

TWELVE & SIXPENCE

Life On The Home Front During The First World War

The First World War years: 1914 to 1918 saw a great many changes in the world, and the children from year 5 in Manor Primary School, Uckfield, undertook a special project to find out what life was like for people in Britain while so many men were away at War.

How did they live? What did they eat? What did they do? That's what they wanted to know. These 9 and 10 year olds immersed themselves in a world without mobile phones, without the internet, without electricity even, where food, money and even warmth was scarce, where teachers were strict and children often had to work after school just to help the family stay alive. They walked in the footsteps of those people, imagining their hardships, their joys, their woes. Only 100 years ago, but a million miles from today: a today that those people helped ensure for us all. They endured hardships and struggled to help the Country and the people in it thrive. The children learned respect for those brave women, men and children who fought their own war, here on the Home Front.



100 YEARS AGO

By the time Britain entered the War in August 1914, there were already food shortages, due largely to reliance on imports. Food Control Committees and Food Vigilance Committees, National Kitchens, "Win the War" Cookery Book published in 1917, and even "Milk for Tommy's Tea Fund" and "Eat Less Bread" campaigns: all contributed to make food at the forefront of everything. What had previously been a woman's private and domestic matter now became a very public one. Rationing was introduced in 1918 as a way to end the unfairness of food distribution and the massive shop queues for food. Growing your own food not only made sense, but was encouraged as one of the ways to win the War.

Separation Allowance was paid to all married soldiers, their wives and children, providing the wife could show they were of good character. In March 1915 this allowance was raised to twelve shillings and sixpence; £26.91 in today's money. Scarcity caused price increases, and in 1917 food was double the price it had been in 1914. The only way they could survive this long War was by being incredibly careful with money and with food, and growing some of their own.

The children's research gave them a unique insight into this world. This is a collection of what some of these 60 children discovered on their journey into the past, and we honour the lives of all those who lived at that time, who helped to create our world today.



Childrens artwork - basket of First World War rations



Results of family research, First World War medals in the family

We invited our parents and family to see the work we have done on the project: writing, artwork, research, and science: growing food. We talked to everyone about all our work, about the Home Front, about money, women, men, children and families at home and what life was like. People brought in memorabilia from family, which was amazing.

OPEN DAY AT SCHOOL

Redoubt Military Museum & Fortress
Imperial War Museum In London



"We explored the museum and saw some amazing things... I found out that lots of people change because of the wars, as they lost friends, families, homes, basically the happy memories had disappeared from them. I would like to find out more about the feelings of the people who experience World War One." *Becky*

WORLD WAR ONE DAY AT REDOUBT

We held a public event at the Redoubt Military Museum and Fortress in April. Some of our work was on display and we also brought trench cake and gave it to people. Most people really liked it, which was so nice to see.

Children offering trench cake to the public who came to "World War One Day" at the Redoubt



Sitting in the replica trench at the Imperial War Museum



"I enjoyed going into the trenches whilst there were sounds, because it made you think about the sounds and actually makes you picture and do what they may have done." *Ben W*



ON THE HOME FRONT

Before the War, women were marginalised in public life. They were only allowed to do certain occupations and usually prevented from working if they were married. Their role was home and family. The Suffragette Movement had begun much earlier, campaigning for political equality; a campaign that started peacefully but became over time increasingly violent. Women were very much seen as having to be watched and cared for; and the lower classes were seen as needing guidance from those above. It was a very structured society with defined roles, but with the gaps left by so many men signing up and going to War and later conscripted, the gaps had to be filled by someone, and there were only women left. There were also jobs created by the War that needed doing such as munitions. An estimated one million women entered the British workforce between 1914 and 1918 and worked in many different areas: from transport to agriculture; from banking to the civil service. Whether this was seen as a necessity to provide for their families or an opportunity for greater independence, it was a huge change for British home lives.



Please keep your head down and your shoes warm.
We miss you! Look after yourself properly. We hope you enjoy the things that we sent you. Write back soon. Lots of love,
Margaret xxx



Above: photo shows Rosemary Keen's aunt: Ethel Corden and Arthur Crabb who were engaged to be married. Ethel kept all his cards sent to her from the Front. Arthur died during the War; Ethel never married.

WOMEN

Jobs

The First World War provided the first chance for women to take on traditional male jobs. Before the War if women worked it was as servants and cleaners. Once a woman got married she had to give up work and be a housewife. The role was to look after the children and clean the house.

During the War women had to take over the men's jobs. Many inexperienced women took over jobs such as factory and farming. Money was low so many house wives had to work. Farm jobs involved milking cows, harvesting crops and food production, and all areas of the farm. As the war continued women had harder jobs as more men went to war, but didn't earn the same amount as men.

Some women worked in the textile industry but as the war went on they had to do different jobs. They had to go in factories making shells and bombs. Some became police officers and their main duties were to control the women around factories and public places, such as pubs and railway stations. Women were given the opportunity to become bus drivers and ticket collectors. They also work on the railway as porters and carriage cleaners. Women found it hard to find people to look after their children so everybody helped look after them such as parents, brothers, sisters and friends. It was very dangerous working in the shell filling factories. There were several explosions in which a lot of women were killed. Tillie, Dominika, AJ and Imogen

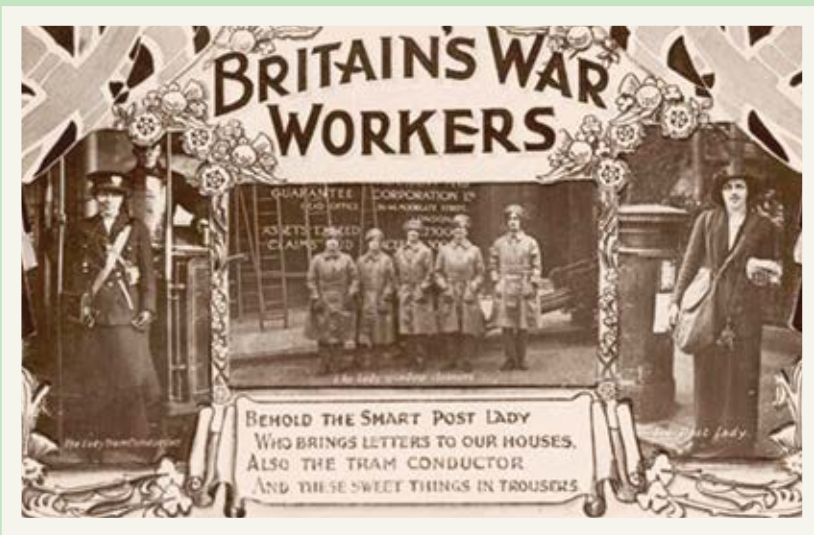
Women in Service

In 1914 the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps was formed. The women's Royal Naval Service was formed in 1917, and the Women's Royal Air Force was formed in 1918. It became very hard to buy food and in 1918 rationing was brought into equal the food out. This was done by everyone being issued a Rationing Book with so many tickets in it. Imogen

"Yesterday I made a trench cake and sent it to you. It hasn't got any raisins in it because I know you don't like them." Imogen



Above: the children made some embroidery style postcards that were popular at the time



SUFFRAGETTES

The Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) was founded by Emmeline Pankhurst. After years of peaceful methods of campaigning failed to bring any results, the movement became more violent, including women handcuffing themselves to railings and breaking shop windows. They even chained themselves outside Buckingham Palace. Some went to prison and even went on hunger strike and were force fed. Emily Wilding-Davison threw herself under the King's horse on Derby Day and died days later from her injuries.

During the War, the Suffragette's decided to put King and Country first and paused in their actions to support the War effort and the Home Front. After the War the Government gave married women over 30 the right to vote. Now women have the same voting rights as men. "It is more fair now. The Suffragettes helped to make the Government give us our vote and a fair point. Sadly there are still some places where women do not have the right to vote but in our Country we had the Suffragettes." Ella, April, Jessica, Amelia, Millajean



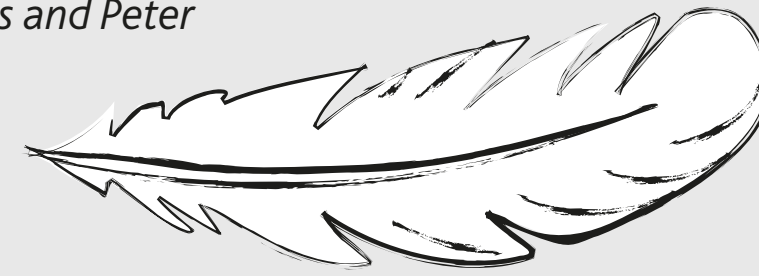
MEN

Even after so many men went away to fight, there were still plenty of jobs that men needed to do on the home front if they didn't or couldn't enlist to fight. From shovelling coal to patrolling the streets, men had all kinds of jobs during World War One. Some men were too old or too young to go to war. Some failed the medical test, or wore glasses, and others were in "reserved occupations". This meant they did jobs that were vital to the Country such as driving trains and buses, working in the coal mines, shipyards and munitions factories. Some men worked as farmers who needed to grow food for the troops and civilians. Other men guarded the coast in case of an enemy invasion. Jack W

Conscientious Objectors

Some men refused and they were called Conscientious Objectors. They would have been called a coward. People would have given them a white feather. This was given to make the man feel embarrassed and bad for not fighting with the other men. They formed a group which protested about not going to war. Some men who were too ill for war were accidentally given white feathers. Over 16,000 refused to fight.

Tom Attlee went to jail because he refused to go to war. He didn't want to fight because his Christian religion wouldn't allow him to fight. He ended up going to prison for his belief. These men had to put with abuse and insults from members of the public. Paris and Peter



"Dear Daddy, I know life is hard for an army man but I know you are very strong and brave. I hope you get the trench cake I made you and, if so, I hope you like it." Calum



CHILDREN

"Dear Daddy, our lives aren't the same because of the War, everyone's emotions have changed, including mine."

Boys and girls helped with the war effort by harvesting food for the soldiers. Boys helped by digging, weeding and harvesting and planting seeds so they grow. The girls helped by looking after the young ones and cleaning the house. Children went to pick berries and lots of families grew vegetables so they had to do lots of work and eat lots of the same things. Ben



"Dear Daddy, I'm keeping the house very tidy. I'm feeling ok but I had a fever the other week. Mum's always tired but she's fine." Millajean

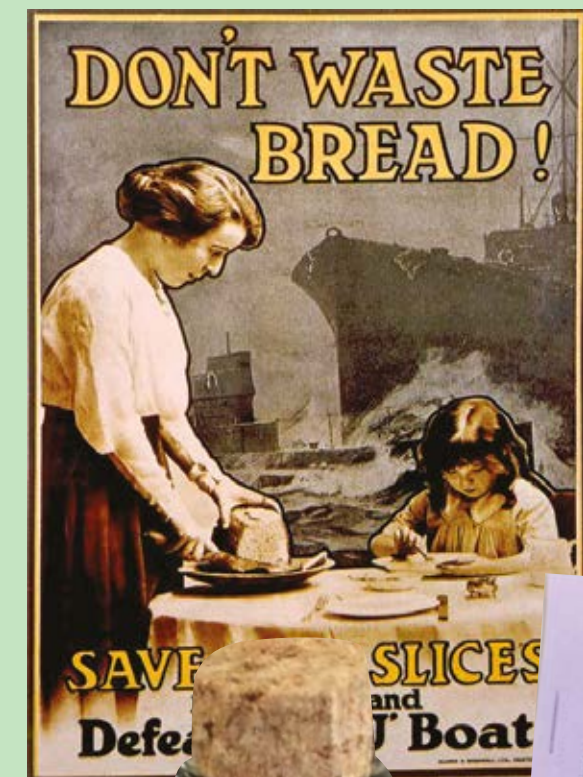
FOOD

Rationing is a way of sharing food fairly when there is not enough for everyone.

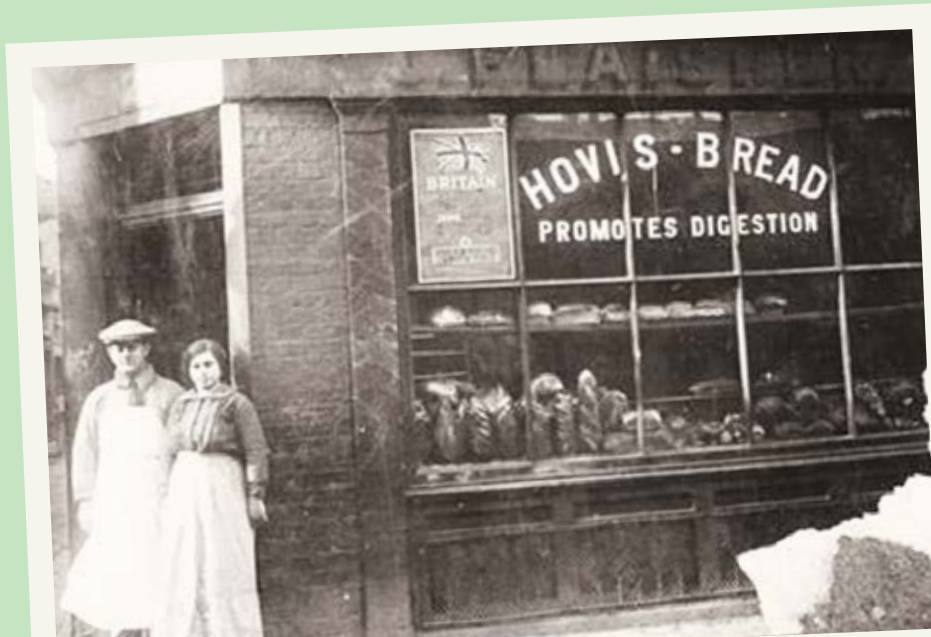
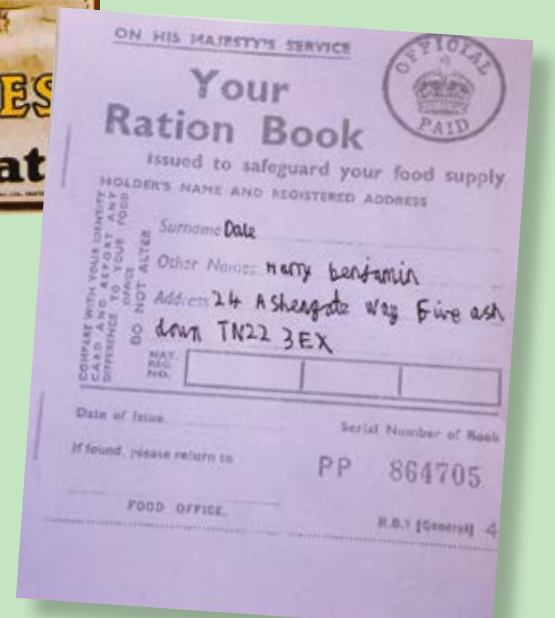
In 1918 the Government told the Country to ration. Each person had special rationing cards. There was a shortage of food because the Germans attacked our food supply with U boats, so our food from other countries often did not arrive in the UK.

The first thing to be rationed was sugar. After that it was meat. Then: flour and bread, butter, margarine and milk. There were even stories of butchers selling dead cats! The bread ration including cakes, puddings and normal bread. The meat included bacon, ham, sausages, rabbit and tinned meat.

School dinners were introduced in the War to make sure that children would not go hungry; many children were missing school to queue for food. Mothers were working and also queueing for food. Toad in the hole is a typical school dinner because it was a filling meal and it was a cheap dinner. Pudding could be jam roly poly. William G, Seb and Michael



"Money was short, and so was food. Women worked long and hard for little and tried to survive on as little food as possible." Tillie



Sound Architect Creative Media would like to thank: Manor Primary School year 5, their teachers and supporters, and all their parents and family members who helped or volunteered:

The Redoubt Military Museum and Fortress, Eastbourne
The Imperial War Museum, London
Bridge Cottage Heritage Centre, Uckfield
Uckfield Library
Gateways to the First World War

Volunteer Researchers and Contributors:
Andy Crosby, Councillor Donna French, Dr Janis Lomas, Dr Lucy Noakes, Prof Maggie Andrews, Mrs Richards, Mrs Rosemary Keen, Dr Sam Carroll, Steve Darvill, Steven Swain, Vicky Darvill, Vicky Richards

The Sound Architect Team:
Nicky Stewart-Johnson, Clements, Peter Lindsay, Susanne Crosby, Joe Turner, Tim Robertson, Vicky Richards

Manor Primary School

Heritage Lottery Fund
Sound Architect

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