

# Evacuation from Woodford Bridge, Essex

Now London Borough of Redbridge

MARILYN JACKSON    JUNE 2023

My mother's younger brothers, Arthur and Ronnie were the only two members of my family who I knew to be evacuated at the start of WW2. Unfortunately they both passed away last year at the ages of 95 and 91 respectively and I never spoke to them about their experiences, but I have memories passed on to me by both my mother and grandmother and have used internet resources to 'pad out ' my source information.

# GOVERNMENT EVACUATION SCHEME

---

THE FOLLOWING FACILITIES ARE  
OPEN FOR EVACUATION FROM  
THE COUNTY OF LONDON

---

## SCHOOL CHILDREN

Register them at a School. The teachers or the school keeper will advise you.

## SCHOOL CHILDREN OR YOUNG CHILDREN WITH THEIR MOTHERS

If you have accommodation to go to in a reception or a neutral area apply to the L.C.C. Divisional Officer for a free travel voucher and a billeting certificate. If not, register at any open emergency rest centre.

## EXPECTANT MOTHERS, THE AGED, THE INFIRM AND THE BLIND

You must find your own accommodation in a reception or a neutral area. When you have done this apply to the L.C.C. Divisional Officer for a free travel voucher and a billeting certificate.

Will you give a <sup>valuable</sup>  
helping hand too?

*and baby is going  
along splendidly  
I know you'll be glad  
to hear that I'm very  
happy here, everything  
is being done to make  
as full at home, and  
now they're trying  
to organize  
a club for*



Your help is wanted. See your  
local billeting officer **NOW!**

ISSUED BY THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH

## EVACUEES IN FIFE



### Who'll give a promise to keep this child safe?

This child's home is in the city. Up to the present his home has been safe. But let us face it: one of these days his home may be a ruin. There is no excuse for feeling falsely secure because nothing has happened yet. The danger of air-raids is as great now as it has ever been.

The Government is arranging to send this child, and some hundred thousands of others, to safety if raiders come. Each will need a home. Only one household in ten is caring for these children now. Volunteers are urgently needed. Plans must be made well ahead. There must be no hitch, no delay, in settling

the children in safety. Here is your chance to help.

You can if you wish make an immediate contribution to this safety scheme. Many households have been looking after evacuated children for six months now. They will be grateful for a rest. If you can take over one of these children, you will be doing a very neighbourly deed and helping greatly in the nation's defence.

To enrol as a host of a child now or in the future, or to ask any questions about the scheme, please get in touch with your local Authority.

The Secretary of State, who has been entrusted by the Government with the conduct of evacuation, asks you urgently to join the Roll of those who are willing to receive children. Please apply to your local Council.



AN EVACUEE FROM WOODFORD, ESSEX

by [jack edward](#)

You are browsing in: [Archive List](#) > [Childhood and Evacuation](#)

Contributed by [jack edward](#) People in story: Mr. Walford, Mr. Potter, Mr. Pitt, Peter Nottage, Reverend Brooks, Margaret Davis Location of story: Woodford Essex; Maldon Essex; Trowbridge Wiltshire; Skipton Yorkshire Background to story: Civilian Article ID: A9005717 Contributed on: 31 January 2006 AN EVACUEE FROM WOODFORD, ESSEX

IN 1939 I was a six year old infant at Churchfields School, South Woodford, our school was evacuated to Maldon in September, we were taken with our teachers and Head Master Mr Walford and Mr Potter up to the Council Offices in the High Road, next to St. Mary's Church. We all had our gas masks and evacuee label in our buttonhole and our cases with what clothes we could carry. Arriving at the Offices we were met by a fleet of London red buses, this was to be our mode of transport for our journey, I couldn't understand why some of the children were crying, we were going on holiday. We scrambled on to the buses I'm sure we must have made a lot of noise in the excitement.

I can't remember much about the journey but it must have taken some considerable time, bearing in mind the number of buses. When we arrived at our destination we were taken to a local school (I have been back to Maldon since and the school is still there), we must have been given some refreshment while we waited for the people to arrive who would be looking after us

A WARTIME evacuee has recalled her experiences of leaving home during the Second World War. June Harrison was just 12 years old when she arrived at Wanstead High School to be evacuated when the Blitz began in 1940. Now, 72 years later, she visited her old school in Redbridge Lane West to tell a new generation of pupils what it was like to live through the fear of Nazi Germany invading Britain, being moved far away from her family and relying on strict rations to feed the population. The 84-year-old, of Reydon Avenue in Wanstead, said: "Looking back it seems quite dramatic but we started out almost as if we were going away for a holiday. It didn't hit me or any of us that we would be away from home for years." Mrs Harrison arrived with friends Barbara and Jean in Maldon, Essex, along with dozens of schoolmates on a fleet of red London buses.



In September 1939, expectant mothers, of which I was one, and mothers with children under five, had to report to the school in Churchfields, Woodford. Several double-decker buses arrived, and in due course set off - none of us at the time having the slightest idea where we were going. We eventually arrived at Goldhanger. The people of Goldhanger had unfortunately been led to expect that they would be getting a group of unaccompanied schoolchildren, but despite this they turned up trumps and billets were found for everybody.

I and another expectant mother were sent to the pork butcher Mr Scobell, who had a house in Fish Street, Goldhanger. Mr Scobell didn't have a shop, adjacent to his house he had a small, newly constructed building, where he cut up the pig carcasses ready for him to deliver in his van. He was a German who had been a prisoner of war during the First World War, had married an English girl and he had remained in England since. It was a lovely billet. Not surprisingly, we ate various cuts of pork, I didn't ever find it too rich and there were always plenty of home grown vegetables. Mr Scobell had what he called his field garden - an allotment at the top of the street. Mr and Mrs Scobell had two sons, one of 21 who was in the Army and Alfred who was 14. All the water for drinking had to be fetched from the pump at the top of the street, and I have a lovely snapshot of Mr Scobell and Alfred standing by the pump, with the container on wheels. The water used for washing ourselves was so soft, that it was very difficult to wash the soap off.

One occasion which stands out in my mind, was when we were invited to tea by the novelist Marjorie Allingham. She lived in Tolleshunt D'Arcy, in a lovely old house, which I remember as having a very big kitchen with an Aga cooker in it. Marjorie herself looked rather like a figure from a fairy tale, wearing a long black dress and she had a little white apron over it.

The problem was where were expectant mothers to go during confinement? The powers that were, solved the problem by taking over an empty house on the road between Goldhanger and Tollesbury. They also managed to find enough furniture for me and other mothers with little children, to be able to occupy the house. The idea was that these mothers would do the cooking and look after us mothers with our new babies. A retired nurse came in to see us each day. On the 3rd of October 1939 one month arriving in Goldhanger my son was born. After the birth, Mrs Scobell from the billet came in Mr Scobell's delivery van to visit me, and brought a little stone coloured vase with some honeysuckle. My stay in Goldhanger was a very special time for me. The weather had been perfect.

The boys were not happy in their evacuated 'home', the younger one, Ronnie, writing home to his mother saying he was going to run away and walk back to Woodford. This was conveyed in a letter to which my grandmother made a hasty response and set off to Maldon to sort the boys out. They remained there for a year but increased bombing along the estuary meant that Maldon was not deemed safe and most evacuees either returned home or were rehoused elsewhere in the country.

My two uncles returned home to Woodford. Arthur was conscripted in 1944 and was in the Military Police seeing out his service in India. Ronnie went to Kneller Hall, the Royal School of Military Music, at the age of 16 ( I think) and he remained a bandsman until 1960. He played the tuba in folk bands and for Morris Dancers up until his death