

Evacuees

I was evacuated as a 13 year old on Friday 1st September 1939 with my school, Hornsey High School, London N8. We got off a very crowded train at Huntingdon Station and were herded on to buses going we knew not where. Eventually our bus arrived at a village called Sawtry (and I'm sure it was the village hall, but now know it was the School Hall) where lots of adults were waiting to take charge of us. I was allocated to a Mr & Mrs Turnill and their daughter Joyce, who was about ten. No idea of their address but it was in a row of small cottages not very far from the hall [1 Burton Villas]. Some of my school mates were there but I have since gathered that schools got somewhat mixed up. I remembered we listened to someone saying that war had been declared whilst we were standing outside the church on that Sunday. After a week or two, or possibly three, our headmistress, Miss Keating, managed to round up all her pupils from various villages and we moved to Ramsey where we started our schooling sharing with Ramsey Abbey School. My schooldays from September 1939 were pretty fractured; to Ramsey after leaving Sawtry, an unhappy first billet there, so noticeable after the kindness of the Turnill family, then I joined a friend on the other side of town where we stayed for about 9 months before drifting back home to Muswell Hill, North London, partly because there was nothing happening in London and partly because it was decided that our billet on the Bury Road out of town was within 1,000 yards of an aerodrome! The Blitz started soon after and I was once again evacuated to family friends in Exeter, where I finished my schooldays.

Connie Chick

Connie Chick nee Mcpherson lived with me and my parents Len and Daisy Turnill at no. 1 Burton Villa, Primrose Lane, which is now Green End Road when she was thirteen. Connie was from Hornsey High School. She then moved from Sawtry to Ramsey. After Connie came Christine and lastly Dorothy who was seven. Dorothy came from Shepherds Bush London and made a lot of friends in Sawtry. We still write to each other. Her mother and father often visited, getting the bus from Huntingdon to the Royal Oak and having a cup of tea in Mrs Chapman's café over the road from the Oak. We loved having the evacuees here as we only had to go to school for half days, the Chapel Sunday School was used for all the extra children, one week

mornings, the next afternoons. We made many new friends; some still visit the people who looked after them during the war. They loved the green fields but not the cold winds that seemed to come from Gidding Road. They also loved going to the woods to pick primroses which were taken to decorate the Church at Eastertime.

Joyce Edwards