

Reference 1 - 11.96% Coverage

Any particular memories of rationing?

Well, you know, we both tried to think about what we used to eat and we can't think how our mothers used to feed us. Because the rations were so tiny. Umm - one egg a week. Umm – bacon - I don't think there was much bacon. Ooh, and butter, about two ounces - that was about ten ounces - and my mother, before the war used to have two and a half pounds of butter so she didn't know where to start.

So I just don't know, I don't know what we used to eat, really. I do wonder. But she used to grow a lot of things. We had a big garden and she grew quite a lot of vegetables. And she used to bottle tomatoes and all kinds of things like that. So I suppose we just had those and sorted it out from there. And then this, perhaps meat – I dunno - perhaps twice a week if we were lucky, I should imagine. I don't think it was much more.

Can you ever remember, um... because you were a teenager then, weren't you? Can you remember going hungry? Did you ever... was there a time.....

No! But my sister-in-law.... I'm only tiny, so I had enough. But my sister in law was a tall girl and, you know, she was a teenager and she said she was always hungry. All....you know, all... when she was growing up, because there was never enough food. So I was alright because, as I say, I was only small anyway, so it didn't sort of matter that much to me.

You say... I mean, that was unusual, your Mum doing the gardening. I thought Dads normally did the gardening.

No - me Mum was the gardener. No - me Dad was busy. Me Dad was in the fire service - the AFS. He went through all the Blitz and then he found out that if he got killed - when he'd gone through it all – that 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.

Right! This was in Birmingham?

Yes, yes.

Reference 2 - 0.97% Coverage

We got married in 1951 and everything was still rationed and it was rationed, a lot of it, until '54. So it was rationed from, well fourteen, fifteen years.

Reference 3 - 2.87% Coverage

During this time of rationing you say you had to have what was there and everything. What was the worst thing? What, for you, was the worst thing you ate to keep from being hungry, what was the worst thing?

I didn't eat rabbit - I never ate rabbit and I still don't eat it and I didn't then either. No, perhaps we got chickens, I don't know. I suppose we must have done from somewhere. We probably did, perhaps somebody used to give us some, I don't know.

[<Files\\HFRT002 Maurice Garwood>](#) - § 2 references coded [11.86% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 8.76% Coverage

I've got here, rationing and food? I've got... no - garden, veg, something tomatoes?

00:15:01

Yeah, well, we used to have... grow tomatoes, veg... you know, the green greenery. And my mother was a real good bottler – she's bottle anything. And she used to make bread and pastry. She was self-sufficient, like - well she had to be, with six boys, didn't she. And uh... I don't think we went without because my father was a grocer and anything that wasn't rationed, that you could pay... they weren't under the counter but, I mean, you could... he used to bring home. I mean, pay for 'em, like, you know? It wasn't Black Market stuff, it was there, but it wasn't rationed.

So you actually did... you know you were... You were growing your own and all that kind of thing, as well. And presumably, with you working, there was good money coming into the house, wasn't there? Presumably.

We didn't think of money. Did we? Money didn't actually come into it. I mean it was there..

Female voice: Well we used to pay for a lot of it in taxes - they used to take 50% of our money, didn't they? You didn't get very much.

90% they'd take, yeah.

Female voice: 50% was credit, wasn't it? Which came back after.

War Credit, yeah, yeah.

Yes, yeah, yeah. So.. but yes, cause in a sense, money wasn't any use and if you didn't... if you couldn't buy the food.... If the food wasn't there...

If it wasn't there, you couldn't...

And do you have any special, you know, food that either you really quite liked – got to really quite like – or you thought 'oh God I'm not having this, even though there's hardly anything to eat!?'

No, I don't think I've got any sort of... I mean, I wouldn't sponge myself on a thing because I liked it - I'd do it in moderation. And even those that I don't like, I'd have in moderation.

But the other thing is, you know, there you were, growing boys – you say, family of six boys. Did you ever feel hungry during the War?

I shouldn't think so... well, no because we never had it before the War!

Reference 2 - 3.09% Coverage

Any other particular memories you've got of life on the Home Front?

Petrol rationing.

Did you have a car then?

Wife: You needed to have a car though did we...

Motorbike.

You had a motorbike? But presumably that was all right, you know, 'cause it does lots of miles to the gallon? Did that affect you...?

Yes. You only had half a gallon a week.

Wife: Wasn't very much. No.

You couldn't keep any coupons because you'd spend the damn 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.

[<Files\HFRT003 William Patterson>](#) - § 5 references coded [22.35% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 3.50% Coverage

What about things like rationing? What effect did that have?

Well, largely of course, that would affect my mother. But the amount of rationing we got was stupid. There was no fruit - no fruit. Butter was, I think, about two ounces and about four ounces of margarine. Occasionally I think you got a bit of cooking lard. Bacon we never saw. Meat - I think it was sold by the amount not the weight. You were allowed a shillings worth or something silly like that, which sound ridiculous today but it formed a joint for the weekend. And occasionally - very occasionally - there'd be a bit of liver or kidney turn up - bit of offal. And um, I know, my father once brought home a pig's head he'd scrounged somewhere. I think some pigs had been killed. He picked this head up and brought it home! And that turned some marvellous brawn - it was beautiful. I can taste it now!

Reference 2 - 3.12% Coverage

So that kind of thing... things like brawn, I mean, if you were talking to children today about brawn, they'd probably turn their noses up!

They don't even know what it is. I mean to say, we used to have all sorts of ... well, basically, home-made things that women in those days did automatically. They were brought up to do this sort of cooking and, quite frankly, I mean to say, how many kids today have had calves knuckles? Lovely! You know, but you never see them. And faggots. But faggots they sell in the shops today are not faggots - they were beautiful - they were a meal in itself - they were gorgeous. And umm... well the fat was always - if you got any chops, the fat was already very carefully carved off and used for frying or preparing other things.

Reference 3 - 2.70% Coverage

But, did you ever feel hungry?

No! Funnily enough, never. It's incredible. We had lots of vegetables. My father was a good allotment worker - he had a bit of an allotment up the road and we were well supplied with vegetables and you filled up on those. And bread, of course. Bread was fairly easily available. And I can't honestly remember

ever...I suppose there were the times when there was the odd hunger pang but generally speaking no, we were never hungry. And a dam sight healthier. Because it was all good food. There was no E's this and A's that! (laughs) You know, it was all good food and we were very active. I got landed with a job as an ARP Messenger.

Reference 4 - 8.43% Coverage

were you expected to go and work on the allotment?

Oh yes, yes. When he went up on the allotment, I went with him and you'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 thing. Name a job that came automatically to you - he just showed you how and that was it. You just got on with it. And many a time my job was to wheel the wheelbarrow down from the allotment, loaded with vegetables - a lot of which was given away - because he used to grow stuff that was ready usually on mass, and you got far more than you could use at one time. There was only three of us and as I say...

But when you say 'give away', was there, like, bartering?

No. No.

You wouldn't have a chicken for ten pounds of spuds, or anything. Not that kind of thing?

No, not to my knowledge. If he did, I'm not aware of it. I never saw him do that. But he'd go down the road and say, 'oh give her a knock and give her some potatoes' or something like that. You know- where he'd got a surplus - you could only handle so much at a time. And rather than let it waste, he would give it away. Mind, I won't say we weren't given other things - somebody maybe had... ooh, we had chickens, yeah - I must remember that - and rabbits.

What? You kept them?

Well, he did. He did. We had a chicken coup at the end, and of course, I always had to go and buy the chicken food - you had a permit - you had to have a permit and you were allowed so much food for so many birds. And then he... one day he turned up and he'd brought a couple of rabbits home. And we set to and we built cages. I think we had about fifty rabbits altogether.

So you were eating them, were you?

Oh yes. I wasn't allowed to name them, not allowed to play with them. And you couldn't turn and say 'ahh, this is poor old Jeffrey!' You didn't do nothing like that - he wouldn't let you name them, not even the hens. And I developed an allergy to them - or to the fur - rabbit fur, which I've still got to this day. But it was good fun.

Reference 5 - 4.59% Coverage

Well... I was brought up to eat everything - not to take dislikes or fancy fads as my father would call it. You just... you ate what was put in front of you and that was it. And one of the foods we used to love was a dish Mum used to do with... what was it called? It was herring done in vinegar.

Rollmop?

No, no, no, these were done... you'd have a great big tray and she'd gut them and fillet them. Take their heads off - gut them and fillet them and clean all the scales off. Then they were just rolled up - like a Rollmop - just rolled up and put in lines in the tray. And she'd maybe do thirty at a time. Funnily enough they were available - fish. I don't know where they came from but they were available and...

And they were raw, basically?

And it was done in a.... well they were raw. And they were done in water and vinegar mix and salt a pinch of salt. And she put them in the oven for I suppose about an hour. And when they came out, we'd scoff the whole thirty - no trouble at all - they were beautiful. What the devil did they call that? I can't think at the moment. But that was a lovely thing – a lovely dish.

[<Files\HFRT004 Edith Wood>](#) - § 2 references coded [6.11% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 4.62% Coverage

What about rationing? Do you remember that?

Yes, I do. Now, we only used to get a little bit of rationing. Now I think - I can't remember exactly - but it was two ounces of this and two ounces of that. But each one got two ounces of whatever it was. And it had to last you a week. I've never seen my mother do so much with a tin of corned beef! (Laughing)

Really?

We used to have it mashed, we used to have it boiled, we used to have it in all sorts of things! In pies, we used to have it in all

sorts of things. She used to make... oh, and tins of Spam. Now that was nice. We used to have tins of Spam and that went a very long way. We used to have that cut up and it used to go a very long way.

So what happened? Your mother used to get all the rations for your family?

That's right, yes. And then we used to have it, yes.

Did you have very many vegetables in those times?

Uh... Vegetables - potatoes we had - didn't have a lot of greenery. We did have greenery but not a selection, like you would have today.

No. And fruit?

Fruit, no. We didn't have bananas. No bananas. We didn't have a lot of fruit, no. No, we didn't. If you had fruit growing in your garden you were lucky. We had a lot of gooseberries, so we were lucky (laughing).

Oh right! What about coupons, during the War? For clothing?

Oh yes, that was this thing. Yes, coupons. You had to be, sort of, careful with your coupons because they didn't go very far.

Reference 2 - 1.50% Coverage

I'm just wondering if there's anything else that you can tell me? What was your favourite.... just one last thing - what was your favourite food during the War? Did you have anything favourite?

Scrambled egg.

But was that made with....?

Made with.... yes, dried egg! Yes, powdered egg. But it was lovely. I used to like that.

Did you?

Yes. That was smashing.

You can still get it you know?

I know you can. Yeah, I loved that. That was gorgeous.

[<Files\\HFRT006 Ted Stanley>](#) - § 2 references coded [18.11% Coverage]

there were rations?

Ooh, yes. rations, yes.

But it was that ... Because you were still fairly young weren't you?

Yeah, yeah. Me mother gave up sugar so that I could have sugar. And she never had sugar again, in her lifetime. Yeah.

But, how did you make ends.... you know, how was...?

I don't know how she did, really. Honestly. Mind you, I used to go and help on a farm and they'd always got milk and butter, you know, their own.... what they made themselves. I had a good feed-up on a Sunday if I went down the farm. Did a bit of haymaking or anything. I don't think they were too bad off, the farmers.

Did you... things like bananas?

No, nothing like that, no. Mind you, poor old Mum had to take in lodgers because my father was a hundred percent disabled from the First World War. He had a terrible head wound, so she used to take in lodgers. Old Dick Hopkins, he got some chickens and up the road at the old timber yard a big 'Jew Boy' had got the timber yard and he'd got his own ship bringing in bananas, funnily enough, and they did swaps, bartered. He gave him a chicken and he had so many bananas back, swapping, bartering.

Did you have, like, allotments?

Oh yes, yes, everything was dug up, Dad was always planting stuff. You had to sort of feed yourself. Potatoes and cabbages and goodness knows what, you had to.

Children today won't have seen this ... but it says here your favourite wartime food was Spam!

Oooh yes. I loved it, still do ... Always got a tin of Spam in the fridge, Spam fritters or Spam sandwich, you know. Still love Spam, my wife can't understand it but it's one of those things that's always stuck with me.

Was Spam always here or was it brought in by the Americans?

Mainly from the States, I mean that's where it originated from the States, I loved it still do. That and Grape Nuts. I think they came

from Canada, stay hard in milk, I had some this week. My Uncle Fred who was on the underground railway he always had his Grape Nuts for his breakfast and now and again I think I'll have a bowl of Grape Nuts.

Reference 2 - 3.12% Coverage

Coming back to that Spam, when you were a kid presumably at weekends before the war you'd have joints and all that...

00:15:05

Yeah.

So you had none of that during the war?

Oh no, no poor old do. I don't know how mother did it. You had an ounce of butter and two ounces of sugar and all sorts of silly things, you know, very tight. I don't know we got over it, better than what they would today, you've got to have it all today.

[<Files\\HFRT007 June Woodward>](#) - § 1 reference coded [4.67% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 4.67% Coverage

Can you remember any thing about rationing at the time?

Well I can remember not having many sweets, yes coupons for sweets yes. I don't know how far into the war it was before they brought rationing in.

It doesn't really matter ...as long as you can remember rationing? Do you remember being deprived apart from sweets, deprived of any sorts of food?

No definitely not, because my father always had an allotment and we seemed to have just the normal food, yes.

[<Files\\HFRT008 Derek Denchfield>](#) - § 3 references coded [22.08% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.74% Coverage

Can you remember how it affected your life and your family, the war? Did it have any effect?

It probably didn't affect us as much as it did some of the people in the towns. Because living in the country in a village, there was always a chicken that got run over or a pig that got killed, or plenty of eggs, or you could go blackberrying. It didn't affect us as much as it did people who had to purchase everything on coupons. I'm not saying we did a lot that we shouldn't have done but there was food available.

there was a school playing field next to it and during the early part of the war that was all dug up, and us village boys and one or two of the town boys used to do all of the gardening and produce food which was pushed over into the school canteen.

Vegetables you mean?

Vegetables, yes. Carrots and potatoes and that sort of thing. Down Queensway where it is now, if you know where Queensway is, just past the school there is a big open green playing field with a new building. Just before you get to the little nursery school, well that was all school playing fields and that was all dug up and we used to do the produce. Then a lot of the older village boys, we used to go up to Bletchley Park, as I say we were in the last year at school. Up at Bletchley Park, we had what's called a farming class. They purchased a lot of hens, chickens and we'd build a... You know where the Fire Station is and the Police Station, well of course there was no Sherwood Drive then. That was all woods... and we put the chicken runs up in those woods, you know, where the Fire Station is now, and we had to have coupons you see, for the meal and we used to get given coupons and we used to traipse down to the Smith's shop. He used to sell us the meal and get our purchases and on our way up to the college, Bletchley Park, we used to have to take the buckets of swill that were left over from the kitchen meals the day before to boil up for the hens the next day. So it was quite a business. We spent more time up there than we did at being educated in the last twelve months.

You say that the chickens obviously laid eggs, who was entitled to those eggs?

00:12:10

Well they went into the school canteen, I suppose... well they did to sort of help out with the rations.

Can you remember rationing?

Ooh yes.

Can you remember being deprived of anything during the war?

Only a few sweets I suppose. We didn't used to get many of them, four ounces for tuppence weren't they, or something like that. I didn't have many tuppences in those days. As I say we had probably more food in one way or another than the townspeople did. But we had to go without a lot obviously. You had to get your clothes darned or whatever.

We talked about food, you were quite lucky in this area. You had the produce?

Everybody in the village had ten or twenty pole of allotment. Everybody used to have an allotment in those days, there was no fast food and tinned food much.

Well, what was your favourite food in the war, do you remember?

Well we used to be able to get hold of quite a lot of rabbits, rabbit pies and that sort of thing if you could get hold of them.

What did you think about the eggs, dried eggs?

Well, we had dried egg powder but that's true enough but that was all on ration. We had a ration of that but we always used to get hold of.... Well, I wouldn't say as many as we would have liked but we could always get hold of plenty of eggs. Everybody, even people with ordinary houses had got half a dozen chickens, I suppose, and after they'd finished laying the eggs, well they had their neck screwed and you had it for dinner!

They had rabbits for stew in hutches and things.

I used to keep some rabbits when we were living just outside the village on the hill... Pet rabbits.

Not to eat?

Well I must admit we did eat one or two but not very often, because you didn't like to kill your own pets did you?

No, no. That's true. But I can remember during the war my parents having a rabbit and killing it for Christmas dinner.

But they always tasted sweeter in some way than the field rabbit. They did.

[<Files\HFRT009 Eileen Denchfield>](#) - § 3 references coded [21.07% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 8.67% Coverage

Can you remember how war affected your life and your family?

Well there were shortages, but I mean you can get over those, can't you?

Shortages of what?

Food and all sorts of things.

You went to school at that time; can you remember anything happening at school?

Yes, we used to have to take Horlicks tablets, wasn't it, in a little tin, you know, if we couldn't get home at dinnertime or anything.

Was that to go with milk?

No that was to keep you going sort of thing, just to eat you know.

So you had no other food at lunchtime apart from your Horlicks tablets?

No not if there was... I used to go home for dinner you see, but of course you couldn't leave the premises if the siren went. That was really... and I used to be worried because boys in the senior school had gone missing and that. That sort of thing.

Reference 2 - 5.87% Coverage

Can you remember what sort of rationing you had?

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. Margarine you could get. You could get a shilling's worth of meat if the butcher was that way inclined, you know.

What about fruit?

No. Not unless nobody had got an apple tree.

You told me that you were quite lucky because your Mum and Dad had vegetables and things?

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

Reference 3 - 6.53% Coverage

in your notes you talked about ration books and coupons, coupons for clothes as well as food?

00:13:42

And for sweets.

You had sweets as well?

If you could get any.

And coupons for clothes, can you remember anything about those?

Yes. You had them in a book and they were cut out you know.

For shoes and....

Everything. Yes.

Was it an awful lot of rationing at that point for clothes and things?

Yes.

Did you feel deprived at all? In those days they used to darn things didn't they?

No. Couldn't have afforded to buy when you're only earning sixteen shillings a week. It went up to sixteen during the war.

[<Files\\HFRT010 Betty Wise>](#) - § 2 references coded [9.72% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 5.24% Coverage

When the war started, you would have been twenty; so can you remember the food you had during the war, did you notice any changes?

Well, we didn't get any changes really, because you were only on the rations, only things you could do with the rations. My mother did the shopping, she 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.

Can you remember any of the recipes? I vaguely remember there was powdered eggs

There was powdered egg.. She didn't make omelettes and you had to make cakes with that – she used to use it for that. 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 and all that as well.

Which allotments patch was he on?

West of the cemetery, behind Furze Way. It's underneath the road now.

When you mention plum trees, there are some golden plum trees on the allotments now?

Where my dad's allotment was, is under the road now!

With the Dig for Victory campaign, did you also grow vegetables in your garden?

No, they weren't very big gardens. Still, I suppose we would have done if we'd had nothing else. The man next door kept chickens in his; he had a coop there and he kept them on after the war as well.

Reference 2 - 4.48% Coverage

And with the fashion, with the dresses you wore, what was the difference between your afternoon dress and what you went to work in?

Well, the afternoon one would probably be lighter, you know, and you sort of wore a skirt and a blouse, something like that – or a jumper, jumper and skirt in winter for work.

Did you knit your own jumpers?

Well, I've knitted cardigans. I wasn't much good as a knitter; no, I didn't do any knitting much before the war, though I do remember knitting a cardigan, thought I was never going to finish it!

Did you make any clothes, or did your mother?

My mum did, yes, she 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 for two or three years until it wore out.

Was material difficult to come by?

Yes, I can't remember. There was the drapery on the Square, the Co-op Drapery, that would have material. I don't know if there was anywhere else in Wolverton you could have got it.

00:25:00

It was rationed wasn't it?

You had coupons, I forget how many it was. Yes it was rationed because according to how much material you had they'd take coupons. I forget how much it was for a coat or anything like that,

you didn't have that many for a year and they were for sheets and everything, so you had to make things last. Yes, you had to darn.

[<Files\HFRT011 Woodward-MissingAudio>](#) - § 2 references coded [32.72% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 21.80% Coverage

Can you tell me something about the allotments?

00:12:38

As we were in the boys' school and it was all boys, one of the days a week we used to go marching down to the allotments ... where the school had got two or three plots of ground and we used to cultivate these allotments.

What did you used to grow?

Having said that I can't recall the produce coming back into the school kitchen to be used but I'm sure it must have been.

So you had dinners, did you, there (at school) then as well?

Yes.

Right.

I had ... my main meal throughout the war I presume was, was school dinner.

Really.

I was always at school dinner.

And do you remember what you had to eat then, can you remember the food that you used to eat?

I can remember one thing which sticks out in my mind, sponge pudding (laughs).

Really.

...In huge trays and then they'd cut it up in to squares.

Custard?

Oh yes of a sort, yes. I think they was all right, I'm sure we... I don't remember not eating the food.

Reference 2 - 10.93% Coverage

Oh right yes. So were you deprived at all during the War?

I didn't think I was.

No?

No, I mean we never went hungry, again my father kept, had an allotment and so there was always food about, we always had food.

So you didn't have very much rationing, you didn't notice that at all?

No, not really,

I think it's the area that you lived in, you were lucky really weren't you?

I mean there was never a day when you didn't have a meal, but certainly I can remember the sweet ration thing.

[<Files\\HFRT012 May Webster>](#) - § 4 references coded [39.89% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 24.52% Coverage

You were married during the war?

1942 I was married.

And when you were planning the wedding obviously rationing was on and....

Oh every thing... I had to do every thing a long time in advance to get things as you wanted it.

So how did you plan your wedding?

Well, with the help of my mother, and coupons, beg, borrow and stealing as you might say; we didn't steal of course, but begged them, borrowed them, bought them, coupons.

Sort of like on the Black Market as it were?

Well no, it was people that you knew, whether it was classed as Black Market because you were buying them off someone else...

(Cousin) It was the Black Market really but everybody did it.

So how many clothing coupons would you have to collect to get a wedding dress?

00:01:59

Seven.

Seven, that doesn't seem a lot?

I know but you didn't have a lot either! Can you remember how many clothing coupons we got to last us twelve months?

(Cousin) I think there was forty.

(Mrs W) I think you'll have to say we're just guessing.

What about rationing food during the war?

Well yes, you got a couple of ounces of this and a couple of ounces of that and you had to manage.

What about you, because you were pregnant during the war weren't you? Did you get extra rations?

I think I got extra milk, coupons for extra milk. I can't remember anything else getting extra for, I'm not going to say they didn't but I can't remember.

When your children were born did they get extra rations?

Well they got a certain amount of rations, but they would only get things that children could. It was probably extra milk again because that was all that they would get isn't it?

Did you have an allotment or any thing like that where you grow you own food?

No we didn't, no.

So when you used to go to the shops to get your food, what sort of food would you buy to make to make a meal?

Well let's put it this way, 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, and as she's told you my mother was a bit of a...!

(Cousin) But offal wasn't on the ration.

(Mrs W) No, offal wasn't, and kidneys weren't if you could get them.

(Cousin) Kidneys, things like that, they weren't rationed but you had to be well in with the butcher to get them.

(Mrs W) ... Butcher to get them

So it paid you to be friends with the butchers?

Oh yes.

(Friend) We used to get a bit of liver at the butchers. I used to have to do the shopping at the butchers... down Leagrave Road, I used to go.

(Mrs W) Yes my mother did.

What would you make with that?

Oh I wouldn't make anything, I did nothing I was useless, my mum did everything!

Reference 2 - 2.27% Coverage

So you were quite a young woman at the time, did you want to have more clothes?

Oh yes, we all wanted more clothes; again you see we had to get the coupons, it was the coupons that stopped you from getting your clothes, so you had to beg borrow and steal them.

Reference 3 - 6.13% Coverage

Can you remember ever being hungry during the war years?

No I don't. My Mother was very good and as I said the butcher was very good. I don't think we ever went without food during the war... always something to eat.

(Friend) If you couldn't get meat you'll get fish, you could get some fish.

(Mrs W) Fish wasn't rationed.

Oh! But no fruit, you don't remember fruit?

There was odd fruit come in, and you usually found that you had to have children to get them, the fruit. They wouldn't serve it if they know you hadn't got any children in the family. In the shops then everybody knew everybody. Luton wasn't as big as it is now. It's just like Newport Pagnell, I mean that's grown since I came here.

Reference 4 - 6.97% Coverage

(Friend) May, I don't know if you think the same as me but you had more people being friendly in those days.

(Mrs W) Well everybody looked after each other didn't they, and they'd come along and tell you. 'They got bananas in the co-op!' And everybody use to run for to get bananas but they would only give them to you for children and you had to show your child's ration book. But they would all tell each other if there was anything going, anything unusual. The shops were empty, then before you knew where it was, you couldn't get in the shop, people queuing.

Did people share their food, if somebody had extra sugar or some thing like that?

Well suppose they sold it, they would sell it. The only people that would have the extra would be those with big families or people who hadn't got any money.

[<Files\HFRT013 Joan Draper>](#) - § 2 references coded [5.99% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 3.06% Coverage

What about rationing?

Well we ate our rabbits!

What was it like rationing in London, do you remember anything about that?

We never went hungry or anything like that but don't forget we left London pretty early on after the Blitz which was 1940, we were gone by that time. But going through while we were evacuated, food must have been short then, things were short then, because when we opened up our packed lunches at school at school I would open up two lovely big thick pieces of bread but they were spread with lard and Marmite. Then sometimes you'd have condensed milk which had oozed all the way through. There'd be lunches like that. You never had cake or... you might pick up an apple from an orchard you went through. I don't think we were ever hungry but we were never ever really full up.

Reference 2 - 2.94% Coverage

When you went to the farming community was it much better there. Were you looked after from the point of view of food?

00:19:38

We had, we used to keep chickens and the rabbits and things but only for a little while. Towards 1944 everything must have been short everywhere. On the farm we used to go and get the milk as it would have come in from the cow and have that sort of thing.

But I can never remember being hungry, but I do remember not having...

... *an awful lot.*

And different sorts of foods. There would... she would do a roast meat dinner or whatever there was, but she would always make a suet pudding which she would cut into slices and dip into the juices of the meat. I eat every single vegetable going because that was what we filled up on sort of thing.

[<Files\HFRT014 Diane Lillian Bowsher>](#) - § 1 reference coded [11.53% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 11.53% Coverage

Can we go the war and remembering things about it. Can you remember rationing?

00:08:30

No, I really, I can remember things my mother done for us because on a Sunday we'd have the glass cake stand and there'd be little squares on there, in actual fact, making out it was cakes, it was bread with a little bit of icing and a dobble in the front. We made out we'd had cakes for tea to all the other kids down the road, you know, showing off! They used to say, 'Do you know the Bells have cakes and we never have cakes!' It wasn't. They 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.

Yes, yes.

00:09:21

She really was so I don't think rationing affected us because she would make something more or less out of nothing and give it a name. I remember one day I said, 'Whatever's this?' She said, 'Queen Something's Duple' but don't ask me what it was because I can't remember but I always remember something. When I brought my kiddies up they would say, 'What we having for tea? Queens Ruple Duple!' because that stuck in my mind.

What about scrambled egg do you remember scrambled egg in the war?

Yes, powdered one, yes.

Did you like that?

I suppose so. The only thing I didn't like was vegetables and I still don't like. We had stews after stews after stews.

What meat was in them?

What when we was kids? I don't really know. Oh we had some rabbits. We caught one of these rabbits up at Stanmore woods or one of the boys did. His mother didn't want it so we said we'd have a raffle but it was fixed that I'd won this blasted rabbit. So my father hastily built a hutch for it but this rabbit happened to be pregnant and so one day there was a load of rabbits there. He couldn't kill them, we couldn't eat them so he'd take them up to the butchers, give the butcher that and he'd give him a little bit of meat for it. But don't ask me what meat it was.

I just wondered if you had rabbit?.

No we wouldn't eat them.

Not even in stews?

No because we'd reared them, fed them.

I can remember them.

No we couldn't have killed them and eaten them.

[<Files\\HFRT015 Janet Chamberlain>](#) - § 1 reference coded [21.48% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 21.48% Coverage

9.57 That went until the early 1950's I remember when sweets came off ration everybody went mad and just ate and ate sweets and they put them back on again. But there wasn't... I remember we had ration books with coupons and I remember when we were living in, this was post war, with the ration books you went to the NAAFI. They took your ration books and they'd take your little coupons out there wasn't a lot of food and I remember my mother eventually, I think bread was put on ration and that was after the war and when you have growing boys they eat huge amounts it must have been very difficult to feed them I think.

A lot of people round here had allotments and supplemented food but I suppose you didn't have that.

No my great aunt lived next door and her garden was full of funny little bushes and things and sculpted hedges, you know these little tiny gardens, terraced garden.

Oh it was only a tiny garden. In terms of things like fruit when did you first see a banana?

I can't remember. I'll tell you one story though which, when, if there was a queue people would apparently used to stand in a queue because you'd just queue up for anything going. So my

mother was taking myself and my brother down to Wardown Park in Luton for some fresh air and she saw a queue at the Co-op. So she stood at the end of the queue and ended up with two grapefruit! Which she put in the pram and brother who must have been sitting up and little. We went to the park and he threw these two grapefruits in the lake, in Wardown Lake and two American servicemen killed themselves laughing and rescued it! But I don't remember it, I guess bananas must have been much later. I can't remember fruit much at all. Probably when we were living, during the first three years we lived in the country and sometimes different places because he was moved around by the sound of things because I know he did fire watching in Bristol. Even though he was in the airforce he had to go to Bristol and watch for firebombs. I remember one place it had a pump in the middle of the kitchen, I think it was but I just remember this big hand pump and apparently I'd gone out and got myself absolutely filthy and my dad just stuck me under the pump! It must have been a hot day!

12.35 I remember there used to be, I'm sure this is my memory and I haven't made it up. Somebody used to come round selling blackcurrant tarts on, do you remember those old fashioned baker's trays? I remember that and these blackcurrant tarts. That must have been before we lived in Luton which I think was '43.

[<Files\\HFRT017 Mary Webb>](#) - § 1 reference coded [7.36% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 7.36% Coverage

And what about rationing, what do you remember about rationing?

1:50

Well em, we used to have ration for butter of course, and eh we didn't have much butter did we? Cause Mum couldn't stand the margarine so we used let her eat the butter and we ate the margarine. And em, well what else did we... meat, eggs, yeah,

I've got here toffee with dried milk, tell me about this?

Yeah, well we used to make this em this em with the dried milk and em well I don't remember what how, we put with it, we also used to make a honeycomb toffee, didn't we? (I know we made it but how we made it I can't remember) it had milk with it,

It would be milk and sugar would it?

Not much sugar I don't think, but we never em had sugar in tea so we benefited from that because we were a family of five, well six when me brother came home, but I mean he was in the Navy. We never had sugar in tea so we benefited from that because the ration went farther.

[<Files\\HFRT018 Lena Jakeman>](#) - § 2 references coded [9.26% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 5.26% Coverage

In terms of things like rationing, how did that impact on your life?

Well it didn't really because we had the rations that we were allowed and as Mary said we had it supplemented because grandad was a farmer. We had chickens, we had eggs we had rabbits and that sort of thing. So we were never, and as I say Dad kept the allotment so we always had vegetables and that sort of thing. It never really took a lot of, we just learnt we couldn't have the things we just learned to go without that was all.

Was there anything you'd had before the war that was a real passion of yours and you couldn't have it?

Fruit, fruit was a big passion. We had a lot of fruit, mother always bought a lot of fruit and we were allowed to eat fruit willy nilly. But 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. If we could get a few more sometimes off the ration well you did sort of thing.

Reference 2 - 4.00% Coverage

How would that work, would you have so many a week and ...

No, well you had a sheet in a book and certain clothes were worth so many coupons so you wanted clothes you took the book to the shop, you bought what you wanted and you spent your coupons on, they took so many coupons for each article that you bought.

Was all clothing then rationed, knickers and vests and so on....

Yes, yes everything was on coupons. You had the utility mark on them which was sort of two little arrows following one another. Oh yes everything was rationed as far as that was concerned, you needed your coupons if you wanted clothes.

When you say it had the utility mark this meant that it was like basic manufacture, nothing frilly and fancy this was the utilities?

Yes.

[<Files\\HFRT019 Audrey Lambert>](#) - § 3 references coded [28.81% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 12.59% Coverage

Right, umm....tell me something about rationing, if you can remember it.

Yes, well, umm, of course I didn't do the shopping very much. Except that I did go down to the Co-op for mother quite often and, umm, they had an extra card and I can

remember that on this card was things like blue bag and starch and that type of thing. Which presumably was not in the normal ration books and so that they had rationed out these other items as well and would just tick it off so that you were only entitled to have it every so often. Custard powder I think was another one. Yes, umm.

Do you remember how much? Did you have sweets during that time?

Not very much, I shouldn't think.

And do you remember butter and margarine being rationed?

Yes, it was because Mother couldn't stand the margarine so the three of us ate margarine and mother ate the butter.

That was a luxury, wasn't it? And, of course, scrambled egg, it was powdered egg wasn't it in those days?

Yes, they did, yes, but you see the parents had got poultry, so that didn't affect us I suppose in that way because she always had got plenty of eggs.

You said, when I talked to you the first time round that you were very lucky from that point of view...did you have an allotment?

Father had an allotment until he bought some extra land which is more-or-less attached to this house, up there between here and the garage. Then he gave up his allotment. But that was the equivalent of it, anyway.

Yeah, but at that time I suppose you could grow your own vegetables.

Oh, yes he did, always.

So you had chickens as well?

Yes.

I suppose they were killed in order to eat, were they?

10.14

Umm, not as much as the rabbits.

So you had rabbits as well?

Yes, he'd got rabbits and at one point he had pigeons as well.

So, pigeons, did you eat pigeons as well?

Mmm..

Right, so rabbits were used.

Yes. I don't like rabbit. We used to have one every week. Mmm.

And who used to kill them, your Dad?

Oh, yeah

And skin them?

Oh, yes I can skin them alright. Yes, I used to skin them for him. Yeah.

So, I suppose rabbit pie was one of those things also that....

Sometimes, she'd just stew it, you know.

But you were very lucky.

I'm sure we were. Yeah. When I look back on it...you know. At the time, I mean it didn't mean much to me.

Reference 2 - 4.58% Coverage

Did you have any favourite food?

18.16

I thought about that and I think my favourite was always, we were talking about the rabbit, was his tongue and his brains and my sister and I used to fight over this and mother used to make us take turns!

Tongue and brains!

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

Anything else?

Not particularly I don't think, no. It's easier to say what you don't like I think. One dinner was a fried egg and some gravy with some bread and I didn't like that. Of course every week we had the same. So Monday was always and Tuesday was always. Mother would have the joint I suppose. That was the ration on the Saturday ready for Sunday joint. So she always had half a leg of lamb and then it would be cold on Monday, stewed on Tuesday and then you've got the rest of the week for these other bits and pieces.

Reference 3 - 11.64% Coverage

Another thing I can remember, I don't know if you've been told we used to have a 'buck bin' at the end of the street. Because at the end of the house sup here there's a bit of a gap and a spinney and this was like a huge tin bath and presumably you could buy the contents of this from the council which was everybody's scraps....

Food scraps?

Food scraps, yes that's right. So we would get, I don't know if it was delivered I don't know but it arrived in the kitchen anyway and we all had to sit round and start sorting it all out for the chickens. But eventually it got so mucky that father decided not to have anymore I think people put, you know they put in sweet papers and things, I could remember and that type of thing you know. So you'd got to keep sifting out....

So who put all that stuff into that bin?

Anybody from this end I presume although when I was at school. I suppose I got to about twelve I used to go with big metal buckets and collect all the lunch scraps from the school to start with and then I used to call at so many houses along here in the evenings with other buckets.

So this was for the chickens?

The chickens, yes.

You can't imagine that now. It's amazing how times have changed really.

23.27

Yes, well after the war it was still not possible to go to the seaside because I don't know how long they kept the barbed wire up, you know, on the pier and this type of thing I believe but there was. You could always go and lend a hand on the land. A friend and I went potato picking down in Churcham in Gloucestershire. Some other girls at work they went strawberry picking in Cambridgeshire. You'd go for a week.

I used to go hop picking because I loved in Kent.

Yes that's right, my husband came from Kent.

Rationing was still continuing after the war.

That's right, a long time wasn't it. They gradually took things off didn't they.

Do you remember icecreams coming in? They were those that you got from a machine, squirty and soft.

Really, I can only remember the man, what was his name, pedalling the thing with a big box on the front. Wall's Ice Cream wasn't he, yes. He's the man I can remember for ice creams.