



# Epitaph to 'Nickle Eck': Childhood Mischief in Wartime Birmingham

*Eric Yates*

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In the history of Britain there is a shortage of Second World War stories detailing the lives of ordinary families living in poverty, the children's games and the black market profiteering that history has forgotten. The story of young Eric and John is here to set the record straight. Two boys growing up in the midst of rationing, with a flair for mischief and a sense of humour history will never see again – what could happen? Quite a lot, apparently, if the exciting family life of Eric and John is anything to go by. Telling of their family life in war torn Birmingham where poverty was rife, John's account is full of wit and the kind of humour history should remember. From the infamous Bread Pudding Incident to the charming children's games like 'Penny on the Brick', you will find laughter and warm memories of time spent in an age before computers, when children had to entertain themselves. Yet there is poignancy here, too, as Eric and John find themselves swept up in the greater tide of war as evacuees, made to travel to the country with no chance of looking back... This treasure trove of Second World War stories are a must read for those wanting to know about the lives of ordinary families in the history of Britain – or indeed, anybody wanting a good laugh to brighten up their day.

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