

# Wartime West Sussex 1939 – 1945

## EVACUEES

### Evacuees need recreational facilities

**Worthing Herald, November 17th 1939**

Since the beginning of October more than forty London boys have appeared At Worthing Juvenile Court. Another batch of boys is due to come before the court this afternoon. The majority of boys have been summoned for small thefts.

The "Herald" understands that if any of the evacuees are sent by order of the court to approved homes, the cost of their maintenance will fall upon the Worthing rates and not upon the London authorities.

It is generally realised among social workers (writes a Herald reporter) that more recreational and social facilities for the evacuees are needed if these juvenile offences are to be tackled at the source.

The trouble is that the extension of these facilities would be beyond the voluntary organisations which are doing their best to provide them at the moment. Worthing Boys' Club is a case in point.

Miss Ralli, of the London Probation Service, who is assisting the Worthing Probation Officer, has written to the Boys' Club asking if it would be possible to extend the evening recreational facilities to include more London children.

London children, she pointed out, are not accustomed to spending evenings at home. Usually, they are turned out to play after tea.

Evacuated children who stay at their billets in the evenings get on their hosts' nerves, and those who go out roam the street in search of something to do.

Miss Ralli considered that the establishment of some sort of play

centre from 5.30pm would not only be a boon to householders but would prevent some children from coming before the court.

The committee of the Boys' Club pointed out that it was financially impossible for the club to enter into further obligations. It forwarded Miss Ralli's letter to the Town Clerk with the recommendation that the local authority should consider the need of extending these facilities for the boys and, possibly, girls.

At the moment, the Boys' Club has accepted to membership seventy evacuee boys and the club is being used by London boys in the mornings for a nominal fee.

"If it were possible for us to assist, the committee would be only too pleased to help", the warden, Mr L. A. E. McCulloch, told me. "It is also absolutely impossible from a financial standpoint."

Another voluntary organisation which is doing what it can to assist in this way is the Boy Scouts' Association, which has placed the headquarters of its troops at the disposal of the evacuees.

Many of those connected with voluntary organisations, I believe, have felt from the beginning that this problem was a matter for the local authority. In spite of that, they have done what they could, but now they are at the limit of their resources.

I understand that others who are interested in the problem are likely to support the view of the Boys' Club that the local authority should take the responsibility.

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