

# World War 2 comes to Hanney

## **Some effects of the Second World War on East and West Hanney**

This presentation is derived from an exhibition Hanney History Group produced to show how first the threat, and then the outbreak, of World War 2 affected the people of the villages of East and West Hanney eighty years ago.

The display was in the chancel of the parish church of St James the Great, West Hanney, during the Michaelmas Fayre on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2019 .

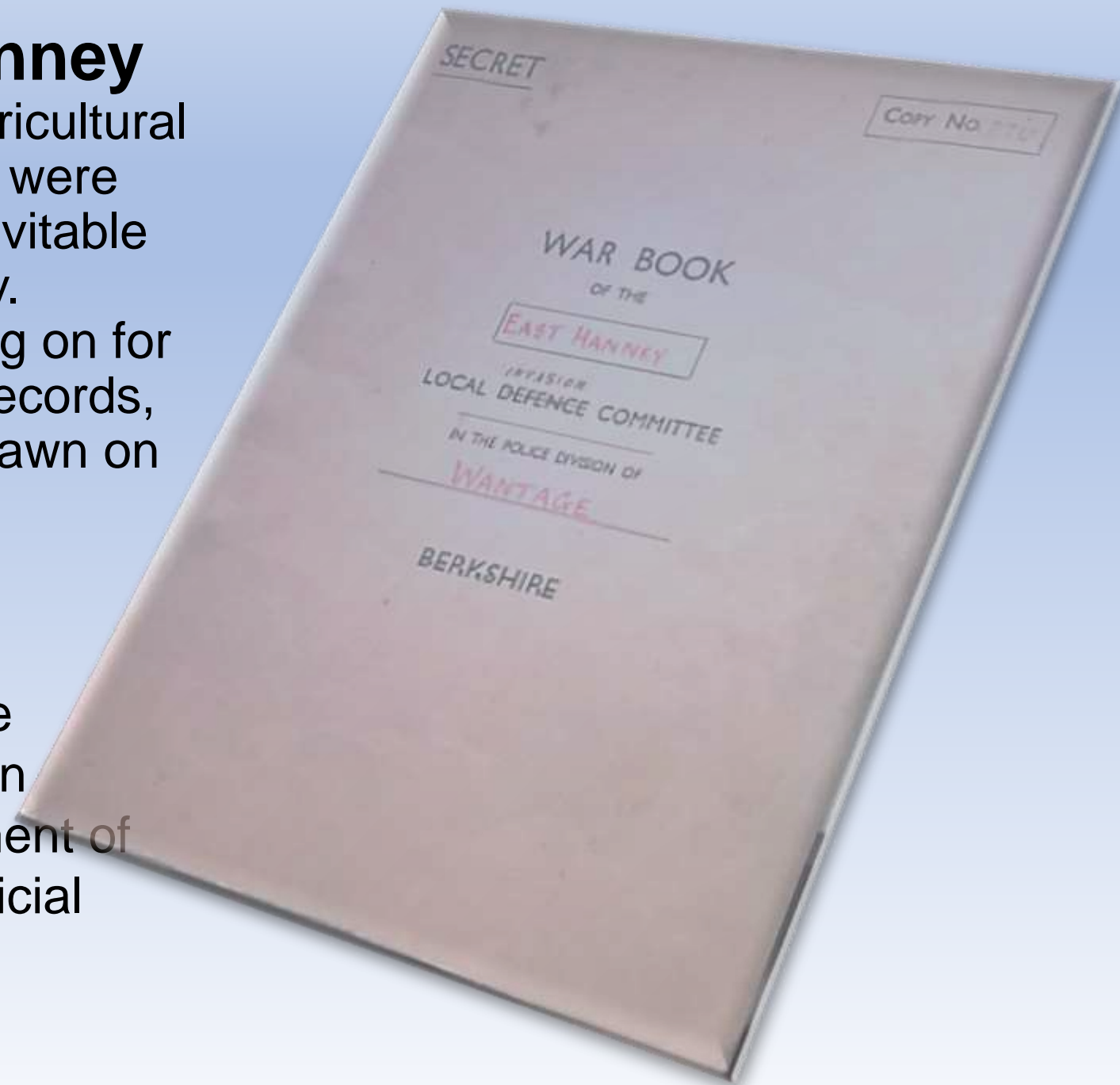
# World War 2 threatens Hanney

Eighty years ago our two mainly agricultural villages, like the rest of the country, were awaiting what seemed to be the inevitable outbreak of hostilities with Germany.

Preparations for war had been going on for some time. We hold some unique records, and for this anniversary we have drawn on them.

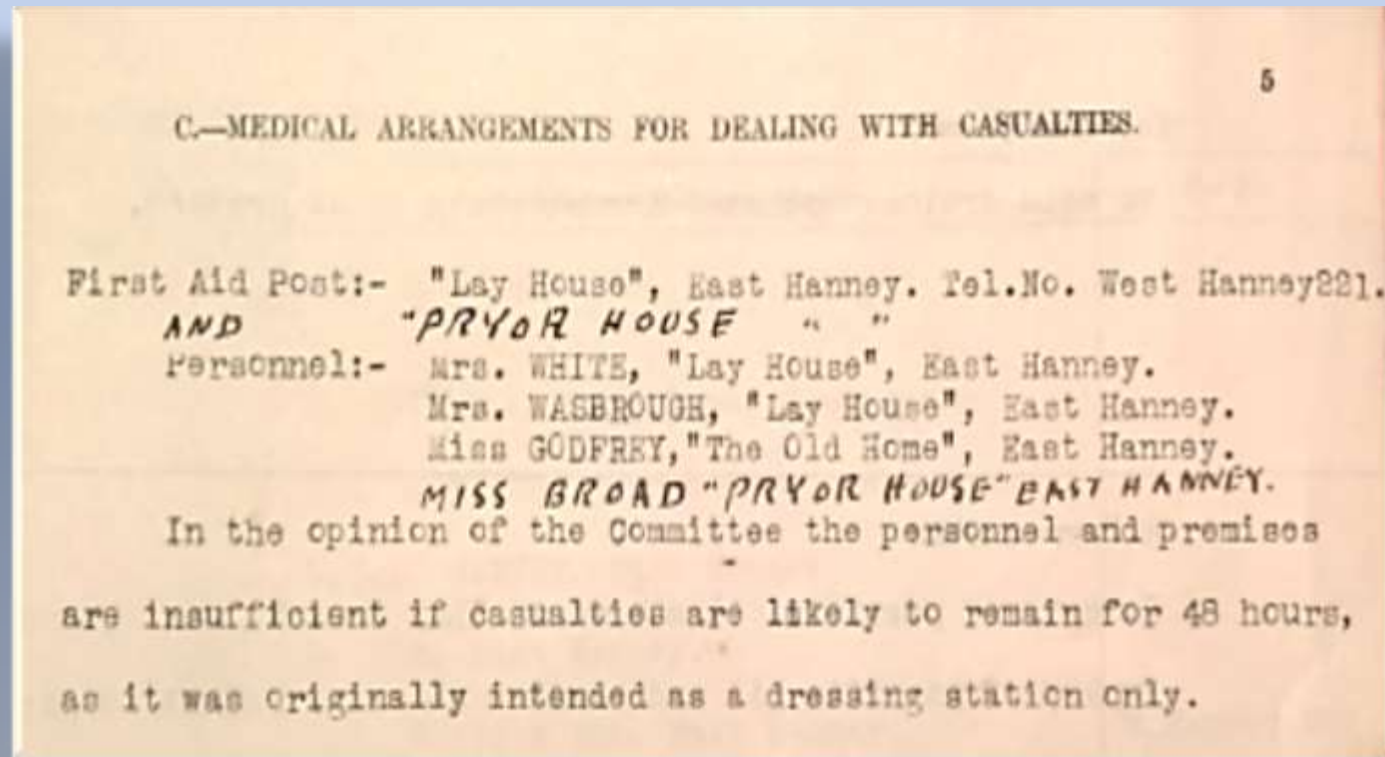
## East Hanney War Book

This is a record of our Local Defence Committee (later changed to Invasion Committee). It contains an assessment of village resources, and of those in official posts...ready for action.



# Village Records

Using material such as the school logbook, Parish Council minutes, W.I. Records and Home Guard Attendance Books, we have attempted to bring to life a time when the Hanneys probably changed for ever.



## The War Gathers Pace

- Before long there was a definite possibility of invasion by the enemy.
- The commencement of full-scale bombing on London and other cities brought more evacuees to the Hanneys, which stretched village resources.
- Around the Hanneys was the influence of the US entering the war, and the production of fighting equipment.

# Extracts from East Hanney Parish Council Minutes

September 18 1940

In a circular on Air Raid Precautions from Wantage Rural District Council it was suggested that

*“the ‘Red’ warning and ‘All Clear’ signals should be communicated to the Head Warden of the Parish, who on receipt of the ‘Red’ warning should blow his whistle and give an alarm which would be taken up by the other wardens.*

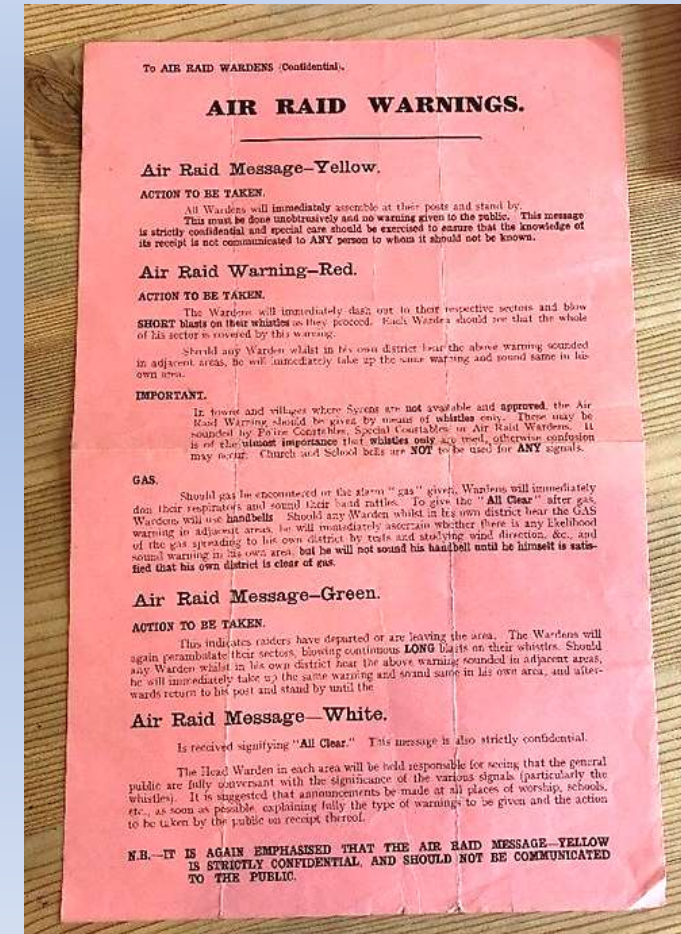
*The decision whether whistles should be sounded rests with the Parish Council”.*

August 27 1941

A communication was read from the C.C. requesting the Council to assist in the formation of a Defence Committee which would operate in the event of invasion.

The circular suggested that when two villages were in close proximity, one Committee could operate for the two villages.

Proposal that E Hanney act independently carried.





# Hanneley Women and the War

By the outbreak of the War the women of Hanneley were well-organised to play their part in the changes that were to come. Taking leading roles in the community was something that the ladies were used to.

The Local Defence Committee may have had a male Chairman, but it had a female Vice-Chairman, a female Authorised Food Organiser, and a female First Aid Representative. Their challenge was to make all the families in the community aware of the changes that were to come.

As women were later often left as Head of the Family with their menfolk away in the armed forces, they became responsible for dealing with the rigours of food and fuel rationing, with ensuring the blackout of their homes, and probably with the increase of their households by evacuees and their teachers, and other lodgers such as land and forest girls.

# Hanneley Women and the War

## Women's Voluntary Service

Women were having to face up to a new and unknown world, with the possibility of invasion of the area and subsequent casualties which they would be expected to help.

The W.V.S. expanded to head up this role. The Organiser was Elsie Andrewartha, who lived at Whitegates in East Hanneley. She had been a missionary in new railway towns in South Africa, and little daunted her. She became the Authorised Food Organiser.

The Food Depot was at Lower Mill, East Hanneley.

## Government Food Preserving Scheme.

The Laundry at Day's House (Philberds Manor) became the centre for making jam. This was a large-scale operation, officially approved so that as many women as possible were registered for 'State Sugar'. (Sugar was not allowed for domestic jam making).

The schoolchildren were also dragooned into collecting blackcurrants and rosehips for the enterprise.

## Government Fruit Preserving Scheme

### A Meeting

WILL BE HELD IN THE

SCHOOL, EAST HANNEY

AT 8 P.M.,

ON MONDAY, MAY 12, 1941

THE SCHEME WILL BE EXPLAINED

ALSO DETAILS FOR THE FORMATION  
OF A CENTRE FOR MAKING JAM

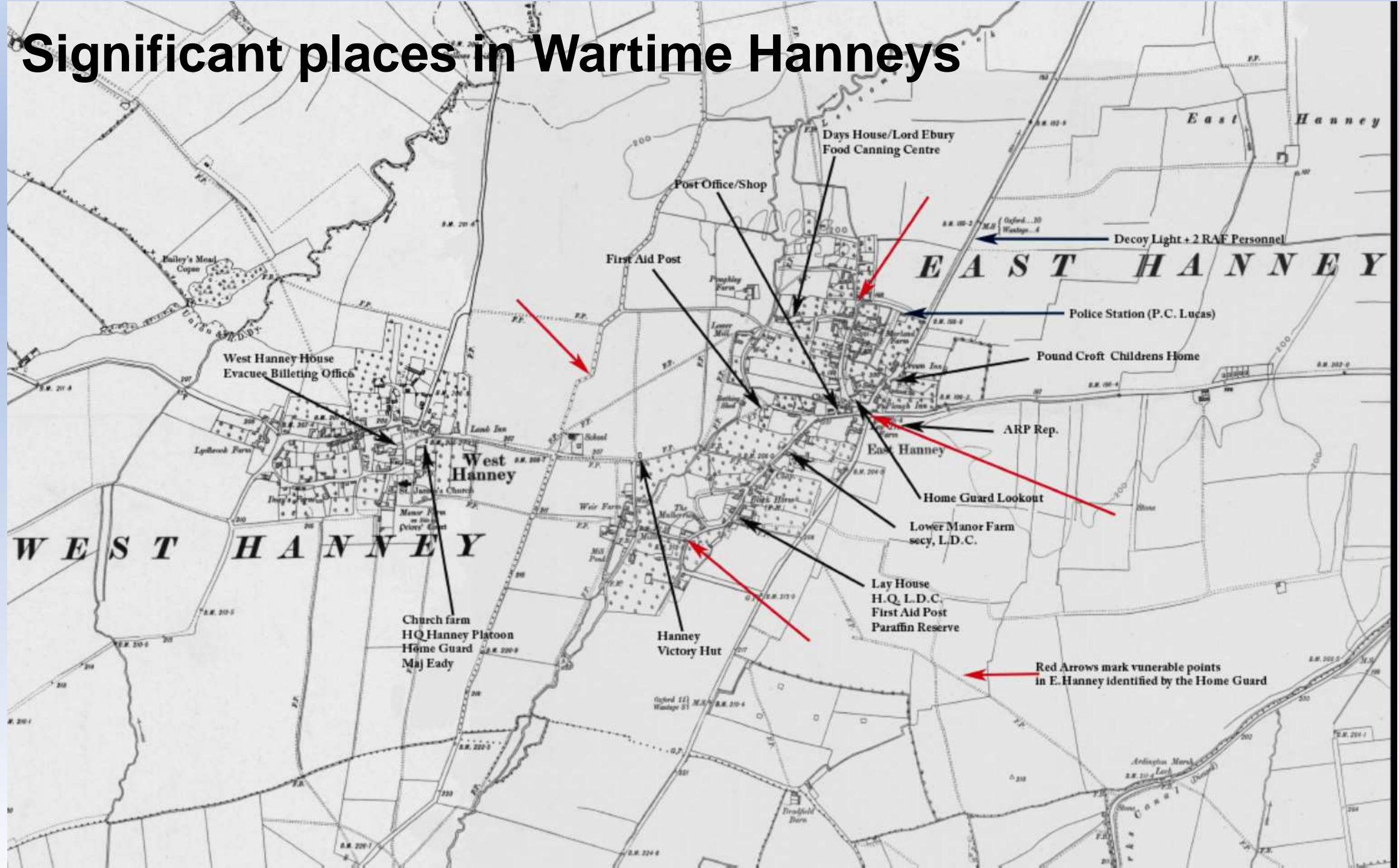
There will be NO SUGAR ALLOWANCE for DOMESTIC  
JAM MAKING and it is therefore important that every ONE  
in the Village should ATTEND the Meeting.

GENIE PRINTER WARTAGE





# Significant places in Wartime Hanneys





# The Women's Institute

The W.I., which was founded in 1927, adapted to play many wartime roles. Meetings were transferred to the Black Horse pub, as the usual meeting place, the Victory Hut, had been taken over for the teaching of evacuees.

The minutes tell of:

- Increasing the growth of vegetables in the village
- Raising money to help the war effort, for example
  - a W.I. Ambulance,
  - a parachute
  - the Spitfire Fund.
- Running a Village Savings Scheme
- Making rifle slings for the Home Guard
- Organising dances in the Victory Hut to which U.S. soldiers from Grove came and met the local girls.



Members competitions give a flavour of wartime resourcefulness!

- 'the best three boiled potatoes'
- a competition for 'peeling a potato blindfold' and
- 'the best pair of slippers made out of an old felt hat'.

# Women's Land Army

Hanney was still an agricultural community in 1939, but at the outbreak of war the country as a whole imported 70% of her foodstuffs from the Empire. It was necessary to increase home agricultural production quickly.

The Women's Land Army was formed in 1939, and female farm workers began to arrive on farms across the County including Hanney.



# There was also the Women's Timber Corps.

A group of Forestry Girls, mainly teenagers from the Nottingham area, were lodged in West Hanney, and a Mr Holmes came to live there. He had a small lorry in which he took them daily to cut pit-props from the woods around Watchfield and Shrivenham.  
(remembered by **Beryl King**).

There were 'lumberjills' also in East Hanney, staying with the Bookers and the Hermans.



# A Hard Life

Dorothy Walcroft lived with her family at The Plough in East Hanney. Apart from working in the pub, as the youngest daughter at home she looked after her father's dairy herd, which he kept up the A338. You can still see the old tin barn beside the road where she used to milk the cows each morning in all weathers.

In winter there was no light apart from the decoy light at the entrance to the village which used to frighten the horse. Having loaded the milk into the cart Dolly then proceeded to do her milk round.

Dolly's fiancé (*Claude Albert Jones*) was a soldier, and taken prisoner of war in Singapore. It was difficult to get any news, and for those in a similar position it was some help to meet in Oxford to swap information - this meant a journey to Oxford by bike!

Sadly, when news finally came, her fiancé had died in a POW camp. (**Dolly Bevan** memories)

# Evacuees

Children and their teachers from relatively poor east London districts arrived at Wantage Road station on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1939.

They left the bustle, lights and noise of the capital for an agricultural village with no streetlights, sanitation often at the end of the garden, and a day centred round the care of animals and the management of crops.

Children had that day waved goodbye to their families, and left home with no real understanding of where or why they were going, nor for how long.

Imagine your children leaving you today - with only a small package of belongings, a gas mask and a name label!

We have three separate evacuee records, and this exhibition concentrates on their first year in Hanney, looking at their memories... and also of the families who received them.

## ➤ **A Teacher's View**

This is a photograph album kept by Margaret Walker, one of the teachers from London, who was billeted with three other teachers at *The Buddleias* (now *Hazelwood*) opposite the Black Horse in East Hanney. We also include other memories of life at Hanney School during this period.

## ➤ **A London Evacuee's Memoirs**

This is a record of one evacuee, Don McDouall, who spent the whole of the war billeted at *Tamarisk*, in East Hanney. After the war he emigrated, and still lives in a remote township in Western Australia.

## ➤ **Evacuation in Practice**

This is an official review of the successes (and *failures*) of this first batch of evacuees to Wantage and surrounding villages. One surprising statistic is that of the 282 sent to the various villages on 3<sup>rd</sup> September, only 55% remained here after twelve weeks – 128 had found their way back to London.



# War Comes to Hanney School: a teacher's view.

We are fortunate to have a diary (complete with black & white photos) written by Margaret Walker, one of the teachers evacuated from London with her school.

## ***Evacuation Day:***

*7.30 left home with suitcase.*

*8.30 arrived Southern Grove School. Supplied each child with tuckbox. Tied label of name and school address round each neck.*

*11.00 Escorted by police and weeping mothers, we walked to Mile End Station. Embarked non-stop to Ealing Broadway, formed fours, counted by officials. There we re-embarked, each teacher being responsible for her compartment. Non-stop to Wantage Road Station.*

*By bus to Hanney School, then after children and foster-parents had been sorted out, I found me being taken by a kindly stranger in the rain to The Bungalow at Rectory Farm, West Hanney about 6.00pm. Kindly draw a veil over the rest of the evening.*



## Other Teachers

Mrs Walker was soon relocated to the house of Mrs Flyn, *The Buddleias* (now *Hazelwood*) in East Hanney, where she joined four other London teachers – Christian Stone (Stoney), Chrissie Atkinson, Mabel Masters (Mabs) and Doris Smith...and their pet dogs Bubble and Squeak!

## School Opens

*School re-opened today (12<sup>th</sup> Sept instead of 5<sup>th</sup>, owing to war being declared on Sept 3<sup>rd</sup>).*

*Our school roll includes 102 Hanney children, and 54 children and 10 teachers evacuated to Hanney.*

A year later the school roll was 122 Berkshire children and 65 evacuees.



# Classrooms

Hanney children attended school from 8.50am to 12.30pm, and the evacuees from 1pm to 4.30pm

In the afternoons Mrs Walker and Mrs Stone shared one classroom.

Mrs Walker writes

*“My side, Upper Division, was separated by the fireplace at one end and a fierce draft at the other.”*

The School Logbook records

*“On 11<sup>th</sup> Nov wire netting was fastened over all the windows in the main school.”*



**Beryl King** remembers that the school became so overcrowded that some children had their lessons in the Victory Hut. Her family had two girls of the same age from Tottenham with them for two years, who saw or heard practically nothing of their parents throughout their stay.



# Happier Memories

Mrs Walker took this photo of infants on the Green in East Hanney – *“during one of the many morning walks to absorb the beauties of nature, glories of autumn, work on farms, blackberrying...”*

**Norma Mahwood**, an evacuee, remembers

*“At Hanney School there was one teacher I will never forget. Her name was Mrs Windsor. She looked exactly like Queen Mary. She never rested her back on a chair and sat up straight as a ramrod.*

*When she retired a farewell party was held for her. Some of the Mums & Dads were crying to see her go - she was so well loved”.*

Norma was also very sorry to leave East Hanney herself... *“a place I soon regarded as home”.*



# Misbehaviour

**Dolly Bevan** remembers:

*“Evacuee children were “picked” by villagers when they arrived. Some people were not used to children. Dolly’s oldest sister, who lived in Steventon Road, had two small girls to live with her. The little one, “Olive”, settled, but at school got into trouble and was shut into the cupboard where the coal buckets were kept and was covered in soot”.*

[See other recollections of the same “Olive” at the bottom of Don McDouall’s “Evacuee Memoirs”]

**John Spindloe** remembers *“...the evacuees arriving in a bus at school. Two evacuees were added to Mrs Rotherford’s household opposite the school. They were badly clothed, upset at leaving their homes and had nits. Everyone got on together”.*



**Sad Ending:** Mrs Walker must have found her time at Hanney more stressful than her diary reveals. She applied for a “breakdown pension” from London County Council in Feb 1942.

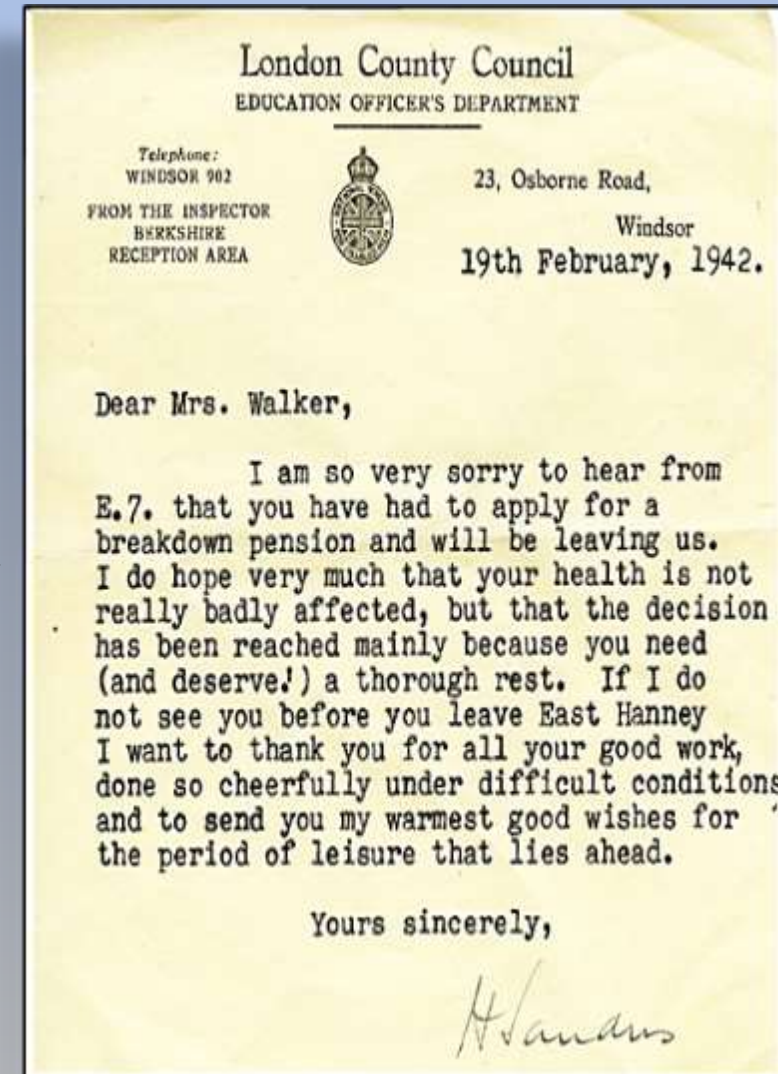
The teachers, parents and children at Hanney School were very sorry to see her leave, as written to her by “M Short”:

*“Dear Mrs Walker,*

*I find it difficult to believe that you are really going, and am very sorry in every way, except that I am glad that you will have a chance to look after yourself. When will you be leaving Hanney? Is there time for you to come round for a cup of tea before you do?...Every good wish for a very happy retirement and many, many thanks for all you have done to help things run smoothly, especially at the start, under very difficult conditions...If you can will you let us know how things are going with you? Every possible good wish.*

*Yours sincerely,*

*M Short”.*





# Evacuee Memories

This is mainly based on the first few months described in “A London Evacuees Memoirs”, published by Don McDouall in 2001.

Don McDouall (calling himself “Donny”) was born in Stepney in 1934. He was separated from his mother and two sisters when he was evacuated to Hanney on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1939.

He was billeted with the Lyford family at “Tamarisk” in East Hanney, along with three other boys. Two of them quickly returned to their homes in London, and the third after three years.

## A London Evacuees Memoirs



Don McDouall

# Arrival at Wantage Road Station

Donny didn't remember getting on the train, but though knew he was with his big sister Esther he couldn't find her anywhere.

He cried, which put him to sleep. He woke to the harsh sounds of carriage doors opening, of people yelling, and dogs barking, and found that he had lost the brown parcel that contained all his clothes. So he stood, empty handed, in the midst of a sad "mess" of Londoners...too hungry and worn out even to cry any more.

He saw a car, but he had never been in one before. He finally found himself on the car floor, where the dust from the carpet made him sneeze.



# Delivery to Tamarisk

The “Warden” was trying to at least look as if he was in charge. He halted the weary group of Londoners slap bang in front of the green iron gate of the house “Tamarisk”.

With the help of Mrs Walker (one of the London teachers) he ticked off the names from the large cardboard list, which they hoped would correspond to the smudged writing on the individual “markers” on the necks of the four little boys who were about to be allocated...or billeted...or perhaps put in care with Mrs Lyford.



Ann Holland, another child who was an early evacuee, staying with her grandparents, Mr & Mrs Painton, heard her grandma comment “*Poor Mrs Lyford! How will she be able to understand boys?*” Donny later realised that she never did!

## Attempted Escape

Donny found himself in this alien space – the low-ceilinged room was the kitchen of the house. Everything was too much for him. He wanted so much to go home...even more so he wanted his mum.

He could see that the front door was open, but this “giant” of a grownup blocked the way... *“Stop him, don’t let him get out!”*

He saw a “Singer” sewing machine in a corner, with a cast iron treadle frame. He’d never seen a sewing machine, but his instinct told him it was a great place to hide. He quickly scrambled between the treadle and the wall, screwed himself tightly into a tight ball and shut his eyes – hoping that all this terrible nightmare would disappear.

But it wasn’t to be. The “giant” was poking him with a broom handle and it hurt terribly.





# First Winter at Hanney

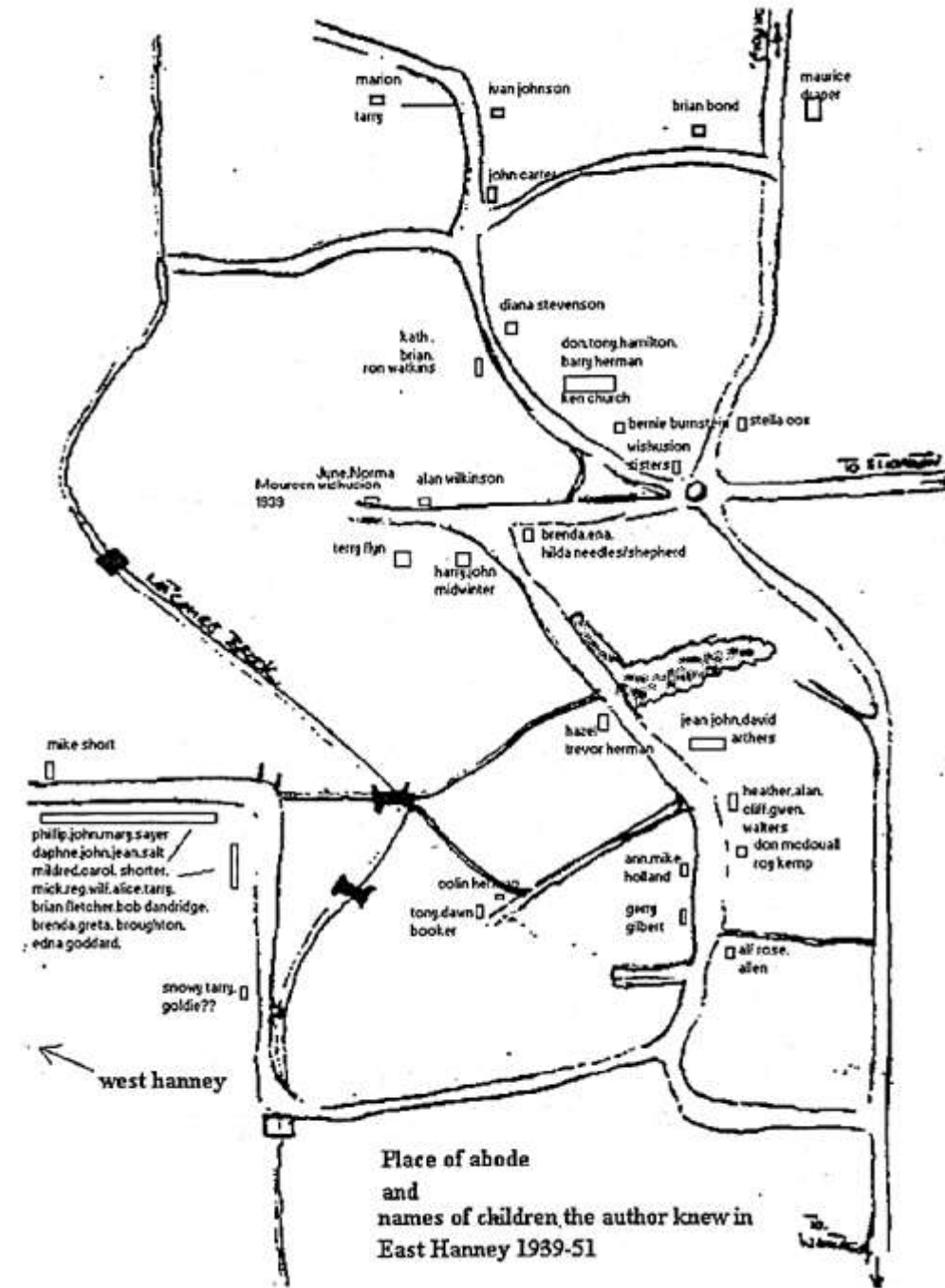
Donny remembers a happy event from his early years at Hanney. This was a Christmas party for all the London kids in the village thrown by Mrs Flyn from “Hazeldene” (*sic*) – a “mansion of a house” directly opposite “Tamarisk”. He became violently sick from eating too many cream buns, blancmange and jelly.

The year 1940 came in bitterly cold and going to school was absolute hell for him as he was for ever falling over. Maybe it was the cast-off men’s boots that he had to wear – four sizes too big and made from stiff leather.

But life wasn’t all bad. He remembers going “sliding” over the iced pond just to the left of Dandridge’s Mill, and playing his first game of conkers – getting angry when his opponent wouldn’t hold his conker still.



# Places of abode and names of children Don McDouall knew in 1939-1951



# Places of interest to Don McDouall

# East Hanney 1940-1951

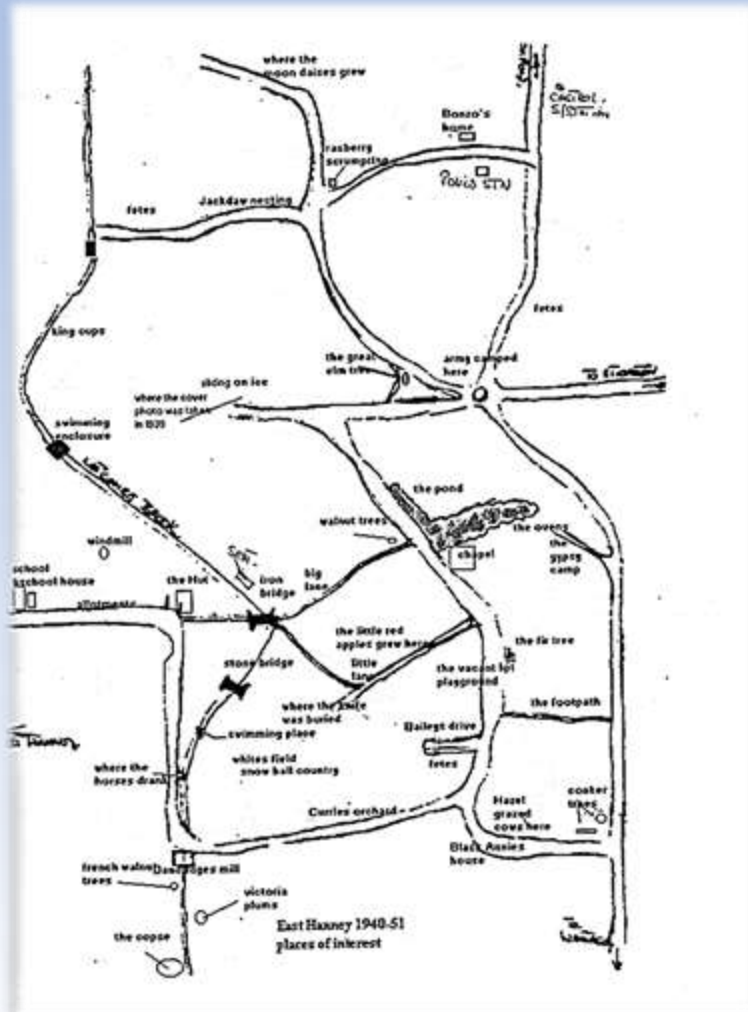
# West Hanney 1939-1951

After the war Donny was first placed in care at "Poundcroft" - a Boys' Home in East Hanney.

Later in 1945 he was moved to another Boys' Home in Bourne End, Bucks, but then returned to "Tamarisk" in 1947.

In 1952 he emigrated to Australia, where he still lives.

In 1998 he finally found his two sisters, whom he had not seen since the outbreak of the war.





# Other Memories

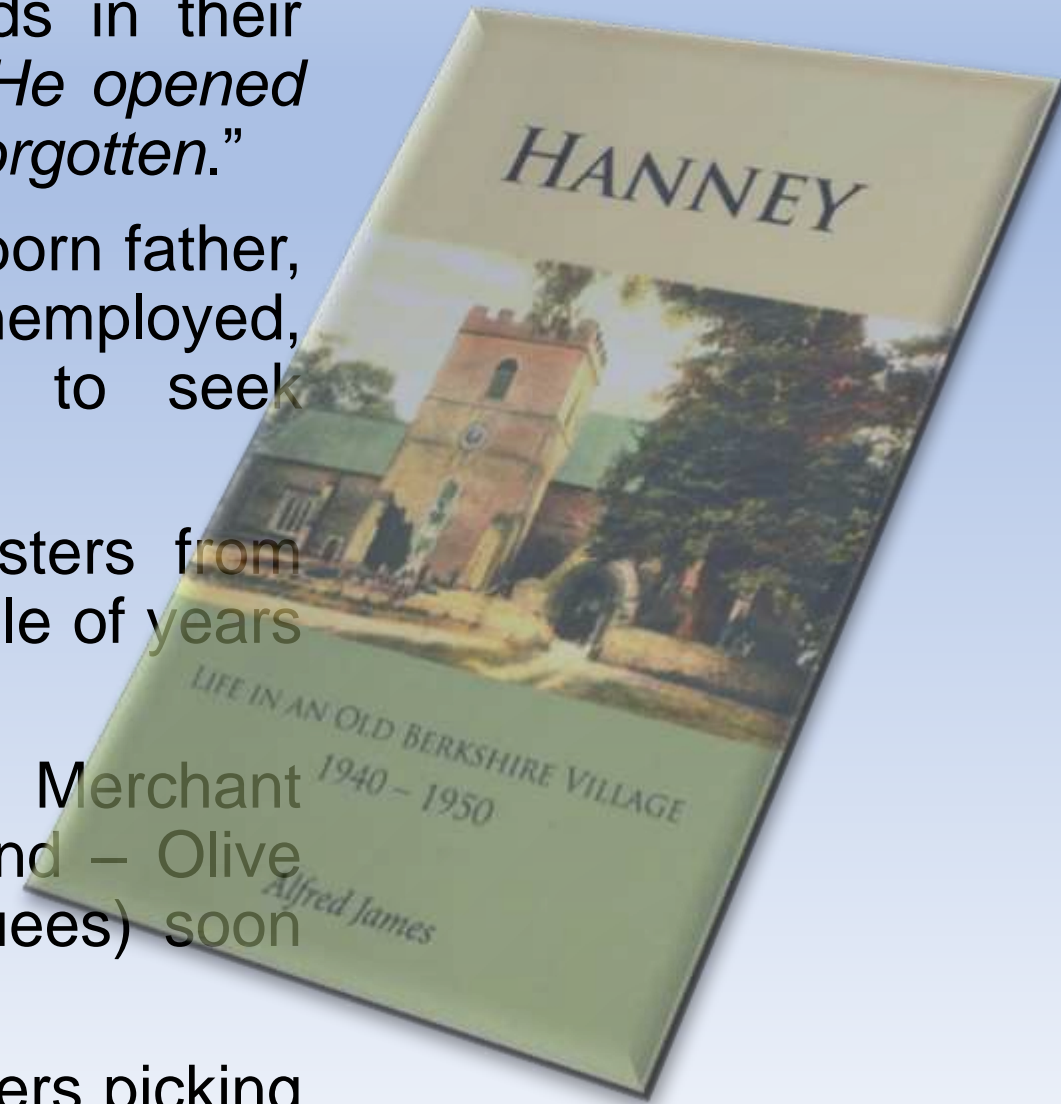
Donny McDouall and Clive Spinage were friends in their early teenage years. *"We went fishing together. He opened up my memory bank...remembering things I had forgotten."*

Clive was not strictly an evacuee – his Berkshire-born father, having moved to London in the 1920s, became unemployed, and decided to move to Hanney in 1940 to seek employment. He lived on the Steventon Road.

One of his neighbours billeted two evacuee sisters from London – Beryl, about his age, and Eileen, a couple of years older.

Another neighbour whose husband was in the Merchant Navy billeted two evacuee girls from the East End – Olive and the elder Hilda, who (like many older evacuees) soon returned to London.

Writing under the name Alfred James, he remembers picking windfall plums with Olive outside "Poundcroft" - *"I remember Olive filling her knickers with them to carry them home"*.





# Evacuation in Practice

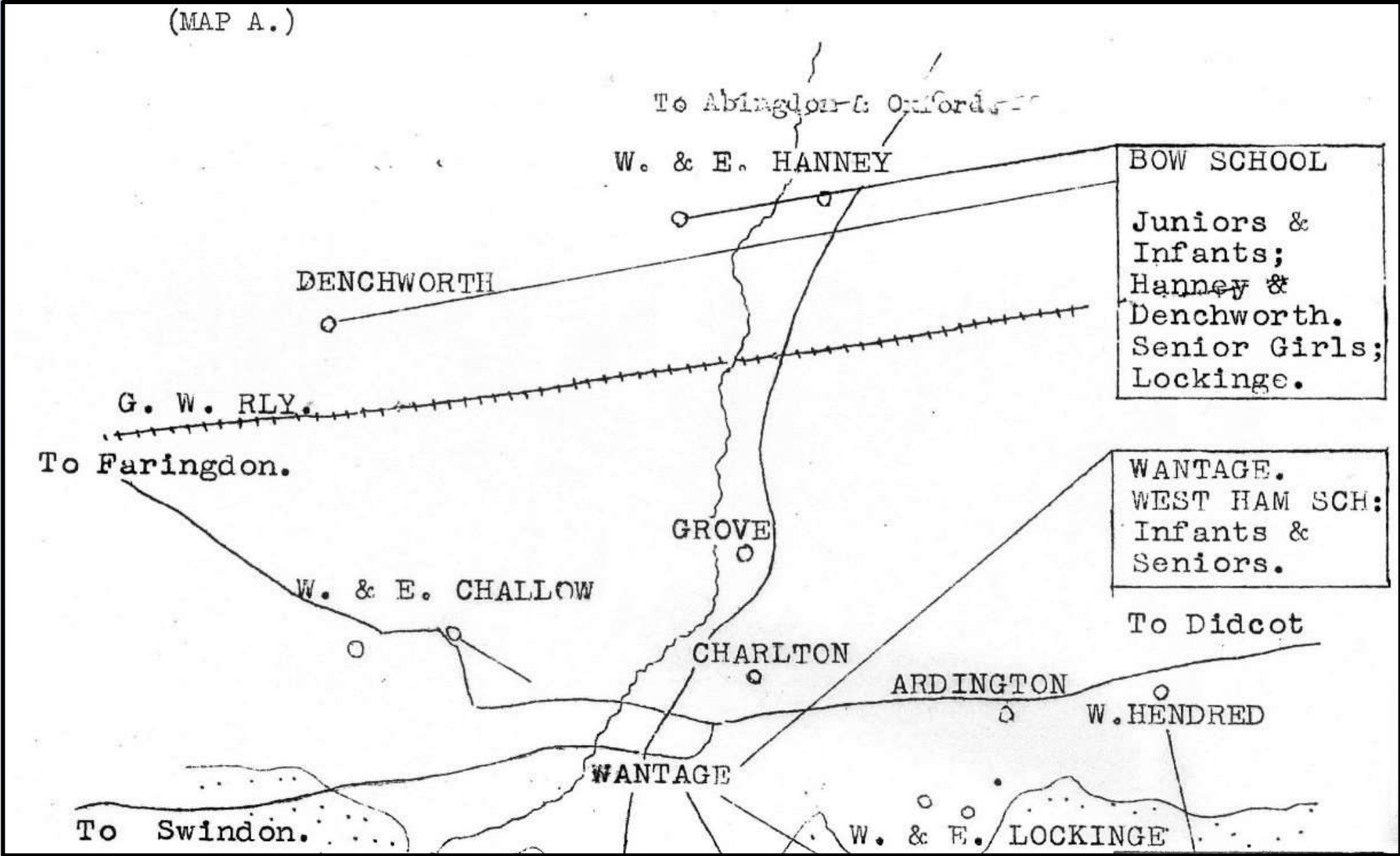
A study of a "Rural Reception Area" was prepared 12 weeks after some 570 London children were evacuated to the Wantage area on 3rd September 1939.

## Explanation:

This survey was made twelve weeks after evacuation took place. During this time the scheme has to a large extent collapsed. This is especially true of the evacuation of mothers with children, the great majority of whom never left or have since returned to the evacuation areas. Conditions are now more stable and the returns are reduced to a steady trickle.

But the danger of large-scale air raids is as real as it ever was. If the war goes on its tempo will increase and inevitably, at some stage or other, we must expect the full strength of the enemy air forces to be thrown against the civil population. The statement in our first Report, that "evacuation can and must be made a success," is as true now as it was then.

# Location of Evacuees





# Effect of War on the Communities

Wartime changes. The war has had a profound effect on the life of this rural area and seems here a much more real affair than it does in London. Schoolchildren, mothers and babies, private families, and some business firms have moved into Wantage. All except one of the public halls in the town have been commandeered by the military authorities and normal social activities are therefore disorganised. Actual billeting of soldiers has taken place only on a small scale, but the presence of soldiers in a town of this size must have important social consequences. Many plans

# Owners of larger properties did not seem to be enthusiastic to take evacuees!

Our enquiries showed that only a minority of the owners of larger houses were willing to receive evacuees. Many took it for granted that they should be sent to the smaller houses, their estimation of the weekly payments being that they were of value to the working class but not worth consideration by them. One or two had filled their houses with relatives of their servants, and so could claim that they had no available accommodation. Another, we were told by a villager, had avoided evacuees by saying that she was reserving her house for air raid casualties. As they are extremely unlikely in such a place she will probably go on living undisturbed.



## The process was a shock to both sides:

"I knew what to expect, but the villagers got a bit of a shock" were the words of a vicar of one village, who had himself been in an East London parish. But it was just as big a shock to the evacuees, for their whole lives were uprooted. Much has been heard of dirt and poverty among the town dwellers, but there has been just as telling an exposure of the isolated life and the lack of social services and amenities among the rural population. Any evacuated teacher will bear witness to this.

**Mothers evacuated with their young children were particularly unhappy and unwelcome...**

MOTHERS WITH YOUNG CHILDREN

Of the 65 mothers who came with their babies and young children only eleven remain. Their visit remains little more than a bitter memory to the country people, and the practically unanimous verdict is "never again".

# Visits by parents from London were not appreciated...

Visits by parents. Unorganised and often unexpected visits by parents have been the immediate cause of more returns to the towns than any other factor. They have caused great difficulties for fosterparents and teachers, and it was the general opinion that they had a most disturbing effect on the children and the parents often behaved inconsiderately to the country people. There were of course exceptions, one village having no complaints at all on this score.



## The senior Evacuee Girls had other impacts!

Special difficulties arose in the village where there were senior girls. In the absence of social facilities they had so much time on their hands that they were able to devote a great deal of it to the village lads, with considerable effect. By the time of our survey most of them had returned home, to the relief of both teachers and fosterparents.



# Evacuation Statistics

Overall, only 59% of the Evacuees to the Wantage area remained after 12 weeks, but the percentage in the surrounding villages was lower at 55%.

For West Hanney the figure was at the villages average of 55%, but for East Hanney it was well above average at 74%. Was East Hanney more welcoming?

					Remaining			
Location	Population 1931	Possible Evacuees	Prepared For	Received Sept 1940	After 6 weeks	% of Received	After 12 weeks	% of Received
W Hanney	283	154	51	31	22	71%	17	55%
E Hanney	506	167	51	31	23	74%	23	74%
Villages	4021	1790	468	282	215	76%	154	55%
Wantage	3790	1675	470	291	228	78%	185	64%
Total	7811	3465	938	573	443	77%	339	59%

# The Hanneys at war

The number of people engaged in war-related jobs and voluntary work in the Hanneys was recorded in the register of all persons in England and Wales completed on the 29th September 1939 – exactly eighty years before our exhibition!

## Special Constables

Volunteer police officers. They helped the village policeman patrol the village, and before the Home Guard was established were the first line of defence in case of an invasion.

<b>East Hanney</b>	<b>4 constables</b>
<b>West Hanney</b>	<b>7 constables</b>



# Air Raid Precautions

Air Raid Precautions were the responsibility of the local council, which in Hanney was the Wantage Rural District Council.

As well as the familiar ARP Wardens, there were also sections for

- Rescue and Demolition from bomb damaged buildings
- Decontamination in case of gas or chemical attack and the
- Auxiliary Fire service.
- Women would volunteer as First Aiders or as Ambulance drivers.

**East Hanney 12 ARP volunteers**

**West Hanney 9 ARP volunteers**





# Other volunteers

Other village residents volunteered for

- Nursing auxiliary service, or
  - Mobile nursing, or
  - St. John Ambulance, or as a
  - canteen worker
- at the Wantage soup kitchen, which had taken over the domestic science classrooms at St. Mary's school.



# Civilian workers in military units

No.3 Maintenance Unit RAF Milton, and

No.4 Section Royal Army Ordnance Corp, Didcot,

were military stores and workshops based together on the site that later became Didcot power station and Milton science and business park.

After the outbreak of WW2 more civilians were needed to work in these units, ranging from building 'planes to sewing army bottles.

**East Hanney 19 RAF workers and 8 Army workers**

**West Hanney 9 RAF workers and 15 Army workers**

# Preparing for invasion

Hanne men probably helped prepare some of the pillboxes, 'dragon's teeth' (which were reinforced concrete pyramids designed to impede tanks and mechanised infantry) and other concrete obstacles that comprised 'Stop Line Red'.

Stop Line Red was Britain's lighter equivalent of the Maginot Line, aiming to obstruct the progress of invading troops as they moved north.

The German army would undoubtedly have passed Hanne in that event, and our Home Guard would no doubt have been in action. Hanne has no pillboxes.

Many of these barriers still survive, and there were once about twenty pillboxes of various sizes between the current A34 and A420. Some have been converted to commercial use rather than attempt their demolition.

For further information on Stop Line Red see the additional presentation on this website entitled

***Defence Stop Line 1940,***  
which presents, courtesy of Radley College Archive,  
***Invasion 1940: Britain's Defence Line near Radley***

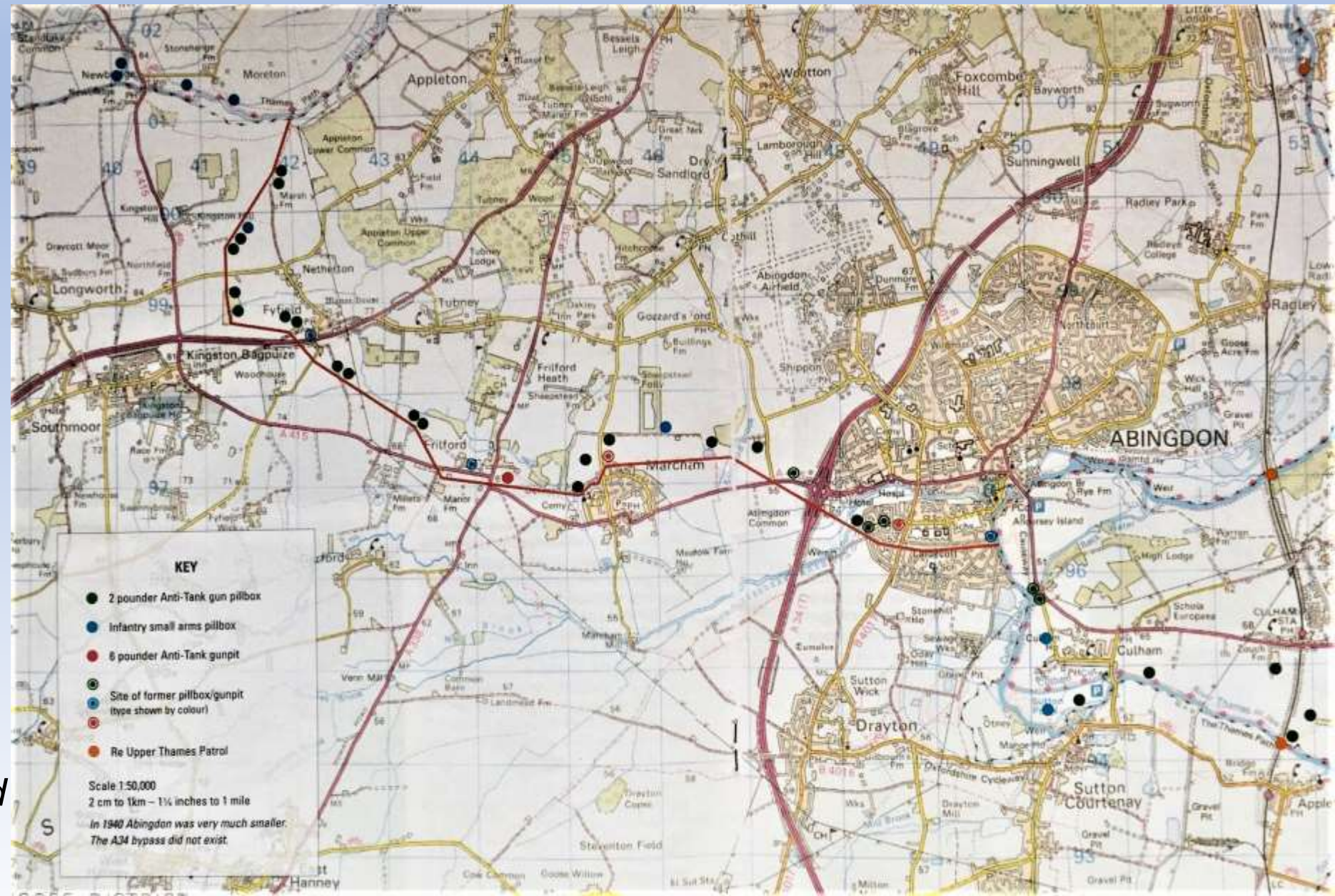


# Stop Line Red

‘Red’ mostly used the natural barrier of the Thames, so most pillboxes follow the river; but where the line needed straightening, because the Thames meandered too much, the line took short cuts.

Appleford to Newbridge was one of these stretches, with more than forty barricades along its length.

*By kind permission of  
Radley College Archive and  
Kennington History Society*





# Stop Line Red

These photographs are of a pillbox at Fyfield, and a 6 pounder gun pit on a rise at Frilford.



They are 2014 images from the Geograph website

# The Home Guard

The Home Guard, initially the Local Defence Volunteers [LDV], was formed on the 14th May 1940. The fear of German paratroops was the main motivation.

The Vale and Thames Valley were identified as likely drop zones. There were the two 'stop lines' of pill boxes and other concrete defences along the Thames and Kennet, but the villages also had to identify their own local ambush points in a War Book – its own plan of village military resources - of which the History Group has a copy.

Hanney was part of the Wantage company of the 5th Berkshire Battalion Home Guard. The platoon sizes varied with the population of each village. Hanney averaged about twenty. The initial excitement of being in uniform - which arrived after a time, but often didn't fit - soon wore off.

Old Lee-Enfield rifles arrived later. They obviously worked, as Hanney won the inter-platoon shooting cup in 1942. The stories of the Hanney battalion, and most others, seem to imply that the BBC 'Dad's Army' series was very near the truth.



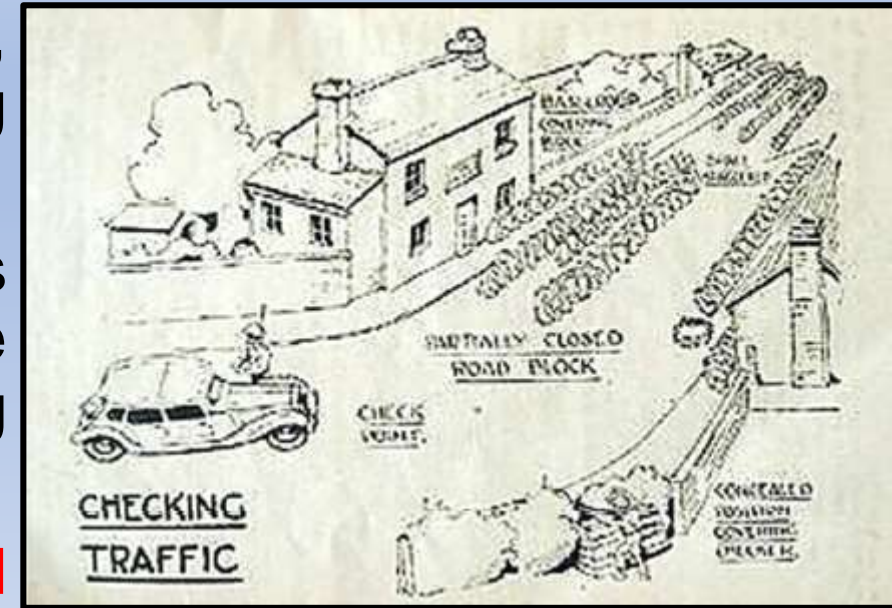
# The Home Guard

The Home Guard totalled 1.5 million volunteers nationally, with 1400 troops in the 5th Berkshire Battalion sharing 1850 weapons. Lambourn even had a cavalry section!

Resources improved in time, although as the diagrams from a training manual show, improvisation was often the key. A vital role was also releasing regular troops being used to guard railways and other such targets.

By late 1944 it was clear the invasion threat was over, and on 31<sup>st</sup> December the Home Guard was stood down. A final parade was held in London on 3<sup>rd</sup> December, before King George VI.

Four Berkshire men were selected to attend, and one, Private C.W. Dunsden, was from Hanney. He in part represented a huge number of volunteers who had made a vital contribution to the war effort, and probably enjoyed their service almost as much as their television counterparts. We owe them our thanks.



# The Defence Medal

The Defence Medal was awarded to members of the Home Guard.

The colours of the ribbon represent

Green                the Homeland

Black                the Blackout

Orange              Fires caused by the bombing



# Women's Home Guard Auxiliary

When women were eventually officially admitted into the Home Guard they were issued with this plastic brooch to show membership. They were never issued with uniforms.

Plastic economy-issue Home Guard Badge

Issued from July 1943. Could be worn on left side of a coat or dress, but frequently worn as a Hat Badge.





# Stories of the Hanney Home Guard Battalion

The stories of the Hanney battalion, and most others, seem to imply that the BBC 'Dad's Army' series was very near the truth. The late Ted Carter, later village baker, and then a very young member of the Hanney platoon, describes guarding key village assets:

*' We were first of all the Auxiliary Fire Service. There were six of us, and we had a hand pump which went up and down and pumped water, but only God knows whether we would have put out any fire. Then the LDV was formed with Mr Eady in charge. A lot of us weren't even old enough – you had to be 17. Our guns came from the First World War, in boxes full of grease, and we had to clean them up to look something like rifles.*

*We were supposed to do a patrol with four people each*

*night. Ted Booth was my mate, then there were two older men, and you had to laugh at what we really got up to! It was before we were called up, and our beat was to walk all around the houses, then march up to Wantage Road Station, contact the Grove Home Guard, and walk back.*

*Well, our idea was to get on our bikes, ride as fast as we could to the station, ride back to the bakery, and have a kip. We would set the alarm, get up and go back to the billet, and wake up the other two, and they'd*

*say, " Well, you've been good". Or if we overslept, we'd say "We've done your turn as well". If our duty was on a Saturday night, and there was a dance on, we would go to the old village hall, 'The Hut'. If Mr Tombs was on the door, we'd put our rifles under the table and carry on to the dance in our boots and uniform. When the dance ended, we would meet up and sign off our beat. All the village were asleep, and thought we were guarding them!'*

# Target Hanney? Our Shadow Factory

Much production of armaments was dispersed from major factories, to avoid being bombed.

Mosquito parts were made at Dandridge's Mill.

By then the Luftwaffe was busy in Russia, so there were few spare bombers, and it escaped attack.

There was also a much bigger Bofors gun factory in Tubney Woods.

Hanney villagers worked at both.



MILL & HOUSE, EAST HANNEY, NR. WANTAGE.

# Target Hanney? The environs

Hanney was a potential target area for German bombs. By 1943 it was surrounded by four airfields within 5 miles. These were Grove, Shellingford, Kingston Bagpuize, and Bush Barn, which was a naval outstation used for parking aircraft to avoid excessive concentrations.

Those near Hanney had non-operational and training functions, and escaped bombing completely, as did the two villages, though one bomb did fall near the site of the current airstrip north of the village. It was probably aimed at the dummy airfield created to protect RAF Abingdon. The crater still forms a pond in Roxey Meadow.

Further afield, Abingdon and Harwell were each bombed about five times in 1940-41 when they were bomber airfields. Brize Norton suffered the worst damage in the war from a single Luftwaffe raid, when over fifty aircraft were destroyed in August 1940.

# Airfields needed labour

At one stage at least fifty-six Tiger Moth aircraft were based at Shellingford, which was an elementary Flying Training School, mostly grading pilot entrants. It trained British, Czech and Dutch aircrews, including giving many D-Day glider pilots instruction on powered aircraft.

Shellingford remained open after the war, accommodating a USAF unit which serviced radar for bomber units at Brize Norton and Upper Heyford. It closed in 1948.

Local workers servicing a Tiger Moth at RAF Shellingford.



Robert Ayres, unknown, and William Miles, of Charney Bassett



# Pilot Training at Shellingford



„Tiger“ T5378 with sequence number 16 was relatively frequently used by Czechoslovak flying staff in No. 3 EFTS in Shellingford. It had anti-spin strakes not yet mounted and identification field of yellow-green colour was painted on the fuselage back.



Shellingford Blister Hangar  
in 2008

# Grove Airfield

Grove airfield was built from 1940 onwards. Many Hanney residents must have worked or socialised there.

It was planned as a reserve RAF bomber station, and became a training airfield, but was reallocated in late 1943 as a support and maintenance airfield for the US Army Air Corps, with building still ongoing.

The arrival of the Americans improved local supplies of chewing gum and chocolate, but led to stories of conflict within local pubs.

Their heavy workload supported transport and communications elements of the D-day landings, but by February 1946 they were gone.

RAF Grove ceased most flying activities in 1947, but remained open as a maintenance airfield until shortly before its handover to the Atomic Energy Research Establishment (AERE) Harwell for civilian use in 1955.



# Flying into Grove – Plane spotting in Class?

The end of the main runway was only a mile from Hanney, pointing between the two villages, so many aircraft would have carried out their 'Finals' turn roughly over the village school.

This cannot have made the teachers' tasks easier, or improved academic performance!



This USAAC (United States Army Air Corps) photo shows how close the airfield was. It was a busy airfield from 1941, but there appear to have been few accidents affecting the Hanneys, and RAF Grove was apparently never bombed.

# Hanne War Memorial: 1939-1945

*Used with kind permission of Matthew Smaldon.*

## 1940

The first man from Hanne who died was Reginald Hopkins.

Aged 29, Reginald was serving with 15 Squadron, RAF in France as a Sergeant (Observer).

On the 18th May 1940 his Bristol Blenheim took off from Abbeville in northern France. His destination was Le Cateau, however Reginald was shot down by German Me 109s, and crashed near the village of Preau-au-Bois where he lies alongside his pilot, Squadron Leader Hector Lawrence.

Reginald married Myra Martin from Wantage in 1937.



# 1940

Herbert John Franklin was serving with the 4th Battalion, Royal Berkshire Regiment when he lost his life aged 23, on the 26th May 1940.

The Royal Berkshire Regiment had been participating in a fighting withdrawal through Belgium, and Herbert was killed somewhere in the vicinity of the village of Zuidschote, not far from Ypres.

He was the son of Albert and Phyllis Ellen Franklin of West Hanney.

# 1941

George Thomas Burnett is one of two Second World War casualties buried in St James the Great Churchyard.

At the time of his death, George was serving with the 4th Battalion, Oxfordshire & Buckinghamshire Light Infantry Regiment. George had been with the 4th Bn. in France in 1940, where the Regiment were used as a 'rear-guard' to protect the soldiers retreating to Dunkirk.

The Battalion was decimated during a battle to hold a small hill-top town called Cassel. The majority of the men were either captured or killed, and very few escaped. Those who did escape were left to their own devices to find their way to Dunkirk.

This is what apparently happened to George, who, according to his family, was separated from his unit, and while he made it to Dunkirk, he had had to drink from puddles to survive. This caused him to fall ill during the evacuation, and while he returned home he never fully recovered, and died aged 31 on the 10th November 1941, presumably in the Military Hospital at Newton Abbott in Devon where his death was recorded.

# 1941

George Burnett was born in Sutton in Surrey in 1910. His mother was Alice Mary Dix of West Hanney. His father was Luke Burnett from near Croydon.

In 1915, George's father was killed in Belgium, fighting with the East Surrey Regiment. His name is recorded on the Menin Gate at Ypres.

Alice returned to West Hanney, where she married Percy Cyril Belcher in 1919, and this is where George grew up, later becoming solo chorister at the church in which he is now commemorated.

*With thanks to George's niece Ann Young and nephew Richard Bates, and Louise Green and Ann Fewins of the Hanney History Group.*



George Thomas BURNETT – with kind permission of his family.



# 1943

The deaths of three men linked with Hanney during 1943 involve the surrender of Singapore, and the harsh imprisonment conditions suffered by those captured by the Japanese Army.

Eric George Dance and Claude Albert Jones were both serving with the 35<sup>th</sup> Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment, Royal Artillery.

Frederick James Monk was a member of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment.

# 1943

Eric George Dance and Claude Albert Jones were both serving with the 35th Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment, Royal Artillery.

The 35th was formed in September 1939, predominantly from volunteers in the Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Wiltshire and Gloucestershire regions. After a period of home defence in England, the Regiment departed Greenock in Scotland on 13th November 1941. After stopping in Durban, South Africa, they eventually arrived in Singapore on 13th January 1942.

When the Japanese invaded Singapore on 7th February 1942, the 144th Battery and the Regimental HQ were cut off and captured. They remained imprisoned in Singapore until the 18th October 1942, when they were transferred with a party of six hundred prisoners to Rabaul in New Britain, and then on to a camp at Kokopo.

In November, over five hundred of the fittest men were transferred to a small island called Ballale in the Solomons, to build an airstrip. Not a single man survived the imprisonment on Ballale.

# Captain Eric George Dance

Captain Eric George Dance was born in 1900 in Weybridge Surrey, and was a company director with Lloyds of London before the war. He was married, and had a home in Belgravia in London, and at Pound Croft, in East Hanney.

He was captured in Singapore on the 15<sup>th</sup> February 1942.

Transferred to Kokopo, he became the senior officer of the remaining 88 men who were not sent to Ballale.

Remaining at Kokopo, he became seriously ill, and was carefully tended by men from the regiment. However, he did not recover from his illness, and he is recorded as dying on the 30<sup>th</sup> April 1943 due to dysentery and exhaustion.





# Gunner Claude Albert Jones

Gunner Claude Albert Jones was also not local to Hanney. He was born in Portsmouth in 1910, and his family lived in Havant. His pre-war occupation was listed as both a chauffeur and valet.

He was also captured in Singapore on the 15<sup>th</sup> February. He was serving with the Regimental HQ at this time.

On his POW Capture card, it is indicated that his contact for reports is not his parents, but Miss D Walcroft, East Hanney. Claude had been working in East Hanney prior to the war, and presumably made the acquaintance of Miss Walcroft then. Miss Walcroft later married, and became Dorothy Bevan. She was a resident of East Hanney for most of her life, and died in June 2019 aged 97.

Transferred to Ballale Island. He died on the 5<sup>th</sup> March 1943.

# A chance discovery

While it seemed highly likely that Captain Dance and Gunner Jones would know each other, due to the fact they were both linked to East Hanney, there were no confirmed records linking them.

However, a chance discovery of a record on “Ancestry” changed this.

On the 28th December 1938, the MV Amerika of the East Asiatic Co. Ltd departed Southampton, with the destination of Vancouver. A small number of passengers were destined to leave the ship at Kingston, Jamaica.

One was a member of Lloyds, Eric George Dance, of Pound Croft, East Hanney. The other was his valet, of the same address – Claude Albert Jones.

# Kranji War Cemetery in Singapore

Both Captain E.G. Dance and Gunner C.A. Jones are commemorated on the memorial at Kranji, which lists the names of over 24,000 casualties of the land and air forces of the Empire who died during the campaigns in Malaya and Indonesia or in subsequent captivity, and who have no known grave.





# Gunner Frederick James Monk

Gunner Frederick James Monk was born in either Didcot or East Hanney in 1916. It seems he was living at 2 Court Cottages in East Hanney when he joined the Army.

A member of the 3rd Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment, he was captured at Singapore on the 15th February 1942. Unlike Claude Jones and Eric Dance, he was not transported to New Britain. The captured members of the 3 HAA Regiment were put in camps in and around Changi Prison.

Frederick left Singapore on the 29th April 1943 on Train 12, as part of “F” Force. “F” Force was one of the groups of POWs who were transported to work on the infamous Thai-Burma Railway. There were over 7000 POWs in this group, 3336 of them British and the rest Australian. Of the British POWs, 2037 died – over 60%.

On the 8th June 1943, Frederick Monk died. He was part of the forced march of POWs who were being driven north towards the Burmese border to work on the railway. He is recorded as dying from exhaustion, after dropping out of the march. Originally buried at Tha Khanun Base Cemetery, his grave now lies alongside nearly 7000 other POWs at Kanchanaburi War Cemetery in Thailand.

# Hanney's Military Fallen

Frederick James MONK

Baptised 27<sup>th</sup> January 1918 West Hanney

Died 8<sup>th</sup> June 1943 Age 25

3 H.A.A. Regt R.A. Gunner 845475

Kanchanaburi war cemetery, Thailand

*From a long established local farming family, the son of Fred and Janet Monk of East Hanney. His father Fred fought in WW1, and is in the victory photo. His cousin Vincent Monk is remembered on the WW1 memorial.*



# Hanney's Military Fallen

Herbert John FRANKLIN

Born 1917 West Hanney

Died 26<sup>th</sup> May 1940 Age 23

4<sup>th</sup> Btn. Royal Berks. Regt.

Pte 5337877

Zuidschote churchyard,  
West-Vlaanderen, Belgium

*Son of Albert and Phyllis Franklin.*

*Phyllis was the daughter of Charles Barrett,  
stonemason, of West Hanney.*

*His uncle Horace Barrett is remembered on  
the WW1 memorial.*





# Hanney's Military Fallen

George Thomas BURNETT

Born 1910 Sutton, Surrey

Died 10<sup>th</sup> November 1941 Age 31

4<sup>th</sup> Btn. Ox and Bucks Light infantry

Pte 5380506

West Hanney churchyard.

In 1939 George was an RAF packer at No.3 M.U. RAF Milton. He was a reservist class B Ox and Bucks L.I.

*Son of Luke and Alice Burnett.*

*Alice was the daughter of Thomas and Belinda Dix of West Hanney.*

*In 1911 the family was living in Carshalton. Luke was killed in WW1 and Alice returned to W.H. with George. She married Percy Belcher who is on the WW1 victory photo.*



# Hanney's Military Fallen

Reginald George HOPKINS

Born 2<sup>nd</sup> April 1910 Fulbrook, Burford

Died 18<sup>th</sup> May 1940 Age 30

15 Sqdn RAF Sergeant  
(Observer) 561177

Preux-Au-Bois communal cemetery, south-east of Lille.

He joined the RAF on National Service, 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1928.

*Son of Clement and Edith Hopkins.*

*He married Myra Martin from Darlington in 1937 in Abingdon.*

*His widowed mother was housekeeper at Grange Farm in North Denchworth, and his wife was a domestic servant there.*



# Hanney's Military Fallen

Sydney George ARTHURS

Born 10<sup>th</sup> September 1912

Died 22<sup>nd</sup> December 1945 Age 33

31<sup>st</sup> Btn. Suffolk Regt.

Pte 5347800

West Hanney churchyard

*In 1939 he was living in E.H. working as a builder's labourer. In 1940 he married Lizzie Belcher.*

*Son of John and Ellen Arthurs of East Hanney.*

*His father is remembered on the WW1 memorial.*





# Hanne's Military Fallen

Eric George DANCE

Born 26th October 1900, Weybridge, Surrey.

Died 30th April 1943 Age 42

35th L.A.A. Regt R.A.

Captain 106005

Kranji war cemetery, Singapore.

The 35th was initially a territorial regiment protecting local airfields.

Late in 1941 they sailed to Singapore, arriving just before its fall. Captured by the Japanese, he was sent to Kokopo, Papua New Guinea, where he died in the camp.



*Son of Sir George and Lady Grace Dance. Sir George was famous in the theatre world.*

*Eric studied at Christ Church, Oxford and became a barrister. He became a co-director and producer with the Oxford Playhouse company, and later helped fund the building of their theatre in Beaumont Street.*

*As a Member of Lloyds he crossed the Atlantic several times in the 1930's. In '38 and '39 he gave his address as Pound Croft, East Hanne.*

*He variously travelled with his valet Claude Jones, or friend John Eyre, a retired merchant banker and former Grenadier, who also lived at Pound Croft. John Eyre continued to live there after Eric and Claude had enlisted.*

*Probate granted after the war also shows his address as Pound Croft.*

# Hanney's Military Fallen

Claude Albert JONES

Born 1910 Havant, Hants

Died 5<sup>th</sup> March 1943 Age 33

H.Q. 35<sup>th</sup> L.A.A. Regt R.A.

Gunner 1483253

Kranji war cemetery, Singapore.

*Son of George and Mary Jones.*

*He was not only valet, but also chauffeur, to Eric Dance at Pound Croft. Older residents of Hanney still remember the large white car he used to drive (possibly a Packard).*

*He became engaged to Dorothy (Dolly) Walcroft, whose father kept the Plough Inn (now La Fontana) near Pound Croft.*

*After he was captured in Singapore Dolly used to cycle to Oxford to go to meetings held for people whose relatives were POW's of the Japanese.*





# WW2 Display, 28th September 2019, St James Church





# WW2 Display, 28th September 2019, St James Church

At the display, Hanney resident John Spindloe studies a photo of himself as a boy at Hanney school, in the album made by Mrs Margaret Walker, one of the teachers evacuated from London with her school.







# WOMEN WANTED

## TO HELP THE CHILDREN FROM EVACUATED AREAS



THE CHILDREN LEAVE FOR SCHOOL



A LOOK IN THE PLAYTIME HALL



REPORT COOKS AND HELPERS PREPARE THE MID DAY MEAL



PLAYING AFTER SCHOOL HOURS



THE AFTERNOON BAKING AND KITCHEN CLUB



WOMEN HELP TO KEEP THE CHILDREN HEALTHY AND HAPPY

THESE ARE JOBS WHICH WILL HAVE TO BE DONE ALL WOMEN LOVE CHILDREN AND LIKE TO HELP THEM OFFER YOUR SERVICES

APPLY TO YOUR LOCAL COUNCIL  
OR LOCAL BRANCH OF THE  
WOMENS VOLUNTARY SERVICES

# mother



## don't forget baby's

COD LIVER OIL

AND ORANGE JUICE





Daily Herald  
WAR DECLARED BY  
BRITAIN AND FRANCE

2  
NAZIS CUT  
DEEP INTO  
FRANCE  
In Control, Says Paris;  
British Hold Louvain  
F.R. ASKS BILLION  
AND 50,000 PLANES

BRITAIN'S DAY  
OF REJOICING  


13 MILLION MILES BETS TWO NAZIS  
Daily Sketch  
GERMANY'S TERMS  
Complete Capitulation of France  
SHE MUST HAND OVER STOCKS  
MATERIAL AND TERRITORY FOR WAR  
ON BRITAIN MUST TO BE CALLED TO  
HONOR PORTS AND DISARMED

Daily Sketch  
UNITED STATES GOES TO WAR WITH  
GERMANY AND ITALY  
ALL POWERS SIGN  
BATTLESHIP  
LINDSEY DETROIT  


THE STAR  
DOENITZ ANNOUNCES  
COMPLETE  
SURRENDER  
We Succumbed To  
Overwhelming Power  
THE NAZI IS BEING IN GERM. ALL THE  
GERMAN ARMS FORCES MUST BE  
UNCONDITIONALLY TO THE

Daily Herald  
11 JAP WARSHIPS, 12 TRANSPORTS, SUNK IN  
BATTLE OF SOLOMONS  
French Guards Beat Nazis  
Back In Tunis Clash  


DIDCOT  
Central Division Dept.  
RYE-LAWS

2019-2020 TALKS PROGRAMME

We offer a range of talks, mostly focused on the past of the Hanneys, Oxfordshire and the Vale of the White Horse. In summer we go on visits to historic buildings and archaeological sites. Topics for this season are listed below:

September 18 <sup>th</sup> David Peacock	Jack of Newbury - Cloth industry entrepreneur
October 22 <sup>nd</sup> Bill Owen	Radical - Thames highway hub, port and battleground
November 20 <sup>th</sup> Jill Eyles	Children at Work - the school of past industries
January 10 <sup>th</sup> Bernie Beckford	A History of the Mills and Banks Canal (17th-19th century)
February 20 <sup>th</sup> Keith Crawford	A History of Winery Shanks
March 24 <sup>th</sup> Andy Robertson	Hanney Characters through the ages
April 26 <sup>th</sup> Tony Holford	Steam and Steel at the Vale - railway & industry
May 20 <sup>th</sup> Liz Maskey	Oxfordshire and the Spanish Civil War 1936-39



New members and visitors are always welcome

Costs: 4 meetings for £10  
member's subscription at £2  
per talk for visitors (concessions available on request)

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Hanney History Group

EVERY 4<sup>TH</sup> TUESDAY OF THE MONTH:  
24 SEPT 2019 -  
26 MAY 2020  
8.00 P.M.

War Memorial Hall East Hanney

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War Memorial Hall East Hanney











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		1.2	Places of Interest Map		3.2 Evacuee Study 2
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# **This information was researched collected and presented by the following members of Hanney History Group:**

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