

Homefront

WALES IN WORLD WAR 2



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Acknowledgements

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Map artwork has been supplied by Dai Howell.

For links to all Amgueddfa Cymru collection objects used in this eBook, go to the [Index Page](#).

**AMGUEDDFA
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Using this resource



Mae'r adnodd hwn
ar gael yn Gymraeg.
This resource is
available in Welsh.



Use this eBook to explore objects from the Amgueddfa Cymru collection and discover what life was like in Wales during WW2.



Mae'r adnodd hwn
ar gael yn Gymraeg.
This resource is
available in Welsh.

Then learn how to research your local community during WW2 by using the 'Your Homefront' resource!

Curriculum for Wales

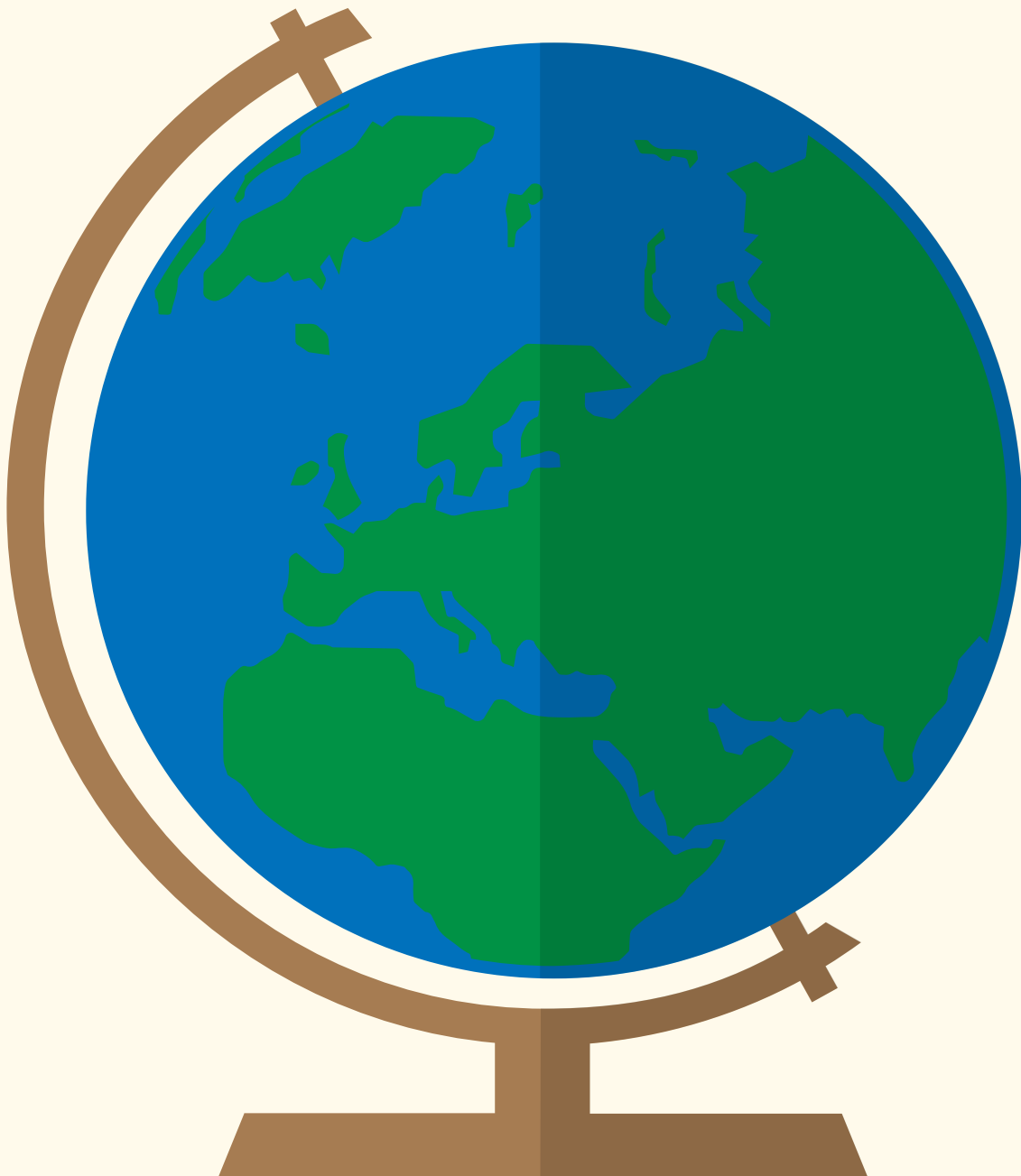
Designed for progression Step 2

Can be used as a Cynefin project within Humanities

World War Two

Between 1939 to 1945, Britain fought in WW2.

We call it a 'World War' as most countries were involved in some way.



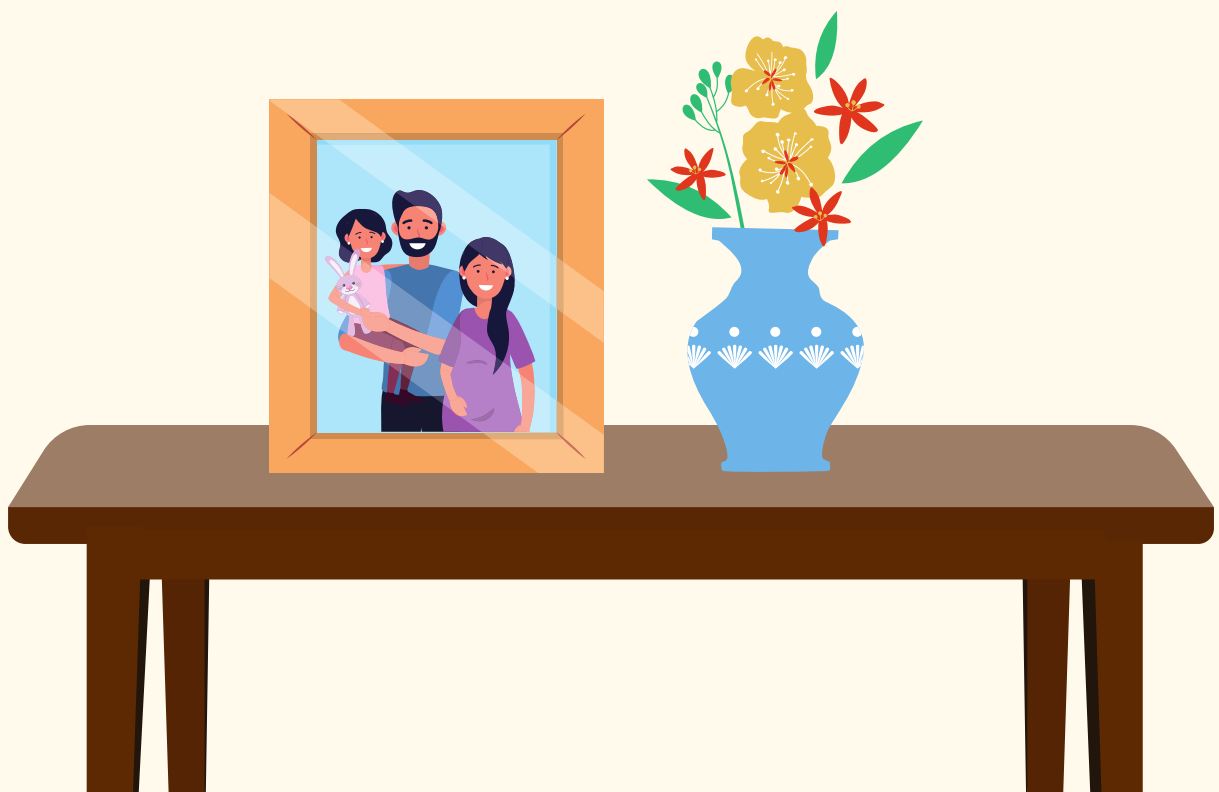
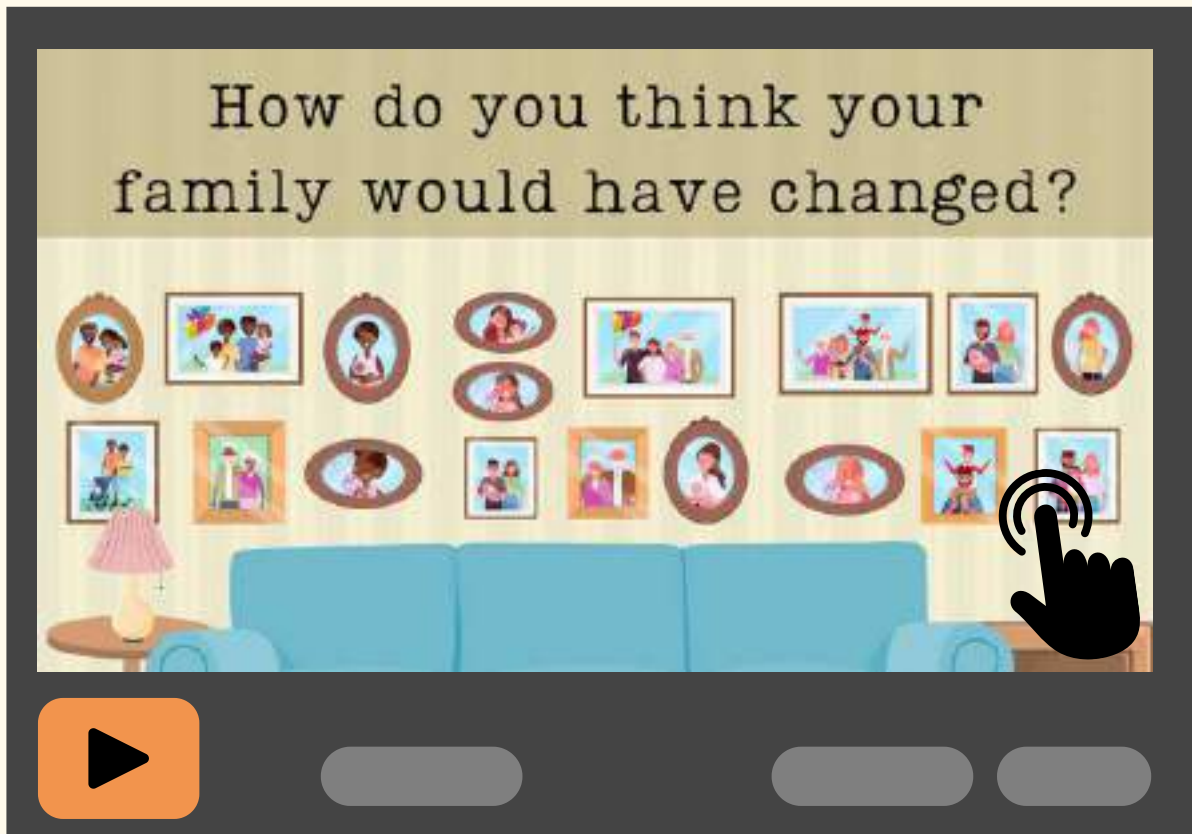
When did WW2 begin & why?

WW2 began on 3rd September 1939.

The war was started by Germany in an unprovoked attack on Poland.



Who Went to War?



Homefront in Wales

The term Homefront describes the activities and efforts of civilians in a nation at war.

During WW2 many men left Wales to fight, and many women left their homes to join the armed forces. Men, women and children that were left behind did their best to keep the country going and support the 'War effort'.



WW2 for Men

In 1939, men aged 18-41 were 'called up' to join the army.

This was called 'conscription'.

Men could also be conscripted into the Royal Navy or the Royal Air Force.

Not everyone went to fight, but many helped in the 'War effort' in some way or other.

© Amgueddfa Cymru



Cecil (Joe) Rees

A member of the RAF
(Royal Air Force)



Women at work



Cooking and make do & mend



Love & loss



Delivering news

Rationing



Memories & evacuees



Click places on the map to explore what life was like for people in Wales during WW2



Memories & evacuees



Return to the map

Wartime Memories: Patti Flynn

Patti Flynn was a child during the War. She grew up in Tiger Bay, Cardiff. Both her father and two brothers were killed during the War.

Patti became a jazz singer, author, model and social activist. She was a founder and patron of Black History Wales.

Watch the film of Patti Flynn talking about her family during WW2 on the next page.

© Amgueddfa Cymru



Patti Flynn

Wartime Memories



WW2 for Children

WW2 was a very difficult time for children. Many dads, uncles and brothers were sent to war to fight.

Children in urban areas were at risk of being bombed. Some had to leave their families to live in safer areas in the countryside. Many had to grow up fast to support their families and the 'War effort'.



Evacuees

Places such as London, Cardiff and Swansea were bombed during the War. During certain times, the bombing was referred to as the Blitz.

Evacuees were children who were moved from cities and towns to more rural areas to live, to keep them safe from the bombing.



© Amgueddfa Cymru

Four evacuated girls who stayed with Mrs Meyrick in Nantyglo, South Wales, 1940

Evacuees

This photograph was taken at harvest time in Pentre Pant, Ceiriog Valley.

Twin sisters, Ann and Judith Bradbury standing, and their younger sister Elizabeth in the centre at the front. They were from Manchester. Ruth Pelter, a friend from Eastham, is on the right of the group. The boy is Henry Thomas Hughes, and his sister Deborah is holding a doll, nearly hidden in the haystack.



© Amgueddfa Cymru

Harvest and Evacuees
Ceiriog Valley, 1940

Wartime Memories: Alan Owen

Alan Owen was a boy during the War and lived in Dowlais with his mother, Minnie, who ran their family draper's shop. His grandfather, Emlyn Davies, from Newcastle Emlyn set up the business.



Alan was interviewed about his childhood in 2021, at the age of 91. He recalls evacuees, blackouts, bombings, American soldiers (or GIs) arriving, and much more.

Watch the following film to hear Alan talk about his memories.



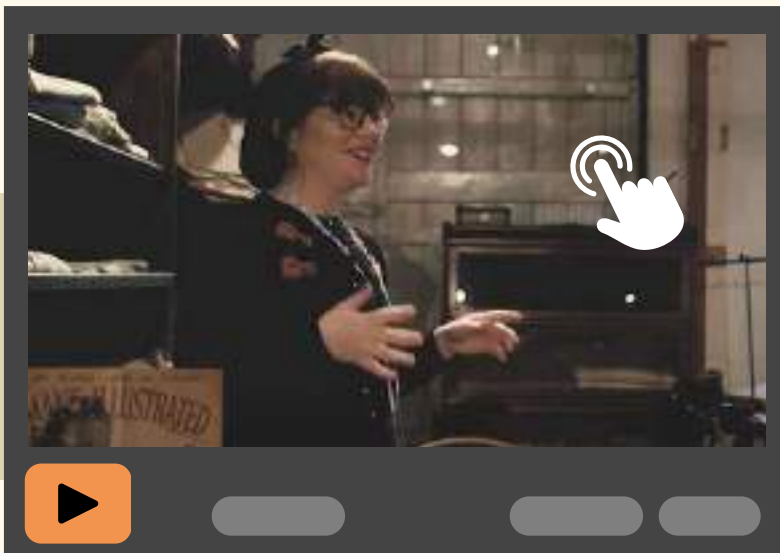
Wartime Memories



Clothes rationing

Alan's family shop sold many things including woollen shirts made in the Cambrian Mills, which is now the site of the National Wool Museum.

Customers had to use coupons issued by the Government to buy clothes.



Life for Minnie Owen and her customers during the War.

National Wool Museum





© Mona Moore/Amgueddfa Cymru

Swansea, Castle Street, after Bombing

Mona Moore

Watercolour painting, 1941



Explore the painting in detail at





Women at Work



Return to the map

WW2 for Women

WW2 changed women's working life forever.

In 1941, all unmarried women and childless widows between the ages of 20 and 30 were liable to be called-up to do jobs that supported the 'War effort.'

By mid-1943, almost 90% of single women and 80% of married women were working in factories, on the land or in the armed forces.

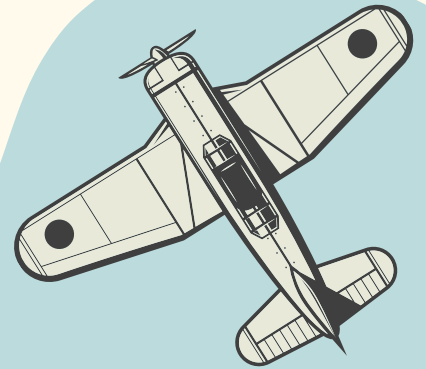


© Imperial War Museum

Women in the Armed Forces

Huge numbers of women were involved in the 'War effort', and many joined the armed forces even though they did not have to.

Many flew unarmed aircraft, drove ambulances, worked as nurses and worked behind enemy lines in the European resistance. 55% of Welsh war workers were female, the highest percentage in all of Britain!



55,000 serving with guns and providing essential air defence

80,000 thousand in the Land Army



640,000 in the armed forces



Women in the Armed Forces

Over 640,000 women were part of the armed forces.



© Amgueddfa Cymru



© Amgueddfa Cymru

Gwendoline's WAAF
jacket and hat



© Amgueddfa Cymru

Gwendoline Celia Lewis

Was a leading Aircraft Woman in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force (WAAF). She was born in Aberdare. Before the War, she worked as a nanny.



© Nicola Howard-Jones/Amgueddfa Cymru

W.A.A.F. Tester

Ray Howard-Jones

Watercolour painting, 1943-45



Explore the painting in detail at



The Women's Land Army

The government wanted to increase the amount of food grown within Britain.

To do this, more help was needed on the farms and so the Government established the Women's Land Army in June 1939.



© Imperial War Museum

The Women's Land Army

What kind of jobs did the Land Army do?

The land army ploughed the fields, dug up potatoes, harvested crops and looked after animals. It was physically demanding work!

They worked long hours all year - including 50 hours a week during the summer months!



© Amgueddfa Cymru

Women's
Land Army
shirt, 1945



© Evelyn Dunbar Estate/Amgueddfa Cymru

Baling Hay
Painting of the Land Army in Usk
Evelyn Mary Dunbar



Explore the painting in detail at



Munitions Factories

Most women worked in the munitions factories.

In Wales, the largest factories were located in Hirwaun, Glascoed and Bridgend, South Wales which employed over 60,000 people between them, and most of these were women.



© Amgueddfa Cymru

Women working on the PIAT anti-tank mortar bomb, Neath, 1940

Factory Conditions

The hours in factories were long. For many women it was a constant juggle between working and balancing family life. Some men were not happy that their wives were working.

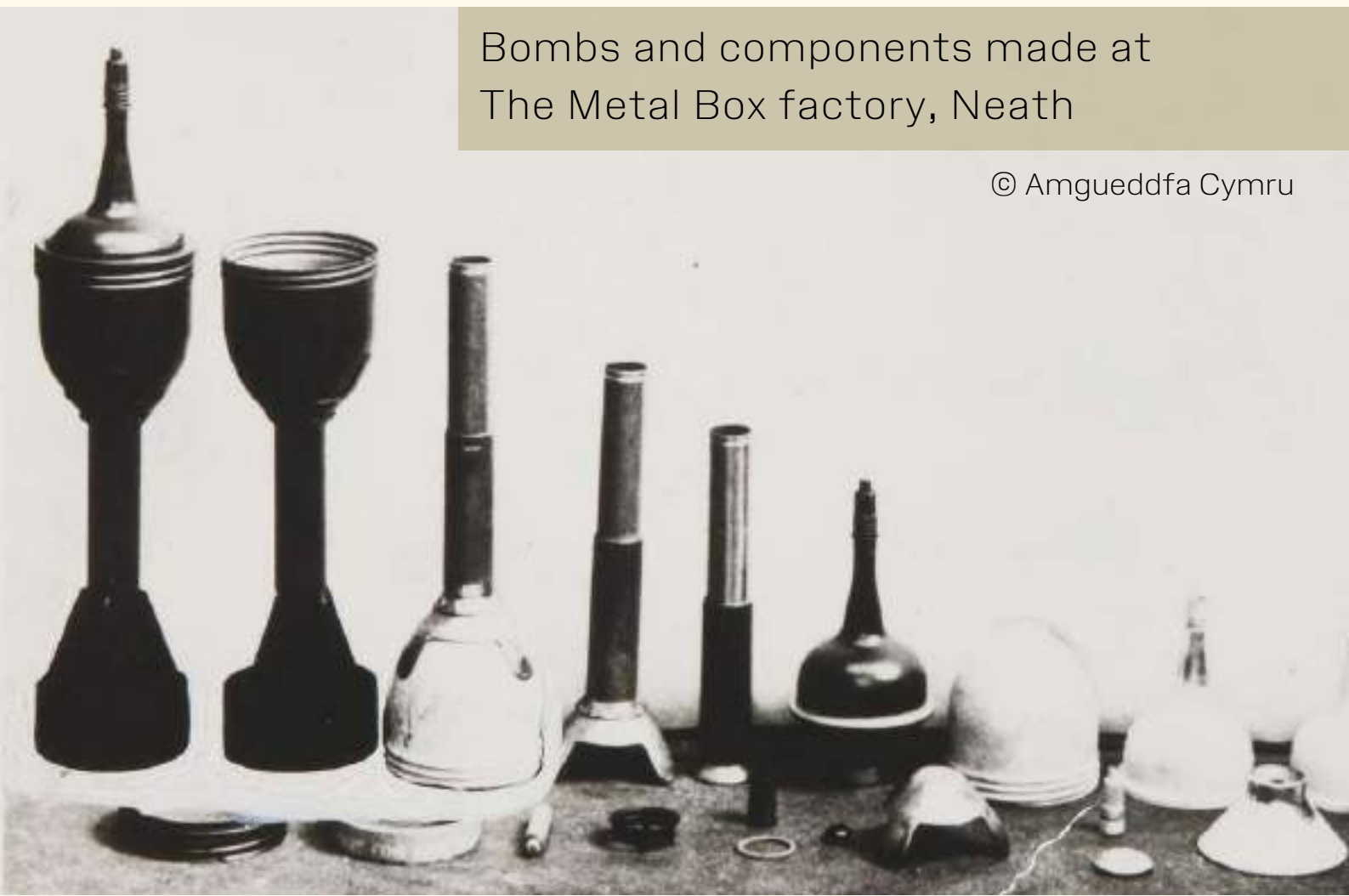
Munitions work could be dangerous and could turn women's hair and skin yellow!



Listen to the stirring, upbeat music broadcast to workers to get them into the spirit.

Bombs and components made at
The Metal Box factory, Neath

© Amgueddfa Cymru



© Amgueddfa Cymru

Overalls issued by the War Department
and worn in a Royal Ordnance Factory
in Aberfan, 1942.



"For King and Country — for Dear Life — for Freedom of Mankind."

ROTEX LTD

This is to certify that

JESSIE IRENE THOMAS

WAS EMPLOYED AT THE

CYFARHYFA **Factory** MERTHYR TYDFIL

**IN THE PRODUCTION OF VITAL WAR
WEAPONS & EQUIPMENT**

FOR THE

ROYAL AIR FORCE

**& SO PLAYED A FULL PART IN HELPING
OUR ARMED FORCES TO VICTORY**



© Amgueddfa Cymru

Certificate awarded to
Jessie Irene Thomas
for the production of
war weapons.

She was employed at
the Rotax Ltd., in
Merthyr Tydfil.

Nursing

Many women became nurses during the War.

Hettie Edwards was the Librarian of the National Museum of Wales Library between 1931 and 1970. During WW2, she volunteered as a nurse for the British Red Cross Society.

Hettie Edwards' nursing uniform



© Amgueddfa Cymru

Hettie Edwards at the National Museum of Wales Library

© Amgueddfa Cymru



Women's Institute

The Women's Institute (WI) played a key role in the War. They helped organise the evacuation of children from the cities.

They also raised funds to support the 'War effort' and helped to maintain food supplies and distribute seeds so that people could grow their own vegetables.



© Amgueddfa Cymru

Sewing circle held at Romilly Road, Canton
During the War, many women set up special
knitting parties to help knit clothes such as
socks for the soldiers



Delivering News



Return to the map

Work, work, work!

Many women did their best to keep the country going and support the 'War effort.' Some worked long hours and had more than one job.



She delivered mail to the local community each day. She completed the eight-mile round journey on her bicycle before going across the road to work in the local pub.



Mrs Griffiths with her daughters

Mrs Griffiths ran both the post office and local pub in the village Blaenwaun in West Wales.



Post Office

Blaenwaun Post Office was relocated to St Fagans National Museum of History in the early 1990s.



Explore the Post Office virtually!
It has been set-up as it would
have looked during WW2.



Delivering news

The Post Office played a very important role in delivering news during the War.

Many families eagerly awaited letters to hear if their loved ones were safe.



Video: Life for Mrs. Griffiths and her customers during the War.

Wartime memories: Mrs. Griffiths

Blaenwaun Post Office was originally built in 1936 by Evan Isaac. Mrs. Hannah Beatrice Griffiths, who was Evan's daughter, was the postmistress here.

Watch the following film where Mrs. Griffiths and her two daughters, Tegwen and Evanna James, talk about their memories of the War. The interview is in Welsh with English subtitles.



Mrs Beatrice Griffiths at the opening of Blaenwaun Post Office, St Fagans, 1993

Wartime Memories





Love and Loss



Return to the map

Love during the War



This wedding dress was worn by Dorothy Dean on her wedding day to American soldier (sometimes called GIs) Robert David Burns. The dress was handmade by two of her friends.

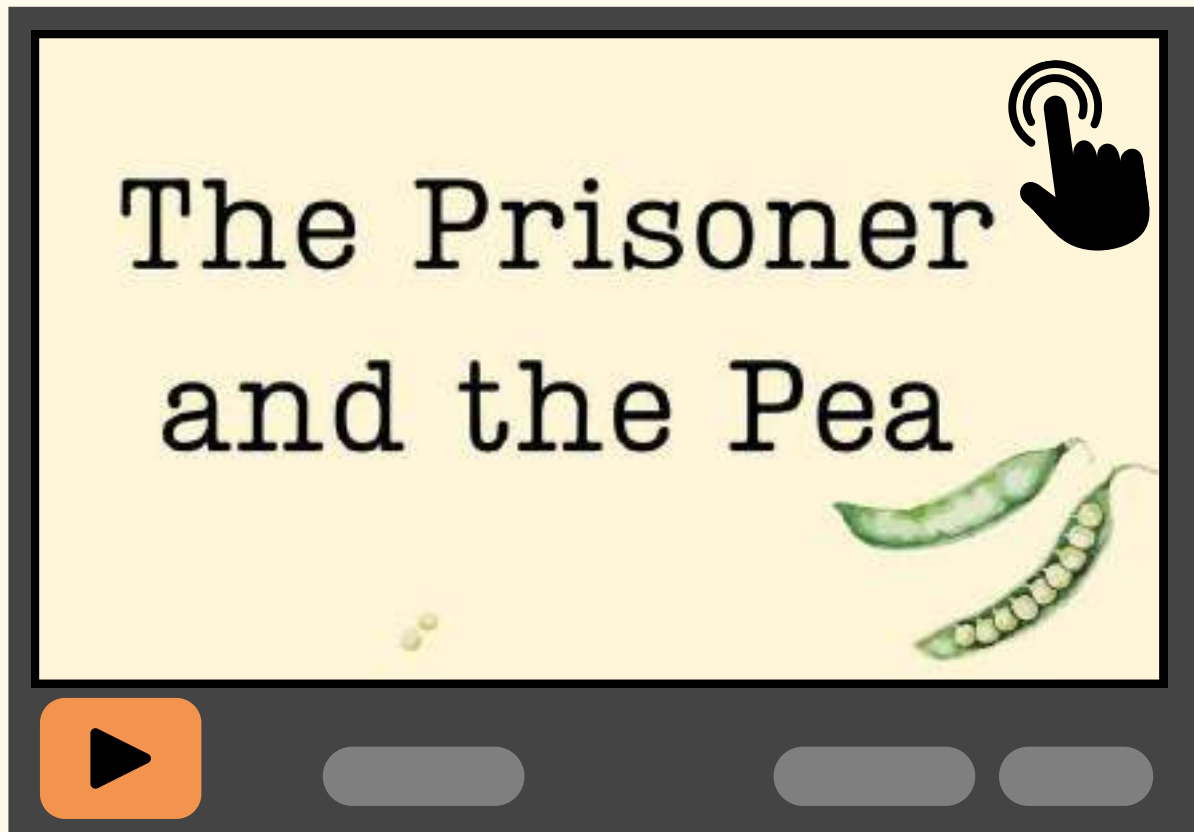
© Amgueddfa Cymru

This is a photo of Dorothy and Robert on their wedding day at St Illtyd's Church, Upper Church Village on 22 September 1944.

© Amgueddfa Cymru



Love during the War



Loss during the War

While some people were lucky enough to find love during the War, many others had to cope with loved ones being killed or going missing in action.

© Amgueddfa Cymru
No. _____

Charges to pay
s. _____ d. _____

RECEIVED
5.15

PC + CT 15/16 ITHEL JEMY

TELEGRAM

Prefix. Time handed in. Office of Origin and Service Instructions: Words.

62

262 1.9 DONASTEP T CUMS AA

To _____

From _____

MRS J JEREMY BRUNRWYN PONTYPRIDD-GLAM

REGRET TO INFORM YOU THAT YOUR SON FLYING OFFICER
ITHEL DAVID JEREMY IS MISSING AS RESULT OF AIR
OPERATION 15/16 SEPT STOP LETTER FOLLOWS STOP ANY
FURTHER INFORMATION RECEIVED WILL BE IMMEDIATELY
COMMUNICATED TO YOU = CO RAF STATION LINDHOLME

For free repetition of doubtful words telephone "TELEGRAMS ENQUIRY" or call, with this form at office of delivery. Other enquiries should be accompanied by this form and if possible, the envelope

WE 1011

Telegram sent to Mrs J. Jeremy informing her that her son, Flight Lieutenant Ithel David Jeremy of Pontypridd (service number 77965), is missing in action.

17th November 1945.

Dear Mrs. Rees,

As hostilities have now ceased it is possible to release as much information as is known of the circumstances of the loss of H.M. Submarine UNIQUE in which your son lost his life.

H.M. Submarine UNIQUE left Holy Loch on 7th October 1942 for patrol in the Bay of Biscay. She parted from her escort off the Scillies on 9th October, and nothing is known of her movements from that date or of the cause of her loss. There were no survivors.

It is possible that you have heard nothing further since the first Admiralty notification and I felt it would be a comfort to you to know these few details which I am afraid are all I can give. I would also like to express to you my deepest sympathy in the loss of your son, who, by his gallant sacrifice, did so much to ensure our final victory.

Yours sincerely,



Rear Admiral.

Mrs. L. Rees,
2, Sunnyside,
Ynyspoeth,
Abercynen,
Glam.

© Amgueddfa Cymru

Letter from Rear Admiral to Mrs L. Rees regarding the death of her son on H.M.S. UNIQUE. Dated 17 November 1945.



Rationing



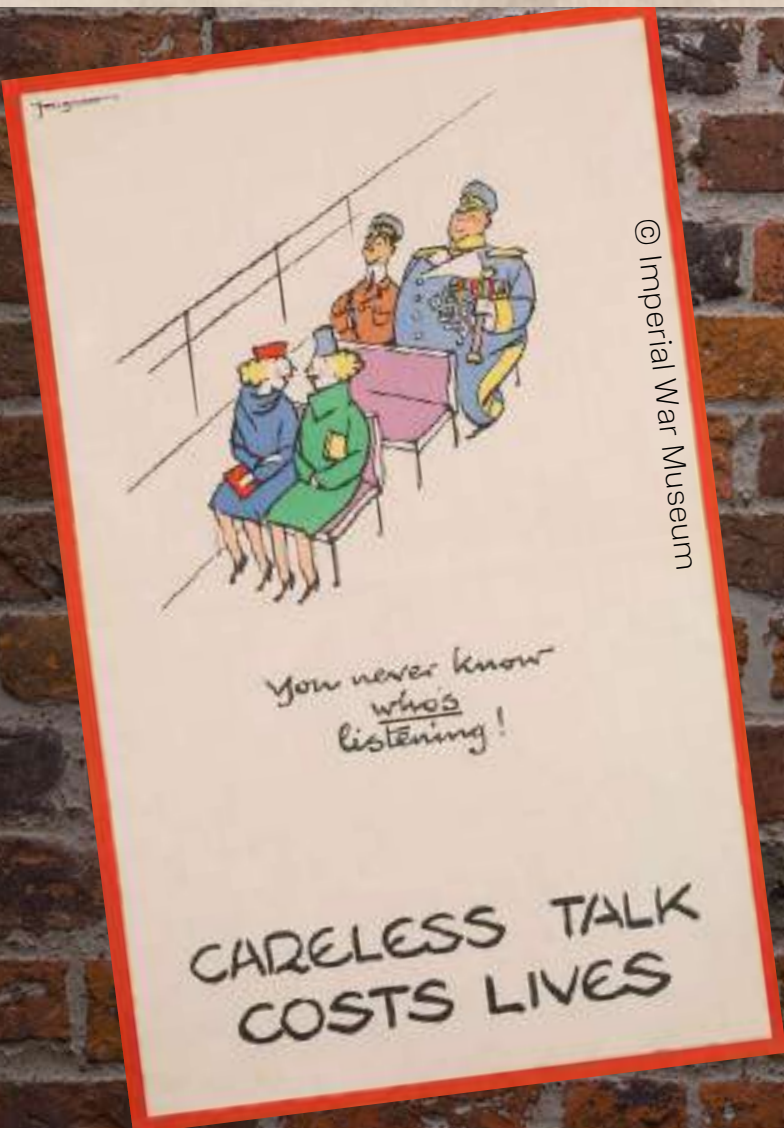
Return to the map

Posters and campaigns

During the War, the government released many posters like these to encourage people to behave in a certain way to help the 'War effort'.

Can you think of any posters like these that we see now?

Think about things that have happened in the last few years that have made us change the way we act.



Food Rationing

The government was worried about food supplies and rising prices, meaning poorer people might not be able to afford the food they need. Rationing was introduced to make sure that everyone had a fair share.

Barbara Donaldson, from Aberdare, was 13 years old when war broke out. She remembered fresh eggs being replaced with dried egg in a tin. Barbara thought they were tasty and had a great deal of uses.



Barbara
Donaldson

Food Rationing

The list of foods which were rationed grew as the War continued. The rules were very strict and people who were caught trying to cheat were fined or sent to prison. Often people who were poor or unemployed and undernourished in the pre-War years were much better fed in wartime because of rationing.



Queue at Horspool's greengrocers,
Llangollen, 1945

The Ration Book

Every person in the country, including children, received a ration book and each home had to register with a local butcher, grocer and milkman who had to ensure they had enough food for their customers.

The ration books contained coupons which had to be presented when items were bought. Everyone had a ration book, including members of the Royal Family.

MINISTRY **MF** OF FOOD

RATION BOOK

1944-45

Surname.....

Other Names.....

Address.....
(as on Identity Card)

Date of birth (Day)..... (Month)..... (Year).....


NATIONAL REGISTRATION NUMBER	:	R.B.4 7	JUNIOR
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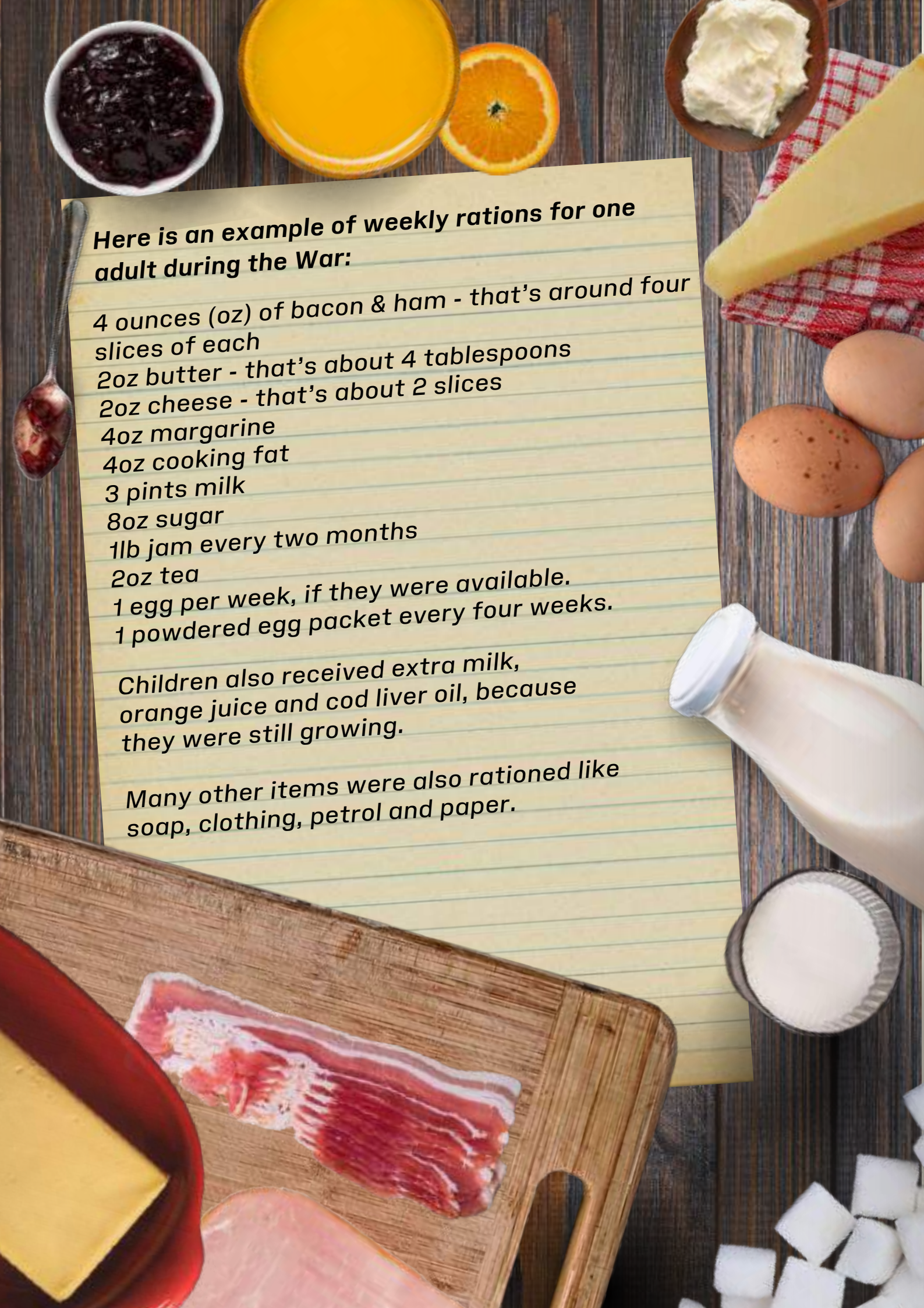
FOOD OFFICE CODE No. **C**

8.17

Serial No. of Ration Book **EJ 115019**

IF FOUND RETURN TO ANY FOOD OFFICE





Here is an example of weekly rations for one adult during the War:

4 ounces (oz) of bacon & ham - that's around four slices of each

2oz butter - that's about 4 tablespoons

2oz cheese - that's about 2 slices

4oz margarine

4oz cooking fat

3 pints milk

8oz sugar

1lb jam every two months

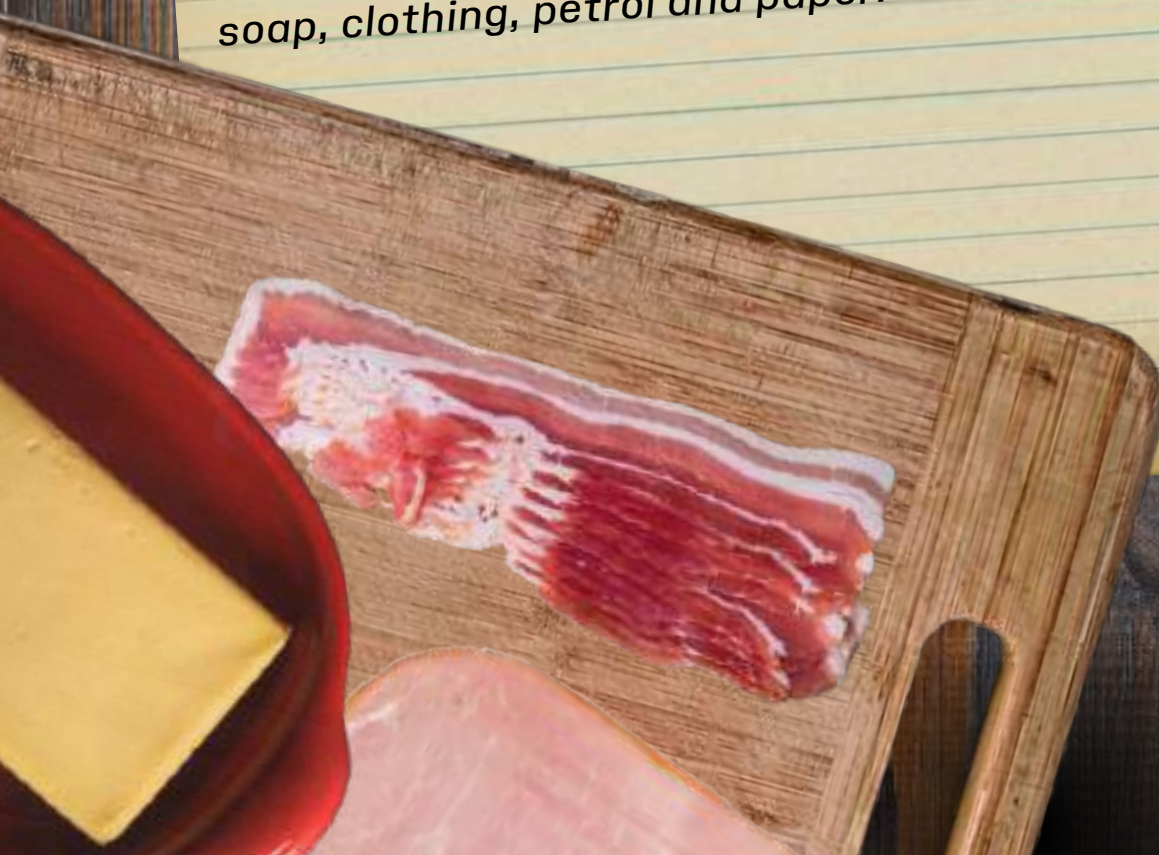
2oz tea

1 egg per week, if they were available.

1 powdered egg packet every four weeks.

Children also received extra milk, orange juice and cod liver oil, because they were still growing.

Many other items were also rationed like soap, clothing, petrol and paper.



Dig for Victory

In October 1939, the government launched the 'Dig for Victory' campaign, and it was a response to a wartime problem of food shortages.

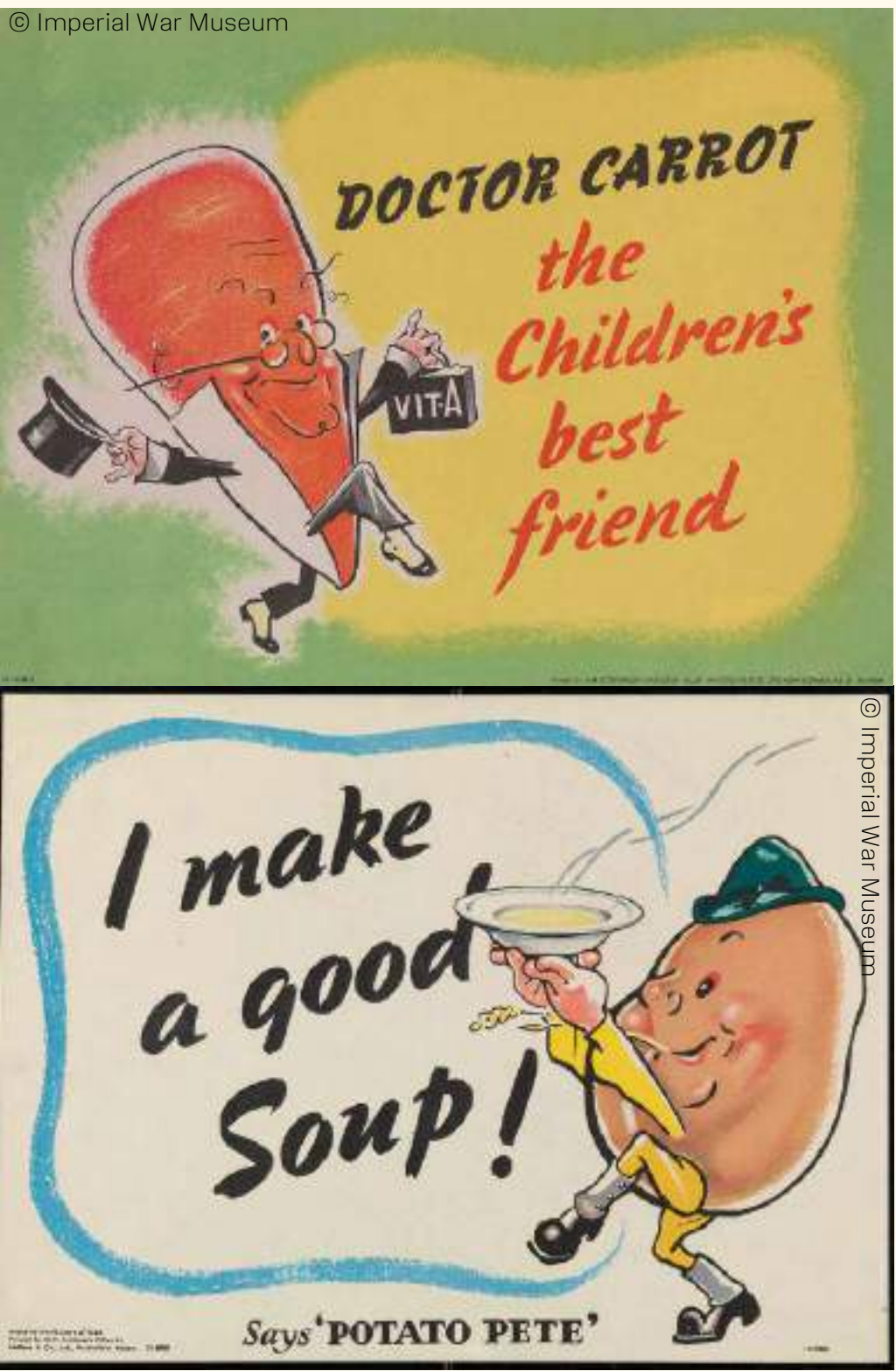
People were urged to use gardens and every spare piece of land, such as parks, golf clubs and tennis courts, to grow vegetables.

'Dig for Victory' was one of a number of slogans to encourage people to behave in a certain way to help the 'War effort'.



To make the campaign appealing, two characters, Potato Pete and Doctor Carrot were created to promote eating vegetables.

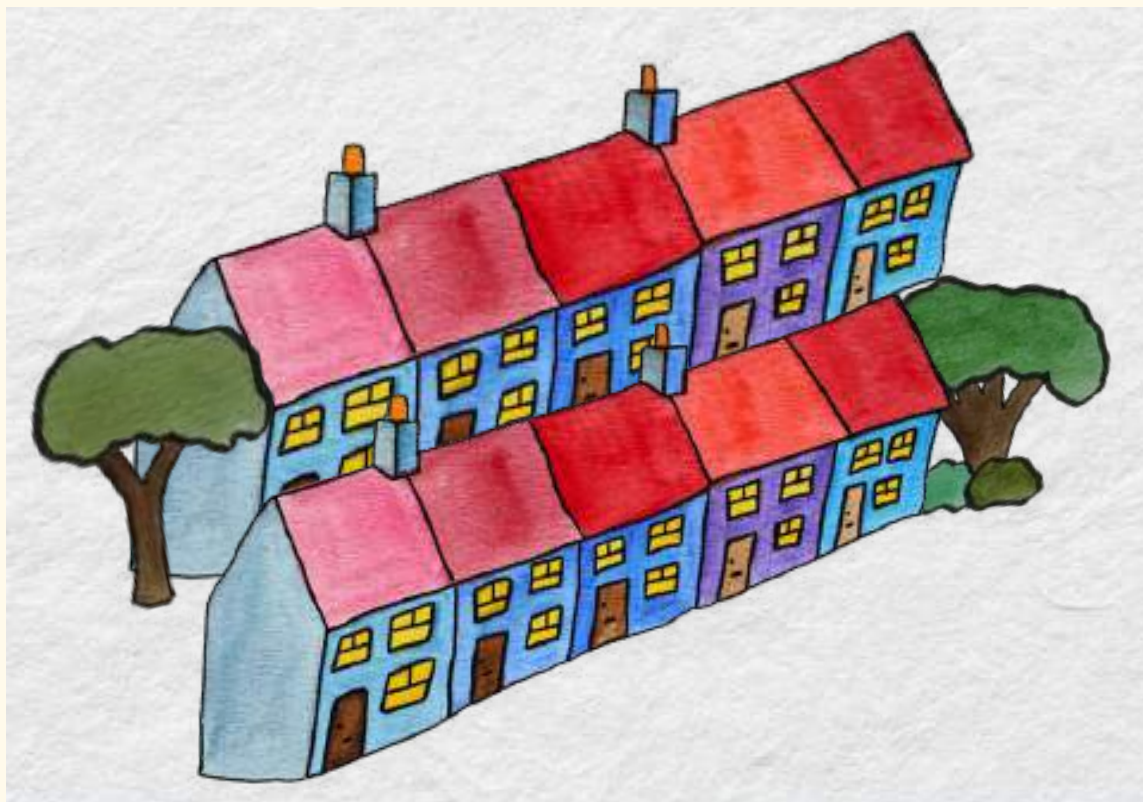
They appeared in most recipes in books and magazines.



Why not try designing your own poster?

Click the drawing for ideas and tips!





Cooking and
Make do & mend



Return to the map

Kitchen front

The Kitchen Front was a popular early morning five-minute BBC radio programme. It gave listeners tips on the healthiest ways to make use of their food rations.

This is an original radio in the Amgueddfa Cymru collection. It was used during WW2.

The popular name for a radio was a wireless.



Marguerite Patten

Marguerite Patten OBE was a popular cook.

During WW2, as a leading Home Economist for the Ministry of Food's Food Advice Division, Marguerite and her colleagues worked very hard to make people aware of the importance of keeping their families well fed on the rations available.



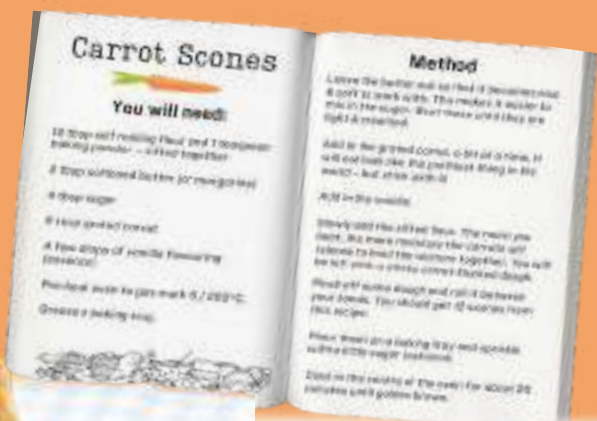
Marguerite
Patten

War time treats

Marguerite Patten created a carrot scone recipe to ensure people got enough vitamin A during the War.

Carrots were readily available as many people grew their own. Carrots are very high in beta carotene which converts to vitamin A. Just one medium size carrot provides the recommended daily intake of vitamin A!

Why not try some of Marguerite's scones yourself? Click the book to see the recipe!

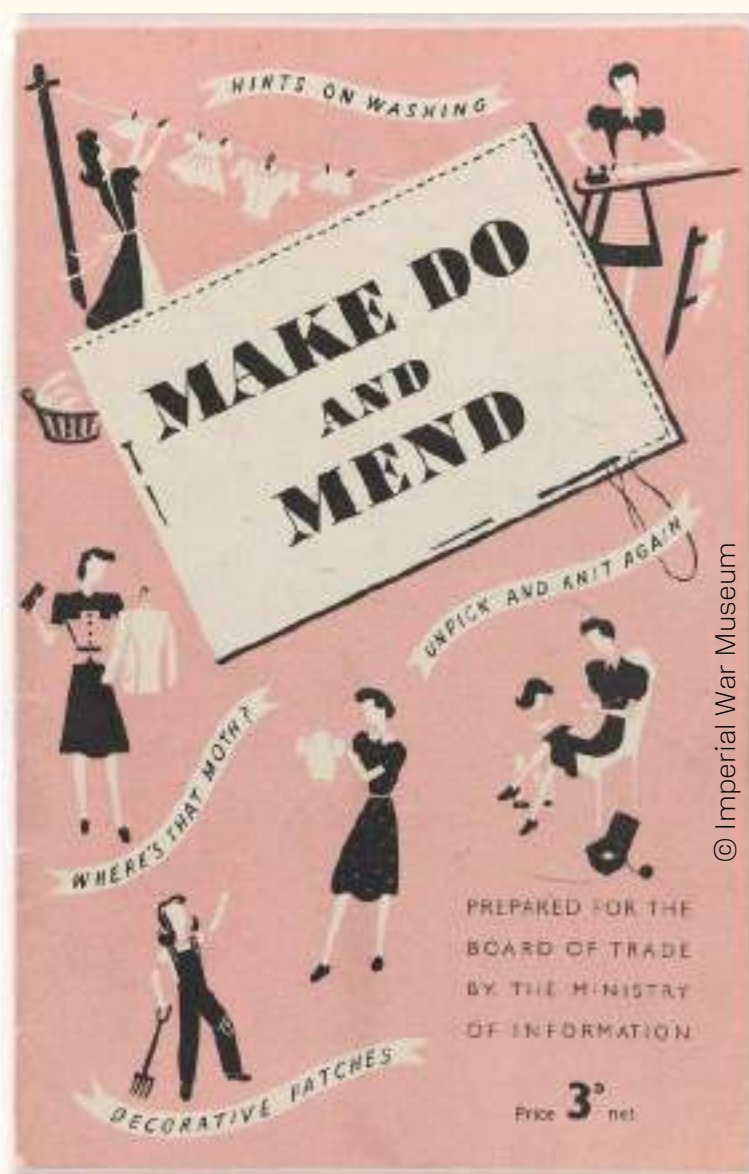


Make do and mend

Following food rationing in 1940, clothes rationing came into force in June 1941.

People were urged to 'make do and mend' so that clothing factories and workers could be used to make items, such as parachutes and uniforms.

In the face of these shortages, the Board of Trade published a small booklet called 'Make do and Mend' to encourage women to be creative and inventive with their clothes.



Everyone was given a clothing ration book with a quota of tokens to spend every year, with each type of garment having a points value. At the beginning of the scheme, every adult was given 66 points to spend, but as the War went on the quota had to be reduced.

Children were allocated extra clothing coupons above the standard ration to allow for growing out of clothes during a year.

A character called 'Mrs Sew-and-Sew' was used to promote the message in newspapers and magazines. Sewing classes were set up in village halls and schools across Wales to help women with all aspects of home life.



This is an example of 'make do and mend' from the Amgueddfa Cymru collection:



Weldons sewing pattern for a blue day dress from about 1940-45.

Multi-coloured scarf, hand-knitted from lengths of wool cut from darning skeins during wartime shortages.

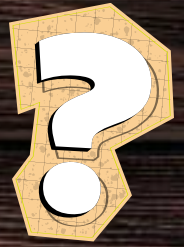
Made in 1944 by a girl aged 14, in Cardiff.



Paper garlands were a popular decoration choice for celebrations like birthdays and Christmas.

Click the card to create your own paper garlands!

Wondering what happened in your area during World War Two



AMGUEDDFA
CYMRU

YOUR

Homefront



start here!

Learn how to create your own project with our new 'Your Homefront' resource!

Find out how to research, collect, and use information about your area.

Google











Your Homefront

- How did WW2 impact my local community?
- Were there munitions factories?
- Was it bombed?
- Are there War Memorials?

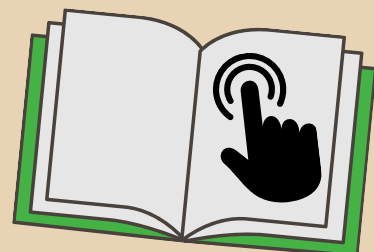
Find all the links to the objects used throughout this eBook on this page!

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- 26 - Land Army Shirt 
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eBook
Activities




Make a poster

Create a poster as part of the WW2 'Dig for Victory' food campaign. Think about the images and words you use to encourage people to grow their own food.

Or create a modern-day poster encouraging people to save on food waste to help the environment. What words and images would you use to encourage people to reduce food waste?

**Return to
the eBook**





Carrot Scones



You will need:

12 tbsp self-raising flour and 1 teaspoon baking powder – sifted together

2 tbsp softened butter (or margarine)

4 tbsp sugar

8 tbsp grated carrot

A few drops of vanilla flavouring (essence)

Pre-heat oven to gas mark 6 / 200°C.

Grease a baking tray.



Method

Leave the butter out so that it becomes nice & soft to work with. This makes it easier to mix in the sugar. Beat these until they are light & creamed.

Add in the grated carrot, a bit at a time. It will not look like the prettiest thing in the world – but stick with it!

Add in the vanilla.

Slowly add the sifted flour. The more you beat, the more moisture the carrots will release to bind the mixture together. You will be left with a sticky, carrot-flecked dough.

Pinch off some dough and roll it between your hands. You should get 12 scones from this recipe.

Place them on a baking tray and sprinkle with a little sugar (optional)

Cook in the centre of the oven for about 20 minutes until golden brown.

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the eBook





Paper garland

You will need:

Old newspapers, magazines, or pieces of paper

Glue stick or sticky tape

Scissors

Drawing pin

Method

Cut the newspaper/ magazine/ old piece of paper into a strip 10cm long and about 5cm wide.

Fold one strip into a loop and use the sticky tape or glue stick to do this.

Loop another strip through this loop and stick together again.

Continue to do this until you have a beautiful paper chain garland.

Using a drawing pin, display on the wall. Remember to ask a teacher, parent or guardian to help you!



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Archwilio amrywiaeth
o adnoddau digidol
amgueddfa.cymru/dysgu

Explore a range of
digital resources at
museum.wales/learn

