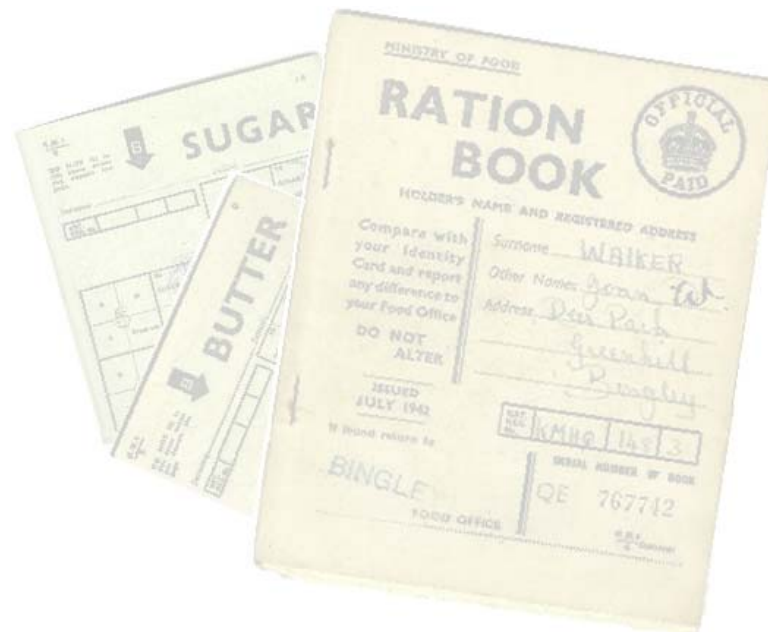




THE SECOND WORLD WAR EXPERIENCE CENTRE
EDUCATION: THE HOME FRONT

THE SECOND WORLD WAR EXPERIENCE CENTRE
EDUCATION
THE HOME FRONT
FOOD AND RATIONING





THE SECOND WORLD WAR EXPERIENCE CENTRE

EDUCATION: THE HOME FRONT

Food and Rationing

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One of the most obvious ways in which the Second World War affected everyday life was in relation to food. Britain then, as now, depended on food supplies from all over the world. Enemy attacks on supply ships therefore resulted in shortages of food. People were encouraged to grow their own food in gardens and allotments or keep rabbits or chickens, but food remained in short supply.

In 1940 the British government therefore introduced a basic system of rationing, to try and make sure that what food there was got shared out fairly. People were issued with a food ration book and required to register with a local shopkeeper. Shortages meant long queues and the quality of some foods got worse. For example as the war went on bread was made with less and less white flour.



[Find out more about Joyce Garvey's experiences during the war](#)



[Find out about Kathleen Garside's experiences during the war](#)



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In 1941 a system of ration points was introduced. Everyone was given so many points a month to spend as they wished on rationed items, at any shop that had the items they wanted. For example if you knew that a shop had a lot of tinned fish that week you could shop there, providing you had enough ration points left and were prepared to queue. Shopping during the war was almost like a lottery; you could never be certain what food would be available.



[Find out more about Joyce Garvey's experiences during the war](#)



[Find out about Kathleen Garside's experiences during the war](#)

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To make the ration go further various 'substitute' foods were developed. For example 'powdered eggs' were used in cooking instead of fresh ones. Other substitute foods included Camp Coffee made from the herb chicory and a syrup made from rose hips to provide important Vitamin C.

Leaflet entitled 'Egg Dishes Savoury and Sweet' (LEEWW : 2003.2432.3.1)



[Find out about Kathleen Garside's experiences during the war](#)



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One food from each of the sections (a), (b), (c), (d), etc., below should be served at each meal.

BREAKFAST 8.0-8.30 a.m.

- (a) Whole-grain cereal.—1-2 cupfuls of porridge, or wheatmealies, or wheatflake preparations, or stewed fruit (in hot weather) with milk.
- (b) An egg, fresh or dried (twice a week), or bacon with 2-4 oz. potato, or 1-2 oz. bread, or fish (once a week) (herrings tinned or fresh if possible).
- (c) National bread.—2-4 whole slices as: toast with
- (d) Butter.—2-3 teaspoons, or margarine, or dripping, or bacon fat.
- (e) Cocoa or tea to drink.

MID-MORNING 10.0-11.0 a.m.

Milk—1 pint (if at school).

DINNER 12.30-1.0 p.m.

- (a) Meat, fish or cheese, etc.—2-3 tablespoons of: beef or mutton, or liver or kidney, or brains, or sweetbread, or chicken, or rabbit, or fish (fresh, salt or dried), or cheese (1-2 tablespoons), or dried egg (one).
- (b) Cooked fresh vegetables.—2-3 heaped tablespoons of cabbage or greens, or cauliflower, or spinach, or sprouts, or swedes, or parsnips, or carrots, or fresh peas or beans.
- (c) Potatoes.—3-4 heaped tablespoons.
- (d) Pudding.—3-4 tablespoons of milk pudding, or blanc-mange, or fruit or sweet tart or flan, or steamed pudding, or baked pudding, or stewed fruit and custard, etc.
- (e) National bread.—1-2 whole slices or extra potato.
- (f) Water to drink.

NOTE.—Dried peas, beans or lentils should be added to the meat, fish or cheese portion, if a full serving cannot be obtained through rationing or shortage.

TEA 4.30-5.0 p.m.

- (a) National bread.—3-6 whole slices with—
- (b) Butter.—2-3 teaspoons, or margarine, or dripping with—
- (c) Raw salad, or raw shredded vegetable, or vegetable sandwich filling.
- (d) Cake.—1-2 slices, or rusks or biscuits.

SUPPER 7.0-8.0 p.m.

- (a) Pulse vegetable dish, or cheese, or fish with—
- (b) Cooked fresh vegetables.—2-3 heaped tablespoons (see dinner), or salad with—
- (c) Potatoes.—3-4 heaped tablespoons.
- (d) National bread.—2-4 whole slices with—
- (e) Butter or margarine.—2 teaspoons with—
- (f) Jam, or syrup, or vegetable yeast extract, or paste.
- (g) Soup, cocoa or milk drink.

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Some people were allowed extra rations. Children for example received half of the adult ration, but were allowed extra milk, orange juice and cod liver oil to keep them fit and healthy. Pregnant women also received one and half times the adult ration.

Workers doing hard physical jobs were also entitled to extra rations but even so food was still short. Mr Reg Robertson worked as a locomotive fireman shovelling coal on a steam train during the war. He didn't think that the ration he got was enough for such a hard job.

Detail from leaflet 'How To Plan Meals For Children, Diet for a Child From 12 to 17 Years' (LEEW : 2001.906.2.1)



[Find out about Reg Robertson's views on rationing](#)



[Find out about Kathleen Garside's experiences during the war](#)

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Food and Rationing

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Breakfast 8.0 - 8.30 a.m.

One food from each of the groups (a), (b), (c), etc., should be served at each meal.

- (a) Whole-grain Cereal.—1-2 tablespoonfuls porridge, or groats, or wheatmealies or 1-2 rusks with milk.
- (b) Half an Egg (4 days a week), or 1-rasher of crisp bacon (1 day a week), or crisp bacon toast (1 day a week), or pounded fish (1 day a week).
- (c) Milk (including that used with cereal) 8 ozs.

Dinner - 12.0 - 12.30 p.m.

- (a) Vegetable Broth (4 days a week).
- (b) Meat, Fish or Cheese.—1 tablespoonful of:—roast or boiled mutton or beef, or stewed minced steak, or chicken, or stewed tripe + 4 tablespoonfuls milk, or lightly cooked liver, or steamed white fish, or herring roe, or eggs, or cheese (1-tablespoonful).
- (c) Cooked Fresh Vegetables.—1 tablespoonful of finely chopped or mashed:—cabbage, or greens, or carrot, or turnip, or cauliflower, or skinned tomato.
- (d) Potatoes.—1 tablespoonful:—boiled, or mashed, or jacket.
- (e) Pudding.—1-2 tablespoonfuls of:—milk pudding, or rusk junket with stewed fruit or jelly jam, or custard blancmange with sieved stewed fruit or jelly jam, or baked apple and milk or custard, or chocolate mould, or hot custard over rusks and jam, or fruit fool or carrot junket.
- (f) 1 Hard Rusk plain or sweetened with custard or flavoured with cocoa.
- (g) Water to drink.

Tea 4.30 - 5.0 p.m.

- (a) Bread.—1 slice, or 1 rusk, or 1 outcake with:—
- (b) Butter, or margarine, or dripping, and:—
- (c) Seedless Jam, or jelly, or honey, or vegetable extract, or finely shredded raw cabbage, or finely grated raw carrot, or chopped parsley, or cheese.
- (d) Milk, or milky cocoa, 8 oz. (1 cup).

NOTE.—Start salad or vegetable sandwich at 18 months.

Some people were allowed extra rations. Children for example received half of the adult ration, but were allowed extra milk, orange juice and cod liver oil to keep them fit and healthy. Pregnant women also received one and half times the adult ration.

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Detail from leaflet 'How To Plan Meals For Children Diet For a Child From 12 to 17 Years' (LEEWW : 2001.906.2.34)



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Dinner	
1st Day	Roast joint; cabbage and roast potatoes; chocolate mould; national bread.
2nd "	Cheese and lentil or bean cutlets; cauliflower or parsnips and jacket potatoes; bread and butter pudding; national bread.
3rd "	Braised liver (or steak); mashed swedes and boiled potatoes; rice, custard and jam; national bread.
4th "	Stewed tripe (or sausage and bean pie); sliced carrots and mashed potato; baked apple and custard (or scrap bread pudding); national bread.
5th "	Shepherd's pie; greens and potatoes; ginger pudding and custard; national bread.
6th "	Lancashire hot pot; peas (or sprouts); trifle; national bread.
7th "	Brown rabbit stew (or steak and beans); spinach and potatoes; chocolate duff; national bread.

Tea	
1st Day	Parsley and potato sandwiches; sweet biscuits; tea.
2nd "	Toast and butter; home-made cake; tea.
3rd "	Bread and jam; biscuits; tea.
4th "	Spinach (raw) and cheese sandwiches; sweet biscuits; tea.
5th "	Bread and jam; home-made cake; tea.
6th "	Cheese, pickle and raw cabbage sandwiches; sweet biscuits; tea.
7th "	Carrot and parsley sandwiches; cake; tea.

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Detail from leaflet 'How To Plan Meals For Children, Diet for a Child From 12 to 17 Years' (LEEWW : 2001.906.2.33)

Food and Rationing



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Leaflet 'Extras Needed By Mother and Child in Wartime and how you can get them' (LEEWW : 2001.906.2.3)



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Black and white photograph of Mrs Agnes Venables working in a Ministry of Food kitchen (LEEWW : 2001.906.3.3)

Methods of cooking food also had to change with wartime restrictions. To help people eat a healthy diet the Government and other organisations produced cookbooks advising how to make the most of the limited foods available. Brian Simpson recalls a typical menu from his childhood during the Second World War. Stuffed hearts and brains on toast were considered acceptable meals in the 1940s!



[Find out what Brian Simpson had for dinner](#)

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Black and white photograph of Mrs Agnes Venables working in a Ministry of Food kitchen (LEWW : 2001.906.3.2)

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Leaflet 'What's Left in The Larder' (LEEW : 2001.906.2.20)



[Find out what Brian Simpson had for dinner](#)

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[Find out what Brian Simpson had for dinner](#)

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Food and Rationing

HOW THE RATIONS ARE DIVIDED

The Quantities are for 4 people.

<u>Amount Used for Main Meals.</u>		<u>Amount for Breakfast, Tea and Sunday.</u>	
Margarine	10 oz.	Margarine	6 oz.
Lard	8 oz.	Lard	Nil
Bacon	4 oz.	Bacon	12 oz.
Sugar	1 lb.	Sugar	1 lb.
Jam	1 lb.	Jam	1 lb.
Cheese	4 oz.	Cheese	4 oz.
Meat	1/4d.	Meat	3/4d. (for
Butter	Nil		Sunday Lunch
Points	23		and
			Monday Supper)
		Butter	8 oz.
		Points	1

Christmas was the only public celebration allowed during the war and people struggled to get the traditional foods to celebrate it. Celebrations to mark the end of the war in 1945 also meant saving up rations in advance to provide all the food for the street parties.

Leaflet 'Suggested Menus For Holidays at Home' (LEEWW : 2001.906.2.2)



[See what Basil Stopps had for Christmas](#)



[View Tom Ashton's film of Christmas 1941](#)



[Find out about Patricia Land's VE Day celebrations](#)

Food and Rationing



Christmas was the only public celebration allowed during the war and people struggled to get the traditional foods to celebrate it. Celebrations to mark the end of the war in 1945 also meant saving up rations in advance to provide all the food for the street parties.

Recipe for Christmas Pudding from wartime leaflet 'Xmas Recipes' (LEEW : 2001.906.2.9)



[See what Basil Stopps had for Christmas](#)



[View Tom Ashton's film of Christmas 1941](#)



[Find out about Patricia Land's VE Day celebrations](#)



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Food and Rationing

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Although Britain was short of food during the war the overall health of the nation probably improved as a result of rationing. The nation's wartime diet generally had a healthy balance of fruit and vegetables and was low in sugar, fat and meat. Before the war about a quarter of the population did not eat properly or went hungry. Half of working class women were in poor health, too many children died young and 90% of the population had bad or decayed teeth. But by the end of the Second World War children were healthier and growing up stronger with better teeth.



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Food and Rationing: Kathleen Garside

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“Wrapping paper was almost non-existent and when you did find some, it was hoarded carefully and re-used many times. Nothing was wasted which could be used again or turned into food. We were supplied with a separate bin where we put potato peelings and discarded pieces of vegetables and fruit. This was picked up, boiled, mixed with bran and other unmentionables and fed to the pigs, who in turn supplied us with bacon. Anyone caught dumping these goodies into the dustbin, was reported and fined.”

“The heavy air raids had eased. We were able to sleep in our own beds instead of in a bomb shelter, or under the kitchen table. Food rationing however, had been cut drastically. Butter, bacon, sugar and cooking fats were rationed by weight and coupon. Each adult was allowed between one and two shillings’ worth of meat per week, mutton mostly. We thought steak was a tough meat, only fit for stewing. Bacon was rationed separately – between four and eight ounces per week. A few ounces of cheese unless you were a manual worker, a hard cheddar or rubbery processed Kraft – neither very appetising. Milk chocolate wasn’t available, just a bitter and extremely hard Cadbury’s ration chocolate, in dreadful greaseproof wrapping paper. School children were allowed one third of a pint of milk daily. Tea was rationed, two – four ounces per week per person. No coffee, except for something in a bottle called Camp Coffee and full of chicory.”

Brief Biography

Kathleen Garside lived in Wimbledon with her parents at the outbreak of the Second World War. She worked for Durastic Plastics Ltd, commuting into offices in London during the Blitz

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Food and Rationing: Kathleen Garside

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“By the end of the war, even supplies of our national beverage were dwindling and we were asked to cut consumption by one cup per day. Bread wasn’t rationed, but only 12% of white flour was allowed, combined with potatoes and barley, so we never saw a white loaf. The national wholemeal loaf contained wheat husks and though full of fibre and vitamins, was dry and unappetising. Sausages were surprisingly tasty, when you could get them. They had to contain at least 37.5% meat, plus cereal, fibre and soya flour. We called them ‘bangers’ because they had a habit of splattering all over the place when being cooked.”

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Food and Rationing: Joyce Garvey

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“We had supplies of eggs which had to be candled, i.e. put in front of a lighted candle to see if they were fresh. Jars of jam, the tops of which were mouldy, were scraped off and lids put back on. Cheese mouldy parts discarded and the rest sent to customers.”

“We were alright with the basic rations, it was food like vegetables and at one point bread, that we queued for, very often one joined a queue without knowing what it was for. If you were lucky and joined the queue at Marsh and Baxter’s and were registered there for bacon, you would get pigs’ heart or liver, perhaps a couple of sausage, but this entailed joining the queue at 6.30 AM.”

Brief Biography

At the beginning of the Second World War Joyce Garvey was working in a bakery in Birmingham. Along with her father she joined the ARP (Air Raid Precautions), working in Birmingham through the height of the German bombing raids. Sadly her father was seriously injured in a raid, later dying. Later in the war Joyce Garvey went to work at a grocers, dealing with the distribution of the food ration.

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Food and Rationing: Reg Robertson

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“Through this legislation my job became a reserved occupation and I was expected to stay there until released under the same legislation. As an engine cleaner I worked the three eight hour cycle of shifts, seven days a week. When passed to be a locomotive fireman the only condition that footplate crews had was a nine hour break between shifts on a seven day roster. This meant that whether your shift was completed in eight hours or 18, you were only entitled to nine hours before they call you on duty again.

These were among the hardest conditions in any industry. Most industries had seven day week rosters with three shifts of eight hours. They also had canteens where the food ration could be supplemented with basic meals on all shifts. At Stratford loco depot more than 2,000 men worked but no canteen was supplied until about 1942. Even then the canteen serviced workshop staff on day work. If a loco crew came off a shift about 2.00am the only thing offering for them was watered down tea and stale sandwiches from the previous day shift. Needless to say we rarely used its facilities.



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Food and Rationing: Reg Robertson

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The loco crews working from Stratford, manning freight trains to the north and East Anglia, as well as passenger trains, had to survive on the basic rations given to everybody. They were, per week:



- 4oz (113.64 grams) bacon or ham.
- 1 shilling and twopenceworth of fresh meat (6p in decimal coinage).
- 2oz (56.82 grams) butter
- 2oz (56.82 grams) cheese
- 4oz (113.64 grams) margarine
- 4oz (113.64 grams) cooking fat
- 2 to 3 pints of milk maximum
- 8oz (227.28 grams) sugar
- 1lb (453.6 grams) preserves (jam or marmalade) every two months
- 2oz (56.82 grams) tea
- 1 shell egg per week
- 1 packet dried egg per month
- 12oz (340.92 grams) sweets per month

This rationing paid no heed to one's type of work. Whether you worked in an office or shovelled an average of seven tons of coal a day on steam locomotives, whether you worked eight hours a day with meal breaks or 18 hours on the bucking footplate of a locomotive and ate your sandwiches the best you could, it made no difference to the Ministry of Food. After much negotiation by unions representing footplate men we finally received an extra four ounces of cheese a week and a ration of tea that was handed out at the workplace once a month. Regardless of these moves the ration was far below the needs of such a physical job with no canteen to boost the gap."

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Food and Rationing: Brian Simpson

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“A typical week’s meals would be. Porridge for breakfast every day.

Dinner (Midday)

Sunday. Joint of lamb or beef, whatever she could get on our ration books.

Monday. Bubble and squeak with cold cuts from joint.

Tue. Stew rest of joint with dumplings.

Wed. Sausage or liver (off ration).

Thurs. Stuffed hearts (off ration).

Fri. Pile of mashed potatoes with ½ boiled egg.

Sat. Fish and chips from shop. Queue for them.

After. Home made pie or jam pudding with custard.

Tea. Bread and jam. Sometimes home made. Home made rock cakes or coconut pyramids and cup of tea.

Supper. Toast a slice of bread in front of the kitchen range fire (no toasters) and mother would spread it with dripping saved from the Sunday joint. And a cup of cocoa made with condensed milk. Sometimes as a treat for supper we used to have boiled brain on toast. We used to spread on ourselves lovely!

I don’t think we ever went hungry. I used to eat plenty of vegetables some from our garden.”





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Food and Rationing: Tom Ashton

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This short amateur black and white film clip shows scenes from the Ashton family's 1941 Christmas dinner. It begins with a close up of the turkey before moving on to show three generations of the family sat around the table, eating laughing and talking. Copyright Tom Ashton.

Frame 3 Granny Ashton and Grandma Clarkson

Frame 4 Kathy and Etty

Frame 5 Teddy

Brief Biography

Tom Ashton and his father Richard Ashton lived in Silsden, North Yorkshire. Members of the Keighley Cine Club they filmed village life during and after the Second World War. An ex-Merchant Navy wireless operator Richard Ashton ran an electrical retailing and contracting business in Silsden until the 1960s.



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THE SECOND WORLD WAR EXPERIENCE CENTRE

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Food and Rationing: Pat Land

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“The VE Day celebrations in Brookside Avenue, back in Southampton. Our road was the last to be built up before the War, and there was an actual brook opposite the houses, with a mined field beyond. The party is taking place on the wide curve at our end of the road, where the milkman used to turn around. The mothers had had been collecting packets of blancmange and jelly for weeks, and saving up all the dried milk and dried egg powder that could be spared. That day, it all came out of the cupboards, and we had a feast at teatime. I think the tables were from people's kitchens, but the benches came from Henty Hall, where our Air Raid Warden was in charge of distributing orange juice and National Dried Milk.”

Brief Biography

Patricia Land was born in Southampton, Hampshire, at the start of the Second World War. She lived there with her parents throughout the war, apart from a period between 1942 and 1943 when she and her mother went to live with her Great Aunt at Furnace Wood, West Sussex. The photograph was taken by her father, Lawrence Griffiths.



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THE SECOND WORLD WAR EXPERIENCE CENTRE

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Food and Rationing: Basil Stopps

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“Christmas was celebrated as usual. Ration allowances were increased slightly where possible. Fresh chickens and turkeys were available but not over plentiful. A tin of red salmon per customer and limited supplies of dried fruit, mincemeat as part of the preserves ration. A box of chocolates.

Many recipes for economy Christmas puddings and cakes, the former with the customary stir and wish during the making, and the latter probably with mock marzipan and a thin layer of icing.

Wines were not drunk very much and spirits, sherry and cocktails were in limited supply from the local Off Licence.

Christmas decorations were put up, most saved from earlier years, and I am fairly certain that real Christmas trees and holly were on sale but am not sure about nuts and crackers.”