.

SYLVIA: No.

GRACE: What if that isn’t true? What if he did know a thing and was frightened and I wasn’t there?

SYLVIA: Don’t.

GRACE: I have to try to remember every day I spent with him. You have to help me do that.

SYLVIA: I didn’t know him that well.

GRACE: You remembered so much about Thomas. All his little ways, all his habits. I have to try to remember everything about Gilbert. Just like you did.

SYLVIA: Let’s get you inside.

GRACE: And you knew all that from so little time. I knew Gilbert for 30 years and I’m not sure I made those same observations. His smile, his shoulders shrugging...I don’t know.
SYLVIA: Don’t do this now, come inside.

GRACE: It’s not safe inside.

SYLVIA: It is now. They’ve sounded the all clear.

GRACE: Sometimes I think he stayed out so long just to avoid me.

SYLVIA: No.

GRACE: ‘I’m just popping out for a minute’ he’d say. He’d take an hour. Always found something to do. A rose needed pruning, a weed pulling, he’d call in for a paper, he just needed to tinker with the car. ‘I just need to stock take’. (Gathering herself) You’ve been very kind but I’m afraid I can’t stand and talk. There’s much to do.

SYLVIA: Have a rest first Grace.

GRACE: There’s no time to rest! Others have suffered loss too; I am only one of many.

SYLVIA: Does Tom know yet?

GRACE: Tom...I need Thomas. He’s the head of the family now.

SYLVIA: I’ll get a message to him. We’ll bring him home.

GRACE: (collapsing) He can’t be dead. He’s my heart!
A church. GRACE is praying. SYLVIA joins her - slightly awkawardly. Eventually GRACE notices her.

GRACE: I see less of you these days Sylvia. I hope you are well.

SYLVIA: I’m alright.

GRACE: You must be relieved there have been no raids recently.

SYLVIA: Just take each days as it comes.

GRACE: You seem out of sorts.

SYLVIA: I don’t go into churches as a rule.

GRACE: I don’t go to Hessle Road as a rule. Strange times.

SYLVIA: You wanted to meet me.

GRACE: Thomas hasn’t heard so much from you either.

SYLVIA: Since David went there’s only me and Dad at home and.....

GRACE: How is he?

SYLVIA: Getting there - slowly.

GRACE takes out her eau de cologne but before she sprays, SYLVIA takes out an identical bottle and sprays it.

SYLVIA: How are you?

GRACE: I’m very well, although -

SYLVIA: Its 3 years isn’t it? Almost to the day.

GRACE: It’s very kind of you to remember.
SYLVIA: Is there anything I can do?

GRACE: No, I don’t think so. Remember him in your prayers – if you do pray.

SYLVIA: I do. Sort of. If praying is the same as hoping.

GRACE: I think it is. Thomas is home next week. I’m sure he’s told you that.

SYLVIA: Often.

GRACE: And he writes once a day – sometimes more?

SYLVIA: Oh yes, sometimes more.

GRACE: Why have you stopped writing to him?

SYLVIA: I don’t know....I just......He pours himself into those letters; it’s like everything he feels rushes out onto the page.

GRACE: He was always a poetic little boy. He could recite the entirety of Tennyson’s ‘Charge of the Light Brigade’ by the time he was 10.

SYLVIA: David could do a few limericks – mostly filthy.

GRACE: Really?

SYLVIA: I don’t know what I’m supposed to say back.

GRACE: Tell him what he wants to hear. Reassure him.

SYLVIA: I’m not sure I can.

GRACE: I see.

SYLVIA: I don’t mean that. Of course I love him. We’re almost engaged.
GRACE: How can you be almost engaged?

SYLVIA: We are engaged.

GRACE: I suppose the Queen is almost royalty. So what do you mean?

SYLVIA: I feel empty. I don’t know what I can give him. I feel like I’ve nothing left.

GRACE: You have. When you see him again, you’ll know that you have.

SYLVIA: I wish I could be sure.

GRACE: They bombed the Yorkshire Post Building. I can’t say that I’m particularly fond of local newspapers: they seem to feature only rotund aldermen and soap adverts. But the point is they soon started printing it again. Nothing’s changed.

SYLVIA: You can’t say ‘nothing’s changed’.

GRACE: We’ve weathered the storm.

SYLVIA: We’re not through it yet.

GRACE: The worst is over and we’re keeping going. It’s the only way.

SYLVIA: I have to get back to work.

GRACE: You should be happy that he needs you.

SYLVIA: I didn’t mean that I don’t need him back -

GRACE: I too have to get on. And, please, if you can, remember Gilbert in your prayers, I would be grateful.
GRACE sits, dazed. SYLVIA is similarly shocked and makes no attempt to respond to GRACE.

GRACE: I don’t know what to do.

MAURICE: What need’s doing?

GRACE: I don’t know what to do with myself. There’s no point to anything. There’s no point. I was a wife and a mother and now I’m not. You still have a purpose.

MAURICE: Yes, I do.

GRACE: You’re well again?

MAURICE: Much better thank you.

GRACE: More yourself?

MAURICE: Yes.

GRACE: Glad to be alive?

MAURICE doesn’t answer

GRACE: Exactly. Your children need you, you have a purpose.

MAURICE: Can I get you -

GRACE: What? Can you get me what? I don’t want to eat anything. Why should I want to do that? Eating keeps me alive. I don’t want to live. In a few months we will have won this war and everyone will celebrate. What am I supposed to do then? Look at this place. Photographs, books, little mementoes of lives snuffed out. Everything, everything is a reminder of what’s gone, what I’ve lost. I wish someone would come and take it all away and me with it.

SYLVIA: ‘He can’t be dead, he’s my heart’.

GRACE: You’re young. You’ll find someone else.

SYLVIA: You think that..?

GRACE: I have no one! There’s nothing left!

SYLVIA: Yes there is!!

GRACE: Shadows only.
MAURICE: That’s not what she means.

SYLVIA: How do you know?

GRACE: Know what?

MAURICE: Tell her.

SYLVIA: *(she touches her stomach)* I’m certain. I know it.

GRACE: You.....? Out of wedlock? The shame! What do you want from me? Approval? Support? If there is one single ounce of comfort, it’s that I will never have anything more to do with you.

SYLVIA: I lost him too.

SYLVIA starts to leave.

MAURICE: Just wait Sylvia.

GRACE: What for?

MAURICE: When her mother died........I looked at Sylvia but all I could see was Kate. My Kate. I didn’t want to know David, had no time for either of them. Did what I had to do and that was that. Shut out my own bairns. You’re stronger than me, I’m sure of that. We’re your family now, like it or not. And when Sylvia has that baby, you’ll bring it up with us. You’ll not turn your back on your grandchild, Grace. I’ll not let you.

There is a moment of uncertainty before GRACE exits with SYLVIA.
GRACE and SYLVIA enter, SYLVIA pushing a pram. They are on the Westwood.

GRACE: I’m still not used to the idea.

SYLVIA: It’s been well over a month, Grace.

GRACE: It still doesn’t seem right, somehow. Poor old Mr Churchill.

SYLVIA: I think a lot of the boys coming back home; you know voting for the first time.

GRACE: Yes, quite. Off with the old.

SYLVIA: Mr Attlee’s not exactly a bairn.

GRACE: No, and he’s always struck me as a very sober gentleman. Not exactly the image of a firebrand socialist. I don’t particularly care for the moustache mind you.

SYLVIA: Tom tried to grow one once.

GRACE: Yes he did!

SYLVIA: He said he wanted to look like Ronald Coleman. I told him he looked more like Fu Manchu.

GRACE: So that’s why he got rid of it. I did wonder.

SYLVIA: (looking into the pram) so who are you going to look like?

GRACE: I fancy he has his father’s eyes.

SYLVIA: Yes, yes he does. A bit dopey but very romantic.

GRACE: Sylvia!

SYLVIA: Maybe not dopey.

GRACE: But certainly romantic. It’s a fine day. Plenty of folk have had the same idea.

SYLVIA: It’s nice to walk in the open air and not be afraid. I’ll not take that for granted again.

GRACE: Your father’s making another model. Did you know?
SYLVIA: Oh he’s always fiddling with something. I wish he’d make some ‘at useful.

GRACE: It’s of Gilbert’s Hillman.

SYLVIA: Really? What would Gilbert have thought?

GRACE: He’d have been as bemused as me. I’m sure it’s kindly meant, but when he told me...I did have to stifle a giggle.

SYLVIA: He’ll spend hours on it.

GRACE: I have decided to stay put for the time being.

SYLVIA: Are you sure? It’s a squeeze but you can stay with us.

GRACE: You are very kind but I could never pretend to be a Hessle Road girl. I mean that nicely, obviously. But, I wouldn’t settle. I do think, however, you might consider staying with me.

SYLVIA: I will from time to time – that would be nice, thank you. But I am a Hessle Road girl! Don’t be all on your own –

GRACE: I shan’t dwell on things. Perhaps from time to time but not much. It’s a comfort to be where they both lived and feel close to them. And if I do start to mope, then Granny shall visit you and her little man.

SYLVIA: He needs you, you know.

GRACE: You’re very kind.

SYLVIA: I do too.

GRACE: There’s no need to say that -

SYLVIA: I think there is. He’ll know everything about where he came from. All about his Dad and his Granddad.

GRACE: Grandpa.

SYLVIA: If you like.
GRACE: I would like him to be christened, Sylvia.

SYLVIA: He will be. In the Fisherman’s Bethel on Hessle Road.

GRACE: Oh.

SYLVIA: Please, Grace. If Tom had lived –

GRACE: He wouldn’t have argued with you. The fishermen’s bethel it shall be.

SYLVIA: Thomas Cedric Craven. You didn’t want Gilbert in there?

GRACE: No, no. Gilbert never liked his name very much.

SYLVIA: Did he have a middle name?

GRACE: Cyril.

SYLVIA: Poor little bugger.

GRACE: Quite. Gilbert would have been more than happy with Thomas Cedric. Cedric was my uncle. A distinguished adventurer and related to royalty, you know.

SYLVIA: Is he the dodgy one who looked like Stan Laurel?

GRACE: There are some things about my husband I don’t miss!


GRACE: So, will he be a fisherman or a tailor?

SYLVIA: You wouldn’t mind him being a fisherman?

GRACE: I’d prefer him to stay on land - but if it’s in his blood -

SYLVIA: There’s no hurry.

GRACE: Sylvia?

SYLVIA: Yes.

GRACE: I’m very glad that.....that Thomas met you and that I still have a family.
SYLVIA: Thank you. We’re very glad too.

GRACE: You’re thinking about him aren’t you?

SYLVIA: I’m always thinking about him.

GRACE: Me too. Both of them.

SYLVIA: But I think about this little bairn more.

GRACE: It’s hard though, to look forward.

SYLVIA: I’m going to walk him over to Willow Grove. You coming?

GRACE nods and presently they walk off, both of them pushing the pram. Possibly they are joined by MAURICE and DAVID.

Fade

End of Play
ENGAGEMENT & LEARNING

YOUTH THEATRE

Hull Truck Youth Theatre is for anyone ages 8 to 21 who wants to have a great time meeting new friends and making and seeing theatre. Groups meet weekly, work on both devised and scripted performances, have access to professional teams and spaces and get discounted tickets to see productions.

Youth Theatre groups meet weekday evenings and on Saturdays.

‘I come to youth theatre to meet new people and make new friends’

‘It’s a welcoming place that’s not school or home where I feel I belong to something’

SCHOOLS

At Hull Truck we believe that culture and creativity should be part of every school so that all children can have the chance to do and be their best. That is why we’re providing opportunities for local schools to build a relationship with us. We invite you to work with us to enhance learning and improve achievement, attainment and aspiration.

Trips to live theatre enhance literary knowledge, tolerance and empathy among students

We have a number opportunities schools can take advantage of:

• A Schools Partnership Scheme: a year-long programme of workshops, theatre tours and discounted tickets to build a long-term relationship with Hull Truck.

• Bespoke workshops to enhance learning across the whole curriculum including, but not exclusively, Drama and English.

• Our prestigious partnership with the Royal Shakespeare Company, to support the teaching and learning of Shakespeare, is available to all schools in Hull from September 2015.

• Create work to perform on our stage as part of the Yorkshire Schools Drama Festival, coming to Hull Truck in June 2015.

INCLUSION AND OUTREACH

We work with Day Centres and special schools to provide creative opportunities for young people and adults with disabilities to participate in the life of the theatre and gain skills in communication, teamwork and individual expression.

Our Outreach work targets people of all ages who have little or no access to creative activities. We work in partnership with a range of organisations to make this happen.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT ANY OF OUR ENGAGEMENT & LEARNING ACTIVITIES, EMAIL ENGAGEMENT@HULLTRUCK.CO.UK