

Wood Norton in WW2 : Evacuees



The School Admissions Register (1913-1952)¹ shows that Wood Norton did indeed take in some evacuees, albeit for a short time as most evacuees returned home within a few months.

Miss Hunt, the Head Teacher, alludes to the possibility of receiving evacuees in the School Logbook's² entry for the 15th September 1939:

School will reopen on Monday next, Sept 18th as usual, expect that there may be some visitors to admit, beside our own children.

The first four 'visitors' joined the School when it reopened after the Harvest Holiday on the 18th September, as recorded in the Admissions Register:

Admitted 15th September 1939:

No. 621 Terence Botterill

Parent/Guardian: Arlie Botterill 4 Council Houses
Date of Birth: 20 April 1933
From: St Augustine's Trust, New Basford, Notts
Left: 10 November 1939 Gone to Attleborough

No. 622 Margaret Alderman

Parent/Guardian: Frank Burton Manor Farm
Date of Birth: 3 June 1928
From: Godwin Road, Forest Gate
Left: 8 March 1940 Gone home

No. 623 John Charlton

Parent/Guardian: Elsie Charlton Sun Inn
Date of Birth: 28 November 1930
From: Rockmount Road Junior, Upper Norwood
Left: 1 March 1940 Gone home

No. 624 Stanley Charlton

Parent/Guardian: Elsie Charlton Sun Inn
Date of Birth: 21 February 1922
From: Rockmount Road Junior, Upper Norwood
Left: 1 March 1940 Gone home

¹ Wood Norton School Admissions Register, 1913-1952 (*Norfolk Record Office, C/ED 4/15*)

² Wood Norton School Logbook, 1916-1952 (*Norfolk Record Office, C/ED 2/84*).

These evacuees may well have arrived in Norfolk at the beginning of September as a result *Operation Pied Piper* (the evacuation of civilians), which began on the 1st September 1939 - 20,000 evacuees arrived at Thorpe Station (Norwich) over four days.³ Although not marked as 'evacuees' they were included in the 1939 Register for Wood Norton:

- **Terence Botterill** (aged 6) and his mother, Arlie Botterill, were recorded as living with Charles and Eveline Hunt and their two sons (Charles and Frank), at 4 Council Houses, The Street (now Church Road). From the entries in the Register it is apparent that Arlie had another child with her, and research indicates that this was Terence's younger sister, Myrna Botterill (born 1935).⁴ The Church Visitor Book for the 17th June 1945 records that Myrna Botterill and her mother came back and visited the village (see Figure 1).⁵

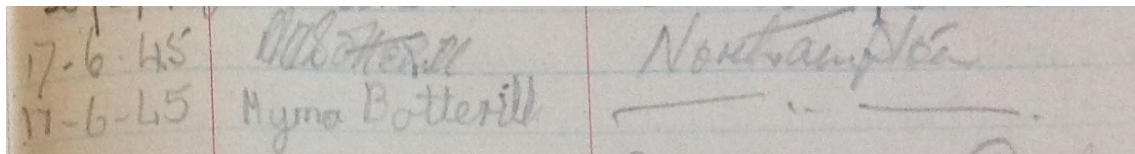


Figure 1: Church Visitors Book, 1945

- **Margaret Alderman** (aged 11) was recorded as living with Francis and Florence Burton and their two sons (Noel and Philip), at Manor Farm Cottage.
- **John Charlton** (aged 9) his brother **Stanley Charlton** (aged 7) and their mother Elise Charlton were recorded as living with Thomas and Edith Risborough at the Sun Inn, where Thomas Risborough was the landlord.

It is unsurprising that Margaret Alderman and the Charlton family returned home in March 1940 - by the end of 1939 the widely expected bombing raids on cities had not materialised, and many parents whose children had been evacuated in September decided to bring them home again; by January 1940 almost half of the evacuees had returned home. The Government responded with a series of posters urging parents to leave evacuees where they were whilst the threat of bombing remained.⁶

In the summer and autumn of 1940, following the German invasion of France in May-June and the beginning of the Blitz in September, additional rounds of official evacuation occurred nationwide.⁷ The four evacuees that came to Wood Norton in 1940 and 1941 most probably came as a result of these:

Admitted 21 October 1940:

No. 635	Leonard Reason		
	Parent/Guardian:	Baines	Low Farm
	Date of Birth:	31 May 1929	
	From:	Cave Road, Plaistow	
	Left:	20 December 1940	Gone home

³ R. Douglas Brown, 'East Anglia 1939' (Terence Dalton Limited, The Lavenham Press Limited, Lavenham, Suffolk, 1980).

⁴ FreeBMD, *Quarter to September 1935, Nottingham, Vol. 7b, p.453* (www.freebmd.org.uk).

⁵ Church Visitor Book, 1933-2001 (copy, authors own).

⁶ See <https://www.iwm.org.uk/history/the-evacuated-children-of-the-second-world-war>.

⁷ See <https://www.iwm.org.uk/history/the-evacuated-children-of-the-second-world-war>.

Admitted 28 October 1940:

No. 636 **Ivy Bull**
Parent/Guardian: Martha? c/o Mrs Norris
Date of Birth: 8 May 1922
From: St. Mary's, Plaistow
Left: 1 August 1941 Gone home

Admitted 18 November 1940:

No. 637 **James Campbell**
Parent/Guardian: Alice Elizabeth c/o Mrs Hopper
Date of Birth: 24 September 1934
From: Dollis Sch., Hendon
Left: 27 November 1940 Gone home

Admitted 21 April 1941:

No. 645 **Janet Robinson**
Parent/Guardian: Florence c/o Mr N. Mitchell
Date of Birth: 12 December 1935
From: No previous school
Left: 4 July 1941 Returned to London

The longest an evacuee remained in Wood Norton was 9 months:

- **Ivy Bull** (aged 8) who as living with her mother with the Norris family at Home Farm (now Cromes Farmhouse)

By contrast, the shortest time an evacuee spent in Wood Norton was only 9 days:

- **James Campbell** (aged 6) who was living with his mother and the Hopper family in The Street, most probably in one of the cottages in Rectory Road (in those days The Street consisted of what we know as both Rectory Road and Church Road).

After 1941 there are no more evacuees recorded in the School Admissions Register.