

DON'T FORGET TO WRITE!



Belfast played an important role during the Second World War producing munitions, ships, aircraft, ropes, parachutes, and uniforms. This made it a possible target for an air raid. Some families took the threat seriously and evacuated their children to the countryside where they would be safer.

Some evacuees stayed with relatives and others stayed with complete strangers. For many it was the first time they had been on a farm. They enjoyed home-cooked meals and fresh milk, but often complained about the strange smells, noisy roosters and their new schoolteacher! Evacuees missed their parents so they wrote letters home to stay in touch and tell them about their experiences.

ACTIVITY

Imagine that you have just been evacuated from Belfast during the Second World War. Write a letter to your family back home using the template on the other side of this page.

Things to mention in your letter...

- How did it feel to say goodbye at the train station?
- How did you feel on the journey? Worried, excited, nervous, scared?
- Did you experience the Belfast Blitz before you left? If so, how did it make you feel?
- What did you pack in your suitcase, and did you forget anything?
- Are you living on a farm or in a village? Have you been helping with chores?
- Have you experienced anything unusual in the countryside?
- Try to use all five senses (vision, hearing, touch, smell, taste).
- If your brothers or sisters have been evacuated with you, are they okay?
- Have you made any new friends?
- Describe your host family, their house and your new school.
- What do you miss about home? Maybe you could ask your parents to visit or send you some treats in the post.
- End with hugs and kisses and a drawing of some of the things you've seen so far.



Need more ideas?

As a museum, we interview older people about their experiences during the Second World War. Read what these evacuees said, and take inspiration from their words:

"They had a big farm. In Belfast we had rationing so things were in short supply, but in Fermanagh they had a kitchen garden with fruit bushes and an orchard. What was not to like! I took to country life just like a duck to water. They had a big Clydesdale horse called Bob, a dog called Jeff and a cat called Daisy and they had barn cats that didn't come into the house. They had pigs, cows and twelve ducks. I collected the eggs. I helped to churn the butter and I fed the hens. I loved it!"
Margaret Wilson

"Food was always in short supply so it was not until we were evacuated out to Ballinderry in Lisburn that I saw my first egg. Powdered eggs were all that was available in Belfast."
Howard Burns

"We never knew what a farm was, we couldn't understand all these animals all over the place and the farmer walking around in welly boots... we didn't have any welly boots! We were glad to get back to Belfast again."
Harold Morgan

"There was a river that ran at the bottom of their field and we used to go down every morning and wash our faces in it, and then we went out and picked blackberries."
Harriet Smyth

"Not all houses had electric lights, so we used oil lamps when it got dark. People in the countryside spoke differently. Instead of saying 'a few apples' they said 'a wheen of apples' and boys were known as 'cutties' and girls were known as 'cutties'."
Doreen Black

