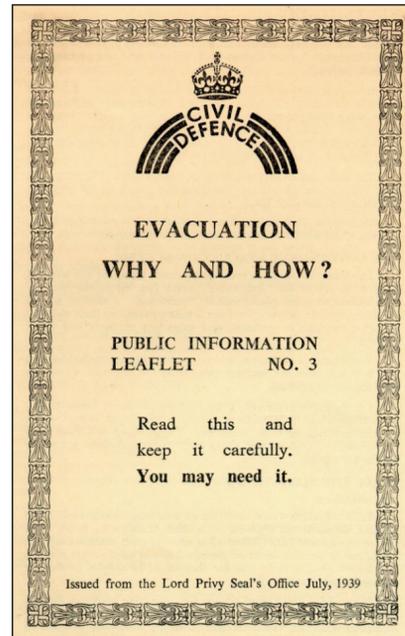


Evacuation

Before the outbreak of war, the Government had made plans to evacuate children and mothers with babies from large cities, such as London, to the countryside. Crowded cities would be the target of air attack from German bombers, especially factories, power stations and military stations. The Government decided to remove children from these areas of danger and move them to safer areas, known as reception areas. Dacorum was designated as a suitable reception area.

Even some of the London statues were thought to be safer in Berkhamsted. A number of figures, including George III and Field Marshal Lord Wolseley, were removed from their usual homes of St James' Square and Horse Guards Parade and taken to the safety of the grounds of Berkhamsted Castle.



This leaflet was issued to all households in July 1939 and was one of a series of public information leaflets on a variety of subjects. The leaflet was designed to answer questions which parents may have had regarding the Government's evacuation scheme. (DACHT : BK 3912.53)

Nurse Blatchford who worked at The Hoo Maternity Home in Great Gaddesden. Expectant mothers were evacuated from London to maternity homes which had been established at The Hoo as well as Home Farm in Tring and Grimsdyke in Berkhamsted. A total of 1,270 babies were born at The Hoo. (DACHT : 939.01)

The Hoo, Great Gaddesden, in 1944, when it was being used as a maternity home. (DACHT : 2313)



Kings Langley Scouts with evacuees from London in 1939. Boy Scouts and Girl Guides were charged with leading walking parties of evacuees from the railway station to the dispersal station. At the dispersal station evacuees were given two days' worth of rations and sent to their temporary homes. (DACHT : 698.203)

Evacuees at Shendish. In 1941, John Dickinson's accommodated the children of employees from their Tottenham branch at Shendish House. (DACHT : 62.12.25)

The Government established a shift system of schooling, whereby resident children would use the school facilities in the morning and London children in the afternoon. Aldbury Village School increased in pupils from 77 to 240 and operated in two shifts of combined schools.



Father Christmas distributing presents to evacuees in Albert Street, Tring, in 1939. Many entertainments were provided for the children at Christmas, throughout the area. School holidays were staggered to enable teachers to supervise evacuated children continuously. Parties were arranged in local halls; the residents of Bovingdon realised that their 'London lads were missing their fish and chips' and gave them a supper. (DACHT : 1220.20)



During January 1939, Local Authorities were asked to undertake a survey of spare rooms available to house evacuees. The results of these surveys displayed that Berkhamsted had 4406 surplus rooms in occupied houses and 284 rooms in unoccupied houses. There were offers of accommodation from 3,283 people.