



A Newton Abbot resident remembers World War II

Rations

We managed very well on our rations. My father grew a lot of vegetables and potatoes and my mother was very good at improvising and making do. We had our ration books and were issued with food recipe leaflets and she experimented with these. Egg came in powder form in a tin. It did not smell very nice, but she would use it beaten in cold water or milk for cakes and puddings (which looked very yellow inside!). She used to make a form of scrambled egg on toast by beating the powder in milk, adding some margarine and grated cheese and then scrambling the mixture, it was very good. If we ran short of egg powder she made eggless scones and Welsh griddle cakes that required very little fat. She did wonders with the meat ration, using mostly vegetables for tasty stews and casseroles. I remember trays of jam tarts, home-made blackberry and apple jelly (wild blackberries), potato cakes and pickled red cabbage, onions and chutney.

Sweets were rationed and we often use our whole months ration at one go and then went without for the rest of the month (1lb per month).

Clothes were on points as well as material. My mother made most of our clothes. If you wanted curtains, sheets, etc. you could not have a new dress. During this time several of my friends married and somehow wedding dresses were made from parachute silk or they wore service uniforms.

Furniture was also on points and had the utility mark on the back, as did quite a lot of linen. We just got used to going without and accepted that times were hard.

Sometimes someone would come into the library and say "such and such a shop had bananas", so we would take it in turns to rush to queue for some. The same with oranges, which were really scarce.

I remember that an old man used to come to the Library and I always helped him choose his books. He wanted to pay me but I refused, so a few days later he came and triumphantly put a paper bag on the counter. "Here you are" he said and inside were some thick blocks of chocolate. "I got that for you at Madge Mellors (cake shop)" he said, "It's for cooking, but you can eat it". I thanked him and we did!

Food rationing continued and in 1949 when I married, I started married life with a ration book and was obliged to wait at the grocers to have my cheese, butter, bacon and sugar etc. weighed out. The furniture we bought for our new home was of a poor quality and had the Utility mark, but it was all that was available. Sweets were still rationed!