

World War II Christmas Day at Beaumanor Hall

During World War II, Beaumanor was instrumental in the effort to break the German Enigma code. The day draws heavily from this rich history to enhance the children's experience.



Core activities:

Arrival and welcome

WWII History of Beaumanor Hall and talk on being an Evacuee

Rationing

- The children will look at what foods are rationed and the effect this has on the traditional Christmas dinner. They will talk and learn about alternatives available to the traditional turkey roast
- The children will fill out an ID card and get it stamped
- The children will colour in a wartime-themed Christmas card and write a letter home inside to their Mum.

Radio Room

- This session is run as on a normal WWII day with children listening to coded radio messages then trying to decode them
- The session concludes with a discussion on the importance of this continuing work, even at Christmas.

Air-raid Shelter

- Children learn about what needed to be done in order to survive an air raid and begin to empathise with people who live through air raids now and in the past
- A story will be read to them
- There will be references to Christmas during war-time with the singing of carols, and the shelter will have some modest decoration.

Seeing Santa - this is a surprise activity taking place in the Air-raid Shelter

- The Instructor will exit the room and re-enter dressed as Santa. He will hand out a small gift whilst wishing them a Merry Christmas. The idea behind this being that they are making do with what they had, trying to make the most of a bad situation.

Finish and Depart



On a two-group day (up to 72 children), the children will work in separate groups for the Rationing and Radio Room activities and come together for the Air Raid. Three-group days will work on a rotation of all 3 activities.

There will be a half-hour lunch break when your staff will be required to supervise the children.

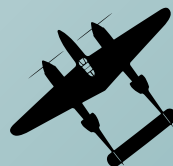


Visiting Wartime Beaumanor in Role

It will greatly enhance your day if you, your leaders and your children turn your visit to Beaumanor into a role-playing exercise. In order to maximise the value of your visit you might like to incorporate the following suggestions:

1) The Background

The day will be very loosely set around 1940. The children will be evacuees, sent by their parents to Beaumanor to get away from the bombing. You will be their teachers and/or parents, accompanying them (as was actually the case).



2) Costume

The cellars are quite cold all year round, so clothing should be warm, whatever the weather. The children could all have a 'luggage label', gas mask box and teddy and anything else they bring with them could be carried in a small suitcase or pillow case.

a) Girls

- School uniform (if applicable)
- Tights or short white socks and outdoor shoes
- Hair in plaits, bunches, pinned up or neatly brushed. If long enough, could be in 'earphones'

b) Boys

- Long-sleeved shirt and short trousers, long socks and outdoor shoes and boots.
- Tank top/school uniform, jacket and school cap (if applicable) or cub uniform.
- Favourite teddy bear, games, books etc.

3) Packed lunch

Packed lunches should reflect the fact that plastic bags and lunch boxes had not been invented. There were no fast foods and most food was plain, simple, local and rationed.

a) The food

- cheese sandwiches and/or bread and jam
- bread pudding or fatless sponge (possibly made in school), apples/pears
- ginger beer or old fashioned 'flat' lemonade in a glass bottle (if safe).

b) The containers

- Wrapped in greaseproof paper and tied up in a plain tea towel or newspaper
- Carried in a cloth satchel or wickerwork basket



More information

For more information or to book a visit please call **01509 890119** or email beaumanor.hall@leics.gov.uk
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