



Starkey & Co: Life at a Grammar School in the 1940s

Berwick Coates

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Blitz survivor, ex-evacuee, veteran of five primary schools and denizen of a typical London suburb, Berwick Coates won a scholarship to a grammar school in 1940. All he knew about was German aircraft recognition, cricket and Hollywood films. During the following years, he had to deal with new surroundings, new subjects, new friends, V-2 flying bombs, post-war austerity, adolescence, and rampant nationalisation. Fortunately, he was taught by some memorable teachers, some of whom helped to shape his later life and teaching career. Within this account of life at a grammar school in the 1940s, which will resonate with anyone who followed a similar educational path, he interweaves the historical context of this turbulent decade, which saw not only the devastation and the 'we're-all-in-this-together' spirit of the Second World War, but also the hardships faced by a country rebuilding itself afterwards.

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