

The Home

1898-1900

BONNER ROAD
CHILDREN'S HOME
Hackney.
Care of Dr Stephenson

The children's home is miles away, in London. It's our first train journey ever – and the first time we've ever been out of Folkestone. The East End of London is very different from where we grew up. Everything is big and noisy. It's exciting, but frightening too. I tried to be brave when our step-mum waved goodbye and we went through the big iron gates into our new home.



Bonner Road Home

The Home is enormous. It is a group of big houses each looked after by a "sister". Edward and I are both in the same house. It is carefully organised and everyone knows exactly what they have to do. We all have jobs.

There are 320 children. We have our own school with lessons every day. Doctor Stephenson runs the Home. He is strict, but makes sure we have two hours off every evening. That's when I play cricket and, best of all, football. I am really good at football – I even made the Bonner Road School team!

BONNER ROAD



Bonner Road School team



My timetable

6.30 a.m. - Get up and make beds. Wash well and quickly (with VERY cold water).

Chores - Clean boots - at least 15 pairs, or wash floors. I prefer polishing boots. Scrubbing floors hurts your hands - and knees! When you finish your chores, Sister inspects your work and if you pass inspection, you go for breakfast.

Breakfast - Bread and marge with cocoa (with skin on top. Yuk!)

Prayers in the school chapel (or church in the town - twice on Sundays).

School - Lessons for the youngsters, plus training in printing or baking for the older children.

Lunch - One course - soup, pie or fish (plenty more skin. Yuk!)

School - Lessons for everyone. Arithmetic. Reading. Bible.

Personal hygiene - Thorough strip wash. Scrub. Then Sister's inspection of our scrubbed ears, necks, hands, nails.

5 p.m. tea - Bread and marge with cocoa (even more yuk!)

5 p.m. to 7 p.m. - Two hours' free time (cricket or football for me, plus writing letters home)

8 p.m. - Bed, lights out.



HOW TO WASH A FLOOR AT BONNER ROAD SCHOOL

Take a tin bucket, scrubbing brush, cloth and bar of soap.

Fill bucket with cold water.

Scrub your line of floorboards.

Change the water after every fourth board.



I am learning to be a printer - so that I can earn my living when I leave the Home.

The best times here are when I get a letter from the family in Folkestone. We both get letters and cards and sometimes visits too. That is the very best bit of all.

14th November 1900

Eddie has been adopted. He's leaving the Home and going all the way to Glasgow, in Scotland, to live with a dentist's family. It's hundreds of miles away. I am glad his new family are going to give him a good education and a chance in life, but still...

ME!

Now I'm on my own.



Good luck in your new home

Walker

I'll miss you

