

## Czech Farewell Service – 19<sup>th</sup> April 1940

Czech refugees who for the past few months have been billeted in Birchington attended a farewell service at All Saints Church on Friday, before leaving for France to join a corps of the Czechoslovakian Army. The service was conducted by the Vicar (the Rev. N. M. Granville Sharp), and a large number of parishioners attended.

### Czechs Leave for France to Join Their Army “Thanks to our English Friends”

Men who have been staying at the Czechoslovakian Home, Beaconsfield House, Birchington, are this week leaving to join a corps of the Czechoslovakian Army in France.

A farewell service for them was arranged to be held at All Saints Church this (Friday) morning. 19<sup>th</sup> April 1940.

On the eve of their departure, Mr. Richard Pollak, the leader of the Home, sends the following farewell message to the “Gazette”:-

“In a few hours we shall bid farewell to England, which has not only offered us a home, but has become our second Fatherland.

“I know that at this moment every one of my compatriots feels, as I do, that we are leaving home. I can only remember one equally sad leave-taking, and that was when we were driven from the land of our birth. But we now feel the same regret, for England has become our new home.

“Circumstances prevent my taking leave personally, on behalf of my countrymen, of all our English Friends, but I send them this message: Accept our heartfelt thanks for the sympathy and understanding you have shown to us in our misfortune and for your efforts to help us to forget our exile, in which you have well succeeded.

“In the midst of a world of brutality and barbarism your sense of humanity and justice has been our firm and unshakable support. The world should know this, and we will hold it for our most sacred duty to do our modest best to see that it is never forgotten. Farewell, and after our victory a happy au revoir in a free Europe.”



Czech flag being raised at Beaconsfield in Alpha Road Birchington 1939

Beaconsfield c. 1938

