

Geraint Hughes – A War Boy

For the rest of the war I think I was simply a schoolboy, almost unaware of the awfulness of the war. In Lampeter and then for a while in Sennybridge, away from the war zone and so growing up with my friends playing at war, playing at being soldiers. We would creep back from school, back to our home in Sennybridge past the sentries and the road blocks the military had around the new camp that was going up there. And we would creep up the hedges and find ways of getting back home without being seen by the sentries you know as if we were infiltrators, just playing the game.

And then back in Lampeter I and my friends were part of a little army of our own, the Mile End Army about eight of us and we did training, we marched, we had cat whiskers radios keeping in contact with each other, looking for anything to do with the war, scouring the countryside around to see if any shrapnel had fallen because aircraft came over even those areas and often just discarded their bombs. And I do remember on one occasion finding a lot of incendiary bombs that had been dropped and carrying these cases back and having them as real trophies of war. And then the terrible row we had when the Air Raid Warden heard about them. You're not supposed to move anything, they could have blown you up, there's phosphorous in them, they have to be recorded anyway. So anyway we were really reprimanded for that.

But really my war in a place like Sennybridge and Lampeter was away from the real terror of war. I can remember seeing the red sky to the south when Swansea was burning, but that's as near as I got to the action.

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