



Sergeant Brewer had a long and varied career in the Essex Police from 1919 to 1949, serving through both peacetime and the extraordinary pressures of the Second World War. He was notably stationed at Wickford from 1937–1949, where he became a familiar and respected community figure. His legacy includes the preservation of detailed wartime police incident logs capturing local experiences of air raids, civil defence, bomb incidents, and other events in mid-20th century Wickford.

Sergeant Frederick A. Brewer

Born 8 December 1897 in Goldhanger, Maldon, Essex, son of Henry and Elizabeth Brewer. He had four brothers and a sister.

Early career & Military Service

Before policing, he worked as a farm labourer. He served in the Coldstream Guards during the First World War (1914 - 1919)

Essex Police Career

Joined Essex Police on 11 August 1919

Service locations prior to Wickford:

Essex Police HQ Chelmsford

Stock (1922)

Writtle (1928)

Brentwood & Upminster (1932-1933)

He received a commendation from the Home Secretary for involvement in a serious rescue incident (the Berry Farm, Warley Sewerage Pumping Station tragedy in 1933), where multiple men died due to toxic fumes (his specific actions are noted as contributing to his commendation).



Wickford Wartime Service

Promoted to Sergeant and posted to Wickford Police Station in 1937.

In Wickford, he was stationed in Police Houses on Lower Southend Road (No. 1 was the actual police station with the public counter and incident map).

He served there through the entire Second World War period (1939–1945), a time of numerous air raids, bomb incidents and civil defence activity in the town and surrounding areas.

Local memories describe him as a well-respected figure in the community, experienced and respected, often known by locals as “Fred ‘Buster’ Brewer”.

Anecdotes suggest he was community-minded, used his police cape in a characteristic way with young local offenders (famously called “gotcha”), and was well known throughout the area.

He maintained Wickford Police incident records for wartime events, including bombings, air raids, and other civil emergencies, which later became a valuable historical resource.



Why This Matters

For a community like Wickford, remembering Sergeant Brewer is about:

Preserving local heritage.

Honouring quiet public service.

Recognising that history is shaped not only by national leaders, but by dedicated local figures.

He represents the kind of everyday leadership that kept towns functioning during Britain's darkest hours.



www.wickfordtowncouncil.gov.uk

Saturday 9th May 2026
**“Blue Plaque Unveiling
Ceremony”**



Retirement and Later Life

Retired from Essex Police:
12 August 1949
after 30 years in the force.
He stayed in Wickford (Wick Drive) after retirement.
He sadly passed away in 1975, at the age of 78 years.



WICKFORD WARTIME POLICING

The Story of Sergeant Frederick A. Brewer



Wickford's Wartime
Police Sergeant
1937 – 1949