

SECOND WORLD WAR EVACUEES - NW LEICESTERSHIRE



BY SAMUEL T STEWART - AUGUST 2021 ©

PREFACE

The author has written numerous social and industrial history publications about villages in the local area of NW Leicestershire. These are all free to download and read on his website <https://samuelstewart940.wixsite.com/mysite>

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THE ARRIVAL OF THE “SECOND WORLD WAR” EVACUEES AT RAILWAY STATIONS IN LEICESTERSHIRE

The evacuation of Britain's cities at the start of World War Two was the biggest movement of people in Britain's history. In four days during early September 1939, nearly 3,000,000 people were transported from towns and cities in danger from enemy bombers to places of safety in the countryside.

From 1939 until 1944 children from Birmingham, Coventry and London were evacuated to this area.

A SYNOPSIS OF A LARGER REPORT IN THE LEICESTER DAILY MERCURY DATED SEPTEMBER 1ST 1939

Carrying their gas masks and satchels, thousands of child evacuees arrived by special trains at twelve Leicestershire railway stations just prior to Germany invading Poland on September 1st 1942.

A large crowd assembled at the L.M.S. railway station at Coalville, to see the arrival of the special trains carrying evacuees from Birmingham. The Chairman, Mr. S. E. Perry, and members of the Urban Council, Dr. Andrew Hamilton (Medical Officer) and officials of the council were on the platform.

The first train brought 341 evacuees, boys and girls belonging to the Dennis Road School, Birmingham. The children were smiling as they stepped out of the train and seemed quite happy and contented.

All the traffic was stopped as they were taken across High Street to the Constitutional Club where they received rations. They were then taken to the central field where they were grouped ready for transport to the various schools. They were taken by bus to outlying areas.

On arrival at the schools, the various headmasters took charge and the children were taken to their new homes to be received by their hosts. One of the Birmingham teachers told the Leicester Mercury 'that they had a very comfortable journey, and it rained heavily as they left Birmingham and they were glad to see the sun shining at Coalville'. 'You have given us a Royal welcome' said another teacher.

This morning, 500 secondary school children arrived at Ashby from Birmingham and were escorted to schools in the town. After a medical inspection and refreshments at the town hall, they were sent to their respective billets (hosts homes). Other batches will follow tomorrow. Mr. C. B. Dearden is the billeting officer.

Several hundred children arrived this afternoon, also from Birmingham for the rural areas. They were escorted by Mr. W. Smith to the Burton Road Council Schools, and there handed a 48 hour ration comprising biscuits, tinned milk, chocolate etc.

Mr. W. A. Brockington (Director of Education) who is touring the county said 'that local arrangements were admirable'.

More children arrive tomorrow and the total for the rural area is estimated at 1,040. The allocations to date are:-

Griffydham	140
Worthington	60
Heather	50
Newton	30
Donnithorpe	120

Oakthorpe	80
Coleorton	40
Staunton	20
Osgathorpe	25
Swannington	100
Packington	30
Measham	200
Appleby	70

TYPICAL PHOTOGRAPHS OF EVACUEE DEPARTURE FROM THE CITIES AND DISTRIBUTION TO HOSTS IN THE COUNTRYSIDE



Unlike Griffydham and Osgathorpe, where excellent information exists for evacuees, taken from records of their attendance at Griffydham Senior School, little information of the many children who came to Coleorton or who their host families were is available. We do know however that because of a lack of room in the Viscount

Beaumont Church of England School, a class was established at Coleorton Rectory which included a mixture of pupils from Coleorton and evacuees. Sadly no photographs or information on the evacuees in this class has come to light.

Although the author of this article was not born till approximately 2 years after the arrival of the evacuees, he was told that his parents who lived in Stoney Lane were hosts to an evacuee named Theresa (surname not known) who was traumatised by the awful experience.

Below is a chart giving details of a few evacuees who were hosted in Pegg's Green and Coleorton but who attended Griffydham Senior School.

Name of Evacuee	Date of Birth	Home	Host's Name	Address	Date of Admittance	Date Left
Stanley Haywood	8.4.28	Small Heath, Birmingham		Clay Lane , Peggs Green.	11.9.39	29.9.39
John William Bradford	4.2.30	Small Heath, Birmingham		Clay Lane , Peggs Green.	11.9.39/31.8.42	18.3.40/11.11.42
Joan Bradford	27.4.28	Small Heath, Birmingham		Workhouse Lane, Coleorton	12.9.39	19.12.39
Joyce Margaret Talbot	4.6.31	Derby	Mrs Bailey	Stoney Lane, Coleorton	25.9.39	21.12.39
Agnes Young Denholm	12.12.32	Scotland		Forest View, Peggs Green.	28.8.41	23.12.42
Ann Engelfield Stevens	30.4.35		Mrs Howkins	Anchor Lane	16.8.43	27.4.45
Daniel Buffery	11.5.32	Birmingham	Mrs Rowell	Anchor Lane, Peggs Green.	3.4.44	27.10.44
Frederick R. Gates	24.8.37	Battersea	Mrs Collins	Clay Lane, Peggs Green.	26.6.45	11.7.45
Beryl Stevens	22.11.36	Chelsea	Mrs Morley	Anchor Lane	1.5.46	27.7.48
Jean Megan Cavies	25.5.36	Foulford, Fife.		The New Inn.	11.9.46	10.9.47

THE AUTHOR'S MEMORIES OF A SECOND WORLD WAR EVACUEE - JOYCE MARGARET TALBOT

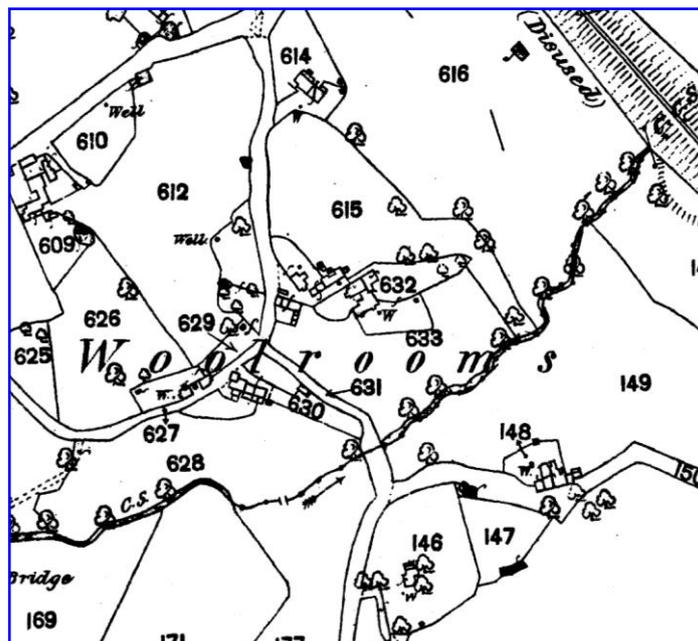
Amongst the children evacuated from cities around the UK to stay with their hosts in local villages was a girl named Joyce Margaret Talbot (see preceding chart) who came from Derby. She attended Griffydam Senior School for a period and was registered as being admitted on the 25th Sept 1939 and left on the 12th Dec 1939.

Her host family was Mr and Mrs Frank Bailey of Stoney Lane, Coleorton, who lived in a simple tiny cottage on the RH side of the two semi-detached miner's cottages on Plot 148 shown on the following extract from the 1885 issued O/S map. This very old cottage still exists today but is much changed from that time. It was almost opposite the author's family home, yet to be built. The tiny front room incorporated the standard "Black leaded grate with oven and boiler" and with an upright piano and a couch. Note the "Well" in the rear garden where they would have obtained their water from at that time.

The author came to know Joyce because in later years she used to come and visit Mr & Mrs Bailey from Derby with her younger brother Alan. Trevor vividly remembers Alan making him a fishing rod from a new garden cane with a length of cotton on the end and a bent pin attached. They went down to the brook which ran through the fields below just before it entered the tunnel through the old Coleorton Railway embankment to try and catch some sticklebacks. It never worked of course, and it was easier to catch them in a jam jar. However, it was exciting and passed the hours away. How simple life was for children in those days when you made your own entertainment!

The author had always thought that the Talbots' were relatives of the Baileys' and it came as quite a shock to learn after all these years that Joyce was in fact their evacuee who took the trouble to re-visit them in later years.

Frank Bailey and his wife Minnie were staunch Methodists and attended Coleorton Primitive Methodist chapel and they are shown in the following photographs.





Mr & Mrs Bailey are on the LH side of the Chapel outing photograph next to the author's grandma and grandad Stewart



Mr Frankie Bailey is in the centre of the front row of the photograph with Coleorton Primitive Methodist Chapel in the background.

Taken during the Golden Jubilee celebrations

Top Row - L to R

Freerson Mee (conductor), John Whyman, Laban Clifford, Jack Richards, Billie Benson

Bottom Row - L to R

Samuel Stewart (Grandfather of Author), Charlie Wright, Frankie Bailey, Jim Stewart (older brother of Samuel), Herbert Rowell