

## **Teacher's guide to the interview with Mr Laurie Holmes in hospital after the air raid on East Grinstead on 9<sup>th</sup> July, 1943**

The pupils are asked to listen to an interview with Laurie Holmes. The interview is divided into four RealPlayer files to be found on the Air Raid and Rescue pages in the East Grinstead case study section of the Second World War site. There are five worksheets to go with the task. They can be done by one pupil or distributed amongst five pupils. The information the pupil(s) collect will be used in creating a 'newspaper' report of the air raid.

<b>List of questions</b>	<b>RealPlayer file</b>	<b>Potential source of information</b>
<i>What were you doing when the German plane came over?</i>	<b>Air Raid</b>	I was speaking to my Senior Grocerywoman, under the canopy of the store when this German plane came over very low.
<i>How did you know that the shop had been hit?</i>	<b>Air Raid</b>	I heard a 'plop'. One of the butchers ran in from the cutting room and said, 'They've hit the roof!' So I left Florence and ran up to the office.
<i>What happened to the building when the bomb exploded?</i>	<b>Air Raid</b>	The blast of course, brought the building down and sent me flying, which I fell on my left side.
<i>You sound as if you think you were lucky to have survived the blast. Why do you think that?</i>	<b>Air Raid</b>	If I had fallen on my back or my stomach I wouldn't be here today because I couldn't put up with the weight of the building on top of me.
<i>You were pinned down by the blast. What did that feel like?</i>	<b>Rescue 1</b>	I was so pinned down I couldn't even open my mouth to spit out the dust and I couldn't even twiddle my toes. So I kept struggling, but I found it was useless, so I just laid there.
<i>Apparently there was something really dangerous on fire next door. What was that?</i>	<b>Rescue 1</b>	Wondering why I was laying in warm water. But apparently this bomb had dropped on the property next door on the 500 gallon tank of parafin, and that was on fire.
<i>The ambulance drivers who brought you into the hospital said you were soaking wet. Why was that?</i>	<b>Rescue 1</b>	and that was where the firemen were playing the water on and all the water was silting down and I was laying in warm water, literally.
<i>Who eventually got you out of the rubble?</i>	<b>Rescue 2</b>	Anyway then I heard the Heavy Rescue people, I heard a lot of sawing going on ...
<i>When did you know that you had been seen and were going to be rescued?</i>	<b>Rescue 2</b>	... and then I heard a voice say, 'look there's a hand sticking up over there,' which of course was mine, so someone came and touched me and I let them grabbed them to let them know that I was alive.
<i>What happened when the doctor came along?</i>	<b>Rescue 2</b>	Then a doctor came along and gave me a shot of morphia, because they didn't know what state I was in.
<i>What happened when the rescue team started to get you out of the wreckage.</i>	<b>Rescue 2</b>	Then they started to remove the debris around me, and somebody removed something they shouldn't have done and down came another lot on top of me.
<i>What did the rescue team have to do to get you out?</i>	<b>Rescue 2</b>	Anyway they eventually tunnelled round me and propped it up with chunks of wood and gradually drew me out, wrapped me in a blanket and put me in the ambulance and took me to the Queen Victoria Hospital.
<i>What are your injuries from the blast, Mr Holmes?</i>	<b>Rescue 3</b>	Where I was examined by a doctor. He couldn't find any bones broken.
<i>What happened when you were transferred to the Red-hill Hospital?</i>	<b>Rescue 3</b>	So I was taken off to Redhill Hospital and the Matron looked at me, and said 'Are you in any pain?' I said 'Not at the moment.' So she said to the Sister, 'Wrap him up in blankets, and put him in bed.'
<i>Did you manage to get a good night's sleep in the hospital?</i>	<b>Rescue 3</b>	Where I was left all night, but I didn't get any sleep, because being near Henley Aerodrome, with planes taking off and landing all night long. Anyway in the morning two nurses came along and gave me a blanket bath and I felt better after that.
<i>Who visited you from Sainsbury what did they say to you?</i>	<b>Rescue 4</b>	About midday, Mr Alan and Mr R. J Sainsbury came along to see me, asked me how I was, well I said, 'I'm alright sir.' I asked how some of the staff were.
<i>Do you know what happened to Florence, the person you were talking to when the raid began?</i>	<b>Rescue 4</b>	'Well I'm afraid that Florence who you were talking to, is... died'. Apparently the light canopy in the roof had dropped on her and decapitated the poor girl.
<i>Do you know what happened to any of your other workmates?</i>	<b>Rescue 4</b>	And of course as I had been laying there, I also heard a girl in the office crying out, 'Help, help' and gradually her voice got lower and lower. She apparently died of suffocation, so by the grace of God I am still alive today.