

The Cast

Present Day

Grandma	An important character, with a key storytelling role. Along with her granddaughter Lucy, her reminiscences ‘frame’ the story.
Lucy	Has important dialogue with Grandma
Grandpa	Only appears right at the end, but MUST be done well!

The Evacuees

Maggie	Central to the story. Needs to appear young and vulnerable, but must be confident actor. Sings solo in ‘Cheerfulness and Courage’ (optional)
Tom	Maggie’s brother. Sings solo in ‘Dig For Victory’ (optional)
Edith	The ‘cry-baby’ - must be able to whinge and sulk convincingly!
Liz Baxter	Big sister of the riotous Baxter family. She’s tough, confident and bossy.
Ernie Baxter	Lovable rogue - always in trouble
Fred Baxter	The cheeky younger brother
Susan	Doesn’t have as many lines, but has the saddest story, so needs to be able to carry off her part well.
Jim and Bill	Fewer lines

Jack’s Family

Guard	We first meet Jack’s dad on the train, so to avoid confusion he is referred to as ‘Guard’ throughout. An important role with lots of lines (especially in scene 5). Sings solo in ‘Cheer Up Granny’ (optional)
Mum	A medium sized role. Also known as June.
Jack	Again, needs to appear young, but must be able to act really well (e.g the emotional dialogue in Scene 11 p46-47)
Eileen	Jack’s older sister - she’s a teenager. Lots of lines. Sings solo in ‘Cheer Up Granny’ (optional)

Auntie Ruth	A small role
Betty	Jack's cousin. Small and young - only has a couple of lines.
Teacher	Medium role

Mothers

Maggie's Mother	} These are smaller roles.
Edith's Mother	
Bill's Mother	
Susan's Mother	

Village residents

Mr Price	The grumpy farmer who takes on the Baxters
Mrs Harbottle	A rather stuck-up lady. Takes Edith. Most important of the Village Ladies
Miss Ellis	A nervous spinster. Takes Maggie and Tom
Mrs Wilkes	Takes Susan
Mrs Bryant	
Mrs Jones	
Mrs Gretton	
Village Boys 1- 6	Have a few lines each in Scenes 6 and 9. Ideal for younger cast members.

City Characters

Granny	Not to be confused with Grandma and Grandpa of the present day! These are Jack and Eileen's grandparents. They are fairly short comic roles, need to be well acted.
Grandad	
Neighbours 1- 4,	} Smaller roles with a few lines each. They 'star' in Scene 10, which is tricky, but fun to do.
Mrs Roberts	
Air Raid Warden	
Princess Elizabeth	Appears once, and reads her speech, so needs to be an expressive reader. Could be cast from amongst your extra evacuees or village characters.
GI's 1 and 2	Brief but fun roles in scenes 9 and 11. Can also appear as extras in other scenes.

And of course, as many extra Evacuees, Village residents, Neighbours etc as you like.

Archibald's War Script Extract

For a Christmas version of this scene, see page 56

Scene 1: Prologue

(Enter Grandma and Lucy. Grandma has writing paper, pens and an address book. She sits down and starts writing)

Lucy: What are you doing, Grandma?

Grandma: I'm writing letters. That's my address book.

Lucy: *(Looking through address book)* You know a lot of people.

Grandma: I've been around a long time.

Lucy: *(Turning pages)* Who's Ernie Baxter?

Grandma: Well, I haven't seen him for years, but when I first met him he was a very naughty little boy.

Lucy: Why? What did he do? Tell me about him!

Grandma: He tried to steal Archibald!

Lucy: Who?

(Grandma stands up and begins to tell the story)

Grandma: It was 1939. The war was just starting, so us children were being evacuated.

Lucy: Evacuated?

Grandma: We were being sent away to the countryside. I was just a little girl...

Lucy: And Archibald?

Grandma: Archibald...was my teddy bear.

(Exit Grandma and Lucy. A small girl, in wartime costume, with suitcase, gas mask and label, enters. She is clutching a teddy bear. As she stands centre stage, we hear sound effects: steam trains and platform announcements.)

SFX 1: Station (CD 11/27)

Maggie: Don't worry, Archibald. I'll look after you.

(On this cue, the song starts, and the Evacuee children flood onto the stage from every direction. This is:)

Scene 2: At the Station**Song 1: Evacuation (part 1)****(Evacuees/All)****CD track 1/12**

**We're at the station
 Today's the day
 Evacuation
 They're sending everyone away**

**We're going on a journey to the country
 But what for? We're not sure!**

**We're getting off at
 A safer stop
 Where it's delightful
 And where the bombs won't drop
 We're heading for adventure in the country
 Until we win this lousy war**

**I hope they're friendly
 I hope they're kind
 I hope they like me
 I hope I don't get left behind
 I really, really hope they don't expect me
 To milk a cow - I don't know how!**

**We'll ride the horses
 And feed the hens
 We might go fishing
 We'll prob'ly make new friends
 We're heading for adventure in the country
 Until we win this lousy war!**

(A large group of children are being organised by a harassed Teacher. Upstage are various other people, including a group of Mothers.)

- Teacher: Over here! This way, children! The train will be here any minute. *(She is trying to count the children)*
- Edith: But I don't want to go! I want to stay with my mummy!
- Teacher: There, there, dear. Come along! You'll see mummy soon!
- Tom: Is that our train coming?
- Bill: Tom! Let's sit together on the train!
- Tom: Well... I promised I'd look after my little sister. *(He indicates Maggie)*
- Maggie: We can all sit together, can't we?
- Teacher: Oh dear. There are three children missing.
- Maggie: Will they be left behind?
- Teacher: If they don't turn up soon... Edith, dear, do stop crying.
- Edith: I don't like it!
- Bill: Oh, come on! It's better than being at school!
- Tom: A trip to the countryside... it's like a holiday!
- Liz: *(From offstage)* Hurry up! We'll miss the train!

(Enter Liz, Fred and Ernie Baxter in a hurry, pushing their way to the front)

- Ernie: *(As they enter)* All right, all right.
- Fred: Here we are!
- Liz: Phew! We made it!
- Teacher: And what time do you call this?
- Ernie: We're here, aren't we?
- Liz: We had to go back for Ernie's gas mask, miss.
- Fred: We ran all the way.

- Teacher: Didn't your parents bring you?
- Liz: No. We brung ourselves.
- Teacher: 'Brought' ourselves, I think you mean, Elizabeth.
- Edith: I want my mummy!
- Ernie: Did you hear that? (*mimicking*) "I want my mummeeeeee..."
- Liz: You shut up, Ernie. She's only little.
- Edith: I want to go home!
- Ernie: (*To Edith*) Put a sock in it!
- Liz: I'm warning you, Ernie. Not everyone's got a big sister to look after them.
- Ernie: They're lucky.
- Fred: Who says you're looking after us?
- Liz: I do.
- Ernie: Bossy boots.
- Teacher: Well, if you three line up with the others, we're ready to go. (*The Baxters join the other children*)
- Fred: (*To Maggie, as he passes her*) Nice teddy bear!
- Maggie: His name's Archibald.
- Liz: (*To Edith, who is still crying*) Cheer up, love. You can sit with us.
- Ernie: I'm not sitting with that cry baby!
- Tom: Got your gas mask, Maggie?
- Bill: Look! Here comes the train!
- Guard: (*From side of stage*) All aboard! This way!
- Teacher: Now, stick together, children, and follow me!

(The Teacher leads the children to the back of the stage, where they face away from the audience and freeze. At the same time the Mothers come forward.)