

WAR DECLARED

SEPTEMBER 3rd 1939



Evacuee children and their teachers arrived almost immediately. Clitheroe Rural District evacuees were from the Clayton area, one of the high risk parts of Manchester with houses near large works. Chipping's evacuees, from Ravensbury School, were part of this Manchester group. Bowland Rural District evacuees came from Bradford.

When the children arrived at Clitheroe Station clutching parcels of food and clothing they seemed bewildered. Many had never been into a country area before. Chipping WI were busy helping the billeting officers, and housing and caring for evacuated children.

The public were advised to avoid panic, carry gas masks, listen for sirens, be aware of first aid points and fire precautions and plan out what to do in an emergency. People got accustomed to carrying their gas masks wherever they went. Not all could expect protection:- "IF CAUGHT IN OPEN COUNTRY take shelter behind banks, hedges or in ditches."

Rail services were restricted and petrol rationing started Sept 16th. Transport became difficult. Deliveries of post and food supplies were disrupted. Buses were crowded. Many people resorted to push bikes.

The blackout was hazardous. Serious road accidents were reported, killing 400 people in Britain in the first week of the war. Driving with restricted lighting (using headlamp masks) was very difficult, specially on narrow country lanes. Lamp standards, sign pillars and even trees were painted with broad white bands to assist pedestrians in darkness.

There was a great boom in weddings. (5 times normal!) Young couples decided to get married before joining the services.

Schools reopened in mid September. Picture houses reopened under strict new regulations in October.

Economy with electricity was urged. eg. lamp size economy.

Halls, Passages, Kitchens, Bathrooms. 15W. Dining Rooms, Sitting Rooms. 25W.

A national register of households was compiled at the end of September.

Since early summer the Government had urged farmers to increase production and improve their land and stock. TB eradication in cattle continued. District Agricultural Committees were set up. Farmers were asked to reduce rabbits and plough up poor grassland. This plough up campaign was intensified in the autumn. Forage crops and oats were recommended. But autumn grass was plentiful locally and farmers were reluctant to plough. Also there were not yet enough tractors. During the year, farmers had a choice of local markets besides Clitheroe and Preston. At Chipping, four markets at the Talbot Hotel; at Whitewell, four at Whitewell Hotel and one at Root Farm; and at Chaigley the annual sale at Moorhead Farm. But by late October farmers were warned that soon only the Ministry of Food would buy fat stock. Farmers would be allocated to a collecting centre. Chipping, Leagram and Little Bowland, Aighton Bailey and Chaigley, were among the parishes allocated to Clitheroe Collecting Centre.

As the nights got longer, people were urged to invest in a radio for entertainment in the blackout, and also because important announcements were given "over the air". Chipping WI decided to buy wool to knit for the forces.

Many evacuee children took to country life. However, by the end of November, with no enemy raids as yet, some evacuees were being taken back by parents. 50% of Bowland evacuees had gone.