



Book Review *The Chocolate Girls* Annie Murray

Three girls living in the Bournville area of Birmingham at the outbreak of the Second World War work at the Cadbury chocolate factory. This book tells of their experiences during the war years, in particular the story of Edith, who rescues a baby from the blitz.

Its strengths lie in the portrayal of the care with which the Cadbury family provides for its workers, the sheer kindness of the Quaker family who take in the young widow and 'her' child and of the Jewish community when, as a young man, he discovers his real identity. We are given an insight into the enormous social and mobility changes in the middle years of the 20th century. Above all we see how, in time of war, a teenaged factory worker from a very deprived background shows great love, self-sacrifice and unsuspected resources.

The plot grows stronger as the book progresses; there is less description of dress material, hairstyles and pathetic living conditions, much more interesting action and some new characters.

If you can plough through the awful transcription into print of a so-called 'Brummie' accent and various inconsistencies, such as the lack of Identity Card for the boy (how on earth was she able to claim a green ration book for him?), this book provides a worthwhile, if light, read. It almost made me wish I was a Quaker!

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Jean Wiggins