



## Michael Whitebrook

“And as I say when war broke out, immediately we had mothers and babies from Manchester which was, they were strange to the country. The billeting officers there was three of them, there was the Head Gardener from the estate, and his wife, lived in a nice house, probably got some amenities, then there was a bachelor who’d got a house keeper in a two bedroom house with a bathroom and the school master, he and his wife. And they had about I don’t know if it was about seventy, but there was two bus loads came anyway from the station of evacuees, they billeted them all round and as I say we’d only a two up and two down, no amenities, tin bath as you had to bring in front of the fire, and an outside toilet right down the yard. It’s still in the same place but of course it’s modernised now. He said we could manage one. And then I went with my mother and father, the night they arrived, you know late evening, all bedraggled and tired, would have been travelling, been travelling all day from early morning. Anyway, they all arrived in the village, and well it was nearly like an auction. “Oh there’s a nice little girl, I’ll take her” or “there’s a nice, strong boy I’ll take him to work on the farm”. And then they persuaded me mother and father to have Olive and Clive and then she said “Well could you take my friend?” and she was a girl the same age and her little brother, Joan and Sydney. But, so mother was soft-hearted and she took them but I mean the billeting officers who were the ones with the best properties in the village, they were the best properties, they’d probably got improvised bathrooms in them days, but they didn’t put any on their own.”