

# The Wonder Girls Resist! - A young people's novel by Jan Carr

*Report on the launch event, by Jan Carr*

What a joy it was to have Carmen Kilner talk at the celebration launch for *The Wonder Girls Resist*, in Southampton on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> June. Held at independent bookshop, *October Books* the event was part book launch, part 85<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration and part thank you to the Kickstarter backers who made the book possible last October.

An all-age-audience of between 40 to 50 people listened to Carmen talk about life at the camp. How strange it was at first for the children – their response to seeing the tents for the first time, ('cowboys and indians'), having to make their own beds, the vegetable stew and the toilets! She also talked about their favourite bedtime drink (Ovaltine/Horlicks) and the daily chocolate ration donated by Cadburys. The story by J.M. Carr, for readers aged 9yrs and up, in which *Ovaltine* plays a key role in the plot, is the second about a 1930s girl gang taking on the 'Blackshirts'. It was inspired by the arrival of the Habana and the North Stoneham Camp. The girls again outwit the Blackshirts, who are forever trying to put kids in peril, in this story, by hi-jacking the camp for their own despicable plans.



Southampton's first Children's Mayor, Amaanah Hayat, a year 5 pupil at St Denys Primary School in Southampton, Star Wars fan and Kung Fu practitioner, also attended in full regalia. Amaanah, accompanied by her Mum and Aunty, gave a confident and inspiring speech about her pride in the city of Southampton and her initiatives for the environment and children's mental health. Southampton is going for UNICEF UK Child Friendly recognition. It was so appropriate that Madam Mayor Amaanah's first event was to celebrate Southampton's welcome and care of nearly 4000 child refugees in 1937!

Author J.M. Carr, read a short excerpt from her story and talked briefly about her aim to make Southampton known as much (if not more) for the story of the Basque Children's Camp as it is for Titanic. The presentations ended with a beautiful performance of *Harbour* by Anna Tabbush from *Glorious Harmony*, a 'natural voice' choir led by Pauline McWilliams.

£30, £1 for every paperback sold during the evening, was donated to the UNHCR.

<https://www.octoberbooks.org>

<https://www.southampton.gov.uk/news/article/southampton-welcomes-councillor-jacqui-ryment-as-the-800th-mayor-of-southampton-in-public-ceremony/>

<https://www.facebook.com/Paulinesgloriouschoirs>

<https://www.jmcarr.com>

# The WONDER GIRLS

A cast of thousands, despicable villains and an unexpected reunion with disastrous consequences...

## England 1937

Four thousand child refugees from The Spanish Civil War arrive at Southampton Docks. Nearby, in Nettlefield, a teacher with movie-star looks and Blackshirt connections wants to billet some of the refugees at the orphanage.

Baby is sure the Blackshirts are putting kids in peril again. With the other Wonder Girls, Baby must work out what the Blackshirts are really up to. And to prevent a Nazi invasion, persuade Letitia, a sixteen-year-old aspiring doctor determined to help with the rescue effort, to value what she's actually good at.

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