

HOMIE FRONT

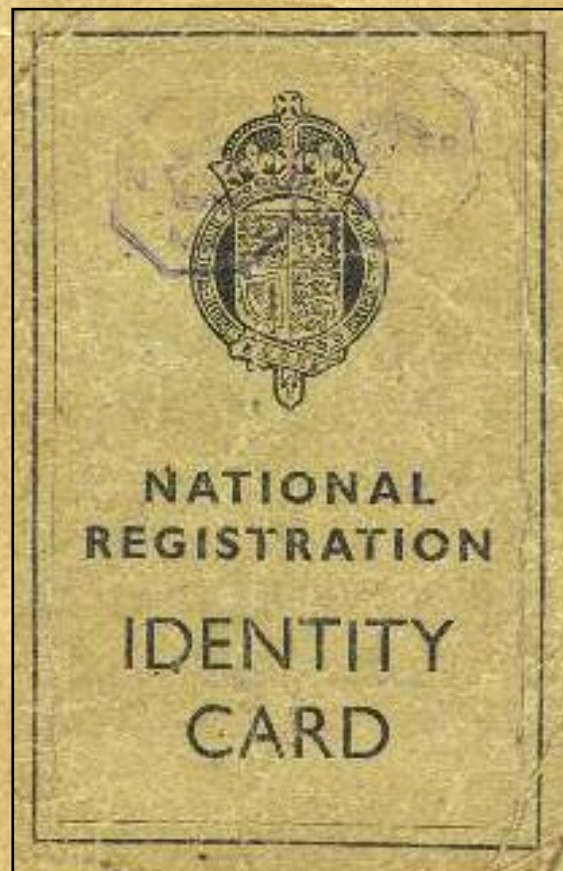
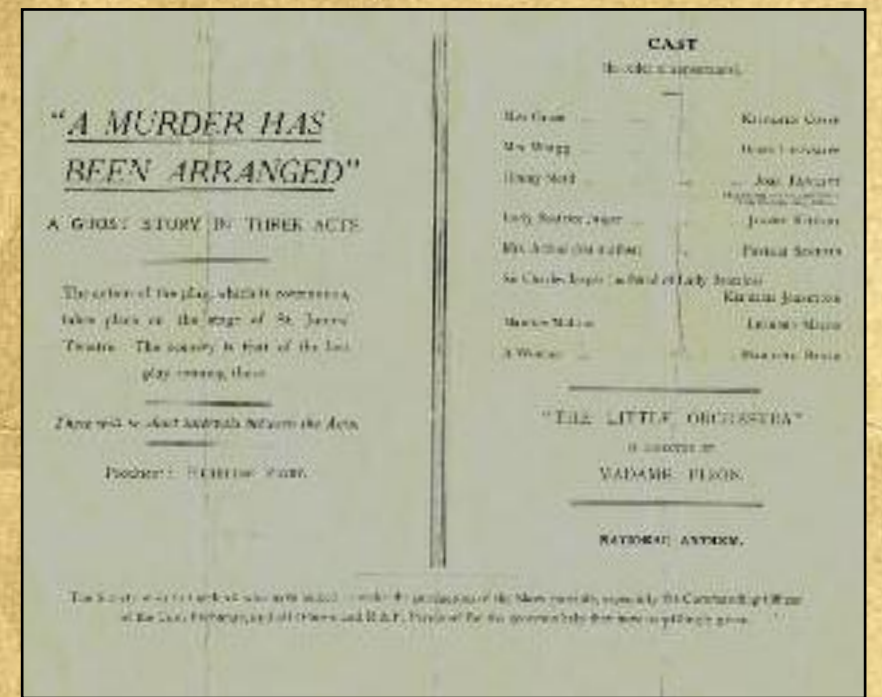
1939 1945

An Introduction

Friday 8 May 2020 is the anniversary of Victory in Europe Day (VE Day), marking 75 years since the end of the Second World War in Europe.

The following exhibition panels contain a selection of memories, photographs and extracts from recorded interviews held in the World War II collection at Living Archive Milton Keynes. They show a snapshot of life on the 'Home Front' at that time in the Milton Keynes area.

We hope this exhibition will inform younger generations as well as preserve and celebrate individual contributions to the war effort.



St. Johns Ambulance, Wolverton



Bletchley firemen. Photo: Living Archive collection.



Baby and child gas masks



www.livingarchive.org.uk



HOMIE FRONT

1939 1945

Evacuees

Cities were prime targets for enemy bombers during the war. The government felt it would be safer for children to be evacuated to safer areas of the country.

This task was led by Walter Elliott, Minister of Health, who divided the country up into three zones; danger areas, neutral areas and reception areas.

The job of letting the children know what was happening was left to the parents, often the mother, therefore many were taken to the train station with no idea of what was happening to them.

The evacuees would travel by train or bus into the reception areas and would be taken through the village ready to be chosen by families who could take them in. Many children had never been away from home before and were unsure what was happening and whether they would see their families again.

Many of the families who took in evacuees were sympathetic and kind, but unfortunately this was not always the case.



Evacuees by Wolverton market. Photo courtesy Milton Keynes Museum.

"We went all round the town and people came out of their houses and said, 'Oh we'll have that little girl,' or 'I'll take those two.' Me and my friend were still there at the end! I thought nobody wants us. Anyway an old couple, Mr and Mrs Boniface, they were very, very nice but too old to be bothered with children. They must have been in their eighties, but they took us and we slept together in the back room. Our schoolteacher Miss Grice she went with us, was evacuated with us, went all through school with us and I think I left school mid 1942 to go back to London. But I loved it, I didn't want to leave school. My Dad said, 'Well you don't have to.' 'Dad.' I said, 'I'm the oldest girl in the school, I've got to leave!'"

BETSY STANLEY



Photo courtesy Milton Keynes Museum.

"There was a girl about four doors up, she changed her name to the name of the people she was staying with and I think her parents didn't really want her back. She changed her Christian name as well, cos that was Margery and she changed it to Madge... and she still lives in Wolverton."

AUDREY LAMBERT

"Next door to us we had a little girl, four year old Vera Ellen Pike from Islington she came. She was only four but I think she lived in our house more than she lived next door. Because there were three girls you know and she used to come in and play, we used to bath her and dress her and wash her hair and all that sort of thing."

MARY WEBB

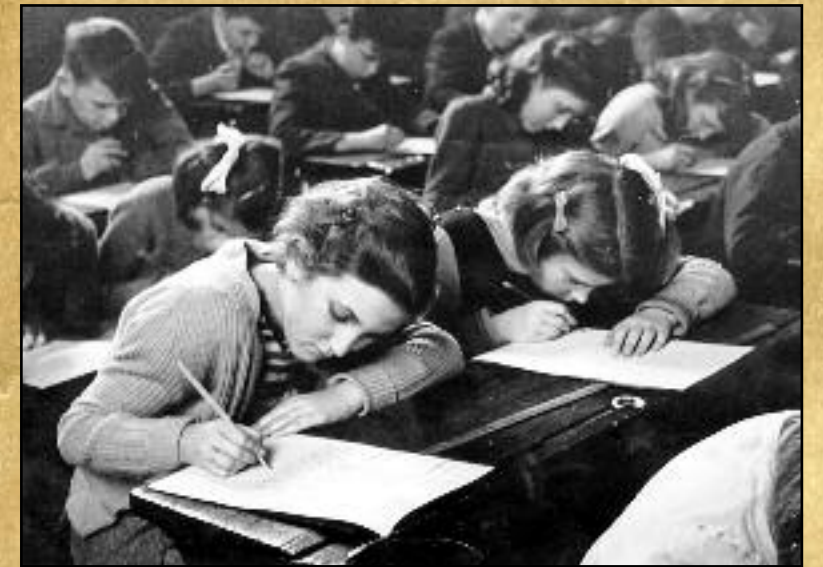


Photo courtesy Monica Austin



Joan Draper

"We came home from school one day and we got up and for some unknown reason we were all dressed in our best clothes, this was to go to school. Mum said, 'We're going off now to the station.' No explanation, nothing. She picked the baby up in her arms, my brother was four and I was six and off we went. We went onto a coach to a station. I walked onto the station with our labels gas masks and a bag. I heard a slam and I turned round and my mother was there behind the fence, behind the gates at the station just looking and crying and we were ushered on then. Total, total bewilderment. We hadn't got a clue why we were going."

JOAN DRAPER

"Well we did have an evacuee Yvonne, she came from Chingford but I can't remember how far into the war it was when she came. She was roughly the same age as I was. We both went to school together and being as I hadn't got a sister I suppose it was nice to have some body the same age."

JUNE WOODWARD



Evacuees arriving in the Little Streets in Wolverton. Photo courtesy Milton Keynes Museum.

"The school that I belonged to, they evacuated all their children but when they approached my father with a view to me going he said, 'No way'. He said 'If we die, we all die together'. I was quite happy with that."

WILLIAM PATTERSON



Photo courtesy Milton Keynes Museum.

"My brother and sister were evacuated. My brother was evacuated to Leighton Buzzard, but I had no idea where my sister was evacuated right further up north somewhere. I never saw them during the war."

GLADYS BANKS

HOMIE FRONT

1939 1945

VE Day

On May 8th 1945 Victory in Europe was declared and there were scenes of jubilation up and down the United Kingdom.

The end of war was declared on 8th May over the radio by His Majesty the King. As the news was declared people went out onto the streets, played music, danced and sang.

There were street parties in most towns.



VE Day celebrations in Finsbury, London. Photo courtesy Jean Cooper.

"Well the VE Day party that I attended, Max Bygraves came to it he was obviously really a young man and he came along in this open topped sports car. We really didn't know who Max Bygraves was. We were more interested in the sports car."

JEAN COOPER



More VE Day celebrations in London. Photo courtesy Elsie Scriven

"Well it was jubilation really I mean it was all over wasn't it, we were being demobbed and it was a lovely feeling, it was all over. People were hugging and kissing complete strangers, dancing around in circles. It was, I don't know, I can't explain it but it was a wonderful feeling, all those people and they were all climbing up lampposts and trying to get a better view of everything. I just remember feeling a bit lonely, with all those folks, how can you be lonely. You can though,

you can be lonely in a crowd. But we all came through safe, we got through the bombing, I mean it was like holiday into the blitz down into the shelter. My brother in law was killed at Dunkirk, we had our share. It was good war really, you know what I mean. I enjoyed it. I think people were... you were all in the same boat and everybody helped everybody."

BETSY STANLEY



Greenfield Road, Newport Pagnell. Photo courtesy John Dumbabin.

"We were allowed out late at night on the end of the war which we had never been before, I mean we used to have to be in for a certain time. But the day the war finished we were allowed out around the town to sort of celebrate you know."

MARY WEBB

"Children I have wonderful news the war has finished! I can remember I said to my mate, 'Here look Miss is crying. I think you're supposed to cry. And all the girls are going whoooo! like that, because they were crying and we didn't know. She said, 'Right those children whose mothers are not at work may leave school, those mothers who are at work will remain at school until we finish at four o'clock!' I bet you ninety-seven percent of kids made out their Mum was at home because we all went home!"

DIANE BOWSHER



Aylesbury Street, Wolverton. Photo courtesy Milton Keynes Museum.

"All the available tables were brought out into the street and joined together and covered with sheets or something. There were all sorts of things to cover tables with and all the women would get together and although stuff was rationed, it was amazing where all the food came from. There must have been, ooooh fifty or sixty young children and then us older kids."

WILLIAM PATTERSON



Greenfield Road, Newport Pagnell. Photo courtesy John Dumbabin.

"Yes I can remember we had a V.E Day party in the street and they had tables all the way down the street and there was jelly and stuff."

JANET CHAMBERLAIN



Photo courtesy Milton Keynes Museum.

"One final memory was of the VE street party when the streets were closed to any traffic, mind you there were only four or five cars in our street at that time. We all dressed up in anything we could find."

DOUG MACFARLANE



VE Day Bletchley. Photo: Living Archive collection.

"Word went round war has finished. In the workshops in the Works on the edge of the bench there was always a metal strip, went the length of the bench. There was this terrible racket blokes standing there with a hammer or a spanner just banging on that metal strip and it was all through the Works. It was a thing of Wolverton Works they bang, you picked it up, it spread. It was just total joy and when we did come out of work, they let us out early."

STAN PETTS

HOMIE FRONT

1939 1945

ATS (Auxiliary Territorial Service)

The ATS were the Women's Army in Great Britain during World War II. The ATS was formed on Sept 9th 1938. The intention was to enable as many men as possible for service at the front.

Poster campaigns were used throughout the war to recruit enough people into the army. The posters used to recruit ATS women were deemed far too glamorous by Winston Churchill and had to be tamed down.

The work they were given was far from glamorous, they were mainly used as drivers, worked in mess halls where many had to peel potatoes, acted as cleaners and worked on anti-aircraft guns.

The ATS women were given between three and six weeks training and their weekly wage was between 2/6- (12 pence) and 12/6- (62 pence).

The ATS continued in existence until Feb 1st 1949, when it became the Women's Royal Army Corps, the WRAC. The WRAC was disbanded in 1992.

"Well we went to Pontefract first from Liverpool Street up to Pontefract and we did our six weeks basic training, which is square bashing, inoculations, they all fainted around me and I thought 'what they doing' because I never faint touch wood. Because the war was coming to an end they had us scrape... We were in the barracks at Pontefract and they had us scraping all the blackout tape off the windows to keep your arms going and they were all going, 'Uurggh' and going to bed. Anyway we did our square bashing, we went through the gas chamber, what else did we do? We had to clean the latrines naturally and then after that we were posted down to Camberley in Surrey to a school that they'd taken over. Court Wallace it was called and... oh before that at Pontefract you'd done an aptitude test, what did you want to do. Well I was sick of being in an office. I said I'd like to be a driver. Right we'll give you an aptitude test. So you go in this room, lovely. They gave me a box of Meccano! They said build whatever it was. Well I'd done it in about five minutes, my brother always had Meccano for Christmas and I liked it better than dolls. So I went in the army and as I say we went down to Camberley for our driving instruction. The Queen had been there the intake before. You know you see her looking in an engine well that was me in the next intake looking in the engine and learning to drive and she came back to us and spoke to us and had a chat with us. Inspected us on the parade ground, lovely lady, I've loved her ever since and she's the same age as me!"



ATS uniforms. Photo courtesy Betsy Stanley.



ATS staff car drivers. Photo courtesy Iris Wells.

Then after that, I forget how long we were there. Probably only six weeks as they were all crash courses, you had to drive in the dark and of course there were no headlights, nothing. But I like driving in the dark.

There were a number of girls, no men allowed and our main task was to drive many ranks to locations around the Home Counties. We all had our own allocated car, a Humber Snipe. Driving mainly the rank of Colonel we had to go through certain security checks to allow this.

Much of the road signage was taken down during this period and our head lights had a black cover over so we could not be seen from the air. Finding your way round was problematic and I got lost many times. I was in the ATS for 4 years and met many interesting people and visited some exciting places."

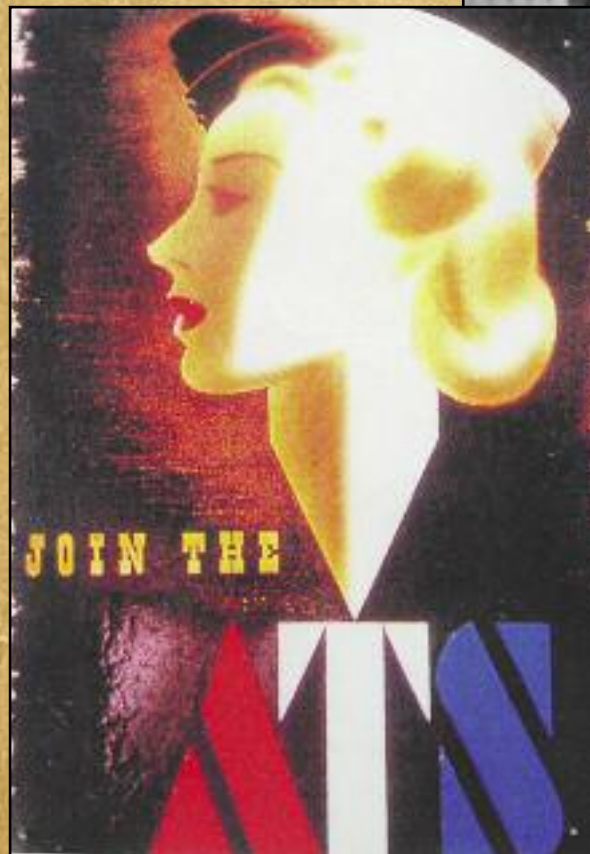


Photo courtesy Iris Wells.

IRIS WELLS



Photo courtesy Iris Wells.



BETSY STANLEY

Form No. 300/16 4-10-1942
 WMS DEPARTMENT DRIVING PERMIT
 (This valid for driving any motor vehicle provided it is not a private passenger)
 Issued under the sanction of A.C.147 of 1942
 This document is the property of the War Office and is not to be used for any other purpose without the written authority of the War Office.
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Photo courtesy Betsy Stanley.



H 1939 HOME FRONT 1945 NT

Land Army

During the first six months of the Second World War, over thirty thousand men previously working in agriculture had joined the forces. The Women's Land Army was formed and by 1944 there were 80,000 women volunteers working on the land. About a third of the volunteers moved to the countryside from Britain's industrial cities. The jobs they took up during this time were jobs that had previously been deemed unfit for women to undertake.

Women in the Land Army wore green jerseys, brown breeches and brown felt hats. They did a wide range of jobs from milking and general farm work to cutting down trees and working in sawmills as well as controlling pests such as rats. Volunteers lived in hostels or on the farms where they worked. The work was very hard, the women worked long hours, especially during the summer.

Some women worked on farms using heavy machinery to plough, plant and bring in the harvest. They worked from 5.30 in the morning until last light at night, sometimes as late as 10.30.

Even with the Women's Land Army there were not enough labourers, the remainder being a mix of enemy prisoners, Army Service Corps, infantry labour units and agricultural workers outside military age.



Agricultural College near St. Albans, Hertfordshire. Photo courtesy Yvonne King.

"We had just six weeks training to prepare us; I went to a place, near St. Albans in Hertfordshire. I did sort of learn to milk cows, by hand, no milking machines in those days but it didn't prepare me for the totally different way of life I was about to embark on. The first farm they sent me to was near Ware, a farmer called Mr. Kittow. He was a man of few words, on pay day he would come to wherever I was working, count my money out into my hand and walk off. I just shoved the money in my dungarees pocket and carried on with my work.

It was the cowman who told me what work I had to do, he didn't like land girls, thought they were townies and useless. He used to see to the dairy and left the mucking out of the cowshed to me, I also helped with the milking, occasionally if the cow kicked out it's foot landed in the bucket I was milking into. The cowman was none to pleased, he'd just scowl and say useless townies."

YVONNE KING



"You could go home at weekends unless you were working but you were in the hostel, the dormitories. You got the cook and everything; she was a lovely person more like a mother. The sort of person that looked after everybody, you'd go from the hostel to the farms. If it was over ten-mile you went in a lorry. If it was under you biked! It was lovely when you went in the lorry. You had a good old sing song going, and a good old sing song coming back. We had some good times.



Rosemary and friend Irene. Photo courtesy Rosemary Whitmore



Poster courtesy Milton Keynes Museum.

Some of the old farmers were lovely, if it was raining they'd say 'well times getting on you might as well make your way back to the hostel.'

Potato picking, pulling mangles up, haymaking, when you got on the threshing machines you took a turn. If you went on top in the dip where you had to throw the sheaves into the thresher you had your turn on that.

But we had some fun, we'd got the Italian prisoners of war around us, and then we got the army. At one place we got the Americans, we got the wounded boys around, we got the Red Devils with the red caps, they were all around us and if we were in them fields where they were stationed they'd come and help. I mean even the prisoners of war were good lads. You know they were really, they didn't want to go to war no more than our lads did. They were some really good workers."

ROSEMARY WHITMORE



All photos on this panel courtesy Yvonne King unless otherwise stated.

HOMIE FRONT

1939

1945

Rationing

Before the Second World War started Britain imported around 55 million tons of food a year from other countries. After war was declared in September 1939, the British government had to cut down on the amount of food it brought in from abroad as German submarines started bombing British supply ships. There was a worry that this would lead to shortages of food supplies in the shops so the British government decided to introduce a system of rationing.

On 8 January 1940, bacon, butter and sugar were rationed. Families had to register with their local grocer and they were given a ration book to make sure that food was distributed fairly. In each ration book there were small coupons that could be torn out or stamped by the shopkeeper.

As the war progressed more items were added to the list of goods that were rationed. Some items were never rationed like potatoes and fish.

Fourteen years of food rationing in Britain ended at midnight on 4th July 1954, when restrictions on the sale and purchase of meat and bacon were lifted.

"We never had fruit during the war and of course as children sweets were a bit of a bugbear but we had our rations. We had sweets but they were never enough of course."

LENA JAKEMAN



Photo courtesy Milton Keynes Museum.

"It's tongue and it's brains I used to like, yes."

AUDREY LAMBERT

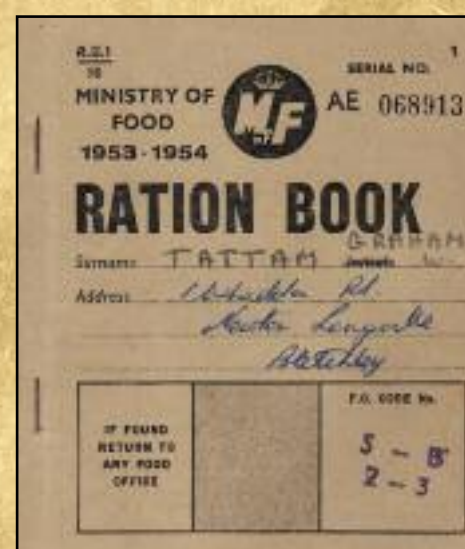


Image courtesy Graham Tattam.

"I used to like hearts and liver, and that sort of thing wasn't on your coupons. So you could get that occasionally and we would queue for that, but we never seemed as though we went without, never seemed to starve or anything."

MARY WEBB

"We'd have the glass cake stand and there'd be little squares on there, making out it was cakes. In actual fact, it was bread with a little bit of icing. We made out we'd had cakes for tea to all the other kids down the road, you know, showing off! Then she got some ice cream cones from somewhere and then filled them up with very thick custard and we pretended we had ice creams. She was a very clever woman that way."

DIANE BOWSHER

"We had a North Country butcher! Him and my mother got on very well and he often slipped a little bit of meat here and a little bit of meat there you know, because of course he come against people who couldn't afford it so he gave it to the ones he fancied."

MAY WEBSTER



Photo courtesy Milton Keynes Museum.

"You only had half a gallon (of petrol) a week. You couldn't keep any coupons because you'd spend the dam things. I ran out of petrol once I was up in Smethwick and I took the tram back and it cost me half a gallon of petrol and I went on the tram with it all the way back to get me bike! You weren't allowed to carry petrol on a public vehicle, you're not even these days."

MAURICE GARWOOD

"I've never seen my mother do so much with a tin of corned beef! We used to have it mashed, we used to have it boiled, we used to have it in all sorts of things. We used to have tins of Spam that went a very long way."

EDITH WOOD

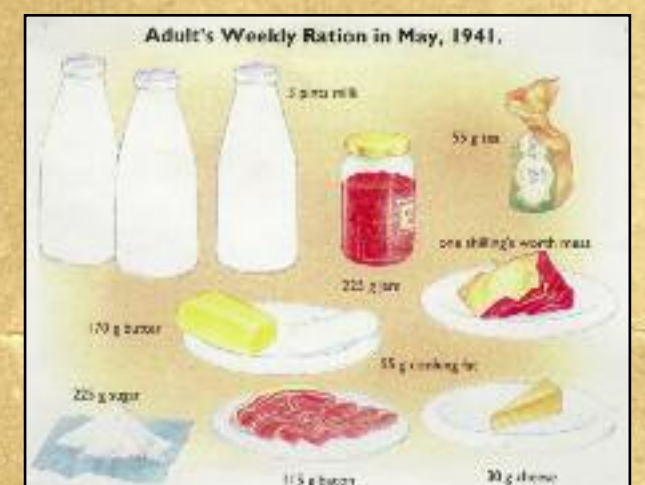


Image courtesy Milton Keynes Museum.

"You had up to 4oz of margarine per week, when there was any butter you got 2oz if you were lucky. Sugar I think it was half a pound a week. You could get a shillings worth of meat if the butcher was that way inclined."

EILEEN DENCHFIELD



Blethley Co-op. Photo: Living Archive collection.

"My mother had to do all the queuing up and things like that - if there was any fish, they used to go and queue for that - if the butcher had anything special, a few sausages, they had to go and queue for that. There was powdered egg and you had to make cakes with that."

BETTY WISE

"I still love Spam my wife can't understand it but it's one of those things that's always stuck with me."

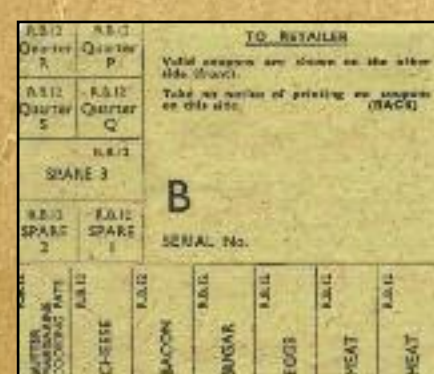
TED STANLEY



Photo courtesy Beryl Connor.

"My father once brought home a pig's head he'd scrounged somewhere. He picked this head up and brought it home and made some marvellous brawn, beautiful, I can taste it now."

WILLIAM PATTERSON



H 1939 HOME FRONT 1945 NT

Civil Defence

Civil Defence as an organisation was set up in September 1941. It was made up of Air Raid Precautions (ARP), the National Fire Service and the Home Guard.

The Home Guard was formed when there was a real risk of invasion. Most men who could fight were already in the forces, those that were left were either too young, too old, or in reserved occupations – those jobs vital to the war effort.

In addition to the Home Guard, towns were patrolled at night by air raid wardens, helping people into shelters and enforcing blackout regulations, urging householders to ‘put that light out!’

ARP staff were responsible for everything connected with an enemy attack. The fire service and ambulance service also played their part.



The Home Guard parading past Bletchley cinema. Photo: Living Archive collection.

“Our house in Greenfield Road was used as an ARP subpost, now the reason for that was that we had the only telephone in the street. A siren was fitted to our house and we had to take the telephone message from the local authority in the town when an air raid was imminent. As soon as the telephone went and the air raid warning was red, the siren had to be sounded by my parents, if my parents were not there we children had to do it, and we loved it.”

JOHN DUNBABIN



Wolverton Works Fire Brigade. Photo courtesy Milton Keynes Museum.

“I remember the air raid warden riding down the road on his bike with his tin hat on, peddling like fury and blowing on his whistle when there was an air-raid.

My father-in-law was a member of the Home Guard and he would tell stories about manning the anti-aircraft guns on Shooters Hill, South London, after working all day in the factory. The Home Guard would spend all night firing at German aircraft with these huge anti-aircraft cannons. He said they never hit anything!!! Later when I was in hospital on Shooters Hill I remember watching the search lights in the sky each night - a real display - that continued for years after the war was over.”

JANE JEAVONS

The Home Guard outside Wolverton Works. Photo: Living Archive collection.



“Father was in charge of an area for the ARP and he used to go on Sunday mornings doing this, whatever he did there, because I remember he borrowed my bicycle on the first occasion and I’d never seen him on a bicycle in Stony Stratford. We all went to the front room thinking he’d fall off it but he didn’t.”

AUDREY LAMBERT



London ambulance drivers. Francis Henry Wilson (centre). Photo courtesy Elsie Scriven.



Wolverton Home Guard. Photo courtesy Kenneth Woodward.

“My Dad was in the Home Guard. He was working shifts at the power station as a chief hand stoker. He would work all day and then have to go and do his stint in the Home Guard.”

DOROTHY HENDRY

“I was a messenger boy probably when I was about fifteen during the early part of the war before I went in the army. I was in the Messenger Service, ARP Messenger Service.”

DEREK DENCHFIELD

“Me Dad was in the fire service, the AFS. He went through all the blitz an then he found out that if he got killed when he’d gone through it all there was no pension for my mother so he decided he’d come out of that and he went into the Home Guard and he used to be on the Ack-Ack guns.”

JOAN GARWOOD

HOMIE FRONT

1939 1945 Make do and Mend

Clothing was rationed from June, 1941, two years after food rationing started. People were urged to "Make do and mend" so that clothing factories and workers could be used to make munitions. There were strict rules saying how much material was to be used to make a dress, or a pair of trousers.

A points system allowed people to buy one completely new outfit a year. Every item of clothing was given a value in coupons.

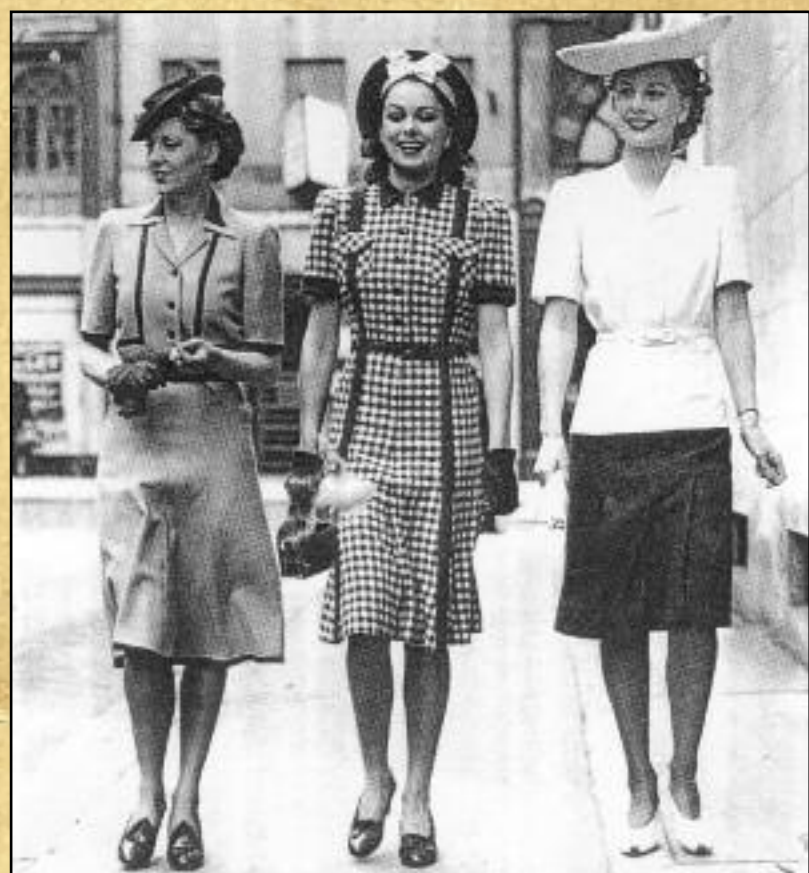


Photo courtesy Milton Keynes Museum.

"On a Friday and there was a man on the market. I can't remember his name, who would sell you material on the black market they called it. That was over and above your coupons you see. But mother being a dressmaker she would always make anything I wanted."

AUDREY LAMBERT

"I will tell you another thing we did at the Scout hall, we had these nets and we used to thread, bits of green and khaki material in them you know to go over tanks and things like that we did that for a little while and we also knitted socks and balaclavas."

MARY WEBB

"I was 17 in this photo. I knitted the sweater I am wearing and I did it in a Fairisle pattern using darning wool because wool was hard to come by. You bought it in short skienis and it had to be knotted to knit the full garment. It was a bit of a mess on the other side."

DOROTHEA BURGESS



"We were never very flush with clothes I know that sort of thing and when we came home I know Mum would un-pick jumpers and wash all the wool and redo it all up again that sort of thing."

JOAN DRAPER



"All my underclothes were parachute silk. We were only saying the other day how lovely they were. I wish you could get some now because it was beautiful. I used to get point heel stockings. Used to get them down Berwick Street Market 'cause I worked in the West End and we used to get them, one and six a pair. Silk stockings. Well if you laddered your stockings and you couldn't get any more for that week then you did paint a line down but it wasn't always straight."

EDITH WOOD

"My mum made a dress for me and you just wore and wore it, that's all, it wasn't for a short time, it came out two or three years until it wore out."

BETTY WISE

"I mean recycling is nothing to us today because we've recycled all our life. In those days it was make do and mend. Today it's recycling. You went round and you collected all sorts of things like jam pots and papers and anything that could be used for something else you collected. I mean if your clothes wore out you darned them or you tried to patch them to make them last a bit longer because you hadn't got the coupons to get anymore with so that's the thing. If things wore out at home you did the best with them until you could get some more. Because you couldn't get household things and that sort of thing so you made do with what you'd got so hence, 'make do and mend'."

LENA JAKEMAN



May and Arthur Webster (centre) on their wedding day in July 1942. Photo courtesy May Webster.

"I remember having to beg, borrow and steal as you might say. We didn't steal of course but begged them, borrowed them and bought coupons for my wedding dress."

MAY WEBSTER

"I made a nightdress out of a parachute and I wore that under my wedding dress when I got married in 1954."

LENA JAKEMAN



"One thing I do remember clear during the war was when I was working at Berkeley Square for six months. I wanted a pair of stockings there wasn't tights in those days. I walked from Berkeley Square to Selfridges one lunch time just to get a pair of stockings."

GLADYS BANKS



HOMIE FRONT

1939

1945

Entertainment

Even though many people involved in entertainment were called up during World War II to serve the country, entertainment to raise peoples morale was still seen as important.

Although all forms of entertainment suffered during the war, new songs continued to be written and sung, both on the radio, and in live concerts. Sometimes proud and defiant, sometimes sad and quietly hopeful, many of these new songs matched and formed the public's mood. Slow, emotional numbers such as "We'll Meet Again" and "I'll Be Seeing You" were particularly popular because they put into words and music what many people parted from their loved ones felt.

During the war, cinema was a powerful means of propaganda. Films often featured plots, which emphasised sacrifice, people giving up things for duty and loyalty. 'In Which We Serve', 'The Best Days of our Lives' and 'Brief Encounter' were emotionally powerful at the time.

Dancing was one of the most popular pastimes during the war and from 1942 onwards British dance halls were filled with American servicemen who were better dressed than those from Britain. They were also better paid, which meant that they could afford to be generous with the cigarettes, sweets, chewing gum and stockings that the U.S. army brought over from America. Understandably, many British girls were swept off their feet by "the yanks" and about 60,000 girls married American servicemen.

It was the Radio or 'Wireless' as it was then generally called that everyone relied on the radio during the war to keep them entertained, informed and educated.



Photo courtesy Betsy Stanley.

"We went to the dances, we were in the guides we used to go down to church and do the St George's Players and that sort of thing."

LENA JAKEMAN

"We had entertainment at home in so much as we'd got all sorts of games, boxed games and things like that. Mother had been a music teacher so we were both taught the piano and we used to entertain our grand parents with duets with mother!"

AUDREY LAMBERT

"Lots of funny things happened during the war and I had to wait forty years to see the end of a film! I went up West, with some friends, to see 'Stage Door', with Rita Hayworth. In the middle of it the warning went so they turfed us all out of this cinema and we had to go down this shelter in Hyde Park, and because by the time we got out the shelter they wouldn't show the film again, they closed the cinema. So we had to go home and it wasn't until a few years back that they had it on and I saw the end of it! I had to wait forty years to see the end of it!"

EDITH WOOD

"On Saturday evenings they usually had a dance in the Science and Arts Institute which was burned down. I don't know who put them on, but the Rhythm Aces used to play and there was Joe Lovesey, he used to have a band, they were very good too. The girls and the boys and if there were soldiers billeted around they'd come. Quickstep, Foxtrot, Waltz, and they said Tango, but it wasn't a proper Tango, but we used to try and do it. We used to dance together very often, because there weren't enough men."



The Rhythm Aces. Photo: Living Archive collection.

BETTY WISE



Photo courtesy Betsy Stanley.

"There were lots of youth clubs around and good youth clubs at that run by church people and they organised dances, different occasions, events. A darts match something like that a day out in the country. You'd never go far but it was a day away from home which was good. That was marvellous for us kids and as we grew up so we took a responsible look towards helping to teach the other youngsters coming on. We got on well with that. Local dances, there were always local dances going on especially at weekends, usually, as far as I was concerned they were nearly an hours walk away. But we did it. There were buses available but we didn't have money for bus fare and we did it, we managed. We used to go dancing and very often I'd take a girl home after the dance, possibly three, four miles and then walk home from there and think nothing of it."

WILLIAM PATTERSON

"We used to go walking round during the evening and you could hear all these different bands playing including Glen Miller. Although it was dark, and it was dark, it was nice just to have a little break and to hear a bit of music, you know. Then I used to come back quite late in the evening and have a game of table tennis."

GLADYS BANKS



"Apart from playing cards at home and games there was the concerts at The Progressive Club. The Progressive Club which is now The New Bradwell Dance Centre, basic, almost just entertainment, singing, dancing, comedian and pantomime of course."

KENNETH WOODWARD

H 1939 OMIE FRONT 1945 NT

Dig for Victory

The Dig For Victory Campaign was launched by The Ministry of Agriculture one month after the outbreak of the Second World War. It was to become one of the most memorable slogans of the whole conflict. Britain's Home Front was encouraged to transform their private gardens into mini-allotments. Lawns and flowerbeds were turned into vegetable gardens. All space was utilised, back yards, window boxes and Anderson shelter roofs. Over ten million instructional leaflets were distributed to the British people.

The Dig For Victory campaign gave children who were not evacuated a role on the Home Front. Children's groups were set up to take over bombed sites and turn them into allotments. Schools had allotments where food was grown and used in the School canteen. Many people kept pigs and rabbits for food, and chickens for their highly prized eggs.

The propaganda campaign was successful and it was estimated that over 1,400,000 people had allotments.

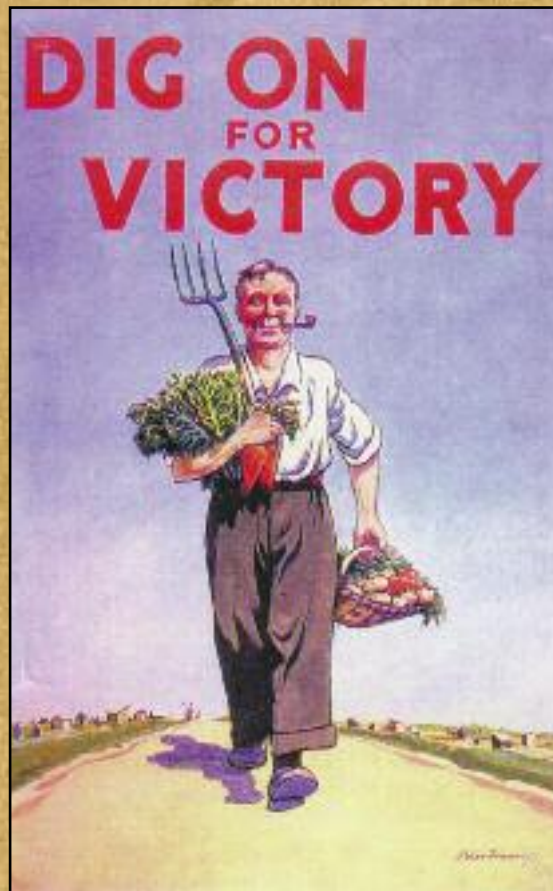


Image courtesy Milton Keynes Museum.

"If you had fruit growing in your garden you were lucky. We had a lot of gooseberries so we were lucky."

EDITH WOOD

"Dad had an allotment, he grew his own, we had a long garden. He grew a lot of vegetables."

EILEEN DENCHFIELD

"My father had some plum trees on his allotment and we used those for making jam, we hadn't got an apple tree, but we'd got plums and rhubarb, we used to have that. All the men had an allotment, they worked very hard really. When you consider they worked

long hours in the Works and then they went up and did the allotments - they did all that as well."

BETTY WISE

"When my father went up on the allotment I went with him and I'd do a bit of digging. He taught me how to dig properly, he taught me how to earth up potatoes, earth up leeks, string beans and all that sort of.... They were jobs that come automatically to



Bletchley Cattle Market. Photo: Living Archive collection.

you. Many a time my job was to wheel the wheelbarrow down from the allotment loaded with vegetables a lot of which was given away. Rather than let it waste he would give it away. Mind I won't say that we weren't given things. We had chickens, I remember those and rabbits."

WILLIAM PATTERSON



Photo courtesy Betsy Stanley.

"We'd got this great big garden and we'd dug it up in patches, each classroom had a patch to dig. We just went out in the garden and our teacher was with us. As far as I can remember we just went out and dug a patch and sowed our seeds and hoed and weeded, mostly lettuces. We used to take them home and have them for supper. I can remember that, with bread and butter. It was a Cos type lettuce, if you chopped them up with vinegar and sugar they were delicious."

BETSY STANLEY

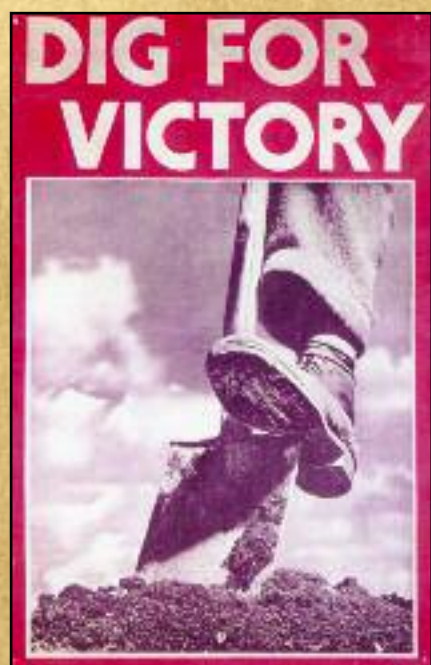
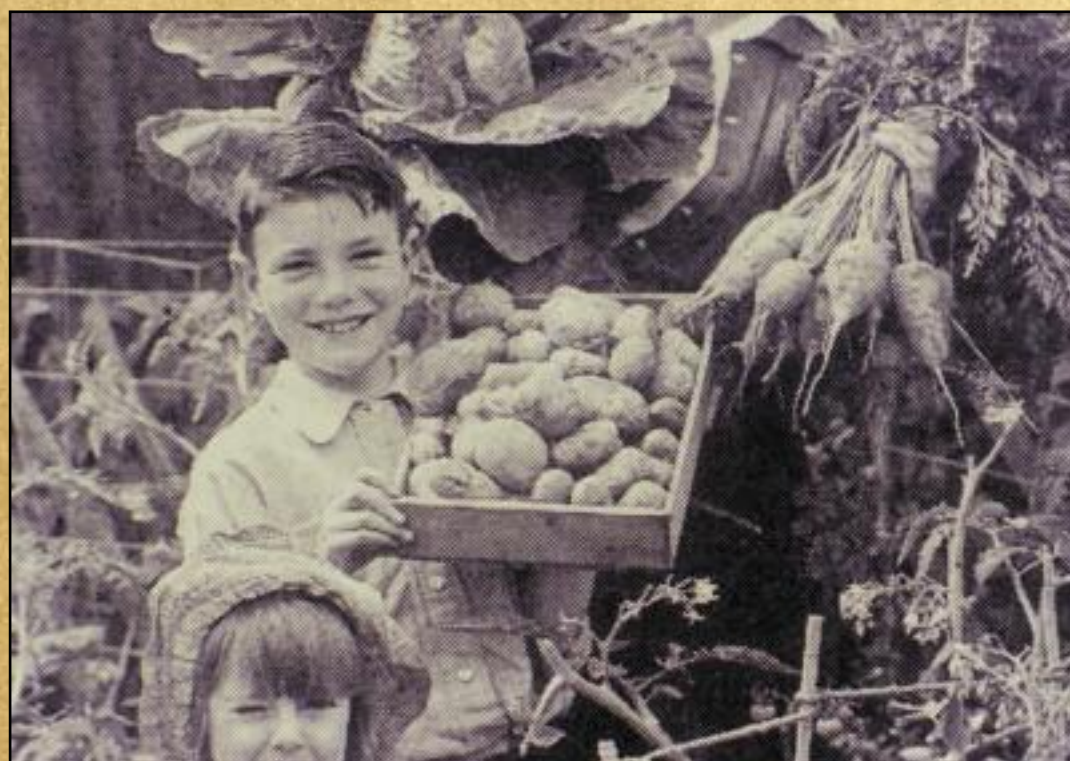


Image courtesy Milton Keynes Museum.

"We used to grow tomatoes, greenery and my mother was a real good bottler, she could bottle anything and she used to make bread and pastry. She was self-sufficient, well she had to be with six boys didn't she. I don't think we went without because my father was a grocer and anything that wasn't rationed that you could pay for, it weren't under the counter but I mean you could pay for it you know. It wasn't Black market stuff, it wasn't rationed."

MAURICE GARWOOD



LOTTERY FUNDED

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