

# Wartime West Sussex 1939 – 1945

## POWS AND REFUGEES

### **POWs in St Leonard's Forest**

From *Memories from a town that disappeared, Horsham during World War II*  
(Horsham Museum, 1989)

By Mrs S. Glaysher

A sad memory was of walking along the Sun Oak Road through St. Leonard's Forest seeing the prisoners of war standing behind the high wire fences, near the little church. They made a variety of wooden toys which they offered to us, and we visited them on many occasions - lonely, silent men, who knew no English other than 'hello - thank you - good-bye'. I think they were from the area known as White Russia, and returned to a very uncertain future at the end of the war. The wooden toys were little chickens on a board, which pecked with the beaks when we swung the attached wooden ball around; little men who climbed wooden ladders and turned somersaults were also made. Sometimes the prisoners took photographs of children out of their pockets to show us, with tears in their eyes, obviously remembering their own families. In the church the following Sunday we would be told to pray for our enemies, and it would be difficult to think of these little children, who looked much the same as us, as our 'enemies'. It was certainly easier to pray for them than for the booted soldiers we saw in the news reels.

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